

# THE ELEVEN LIGHTS

THE RED COW VOLUME II



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• Red Cow Book 2 •  
**THE ELEVEN LIGHTS**



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First Chaosium Printing — July 2017

ISBN# 978-1-56882-444-4

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*May Arachne Solara bless and protect this book.*



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# • Chapter 1 •

# PLAYING THE GAME

## INTRODUCTION

*The Eleven Lights* lets you play members of the Red Cow clan as the Hero Wars begin in Dragon Pass. The campaign stretches between 1618 and 1625. It is the second volume in a series that began with *The Coming Storm*.

The first volume in the series focused on the setting for the campaign, the Red Cow clan of the Cinsina, and their neighbors. It outlined how your players could create Red Cow PCs for the campaign and the key NPCs, locations, and conflicts of the campaign.

This volume contains the information the GM needs to run an eight-year campaign that takes the players through the height of the Lunar occupation of Sartar to the kingdom's liberation. It begins in 1618, before the lowest point for the Orlanthi rebellion against the Empire: the Windstop and Great Winter that follows. This gives your players time to become accustomed to day-to-day life in a Sartarite clan, forge alliances and friendships, and develop enemies before that life is disrupted at the end of 1621. With those ties to the setting, the feeling for the rhythm of normal life, the players should feel more keenly the impact of the events of that year, and sense that the Hero Wars are coming and nothing will be the same again.

We begin with introductory episodes intended to introduce the players to the NPCs, but quickly move to include the impact of larger events on the clan. It is the authors' expectation that you will run your own episodes as part of the campaign, to reflect your PCs and your players' desires and preferences. We include an extensive set of template episodes that represent common activities, to help you when preparing your own games.

Since the early days of the Gloranthan gaming magazine Wyrm's Footnotes, in whose pages we learned of Greg Stafford's Colymar campaign, and his PCs adventures with the Temple of the Wooden Sword, fighting in Starbrow's Rebellion, and performing a Crown Test to try and win rule of that tribe, the campaign based around a Sartarite clan struggling for liberation has been one of the classic settings for Gloranthan gaming. (The other being the treasure hunting campaign set in the ruins of the Big Rubble, adjacent to the city of Pavis, led by Steve Perrin.)

For many people, the task of detailing the NPCs, locations, and conflicts then plotting out episodes is too time consuming to hope to create a game that matches Greg's groups' famous adventures. With these two volumes we want to give you the material you need to run your own story, based in a Sartarite clan, that rivals Greg's game with little preparation, and we hope that it brings your group many nights of epic gaming pleasure in that tradition.

## ANNUAL FORMAT

For each year, we provide an outline of the significant developments within the setting and suggest episodes that can occur during those years.

### CONFLICTS

Conflict powers stories. A community-centered game needs a community that has conflicts within it. Before the game starts, those conflicts are in stasis or status quo. As the game commences, a crisis drives the conflict within the community out of equilibrium and into a new phase. The PCs, through their involvement in that crisis, help weigh the balance in the community conflict in favor of one side or the other — they become the catalysts for community change.

The crisis may be the result of abstract forces or external forces. That is the role of such forces within the story, to drive the conflict within the community, which is what interests us. The players themselves might be the source of conflict.

The NPCs within the communities described in Red Cow belong to factions — those factions are in conflict. At the beginning of the game most of those conflicts are at a status quo. The rivals: Kangharl, Farandar, and Borngold vie for Broddi's office, but until the chieftain makes a mistake the clan will not remove him; Gudny and Morganeth want to bring down Ivar, but the knowledge of their betrayal of Arnal prevents them acting, etc.

Every year we identify the key threats to the Red Cow. The threats will create conflict with people outside the clan, but also within the clan, as the different factions struggle for advantage.

Before 1624 the key conflict is that between the Rivals (see page XX), their competing agendas will dominate the different responses to such crises. After 1624, the PCs themselves ought to be amongst the prime movers and shakers responding to these threats.

In those pre-1624 episodes the Rivals will seize upon any threat to the clan as an opportunity to: push their leadership, weaken the Rivals, and destroy their enemies. After a few episodes, the PCs will become familiar with this 'hidden agenda' within the clan and expect it to appear. Adding more NPCs who support each of the Rivals lets you add a little variety, when dealing directly with the Rivals each week becomes stale.

## THE RING

The ring is the heart of the clan and changes here will create threats and opportunities for the players as people rise and fall in influence.

## THE HERO WARS

The entries are presented season-by-season. In addition to the events that form part of the Hero Wars, we also provide information on likely local events. Some of these provide color, but others provide the local reaction to the Hero Wars. We recommend that you mix in both. The grand events of the Hero Wars can seem meaningless without a context in which the PCs care about them.

## RESOURCES, BACKGROUND EVENTS, AND CRISIS TESTS

We suggest you use an interval of a season to track the Red Cow's Resource fluctuation due to Background Events as per *HeroQuest Glorantha*. You may want to tie this test in with the moot, when everyone takes stock of the clan's position.

We recommend having the clan record sheet out on the table during play, and making it clear to the PCs that Resources have fallen and the possible consequences. This may play into attempts to bolster Resources. We provide some suggestions for this below, particularly in the common episodes. Let the PCs debate the clan's course of action in the moot. You should also make it clear that the PCs can borrow the clan's Resources, and encourage them to approach the ring to use them.

If the clan's Resources decline, you should make a Crisis Test for the community. As recommended in *HeroQuest Glorantha*, you may want to skip the crises tests when the PCs have enough to occupy their attention.

Sometimes events of the Hero Wars dictate a Resource fluctuation and Resource Crisis. We indicate that in the text, saving you the need to roll.

## IMPORTANT NPCs

For each year, we list the important NPCs for that year, to help manage the cast list for *The Coming Storm*. Over that period, a number of significant characters will come and go.

Given the number of NPCs in this book, it's helpful to know which ones you need to understand for a given year. This list gives you that information.

Of course, as each year passes, NPCs who do not feature in the next year can always make a comeback in your own episodes,



Armies will clash in the Hero Wars

or added into the ones here, if the PCs have relationships with them, the players like them, or the situation demands. Similarly feel free to bring in NPCs early; this list is just an aid to the minimum you need to know.

## MANAGING NPCs

At first glance, the number of NPCs within *The Coming Storm* may seem intimidating. How do you keep track of large numbers of NPCs within an episode?

A relationship map creates conflicts that drive the story — perhaps more so than the situation at the heart of the episode. One technique is to write the NPCs and PCs out on a sheet of paper, with lines between them showing their connections, as a visual aid to the players in seeing the web of conflict in the episode.

The other warning is not to try to play all of the NPCs in all these communities at once. That would be overwhelming, even for the authors. Think of a genre TV show. We don't meet all the cast at once. Instead from a core of characters, we spread outwards. Pick a manageable number of NPCs to start with, perhaps a dozen. Then introduce new NPCs as old ones grow stale or the PCs actions demand new opponents and rivals.

When the game starts, it may be enough in character generation to tell the players about Broddi Strong-Kin (see page XX) and the Rivals (see page XX) from the Red Cow clan. Then as the PCs tell you whom they want to play, pick out ring members, housecarls, thanes, priests, god-talkers, and bloodline elders who can help them. Be guided by what the PCs want their story to be. At this point you want to limit your palette to a dozen NPCs. You may find it helpful to sketch this dozen on a simple relationship map, and show the PCs their connections with them and each other.

Within each episode we give advice on the additional NPCs you may need to introduce — the cast. For your own episodes we recommend no more than a half-dozen NPCs in the cast. Try to introduce no more than a couple of new NPCs in a given episode, make most of them NPCs you have already added to your map — though episodes taking you outside the clan to a neighbor for the first time might add two or three new NPCs the first time.

When picking NPCs before 1624, focus on the Rivals (see page XX): Borngold, Kangharl, and Farandar and their supporters. The choice between these leaders during the election of a new chieftain should be a key moment, so foreshadow it by having their agendas pushed regularly. Of course, the PCs themselves may stand in the election, but it is even more sweet to overcome rivals whom you have met episode after episode.

After 1624, bring in NPCs who can challenge the PCs' leadership of the Eleven Lights or the Red Cow.

If possible, bring in NPCs that already have links to the PCs. Recurring characters can both bring the PCs into the episode, and have a reason to approach the PCs.

### *Jarstak's Raid*

As an example, the Game Master is running a *Cattle Raid* against the Emerald Sword in 1618 and is choosing NPCs to feature in the scenario.

One of the PCs hates the Dinacoli and has a relationship to Darna Longcoat, so the Game Master decides to bring her in as a potential sponsor of the raid. To show the conflict of the Conquering Storm faction with the Eye of the Hurricane faction, the Game Master remembers that Darna's rival is Broddi Strong-Kin who has to give permission for the raid and deal with the aftermath. She includes him in her relationship map.

The Game Master decides that things will escalate and so includes Kangharl as well.

Upping the tempo now that she has chosen Kangharl, the Game Master decides to bring in Kormhyor the Swift from the Emerald Sword. The Game Master also decides to bring in Jarstak Bristle-Beard — she decides that Kangharl wants to send an old hand in with the PCs, and the Game Master feels sure that controlling Jarstak will prove an issue for PCs who do not want trouble on the raid.

The Game Master sketches out these relationships visually so that the players can reference the key NPCs easily.

### *War Drums*

As another example, the Game Master is running the conflict between the Culbrea and the Cinsina in 1623. Events have escalated; after refusal by the Red Cow and Blueberry to pay tribute to the Culbrea, King Ranulf has unleashed the Two-Pine clan. The Two-Pine has made two abortive attempts to take the Bloody Sword Tribute, but deaths mount on either side. The Cinsina have called a tribal council and are ready to send the Black Arrow.

To begin filling out the relationship map, the Game Master thinks about the key figures involved and starts with four NPCs she sees as being at the corners of the conflict. King Ranulf, proud and independent, determined to reassert the Culbrea; Ivartha the Skinner, grim and battling, determined to keep Cinsina

leadership of the Jonstown Confederation; Jomes Hostralos, struggling without enough resources to hold on to the kingdom, who fuels the conflict to keep the Culbrea busy; Kallyr Starbow who wants to unite the tribes against the Empire, provided they give her their loyalty.

The Game Master imagines this will play out in a number of acts beginning with the Cinsina tribal council.

For the tribal council on Raven's Ait, she decides to play up the conflicts within the tribe. She focuses on building a relationship map for that act. So for now she focuses on the people in the tribe who will play a part in the decision to or not to send the Black Arrow, declaring war on the Culbrea.

From the clans, she brings in Broddi Strong-Kin who Ivartha sees as a weak appeaser, he calls for returning the old clans over paying tribute; Edrath the Wise of the Blueberry, who have no desire to return to the Culbrea and want the Red Cow to honor vows of friendship; and Ivar Quickstep who wants the kingship for himself and would do whatever is expedient to see Ivartha weakened and other clans following him. Other clan chieftains will certainly be there, and the PCs and NPCs might involve them — but she wants to focus on creating scenes with these NPCs.

From the tribe she draws in Verlain Never-Doubt, Broddi's son and a natural ally on the ring, and Kallai Hairy-Breeds who wants the tribe to dominate the Jonstown Confederation and fears the Dinacoli and Culbrea. Other NPCs might be drawn in, but she wants to focus on scenes with these characters.

She also brings in Sureela Far-Traveled, as an agent provocateur for Jomes. She has her disguised as a puppeteer, drawn to the council meeting to ply her trade as an entertainer, and as a recent lover of the queen's housecarl Vastyr Bloody-Shirt.

This is a large cast for an episode with ten NPCs, who all have conflicting goals — but the Game Master and players feel comfortable with many of these NPCs by this point in the campaign. When she sketches out the NPCs, the Game Master is open about Sureela's deceit, allowing the players to play into the story line of a Lunar spy. Some groups have difficulty knowing the hidden identity, in which case the Game Master might just draw up the sketch with Sureela disguised.

She does not create the map for later acts; the outcome of this act will determine what happens next; war or peace weaving. Once she knows how the PCs react she will build a new map at that point.

## YOUR NPCs

It may seem strange, when we have talked about the number of NPCs that you have to manage to talk about introducing your own NPCs — but your campaign will be stronger if you introduce your own recurring NPCs. Some of these will be color, with little impact on the big story-lines, but well known to the players for their quirks. Others may be key obstacles and rivals to the players' own agendas. Some may be characters mentioned only in passing here — ring members of other clans without detailed descriptions. Within the communities covered here, we have only scratched the surface of the number of people, so there is plenty of room for you to expand.

You might also find that some of the keys NPCs here don't suit you or your players. Feel free to change them to your liking. Apart

from Broddi and the Rivals (see page XX), most of the NPCs here can easily be customized for your campaign without issue.

In play-test, one of the authors had a cast list twice the size of the cast list here, when NPCs not in this book are tallied up.

## EPISODES

We also provide suggested episodes for each year. Most episodes can occur in any season and the suggestions here are just that, but a few do not make sense if they are not run in sequence. Interweave your own episodes with these. We cannot know what story-lines your players want to pursue, but you can find that out by looking at the Narrative Hooks they chose for their characters.

Do not feel pressured to run all of these episodes. The breadth here is to give you the widest choice to find something that fits your group, not to suggest that all of this will happen in one year.

More episodes should occur in Sea and Fire Season than any other. This reflects the Orlanthi year. Spring and summer are times to be away from home. Fall is about the harvest and in winter, folk stay home and tell stories.

## SANDBOX VS. STORY

Some groups like Sandbox style games, some prefer stories. We try to support both play styles here.

The conflicts built into the setting make *The Coming Storm* ideal for sandbox play. Simply push your players in the direction of the conflicts here and then let events unfold, as they will. If you intend to use a sandbox style, you might omit many of the episodes here in favor of responding to the players. You will find the Common Activities and the Background Events and Resource Crisis to be helpful in this style of play.

We also provide a story for the clan's struggle to survive the Hero Wars between 1618 and 1625 for those who prefer that style of play.

You can combine both. Even in sandbox play the threats to the clan should not be static, and you can take the seasonal developments for each year as an indication of what will happen, if the PCs don't act to prevent it, or what they will have to deal with. You can also use the story here to drive elements in sandbox play, but take the *Begins With* and be very fluid about what follows and the outcomes. You can also follow the story here, but switch to a more player-directed style in between the great events. That is one of the author's preferred approaches to this material in play-testing.

The goal of this book is to support you, whatever your preferred style, but that of necessity requires you to determine how best to use the material with your group's preferred play style.

## YOUR EPISODES

We don't intend for you just to play the episodes in the timeline here. Many of the episodes are triggered by events outside the clan, and if you only play those adventures, the PCs might feel they are constantly hostages to fortune. Instead, we recommend inserting your own episodes in between. In these episodes focus on advancing the stories of the PCs. Look at the Narrative Hook on the PCs' character sheets and create stories that challenge those goals. Look at the relationships on their character sheets,

and prepare episodes that bring in those characters. Look to the Community Resources, if some of them are declining, ask the PCs what they want to do about that. Sometimes do zero preparation and run a session based on whatever the players want their PCs to do, or if inspiration fails you, start with an encounter from the *Sartar Companion*, and allow the PCs to direct subsequent events.

## COMMON ACTIVITIES

We provide a number of template episodes — Common Activities — for common conflicts an Orlanthi clan encounters. These are intended to help create episodes of your own — as well as being a resource to describe the published episodes here. In play, personalize them for your group by introducing recurring NPCs from your game. Add elements that make sense for your group and their PCs' goals.

You can use these templates for running any clan-based Orlanthi game, not just *The Coming Storm*.

### Common Activities are Seasonal

There is a rhythm to clan life, dictated by the seasons.

A Background Event (see *HeroQuest Glorantha*) should be seasonally appropriate; a Wealth Background Event in Sea Season might be a cattle raid by a neighboring clan, a Background Event in Earth Season might be a poor harvest. A Resource Crisis (see *HeroQuest Glorantha*) should similarly reflect the season, but the PCs should have the chance to confront it. So a Wealth Resource Crisis in Fire Season might have the PCs on a stead as a neighboring clan tries to steal cattle, a War Resource Crisis in Fire Season might have the PCs caught up in a full-scale Raid to burn steads and plunder by a hostile clan.

In Sea Season the farmers are planting, and the roads are often muddy so raiding is rare. However, some cattle raiding occurs amongst neighboring clans. Clans may send emissaries to neighbors as well, to renew friendships or alliances, and clans may trade winter surplus, or simply swap one winter store for another to get some variety. If a clan had a poor harvest, this is the period when starvation bites, so a clan may send emissaries to beg food from the neighbors. Broddi has put aside food in storage pits in Red Cow Fort so hungry neighbors often petition the Red Cow in Sea Season. Broddi is generous, determined to build peace. The thanes begin patrolling the clan land again, looking for trouble after the winter.

In Fire Season the demands of the agricultural cycle are less, and so clans launch cattle raids against their neighbors or raid their enemies for plunder or revenge. The thanes become restless if the clan does not raid its enemies, the farmers become restless if the neighbors raid them too much. Amongst the Red Cow, Darna Longcoat and Kangharl Black-Brow goad the warriors to raid despite Broddi's objections that raiding undermines his attempts to build peace. The Empire moves its troops for military campaigns during Fire Season and rebel activity is at its height, trying to disrupt that. Banditry is also at its worst in Fire Season, especially if a clan does not patrol its borders. Fire Season is also the time to send emissaries and traders to clans further away, or to Jonstown or Boldhome.

In Earth Season, the harvest dominates and all hands are required to reap the crops, make hay, gather firewood and slaughter

## KING OF DRAGON PASS

*The computer game King of Dragon Pass gives an insight into the yearly cycle of life in an Orlanthi clan and the types of activities that occur. It is also a great inspiration for the kind of events that happen when the clan experiences a Resource Crisis. Playing a few turns of King of Dragon Pass will give players and Game Masters new to Glorantha an insight into this cycle.*

the surplus animals. If a clan sends out raiders in Earth Season it risks failing to bring in the harvest. Broddi never consents to this. The tribal moot at the end of Fire Season is positioned to allow clans to stop feuds boiling over into harvest. The harvest is a good time for sending emissaries to other clans, with agricultural surplus as gifts, marriage proposals because the annual slaughter is a popular time for feasts, or, if a clan falls on hard times, requests to neighbors who have had a better harvest. A War Clan, such as the Two-Pine, may send emissaries to demand tribute if they do not have enough wealth from raiding in Fire Season. They have nothing to lose by raiding in Earth Season, so clans usually try to buy them off.

In Dark Season, winter prevents most travel. People stay at home, out of the snow and ice. Crises during this period are weather or Darkness foe related. The Red Cow may suffer from ogres, their Darkness enemy in this season for example.

In Storm Season people focus on religious activities with Orlanth's High Holy Day, and Sacred Time approaching. It is the time to renew vows to the gods, maintain temples and shrines, and heroquest. If the weather is fine clans may go cattle raiding, though it is usually too wet for raiding and war.

In Sacred Time everyone stops what they are doing and takes part in the renewal of the world.

## LET THE DICE FALL

In a chronicle campaign, we cover many years. Over those years, people come and people go. Some people will die, and new leaders join the ring and old leaders leave.



*The dice fall where they will*

We outline a possible set of changes in the campaign outline below.

Do not feel constrained to follow these changes and make them happen.

Instead, go with the flow of your campaign. If Broddi is voted from office in 1620 and one of your PCs becomes chieftain leading the clan through the dangers of the Great Winter, so be it.

Always let the PCs' actions have consequences instead of letting the text constrain you. Let the results of the dice stand and use those results to assess impact.

In play-test, one group responded to the Culbrea threat in 1623 by trying to raise the Cinsina in rebellion. Some preparation and lucky dice rolls gave them a complete victory and the Cinsina rose in rebellion to expel the Lunars from their lands. By the end of that year the Red Cow, Blueberry, and Greenhaft were free, other clans remained under Lunar Occupation, and Willandring the Giant had killed Broddi Strong-Kin having been freed by Ustarna. The setting for the next year was unlike that presented for 1624 here, but rich in conflict. So roll with the dice, let them fall where they may.

The best way to understand the timeline, and episodes given here is to perceive it as a timeline of what will happen if the players do not interfere. It shows the results of the actions of larger forces in the world such as the Lunar Empire and the Rebellion; it shows the actions of NPCs such as the Rivals (see page XX), neighboring clan chieftains or Telmori shaman.

If the players interfere, many of these elements could change. For example in your game the PCs might assassinate Jigar Sog, preventing the war with the Telmori and negotiate peace with Black-Paws Helkos. Don't fight that, if your players are engaging with the setting in that way let them run with it.

This setting is yours now. Let your players tear it up, roll with the new directions they give you. In such moments you will find the true gold of your Coming Storm campaign.

### *What Can't Change*

So what could change if the players' actions break the assumptions here? One answer is nothing, what happens in your game is right: Your Glorantha May Vary.

If you want to ensure that you are following the history of the Hero Wars other Moon Designs supplements will rely on, then it is worth noting that it will be assumed the following events covered in this book happened:

- 1619, The Bat Comes to Sartar
- 1621-1622, Orlanth is Dead

- 1622, The Three New Stars
- 1622-1623, The Rising of the Culbrea
- 1624, The Eleven Lights
- 1625, The Liberation of Jonstown
- 1625, The Battle of Dangerford

In addition, many of the off-stage events in the Hero Wars timeline will have happened. The timeline given in *The Guide to Glorantha* should be your yardstick here.

Note that we cover the option of the *Three New Stars* heroquest failing in this book — which may mean that your game deviates from the outline of history presented in the Guide. Your game however will be rich, as the heroes try to deal with the collapse of their clan in the Great Winter.

## MAKE FAILURE INTERESTING

When using the Pass/Fail cycle in *HeroQuest Glorantha* this ‘only winning is interesting’ can become a problem as the cycle is designed to force reversals on a PC that has had a string of successes.

The trick is to ensure that failure is motivating because it creates additional problems for the PC. These additional problems create more conflict, which is the lifeblood of stories. Don’t block a player with failure; make it more complicated for them to achieve their goal.

The locked door problem is a good example. If adventure lies beyond the door, then the PC’s failure to pick the lock described as “you cannot open the door” will not be interesting. But if the PC meets a guard, whilst trying to open the door on a failure, you have increased the conflict instead.

When naming the prize, try to make the Consequences of Defeat create further complications — it’s not always possible, sometimes defeat is just that, but look at outcomes that increase complexity.

In some cases we use ‘*In Media Res*’ to avoid failure. Where we know that the PCs could not succeed we move the timeline past the obstacle. That allows us to have flashbacks if we want to, highlighting the heroism of the PCs when facing that adversity, without creating a contest we know the PCs cannot win.

## IN MEDIA RES

The Latin ‘*In Media Res*’ means ‘in the middle of things’ and is a narrative technique for opening the telling of a story not from the beginning, establishing situation and character, but from some point in, with dramatic action. Flashbacks or exposition often fill in the earlier parts of the story.

We use this technique in a couple of places. For example the episode, *The Burning of Lhankpentos the Blind* begins with the stead alight, and surrounded by raiders. *Orlanth is Dead* begins with Broddi evacuating the clan to Red Cow Fort when the Great Winter sets in.

The reason for using this technique is to avoid playing out any pre-amble and to dive into the kernel of the story. Flashback scenes can always fill in any needed character actions during those periods where the player wants to establish facts about their character’s actions in the events leading up to the current crisis.

Some players might object to beginning ‘in media res’ stating that they would have set guards, been alert for trouble, prevented

the petitioner from seeing the chieftain, etc., and claim they are being railroaded. Point out that you are not removing their power to make choices, simply framing a scene for them to react to. Once the episode has started they are free to act as they wish.

## EPISODE FORMAT

This episode format is intended to be “just-enough” to run a session. The goal is to provide sufficient info that you are not stuck for “what happens next” during a session, but not so much that it dissuades you from embracing player creativity during a session.

### Begins With

All stories have to start somewhere. The purpose of this section is to draw players into the adventure beginning with what might be a ‘push’ to thrust them into the adventure willing or not, or it might be a ‘pull’ which lures the players into the adventure. Of course, with a ‘pull,’ the PCs might simply ignore the lure. If that happens, do not try to force the players to follow a pull. Decide how events unfold ‘off-camera,’ and present those in turn to the players. Meanwhile look for another episode for tonight’s entertainment. ‘Begins With’ is the teaser trailer that hooks us into the action.

### Cast

A great tool for the Game Master to drive events forward is the cast of NPCs. *The Coming Storm* has a host of NPCs so to help sort through them we provide a suggested cast. Feel free to alter this to substitute NPCs with more relevance to the players.

### Situation

All good stories arise from conflict, so in this section we present the underlying conflict the players must resolve. In some cases the players could be expected to know all this, from simply living in the community, in other cases it represents dark secrets they may uncover.

### Twists

Some fact adding complexity to the situation, often discovered mid-session. A twist may force the PCs to change direction when discovered. In movie-speak, folk often call this a ‘reversal.’

### Connected Episodes

The consequences of one episode may create new ones. We list any other episodes within *The Coming Storm* that help you play out those sequels.

### Acts, Scenes, and Beats

An episode consists of acts, which in turn comprise scenes which are made up of beats.

A beat is a moment of action and reaction; it’s usually a contest where you roll the dice because the outcome is uncertain. If it’s not a contest, then it’s just exposition; avoid too much exposition — show don’t tell. The beat should compel a reaction from the PCs, and tell us something about them. You can find a great discussion of beats by one of the authors of *HeroQuest Glorantha*, Robin Laws, in *Hamlet’s Hit Points*.

## THE PASS/FAIL CYCLE

*One way to use the pass/fail cycle in combination with this kind of play is to let it prompt you as to the type of scene you narrate. If the pass/fail cycle suggests the PCs face a Low resistance, narrate a scene putting the PCs in conflict with a foe they can easily overcome. If the pass/fail cycle suggests that the PCs need to encounter a High resistance, put them in a scene with an NPC who will challenge them. This is a more natural expression of the pass/fail cycle than simply running the next scene regardless and trying to explain away the pass/fail cycle results.*

*Of course, as always, bear in mind that the pass/fail cycle is a tool to use when your inspiration fails you.*

Because they are moments in play when something significant enough happens to result in a contest we often detail examples of what beats may be relevant in a scene. But you should expect to create more, based on your players' actions, and skip some of those we provide as unsuitable. The narrator drives the story by creating beats for the PCs, or managing those they create for themselves.

Most beats do not demand an Extended Contest, only a Simple one.

A scene takes place in a location, it is a mini-story with beginning, middle, and a climax; it has NPCs. It should end in a contest whose result in a definite change to the situation, either in favor of the PCs or against them. A scene comprises a number of beats. If you are using the pass/fail cycle then what you are tracking usually is the scene outcome, the significant moment, and not the little interchanges that build to that.

The final beat of a scene may invite an Extended Contest, though the narrator should be sure that the ebb-and-flow of the contest demands that.

We present scenes for the episodes below. The scenes we present are optional. Once you have presented the hook in 'Begins With' to the players allow them to drive the action. React to their actions with your NPCs, guided by the situation. Don't force these scenes on your players. If they do not occur naturally, leave them out. Providing everyone is having fun there is no need to dip in here.

An act is a series of scenes. An act has a bigger climax; the situation that the PCs find themselves in is transformed.

Again we provide act divisions for the episodes below — unless they are one act episodes.

The final beat of the final scene of an act may well demand an Extended Contest; if the opportunity for an Extended Contest does not emerge, then there may not be enough at stake in the scene.

It is likely that the final act should have an Extended Contest if one has not previously occurred, though it may not be the final scene if there is exposition at the end of the story.

The final scene of the final act should use the climatic resolution table. For an episode to be truly satisfying then a Major or Complete result is necessary, otherwise loose ends may demand another episode to draw the story to a conclusion.

An episode has one or more acts.

To show the difference between these we show them as follows:

### ACT

#### *Scene*

## Play of the Game

We provide some advice on how to use this episode. We also discuss how the episode may play out and tricks and tips to make it work in your game.

## HEROQUEST FORMAT

We use the same format for heroquests seen in earlier publications.

# COMMON ACTIVITIES

Some activities occur from year-to-year and form part of the common events of Orlanthi life. The outline of these activities is the same and so we provide a common episode outline for them. The idea is that you can use these outlines as a framework to run adventures in any year of the campaign. Although you can use these at any time, we offer suggested episodes in some years outlining specific people and places for these activities and their consequences.

These common activities can also be used in other Orlanthi games, such as in a game set amidst the Orlmarth clan of the Colymar.

## TEMPLATE EPISODE LIST

- Cattle Raid
- Emissaries
- Feast
- Feud
- Peace Weaving
- Patrol
- Trade

# CATTLE RAID

## BEGINS WITH

If you want the PCs to join a cattle raid begin with a call to raid, either from an NPC who intends to lead the raid or an elder who goads the young men to prove themselves. You might have the PCs' stead be the victims of a cattle raid by another clan, perhaps roused at night by the hissing of alynxes or the lowing of cattle.

## CAST

Broddi Strong-Kin will tend to be involved, as he will grant permission to raid, or react to the fallout



*Raiding is common, after sowing and before the harvest*

from a raid. A thane like Ortossi, Kernalda, or Jarstak might lead a raid. A leader like Kangharl, Farandar, or Borngold may call on the young men to show their mettle through raiding.

## SITUATION

In late Sea Season and early Fire Season, when the farm work eases off enough to free men up from the land, a clan may raid neighbors to steal their cattle. Going on a cattle raid is one way young men show their mettle, and acquire cows to increase their own herds. For warlike clans, raiding is a way of life, but even peaceful clans will raid their neighbors to steal their cattle. A cattle raid is not about killing, and while fighting can occur, a cattle raid is more about ‘counting coup,’ practicing for real war, and gaining wealth, than confronting your enemies. An experienced raider usually announces the attempt to raid and recruits a small band, for stealth is of the essence, to sneak into the enemy clan lands. A raid leader should gain the permission of the chieftain before heading out, but chieftains who refuse the young men the opportunity will find they go without his permission.

## CONNECTED EPISODES

Feud, Patrol, Peace Weaving

## ACTS, SCENES, AND BEATS

### CATTLE RAID

#### *Gain permission to raid*

Raiding is expected of young men, so it is rare for a chieftain to refuse them the right to raid. This may be an Auto-Success or Arduous Auto-Success, or perhaps an Easy resistance. However,

a chieftain may decline to allow raids against friends, or when a situation with an enemy clan is on the verge of becoming a feud, and the chieftain does not want it to escalate further. Sometimes the chieftain approves of a raid, but cannot be seen to approve it. In this case, he gives the raiders permission to ‘visit your far-off cousin’ or ‘travel to market to buy a new horse.’ Unsanctioned raids will find it harder to attract followers if they choose to continue. They may also find much of the wealth appropriated, which should be gifted to the chieftain to pay wergild for any trouble caused.

#### *Gather Spears*

Raiding bands are small, a dozen men or less, as stealth not might is the best approach to stealing cattle. Still, a player band may not have enough people to conduct a raid and may want to recruit kinsmen to help them.

#### *Sacrifice to the Gods*

Nothing important happens without a sacrifice. Sacrifices are usually to Orlanth for aid on the raid. Significant sacrifices (succeed in a Wealth contest) result in Orlanth’s favor to the raiders and a Benefit of Victory for contests on the raid.

#### *The Raid*

The raiders try to avoid any patrols, herders, or shepherds. Being spotted is likely to result in the guard blowing his horn to alert any nearby village to the presence of strangers on the clan lands. In turn, nearby thanes will rouse their household to begin trawling the clan lands for the intruders, possibly sending word to the chieftain so that the whole clan can be alerted.

Raiders do not only target adjacent clans. The journey may be an important part of the story, but in many cases just use an Arduous Auto-Success or Costly Success (see *HeroQuest Glorantha*).

The goal is to take their cows before nearby villagers can react. Herdsman watching over the cattle and alynxes prove a hazard. The prize animals may be in the homefield — closest to the village — and thus most difficult to steal without being spotted.

If the band cannot sneak the cattle away without being seen, the village will be roused. The raiders may flee at this point; otherwise, they may end up in a fight with the farmers of the stead.

If a fight breaks out, there may well be serious injuries and deaths. That means compensation paid to the clans that suffer a loss, and might lead to a blood feud.

The thanes will blow their horns and summon villagers to the defense of the clan. As they pursue the raiders, they will gather more and more supporters to their side.

The PCs need to drive their cattle back over the border and fast. Failure means that the thanes catch up with the PCs and demand their cows back. Once again, cooler heads need to prevail if this is not to turn into a feud.

The victims of the raid home may not be the only opposition to the journey home. If the raiders have traveled some distance, intervening clans may demand tribute (in stolen cows) for passage. Natural obstacles may make herding the cows home difficult as well.

#### *Divide Up the Spoils*

If the PCs escape with cows then the leader should gift the chieftain with the cows. The chieftain should then reward the raiders in turn, handing the cows back out to the players. If the raiders kill anyone though, the chieftain will keep the cows saying that they will be needed to pay wergild. Anyone participating in an unapproved raid will also find the chieftain may not be generous when it comes to gifting cows.

A successful cattle raid can bolster a community's Wealth. If a community suffers due to a poor year or its enemies, it may raid its enemies to restore its Wealth. A successful cattle raid can also bolster the community's Morale, but only against the clan's enemies.

However, complications reveal the danger of unsuccessful cattle raids. Someone may be killed leading to a feud, or the chieftain may refuse permission to raid to avoid provoking a troubled relationship with another clan. A Resource Crisis to Peace might result from just such a raid.

## PLAY OF THE GAME

A cattle raid is a routine adventure for young Orlanthi. It is a chance to gain wealth, and prove honor and courage.

A cattle raid usually begins with Gain Permission to Raid, and then proceeds to Gather Spears, Sacrifice to the Gods, Travel into the Other Clan's Lands, Steal the Herd, and Flee with Your Prize. With success comes Divide Up the Spoils.

Broddi never gives permission to raid friends. The risk of a raid against the Underwillow, Frithan, or Blueberry clan souring a friendship is too great. Broddi also never gives permission to raid Wulfsland, fearing Jomes' wrath. Broddi dislikes giving permission to raid the clan's enemies, the Dinacoli or Culbrea tribes, because the danger of hot tempers spilling over into killings and blood feud is too great. The desire

to prove themselves against the 'old enemy' means many raid without permission. Common 'acceptable' targets for a raid are the Dolutha, Greenhaft, and Goodhaven clans of the Cinsina, the Torkani clans of Goodfarm Vale — the Godori, Erlending, and Siganti — or Dinacoli clans such as the Emerald Sword, Fox or Rain Blossom.

When the Red Cow raids Dinacoli clans, such as the Emerald Sword, they have to bring the stolen cattle back across the Creek. One option is to swim. Cattle are better swimmers than horses, though they may need switching to enter the cold water, but there is always a risk that some will drown if the river is high or fierce. The cattle may also end up dispersed on the far shore and need rounding up. Getting the raiders across may prove more difficult. Mounted raiders can rely on their horses to swim, and just need to stay horsed. Raiders on foot may be able to hang on to cattle or horses to help swim across. (If the PC has no other Ability, use their *Red Cow Clan* keyword to cross a river). Swimmers are vulnerable to javelins, bows, or slings if pursuit is close. If no one wants to risk swimming across then the cattle need to be driven down to Dangerford to cross there. This has its own dangers because the Red Cow raiders have to travel further in enemy territory, allowing pursuit a chance to catch up. The Dolutha will usually demand a gift, in the form of some of the stolen cattle, to allow passage back to Red Cow lands. Over the years, Red Cow raiders have fought famous duels at Isle Dangerous against Dinacoli pursuers who caught them before they could cross.

Isle Dangerous' reputation for conflict comes not just from the duels there.

## EMISSARIES

### BEGINS WITH

Begin in the chieftain's hall. For routine diplomatic journeys, only Broddi may be there. For important missions of state, the entire ring might be present. Broddi will impress upon the PCs the importance of their role as ambassadors of the clan and how the honor of the Red Cow clan travels with them. If Broddi is dispatching the emissaries as a response to a crisis, he and the ring will stress the importance of the mission and how the hopes and prayers of the clan go with them.

### CAST

Broddi Strong-Kin, Darna Longcoat, Salissa Three-Husbands, Kullina the Fat, Farandar Orendalsson, Ivar Quickstep, Hingot Twice-Outlawed, Fedarkos Many-Breath, Jost Bronze-Side, Edrath the Wise, Parutan Redgold, Kulbrast Offirson, Duruvan the Fat, Jomes Hostralos, Ivartha the Skinner

### SITUATION

Diplomacy between clans occurs through personal contact and requires sending emissaries.

Presenting gifts is an essential part of sending an emissary, and a diplomatic mission arriving without gifts suitable to a chieftain or king insults their host. The gift is payment in advance for the counter-gift of the service you want, now or at some time in the future from the other clan. Suitable gifts might include: a fine bull; a dozen cows; a ram and two dozen ewes; a pair of horses; a sword or helmet; torcs and rings; fine decorated pottery; gold or silver cups and bowls; amphorae of wine or oil; jugs of mead; jars of barley; glassware, broaches, and exotic goods such as spices and silks. Portable goods may be packed onto mules, or in an ox-cart. Because an emissary carries wealth, Broddi will send thanes to guard it from bandits on the road.

The emissaries expect to be shown suitable hospitality. A visit from the neighbors is an important chance to impress, the chieftain and his ring wear their gold and silver, and the thanes burnish their swords and armor. Nothing says, "We are rich and you should respect us!" like a lavish feast, even if you can barely afford it. By contrast, offering poor hospitality insults the emissaries or simply shows your poverty and weakness.

To cement a relationship or agreement, the chieftain will gift the emissaries' clan in return, and the thanes must guard the treasure back to their own lands to present to their chieftain.

There can be a number of motivations behind a diplomatic mission between clans or tribes. Under the *HeroQuest Glorantha* community rules, a diplomatic mission is an ideal way to bolster a community's Resources following a Resource Crisis (see *HeroQuest Glorantha*).

## BOLSTERING FRIENDS

Friendships between clans can fray without regular renewal. Sometimes they need bolstering because of accidents or misunderstandings that threaten them, such as a cattle raid. Sometimes the other clan is in trouble from strangers, Chaos, disease, or foreigners, and needs help. Perhaps they want someone to help raid their enemies, perhaps someone to help defend them against monsters. Sometimes they have something to celebrate such as an important marriage between your two clans and want you along.

## HELP FROM FRIENDS

Friendship extends in both directions. Gifts are still required, but this time the gift is presented in the hope of bringing a greater one in return. Friends rarely turn you down, they would no longer be friends if they did, but the amount of help they send varies according to what they have to lose or gain. Whatever the reason the stakes may be high. Calling in favors from friends too often risks exhausting your friendship, so the ring will only send you if the clan is in trouble.

## HELP FROM ALLIES

You should be able to rely on your allies to help when outside forces threaten mutual interests. Unlike your friends you may have to convince them that such shared interests really are at stake, and that they will benefit from combined effort.

## HONORING CHOSEN LEADERS

Queen Ivartha represents the Cinsina tribe in affairs at Jonstown with the Confederation, or at Boldhome with Prince Temertain.

She may ask the Red Cow to send people or gifts to join on her these missions.

## HONORING THE GODS

The Red Cow may also send emissaries to the most important temples of Sartar. Often this is simply to honor the gods, and ensure their continued favor; perhaps the Red Cow have had good rains, or birthed may calves and seek to thank Orlanth or Ernalda for their good fortune. Ashart Dusk-Eater or Darna Longcoat accompany these embassies and their gifts for the priests and priestesses.

Larnste's Table (page XX), Old Wind (*Sartar Companion* page 74) and Greenstone (*Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* page 114 & 312) are the main destinations for these emissaries, but sometimes the clan sends to the Jonstown Library (*Sartar Companion* page 23) and the House of Peace (*Sartar Companion* page 21) or even further afield to Kero Fin (*Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* page 115).

## MAKING ALLIES

This is often easier than making friends. Emissaries need to find mutual interests and common positions between the Red Cow and the other clan.

## TURNING ALLIES TO FRIENDS

The Red Cow's allies will side with them against a mutual foe. However, friends owe a debt to the Red Cow that must be repaid even if there is little mutual benefit. Because friends are better than allies, Broddi works hard to try to win more friends for the Red Cow. He sends emissaries with gifts to allies hoping to win them with wealth or offers of service. Winning friends is challenging; you must persuade another clan to give you their backing, right or wrong. You must also convince them that you will do the same for them. Personal sacrifice or risk on the part of the emissaries to solve an ally's problems without asking for any reward is a good way to win friends. If Broddi sends emissaries to an ally, it may be that he knows that they are in trouble and asks the PCs to help solve the issue as a sure route to friendship.

## APPEASING ENEMIES

The hardest mission of any emissary is to try to overturn generations of enmity, and broker improved relations with your enemies.

## CONNECTED EPISODES

Feud, Peace Weaving, Trade, War

## ACTS, SCENES, AND BEATS

### ON THE ROAD

#### *Bandits*

Bandits attack the emissaries trying to steal the treasures they carry with them. They attack from ambush, when the emissaries' caravan passes through a wood, crosses a ford, travels down a narrow valley. After a volley of arrows and javelins, the bandits charge from cover.

## MEET THE NEIGHBORS

### Visiting

Look for conflicts between the PCs' personal motivations and the needs of the clan. Can they put aside personal feelings or desires to negotiate on the clan's behalf? Perhaps one of the PCs had an uncle killed by the Goodhaven, but Broddi asks him to pursue an alliance with the Goodhaven on the Red Cow's behalf. Perhaps one of the PCs hates the Empire, but Broddi asks him to seek help from Jomes for the failed harvest.

Some possible complications:

- A faction of the clan dislikes the emissaries' presence. They believe the Red Cow have brought their clan nothing but trouble. "No gifts are worth the pain and suffering you have led our clan into." They speak out against alliance, and publicly doubt the character and achievements of the emissaries.
- At an enemy clan, or any other clan the Red Cow has feuded with, these folks may bear a grudge based on old killings. "How can you negotiate with the clan of my father's killers?" Women marry across clans so it is possible that even in an allied or friendly clan, someone had a blood relation killed in a feud with the Red Cow. Perhaps one of the emissaries is the killer and the dissenter's rage is directed straight at them.
- The emissaries arrive to find that their enemies are there as well, and seeking help against the Red Cow! This is likely to be the Emerald Sword clan or the Two-Pine. It might even be that Broddi has sent his emissaries to undermine Two-Pine or Emerald Sword clan attempts to seek alliances or friends. The presence of Telmori emissaries would be a huge shock and send ripples throughout the Jonstown Confederation. Who would dare make friends with the wolfmen? Emissaries from foul King Brangbane are only likely in secret and suggests something is terribly wrong. Will the Red Cow emissaries discover and expose such an evil alliance?
- The Lunar Empire has arrived at the same time as the PCs. It might be Lunar missionaries looking to spread the word or the army, foraging for supplies, or searching for rebels. It might be Lunar tax collectors, come to bleed the clan dry. The Empire's demands might be so great that they quash any chance of the emissaries negotiating help for their clan.

## PLAY OF THE GAME

A common reason to run an emissaries episode is to bolster the clan's Resources following the PCs actions or a Background Event (*HeroQuest Glorantha*). Sending emissaries to neighboring clans is especially appropriate if a Resource Crisis develops from the change in Resources.

### BLUEBERRY

If you want help for a feud with the Two-Pine then the Blueberry may be cautious, fearing being drawn into a fight with their neighbors too.

### DOLUTHA

Ivar Quickstep has ambitions for the kingship and will only help the Red Cow in return for their support in ousting Queen Ivartha and placing him on the throne instead. If he thinks the Red Cow is desperate, he might press them to force their friends, the Blueberry, Frithan, and Underwillow, to support him too. It's unlikely that Broddi could or would agree, but if the clan's survival hinged on Dolutha support, he might have to try.

### EMERALD SWORD

Duruvan the Fat and Broddi Strong-Kin have kept the peace between their two clans, and Broddi regularly sends emissaries to prevent a return to former hostilities. The two clans still have a history of generations of sleights both real and imagined. Rostakus Twice-Outlawed seeks to oppose any peace, and tries to rile all the Red Cow emissaries. However, a concerted effort could defuse tension and move the normal relation from hostility and suspicion to tolerance. With time, acceptance might even be possible, though the Hero Wars might mean no one has time.

### ERLENDING

Good Rain Hill lies in the clan's territory and the Red Cow works with them to keep it open for clandestine worship. Ashart Dusk-Eater is often in Erlending lands. The two clans engage in shared Orlanth worship, which makes their ceremonies more effective. This can bolster the Red Cow's community Magic Resource rating. Like all Torkani clans the Erlendings suffer from being neighbors of the Telmori, and they would provide aid to the Red Cow against the Telmori. Turning the Erlending into friends would require the Red Cow to become involved with the Erlending's continued conflict with their northern neighbors the Bachad tribe. The Bachad are the losers in a conflict with Harvar Ironfist and now pressing on their southern neighbors. The Erlending have suffered most from continued raids from Bachad clans trying to restore their fortunes. The Red Cow could simply send thanes to help in the fight, or they might be able to buy off the Bachad with tribute, giving the Erlending breathing room.

### FRITHAN

Hingot Twice-Outlawed is happy to send Frithan warriors to help the Red Cow in times of conflict, especially if they are fighting Telmori, Dinacoli or Culbrea. His clan needs food to survive each winter and he will want to exact a heavy price in cattle and barley for his aid. He will be insulted if the Red Cow try to lower the price too much.

### GREENHAFT

The Greenhaft have grown wealthy on trade. If the Red Cow suffers a Wealth Resource Crisis, Broddi might seek a loan from them to bolster the community's Wealth Resource. A resurgent Two-Pine demanding the Fired Thatch Tribute could lead to the Greenhaft seeking alliance. Anxious not to pay the Two-Pine, Jost might see value in joining with the other 'victims': Blueberry, Goodhaven, and Red Cow in a pact of mutual defense.

### TOENA

The clan shares an enmity with the Red Cow for the Telmori and the two often ally against the wolfmen. The Cinsina and

the Aranwyth both have a traditional enmity with the Culbrea, and their mutual interest extends to feuds and raids against the men of Lorthing Vale. The Red Cow also trade with the Toena for horses as the Elmal worshippers there breed some of the finest in Dragon Pass outside Runegate. The Red Cow tend to have better relations with the horse breeders there than in the Dolutha clan. Trouble sometimes flares between Dolutha and Red Cow buyers at the Toena Fort horse markets.

The Toena suffer from the Animal Nomads of Prax. The nomad raiders gather at Jaldon's Rest from time to time, seeking slaves, metal, and to fulfill the sacred duty of killing horses. If the Culbrea grew dominant again, it might be possible to create a friendship with the Toena by helping defend them against newly aggressive Culbrea clans after the Culbrea resurgence in 1622.

## TWO-PINE

The clan has ritual reasons for conflict with the Red Cow. The Two-Pine's magic depends on their collecting tributes — amongst them the Red Cow Tribute. The surest way to improve relations with the Two-Pine would be for the Red Cow to pay the tribute. Broddi might try to pay tribute to the Two-Pine but only if the clan risked losing more from conflict with them than he would paying. Despite this, Isbarnessa Boarscar wants peace and would welcome the emissaries of the Red Cow, believing that dialog can prevent further feuds.

## UNDERWILLOW

Fedarkos Many-Breath has plenty of reasons to welcome the Red Cow. His clan is poor and always in need of a handout from their richer friends. When they do acquire anything the Malani are inclined to raid and take it, so the Underwillow always need thanes to help fight off their Malani neighbors, or simply get their belongings back. The Underwillow clan controls access to Larnste's Table and the Orlanth temple there. The Red Cow can bolster their Magic Resource rating by sacrificing to Orlanth at the Table. Of course, such an act is illegal in occupied Sartar.

## WULFSLAND

As well as being a Field Commander, Jomes is the Red Cow's neighbor and it is important to Broddi that they get on. The shared hatred of the Telmori gives an obvious reason for alliance, but cattle raids can cause trouble with the authorities, as can disputes over fishing rights along the Heort Creek. Jomes is aware of the need to win 'hearts and minds', but takes an attitude of 'speak softly but carry a big stick.'

Give the PCs access to clan Resources when they act as emissaries, without requiring a roll. The exact

Resource might vary. Wealth is a good catchall as the emissaries will undoubtedly take gifts with them, but Peace may be more appropriate if the emissaries are trying to appease angry neighbors, or beg for help with Wealth from friends. War might also be appropriate if they are demanding tribute to bolster Wealth by intimidating others.

Throw in complications in the form of trouble for the clan the PCs are visiting. Tailor the threat to the PCs' skills. If bold warriors dominate the PCs perhaps the neighbors, or someone more exotic like trolls, dinosaurs, or dragonewts, are raiding the other clan. Can the PCs help to defeat them? If the healers dominate the PCs, perhaps the other clan is suffering from a plague. Whatever the option, create the possibility that the PCs have some way to influence the other clan through their strengths. The best options involve choices. If the Red Cow chooses to help the clan against their dragonewt enemies, the Red Cow acquires the alliance of the clan at the expense of enmity with dragonewts.

You don't always need to think of external problems. No clan is truly unified and the PCs may find they have supporters and enemies in any clan they negotiate with. Play up these differences as the PCs make choices and give them friends and enemies. Next time the PCs come, they may regret taking sides the last time if their old allies do not support their new request.

## TRAVELING IN SARTAR

*In many games, the PCs will want to travel out of the Red Cow clan lands, perhaps as emissaries to another clan, perhaps to visit Jonstown or Boldhome. We do not cover road encounters here, however the Sartar Companion has an extensive Encounters section, which Game Masters can use to create suitable encounters on long journeys.*

# FEAST

## BEGINS WITH

You are not sure whether it was the bowls of wine, or the cups of cider or mead that made you dizzy, but you have to accept that you are feeling slightly drunk. You are not even sure you like puppeteers — you usually argue the merits of the skalds — but you found yourself laughing along as you savored the last morsels of your honey cake. And now you even find yourself thumping your fist on the table in approval of the fire-swallowing.

## CAST

Broddi Strong-Kin, Kangharl Black-Brow

## SITUATION

The Orlanthi feast for many reasons: as a display of wealth and power — only the rich have surplus food and drink — to show hospitality to guests and welcome them into the home, to cement friendships and alliances, to seal trade deals, to celebrate a

marriage or victory in battle, to mourn defeat or the dead. The end of Earth Season and the beginning of Storm Season are the most common times for feasting — the harvest and slaughter of those animals that cannot be kept through the winter means there is excess food available. Many Orlanthi marry at this time for that reason. Most Holy Days are often feast days — the gods only demand the portion of the sacrifice people cannot eat is burnt on their altars, so the remainder goes to their worshippers.

A feast is a time to indulge in fine food and drink. Few people eat beef, venison, wild boar, or horse meat outside of Holy Days or feasts, eating pork, fish, or lamb for the remainder of the year. Most drink ale or buttermilk during the year, brewed at home, but at a feast there may be wine, cider, or mead as well. There may be delicacies too, such as honey-soaked pastries, pear or apple crumble, small birds, sweet oatcakes, pancakes with honey, cream and fruit, mature cheeses, and shortbread.

A feast tends to last 'all day' and some are longer. People go to enjoy themselves and, in addition to food and drink, expect entertainment. The chieftain and the thanes may have the clan's skald attend, but carls often just have the more humble entertainment — a puppeteer or juggler, a dancer, storyteller, acrobat, or singer.

Etiquette is important, from who sits on the high table with the host to who sits closest to the door, who gets the prime cuts of meat and who takes the burnt edges, who washes first in the bowl provided, and who has the bowl after everyone else has performed their ablutions. Status is carefully monitored and 'getting it wrong' can give offense. Guests are expected to remain at table until all the food is eaten, and to refuse the host's food is an insult.

A Feast can be used to restore the Morale Resource when it has fallen. If one part of the clan is the source of discontent — the farmers feeling the pressure of conflict, the housecarls feeling neglected — a feast for that group can help the ring make them feel valued again. Of course, unless an individual steps forward, the clan is often using its Wealth Resource to furnish the feast, with the risk that Resource itself becomes depleted.

## CONNECTED EPISODES

Emissaries, Trade, Peace Weaving

## ACTS, SCENES, AND BEATS

### THE FEAST

#### *Marriage*

A marriage is a common reason for a feast, and many marriages take place in the autumn months when there is surplus food for feasting. The PCs might have been involved in *Emissaries* episodes, to make the match in the first place, or negotiate the bride price and dowry. If so, they will be honored guests. Otherwise, they might well be close family, or someone the host simply wants to impress with his wealth.

The bride's family will also be in attendance. If the bride's clan is friendly to the Red Cow then it will be difficult to cause real offense, but if a fist-fight breaks out the matter may have to be settled in the courts — with compensation awarded — to ensure the clans preserve their friendship. If the bride's clan comes from



*Religious festivals are the major feast days in the Orlanthi calendar, for the gods leave the food from the sacrifices to the worshippers*

a clan that the Red Cow is neutral to, then the dangers of a misunderstanding are increased, and the consequences could be worse, with *Emissaries* dispatched to prevent any feud and possible court cases. If the marriage is to a hostile clan, perhaps to cement a peace treaty to end a feud, the entire evening will be fraught — the host might even try to limit the alcohol flowing — as each side glares over its food at the other, and the wrong choice of tale by the skald or puppeteer could spark conflict.

### **Funeral**

When a person dies, their corpse is laid in state in his or her home. The hearth fire is extinguished, and for a week anyone can view them to pay their last respects. The person's soul takes a week to reach the Court of Silence. On the eighth day, the family burns a man's body on a pyre or a woman's body in a funeral oven. After a man's ashes blow away on the winds, the relatives place the bones and other remains inside an urn. All of a woman's remains go into an urn. The funeral urns are buried in the urnfield. The family always includes grave goods in the rites.

Once a person has joined the ancestors, their kin hold a feast to celebrate their life. If they were important the clan's leaders may come, perhaps even the tribal queen herself. People praise the dead person's life, telling tales of their deeds great or small. It is wrong to speak badly of the dead at a funeral.

### **Great Men or Women**

Great men or women are generous gift-givers, and one gift is a feast. To ensure continued support from their 'sworn men' leaders will often invite them to a feast, to fill their bellies with beef and wine and remind them of the Orlanthi obligation to 'obey chosen leaders.'

Of course, sometimes such a feast is a sign that the leader is about to make a political play for office, or defy the chieftain or inner ring, and wants to know that he or she has support to do so. Other times the chieftain or the ring feels that their support is ebbing and they feast their supporters to ensure their continued loyalty.

If a leader's authority is diminishing there might be an outburst at the feast, as too much drink encourages someone to tell the leader exactly what they, or the clan, think of them.

## **PLAY OF THE GAME**

More than anything a feast is a role-playing opportunity. Early on it might be the chance for the PCs to meet the chieftain or the Rivals and negotiate for their support. Later on it might be the chance for the PCs to determine their support. If the PCs are carousing with people from outside the clan, it may be a minefield of social niceties to endure, without causing offense.

A feast may be used to lessen a Resource Crisis in Morale or Peace. In the former case, leaders feast the troubled members of the clan, to win them back on side. In the latter case, the clan entertains its rivals or enemies, in order to bring peace.

Of course it is always possible the PCs are guests of another clan for a feast — perhaps a Red Cow daughter is being married off, or perhaps another clan seeks to improve its relationship with the Red Cow.

## **FEUD**

### **BEGINS WITH**

When people seek a feud against another clan, they first take their complaints to Broddi Strong-Kin, who decides if it warrants clan consideration. If so, he sets a date for the clan ring and bloodline elders to meet, typically the next clan Holy Day. The clan leaders make sacrifices to seek ancestral approval and divine outlooks. Plaintiffs state their case before the chieftain and ring. Discussions are held, and Broddi decides.

If a feud is declared, Broddi Strong-Kin performs a short ritual called "Passing the Red Collar." The elders, warriors, and other interested parties wear the collar to make their vows. The chief priest sacrifices immature cocks to alert the *wyter*, Orlanth, and Ernalda. The clan then sends a messenger to tell the tribal king(s), another to Issaries (whose herald bears word to the enemy), and others to warn all clan members.

## **CAST**

Broddi Strong-Kin, Darna Longcoat, Salissa Three-Husbands, Kullina the Fat, Farandar Orendalsson, Borngold Many-Brothers, Frekor Deep-Woods, Jaranil the Thunder, Ortossi Ketilsson, Jarstak Bristle-Beard, Lhankpentos the Blind, Jarkorl Snow-Whiskers, Enerin Bristle-Beard, Tarkalus Bigger-Boat, Gringle Harvest-King, Kangharl Black-Brow, Branduan Unmatched

## **SITUATION**

The Orlanthi legal system specifies amounts, *wergild*, that can be paid to compensate for injury or death. No one is required to follow those rules, however, for 'Violence is always an option.' Sometimes compensation cannot placate angry victims and their kin, and there is a call for blood vengeance.

A blood feud is an act of justice upheld by the laws and actions of Orlanth. If one clan hurts another, they must exact the same price to maintain cosmic order and balance. Regrettably, the opponents usually differ on the value of their dead kinsmen. As they become more enraged by the deaths of their friends and relatives, violence becomes ever greater and harder to escape.

Reasons for starting a formal feud depend upon each clan's concept of honor. Some are touchy, and anything that offends them offends their honor. Other clans care only about a few important issues, things that wound their Orlanthi virtues. However, a crime that goes unpunished by the perpetrator's clan is always grounds for a blood feud, especially when it is serious.

## **CONNECTED EPISODES**

*Emissaries*, *Peace Weaving*, *War*



*Sometimes, wergild is not enough and only blood vengeance will appease the dead*

## ACTS, SCENES, AND BEATS

Feuds are killing and counter-killing, so these scenes are not placed in any given act and are just examples of the kind of thing that happens in a feud.

### THE FEUD

#### Ambush

A thane recruits the PCs to ambush members of the enemy clan. He picks an ambush site where he and the PCs can wait in concealment and spring the trap, such as woods, a ford or river ferry, or a narrow valley. Sometimes the ambush is not even in the enemy clan's lands but on their route to and from market, or visiting allies.

Alternatively, raiders from the feuding clan might ambush one or two of the PCs.

#### Burners

The feuding clan leads a raid on a Red Cow village off-stage, perhaps one to which the PCs have a connection. The raiders pen everyone inside the village's main hall, and then burn it, killing everyone inside, including women and children. Everyone calls for revenge against the burners and there is

pressure to organize a party to hunt them down one-by-one. If Broddi fails to react, then a thane is likely to organize a raid without permission. The burning may mean he draws on raiders from the Blueberry, Frithan, or Underwillow clans as well, outraged by the loss of their kin.

#### Dawn Raid

Just before dawn, the village where the PCs are staying comes under attack. The headman is first to wake, alerted by the village's alynxes. As he steps past hissing alynxes and out of the hall door to investigate, arrows strike him. Raising his horn to his lips, he is able to sound the alarm before slumping to the ground. Warriors from the feuding clan push past him and into the doorway to fall upon their unprepared foes.

#### Duel

Challenging a killer to a duel is one way to try to gain blood vengeance. Refusing a duel leads to the accusation of cowardice, a terrible stain on any Orlanthi's honor (*Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* page 216). A PC might be asked by another member of the clan to fight in his or her stead. The duel need not be between individuals, two groups can agree to meet, but the numbers should be even. Isle Dangerous is a traditional dueling ground in the area and a PC might issue or receive a summons to meet at Isle Dangerous on a given date.

#### Forbidden Love

Two young people fall in love, but they are on either side of the feud. This scene works best if a PC has a relationship to one of the two lovers. Of course, their families, bloodlines, and leaders object; this relationship is impossible while there is a feud. There may be pressure on one of the lovers to join a raiding party against the enemy clan; the end of a feud is often sealed with a marriage, but even this might be complicated if the boy has been involved in the killing.

#### Goading

A Morale Resource Crisis during a feud (*HeroQuest Glorantha*) may well result in the clan's women goading the men to act against the clan's enemies. Widows tear out their hair and rend their flesh, old men sulk by the fire and refuse to eat. They question the honor and courage of the PCs because they do not act to 'do what is right' and avenge their kinsmen.

#### Traveling

Anyone traveling outside the clan lands during a feud is at risk, especially if plundering a trade caravan disrupts the other clan's economy.

#### Raid

A Red Cow thane is gathering men to raid the enemy clan. He seeks to exact blood vengeance for the death of close kin, goaded by the victim's grieving relatives for his inaction. He approaches the PCs to join him. After sacrificing to Orlanth or Humakt, the raiding band sets out at night to arrive at an enemy clan's stead at dawn. Small bands of raiders prefer isolated steeds because there are fewer people to overcome, but

larger bands may attack villages. At first light, they descend on the settlement, kicking down doors to kill until the blood price is paid. This is not war but killing. If the raiders are lucky, the surprised villagers have little ability to put up resistance and they can complete their grisly task and flee back to their own lands, to swear to the killings in front of a juror, lest they be accused of secret murder.

Raiders avoid targeting women, because their birth clans may be drawn into the feud or children, who are innocent of the feud. Rage can overcome moral sense and sometimes anyone is potentially a victim. Burning a longhouse, by firing its thatch, makes killing those inside easy as they boil out of the door coughing with smoke. However, it is indiscriminate and widens the feud.

Carrying off plunder is another way to “redress the balance” and looting is common on raids. The raiders pay the booty to their chieftain who takes some to recompense the clan for its losses in the feud and divides the remainder up amongst the raiders.

## PLAY OF THE GAME

The most likely clans for a feud are the Red Cow’s enemies, the Two-Pine clan of the Culbrean tribe and the Emerald Sword clan of the Dinacoli. There is already a history of blood between these two clans, old slights that wergild has never settled. New blood spilled or insults are unlikely to be defrayed with peacemaking efforts and turns more quickly to war.

When playing out an Orlanthi blood feud, take inspiration from the Icelandic sagas, particularly *Njal's Saga*. The feuds of the saga are both heroic and tragic. Tragic, because the spiral of violence worsens with each new killing, heroic because of the actions by characters to avenge the death of loved ones, often against overwhelming odds.

Keep a running total of the wergild for killings and injuries for each side. You can figure injuries at about a tenth of wergild for hurt, and half of wergild for injured. Participants from both sides swear as to their recollection of those injuries to a local juror as soon as possible following the event. Of course, people tend to remember the injuries they suffered but forget those that they inflicted, so both sides rarely agree. Now, the side owed the most compensation needs to reclaim that in blood debt. The ancestors, honor, and widows and orphans call for raids to redress the balance. Of course, it is hard to be exact when killing and counter-violence usually end up with the other side in blood debt to the raiders. This is the violent spiral of a feud.

When clans begin to raid each other, they threaten the stability of the region. A chieftain may dispatch emissaries to call in help from friends. They promise plunder from the enemy clan’s villages as a reward. A hard-pressed clan may hire its friends to bolster the defense of its clan lands. Because the involvement of these mercenaries risks drawing their clans into a blood feud, tribes can find themselves drawn into a conflict. At this point the tribal kings become involved, and the Empire begins to take notice.

Despite the tragic nature of the feud, there are opportunities for the PCs to be heroes. Heroism comes from facing overwhelming odds to obtain justice. This is especially true when the PCs opponents are powerful or well protected.

# WAR

## BEGINS WITH

A rider approaches the PCs from Red Cow Fort. The rider carries a black fletched arrow in his hand. He dismounts quickly and proceeds to gather the thanes. The meaning of the “Black Arrow” is clear — the Red Cow is marching to war.

## CAST

Broddi Strong-Kin, Jaranil the Thunder, Kernalda Other-Ways, Ortossi Ketilsson, Aethelric the Girl, Orkarl Iron-Beard, Kanghar Black-Brow

## SITUATION

If the chieftain intends to send the thanes to war, he summons them by sending out the Black Arrow. This tells the gods, the *wyter*, and the ancestors of the clan’s intent, and so offers magical benefit for the participants. The chieftain may lead the assembled warband, but usually he delegates it to the most experienced of his housecarls, and remains behind to defend the clan whilst its warriors are away.

If the clan ring decides that the threat is universal then the ring can elect to summon the whole clan to war using *Vingkot's Muster*. The ring sends out the Four Torches that burn Blue, Yellow, Black, and Red — for the four enemy elements. This is the summons for the clan’s militia — the *fjrd* — to muster at a well-known meeting point. It is enough for the riders to pass a village for men to *feel* the summons. It is possible to refuse — ‘no one can make you do anything’ — but failing to fulfill obligations to the clan could result in fines or outlawry.

Orlanthi men perform war dances before and after raiding. They dance to the sound of flutes and pipes, leaping into the air and clashing swords, or spears and shields as though striking each other, dancing naked save from woad, armbands, torcs, and sacred masks. The masks depict the Thunder Brothers, the thanes of Orlanthi’s household. The wearing of masks denotes the fighters intend to step outside the limits of normal society in which killing is wrong. For this they assume the personas of the Thunder Brothers. When men return from war they perform dances again, this time to unmask themselves and symbolically return to society.

Humakti do not don masks, for they are outside society anyway and killing is normal for them. They do not choose to hide behind masks when doing “god’s work.”

The Orlanthi have different rules of war for different opponents. There is no war amongst kin and so people often say that conflict is settled by **Barntar's Rules** — a fistfight. Death is not expected, knock is expected for knock, and the victor should gift the loser ale and a handshake. When clans fight other clans, they do so by **Orlanthi's Rules**. These allow killing, but a man must announce whom he has killed so that the kinfolk of the deceased can seek compensation — to do otherwise is secret murder. Similarly, a man does not commit rape, spread disease,

consort with Chaos, desecrate Orlanthi holy places, or kill a king. Orlanth's Rules do not exempt a man from the normal rules of society. Against foreigners, Orlanthi make war with **Humakt's Rules**. The Orlanthi recognize that foreigners are outside the law and take a 'do it to them before they do it to us' attitude toward such conflicts. Against such opponents, there are no rules, and any actions are acceptable.

War occurs during Fire Season, because farms require less hands and the roads are fit for travel. War needs to end by Earth Season if the harvest is to be brought in; otherwise, a clan may not survive winter.

As always, no important activity begins without sacrifice to the gods. The chieftain sacrifices a bull, ram, or stallion for aid in war. A sacrifice made to Orlanth aids in outmaneuvering the enemy, ambushing the enemy, or fighting on advantageous ground; a sacrifice made to Humakt aids in killing the enemy. Sacrifices to Orlanth allow use of the community's War Resource rating in leading the warband; sacrifices to Humakt allow use of the community's War Resource rating to kill their enemies.

## CONNECTED EPISODES

Peace Weaving

## ACTS, SCENES, AND BEATS

### THE FACE OF BATTLE

When poets sing of the conflicts between clans, they sing of noble duels between champions, heroic warriors trying to break the enemy line, and the slaughter and confusion of battle once the enemy breaks. The harsh reality of war is often unlike this — it's mud, fear, piss, blood, shit, and a spear in the back when you are issuing a bloody challenge to someone else.

The Orlanthi are experts in unconventional warfare and maneuver: the ambush, the raid, and the hit-and-run attack. These are messy inelegant affairs where everyone has but one simple thought — to survive to fight another day, and only the foolish dream of glory.

All the same, when two clans' warbands meet in the field, there can be a rhythm to the proceedings.

When both sides are drawn up, the brave or foolish from each side may have the courage to step from the lines and boast of their prowess and the men they have bested in single combat crying out: 'Who will fight me?' It may be the chieftain, his housecarl, or just a thane or carl seeking to prove himself. The opposing sides clash spear and shield to cheer their champions on.

Sometimes the battle is decided there and then, because the opposing sides discover that they do not have the stomach to take it further when they see their champion lose.

If the champion is a PC then the Consequences of Defeat or Benefit of Victory become a morale bonus to his side in the battle too. On a Complete Victory or Defeat, the losing side loses heart and quits the battle.

If everyone is still ready to fight the better fighters on each side, such as thanes and housecarls, may try to break the enemy line. Behind them, the militia stands in a shield wall, each man overlapping his shield to cover the man to his left.

## THE THUNDER SHOUT

The Orlanthi often perform the Thunder Shout before charging. The shout begins as a low rumble, as of distant thunder, growing louder to end with the clap of the Lightning Strike. Often the fighters make this noise against the back of their shields so that it reverberates. The goal is both to summon men's courage for battle and to frighten your opponent. If your Thunder Shout is louder, then the thunder is strong in your souls and you will win the day.

These fighters skirmish forward, sometimes mounted, using movement magic, or taking to the air, to throw javelins into the enemy militia in the hope of disrupting the enemy line. Other fighters may advance to meet these skirmishers, resulting in a series of running battles. Once one side has the advantage in these battles, they can assault the opposing line with javelins, slings, and thrown axes, unhindered — hoping to disrupt or break the enemy's line. The Red Cow often uses mounted thanes, paired with a foot soldier, in this stage of the conflict because they can move quickly across the battlefield.

Finally, once the line is broken, the victorious side charges forward to press their advantage.

Of course, sometimes a canny warband leader decides to skip the preliminaries and just charge the opposing line from the start, hoping to catch his enemy off-guard. Often the leader relies on Movement magic to help his men close the distance quickly.

The battle then turns into a grind, of pushing, shoving, stabbing, and killing. Shields splinter, spear shafts snap, helmets and armor fail and swords bend, swords and spears stab and axes hack, men slip and slide, and those who fall are trampled into the mud. The press of bodies may last some time; men may step out of the first rank to take a skin of wine, allowing others to take their place. Eventually one side or the other falters and breaks. This is when most casualties happen, as one side turns to run from the battle. If the other side pursues it is to kill, or take hostages to ransom back later. If they do not pursue it is often to loot a nearby village or the corpses of the fallen.

War between tribes or nations is altogether different. Most of it is boredom, hunger and cold, marching between one place and another. Some of it is maneuver to horns on a battlefield, packed in with your kinfolk. The rest is terror as you charge or are charged by some stranger or a foreigner with weird magic, armor and weapons. At that point it's the messy press of bodies again, and the prayers to Orlanth for survival or Humakt for killing.

## PLAY OF THE GAME

A clan fallen on hard times might seek to plunder their enemies, carrying off livestock, grain, and beer to see them through difficult times. A clan that seeks over-lordship of its enemies might want to defeat the enemy thanes in battle, capture hostages, and then demand tribute from the conquered clan to return their loved ones and leave them in peace. A clan that



*Sacrifices to Orlanth before battle bring success in manoeuvres*

has been fighting a bitter feud may be intent on killing their enemies, driving them from their homes, and burning their halls to the ground.

There are two main variables in running a battle: what is the outcome, and what happens to the PCs.

If a player is in charge of the battle, then winning is a contest. Commonly this is a Simple Contest using an appropriate Ability from the commander. The results of this battle become a situational bonus to the PCs in the upcoming battle.

If no player is in command of the battle, do not bother rolling — decide the outcome creating the most drama and provide the PCs with a matching situational bonus instead.

In both cases, you should weave a narrative of the ebb-and-flow of the battle from this contest. If it warrants it you may want to run a PC's command as an Extended Contest and note the back and forth of battle from the rounds of that contest.

Next, you need to decide the fate of the PCs in the battle. This can be a Simple or an Extended Contest. We would suggest using an Extended Contest when you have a feel for the ebb and flow of the battle and feel happy narrating the outcome of each round. Each round should represent a new development in the phase of the battle instead of focusing on a blow within an exchange. Outside a massed melee you probably narrate a round as an attack by one-side or another, but in battle each round summarizes a new phase of the engagement.

Gamers use the term 'railroading' to describe the Game Master making PC choices meaningless, because they don't affect the story. There is a danger here that the PCs, told they cannot affect the outcome of the battle, just role-play their part in it, feel that they have been made 'passengers' on a story that they had no influence over — why ask the players to take part if they cannot decide the outcome. Our counterpoint is that we perceive the battle as a backdrop, against which interesting stories can be told, not the

story itself. The practical reality is that running a skirmish is outside the scope of a *HeroQuest Glorantha* game.

## PEACE WEAVING

### BEGINS WITH

Broddi calls the PCs into the chieftain's hall. Members of the ring may also be present, if the crisis threatens the whole clan, seated on benches either side of the chieftain's high seat. Broddi explains that the conflict threatens the Red Cow and needs to be stopped. He asks the PCs to be his representatives in bringing peace.

### CAST

Broddi Strong-Kin, Darna Longcoat, Salissa Three-Husbands, Kullina the Fat, Farandar Orendalsson, Borngold Many-Brothers, Frekor Deep-Woods, Kernalda Other-Ways

### SITUATION

Umath taught men that, 'Violence is always an option' and since then there has been feuding and war. Eernalda taught the women the proverb that, 'There is always another way' and since then there has always been a path to peace too. When a clan feuds with another, or finds itself in all-out war with its neighbors, society has several ways to give peace a chance.

The Orlanthi legal system focuses on compensation. Every man has his wergild, his price, according to his station, and a clan wanting to avoid a feud pays blood money to the victim's clan. There is no question of proving guilt, clans admit to killings because failure to do so is 'secret murder' a crime denying the chance of compensation. Such crimes are taboo and punishable by outlawry and death. It is possible to negotiate the amount of compensation from the circumstances though, and compensation may be applied to both sides in a fight on a knock-for-knock basis.

- **Law Courts:** If the feuding clans can find a moot they both attend, then there is a chance to bring a resolution through the courts (see *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*, page 216). The lead juror, when two clans are feuding, will likely be the lawspeaker of each clan, and the ring will be the plaintiff who brings the case before the court. The other two jurors are most likely local to families who have suffered injury or deaths in the feud. However, everyone gains from noted jurors speaking on behalf of the clan, so

attempts may be made to persuade renowned jurors, even from friendly clans, to attend the court.

If other clan is part of the Cinsina, then the clans go to the tribal moot. If not, but the other clan is part of the Jonstown Confederation, such as Two-Pine, they can go to the Jonstown court. Otherwise, they must go to the Prince of Sartar.

Under Prince Temertain, the Lunar governor steers the judgments made by this court, and tends to favor Lunar friends over enemies. After Temertain dies, the governor presides over the court directly and is even more prejudiced.

- **Making Peace:** If Orlanth's Justice cannot provide fair dealing, another option is to 'take it to the women.' Eralda's way of making peace is Orventili's Peace Rug. Peace Weaving involves the Eraldan priestesses of the feuding clans — the Peacekeepers.

The priestesses work together to weave a peace rug. The rug includes Orventili's face where the basket goes, spaces for the two peacekeepers to sit and marked spaces for the two plaintiffs to sit with their four supporters. The rug is woven in the loom houses of each clan in turn, and the Women's Circle gathers to talk through the challenges to peace within each clan. The weaving process pours the clan's energies for peace into the rug. It also allows the priestesses to talk through 'another way' to violence for the two clans. The women then whisper hints of the solution to their husbands, so that by the time everyone sits together a solution acceptable to all is already in motion.

The priestesses take a vow of chastity and poverty to reassure everyone that they have no favor or personal gain in the negotiations.

The feuding parties agree to a meeting point with the priestess, usually neutral ground somewhere between the two clans. Then the clans begin to discuss settling their dispute.

- **Arbitration:** Sometimes clans know that they need to end a feud, but cannot negotiate a solution through the law courts or the women. In that case, both clans can agree to have a neutral third-party arbitrate the dispute. It is a significant honor to be asked to arbitrate a dispute, only offered to those whose wisdom and knowledge of the law is respected. This is rare and the decisions made by arbitrators are widely remembered. The Red Cow clan remembers how Sartar acted as an arbitrator in the dispute with the Telmori.

The clans are bound to accept the decision of an arbitrator they choose, and will experience Divine Wrath if they refuse to comply. It is also the responsibility of the arbitrator to gather a posse and enforce his judgment if a clan refuses to abide by it.

- **Self-Judgment:** The Orlanthi recognize self-judgment as an honorable and generous act, a sign that the person is taking responsibility for his actions. Orlanth did this when he sought peace with the Evil Emperor. Self-judgment involves giving your enemy the right to set the terms of peace; for the judge to offer a fair settlement or for the supplicant to pay brings honor to both individuals and clans. On the other hand, refusing to grant self-judgment makes it clear that the clan does not intend to settle the feud. Offering self-judgment and not honoring it brings terrible dishonor on the individual and his clan.



## CONNECTED EPISODES

Emissaries, Blood Feud

## ACTS, SCENES, AND BEATS

### THE MOOT

#### *Gathering*

The parties gather at the moot. There is a truce here and breaking it will result in fines and possibly demands for outlawry; still, it does happen.

Both parties tend to spend the time seeking allies to clash shields and spears on their side at the moot, or bear witness to acts requiring compensation. Despite Orlanth's laws and custom, justice does not always prevail at the moot. The judge of the court is not immune to political influence, gifts, or intimidation. The judge likely has to live alongside the people he has presided over in court the next day. Bringing the most supporters to the moot to clash shields and spears together has a significant intimidatory effect on the judge. Because of this, each side tries to persuade those attending to stand on their side during the proceedings.

Refer to the *Emissaries* episode for how to win support at the moot. Remember that both sides will be seeking it.

#### *The Law Court*

The judge hears the jurors from each plaintiff present the witnesses and their sworn statements. This may take some time and extend across a day or more. Jurors on each side may raise points of procedure to have witnesses from the other side discounted. The jurors' goal is to paint their picture of events to the judge, instead of the opposition's.

When all the witnesses have spoken, the judge will consider his verdict. The judge's goal is to restore the balance — compensating each party to the level it has been aggrieved — not find right or wrong. What is fair allows a lot of interpretation. It is here that the judge is open to outside influence, personal favoritism, or sheer weight of numbers.

The law court is a contest. Use an Extended Contest if you want to play out the drama of legal argument, otherwise a Group Extended Contest should give everyone the chance to contribute to the outcome. It is dull to roll for an NPC so if the PCs are represented by an NPC have them roll using the clan's Peace Resource to resolve the issue instead. Allow them to Augment if they have obtained support from allies, using the clan's Wealth Resource to represent the gifts that will be required.

If the court proceedings do not go the way one side or the other wants, they may resort to violence (see *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*, page 216).

If the Red Cow chooses the champion's duel, it is dull for the GM to roll for a contest between NPCs. If one of the PCs could act as champion of the Red Cow, choose them instead. If that does not work the GM should also consider making the duel a melee and involve more of the PCs. Finally, if no PC is suitable for the champion role then allow a PC to roll with the Red Cow War Resource to settle the dispute.

Because Orlanth favors the just, you should give a situational bonus to any PCs involved in a duel if they have right on their side.

### MAKING PEACE

#### *In the Loom House*

Weaving the peace rug, the women of the two opposing clans gather to 'find another way' to continued violence. In the absence of a suitable PC, Darna Longcoat acts as the Red Cow peace weaver. If a PC is suitable, Darna may offer her the role instead. Darna sees the PC as in her debt for such an honor and expects loyalty. The PC has to swear an oath of chastity and poverty during the negotiations.

With loved ones dead many of the women may be in mourning, their hatred may be directed at the husbands and sons of the other clan.

The priestesses try to encourage open sharing of grief and remorse as a prelude to finding a resolution. They try to persuade the women weave their grief and anger at past events into the rug.

With the past talked about, the priestesses tell everyone to leave old feelings as memories woven into the rug, but not to carry them anymore. They discuss how the two clans can move forward. How can old injuries be atoned? How can new conflicts be averted with a settlement that soothes pain without causing fresh injury? This is the key stage of the negotiation. Here peace is made.

The settlement agreed by the women may not only include the transfer of wealth to redress the balance and return to the status quo. Ernalda seeks to prevent further conflict by addressing the underlying causes of conflict. The women look for root causes: why do the Two-Pine need to be a War Clan, do the Dinacoli really desire Cinsina lands, should the Red Cow pay for Two-Pine warriors to fight the wolfmen? Often the women use marriages between the two clans as part of the settlement, to help cement the bonds between them.

The Loom House meeting can be handled as a Simple or Extended Contest. The PCs' goal is to achieve consensus around their plan for peace. Ask the players how they see a long-lasting peace between the two clans being created. The priestess should use the community's Peace Resource rating. Summarize the stages for a Simple Contest result, but for an Extended Contest, you can play through the stages of the process as the rounds in the Extended Contest. Any Victory indicates that the two clans reached agreement, but a Defeat ends up with the enemy clan storming out of the negotiations. The cause of the breakdown could be anything from an incautious turn of phrase or look, to a genuine misunderstanding.

With the peace rug woven in the Loom House with the proposal, and the clan convinced of the merits of the plan the two clans meet to agree. This should be a formality, with the ceremony a ritual cementing of the clan's agreement. Still, some details may require fine-tuning when the two sides sit down together.

### ENDING CONFLICT

#### *Self-Judgment*

Like Orlanth before the Emperor, the Red Cow may offer the chieftain of the enemy clan self-judgment. The Red Cow will pay the price demanded by their enemy to settle the feud. This is

## ORLANTH BEFORE THE EMPEROR

Orlanth made his bid for friendship. The Emperor made his demand for atonement. Orlanth made his demand for recognition. The Emperor made his Requirement for proof. Orlanth made his promise of the future.

Orlanth began with the Song of Truth. This freed all those dead who still cared for him. They armed him in ragged splendor for the tasks to come.

Orlanth underwent Trial by Combat. The Locked Gate and its guardians had kept certain dead gods imprisoned.

Orlanth fought these Keepers and soon they had joined their captives in the Hall of the Dead.

Orlanth made a promise of the future, in that it would be like the past. The Emperor demanded, "Which past?" to which Orlanth replied: "All of them." The dead scorned his words because they all knew they were here in Hell because everything could not exist at once.

Orlanth suffered the Requirement for Proof, a searing burning shower of the acidic hatred of all Orlanth's foes present. The three baths were Fire, Hatred, and Truth. He was scorched and would have been destroyed. Only the faith and love of those he had left behind saved him.

Like the Baths of Nelat, he survived. In the Middle World, the thousands who survived in the Silver Age had a dream that night, and awoke from nightmare and sacrificed to Orlanth to strengthen him. Orlanth survived, and so his Proof was accepted.

The Emperor made his statement of recognition then, and agreed that Orlanth and his kin had the right to a place in the universe and that Orlanth was High King among the gods. All hatred between the Emperor and the High King would be healed in whatever future might exist.

The Emperor made his demand for Atonement. Orlanth made obeisance then before the other gods. He acknowledged the power and might of the Emperor and his way of life as long as it did not interfere with his own.

Orlanth then surprised everyone and made a formal bid for friendship. The Emperor was reluctant to do this, as this was not necessary for the world to work. However his family, advisors, and subjects all begged with the Emperor to accept and finally he did. Friendship was not necessary but it made things easier after that.



*The reading of the law at the Moot*

rare, difficult, and likely to be sung of by poets for generations. It suggests that the dispute has become so dire that the future of the clan is at stake if the conflict is not ended, whatever the price.

This is a *This World* Heroquest. Both clans need to prepare for it as they have roles to play. However, the Red Cow can begin the ritual unilaterally and the other clan will find itself fulfilling its role. These preparations are: the Red Cow performs the *Arming of*

*Orlanth* to provide the quester with Magical Help (*HeroQuest Glorantha*, page 196). The enemy clan performs the Summons of Evil, both to call the Red Cow heroquester, but also to call their ancient enemies.

The Red Cow heroquester heads out to the enemy clan, accompanied by any supporters. The enemy clan thanes take him to meet the chieftain in his hall. The heroquester must run a gauntlet of the enemy clan who sneer and jeer him, doubting his sincerity and honor.

With the enemy clan chieftain, the Red Cow heroquester speaks the ritual words of Orlanth offering self-judgment to the Emperor. Then the heroquester sings the Song of Truth. The Song of Truth allows the hero to obtain Community Support from his clan (see *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* page 192).

To prove his words the heroquester must pass the Trial by Combat. The ritual has summoned the enemy clan's old enemies and the heroquester must now confront and defeat them, showing his willingness to risk life and limb in the pursuit of justice. The choice of the 'old enemy' is up to the Game Master but see *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* pages 42-43 for the Heortlings' traditional ancient enemies. Companions (PCs), who accompany the heroquester can help him defeat the enemy.

This is an ideal point for a Heroquest Surprise with an unexpected foe appearing. For example, when offering self-judgment to the Two-Pine a Lunar heroquester might be drawn in as the enemy. Killing the Lunar will prove the Red Cow's intent to the Two-Pine, but will make the heroquester a rebel who has to live in hiding and bring reprisals upon the Red Cow clan. Failing to attack and defeat the Lunar heroquester breaks the quest and the Two-Pine will refuse the offer of self-judgment with the blame falling on the Red Cow's failure.

Next, the heroquester promises that the future will be like the past. This means that the status quo will be restored. The Emperor's question "which past?" implies that the restitution sought by the enemy clan may not be just for the most recent conflict but for the cause of all the conflicts between the two clans.

This is the moment the chieftain of the enemy clan makes his judgment on what the Red Cow must pay in compensation so as to settle the ongoing conflict. This is reflected in a penalty from Resource Depletion (see *HeroQuest Glorantha*) of -3, -6, -9, or -11. The Red Cow must now prove they will honor this agreement. The assembled crowds from the enemy clan spit forth their bile and hatred, doubting the Red Cow's willingness to match their demands. The heroquester can draw on the clan's Magic Resource rating to resist, as his clanfolk at home lend their support to his attempt to restore justice.

The Red Cow heroquester atones for the clan's acts. At this point the ritual is completed. Any ongoing conflict is ended by the Red Cow's compensation and proofs. Further conflict between the two clans is averted for a period determined by the Game Master from the heroquester's success. A Marginal Victory might last only a season, a Minor Victory a year, a Major Victory three years, and a Complete Victory seven years.

A heroquester can go one step further and try to create friendship between the two clans. This is not required, but is possible if the heroquester gained a Major Victory on atonement. The heroquester needs to make a bid for friendship, explaining why the enemy clan would benefit from becoming friends. Only a Complete Victory results in friendship, but any Victory gives a Benefit of Victory to further attempts to gain friendship and removes the clan as an enemy of the Red Cow.

## PLAY OF THE GAME

The most likely option for peace is that the clan chooses to pursue resolution through the courts.

Queen Ivartha presides over any dispute between Cinsina clans. She favors traditionalist Orlanthi clans such as the Red Cow and Frithan over 'traitor' clans such as the Dolumtha and Greenhaft and her judgments reflect that. This tends to leave those clans spitting with fury, but Ivartha has little sympathy with the turncoats. However, she tries to ensure some balance, as she does not want to encourage feuding within the tribe by giving the nod to those who kill members of the 'traitor' clans. Feuds weaken the tribe and give advantage to the tribe's enemies.

Disputes with the Two-Pine can be heard in Jonstown. Lyserian Goodspeech, the mayor of Jonstown (see *Sartar Companion*, page 14), usually presides at the court when it hears such disputes. Lyserian cares less about appeasing the clans

## WILDDAY

Throughout the Jonstown Confederation area people become nervous on Wildday. This is the day the Telmori transform into werewolves — and people seek shelter for themselves and their livestock. Most settlements in this area have some form of enclosure: a wooden palisade, a dry-stone wall, or a dumped rampart. During the day, people try to stay close to the refuge of these walls, carrying a horn to summon help if caught outside when the wolves are running. But it is night that most people fear, and they shelter around the fire in their defended places, praying to the gods for protection from the wolfmen.

than appeasing the Lunar prefect Tovtarim Orindori (see *Sartar Companion*, page 15). He is eager to bring peace as quickly as he can, and penalizes both clans for their part in the feud. If one of the clans has significant ties to the Empire, Lyserian's judgment will likely favor them. The Red Cow may have the advantage in this court, if they play the Lunar sympathizer card against the notorious troublemakers from the Two-Pine. Of course playing such a card might have to be backed up with concessions to the Empire and the Moon Winds in the clan.

The Emerald Sword owe fealty to Harvar Ironfist in Alda-Chur not Jonstown or Prince Temertain in Boldhome and so it is difficult to obtain justice through the courts. One option is to seek peace with the aid of the clans' women. This is only likely if both sides have become sufficiently tired of conflict that they both want a way out of the feud. Both sides can seek judgment, most likely from Jomes. Whilst Jomes might be better disposed toward the Lunar sympathizing Emerald Sword he is very interested in who drew "first blood" and is likely to decide in the other parties favor, unless the second party "upped the ante" with stead burning or similar dishonorable behavior.

Offering self-judgment is a once in a generation event which poeats will sing of for years. It is also a climactic event likely to change the nature of the conflict between the Red Cow and one of their neighbors permanently. It is suggested that you only use this option if it seems likely that a PC will be in the position to lead the heroquest. Such great events should always be the work of the PCs.

## PATROL

### BEGINS WITH

Jaranil meets with any of the PCs who are fit to serve in the clan militia in the chieftain's hall. Some of the chieftain's housecarls are there too: Ortossi, Jarstak or Aethelric are sitting on a bench near the hearth. Jaranil is relaxed and informal, but not friendly. He offers the PCs a place on the bench and a cup of ale. He tells them he needs them to help patrol the clan's lands and keep the clan safe. This he explains is a duty and everyone must take his or



*A patrol confronts chaos*

her turn. He points to the housecarls and tells the PCs they will report to one of them on patrol.

Jaranil then empties an odd assortment of bronze weapons and armor from a chest on to a rug. There are spear-points, a sword, a couple of helmets, some vambraces, and greaves. He calls the PCs forward one-by-one and offers them their pick of the items. Then he pours a libation of beer and extracts an oath from each 'volunteer' to be willing to die in the defense of his or her clan. (The chosen items are payment for future service). They are color unless a PC wishes to cement one as a new Ability by spending a Hero Point.

## CAST

Jaranil the Thunder, Ortossi Ketilsson, Jarstak Bristle-Beard, Aethelric the Girl

## SITUATION

Someone needs to patrol the borders of the clan lands to keep out raiders and the interior to prevent bandits or outlaws taking up residence. Housecarls in the service of the chieftain or thanes tend to be given patrol duties, leading members of the clan militia for numbers.

Border patrol is one of the main duties of clan patrols. The patrol leader is charged with deciding on whether to accept the Greeting from groups desiring Red Cow hospitality (see *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* page 248). The Greeting protects both guest and host from trouble and ensures peace, so it is common where the visitors are not well known to the patrol or on official business.

A number of groups tend to regularly pass through Red Cow lands:

### ARANWYTH TRIBESFOLK

They sometimes travel up through Jarolvale on the way north. The Red Cow tends to offer the Aranwyth hospitality unless they are known troublemakers. The most likely reason for Aranwyth travelers are pilgrims heading to Good Rain Hill. Broddi's orders are that pilgrims should be treated with respect, however Moon Winds in the clan might try to report the movements of Orlanthi pilgrims to the authorities to prove their religious zeal. The patrol might have to negotiate with their own traitorous kin to prevent the pilgrims being arrested.

### BANDITS

Outlaws who cannot find employment often turn to banditry to survive. Some people just prefer to steal for a living. Patrols attack and drive off bandits. The rebellion has led to many bandits excusing their actions as "striking blows against the Empire." The Red Cow clan tends to have little sympathy for those who use such excuses. Broddi has little desire for Imperial retribution to fall on his villages and dismisses all "men of the road" as bandits who should be "run off our lands."

### CULBREA TRIBESFOLK

Few from that tribe have any reason to pass across Red Cow lands. Most travel to Jonstown or Dangerford via Greenhaft — so patrols are suspicious of Culbrea visitors. A visit from the Two-Pine usually mean trouble and patrols regularly drive them off. More often than not Culbrea on the clan lands mean cattle raiders.

### DINACOLI TRIBESFOLK

Red Cow hatred for the Dinacoli runs deep and there are few legitimate reasons for Dinacoli folk to pass through Red Cow lands. Still Broddi allows them to attend the Red Cow market

and has issued orders for them to be allowed through for that reason. Otherwise, “Run them off” because they will be raiders.

### DOLUTHA AND BLUEBERRY CLANFOLK

These are the Red Cow’s neighbors along the Danda and the border is porous. Patrols avoid harassing Dolutha clanfolk here unless there is friction between the two clans. Those who press further into the clan lands are challenged and can be refused hospitality if they cannot show good cause for their presence — such as meeting kinfolk amongst the Red Cow. Some might be legitimate emissaries who have come to Broddi; they need escorting without trouble. A patrol might also encounter Dolutha or Blueberry cattle raiders, or the aftermath of a raid with a local thane hot in pursuit. Restraint is the order of the day to avoid killings and a blood feud, though angry locals with their blood up may not care. The Red Cow tends to have a friendly rivalry with the Blueberry but the Dolutha may refuse to surrender their prizes without a fight.

### OTHER CINSINA CLANFOLK

The patrol welcomes these folk and offers them hospitality unless they are known troublemakers. They may be visiting kin or friends within the Red Cow, if they neighbor the Red Cow, or they might be emissaries.

### IMPERIAL TROOPS OR OFFICIALS

Broddi does not want the Empire antagonized, so patrols leave those on official business alone. Jaranil however requests that the patrol shadows them and reports their movements. Most Lunar patrols ignore those of the Red Cow but some are officious and assert the Empire’s right to move unimpeded across Red Cow lands. When this happens the squad leader may be deliberately confrontational with the patrol. Few are really looking for a fight, expecting the Red Cow to back down, but they are interested in making the natives cower. If the PCs do cross swords with the Empire, they had better leave no survivors to tell the tale for fear of Lunar reprisals. Whilst the ring would ask Jaranil to try to cover up an incident where there were no survivors, they would be forced to outlaw the offenders to save the clan if it came out.

### TELMORI BRAVES

The only reason for Telmori in Red Cow lands is raiding. These are dangerous foes, so a patrol leader may try to shadow them, warn villages of their approach, and summon help. Ambitious patrol leaders may try to tackle the Telmori themselves, though no one without good magic or iron should really try this. The patrol might come across members of the Wolfskinners who are hunting Telmori on Red Cow clan lands, even Queen Ivartha herself. These Telmori hunters may encourage the patrol to join them “bring the Telmori down.” If a fight does begin then no one shows Telmori any mercy.

### WANDERERS AND ODDBALLS

Other groups such as merchants or adventurers are dealt with on a case-by-case basis, which means that the patrol escorts them to Red Cow Fort for the chieftain to make a decision.

### WULFSLANDERS

When traveling to Dangerford, or beyond to Jonstown Wulfslanders must pass along the Creek. Few request hospitality at Red Cow on the way to Dangerford, preferring the inns there, but those returning home often request to stay if nightfall is close. Jaranil’s standing instructions are not to annoy these folk, as Jomes is too powerful to make an enemy of. Whilst most such guests are no trouble and easily put up in the bothies in Red Cow Fort, some of them know that Red Cow will not risk angering Jomes and arrogantly put increasingly difficult demands on the patrol, hoping to rile them. These folks do not want a real fight; they just want to establish their superior status to the Red Cow’s discomfort.

## CONNECTED EPISODES

Feud, Trade, War

## PLAY OF THE GAME

*Patrol* provides a convenient excuse for PCs to deal with outsiders whilst remaining at home. Some of the scenes here are about diplomacy, some are about fighting, and some could go either way. Unless you frame it as a “montage,” you are unlikely to want to run several of these scenes in one session. Focus some preparation on the NPCs who make up the visitors to understand their motivations and interactions. NPCs from this book are a useful source of encounters for any patrol, and further expose your PCs to the setting material.

*Sartar Companion* also provides a useful source of encounters you can use for a patrol. If you are stuck for inspiration for a session having a patrol encounter, any one of those groups will produce an entertaining night’s play.

You can use the patrol episode to emphasize to the PCs that Dragon Pass is a dangerous place to live and strangers and enemies surround the clans living here.

Doing patrol duty also provides an excuse for the PCs to work with the ring and the chieftain’s housecarls.

## TRADE

### BEGINS WITH

Broddi summons the PCs to his hall.

### CAST

Broddi Strong-Kin

### SITUATION

A clan sends gifts with emissaries in the hope of purchasing alliance or friendship. It sends goods in trade when it lacks resources in its own lands that it must import. The Red Cow clan needs to import: metal ores, salt, spices, horses, glassware, fine items of craftsmanship for use as gifts, and wine. It exports

whatever the importer needs that they produce: fish, meat, leather, wool, or grain.

Trade with a friendly clan or an ally is about equal exchange not profit. This is the domain of Issaries and his worshippers, of striking a contract mutually beneficial to both parties. Coins rarely change hands, instead the clans barter goods and services.

When neighbors, friends, or allies do not have the goods the Red Cow needs, they have to send clanfolk further afield. Commonly clanfolk travel to a city like Jonstown (*Sartar Companion*, page 5) or Boldhome (*Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*, page 241) with its great markets. Alternatively they might make the journey to a far off clan center such as Clearwine (*Sartar Companion*, page 28) to trade for some of the Colymar's famous wine, or Runegate (*Sartar Companion*, page 55) to trade for horses. Trade at these locations tends to be for payment in cash — usually silver Jonstown guilders. Of course that creates the problem that if you want to purchase at those markets, you need silver too.

Finally the clan might take advantage of a wandering merchant, one of the famous Goldentongues of the Issaries cult such as Joh Mith (*Sartar Companion*, page 14), Biturian Varosh (*Sartar Companion*, page 123), or even a Lunar merchant like Ingkot Sharp-Eyes (see page 270). Of course under the auspices of the Issaries cult these markets and wandering merchants still seek 'equal exchange' but they expect a gift for their service in arranging the transaction. This is their profit on the trade, the way they earn a living.

## CONNECTED EPISODES

Emissaries

## ACTS, SCENES, AND BEATS

### BANDITS

Bandits are an ever-present danger, especially when you are trying to take goods between one clan and another. A group of bandits may try to steal some or all of the Red Cow's trade goods. They might be enemies, the Two-Pine clan supplements their income by raiding, and Telmori bachelor packs are not averse to stealing. They might also simply be outlaws, desperate to survive. Of course some of those outlaws may style themselves as rebels against the Empire.

### THE CHAIN

The prospective trading partners have what you want, but the Red Cow have nothing they want, but another clan, whom the prospective clan has nothing to offer to, does have what the first clan wants. Now, if only the Red Cow could convince the second clan then to exchange with their traders for what the first clan needs...

Of course the chain can keep going with each new clan requiring you to talk to another clan, until finally someone can make a trade and get the whole chain moving. Don't overplay this though, as it is as frustrating in a game as it is in real life. The main purpose of the chain is to push the episode in an unexpected direction by making the PCs negotiate with a different clan. Usually the other clan should provide something more interesting than being just one of the neighbors. They might be located some distance away. You can even use this to force

your PCs further afield amongst the Exiles of Wintertop, the Tarshites, Esrolians or Volsaxi. You might choose a more exotic group such as the Grazeland Pony Breeders, Beast Men, or Black Horse Troop if you feel ambitious.

### HARD TIMES

Times may be hard for the Red Cow, but they are even harder for their prospective trading partners. They can only give the Red Cow a fraction of what they want, and need a considerable amount in return. There could be advantage to be had from helping out the less fortunate. Generosity is an Orlanthi virtue and the indebted clan would have to repay the debt in the future. However, that does not help the Red Cow meet its own needs, and resources may end up further depleted by this trade. If the PCs do decide to trade treat any result as a Pyrrhic Victory when figuring the Resource Depletion from successful trading.

### RIVALS

The Red Cow is not the only clan here to trade. An enemy clan, the Emerald Sword or the Two-Pines have shown up as well. The prospective clan does not have enough resources to satisfy the needs of everyone. The Two-Pines will use the threat of violence to ensure that they gain the trade. The Emerald Sword will hint at Imperial disfavor. How does the Red Cow prevail? Can they negotiate something to everyone's advantage, or must they worsen their position with their rivals to win?

### WE DON'T FORGET

Old rivalries, remembered insults, and slights mean that the prospective clan is unwilling to trade. They regard the Red Cow as arrogant for even coming to suggest the two might exchange goods. This is a common problem when the Red Cow try to trade with the Dolutha for horses, but sometimes the Toena just cannot meet their needs, and Runegate is a long way to travel. A successful trade will mean overcoming the hostility the prospective clan feels. This will of course be even worse if the events involved have happened within game time, and involved some of the PCs. The PCs may be regarded as an enemy, and not a friend.

### WE'D LOVE TO HELP BUT...

The prospective trade partners would love to help the Red Cow, but they have a problem that means they cannot think about trading right now. Now if the Red Cow could help them solve this little problem.... Usually the problem is one of the seven dangers: strangers, foreigners, enemies, hostile gods and spirits, disease, hunger, or Chaos.

One obvious question is why the prospective partners cannot solve it themselves. It may be due to ineptitude, and meaning the PCs are likely to make enemies of those who have persistently failed to solve the problem. It might also be due to taboos that prevent the clan from acting on its own behalf. If the clan has a taboo against killing dragonewts and yet a number of them are using the clan lands as a hunting ground, bringing down animals and people, they might need someone else to act. A clan allied to the Red Cow may be the problem and the prospective trade partners simply want the Red Cow to intervene on their behalf. In some cases the only 'trade' the prospective clan wants is for the



*The trader arrives*

Red Cow to negotiate their problem away. Acting as a conciliator in such cases is a classic Issaries role.

### YOU HAVE NOTHING WE WANT

The prospective trade partners do not want to talk about what they really need, because they are too worried about revealing their weaknesses to the Red Cow. This means the clan is probably not a friend of the Red Cow. Negotiations will stall, primarily because until the prospective clan reveals their real need they won't make a trade. The PCs will need to figure out what the prospective clan really needs, in all likelihood despite their best efforts to hide it.

### PLAY OF THE GAME

Trade is a great reason for players to leave the Red Cow clan and visit 'foreign parts.' It might be a simple trip to the Jonstown market, but the big city makes a change of pace for a clan game. You can go further afield to Runegate or Clearwine, or even Boldhome itself, allowing the Game Master to give the PCs a view of the diversity of the kingdom beyond Cinsina lands.

If you are feeling more adventurous it might even involve a journey to far off parts of Dragon Pass such as Wintertop, Muse Roost, Beast Valley, Dwarf Run, or Tarsh. It might even mean a trip to foreign lands such as the Holy Country or Pavis in search of something truly exotic the ring needs.

There is no need for the PCs to make the trade themselves if they have no appropriate abilities. The PCs might simply be along to guard the trader and her goods. Some of the goods are gifts, as described in *Emissaries*, to win over the chieftain of the clan they visit. Such gifts need protection. Once the trade is complete, someone has to transport goods and services between the clans, which again require protection from bandits.

The resource the Red Cow requires is frequently a 'MacGuffin' — a term coined by Alfred Hitchcock for an item that everyone seeks, but whose properties beyond that are unknown. The 'MacGuffin' is just an excuse for people to travel somewhere and search for something and has no value beyond that. Of course the MacGuffin brought back to the clan by the PCs today, might be the inspiration for another plot for the players tomorrow.

The most interesting aspect of travel for PCs is exposure to other clans, cities, or even foreign lands. All of those represent opportunities for conflict and change.

Trade is a good way for the Red Cow clan to Bolster Resources (see *HeroQuest Glorantha* page 125). Trade is just the use of one Resource to bolster another. If a PC is in charge then the Red Cow should offer him one or more clan Resources to draw on when trading. The resource is whatever the Red Cow considers 'surplus' to trade for whatever is in 'shortfall.'

### WAR

Trading the War Resource involves hiring out Red Cow thanes and their men, the clan's "spears and swords" to act as mercenaries. If the Red Cow is trading with another clan, these mercenaries are probably for a feud the friendly clan is participating in. If trading in Jonstown these are likely to be mercenaries in the pay of local merchants or traders. The Red Cow might also trade resources to the Empire. Most likely such soldiers relieve Imperial troops from garrison duty in other parts of Sartar to allow them to head south to fight in the Holy Country. But the mercenaries might be sent there themselves.

Few people distinguish easily between the actions of Red Cow thanes acting as mercenaries and the actions of the Red Cow themselves, so any such trade risks embroiling the clan in wider conflicts. All of that is perfect material for further adventures.

# THE STEALING OF THE GIANT'S COWS

Gochbadun was a son of Urox, and one of the great aurochs, bursting with vigor and health. Courageous, fierce, and strong, Gochbadun was the greatest of the aurochs. Bergilmer the giant chieftain had Gochbadun in his herd. Bergilmer's clan occupied the lands north of the Quivin Mountains at that time, and few dared to try to settle those lands.

King Ulanin's scouts often reported that Bergilmer's clan enjoyed the taste of men and the terrible smell of roasting man-flesh at the giant's hearth. The king despised Bergilmer, but his advisers told him not to attack the giant chieftain, whose stead was surrounded by stout wooden walls and guarded by the two-headed dogs.

When Ulanin heard of the great bull, he swore that he would add Gochbadun to his own herds and drive Bergilmer's clan out of the lands north of the Quivin Mountains. He rode out with his war host, with their glittering spears and mail coats to take the giant's treasure. Many fine men rode with him, including his sons Brandig Blue-Helm and Joram the Sword, along with Harkala Never-Blink. She was in exile from the Koroltes then.

This was the route of the war host: they went east of the Wild Mountain, past Korgradus and Hareva. This was King Ulanin's land and he was greeted with a day-feed when he needed to rest. Ulanin's host had to fight off the raiders in the hills, and the king was shocked that his enemies had

grown so bold. Then they headed east into the giant's lands, so long denied to man.

Ulanin's host met Bergilmer's giants there, and many of his host died. They feared the two-headed dogs more than the giants, but Ulanin speared them from his horse Goldwind. The host marched on to Borden Hill. After the defeat of his warriors, Bergilmer the Cowardly withdrew his remaining giants inside the fort.

Ulanin laid siege to Bergilmer's camp. Six times he assaulted the walls of the giant's castle, and six times, he was repelled, but he never gave up. On the seventh attempt, Ulanin breached the walls and his men poured through the gap. Bergilmer the Cowardly escaped, but Ulanin took possession of the place of slaughter.

Ulanin then built a hill fort of two ditches and three banks, half a mile wide, to guard his captured herd.

Red Cow Fort was tested three times.

The first came when Bergilmer returned looking for his missing bull.

The second was when King Hargart Many-trials of the Stravuli raided the Orgorvaltes because he wanted Gochbadun for his own. Jarenst Bear-club held off Hargart's warband for three days and nights at Dangerford that time.

The third and final time was when Foul-of-the-Woods led an army of broos here. That time the fort failed; no one remained to tell of it, but the Red Broos were seen after that.

## HEROQUEST: THE STEALING OF THE GIANT'S COWS

### BACKGROUND

The *Stealing of the Giant's Cows* is a well-known Orlanthi 'cattle raiding' heroquest. Ulanin the Rider, Vingot's son-in-law, and an ancestor of the Red Cow clan, stole aurochs from the herd of the giant Bergilmer. The giant chieftain Bergilmer's stockade became Red Cow Fort.

Performing this quest successfully leads to the clan's cattle calving the red cows. The quest is done in late Sea Season for calving early in the following Sea Season. Commonly the questers, called the Auroch Bringers, use Orlanth's Sword Day rites to begin the quest.

Whilst much of the myth is well-known, no clan has fully succeeded in this heroquest; the frontal assault of Bergilmer's hill fort is too hard. The Culbrea under Hofstaring Treeleaper tried and failed.

Everyone guesses that the Red Cow must have some secret to overcoming Bergilmer because it does not appear possible for even a tribe to muster the required strength. Of course, the Red Cow only has the famous red cows born to their cattle, so most folk guess their approach does not give them the full benefit of the quest.

Because of the importance of this heroquest to the clan, the PCs should participate in it during the campaign. They might participate more than once, first perhaps as a common raider, directed by others, later perhaps as the leader of the raid. The

Game Master should ensure there are surprises and variations each time the quest is run.

This adventure is key to the identity of the Red Cow and the Game Master should take time to play through it the first time, establishing the key ritual that gives the clan its identity.



*An aurochs, now extinct. A prophecy tells that the Liberator will hunt them again in Dragon Pass*

## PREPARATIONS

The Auroch Bringers are an inner circle within the Red Cow clan, whose membership has participated in the quest. It is this group that knows the secret that allows the Red Cow to steal Bergilmer's cows. Broddi Strong-Kin is the priest of Ulanin the Rider and the leader of the Auroch Bringers. He has participated in the quest.

The Red Cow clan was not the Red Cow before they came here, and did not possess the secret of breeding the red cows. Maklan the Fat and Good knew of the *Stealing of the Giant's Cows*; he had always, like others, failed when he tried it. However, he knew that the hill fort the exiles from Durulz Valley now occupied was Bergilmer's fort. Maklan found a secret way into the fort, via a series of underground passages. Seizing this advantage, Maklan entered Bergilmer's fort undetected and opened the gates to the other besiegers.

There are a number of entrances to the cave system that runs under Red Cow Fort. For this raid the Red Cow use one that runs under the Heort Creek, but at least one other runs under the Creek. With the threat posed by enemies attacking the fort via the tunnels, the ring is anxious only a few people know about the tunnels under the fort. Only the chieftain, the ring, and the Auroch Bringers know of it. It is Very High difficulty to get permission to use the tunnels today, for fear of its discovery. Only an emergency threatening the clan might change that.

The Auroch Bringers only tell members of the clan the secret, when they join the quest.

### THE RED COW 'TRICK'

The Red Cow continues to accomplish the heroquest by using a trick — sneaking into Bergilmer's castle. Because of this, they do not gain the full benefits possible from this quest — the birth of aurochs to their herds. To obtain the full benefit, the quester would have to follow Ulanin's example and drive Bergilmer out of his castle. Less well known is that the questers would also have to complete "The Testing of Red Cow Fort" — when foes attacked the fort to take back the giant's cows — to accomplish all the conditions and return aurochs to the clan.

This event lies outside of the timeline of this campaign, but the Argrath will show the Red Cow how to achieve this quest during the Hero Wars and help them to do it. This will complete an important prophecy.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE QUEST

When the Red Cow supports this quest the objective is always to breed the famous Red Cows. There are side-benefits members of the clan can accrue from participating in the quest, as companions.

### WHO ARE THE HERO AND HIS COMPANIONS?

The key mythic role is that of Ulanin the Rider and one of the participants must be Ulanin to obtain the benefits of the quest. This may or may not be a PC. It is possible for the PCs to participate once in this quest as supporters and later lead it.

Broddi Strong-Kin, Farandar Orendalsson, and Verlain Never-Doubt have all led and succeeded at the quest. They are all happy to offer advice on how to succeed.

The clan can take considerable numbers of thanes or other warriors on the quest because they have to defeat Bergilmer and his guards and escape with the cattle — this is after all a cattle raid. The limiting factor is moving a large body of armed men between Red Cow clan lands and Ulaninstead, the traditional jumping off point for the quest. As these are Sword Day rites, and celebrate the martial aspects of Orlanth, the Empire regularly tries to disrupt these ceremonies. For this reason the clan tends to take a dozen men on a typical attempt at the quest.

As befits a raid by Ulanin, all of the participants on the quest should be mounted.

### CLAN SUPPORT

If a PC wants to lead the *Stealing of the Giant's Cows*, it is essential to obtain clan support for this quest both to learn the secret and to be able to use the clan's Magic Resource during the quest. Broddi Strong-Kin will present the quest leader with the Meteor Spear as the link between the clan and the quester.

At the Sacred Time rites, the PCs should try to obtain the support of the clan. The difficulty of this should be High or Very High. Although the Red Cow regularly performs this quest, the resistance reflects the danger of the quester failing and the lack of any red cows being born that year. Benefits of Victory to clan relationships should apply, as should Situational Modifiers for those PCs who have proven themselves successfully.

If the PCs simply want to join an existing quest then there is no need for them to roll, the NPC leader will obtain support instead. If the PC fails to gain support for their leadership of the quest, the Red Cow will still perform the quest, but an NPC will lead.

As with any cattle raid, the PCs may want to "gather spears" filling out the numbers of raiders they have for the quest. There is usually no shortage of willing volunteers from amongst the ambitious thanes of the clan. Pick some NPCs from amongst the thanes who both support and oppose the PCs and allow them to choose who accompanies them. Wise old questers like Broddi may advise them to take the best men they can find, even if they are rivals. One or two youngsters might try to join as well. The PCs may want to give them a chance, but the Game Master might want to point out the dangers of heroquesting by having one such NPC meet a grizzly end and become mentally scarred and broken by the experience — ending up in what the Orlanthi call the Mishap House.

## PERFORMING THE QUEST

### THE JOURNEY TO ULANINSTEAD

The party setting out from Red Cow Fort is large. There are the dozen or so participants in the quest, who will actually cross over to the Other Side. The participants dress in Vingkotling costume. They wear masks, to show which of Ulanin's band they are. Broddi Strong-Kin presents the most elaborate mask, that of Ulanin the Rider, to the quest leader. Ulanin's entire band is mounted and their horses have the finest ceremonial tack in gold, silver, and tin.

In addition, supporters accompany the quest, to aid with the ceremonies. Broddi Strong-Kin, Farandar Orendalsson, and Verlain Never-Doubt will accompany the quest to its starting point, even if they are not leading it, or joining in with the

## THE MISHAP HOUSE

“Mishap House” refers to clan dependents, particularly those who were permanently disabled or made mentally incompetent while performing a special task for the clan. Since such tasks often entail a dangerous trip to the Otherworld, the Mishap House commonly includes survivors of heroquests who have paid the price but not collected any reward.

Clans rarely have an actual house for these pitiful folks, for who but Chalana Arroy could bear to be amongst so much misery concentrated into a single place? The term “house” is used in the meaning of “a group of people.” People usually tend their own kin in these circumstances.

quest. In addition, Griselda Gray-Tresses joins the company of heroquesters to add Ernalda’s support. Many of these supporters travel with parts of their own households to support them. In total this means that the Red Cow party consists of some 30-40 members of the clan.

It is worth noting that anyone journeying to Ulaninstead will miss the clan moot and tribal market. Rivals might use this to press claims or other advantages in their absence.

If things go well the march to Ulaninstead should take five days. However, things never quite go to plan so the Red Cow typically allows ten days to make the journey.

The group normally sets out on Waterday of Stasis Week of Sea Season, traveling to **Dangerford**. From **Dangerford** the PCs can take the **King’s Road** south to **Jonstown**. From Jonstown the route follows the King’s Road as it climbs through the mountains. The group does not tarry too long in **Boldhome** and move on the next day. From Boldhome the party must descend into **Killard Valley** and **Goodfork**. The route then winds through the **Sambari Pass** through Saruvan’s Hills to **Wilmskirk**. The Red Cow party always stops the night in **Wilmskirk** and hires a guide. From there the King’s Road goes through **Balmyr Country** and the party leaves the road heading on into **Richberry Vale** and from there to the site of **Ulaninstead**.

You can make this journey as rich or uneventful as you like, treating it as an extended travelogue, or simply saying, ‘You are there!’ and treat it as an Arduous Auto-Success.

### CROSSING OVER

At Ulaninstead, little more than a raised obelisk with a Movement Rune carved on one of its faces now marks the small mound where Ulanin once had his stead. This is a holy place (see *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*, page 86) and associated with the Movement Rune (R).

At dusk, as Windsday begins the celebrant (Broddi Strong-Kin if he accompanies the group or a PC) begins the preparations to commence the ritual to open the sacred space. The next morning he performs the *Arming of Orlanth* to prepare the leader for the heroquest (see *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*, pages 192-193). The celebrant presents the quest leader with the Meteor Spear at this point, giving him the clan’s Community Support for the quest

## STARTING ELSEWHERE

Why doesn’t the Red Cow begin the quest from Good Rain Hill, or Larnste’s Table? Maklan first succeeded at the myth from Ulaninstead, and the conservative Red Cow have always followed that tradition, unsure if the quest begun from another location would work as well.

Desperate times might push the PCs to try this and persuade the clan to support them. In this case, the herds of the leader of the quest will calve red cows, as expected, but the effects will not spread to the whole clan.

and allowing the quest leader to use the clan’s Magic Resource rating on the Other Side. The celebrant sacrifices a stallion, slashing open its throat and catching the blood in an ornate cup. The participants then drink fresh, hot, horse blood before crossing over to the Other Side to begin their heroquest.

## THE OTHER SIDE JOURNEY

### ULANINSTEAD

Crossing to the Other Side the PCs find themselves beneath a very dark blue sky — this is the Late Storm Age after the waters invade the Heavens, turning them blue. Cold winds blow. A few indistinct planets and moons are visible in the sky. Many are unfamiliar.

Ulaninstead is restored around them. Ulanin’s megaron is fit for a king, over a hundred feet long. The walls are built of immense stone blocks — even the door arches have huge stone lintels. Plaster, painted with scenes of war and hunting covers the walls. Great wooden posts support rafters and a tiled roof. An enormous bowl, in which burns the great hearth fire, dominates Ulanin’s Hall — a clay pipe in the roof allows the smoke out of the hall.

A beautiful young woman approaches the quest leader; her long dark hair is bound in a golden headdress. She kisses the quester who has taken the part of Ulanin. “Husband, bring your companions, the feast is ready.” It is Orgovale Summer, Vingkot’s daughter and Ulanin’s wife.

It is a grand feast, and everyone has a belly full of beef, venison, and pork by the end, washed down with mead. At the conclusion of the feast, Ulanin’s skald, Janar Black-Tooth, comes forth and sings a praise song to Ulanin and Orgovale; he lists their wealth, from pails and cauldrons and other bronze cast vessels, through rings and torcs, armor and weapons, sheep, pigs and cattle. As the skald finishes singing, a beggar, let into the hall for the scraps, shocks everyone by approaching the high table. He pulls back his hood to reveal he only has one eye, the other a gaping socket from some brutal encounter.

“I may only have one eye to see,” he begins, “but Ulanin’s cattle cannot compare to Bergilmer’s cattle. In particular he has no bull like Gochbadun in his herd.

“Gochbadun, the son of Urox, is a great aurochs bursting with vigor and health. He can sire fifty cows every morning, and each will give birth to a fine calf by sunset. He has a white head and white feet, but his body is the red color of blood. All his offspring

are colored the same way. Six of every seven can be milked three times a day, but the seventh is always thin and weak. Ten men can stand on Gochbadun's broad back, and he is taller than three men. His bellowing is like thunder, his breath like fire. Courageous, fierce, and strong, Gochbadun is the greatest of the aurochs.

"Bergilmer the giant chieftain owns Gochbadun at his stead north of the Quivin Mountains. Truly I believe he is richer than Ulanin, and a finer chieftain."

The PC taking Ulanin's role should leap to his feet and swear an oath that he will steal Bergilmer's prize bull. If the PC does not react, have Orgovale prompt him "Husband can we let this chieftain of the giants outshine us here in our own lands? We will bring shame upon our descendants and mockery in my father Vingkor's hall."

## ARFRITHA VALE

The host sets off from Ulaninstead, mounted on fine horses and begins the journey north.

Much of the journey is through the lands of the Orgorvaltes tribe, to whom Ulanin is king. Most of the settlements are isolated farmsteads instead of villages. The king is welcome in any of these steads, and the inhabitants do their best to provide refreshments for King Ulanin and his men.

Much is familiar about the journey, seven-and-a-half miles high Kero Fin is visible on the skyline, and the Quivin Mountains dominate the landscape. However, much is unfamiliar. Many of the rivers the PCs know are not there: there is no White River, and no Creek. The rivers, such as the Boranini and Lorthing, are more like long ribbon lakes than rivers.

This part of the journey is most variable. Sometimes it is uneventful; sometimes Ulanin's party encounters something unexpected. We provide examples below. Often the Red Cow tries to influence what foe they meet here by performing the Summons of Evil before they undertake the heroquest (see *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*, page 193). The most common encounters are raiders, particularly Hsunchen. Usually they are Telmori raiders from the lands of Seravus the Enchanter. This is an ideal place for any Heroquest Surprises (see *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*, page 186). The Red Broos are Heroquest Surprises Farandar encountered here too — everyone in the clan will be worried if this occurs a second time. This is deeply upsetting to the Orlanthi — broos should not be around before the Great Darkness and occur later in the myth after the fort falls to the broos; and yet heroquesters are encountering them here.

### *The Telmori*

The Telmori raiding party is a mixed band of wolves and men. Usually a Telmori shaman leads the raiding party and uses his magic to fell enemy champions or support his braves. Sometimes spirit wolves lead the raiding pack. These wolves are the pups of Telmor, and are the size of horses with a vice-like bite that crushes bronze and splinters bone, fiery red eyes, and a terrifying howl striking fear into men. They are capable of leaping 15' in a single bound. A spirit wolf often leaps onto a target to knock it down before savaging it. They are capable of breaking an Orlanthi shield wall with the ferocity of their charge. Spirit wolves are also smart. They can speak although they have a gruff voice. When on a raid

the spirit wolves issue orders to common wolves and braves alike. Fighting a spirit wolf has a High or Very High resistance.

The Telmori use pack ambush tactics. Against a strong foe they try to lure the Orlanthi into a trap by sending out a small band as bait; against a weaker foe they will send out pursuers to drive the Orlanthi into an ambush. Often the Telmori will be a local foe of the Red Cow drawn into this quest to raid his ancient enemies.

The leader here may be a Telmori NPC from this book, such as Black-Paws Helkos or Jorgar Sog. If so, you might want to up the resistance. People take on the masks of their gods on the Other Side, so the PCs will not be able to recognize the NPC, but certain tells may suggest it is a given person known to them.

### *The Red Broos*

The Red Broos are the progeny of broos mating with the aurochs. They have bovine heads with forward-facing horns, stand over 9' tall, and have short shaggy red hides. They might not be identifiable as broo (*Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*, page 264) instead of bull-men were it not for the fact that they drip with puss and boils from the diseases they carry. Many have obvious Chaotic mutations: abnormally oversized or withered limbs, snake-like lower bodies, oddly asymmetric faces, overlarge noses dripping mucus, or bat-like ears. Some of those mutations are advantageous such as an extra pair of arms, tough leathery skin, and the ability to spit acid, venom, or fire.

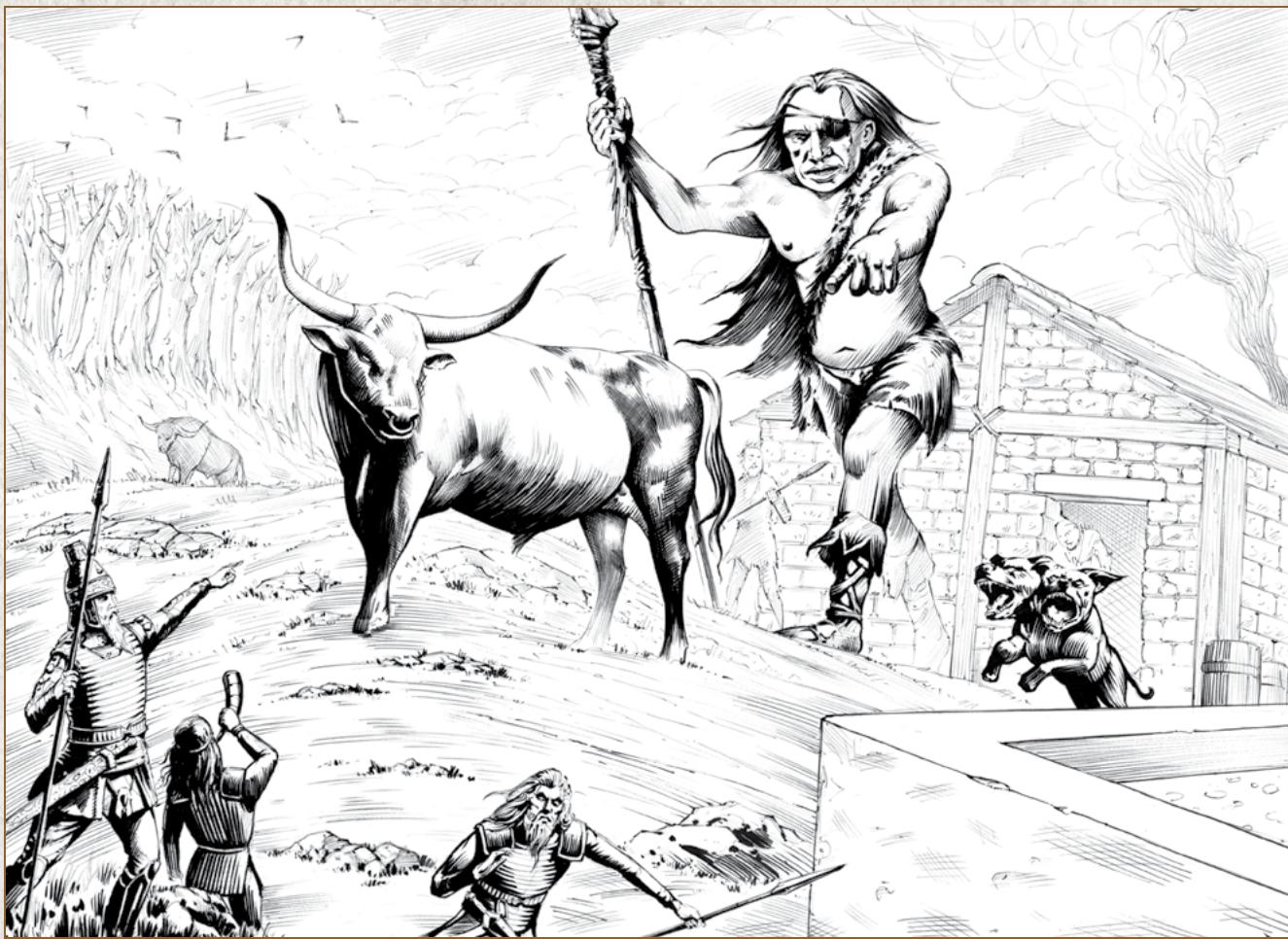
Any encounter with a Chaotic horror frightens most people, and the PCs need to win a contest to stand their ground (see *Sartar Companion*, page 105). PCs who have no other Ability can use either their *Red Cow Clan* keyword — the Red Cow have courage as a virtue — or any divine affinity.

## BERGILMER'S STEAD

Bergilmer's Stead lies atop Borden Hill. Borden Hill is at once familiar from Red Cow Fort, but at the same differs because it lacks Ulanin's later earthworks and the buildings the PCs are familiar with. There are a number of halls with barns, cattle byres; much like an Orlanthi village. The quality of workmanship is poor, the roofs leak, doors do not fit properly, much of the wood is poorly seasoned and rotting, and the floors are uneven. In many places there are temporary repairs using hides. The barking of dogs makes it clear this is not an Orlanthi settlement, and each household has a number of the giant two-headed dogs. A giant-sized palisade wall, thirty feet high, surrounds the village.

There are some eighty mountain giants (see page XX) in Bergilmer's clan. Only about a quarter of these are children because the giants have a low birth rate. Of the sixty adults, about a dozen full-time warriors form Bergilmer's household. These giants are well equipped with bronze spears, cuirasses and vambraces — even if the workmanship is crude.

The secret to the bronze implements, and wooden buildings, are the thralls Bergilmer keeps in his 'castle.' The thralls are Vingkotlings, captured from the Orgorvaltes and the neighboring Jorganostelli and Koroltes tribes. Bergilmer forces them to labor for him. Those who do not, he adds to the pot. Those who try to escape are hunted down with dogs, and become ingredients for the stew.



Gochbadun confronts the cattle raiders stealing his prize bull

The PCs might meet one of Bergilmer's patrols on their way to the Wandle's Pool. Consider pacing here though. If they had to fight raiders in Arfritha Vale running another fight straight away might fatigue your players, so consider allowing the PCs to simply avoid Bergilmer's patrols and go straight to Wandle's Pool.

Bergilmer's patrols consist of a group of 2-3 mountain giants and as many two-headed dogs. The giants drive intruders off, or if outnumbered try to alert the stead and seek its shelter. They are aggressive, contrary, and difficult, and attempts to negotiate with them are Very High. They are slow-witted and it is possible to trick or fool (Moderate or High) a patrol, though their taste for human blood and flesh means the only way into the stead is in a bag as lunch.

The giants are armed with eighteen-foot long spears, tipped with a bronze point, and balanced by a butt-spike. At a distance, they pick up and throw large stones or small boulders. The dogs are large, the size of a small pony and their neck splits into two heads, each of which acts independently of the other. The dogs tend to be fight alongside their masters, running in and biting whomever their master is fighting or just equalizing any opponents' numbers advantage.

They have a poor grasp of tactics and do not fight well as a group, relying on strength and size to wade into their opponents. They won't pursue retreating foes, but anyone defeated is captured, thrown into a sack, and taken back to the stead as dinner later.

A giant is a Very High resistance in a fight. Even those giants who spend their days herding livestock present a considerable danger at twenty feet tall, regardless of being armed with a wooden club instead of a spear. Remember that the two-headed dog acts as a Secondary Contestant in the fight (see *HeroQuest Glorantha*).

Use a Nearly Impossible resistance for Bergilmer himself. The best way for the PCs to overcome Bergilmer is by use of Multiple Opponent Penalties. Set things up so that the PCs can fight him, with the NPCs in the party focusing on the other giants. By co-ordinating their attacks so that their best fighter wins the highest penalty, and judicious use of assists for those struggling, a group should be able to defeat Bergilmer.

#### ***Bergilmer the Giant Chieftain***

Bergilmer is big and smart for a giant. Both those attributes led to him organizing his kin to take land and craftsmen from his human neighbors. Of course, some of his kin are too stupid and argumentative to see the benefits of the 'civilization' Bergilmer has brought them, so he has to crack skulls every so often. Bergilmer is shrewd enough to know that the Vingkotlings may gather a large enough host against him one day, but for now he is content to exploit the opportunities living off the crumbs from their table offers him. He has too much anger and hatred for 'men' to learn to live side-by-side in peace with them.

## Bergilmer the Giant Chieftain

**Keywords:** Mountain Giant

**Magic:** I

**Look:** Forty-foot tall giant, patch over one eye

### *The Wooing of Wandle*

The Creek does not exist at this time. The Heort Creek is not present either, and Borden Hill is an isolated rise, but the nymph Wandle is a small lake just to the north of Borden Hill. Remind the PCs that Wandle is the nymph who lives in the Heort Creek and is friendly to the clan, if they have forgotten.

The Wandle's Pool is broadly circular and about 500' in diameter. Trees cluster along the shoreline, and a narrow beach surrounds most of the lake. The water seems calm and placid most of the time. The nymph Wandle is usually submerged, but she might be encountered bathing on the shoreline.

The entrance to the caves giving access to Borden Hill lie under the waters of the lake. Whilst the way in is submerged, the tunnel away from the entrance rises above the water table and has breathable air after a short stretch.

There are two ways into the tunnel — the first is to swim, the second is to enlist the help of the nymph Wandle.

Swimming down to the tunnel is a hard as the water is deep and dark, the entrance hard to find. Panicking whilst searching for the exit tunnel from the cave is a real risk. This has a High resistance. In addition, Wandle is likely to be displeased with people swimming in her waters without being "nice to her" first. She will use strong currents to send swimmers off course, and weeds to bind their legs and limbs hoping to drown them. In this case diving down to the entrance becomes a Very High resistance.

If the PCs enlist Wandle's assistance she will use her magic to help each PC breathe water and swim down to the cave with them one at a time, holding their hands. Of course for some paranoid players slipping into the water might still be an act of faith!

By simply waiting on the shore, the PCs will eventually encounter Wandle (see *The Coming Storm* p.XX). The lake waters coalesce into a human female form and she strides out of the lake. She is unabashedly naked, and her figure is voluptuous. At the same time, she is unsettling for her watery body flows as much as moves, with ripples forming across her skin. When she turns, she just re-distributes her fluid form instead of swiveling on the spot. She laughs sweetly if anyone seems disturbed by this.

*Shy mortals blush to see me lave,  
Wetly undulating limbs awoken!  
By offering some trifling token,  
Would you in my waters bathe?*

To enlist Wandle's aid the PCs must give her a gift. She will happily explain this, but coquettishly refuse to explain what gift would be suitable. It is up to the PCs what they offer but some options are:

- **Seduction:** Wandle is lonely. She is also sensuous and would happily take a lover from amongst the PCs. Seducing Wandle is a contest. On any Victory, Wandle and her lover disappear

below the water to consummate their relationship. When she and her lover return she will guide them to the cave.

There are some long-term consequences to becoming Wandle's lover. The first is that when the PCs return from the Other Side, the PC will find he has developed gills and can *Breathe Water*. Treat this as a Directed Improvement (*HeroQuest Glorantha*) and add a new Ability under the PCs *Red Cow Clan* keyword. In addition, Wandle will try to pursue a relationship with the PC, seeming to be drawn to him, and flirt any time they are near Heort Creek. Though she has no idea this was the PC she met on the Other Side, she will find herself attracted to him.

- **Gifts:** Wandle likes shiny glittery things so torcs, rings, swords, spearheads, or armor all makes a suitable offering. One gift will cover the whole party. The gift needs to be either a named Ability or a permanent removal of an Ability that represents the item given. The PC gains *Breathe Water* as a Directed Improvement.
- **Oaths:** Wandle will also take oaths from the PCs to act as her protectors. When they return from the Other Side, the PC is expected to act as a guardian of the Creek and its tributaries. The PC has a Water Runec tattoo ✕ on their left breast as well as the Flaw of *Must Protect the Creek*. The Game Master should invoke this Flaw if the PCs' action or inaction threatens the Creek or its tributaries. Remove the PCs' lowest Flaw if they have three already. If it strains credibility for the PC to lose their lowest Flaw or the player does not want to, they are unable to take the oath. The PC will gain the friendship of Orstalor Spearlord if he sees that tattoo — he recognizes a fellow defender of the Creek.
- **Through the tunnel:** The tunnel from Wandle Lake leads up into Borden Hill, twisting and turning. It is a tight squeeze, where the PCs must crawl and slide. The tunnel leads into a cave complex beneath Borden Hill. Water has worn passageways through the sandstone, but in places it has been worked with pick antlers, and even improved into rooms or staircases. Without instructions from Wandle on the route to climb, the PCs realize they would become lost easily.

There are escaped thralls living in the tunnels closest to the surface. They cower at first, but soon begin to crowd around the PCs, begging them to tell them where they came from and if a way out lies in that direction. They will be shocked to discover the PCs want to go into the castle and try to dissuade them, begging the PCs to leave with them.

The thralls could be allies to the PCs; they could tell the PCs where Gochbadun is and how to work the gates. However, the thralls are so cowed the PCs will need to persuade them to join them. On a Major or Complete Defeat the thrall not only does not want to help, he or she decides to inform on the PCs in the hope of winning Bergilmer's favor. The PCs might come up with other cunning ruses to move about the camp, such as disguising themselves as thralls. Given the low intelligence of most of the giants, such schemes might well work.

One echo to bring in is that some of the escaped thralls are bronze-smiths who made the weapons and armor for the giants. They are hamstrung; their crippling reflecting the mutilating of Willandring in Red Cow Fort.

The thralls can show the PCs the way into the fort. An upward tunnel emerges on the east side of Borden Hill at the bottom of a shaft. Climbing the shaft is easy, giving access to the giant's castle.

The castle is busy with giants going about their day-to-day business and thralls scurrying back and forth on errands. It is safest for the PCs to try to steal Gochbadun at first light, when the stead is still asleep and they should be able to move around.

#### *In the Byre*

By luck or judgment, the PCs need to find their way to Gochbadun's stall. Once they have located the great bull, the next problem is how to herd him. Gochbadun is eighteen feet tall, about thirty feet long, ill-tempered and breathes fire. Tethering him by the great bronze ring in his nose and leading him out of the byre is a contest. (If they have no other Ability, a PC can use their *Red Cow Clan* keyword for familiarity with herding cattle.) The PCs can work together on this, in which case treat it as a Group Simple Contest. Failure indicates that Gochbadun begins to bellow and stomp his hooves, the sound of which is certain to wake the stead. It also means physical injury to the defeated PCs as Gochbadun tramples, gores, or breathes fire on them.

Following a failure, allow the PCs a second chance to lasso Gochbadun or otherwise bring him under control, but this time increase the resistance one step.

#### *Out of the Gates*

If they have Gochbadun, they need to leave the stead by the gates. If they cannot capture him then they can escape back the way they came.

Two giants guard the gates. In addition, the gates are enormous and usually opened and shut by giants so it will take several PCs working together to shift them. (If one of the PCs has a herding Ability, they might be able to use Gochbadun to break down the gates for them.)

Treat this as a Group Extended Contest and use the Climactic Scene Consequence Table. Whatever the PCs' plan, have Bergilmer join the fight as the PCs try to put their plan into motion, bellowing in rage that the PCs are stealing his prize bull. Try to orchestrate events so your PCs' take on Bergilmer and treat the struggle with the other giants as off-stage if you don't have too many PCs to make the fight with Bergilmer interesting. In addition, you can treat the attempt to break down the door as a contest as well, especially if you have PCs who cannot do much in a fight.

#### *Captured*

If the giants capture the PCs, Bergilmer will decide their fate. Bergilmer is inclined to eat them, but offers them a chance to prove to him how they could be more useful. This is a Simple Contest for each PC to persuade Bergilmer to keep them as a slave. Give a Situational Modifier of +3 to +6 for anyone proposing a civilized skill such as carpentry or metalwork as his or her value to the giant chieftain.

If a PC fails then Bergilmer skins them and puts them in his cooking pot. The PC will return to the mundane plane at Ulaninstead, but suffers damage at their level of Defeat from the trauma of this event.

Provided they are not eaten, the PCs are enslaved. They are stripped of weapons and armor, their hair shorn, and a leather collar placed around their neck. Then they are put to work in the stead. Enslaved PCs can of course hope to escape. If left unwatched they may be able to slip back out of the stead through the secret tunnel and should be able to escape cross-country to Ulaninstead.

The PCs might try to organize a slave rebellion in order to effect their escape. A key danger here is from traitorous slaves informing on them.

## ESCAPE

Once the PCs have left the stead they need to escape back across country to Ulaninstead. We recommend treating this as an Arduous Auto-Success (see *HeroQuest Glorantha*), describing how the PCs need to keep moving day and night to escape the pursuing giants who track the PCs with their two-headed dogs. As they reach the point of exhaustion and question if they can keep up the pace, they realize that their pursuers have given up the chase.

If the PCs reach Ulaninstead with their prize, Gochbadun, Orgovale Summer puts on a lavish victory feast for her husband, his sons, and thanes.

From here, the PCs return to the mundane plane.

## RETURNING HOME

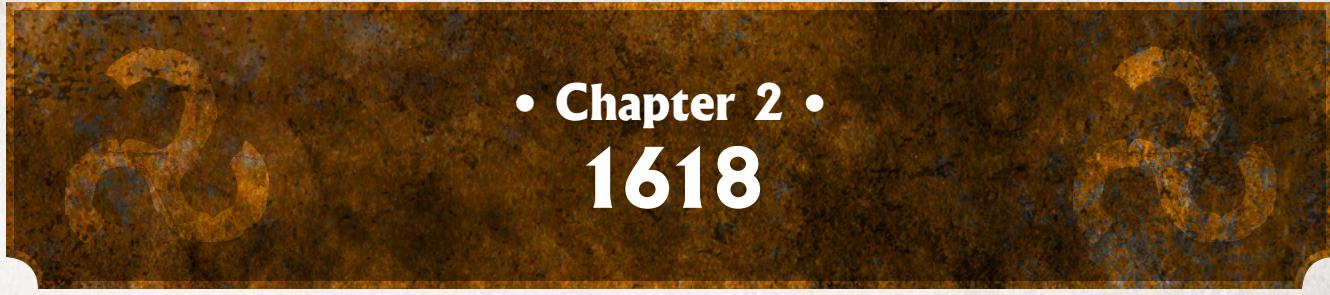
The return from Ulaninstead follows the reverse route, heading down the Stream to Clearwine and from there through Colymar Lands and the Arfritha Vale to Jonstown before returning to Red Cow Fort. The simplest way to handle this is as an Arduous Auto-Success.

If the PCs succeeded, then cows giving birth over the coming year will give strong, large calves, with a ruddy coat. The PCs will be honored by the clan as Auroch Bringers, and welcome in any stead during the coming year.

Treat the Victory level from the fight with Bergilmer the giant at the gates as bolstering the Red Cow's Wealth Resource next Sea Season when the calves are born (see *HeroQuest Glorantha* page 125). For the PCs treat it as a Benefit of Victory when using the *Red Cow Clan* keyword to obtain favors from the clan.

If the PCs fail, the attempt to perform the heroquest is ruined for this year. Only normal cows will be born to the clan, worse, one in seven calves will be stillborn. On a Major Defeat, or worse, then broos will also attack the clan in the coming year, trying to impregnate the cattle — the PCs' failure has weakened the world and let Chaos in.

Treat the Consequence of Defeat as a penalty to the clan's Magic Resource (*Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*, page 201). In addition, apply the Consequence of Defeat as a penalty to the PCs if they try an influence the clan — until they can turn their fortune around by succeeding in helping the clan.



## • Chapter 2 •

# 1618

## CONFLICTS

### FEUD WITH THE EMERALD SWORD CLAN

The Red Cow and the Emerald Sword clans are old enemies. Three years ago many Red Cow clan folk died in the 'Tormakt's Farm Massacre.' A group of Dinacoli raiders burned a hall, killing women and children. Kangharl Black-Brow has always wanted blood vengeance against Korlmhyor the Swift of the Emerald Sword clan and never accepted Broddi's settlement with Duruvan.

Last year, Kangharl led a cattle raid against the Emerald Sword resulting in the death of Torath Silk-Breeches, an Emerald Sword man. Broddi Strong-Kin, eager to avoid a feud, offered the Emerald Sword clan compensation.

Rostakus Twice-Outlawed of the Emerald Sword clan was keen to use the incident as an excuse for trouble; he called the offer an insult and Duruvan the Fat declared a blood feud with the Red Cow.

Rostakus Twice-Outlawed used the feud as an excuse to fight a duel with the old Red Cow clan champion Jordarn the Clash. Rostakus killed Jordarn. This made the Red Cow thanes more determined to seek blood vengeance.

The so-called Silk-Breeches feud is still raging.

## THE RING

Darna Longcoat calls in **Salissa Three-Husbands'** debts to have her goad the ring and the housecarls to further the blood feud with the Emerald Sword. Salissa focuses her efforts on **Kangharl Black-Brow**. Salissa also pushes **Farandar Orendalsson** to raid, and asks him to convince rebels such as Orstalor Spearlord to join them. She chides Farandar for his failure to oppose the Lunar collaborators of the 'Fat Tribe.'

**Broddi Strong-Kin** calls for peace, and talks of the women arranging a settlement. Darna, playing both sides, tells Broddi she will ask **Griselda Gray-Tresses** to weave peace with the Emerald Sword Women's Circle.

**Kullina the Fat** supports Salissa, despising the Emerald Sword for turning to the Red Moon, but she has no desire for the Red Cow to be exhausted by a feud when they should be supporting the rebellion against the Empire.

## THE HERO WARS

### SEA SEASON

The feud that subsided in the winter sparks up again. Kangharl Black-Brow encourages Jarstak Bristle-Beard to raid the Emerald Sword clan. He goes despite Broddi failing to condone the raid (see *Jarstak's Raid*). Following a retaliatory Dinacoli raid, Lhankpentos the Blind is killed (see *The Burning of Lhankpentos the Blind*). Kangharl Black-Brow becomes leader of the Tormakting bloodline.

Kethaela is in anarchy, but High King Broyan continues to hold out in Whitewall. Fazzur Wideread begins massing troops around Wilmskirk for an invasion of Heartland. The Empire recruits mercenaries both for the fighting in the south and to backfill garrisons in Sartar depleted by the war effort. Recruiters visit Red Cow Fort and a number of young men and women sign up for a 'life of adventure.'

### FIRE SEASON

Broddi tries to arrange peace. First, he goes to the women to see if they can accomplish it. If they cannot then Gordius Silverus settles the feud for them. Kangharl rails against Broddi for negotiating a peace settlement.

The Dundealos tribe rebels again; the tribe is disbanded, and most members are killed, enslaved, or forced to flee to their kin among the Pol-Joni. Broddi takes this as confirmation of the appeasement strategy and batters his opponents with this 'evidence' of what happens to those who openly resist the Empire.

### DARK SEASON

Queen Ivartha tries to recruit people to join her for the Wolf Hunt, an Odaylan Holy Day on Freezeday, Disorder Week, of Dark Season. It is considered lucky to kill a wolf on this day, and Queen Ivartha often goes hunting Telmori in Stagland.

### STORM SEASON

Broddi re-organizes the ring and Griselda Gray-Tresses replaces Salissa Three-Husbands who Broddi feels failed to support his attempts to end the feud.

Kullina the Fat takes supplies to Enastara the Red, who is hiding in the Indigo Mountains.

At the One Day rites, Ashart Dusk-Eater's alynx saunters into the ceremony, and stands upright on its hind legs, raising one paw. It then speaks to the assembled priests and god-talkers:

*Eleven are the number of the lights,  
Eleven stars in Orlanth's Ring,  
Ten are the virtuous stars,  
Nine of orange, one pale blue,  
The Dragon's Head is set in the ring,  
The green star is its ornament.*

Everyone is confused by the cat's poetry. Obviously, it is a message from the gods, but Orlanth's Ring only has eight stars, not eleven.

## IMPORTANT NPCs

- Jarstak Bristle-Beard
- Rostakus Twice-Outlawed
- Broddi Strong-Kin
- Kangharl Black-Brow
- Lhankpentos the Blind
- Jaraniil the Thunder
- Ortossi Ketilsson
- Salissa Three-Husbands
- Darna Longcoat
- Kernalda Other-Ways
- Griselda Gray-Tresses
- Duruvan the Fat
- Kallesra Sees-Tomorrow
- Korlmhyor the Swift
- Jomes Hostralos
- Ivartha the Skinner

# THE MISSING

## BEGINS WITH

Broddi Strong-Kin has summoned the PCs to his hall in Red Cow Fort. Lhankpentos the Blind is there, his son Arlest and Kangharl Black-Brow nearby to steady and guide the old man. Standing to one side is Jaraniil the Thunder, the leader of the chief's housecarls and Kernalda Other-Ways beside him. A number of the clan's thanes and ring members mill about the hearth.

"A number of children are missing from Red Cow Fort," Broddi begins. "This has happened at a bad time. The ring is busy with the sickness, we have yet to find a cause or cure, and the medicine from Jerra's Healing Broth Cauldron is stretched thin amongst the thanes," he tells them, referring to the fever that has affected many people in the fort. "We are feuding with the Emerald Sword, so this sickness weakens us at the worst time. Jaraniil has far too few men left to patrol the borders, let alone stop an attack." Broddi nods in the direction of Jaraniil, who appears pale and sweaty as he too has the fever that rages through Red Cow Fort. "As you seem unaffected by this sickness, we need you to find the children, and bring them home safely."

Jaraniil leans heavily on his spear as he speaks, "The sickness seems to have started here in Red Cow Fort and has spread to the villages up and down the Heort Creek. Because of the threat from the Emerald Sword we have asked people from Red Cow Fort and the villages along the Heort Creek not to travel to the villages along the Danda Creek. The people there seem free of this illness, for now, and I need their strength to patrol along the Creek. If the Emerald Sword find out how sick we are, they will surely come in force."

Lhankpentos the Blind addresses the PCs. "The children were taken from my bloodline, from the household of one



of my kinsmen in the fort, Jostharl Three-Sticks. My own grandnephews and grandnieces are amongst those taken. Please, find and bring back my grandchildren."

Lhankpentos nods to his son, who reaches into a chest and pulls out silver fibulae, one for each PC. "These have value in themselves," Lhankpentos tells them, "but also any in the Tormakting bloodline who see them, will know that we are in your debt."

Kangharl is red in the face, and pacing. He blurts out: "The disease shows the gods and ancestors are angry with us, because we have not taken blood vengeance upon the sons and daughters of Dinacol Hard-Rule. My wife and daughter died at their hands and their souls cry out for revenge."

Lhankpentos tells him: "Killing leads to more killing, there is always another way. I see no signs that this is why the gods have turned their backs on us."

Kangharl storms out, saying to the PCs: "I pity you being sent on this duty, when killing our enemies awaits."

Lhankpentos turns to Broddi, commenting: "When I am gone my bloodline will elect him patriarch, my old friend. He will not sit easily with your peace."

Broddi sends for the clan's treasure chest. From it he takes Voriof's Crozier and hands it to the PCs' leader. "This is Voriof's Crozier, it helps in finding the missing, both cattle and kin," he tells them. "Use it to bring our children safely home." With the Crozier the PCs can draw upon the Red Cow's Morale Community Resource, for the duration of the episode.

## CAST

Broddi Strong-Kin, Lhankpentos the Blind, Jaranil the Thunder, Ustarna Try-Much, Leikorl the Shadow, Ostling Spotted-Fur, Ashart Dusk-Eater, Rostakus Twice-Outlawed

## SITUATION

Farnantyr the Handsome a young Tormakting cottar stumbled across the tunnels that run under Red Cow Fort. Entering them in search of adventure and plunder, he instead found a pool sacred to Wandle, the nymph of the Heort Creek. Bored with her current lovers, the promiscuous Wandle flirted with the handsome young visitor. He returned her affections and captured the heart of Wandle. He became her lover, and idled away time when he should have been watching the herds with her.

## CREEK TURN

Creek Turn village is the Emerald Sword clan village close to both the Red Cow and Wulfsland. It has often been at the forefront of raids and feuds across the Creek. The village sits at a bend in the Creek, giving the village its name. The village is visible from Red Cow Fort, and the residents of the village can see the fort in return. During troubled times Red Cow Fort is a looming presence in the minds of the locals. There are a hundred people at Creek Turn, of whom twenty-five muster for the clan militia.

However, Farnantyr explored more of the tunnels. The tunnels extend for miles and he found a passage that led him under the Creek itself. Surfacing he found himself across the Creek in Emerald Sword lands. He spied upon and became infatuated with a Creek Turn village girl, Mirani Speaks-To-Moon. He contrived to meet her when she was washing clothes; she in turn fell for the handsome youth despite his clan.

Filled with love, Farnantyr avoided Wandle's pool when he snuck through her tunnels, determined to keep himself for this true love.

Despite the feud between the two clans, the two continued their relationship in secret.

Jealous and spurned, Wandle took her revenge, removing her protection against diseases and parasites in her waters for the Red Cow so that any who drank it came down with a fever.

The obvious reason that villages along the Danda Creek remain healthy is because they do not drink the waters of the Heort Creek. Remember, in Glorantha the causes of disease are not those of our earthly world, so the simple notion that if people drinking from the same water source all get sick, the water is polluted, is not as obvious to the NPCs.

The Lunars in Red Cow Fort have not gotten sick either. Their gods protect them against the low-grade fever found in the drinking water. Estavia GoldEyes has been offering healing at the Citadel, taking in as many as she can. Many people are grateful to the Seven Mothers for their help. If the PCs suggest the Empire is behind this, trying to win converts, Lunar haters will probably adopt the idea, but others will be more cautious, saying that Estavia is a good woman.

When this was not enough to bring her lover back to her, Wandle kidnapped a number of the young children. She gave them the ability to breathe underwater and they now play in the depths of the tunnels under Red Cow Fort; the children are happy, but Wandle plans to keep them.

This episode takes place in Sea Season.

## LOCATIONS

Red Cow Fort, Creek Turn, Grave Hill

## ACTS, SCENES, AND BEATS

### RED COW FORT

#### *Eastside*

Lhankpentos and his son take the PCs to Jostharl Three-Sticks' household in the Eastside of Red Cow Fort. When the PCs enter the compound, they can immediately see that a lot of people here seem to be sick. At first, no one comes to greet them, but when Lhankpentos calls out Jostharl shuffles out.

Jostharl is obviously sick; his skin is pallid and feverish.

"Lhankpentos, thank you for coming," says Jostharl. He turns to the PCs, "I am afraid you will find our hospitality somewhat limited, my family are all unwell with this fever. But please come to my hall, I can at least offer you water to quench your thirst."

Jostharl leads them into his hall. The household sick are here as Ustarna Try-Much who is tending to them, mopping brows,

providing damp cloths and water to cool the fever, and getting everyone to drink a herb-laced drink to ease the fever.

"It burns itself out after a few days," she tells Lhankpentos and the PCs, "and no one has died yet. But it seems to strike again and again. This household was one of the first to become sick and they keep getting ill. I usually don't expect people to fall ill with the same illness again in such quick succession." She looks up at the PCs, "I do what I can, but the men are needed for planting season, and for patrols against Emerald Sword raids. And now the children..."

A handsome young man, Farnantyr, helps Jostharl to sit, and then brings Lhankpentos and the PCs water to wash and drink. Farnantyr then retires. Jostharl says, "That young man has been a tower of strength, he hasn't gotten sick once."

Jostharl explains that with most of the adults sick the children were playing practically unsupervised when some went missing ("no, none of the children have fallen ill"). There were no cries of alarm; nothing to suggest anything was awry. As Jostharl speaks a number of the fathers weep for their missing children, obviously overwhelmed by what has happened.

There are 24 adults and 26 children in the household. Seven of the children are missing. None of the children have fallen sick (Wandle loves the children and so still maintains her protection for them).

Suspicious PCs may want to speak to Farnantyr. He genuinely has no idea why he has not fallen sick, or where the children are, so the PCs will get nothing from him. He is worried that someone will find out that he has been seeing an Emerald Sword girl — after all the clans are feuding — but getting him to admit to that is a Very High contest.

If his relationship is discovered, Farnantyr begs the PCs not to tell Broddi, because "people won't understand, we love each other."

If the PCs do report the situation to Broddi he will not want it to continue illicitly, for fear of trouble from either clan toward the lovers, but will realize that settling any peace with a marriage could turn this into an opportunity and so will be kind towards Farnantyr.

However, if the PCs find out the truth, and tell Farnantyr they intend to report it but leave him behind at his household, he will use the tunnels to flee to Creek Turn.

The PCs may question the remaining children to see if they know what happened to their fellows. They know very little. The missing group was a gang, both boys and girls. The favorite games involved chasing mice and other vermin with the cats in and out of the root cellars. Their leader was an older boy named, Baranwulf. He was fearless and always getting into scrapes or breaking a limb.

A PC might decide to search the root cellars. That will take some time, as the entrance to the caves is hidden amidst stored vegetables where a child could easily worm through but an adult would struggle. Finding the entrance to the caves under Red Cow Fort is a Very High resistance.

For pacing you might want to have Ustarna approach the PCs before their search is complete.

If the PCs do find the entrance then they can explore the tunnels. Broddi will be shocked that one of the clan's secrets has been exposed, and have the PCs swear an oath not to reveal it. "This is one of the clan's greatest secrets. When you become

Auroch Bringers, by going on the heroquest of *Stealing of the Giant's Cows*, you will understand why. But that day is not today, and you must keep this hidden."

There is no manpower to search the tunnels other than the PCs.

If the PCs search it is unlikely they will find the children, who are hidden underwater in a deep pool. This is Nearly Impossible, unless the PCs can breathe underwater. If a PC can breathe underwater it is just High. If a PC finds the children early, simply cut to the confrontation with Wandle.

### ***The Gods' Protection***

Ustarna approaches the PCs. "The gods have surely withdrawn their protection from the Red Cow, otherwise people would not be getting sick. We must find out why," she says. "I suspect when we find the answer to this sickness, we will find where the children have gone. At Grave Hill, Many-Breath will speak to us. I will fetch Kullina and a cow to sacrifice. You must fetch Ashart Dusk-Eater. Go ask Leikorl in the Great Hall, he will know where to find him. Meet me at Lightning Lodge at sunset."

It is possible the PCs will question this. After all, aren't the ring and Queen Ivartha investigating the sickness? Shouldn't they continue the search for the children?

Ustarna simply says that she feels this to be true. If the PCs still resist, she turns to the Orlanthi PC with the highest divine rune affinity, and says, "What is Orlanth's promise to the Earth? Sweet Green Woman, Look at me! I am come, the Conqueror! None can stand before me. I am yours, what Dark shall I fight? Perhaps you are no Wind Lord, but I offer you the chance to call upon my services if you will do this for me."

If the Orlanthi PC wants to refuse Ustarna's call it is a contest with a Moderate resistance against his divine rune affinity. If the PC succeeds they can refuse Ustarna, but any Benefit of Victory should be applied as a penalty to their divine rune affinity, until they show better Orlanthi behavior (see *Acting Like Your God, Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*, page 80).

If the PCs spurn Ustarna she leaves in search of help from Leikorl and Ostling directly. The Game Master can have her return later with additional information, if the PCs are struggling, but she will remind the PCs that they failed to heed her call in the future.

### ***The Shadow and the Wolf***

Leikorl the Shadow is in Broddi's Hall. Queen Ivartha left both Leikorl and Ostling here when they fell sick and has gone to Jonstown to get help from the House of Peace. When the PCs find them it is obvious that both men are ill, and that both watch each other intently.

"He is watching and waiting, hoping that I will die," Leikorl tells them. "Or get weak enough that I can't hold my sword to defend myself," he says, lifting the sword that rests across his knees. "I killed his mother. This is her skin." He indicates the cloak he wears, wolf fur with a wolf's head hood.

"Sartar's treaty binds me as a hostage, Shadow," Ostling snarls, "though I would be happy if Jigar Sog had taken all your scalp." He nods towards the chunk gouged out of Leikorl's scalp.

Ask the PCs how they feel upon meeting a Telmori. Most Red Cow hate the Telmori, so most PCs ought to hate them too, with

no other experience. If anyone wants to overcome that prejudice they need to overcome their own *Red Cow Clan* keyword in a contest. Leikorl takes a dislike to anyone who seems sympathetic to the Telmori, so any Benefit of Victory should also be applied as a penalty to interacting with him.

If the PCs ask for help finding Ashart, they need to convince Leikorl to help them. If they fail, he agrees to help, but demands that one of the PCs remain with Ostling, “a hostage to the hostage,” to ensure no betrayal. If they succeed, Leikorl will tell Ostling to come with them, “So I can keep an eye on you, and you can be close to your mother.” One of the PCs should see Ostling spit on the ground when Leikorl turns his back.

It should be clear to the PCs that both Leikorl and Ostling are sick. They ride horses because they are not capable of walking to Grave Hill, and neither looks fit to fight.

### ***The Hidden Priest***

Ashart is hiding in Green Meadows; it is a short distance from Red Cow Fort and Leikorl takes the PCs there. The priest and his wife are hiding in the loft of a hay barn. Leikorl whistles three times, waits for a two-whistle response, and then whistles once more. Ashart pops his head out: “Ah Shadow, what a delight. Ostling, good to see you as well,” he says. He looks at Ostling and nods toward Leikorl, “Not killed him yet then.”

Ashart asks the PCs to explain what has been happening in Red Cow Fort. Once he understands Ustarna’s plan he says, “Let’s hope the gods can help, though they may not know the answer themselves.”

Ashart is obviously sick. He takes one of the horses from Green Meadows for the trip. But he brushes aside any concerns for his health.

As the PCs gather to leave Farandar Orendalsson approaches them. He too appears sick. He speaks briefly with Ashart then addresses the PCs.

“Kill those Lunar bastards at Grave Hill. They stop us conducting worship of Orlanth on our own land. This affront to our honor has gone too long unavenged. I would welcome your blow against the Empire, and count you afterwards amongst those who have proven themselves to the rebellion.”

## **GRAVE HILL**

### ***Lightning Lodge***

Ustarna meets the PCs at Lightning Lodge. The stead is a ruin, razed by the Empire years ago. Ashart looks mournfully at the buildings. “I was happy here once,” he tells them, “I remember such laughter with Rangard Blacktooth, the old priest here, and the herds that once grazed these sacred hills.” He wipes a tear from his eye, “But the Empire took all that away.”

“Grave Hill will be guarded by the Empire, perhaps a half-dozen soldiers. Doblain Dogeaters,” Ashart spits as he mentions their name. “Worship of Many-Breath at the Hill is forbidden, for we use Orlanth’s rites. To get access to the temple we will need to kill them.” He looks over at Leikorl and Ostling, “This work will fall to you. We are too sick to fight.”

Ashart reaches into a bag and pulls out wooden masks. They are carved and painted with images of the Thunder Brothers,

Hedkoranth, Finovan, Vinga, Yavor Lightning, Destor, Tatouth, Vanganth, Helamakt, and Desemborth. “Wear these masks,” Ashart tells them, “So that the Lunars cannot recognize your faces, if any escape. Of course, it would be best if you did not let any escape...”

Ask the PCs how they feel about the Empire, which has razed their sacred village, and blocked access to their holy places. Ask them how they feel about killing Lunar soldiers. It is possible some PCs are sympathetic to the Empire, or at least not hostile. They may be in a real quandary, for what Ashart is suggesting means an act of rebellion against the Empire, which carries the sentence of death if discovered. Do any of the PCs balk at this and abandon the attempt to petition the aid of the gods?

### ***Dogeaters***

A patrol of a dozen Dogeaters guards Grave Hill. They are on detachment from Red Cow Fort, bivouacked near the foot of the hill itself. At any one time a pair of bored guards keeps watch on the causeway approaching the hill, the others sit around the camp tending to equipment, sleeping or gambling.

Judge the Dogeaters state of alert from the Pass-Fail cycle. If the resistance is Easy or Moderate then the Dogeaters do not expect an attack, discipline is lax, and the guards un-watchful and distracted. If the resistance is High or worse, then the commander of the patrol is enforcing discipline and the patrol are alert and ready for trouble.

The PCs can sneak fairly close to Grave Hill without detection — this is an area of large barrow mounds, built by the Vingkotling ancestors — but the last 100 yards or so is open ground.

Let the players come up with a plan and execute it. If the PCs turn to the NPCs for advice Ashart tells them, “You are the ones who must do the killing, you must choose how it is done. Once the word is given on what, the how is always the job of those with skin in the game.”

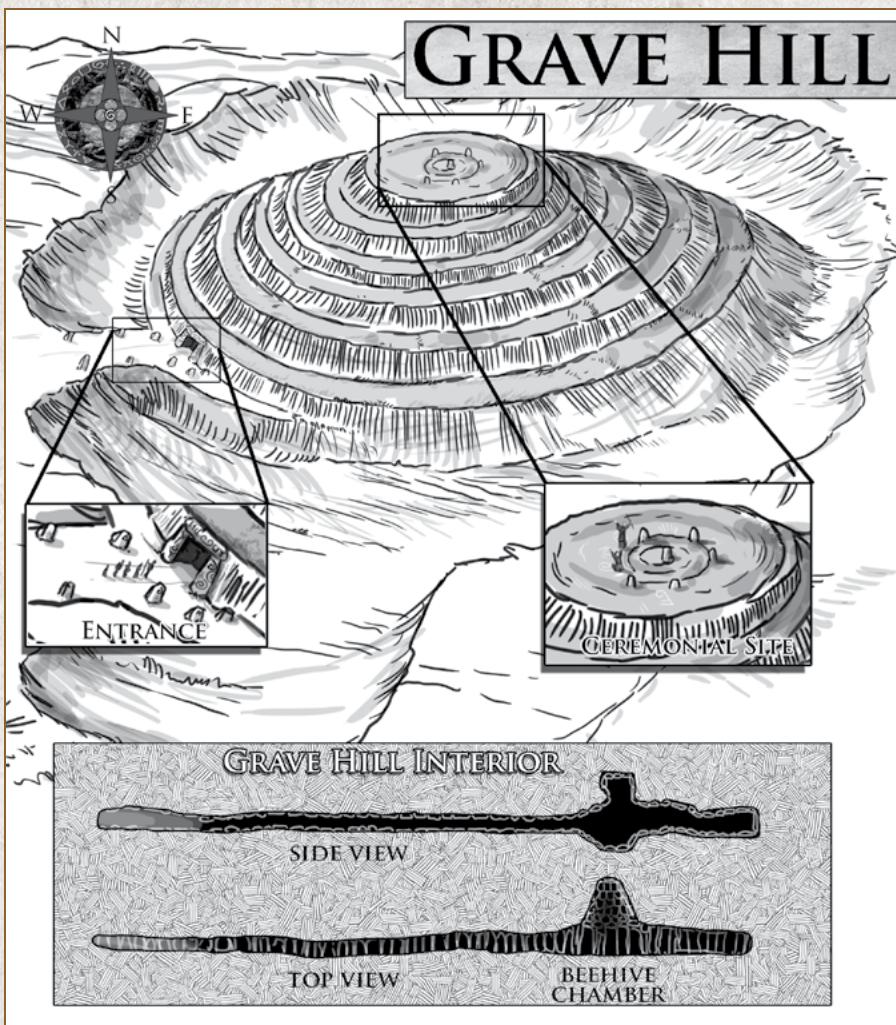
If the Game Master decides to run this as an Extended Contest, the NPCs can offer assists to struggling PCs. Ustarna can heal, even in battle, Ashart can summon winds or direct lightning, Leikorl can pick off opponents with arrows, and Ostling may send his wolf brother to help. Make it clear such actions exhaust the NPCs.

If the PCs lose the contest, then Ashart, Leikorl, and Ostling have sufficient strength to cover their retreat and help them escape. Ashart whips up a windstorm and Leikorl peppers them with arrows, whilst everyone else runs. Ustarna will help any wounded to safety and then heal them.

In that outcome, Ashart tells the PCs to return to Red Cow Fort, “There will be no answers from the gods.”

On anything but a Major Victory or better, some Dogeaters will escape. Leikorl offers to hunt them down and asks if any PCs want to join him and Ostling. He will only take one of the PCs if any offer. The events of the hunt are left to the Game Master, but Leikorl is a brutal killer and the Game Master should emphasize his nature to the accompanying PC. Ostling by contrast may show mercy. This may surprise a PC who sees the Telmori as the savage killers, not the Cinsina.

Ashart and Ustarna conduct the ceremony atop Grave Hill. They perform the rituals to open the sacred space, so that the



### The Red Cow Orlanth and Eralda Temples at Grave Hill

Other Side and this world are one, and gods might walk with men. The PCs join in the chants and the calls, for there are no other initiates to do the work.

Whilst Ustarna holds the red cow steady, Ashart slits its throat. As the beast falls to its knees, and then the ground, Ashart carefully watches the spray of blood, pointing out spirals and directions to Ustarna. Then Ashart slices open the cow's belly and pulls out its entrails. Arm deep in gore he sifts through them, examining them for marks. Signaling to one of the PCs to help, he takes the entrails and offal to the altar atop Grave Hill and burns them in a fire there, watching the smoke intently as it rises.

He steps aside and confers with Ustarna before turning back to the PCs.

"The gods have spoken. Wandle is angry and has removed her protection from the Red Cow. Her water will not be safe to drink until we can find the reason for her anger and appease her."

As Ashart prepares to close the sacred space, a ghostly figure strides up to the hilltop. He wears an ancient bronze panoply and carries an axe and shield of antique design.

Ashart exclaims: "Many-Breath!"

Only the chieftain of the Red Cow usually meets the clan *wyter*, and then only in the barrow at the base of Grave Hill.

The *wyter* speaks grim words of prophecy:

*The Hero Wars begin,  
A great evil comes from the north,  
Evil's steed, Death on leathery wings,  
Brother shall turn against brother,  
Mother against child,  
All in hope to escape the Hunger.*

Afterwards Many-Breath's shade sinks through the earth of Grave Hill, back to his resting place.

"This is a foretelling of the future, of the Hero Wars," Ashart tells them. "I must travel to the Old Wind Temple with this news."

Despite his illness, Ashart takes a horse and rides to the Orlanth Temple at Old Wind, leaving the PCs to return to Red Cow Fort.

### RETURN TO RED COW FORT

Much of the action in this act is up to the PCs. Upon their return to Red Cow Fort with the news that the Wandle is polluted, everyone stops drinking from it. As people recover from the fever, no one gets sick again. But now everyone has to walk miles to fetch water from the Creek; a huge burden in planting season.

The children are still missing. Ustarna still suspects the events are linked.

Broddi tries to talk to Wandle to see if he can find out why she is upset, but she refuses to talk to him, crying and saying she is too upset to speak to the chieftain, who has 'betrayed her.'

The next steps are up to the PCs.

If they go back to Jostharl's household, where the infection began, Farnantyr will be missing, suggesting his guilt (actually he has run because the feud makes it impossible to marry his lover Mirani).

If they do not think to return, Ustarna tells the PCs that Voranga Many-Sorrows may be able to help because she has a good relationship with Wandle. Ustarna tells the PCs to take Voranga a gift of honey, for she has a sweet tooth.

If the PCs fought with the Dogeaters, Farandar and Kullina approach them.

"You have joined the rebellion now," Farandar tells them, "and have a price on your head. You are our brothers and sisters in arms. There are others in your clan who would see Sartar free again. We stand together."

"Broddi is no friend to the rebellion," Kullina says, "so he will regard you as trouble now. Don't worry, when Sartar is freed, we will remember who made sacrifices, and the people will then know of your deeds."

Give the PCs a Directed Improvement relationship to the Free Sartar faction (see *HeroQuest Glorantha* page 105).

## ASHWATER FALL

Voranga Many-Sorrows lives in hermit's cave near Ashwater Fall. Mist and spray hangs in the air. Alynxes roam everywhere. Voranga feeds them, but they are wild and come and go as they please. The presence of the cats tends to alert her to visitors such as the PCs. Her cave is hung with herbs, cooking utensils, preserved food, making it necessary to duck down to enter. Her furniture is simple, a table, some benches, a stone dresser and basin, her bed a straw mattress spread across a rock shelf. A fire burns in a stone fireplace providing warmth and the only light; small lesser spirits waft the smoke out of the cave for her.

Voranga is unpredictable, sometimes willing to entertain visitors, sometimes not. She flirts with everyone, but reaching through to her depends on piquing her interest. Getting Voranga's help is a contest with a High resistance.

A gift of honey, or other sweet substance helps, as Voranga has a sweet tooth. Give a +3 Situational Modifier to the PC. Seduction is a viable approach as well, for a PC of either sex; give the PC a +6 Situational Modifier. If a male PC who has mastery in the Air Rune seduces her, she will ask him to join her in a rainmaking ceremony in the fields. This is an enormous honor, bringing good fortune to the whole of the Cinsina. Give the PC a Directed Improvement relationship to Voranga (see *HeroQuest Glorantha* page 105).

If Voranga does not wish to help the PCs she simply babbles in broken poetry. There are no clues here, she is just not engaging with them, and continues to live in her own strange world.

If Voranga does decide to help she becomes lucid. She asks the PCs to recount what has happened.

"Few things upset Wandle. When people or their livestock pollute her waters or they show a lack of respect to the animals that swim in her waters, or the plants that grow along the river. She offers us her bounty for free, and asks so little in return, it is hard when people treat her without respect," Voranga tells them.

"We should go to Stagland Sour and see if we can find what pains her. We will need a gift for her, ask Broddi to provide one. I will meet you on the edge of the Sour at dusk tonight."

## Gift Bringers

The PCs need to obtain a gift. Treat this as an attempt to draw on Community Resources (see *HeroQuest Glorantha* page 123). If Broddi is hostile to the PCs, because the clan has had to pay wergild to the Lunar garrison (see Play of the Game below) then this modifies the attempt.

If the PCs fail to gain access to Community Resources, their only options are either to try and persuade a wealthy influential NPC (treat a Victory as a benefit to the attempt to speak to Wandle, a Defeat as a penalty to gaining future help from that NPC), or to provide a gift themselves (allow them to Augment with a suitable Ability).

Darna Longcoat will offer a gift without a contest, if asked and the PCs should know her reputation of generosity. Anyone who takes a gift from Darna Longcoat should take the Flaw of *In Debt to Darna Longcoat*.

"I am always pleased to help kinfolk," she tells them, "especially when they are serving their own kin. There is no need to think about repayment now, one day, when you come into your own, you will be in a position to help me, and I will call on you then."

## Stagland Sour

Voranga meets the PCs at the edge of the Sour at dusk. She carries a torch to guide the way as the daylight fails. Borngold Many-Brothers accompanies her.

"The marsh here is sacred to Krikans, the Creek, and its tributaries," she tells them, "and thus to Skyriver Titan." She points to a causeway running through the marsh. "Keep to the path; we are here at the sufferance of the spirits of this place."

Walking off the path here is dangerous. This is a liminal place, neither water nor earth but both. The Spirit World is close, and anyone with Spirit Sense can see water, frog, snake, and insect spirits clustering near the causeway. They will attack those who wander from the causeway, seeking to possess them, and then direct their possessed victims to drown themselves in the water and mud.

The spirits are particularly angry because Wandle is upset.

Will-o'-the-wisp, or ghost-lights, hover in the darkness by the causeway. They are hypnotic, drawing the gaze of travelers without Spirit Sense who cannot see them for what they are — small spirits of the marsh. Those who cannot perceive their true nature may be drawn to follow them, mistaking them for Voranga's torch and step from the path to be attacked by the spirits.

The causeway ends in a platform. Borngold tells the PCs to form a circle and place their gift in the center. He marks out the circle with river pebbles, then lights candles around the edge of the circle. Voranga invokes Skyriver Titan, Krikans, and the tributaries. She offers small gifts to the water and praises Wandle for her beauty and life giving powers. Then she asks Wandle to come forth and receive her gift.

The water in front of the platform coalesces into the shape of a woman. Wandle's form is protean.

At first, to the male PCs she seems to be a beautiful young woman, with long watery hair, and a voluptuous figure. To the women she appears to be a naked youth with an athletic figure. As she strides onto the platform, all eyes turn upon her and it is hard to resist desiring her.

She sings a sweet song of the fish in the waters.

*Darting silver silvery fishes,  
Amidst the reeds greenish,  
Every friend I could wish,  
Blowing bubbly bubbling kisses.*

But as she stands in the center, by her gift, she mutates, into a repulsive hag, her face scaled, her back bent, her hair becoming long snakes of water that swing toward the PCs, fanged mouths agape.

She screams a blood-curdling scream.

*See my fulsome fury wail and hiss,  
For my dark loathing is capricious,  
Filled with hateful passion vicious,  
Do you dare ask what lies amiss?*

Remaining within the circle when Wandle transforms, is a contest against a High resistance.

"Betrayed! I have been betrayed! Spiteful, hateful Red Cow. What did I do to deserve this?" Wandle wails, "None shall drink of my waters, or take my bounty then! Let us see who is sorry."

"Orlanth is here," Voranga begins and points to the PC with the highest Air Rune. "He will mend what is broken and right the wrongs done to you." She motions to the PC to hand over the clans' gift to Wandle.

"I will keep their children, for the Red Cow cannot be fit parents," Wandle tells them.

Frame the contest as discovering the reason for Wandle's wrath. She is so angry that the PCs can't hope to mollify her and get the children back or return her protection to using the waters of the Heort Creek; they need to coax from her what injured her, so that they can put it right. Game Masters can reveal that a lover, even on a Defeat, has injured Wandle but revealing that Farnantyr is her lover requires a Victory. She won't name him, but will make an image of him out of the water, and the PCs will easily be able to recognize his face from meeting with him earlier.

Make sure to note Consequences of Defeat or Benefit of Victory as modifiers to future interaction with Wandle.

## EASTSIDE

### *Jostharl's Household*

Eventually the PCs should return to Jostharl's household where it all began. All the answers are here.

Although the sickness has passed, because the people now travel to the Creek for water, this is not a happy household, for the loss of their children weighs heavily on everyone.

The PCs' kin are anxious; can they solve the problem and return the children?

The PCs soon learn from Jostharl the household has also lost Farnantyr. No one is sure if this is related to the children's disappearance.

If the PCs have learned from Wandle that a lover has jilted her, Jostharl mentions that everyone suspected Farnantyr had taken a lover but was secretive about it. His sister Renedala might know more.

(In fact Farnantyr's secret is his Emerald Sword lover, not Wandle. But the clues will lead the PCs in the right direction).

Renedala is twelve years old, and still a girl — not having undergone her initiation, but she has already cut her hair short, and dyed it red. She spends her time climbing trees, racing the boys, practicing with her javelin and generally behaving like a tomboy.

Everyone expects her to reveal the Air Rune at her initiation and follow Vinga's path.

No one is worried about this, apart from Renedala, who frets endlessly about her initiation and that she might have the Earth Rune and have to take Ernalda's path.

As a result Renedala is receptive to Vingans (+6 Situational Modifier) and Orlanthi (+3 Situational Modifier) but hostile to Ermaldans (-6 Situational Modifier).

Renedala knows that her brother discovered tunnels under the fort and uses them to visit Mirani. She knows nothing about her

brother and Wandle. (He shared romance with his sister, but not his sexual adventures, which is a matter for adults not children.) She followed him into the tunnels and knows the route under the Creek.

Because the PCs need Renedala to show them the route through the tunnels, frame the Consequences of Defeat, as Renedala running for the tunnels to warn her brother and the PCs having to drop everything and give chase. Renedala insists on going along with the PCs, "You won't find your way through those tunnels without me!" She sees this as an opportunity to prove herself — on an adventure!

### *Through the Tunnels*

The tunnels under Red Cow Fort are carved into the sandstone. Water has shaped some; others sections were excavated by people using antler picks; there are rooms the purpose of which is long forgotten cut into the rock. They extend down sharply through the body of the hill and then run for several miles through the surrounding area. One branch of the tunnel system heads north and runs under the Creek.

Travel through the tunnels is at times easy, there are places where steps have been carved, floors leveled, tunnels widened and people can simply walk through the passages. Other sections are not improved and there are unexpected pits and chasms, narrow squeezes and sumps, and places where the tunnels are completely flooded or blocked by a rock fall and there is nothing to do but turn around and find a new route.

There are animals in the tunnels — Rubble Runners — they dwell in packs and are vicious to intruders. They feed on the rubbish thrown over the cliffs or down the clefts in the rock of Red Cow Fort. In one or two cases they have eaten their way into the storage pits used by the Red Cow.

If Renedala agrees to show the PCs where her brother has gone too, then the journey through the tunnels is an Arduous Auto-Success (see *HeroQuest Glorantha*) as Renedala leads them by the easiest path under the Creek.

If the PCs chase Renedala then it is a Costly Success against a Very High resistance to travel through these tunnels (see *HeroQuest Glorantha*). The Consequences of Defeat are injuries from falls, cave-ins, near drowning, scrapes in a squeeze, or meeting a pack of rubble runners, etc. Renedala emerges with just a few scrapes.

## CREEK TURN

The Red Cow is feuding with the Emerald Sword, so events in Creek Turn will be difficult. Horns blow at their approach, and Rostakus Twice-Outlawed will strap on armor and call his household to confront these 'raiders.'

### RUBBLE RUNNER

A rubble runner is a rat-shaped creature one to two-feet long which lives in packs underground, or in ruins. Its wide mouth gapes back to its shoulders and can open to 60 degrees to reveal rows of sharp needle teeth. The rubble runner's hide is a tough armadillo-like leathery armor shell. They have poor eyesight and hunt by scent.

Ask the PCs how they feel to be facing the man who killed their old clan champion!

Rostakus Twice-Outlawed will be aggressive in confronting the PCs. He wants to know what they are doing here. If Renedala is present he mocks the PCs as hiding behind the skirts of children. Renedala becomes aggressive with Rostakus — “I am almost a woman and soon will be a Vingan” — Rostakus laughs cruelly and says, “And soon after that you’ll be lying face down in the mud, trying to hold your guts back in from the hole a spear made, because you were too young and dumb to know that war is killing and death!”

Rostakus will be incensed to learn of Farnantyr and Mirani, “What do you mean? One of our daughters is a bitch and rutting with some Red Cow dog! You have a lot to answer for. He has even more to answer for. Someone bring me that cur and his bitch.” His insults are even more insulting to the Orlanthi, who keep cats and dislike dogs.

Calming the situation is a contest with a Very High resistance — the ongoing feud makes peaceful negotiation difficult. If PCs lose the contest Rostakus challenges one of them to a duel — probably whoever seems to be the leader. If they accept he will set the location as Isle Dangerous a week hence. If they refuse then the PC suffers Orlanth’s Scorn and has a penalty equal to the level of Defeat to use Orlanthi divine rune affinities — Orlanth does not like cowards! It is up to the Game Master to determine how the PC can heal this damage to their reputation in the eyes of their god.

Whether dragged out by Rostakus’ carls, emerging of their own accord, or found by Renedala, Farnantyr and Mirani join the heated confrontation.

“Well, slut, lying with a Red Cow dog,” Rostakus spits before Mirani, “this is a matter that will have to go before the chieftain. He’ll have to know how you cheapened yourself.” There are nods of approval from the Emerald Sword. One of the women spits in Mirani’s face and shouts “whore!”

Farnantyr tries to shield Mirani from the crowd. A rock flies out and strikes him on the side of the head. Blood runs down his face, and he is stunned for a moment.

“Stop it,” Farnantyr cries, “leave her alone!”

Rostakus does nothing to intervene.

Do the PCs intervene at this point, to try and protect Farnantyr and Mirani from the mob? If not a few more stones fly out, and one strikes Farnantyr a good enough blow to knock him to the floor. The women continue to spit at Mirani, call her names, and yank her by the hair. Renedala screams and rushes Rostakus, who sidesteps, laughs, catches her and puts her over his knee and spanks her. Then he sends her sobbing back to the PCs, laughter ringing in her ears.

Most likely the PCs try to drag Farnantyr and Renedala away from the mob. He sobs for Mirani. She cries his name. Both swear love for each other. If they were unable to quell the mob earlier, treat this as a Costly Success, with any level of Defeat indicating Farnantyr is injured.

Getting Rostakus and his kin to let Mirani go is Nearly Impossible. Such a matter needs to go before the chieftain, and the idea of allowing one of their daughters to join a clan they are feuding with would seem outrageous and ridiculous.

If the Red Cow PCs flee with Farnantyr and Renedala, then the Emerald Sword jeers as they leave Creek Turn. Fortunately as no one follows to see them off, they can use the tunnels to retreat if they must.

The PCs might decide to fight with the mob. Rostakus Twice-Outlawed should be a Very High resistance and might prove a challenge for two to three PCs. Adjust the number of good fighters who accompany him depending on the size of your group — between two and four is right. The mob will prove less of a challenge — likely to run if axe and spear come into play.

### **Wandle**

With Farnantyr in the custody of the PCs they may want to question him about Wandle. He will seem almost relieved they are not questioning him about Mirani, and happily opens up about his tryst with the nymph.

“I couldn’t really resist. Well, I mean, you’ve seen her. I didn’t think it was anything more than sex,” he says. “There was a pool in a large cave in the tunnels and I would often go there to meet her. But it couldn’t last could it? I mean, I’m just a farmer’s boy who hasn’t even got enough oxen for a plough team of his own. Why would a goddess be interested in me?”

If the PCs explain he is the cause of her wrath, and the loss of the children he looks devastated. “I never meant for any of this to happen, any of it. I’ve ruined everything.”

If the PCs suggest that he meets with Wandle to resolve the matter he readily agrees, “But I won’t betray Mirani,” he tells them, “I love her. You have to explain that.”

### **ATONEMENT**

Farnantyr will happily take the PCs to the cave in the tunnels where he used to meet Wandle. It is at the bottom of the waters of this cave that the missing children now sleep and play — for Wandle has blessed them with gills to breathe in her waters. The PCs might even see one or two, darting in or out of the water.

It is possible the PCs decide to go back to Stagland Sour as well. The atonement can work just as well there, but the children won’t be present.

Wandle will appear at either location when Farnantyr appears.

She looks radiantly beautiful. “My love,” she says, “I knew you would come back.”

Farnantyr looks vaguely terrified and looks imploringly at the PCs, “Can you explain to her that we can’t be lovers anymore, I have found someone else.”

Wandle’s face transforms into that of the hag with hair of snakes. The children all stop playing and dive back into the water. Farnantyr cowers on the floor, whimpering in fear.

The PCs need to persuade Wandle to forgive Farnantyr and thus release the children, and allow the Red Cow to enjoy the bounty of her waters in safety again.

How to do this is left to the ingenuity of the PCs.

Apply a Situational Modifier of +6 for anyone who decides to seduce Wandle and become her new lover. If a seduction succeeds Wandle gifts the PC with gills, so he or she can descend under the water with her. Give the PC a Directed Improvement for *Breathe Water* as a Natural Magical Talent.

Any Victory should allow the PCs to succeed; these become a Benefit of Victory to future interaction with Wandle.

On a Defeat, the PCs fail to convince Wandle that Farnantyr should be forgiven. She releases the children; she has tired of their games anyway, but does not grant the Red Cow access to her waters. Apply the Consequences of Defeat to the Red Cow's Wealth Community Resource as an important natural resource dries up. On a Major or Complete Defeat, Wandle is so angry she fills Farnantyr's lungs with water and he drowns, clutching at the PCs as he expires.

In that outcome, restoring the Red Cow's fortunes in that case is left to the Game Master — possibilities include getting help from Orstalor Spearlord, or performing a *This World* heroquest to aid or conquer the waters which results in renewed friendship between the Red Cow and Wandle.

The children are unharmed by their ordeal — although all now have gills and webbed toes and feet, and have become amphibious. People call them Wandle's Children after that.

## PLAY OF THE GAME

This episode is designed to introduce players to the Red Cow clan and environment. It introduces them to a few locations, NPCs, and establishes the key threat in 1618, the feud with the Emerald Sword clan. As such, add your own scenes to introduce any NPCs who might be significant, given the Narrative Hook the players choose for their PCs. Treat this as a kick-starter to the players understanding the clan. Take your time, and allow the PCs plenty of opportunity to learn who is who in their clan.

The sickness affecting the clan is a device to force player agency — the PCs must act because the movers and shakers are too ill to do so. In addition, the illness is a threat to drive the story forward in the early steps. With the Emerald Sword waiting in the wings, NPCs should express concern if the PCs stall or dally. "We do not have time for this," they say, "the Emerald Sword will soon get wind of the clan's weakness and overrun us."

Ustarna drives the PCs to uncover the mystery. She is a Game Master tool here, to avoid the players wandering off track when confronted with the mystery. For some groups, her intervention may feel too much as though it risks robbing the players of the choices. In that case, dial down her involvement and let the PCs find their own way through the crisis. It is not necessary to travel to Grave Hill and sacrifice to the gods to solve the problem. The Game Master may still want to push beats on the PCs introducing them to key members of the clan, so that her group can begin to develop their own episodes from those interactions.

Once the PCs have information that Wandle is unhappy, either through a sacrifice at Grave Hill, or petitioning Voranga Many-Sorrows, try to allow the players as much freedom as you can to solve the problem.

Involving Voranga with the first confrontation with Wandle allows PCs to meet with this enigmatic NPC. It also allows you to drive groups lacking direction towards the solution to the problem.

If one of the PCs challenges Rostakus to a duel, it takes place one week after the challenge was issued at Isle Dangerous.

The duel gathers a crowd. Korolfin Longeye is there; just in case it turns into a brawl, he has brought militia with him. Ivar

Quickstep attends too, happy to see the 'sport' of two of his enemies killing each other. Even Illaro Broken-Back from the Lunar authorities is there, and whilst he should frown on such a duel, he seems happy to watch the entertainment, along with everyone else.

Rostakus Twice-Outlawed is a renowned fighter and should be a +1L resistance. What may disturb the PC, if they have not fought Rostakus yet, is that Rostakus Twice-Outlawed is clearly drunk and still fights this well. What kind of opponent would he be if sober?

Broddi will be angry with anyone involved, either as the duelist or attending in support of the duelist. If the PC dies, Broddi refuses his kin the right to ask for wergild — pointing out the victim's failure to "obey chosen leaders." Of course, this may anger the PCs friends and families, lose Broddi support, and create a debt that can only be repaid through more blood vengeance.

If the PCs fail to attend Orlanth will scorn them (use the original Consequences of Defeat from the confrontation that led to the duel), and skalds will sing of their cowardice. As above, the injury remains until the PC can heal his relationship through acts more befitting of an Orlanthi.

If Rostakus should die then replace him future episodes with Korlmhyor or a new Game Master NPC.

If Broddi discovers Farnantyr has found the tunnels leading into Emerald Sword lands he becomes worried about the risk of an attack, and orders the passages under the Creek blocked. Darna Longcoat and Salissa will object — these passages could be used to attack our enemies — but Broddi overrules them saying that the risk is too great.

Broddi will listen but not entertain petitions to unite Mirani and Farnantyr now — but he commits the information to memory; marriages are always a good way to cement a peace treaty and end a feud.

Broddi will be angry with the PCs if the attempts to persuade Wandle to forgive Farnantyr fail — resulting in the Red Cow losing access to the Heort Creek. Without reliable fresh water, life becomes difficult for the farmers along the Heort Creek. People and cattle die. Voranga tries to help by making rain, and the farmers catch what they can in rain butts, but the clan will have to rely on stores and buying food to feed itself until the situation is resolved.

A group more open to the Empire won't necessarily want to kill Lunar soldiers. A Game Master with PCs with that background may wish to bring in Estavia GoldEyes as an ally in the search, and perhaps have her perform the necessary divinations at the Seven Mothers shrine in Red Cow Fort.

The Empire will not take the death of its soldiers at Grave Hill lightly. They offer a reward to anyone who comes forward with information leading to the arrest of those involved — three years without taxes. Bolik Red-Turner and Tarkalus Bigger-Boat are most active in the search for those who did it.

The Empire also fines the Red Cow. Broddi has to pay ten cows in wergild for every dead soldier, and 25 cows for the garrison commander. This is a heavy blow to the Red Cow; deplete the clan's Wealth Resource by -6. Broddi calls the PCs into his hall and expresses his displeasure. "There were other ways to solve this problem, which did not involve killing Lunar

troops. I could turn you over for the good of the Red Cow, but I prefer to think that you will believe yourself in the clan's debt, and work to find some way to restore our fortunes."

Many outcomes from this episode lead to Broddi marking the PCs as 'Trouble People' — whose actions are a threat to their own clan. Be sure to note that in future interactions with Broddi, who will tend to be hostile to them, perhaps by raising the resistance the pass-fail cycle suggests. If the situation results in the Red Cow falling into poverty, people may shun the PCs as the source of their troubles.

## JARSTAK'S RAID

### BEGINS WITH

Jarstak Bristle-Beard is recruiting for a cattle raid into the clan lands of the Emerald Sword clan of the Dinacoli. The problem is everyone knows Broddi has turned him down, for fear of worsening the feud with the Emerald Sword.

"Only a fool goes poking a stick into a hornet's nest," he tells Jarstak, "stay away from the Emerald Sword clan."

### CAST

Jarstak Bristle-Beard, Rostakus Twice-Outlawed, Broddi Strong-Kin

### SITUATION

Spurred on by Darna Longcoat, Salissa Three-Husbands and Kangharl Black-Brow have goaded Jarstak into a fury. They tell

Jarstak people no longer call the Cinsina the 'Brave Tribe' but the 'Cowards Tribe' because they refuse to exact a blood price for the wrongs done to them. Jarstak vows to raid without the chieftain's permission. Many of the young men are interested; it's a chance to make a name and start building a herd.

### TWIST

Broddi has refused him permission to raid because he knows Jarstak is dangerous. With little control of his temper, he is likely to kill or injure on the raid if no one prevents him.

### CONNECTED EPISODES

Feud, Cattle Raid, Patrol, Peace Weaving

### ACTS, SCENES, AND BEATS

#### JARSTAK'S RAGE

Use the information from the common activity *Cattle Raid* to run this episode. Jarstak has already failed to get permission to raid from Broddi and everyone knows it, so there is no need to run Get Permission to Raid. We provide beats here for the attempt to recruit the PCs for the raid, and if that succeeds, the climax of the raid itself.

Jarstak plans to raid Creek Turn, the closest village to the Red Cow. See *The Missing*, above.

Salissa Three-Husbands and Kangharl Black-Brow approach the PCs.

"Jarstak Bristle-Beard plans to raid the Emerald Sword," Kangharl tells the PCs, "and he is looking for companions. I urge you to join him, despite the chieftain's refusal. The Emerald



Stealing cows at Creek Turn

Sword look down their noses at us, they mock us as weak. They burned my home, and I heard my wife inside — her screams still wake me from my dreams every night. They spur my dull revenge. I will never accept Broddi's settlement of blood price with Duruvan. This summer, I swear by Orlanth, Korlmhyor the Swift will pay for what he did to me. For now, this cattle raid will bloody their noses, and perhaps my ancestors will be quiet enough that I can rest."

"When I grew up in the Underwillow," Salissa begins, "the Ernaldan priestesses and god-talkers could always be sure the Orlanth would protect them and right wrongs done against them. I fear this is not the case in the Red Cow these days. There are too few who will protect a clan when honor is at stake."

If the PCs killed Lunar soldiers in *The Missing*, resulting in the Red Cow being fined, then Salissa may say, "I know that you are in the Red Cow's debt for those fines we paid to the Empire for the soldiers killed at Grave Hill. Winning cows from our enemies might go some way to paying off your debts."

Let the PCs decide if they want to join the raid. Salissa will mock those who do not agree to join the raid as cowards. Kangharl just seems disappointed. If the PCs do agree Kangharl clasps them by the hand, and says, "You will always find a place by the fire in my hall."

The goal should be to take cows before the folk of Creek Turn village react. Night watchmen and alynxes will prove a hazard. The prize animals are in the homefield — closest to the village — and thus most difficult to steal without being spotted. Jarstak tells everyone he is keen to steal those animals, particularly the prize bull of the village, in order to humiliate the Emerald Sword. Jarstak is keen to provoke a fight. As the raiders spill into the stead, he blows his hunting horn and cries "Up sons of the Emerald Sword, the Red Cow are upon you!"

Men folk spill forth from the longhouses, half-dressed, clutching at spears. Rostakus Twice-Outlawed and his sons try to scare the PCs off, by putting their helmets on and forming a shield wall. Jarstak runs around grinning and shouting: "Who will fight me!" He is in a killing mood and will try to lead a wedge into the shield wall.

The PCs' actions determine the outcome here — does this turn into a bloody battle, or do cooler heads prevail?

Rostakus Twice-Outlawed is a renowned warrior and a Very High resistance in a fight. He won't face down the PCs, but if the PCs insist on facing him, he will probably better three or four of them in a fight.

#### *Broddi's Anger*

Broddi is angry and vents that anger on the cattle raiders on their return. He keeps any cows from the raid and refuses to hand them to the raiders stating "they will be needed to pay wergild to the victims of this bloody feud." Jarstak is infuriated at what he sees as a failure of the chieftain's duty to his followers.

If the PCs cost the clan wergild in *The Missing*, Broddi explodes at them. "You are Trouble People. Every clan is cursed with them. I thought those lazy no-goods at Sevenoaks were the biggest thorn in the side of this clan. But you could challenge them for that position. You better start proving you understand your duty to the clan, or next time I may not protect you from outlawry."

Kangharl Black-Brow invites the raiders to Tormakt's Farm where he holds a feast in their honor. Salissa Three-Husbands joins, and she praises those who "have upheld our clan's virtues."

Kangharl approaches the PCs one-by-one to ask if he can "count on their support in the future." If people agree, Kangharl gifts them with a silver arm ring saying, "I know how to treat my people."

## PLAY OF THE GAME

Some PCs may have attitudes or alliances with Broddi meaning they object to the raid and want to prevent it rather than support it. Beats for a group that decides to work against Jarstak may change to include attempts to dissuade kinfolk from joining Jarstak's band, and attempts to influence those who can control Jarstak like Ortossi.

Direct, violent confrontation carries the risk of kinstrife — when one member of the clan kills another — and Jarstak is violent enough for this to be the light to his disorder keg. The ring will intervene to stop that from happening, but if kinstrife does occur, the clan will outlaw those responsible.

In a group with mixed attitudes, you might have Broddi ask them to join the raid to ensure it does not get 'out-of-hand.' If the hero has a relationship with another figure in the Eye of the Hurricane faction, the request most likely comes through them, on Broddi's behalf. If they succeeded in preventing trouble, Broddi will gift those PCs with fine cattle from his own herds.

It is unlikely Rostakus dies here, but if he does you will need to introduce a new recurring Emerald Sword thane for subsequent episodes or use Korlmhyor. A son of Rostakus, hell-bent on vengeance might be appropriate.

Although the next episode we provide, *The Burning of Lhankpentos the Blind*, can be run immediately afterwards, Game Masters might like to insert their own episodes ratcheting up the tension beforehand. See *Feud* for details above.

## THE BURNING OF LHANKPENTOS THE BLIND

### BEGINS WITH

You smell smoke! The hissing and spitting of the alynxes wakes everyone in the longhouse. It is the gray half-light just before dawn. There is the dull clunk of metal on metal from outside and the sound of boots running. Suddenly there is the sound of shouted orders and a horn blows outside followed by a scream.

### CAST

Rostakus Twice-Outlawed, Korlmhyor the Swift, Broddi Strong-Kin, Kangharl Black-Brow, Lhankpentos the Blind, Jaranil the Thunder, Ortossi Ketilsson

## SITUATION

Rostakus Twice-Outlawed and Korlmhyor the Swift lead a raid on Tormakt's Farm.

One or more of the PCs might have a connection allowing them to be present during the raid; another option is to have Lhankpentos the Blind to invite them to his hall for a feast. If the PCs saved the children in *The Missing*, Lhankpentos invites them to thank them for their role in saving his grandchildren.

## CONNECTED EPISODES

Feud, Cattle Raid, Patrol, Peace Weaving, Emissaries

## ACTS, SCENES, AND BEATS

### THE SILK-BREECHES FEUD

#### *Burners*

The raiders are intent on steady burning. Rostakus and Korlmhyor's plan is to pen everyone inside the village's main longhouse, and set fire to it, killing everyone inside, including the women and children. When the players awake, the longhouse they sleep in is already surrounded and the thatch is smoldering. The doors seem blocked from the outside.

Unless the PCs can produce a plan to survive the fire, the choice is stark: break a door down and fight your way out, or burn to death. Through cracks in the wooden frame, they can see the raiders gathered outside and other halls are being set ablaze as well.

The burners expect some people to try to fight their way out of a burning hall. The raiders will get plenty of warning because the folk inside must first batter down the barricades in front of the doors. The burners are ready for people trying to break away and hurl javelins at those emerging from the burning home. Any who survive a round of javelins they close with to finish off with spears and swords.

As smoke begins to fill the house, Lhankpentos succumbs. The old man's body simply can't cope and he dies gasping for air. It is Nearly Impossible for a PC to stop this, Lhankpentos is old, and his time in this world is running short. This just gives him the final push. If a PC does save him, he will still be incapacitated, and getting him out will be a complicating factor to leaving.

The PCs might wait until the house begins to collapse from the flames and try to push out of a broken wall instead. The PCs must succeed at a suitable contest to avoid injury from flames or inhaling too much smoke.

The most credible plans to survive involve extinguishing the fire by throwing water, ale, or milk over the flames, or using magic. Of course those outside will try to keep relighting the fire, tossing new torches into the thatch or lighting hay bales stacked against the walls of the building.

Anyone who does not leave a burning building will die either from smoke inhalation or being consumed by fire.

The PCs and the burners can talk to each other, so it might be possible to persuade the burners to stop, or to let the women and children go. Burning is considered a dishonorable act, because it is so indiscriminate.

Persuading the burners to let the women and children escape has a High resistance. Persuading them to let the men go has a Very High resistance. Inventive PCs may try to smuggle people out disguised as women, etc.

Persuading them to let Kangharl go has a Nearly Impossible resistance.

If Kangharl cannot leave, some of his retainers opt to stand and die with him instead of leaving his side. Kangharl summons an Umbroli and has it fly a bench through the roof of the building. It comes crashing down outside, throwing up sparks and embers. Rostakus' men scatter and then fall back as the Umbroli barrels into them. Meanwhile Kangharl leads his followers out through the hole in the roof. Many are burnt as they climb through the flames, but manage to escape. They flee under cover of darkness and confusion from the Umbroli attack.

Any PC who opts to stand with Kangharl creates a debt of honor Kangharl will repay if asked — provided they survive.

After the event, the burners will be notorious. Lhankpentos the Blind dies in the attack, burnt to death in his hall. The clan goes into shock at the death of such a beloved old man. At the funeral Kangharl Black-Brow gives a moving speech, praising the old man, promising help to rebuild Tormakt's Farm, and promising blood vengeance for this crime.

Most likely, the bloodline elects Kangharl to speak for them without opposition, unless one of the PCs stands. Opposing Kangharl at this point is Nearly Impossible unless the PC has proven his or her self to the bloodline with past deeds, in which case it might be Very High.

#### *Blood Vengeance*

The clan's cows all run dry and the god-talkers have dreams of the ancestors dying at the hands of the Dinacoli during the Resettlement. Ashart Dusk-Eater tells the ring that the ancestors are angry and have withdrawn their protection. The clan must raid their enemies if the clan is not to go hungry; the clan must avenge these wrongs by the 'Fat Tribe.'

Even Broddi cannot speak peace when faced with this crime. He organizes a raiding party to hunt down the burners on Emerald Sword lands and take blood vengeance for Lhankpentos and the other victims of the raid.

Broddi recruits Jaranil the Thunder and Ortossi Ketilsson to lead the raid. Kangharl invites the PCs to join any such expedition. If they refuse Kangharl will goad them, asking if the "lives of your loved ones mean so little."

The PCs will find it harder to obtain clan support for their actions if they fail to join with this raid.

## THE SIEGE OF CREEK TURN

#### *Jaranil's Raid*

Jaranil the Thunder gathers his raiding party from amongst the Red Cow's thanes and best fighters. The raiders number some twenty-five of the clan's thanes and a further forty of the clan's better-equipped and trained carls.

After sacrificing a ram to Humakt for aid in killing, Jaranil takes the raiders across Dangerford. He has little luck though: spies in Dangerford mean that the Emerald Sword clan has been

expecting an attack and posted watchers on the routes from Red Cow Fort and Dangerford. The watchers blow their horns and the alert goes quickly from steady to steady.

Rostakus Twice-Outlawed is at Creek Turn. He realizes he is outnumbered and decides to hide in his longhouses instead of coming out to meet the Red Cow, hoping that help will arrive from his clan.

The Red Cow could decide to burn Rostakus. Whilst Ortossi and Jarstak support the ‘poetic justice’ of this argument, Jaranil responds, “Two wrongs don’t make a right.” Jaranil will go with the opinion of the group, but if it goes against him says, “I fear the Red Cow will live to regret this day.” If the Red Cow tries burning him then Rostakus attempts to fight his way to freedom instead of dying in the flames.

Goading Rostakus to a duel is another option but provoking Rostakus into the open has a High resistance. Rostakus should be a Very High resistance in a fight.

The Emerald Sword clan has been roused by the watchers’ horns to action. At a nearby stead, Korlmhyor the Swift organizes a hue and cry summoning thanes and carls to join him in driving the Red Cow out of Emerald Sword clan lands.

Korlmhyor takes time to assemble enough men to give the Red Cow a ‘bloody nose.’ By the time he rides out to challenge the Red Cow he has some thirty thanes and sixty carls in his warband.

Use the advice on *War* in the Common Activity section to run this battle. Because Jaranil is in command, and we don’t want to roll NPC vs. NPC the outcome is pre-determined: the Red Cow lose this fight and suffers causalities in the rout that follows the breaking of their shield wall.

Let the PCs know that the Red Cow will lose the fight, and describe the awful situation as the Emerald Sword break their line. Encourage the players to frame the contest by Naming the Prize with this in mind (see *HeroQuest Glorantha* page 58). They can still frame contests describing how heroically they fought, but they might want to focus on how their rear guard action helps others escape, how Jaranil notices their heroism in the press of battle, how they help organize the escape back across the Creek, rallying the troops to prevent them being slaughtered by vengeful Emerald Sword thanes. The raiders will flee directly back to Dangerford and one fitting end if they cannot outrun their pursuers is a battle at Isle Dangerous. The Empire does not move to break up that battle, it has too few troops to get between the warring parties. However the Empire begins to consider the blood feud a problem as a result.

Lower the Red Cow War Resource by -6 to represent this defeat by the Emerald Sword (see *HeroQuest Glorantha* page 124).

## PLAY OF THE GAME

This episode begins with a simple jolt to the PCs. Keep the pace moving and don’t allow the players too long to think. Make them react as their PCs have to, with little notice, barely awake and confused. Rostakus intends this to be a death trap. It is possible a PC might choose to sacrifice his or her self so that the others can escape, for example charging out the front door, whilst the others make an exit via the rear. Allow the PC to sacrifice themselves by using the rules for Pyrrhic Victory (see *HeroQuest Glorantha*).

If the PCs manage to save Lhankpentos they will be heroes, feted by the Tormakting bloodline who consider themselves in the PCs debt. The old man will die anyway over Sacred Time, the injuries he received and losing his home are simply too much, and he slips away quietly, surrounded by his children and grandchildren. Perhaps even by the PCs.

Even after the burning, don’t allow the players too long to react. Make it clear that the clan is swept up in an angry mood, calling for vengeance and showing little desire for negotiation and compromise. If the PCs suggest compromise or peace, confront them with angry kin who question their courage and competence. The voices for peace are few and mostly confined to members of the Eye of the Hurricane faction like Broddi who feel that, “There has already been enough killing.”

Some may object that the outcome of the battle is pre-determined, and that player action cannot change it, suggesting they are being railroaded. Remind them that Jaranil not they was leading the warband, and that you do not intend to role NPC vs. NPC. By informing them of the outcome of the battle before they frame the contest, you don’t make their actions meaningless, as you inform them the contest they frame ought to be about something other than who wins the battle.

Sometimes players dislike “losing” as the Red Cow do in this instance. Encourage them to channel those feelings through their PCs by introducing them to NPCs like Kangharl and Jarstak who will be bitter about any loss to the “enemy” and plot vengeance.

Following this episode, or even before it, you should run more scenes from the *Feud* episode to reflect the explosion of tit-for-tat killings between the Emerald Sword and the Red Cow clan. The killings and counter-killings run through Sea Season and into Fire Season. These incidents can be mixed in with other episodes: for example, a trade expedition can be interrupted by enemies from the Emerald Sword clan on a Jonstown or Boldhome street or whilst traveling along a royal road.

You could also run an *Emissaries* episode, if the Red Cow tries to get help from friends or allies. At some point start the *Peace Weaving* episode as Broddi tries to end the feud.

The PCs might try to bolster the clan’s War Resource following a defeat. See *Resources, Background Events, and Crisis Tests* above for suggestions.

The Red Cow losses here put them on the back foot. The arrogance of the Coming Storm faction is seen as having caused the trouble and Broddi and the Eye of the Hurricane faction gain from their rivals’ discomfort, with many in the clan realizing their warnings were correct. Broddi, shocked at the deaths takes little comfort from the outcome.

## PEACE WEAVING

### BEGINS WITH

Darna Longcoat wants the PCs to join the expedition to the Emerald Sword. It is likely that they have earned the reputation as Trouble People with Broddi, following earlier events. Darna hopes they are, and will bring the peace process crashing down.

She wants the Red Cow to assert its dominance over the clans along the Creek, and it won't do that by suing for peace.

Darna summons the PCs to the Great Hall for the council meeting — she wants the PCs on hand when Broddi and the ring discuss who will form part of the expedition to the Emerald Sword.

"I am going to give you the opportunity to lose your reputation for bringing trouble to the Red Cow," she says, smiling, "Broddi is sending emissaries to the Emerald Sword, to sue for peace and end this feud. I will petition for you to join us, so you can fix your broken reputations. After all, that's what Orlanth did, took responsibility for his actions and fixed his mistakes."

## CAST

Broddi Strong-Kin, Salissa Three-Husbands, Darna Longcoat, Kernalda Other-Ways, Griselda Gray-Tresses, Kangharl Black-Brow, Duruvan the Fat, Kallesra Sees-Tomorrow, Rostakus Twice-Outlawed, Korlmhyor the Swift

## SITUATION

Broddi decides the Red Cow is losing the struggle with the Emerald Sword clan and resolves to seek peace to try to end the feud. With the Dinacoli allied to Harvar in Alda-Chur, not Prince Temertain in Boldhome, Broddi is unable to approach a court to seek resolution, so he "takes it to the women."

Broddi chooses Griselda Gray-Tresses to lead the women of the Red Cow clan. The two groups will need to begin weaving their peace rug, talking through the challenges facing the two clans.

Griselda sets out for the Emerald Sword clan to begin the talks. She takes Salissa Three-Husbands, Kullina the Fat, and Darna Longcoat with her. Broddi sends Kernalda Other-Ways to provide protection for the emissaries.

Broddi chooses Griselda to lead because he has realized that Darna Longcoat has no interest in peace with the Emerald Sword clan. Darna plots to see it fail, embarrassing Broddi and Griselda. Salissa is a puppet dancing to Darna's tune. Griselda hopes to win Salissa away from Darna.

Both Griselda and Broddi are aware of Farnantyr and Mirani, the young lovers from *The Missing*. Uniting the two of them in marriage might prove useful to cement any peace negotiations.

## CONNECTED EPISODES

Peace Weaving, Feud, The Burning of Lhankpentos the Blind, Jarstak's Raid, Jones' Peace

## ACTS, SCENES, AND BEATS

### THE COUNCIL

Broddi tells the council that he will send the women to make peace with the Emerald Sword Clan. "There is always another way," he tells the assembled ring and PCs.

Salissa Three-Husbands and Kangharl Black-Brow react with anger, shouting at Broddi and urging him not to "betray the ancestors by paying off the Emerald Sword."

Broddi shrugs and simply says, "We cannot win this fight.

"I have asked Griselda Gray-Tresses to weave a peace rug with the Emerald Sword women," he continues. "Ernalda's god-talkers and priestesses will accompany them."

Everyone expects Darna to be spitting with rage at such an insult, for as the high priestess of Ernalda she should lead the peace weaving. But she seems calm, as if she expected this development.

When Broddi assigns Kernalda to provide protection for the peace weavers, Darna steps forward, "I know these sons and daughters of Karganar Blood-Eye," she points to the PCs, "would dearly like to win approval from you Broddi, and make up for any past mistakes. They have petitioned me to join this mission, as guardians and helpers of the Earth, and I would like the ring to agree to send them along to help."

Broddi snorts, "They are Trouble People, more likely to cause pain than stop it."

Give the PCs a chance to defend themselves and speak up for their own actions. After the PCs, Darna and Salissa, but perhaps surprisingly to the PCs, Farandar and Kullina speak up in their favor.

Broddi relents.

"Don't worry," Darna tells the PCs, "I'll give you an opportunity to repay your debt to me in the future."

Of course Darna is duplicitous, but even if the PCs don't trust her, they might want join the expedition.

Some players may be spitting at this point, but such manipulations are Darna's style.

Make the PCs aware that by accepting a role in this mission they enter Darna's debt. By refusing it they risk offending her. Give the PCs a Directed Improvement of *In Debt to Darna Longcoat* under their *Red Cow Clan* keyword if they accept. If they refuse give them a Directed Improvement of *Spurned Darna Longcoat*.

Once she has Broddi's agreement, Darna begins plotting. She intends for the Trouble People — the PCs — to scupper any chances the mission has of success.

Her first step is to send Salissa to goad the PCs.

Salissa will question the PCs' courage, one of the Red Cow clan's virtues, for not bringing the stead-burner, Rostakus, the killer of Lhankpentos the Blind to justice. "Would that I were a younger woman, I would take Vinga's vows, dye my hair red, and kill this man myself, for it appears that we have no men left in our clan?"

If the PCs want to resist Salissa's goading it is a contest against their own *Red Cow Clan* keyword.

If Salissa wins over any of the PCs, she tells Darna.

If Salissa persuades anyone to sabotage the mission, Darna abandons using Salissa as a mouthpiece and pushes the PC to action herself. She reveals her true intent — stop this craven call for peace — to the PC and actively solicits their aid in upsetting Broddi's plans.

Observant PCs may see Darna and Salissa in argument, as Darna twists Salissa's arm to act as her mouthpiece. Those PCs who refuse Salissa's attempts to subvert the process may attempt to win Salissa away from Darna. This is a Very High resistance as Salissa is in fear of Darna and her retribution if crossed.

If any PCs fail to listen to Salissa, Darna will ask Kangharl to approach them.

Kangharl will speak of his pain, the pain of losing his wife Yerestia three years ago. "My heart cries out. No guilders can soothe my pain, only blood vengeance against the Emerald Sword. For too long have the Dinacoli killed our kin. We cannot offer them peace!"

Again this is a contest against the PC to see if they react to his goading. If the PC has another Ability likely to encourage them to be vengeful — a Disorder Rune for example — test that instead of the *Red Cow Clan* keyword. Allow the PC to use any Benefit of Victory from the contest with Salissa in this contest.

If any of the PCs side with him he will take them into his confidence: "As part of this embassy to the Emerald Sword clan, you have the opportunity to ensure that peace does not happen. I will be in your debt for such a gift."

If the PCs have played *The Missing* then Farnantyr pleads with them upon learning they are heading to Creek Turn: "Find out how Mirani is, tell her that I still love her."

## INTO EMERALD SWORD LANDS

The expedition sets out crossing the Creek at Dangerford and then following it north towards Lake Aroka. Kernalda rides out in front of the party, blowing her horn regularly to alert the Emerald Sword to the expedition's presence.

### *Patrol*

The Red Cow party meets an Emerald Sword patrol (see *Sartar Companion*, page 134) led by Rostakus Twice-Outlawed.

Rostakus is hostile to the presence of Red Cow clan folk on his lands. If the PCs were involved in *The Missing* or *The Burning of Lhankpentos the Blind*, they will recognize Rostakus. How do the PCs react?

Rostakus is aggressive. He will happily duel with a PC and does not back down from a challenge.

If they try to challenge Rostakus to a duel Griselda intervenes and tells the PC that, "We have come to weave peace, not more violence. There is always another way."

In confidence, Salissa will goad any PC who looks likely to duel with Rostakus: "That men who have done the Red Cow such harm should freely walk the land and she should not feel shame! Will you dishonor your ancestors by refusing to show this son of Dinacol Hard-Rule that the Cinsina will not be cowed into submission? If you don't I fear we will always be victims of their aggression."

If a PC has expressed willingness to Darna to sabotage the peace weaving, she tells the PC that, "This Rostakus is touchy with his honor, fight him and we can be sure this peace weaving will not end in our submission to the Emerald Sword."

If the PC obeys Griselda, he will mock the PC as "hiding behind the women's skirts."

If the PC listens to Salissa and agrees a duel he sets the time and place as "dawn in three days on Isle Dangerous." Should the PC fail to attend that duel, Salissa Three-Husbands and the Emerald Sword will mock them for cowardice. Give them a Directed Improvement of *Cowardly* under their *Red Cow Clan* keyword.

If the PCs ask about Mirani, Rostakus laughs. "That bitch won't go chasing after Red Cow dogs since the chieftain told her that she was dishonoring the memories of the ancestors by carrying on with one of our enemies. The women shaved her bald, and she doesn't leave the house anymore out of shame. I doubt she will again until it grows back."

### *The River Dragon*

The party hears shouts and screams the other side of a copse by the side of the river. Rostakus orders the group to press on — he wants to see what is happening. Kernalda flanks Griselda, Salissa, and Darna closely watching nervously for trouble. She orders the PCs to ride ahead and find out what is happening.

As they break through the tree line, the PCs see four men and women fighting a large river dragon. The creature has its jaws around one of the four and is thrashing him about. The others stick the river dragon with spears, trying to get it to release its hold on their companion, before it can retreat into the water.

The river dragon is a huge beast, twenty feet long and weighing some 2000 lbs. Rostakus and his patrol join the fight against the river monster. Such a large group is able to force the River Dragon to release its victim and slink back into the water. The prize in such a contest for the PCs is to survive without injury and perhaps acquit themselves well.

After the fight, Rostakus quickly realizes that the victim and his friends are some of Orstalor's guerrillas. With that discovery, Rostakus will bind them and take them to his chieftain, to decide what is to be done. The victim of the River Dragon's jaws is badly wounded and needs a healer. The Red Cow priestesses offer to do what they can, but Rostakus warns them off. He orders the three less badly injured guerrillas to carry their friend to Blue Dragon village, from where they can be turned over to the authorities.

Rostakus is playing a dangerous game, his little patrol is outnumbered and if the PCs joined with the guerrillas, they might be able to kill him. Rostakus is relying on Griselda's desire for peace to be enough to keep her retinue in line. Kullina the Fat and Kernalda Other-Ways are strong supporters of the rebellion and would join any PCs who decided to "free the prisoners."

If the PCs accept Griselda's instruction, Salissa and Kullina complain to the PCs muttering about: "Broddi's policy of appeasement."

## BLUE DRAGON

When the PCs arrive at Blue Dragon, it is obvious how much their delegation is despised. People stop what they are doing to stare as the Red Cow party proceeds down the track through the village to the chieftain's hall. Mothers call their children, alynxes hiss, men spit on the ground and make the sign to ward off evil. A young man shouts at the Red Cow: "I am Jarlar son of Garath. Do you hear me Red Cow? You killed my father! No wergild can pay that debt. I will have blood vengeance."

Away from the braying of the mob outside, Duruvan's hall seems quiet and safe. Duruvan is polite and welcoming, restraining much of the bile his clan directs at the Red Cow. He looks for peace, if the women can find a solution. He introduces



them to the priestesses on the Emerald Sword ring: Kallesra Sees-Tomorrow, Tamara Little-Mouse, and Olinara Ravenhead, wishing them well on finding a solution.

The women retire to the Loom House. Duruvan invites the men in the Red Cow party to stay in his hall.

#### *In the Chieftain's Hall*

The escort enjoys comfortable but wary hospitality in the chieftain's hall. Korlmhyor the Swift, Rostakus Twice-Outlawed, and their men always keep them company.

Boredom is the enemy, and to prevent quarreling Duruvan suggests that the two sides contest in games of skill instead of war. He proposes sword and shields tournaments, foot races, swimming in Lake Aroka, and horse racing. He tries to keep people busy and give their aggression an outlet to prevent violence.

The contests could spiral into further violence with Rostakus, especially if he loses to the Red Cow. Salissa and Darna continue to spread poison, suggesting that, "Losing these games to the Emerald Sword will show us as weak," and remarking that, "Rostakus mocks you; he thinks you feeble."

#### *In the Loom House*

The women come together in the Loom House to weave peace, intertwining their anger for the crimes committed by each side, exposing their hopes and dreams for the future.

Treat this as a Group Simple Contest trying to overcome the resistance to negotiating a settlement felt by both sides. For any one person to achieve this would be Nearly Impossible, but working together the women can reduce this resistance to Very High. Do not roll for NPCs, make some short speeches for them that reveal their beliefs, interspersing them with the PCs.

## BLUE DRAGON STEAD

Located where tributaries flow from Lake Aroka into The Creek, Blue Dragon village is one of Emerald Sword clan's most southerly villages. The location is idyllic and peaceful. In Earth Season, the land here is covered in a sea of barley.

The chieftain's hall of the Emerald Sword clan reflects the Dinacoli wealth. It is 80 feet in length with a tin roof, which resounds when the rain falls.

Salissa should dwell far more on hurt and injury than solutions, Kullina will argue over religion, and Darna will refuse to speak up. Griselds speaks of the cost of war in blood and treasure. Kallesra works far harder to achieve peace than the Red Cow priestesses do. Apply the results of the contest to the Red Cow's Peace Resource rating (see *HeroQuest Glorantha* page 125).

See the In the Loom House scene in *Peace Weaving* for more advice on running this scene.

If the women agree peace, then they return with their escort to Red Cow Fort. There they explain the settlement to Broddi and the ring. Broddi agrees to whatever the women have talked through.

The clans agree to hold the Peace Rug at Isle Dangerous. Broddi and the Red Cow ring travel to the meeting, and Broddi asks those PCs who took part in the peace weaving to accompany him.

At Isle Dangerous, people from both the Cinsina and Dinacoli tribes turn out to watch the peace weaving. Duruvan and Broddi embrace like old friends and Griselda and Kallesra lead the ceremony. Guided by the priestesses, the two clans agree

the peace deal. Afterwards everyone celebrates that, “Another way” has been found, and many people go into Dangerford to cement new relations by drinking and eating together.

## PLAY OF THE GAME

Some players may want to stop the feud with the Emerald Sword clan; others might want to pursue it. This episode gives those who would prefer to weave peace the chance to act. It also shows that the main opposition to peace comes from within the clan, not from outside it.

If the PCs help win peace, Broddi will begin to change his opinion of them — perhaps there is hope for them after all. If the PCs try to sabotage the peace plan Broddi confirms his opinion of them — they are trouble and a danger to the clan.

Should the peace weaving fail the feud will continue. The Game Master should run more scenes from the *Feud* episode to indicate the worsening of the conflict between the two clans.

The PCs might try to bolster the clan’s Peace Resource following a defeat. If the Red Cow has yet to seek allies from other clans, or even from the tribe, then run an *Emissaries* episode as the clan seeks help prosecuting the war. The Emerald Sword may also try to obtain allies. The PCs might have to stop the Emerald Sword emissaries winning over the Dolutha.

The tension in this scenario comes from within the Red Cow mission. Griselda tries to soothe passions and tempers, but Salissa and Darna try to inflame them. The PCs are pawns to Darna; she hopes she can push the Trouble People into scuppering any negotiation: they will take the blame and Griselda’s expedition will be a failure.

The PCs might try to expose Darna, but she is careful to make Salissa the scapegoat if anything goes wrong. Broddi won’t accept Darna has betrayed him, choosing to believe in Salissa’s guilt instead, and pressing the allegation only serves to weaken their position with Broddi.

If the PC does end up in a duel with Rostakus, see the Play of The Game notes in *The Missing* for advice on how to run this.

If peace was agreed, then the duel may ironically follow the peace conference at Isle Dangerous. Despite the best efforts of both clans the seeds of a new feud have been sown, which may reap a bitter harvest when the peace woven earlier begins to fray and wear thin.

Eventually it is likely that the Red Cow need to seek outside help to reach a settlement. In that case, run *Fazzur Wants Peace, Now!*

# FAZZUR WANTS PEACE, NOW!

## BEGINS WITH

You gather at the side of your chieftain, Broddi Strong-Kin. The emotions of the people of Red Cow Fort seem mixed. Some wish you well as you depart, hoping that your expedition will at last

bring peace. Others look scornfully at you, turning their backs, feeling you have betrayed the ancestors by seeking settlement with the Emerald Sword clan for this bloody feud.

## CAST

Broddi Strong-Kin, Jomes Hostralos, Duruvan the Fat, Ivartha the Skinner

## SITUATION

Fazzur is focused on the invasion of the Holy Country to the south of Dragon Pass. He will launch a major invasion of Heortland in late Sea Season 1619. Thousands of soldiers from across the Empire have been gathering at the great Lunar Camp outside of Wilmskirk for the better part of a year; more are expected to arrive during Sea Season. Fazzur intends to use the Creek-Stream River to help supply this great army. The last thing General Fazzur wants is a tribal war interfering with his supply chain!

The fighting across the Creek threatens his supply routes so Fazzur sends his ‘detachable right hand,’ Gordius Silverus (see *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* page 269, *Sartar Companion*, page 121), to resolve it. Gordius assembles the Arrowstone Cavalry from Jonstown and rides into Dangerford. He summons Queen Ivartha and King Petrad to attend a peace conference on Isle Dangerous, along with Broddi Strong-Kin and Duruvan the Fat. He also summons Jomes to join him, to lend his advice.

Many in the Red Cow clan are optimistic at this turn of events, especially those who fight alongside Jomes in the Wolf Hunt. “He is a good man,” they will tell anyone who will listen. “We can trust him to speak up for us to Gordius on how wronged we have been by the Emerald Sword. After all, they started it.”

Broddi asks the PCs to accompany him.

## CONNECTED EPISODES

Feud, Cattle Raid, Patrol, Peace Weaving

## ACTS, SCENES, AND BEATS

### DANGERFORD

#### *The Queen*

The queen and her household arrive in Red Cow Fort a few days before setting out with Broddi, and this provides a good opportunity for the PCs to meet them. Introduce the PCs to members of the queen’s household who share their beliefs on the Telmori and Lunar threats. Introduce them to Queen Ivartha herself.

Queen Ivartha is sympathetic to the Red Cow; those who died were her kin too after all. However, she is concerned that the feud is distracting from the menace posed by the Telmori shaman Jogar Sog who is stirring up the wolfmen. This foreshadows the conflict in 1620.

# KING OF THE SWINGERS

In fortunate years, sometime between the tribal market in Fire Season and the tribal market in Earth Season, Bozdagan's Band arrives in Dangerford — to play a short season — then heads on the Red Cow Fort and the Theater there, where they remain until the first snows of winter.

The leader of the troupe of musical performers is Bozdagan the baboon. He is also the lead singer of the band; although many say his vocals are an 'acquired taste.' Bozdagan's three wives provide the chorus, whilst his sons and daughters work behind the scenes, and carry provisions on the trail.

Although Bozdagan leads the band, Puddleduck, a durulz initiate of Issaries, is the band's manager, organizing their tour schedule, and passing around her magical hat into which goes the collection for the night's entertainment.

On the lyre is the centaur Zinger Hendrik, who also composes all of the bands songs. Puddleduck tries to keep Zinger to short folk numbers that play well with the mostly rural audiences, but Zinger fancies himself a composer of epics. He moans about his 'musical differences' with Puddleduck, claiming she has undue influence on the band.

Zinger is also the priest of Donander, the players' god, for the band and leads their ceremonies, most of which take the form of musical performances with the audience helping make up the numbers for the initiates to talk to their god.

The Windwood brother are three satyrs from beast valley who all play pan pipes. The brothers smoke too much hazia, drink too much wine, chase too many local women, and steal too much from their hosts for Puddleduck's liking, and she regularly has to resolve the mess.

Growl the trollkin leads a group of trollkin drummers. They escaped from the Redwood Caverns where their owner, a Zorak Zorani death lord, had trained to keep the beat for his zombie army. The septet stomp, crash bronze symbols, and beat out compelling rhythms on their drums. Everyone dances when they play. Growl always seems to be on the lookout for his former master, who he is sure is coming to 'take us back, any day now.'

The 'Noble Cats' are the brass section. On the carnyx is Saramiss, who claims he is a 'Puma Person,' a were-puma. Saramiss claims there are many of his kind, though Minaryth Purple famously claimed on meeting him that 'there are no Puma People in Glorantha'. Farmers though have reported a large panther taking sheep when Bozdagan's Band is in town, and although Puddleduck claims it is nonsense invented by Saramiss, she settles their claims. On the Cornu is Te Fang, who comes from far-off Kralorela. He says he is a 'Tiger Son' a were-tiger, but Garval Shvetop has called him a liar. There are stories about would-be theives encountering a large striped cat prowling the band's tents, but Puddleduck dismisses such talk as locals 'high on hazia.'

## *Gordius' Judgment*

In the comparative privacy of his luxurious tent, Gordius Silverus compels Queen Ivartha to make peace with King Petrad and to pay compensation for their dead and wounded.

In public, Jomes Hostralos reads out Gordius' judgment.

His first judgment he tells everyone is the compensation due to both parties. Do a rough totting up of the killings on each side to arrive at a figure due to each side from the feud. The actual payment made is any difference between the two. For example, if the Emerald Sword clan owes the Red Cow one hundred cows in wergild and the Red Cow owes the Emerald Sword fifty cows, then the final payment would be fifty cows to the Red Cow.

His second judgment is to fine the parties for becoming involved in a feud, telling them that the Governor, Fazzur Wideread is determined to stamp out feuding. Gordius fines the Emerald Sword clan forty cows, and then fines the Red Cow one hundred cows, telling them that he is clear that they were the main troublemakers throughout the feud. Broddi looks shocked. The Red Cow ring looks angry; Kangharl and Darna are red-faced with rage. However, there is little the Red Cow can do but accept this turn of events.

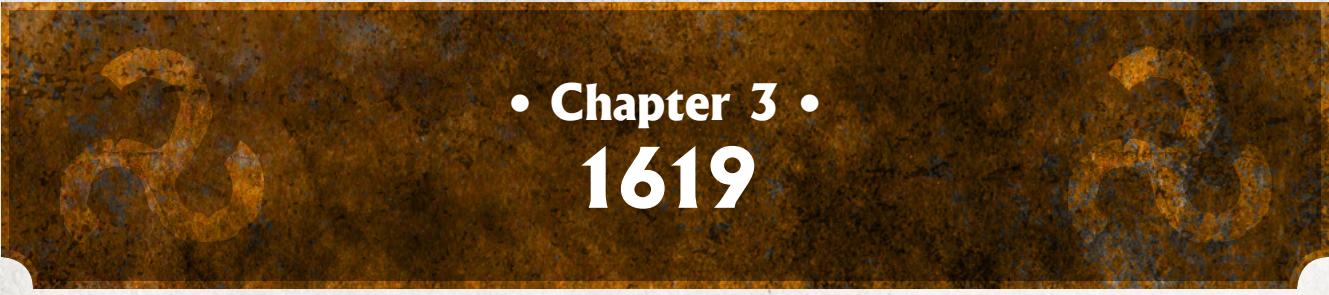
## PLAY OF THE GAME

This episode ends this story and contains no crisis for the PCs to fix, but has many opportunities for interacting, perhaps for the first time, with the 'movers and shakers' outside the Red Cow clan.

The PCs may well be angered that an outside force imposes a settlement. Capitalize on this anger with approaches to the PCs by Farandar and Kullina who endeavor to recruit them to the rebellion.

Gordius Silverus' judgment is a disaster for the Red Cow; deplete the Red Cow's Wealth Resource by -6.

The clan is shocked that the Empire could show such strong bias against them. The Moon Winds amidst the clan point out that if the Red Cow accepted the Lunar religion then perhaps Gordius Silverus would have supported them. This, they say, is the new reality, that the client tribes and kings will prosper and those who oppose the Empire will lose out.



## • Chapter 3 •

# 1619

## CONFLICTS

### CHAOS FLOOD

The Lunar Empire has always included Chaos within its religion — and its acceptance of the entropic forces that nearly broke the world is a cornerstone of the conflict between the Red Moon and the Storm Gods.

Whilst many within the Heartland choose to overlook the horrific nature of Chaos, the Lunar Empire is able to employ Chaotic demons such as the Crimson Bat as terror weapons to cower the provincial populace.

The side-effect of such a display is that Chaos throughout Dragon Pass is stirred from its nests.

The Red Cow's Chaos foes in the Great Darkness were ogres, and the power of the Bat flushes out the Chaotic evil concealed within the clan.

### THE RING

**Frekor Deep-Woods** becomes concerned about the rising of a new leader amongst the Telmori — Jorgar Sog. He is particularly concerned that with Jomes in Boldhome, the Telmori will choose to attack.

**Kullina the Fat** demands that the Red Cow aid the southern Orlanthi by supporting Orstalor and Venharl in raiding the Lunar supply train.

**Broddi Strong-Kin** refuses to allow the clan to be drawn in.

**Farandar Orendalsson** makes contact with the rebels, and leads small groups to aid Orstalor in attacking the Lunars up and down the Creek. The farmers complain he is ignoring them, and **Griselda Gray-Tresses** has to rein him in. She tries to encourage the clan to improve its relations with its allies, and make peace with its enemies.

### THE HERO WARS

The Crimson Bat moves through Sartar on its way south. The local chieftains are cowed for years to come.

### SEA SEASON

General Fazzur Wideread marches the Lunar Army southward.

The Kultain tribe rises against the Lunars, capturing and drowning an entire caravan of concubines traveling to the priests around Whitewall. After supernatural efforts, the priests capture the Kultain king and drown him in successively more awful liquids. After his death, the Lunars break up the Kultain tribal regalia. A few of its clans join other tribes, but the Lunars force the majority to swear loyalty to the small Sylangi tribe.

High King Broyan and the Volsaxi retreat to the fortress city of Whitewall. Detachments of the army lay siege to the fortress whilst the remainder continue to march south.

During his absence, Fazzur Wideread gives Jomes Hostralos command of the garrison forces in Sartar. Queen Ivartha and other members of the Jonstown Confederation express concern — with Jomes spending more of his time in Boldhome, advising Prince Temertain, who will watch the Telmori?

The rebellion tries to disrupt Fazzur's supply lines, ambushing Lunar caravans along the roads and rivers between Tarsh and Whitewall. Orstalor Spearlord leads his Mudhens up and down the Creek, disrupting Lunar shipping and Venharl Stormbrow raids the mule trains along the royal road between Dangerford and Boldhome.

Fazzur tells Jomes to "secure the rear, quash those bandits" and Jomes sends word to the garrisons across Sartar — no tolerance of banditry. He 'persuades' Prince Temertain to remind everyone of their commitment to keep the royal roads free of brigands. *Manhunt* deals with the fallout of this edict for the Red Cow.

If the PCs have not yet completed the *Stealing of the Giant's Cows* heroquest, one option is to run it now.

### FIRE SEASON

The Lunar Army assaults Smithstone, and then marches downriver to Karse. After a failed assault, the army lays siege to the city. After some weeks, many of the besieged defenders escape by ship, leaving only the locals who are overpowered when dragonewt mercenaries storm the walls. Fazzur Wideread spares the common people and prevents his troops from sacking the city.

### DARK SEASON

Fazzur Wideread's army winters in Karse, active only in vigorous defense against raiders from Hendrikiland. By the next spring, the port is open.

The Empire sends the Crimson Bat to help the siege of Whitewall. The initial part of this event is captured in the scenario *The Crimson Bat Comes to Sartar* in *Sartar Companion*; we cover the Red Cow involvement in *Flight from the Bat*. The Bat resides in

Dangerford for a week and 25 people are offered to sate its hunger on Freezeday. Ivar Quickstep solves the problem of providing 'food' for the Cinsina tribe, by offering up Orlanthi traditionalists from the Dolutha — at one stroke removing most of his opponents in the clan, and terrorizing others. The Feeders search for Ashart Dusk-Eater but he hides out in Torkan's Vale. The Bat continues, spending a week in Jonstown and Fox Hollow, bringing horror.

Snakepipe Hollow is a nest of Chaotic horrors to the north of Sartar (*Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* page 239). Every so often, it vomits forth terrors to trouble the surrounding lands. The passage of the Crimson Bat causes Snakepipe Hollow to spew out creatures this year and they follow the Crimson Bat south like a tide, overwhelming the tribes and clans without discrimination. Broo and Scorpion Men raiders are the most common problem (*Sartar Companion*, page 97 and page 137) but other Chaotic horrors such as Dragonsnails and Gorp in the rivers, and Walkatapi and Jack O'Bear plague the clans too (*Sartar Companion*, page 103).

Broo raiders make their way from Snakepipe Hollow into Torkan's Vale (see *Sartar Companion*, page 97). A female broo shaman, Hewuha, leads the band. She worships Malia, the mistress of disease, and is determined to afflict the clan with disease, to that they will propitiate Malia for relief. She poisons the Wandle River, concealing jars containing disease spirits upriver of the Red Cow to pollute their water.

The PCs might become involved in driving the broos from Torkan's Vale, or traveling to Jonstown to seek help from the White Healers (see *Sartar Companion* page 21).

Queen Ivartha is present at Red Cow (as she always is in Dark Season) and begins to organize the defense against the Chaos flood. She sends for Toltar Gors-Born, who is wintering with the Pol-Joni in the Good Place in Prax (perhaps the PCs are asked to fetch him). A series of desperate battles are fought against broo raiders along the Creek, with one of the nastiest a stand against Chaos at Isle Dangerous.

During the winter, the Red Cow suffers from their ancient enemy ogres, enduring the experiences outlined in episode *The Horror in The Dark*.

## IMPORTANT NPCs

- Broddi Strong-Kin
- Ortossi Ketilsson
- Jaranil the Thunder
- Kanghral Black-Brow
- Gringle Harvest-King
- Ashart Dusk-Eater
- Ivartha the Skinner
- Vastyr Bloody-Shirt
- Aethelric the Girl
- Orstalor Spearlord
- Kostajor Wolf-Champion
- Black-Paws Helkos
- Toltar Gors-Born
- Camille the Quick
- Janara the Swarthy

## THE BAT'S LEGACY

The Crimson Bat leaves the Sartarites too frightened to rebel. Although they might outnumber the garrisons in their forts, everyone knows the Empire has used the Bat against them before, to destroy Runegate; surely, the Emperor would have no hesitation in using the Crimson Bat again? Whenever a rebel leader's plans seem too bold someone says: "But what of the Crimson Bat?" The elders mutter agreement, and the plans are dropped.

## MANHUNT

### BEGIN WITH

Broddi slumps in his high seat, a resigned expression on his face. You are not surprised to find Jaranil the Thunder, a Wind Lord of Orlanth and the leader of the chieftain's Housecarls there; nor are you surprised to see Borngold Many-Brothers there — perhaps your summons to the great hall was because of the ongoing threat from the Telmori wolfmen, and apart from Frekor or Aethelric the clan has few more experienced wolf fighters than Borngold; you are not surprised to find Kanghral Black-Brow here either, last year's settlement with the Emerald Sword pleased no one, and he continues to put pressure on the Red Cow to crush their troublesome neighbors; nor are you surprised to find the ring gathered. What would be more correct than for the chieftain to consult his advisors on such weighty matters? The presence of the Lunar garrison commander Phargentes Grinning-Scar, and the priestess from the Seven Mother's mission Sureela Far-Traveled does surprise you. Why is the Empire interfering in your clan's affairs again! A fat man with a red face and a strong Tarshite accent accompanies them. As you enter you hear him blustering about "bandits and thieves!"

Perhaps most disturbing of all is that in one corner stands a strange man who has a dog's nose where his own should be!

An exasperated Phargentes tells the fat man to be quiet.

"Chief Broddi," Phargentes begins, "you are bound by obligation to the House of Sartar to keep the kingdom's roads free. I sympathize with your dispute with the Emerald Sword clan, but Prince Temertain demands that the roads are open so that merchants of his friend, the King of Tarsh, can easily pass through his kingdom."

Two members of the clan ring, Farandar and Kullina exchange a wry smile at the mention of the Lunar puppet in Boldhome.

Phargentes holds a scroll in his hand, with a prominent large wax seal on its base. Even if you cannot read the scroll, you recognize the seal — that of the House of Sartar, to whom your tribe has sworn loyalty.

Broddi rises from his high seat with a resigned expression. "Very well Phargentes, if your soldiers will not hunt down these bandits in Stagland for fear of the wolfmen, then members of the Brave Tribe will."



Phargentes looks ready to respond when the dog-nosed man puts a hand on his arm and shakes his head.

Broddi nods toward the PCs, "I can spare these brave sons and daughters of Karganar Blood-Eye to accompany your bounty hunter." Broddi nods first toward the PCs and then towards the dog-nosed man and strides out of the room with a weary sigh.

## CAST

Broddi Strong-Kin, Gringle Harvest-King, Borngold Many-Brothers, Kangharl Black-Brow, Phargentes Grinning-Scar, Buthur Dog-Nose, Sureela Far-Traveled, Farandar Orendalsson, Kullina the Fat, Vogarth Hearth-Guard, Invarth Red-Cloak, Argrath Arkelsson

### THANE: VOGARTH HEARTH-GUARD ♂

Vogarth is a brutal bully who despises the weak and fears only the strong. He intimidates and cajoles those who meet him into getting what he wants.

Scorning the farmer's life in favor of making a living from raiding and banditry, his axe, Foe-Reaper has taken many lives among the Maboder, Dinacoli, and Culbrea. Many still nurse grudges against Vogarth, not lessened by the intervening years.

Despite this, Vogarth believes the young men should live as he did, taking what they want from their enemies and those too weak to hold themselves. "Violence is always an option," he reminds his kin. Despite advancing years, he still leads raids, favoring the rich picking to be had from the mule trains on the road to Jonstown or in the Quivin Mountains on the way to Boldhome.

He despises his brother Gringle as 'weak.' He bullied Gringle for years before Gringle's marriage to Orsta. Orsta's influence

pulled Gringle out from his brother's shadow. Gringle's wife, Orsta frightens Vogarth though.

Since Gringle moved to Brightwater village, affairs at Sevenoaks have declined. His brother Vogarth has fallen back into his old ways and continues to run through the wealth Gringle brought to the village. Few there seem to care while Vogarth's feasts continue.

#### Thane: Vogarth Hearth-Guard ♂

**Clan:** Osmanning

**Faction:** The Conquering Storm

**Age:** 48

**Keywords:** Thane

**Magic:** Initiate of Orlanth 2

**Look:** Dark shaggy mane of hair, livid scar on left cheek, long black beard

### THANE: INVARTH RED-CLOAK ♂

Invarth is a tall strong man with a hasty temper. He has killed Dinacoli, Maboder, and Culbrea men on raids. He is merciless and thinks nothing of killing injured foes and cares little for the possibility for ransoming hostages back to their kin. He regards every hostage as a potential future enemy who would seek vengeance. He has left a trail of grieving relatives behind who would gladly see him dead.

Broddi regards Sevenoaks stead as the 'misfit house' or 'trouble stead' of the Red Cow clan where the troublemakers tend to congregate. When he worries about the impact of the clan's

warriors on relationships with the Empire and their neighbors — it is exactly these people he worries about. Invarth glories in this reputation, as the clan's 'bad-boy'.

His wife Harla Gray-Skirts goads him to try raids that are more ambitious and bring back plunder — especially plunder she can wear to show her husband's skill: gold armlets, fine earrings and broaches.

#### Thane: Invarth Red-Cloak ♂Ⅲ

**Clan:** Osmanning

**Faction:** The Conquering Storm

**Age:** 44

**Keywords:** Thane

**Magic:** Initiate of Orlanth 2

**Look:** Hair in long single braid, broken nose, long black beard

### THANE: ARGRATH ARKELSSON

Argrath Arkelsson's first marriage was a disaster. He married Orsta Trades-With-Trolls at the urging of his mother, unaware that Orsta loved another, Kalf Triplet-Born. Orsta tried to make the marriage work, and bore Argrath a daughter, but his unwillingness to settle down to life as a farmer, and continual risk-taking with Farandar Orendalsson, pushed her into Kalf's arms. With feelings running high, and the clan fearing kinstrife, Argrath was pressured into divorcing Orsta and letting Darna Longcoat foster his daughter.

Embittered, Argrath spurned love and turned to Farandar Orendalsson to make his fortune, accompanying him on raids, and eventually the restoration of Eoric's Stead from its haunting. Argrath had almost erased the association of his name with those events when Orsta married his cousin Gringle Harvest-King, igniting old wounds. Vogarth persuaded Argrath that he too had been 'betrayed' by the Red Cow and denied his fair lot in life. Warming to the message of anger, Argrath moved to Sevenoaks and joined Vogarth's raids. The fact that Vogarth's raids make life difficult for Gringle only makes Argrath happier.

Argrath's anger still burns. Orsta, Gringle, and Darna remain enemies and he still burns to see their downfall.

#### Thane: Argrath Arkelsson ♂Ⅲ

**Clan:** Osmanning

**Faction:** The Wolfskinners

**Age:** 31

**Keywords:** Thane

**Magic:** Initiate of Orlanth 6

**Look:** Bald-headed, short beard, twitch to left eye when angry

### TRADER: ORSTA TRADES-WITH-TROLLS ⚡ⅢⅩ

Descended from Esrolian Queens, Orsta has a commanding presence. Her ancestors visit her in her dreams — and speak of her daughter's destiny.

Her history with the Red Cow is troubled. Argrath Arkelsson divorced her for adultery with Kalf Triplet-Borne and Darna Longcoat adopted their daughter, Saroosa Dark-Wyrd. Orsta remarried into the clan, but never recovered the custody of her daughter. She despises Darna for that.

Orsta's second marriage was to Gringle Harvest-King. She has tried her best to restore Gringle's family, the Osmannings of Sevenoaks, from their reputation as the 'Trouble People' of the clan. Yet, Gringle's brothers remain thugs who care little for reputation and a lot for gold.

Orsta has contacts among the trolls of Sazdorf tribe in the Haunted Ruins (*Sartar Companion*, page 232), and runs a profitable trade with them, exchanging crafted goods for insect foodstuffs and products, that fetch a high price in Jonstown.

#### Trader: Orsta Trades-With-Trolls ⚡ⅢⅩ

**Clan:** Osmanning

**Faction:** Free Sartar

**Age:** 41

**Keywords:** Merchant

**Magic:** Initiate of Ernalda III

**Look:** Gold and Silver jewelry; graying hair; plump figure

## SITUATION

Unknown to Broddi, the 'bandits' are not outsiders but members of the Red Cow's trouble stead; Vogarth, Invarth, and Argrath lead them. Misdirecting their actions as 'for the rebel cause', the Sevenoakers' real motive is to get rich quick because they are too lazy or embittered by life for hard work, bent over a plough. Vogarth and his men sell their stolen goods at Horse Rest, where the Two-Pine turn a 'blind eye' to the disposal of plunder from raiding.

Gringle, the Osmanning patriarch at Brightwater, suspects this household is behind the banditry on the Old Saint's Road; Farandar and Kullina both know the 'bandits' identity and turn a blind eye, even encourage the raids provided they fall on Imperial traders. Kullina tries to persuade the Sevenoakers to tithe a portion of their raids to the rebellion, with little success so far. Farandar has provided Argrath, an old friend, with information on the traders passing through Red Cow Fort.

Darna's adopted daughter, Saroosa Dark-Wyrd, perhaps embittered by the tug of war between her birth mother, Orsta Trades-with-Trolls, and her foster mother Darna, wants to initiate to Humakt and sever ties with her family. Indeed her gloomy, fatalistic nature and withdrawn behavior has led many to speculate that she will likely present the Death Rune at her initiation. Darna will hear no talk that she will not initiate to Ernalda, and Saroosa, who knows her foster mother's controlling nature better than any has fled their home. She intends to seek out Orkarl at Eoric's Stead to initiate her to Humakt. But first, she wants to say goodbye to her birth parents, Orsta and Argrath, before asking Orkarl.

Buthur is hunting for Venharl; Sureela has put up the reward and provided the information that she believes he is hiding at Brightwater or Sevenoaks. The recent banditry has provided an excuse for Sureela to send Buthur to sniff around those steads.

Sevenoaks village will connect all these people, as hunters and hunted come together in one place.

## LOCATIONS

Brightwater, Sevenoaks, Stagland, Horse Rest

## ACTS, SCENES AND BEATS

### THE BRIEFING

Jaranil the Thunder, Borngold Many-Brothers, Kangharl Black-Brow and the dog-nosed man approach the PCs.

Jaranil will speak to the PC who is an Orlanth initiate with the highest divine rune (and thus best known to the Wind Lord)

— assuming that they are the leader of the PCs' group. "This is Buthur, a bounty hunter from the Empire," he says introducing the dog-nosed man. "Baranath," he indicates the red-faced merchant, "has hired him to bring the bandits who robbed him to justice."

Ask the players how their PCs feel about Buthur. He is a foreigner from the Empire and seems to be part dog. The Red Cow are descended from the cat god Yinkin and have a long history of enmity with dog people; the Telmori being just the latest.

Jaranil tells the PCs, "The attacks have taken place on the Jarolar Trail — Phargetes believes that the bandits camp out in Stagland. The trail is safe as far as Brightwater, the attacks occurred beyond that. Gringle Harvest-King, the patriarch of the Osmanning, is at Brightwater, and I would ask him to help you — if anyone knows more about the bandits it will be him.

"Buthur will be able to track the bandits, if you can find something he can pick up their scent at the ambush site." Jaranil continues, "That will be the best place to begin your search."

## PLACES

### BRIGHTWATER

Once this village was on the border with the Split Waters clan of the Maboder, and now lies on the border with Stagland. The Split Waters and Red Cow often feuded and the raids fell upon Brightwater. Since the destruction of the Maboder the threat is from the Telmori instead. As a result, outside of Red Cow Fort, Brightwater has a palisade wall and a watchtower, for defense. The bloodline pressures Broddi to allow them to clear more land in Stagland for grazing.

There are 37 people in the stead. 21 are adults and 16 are children of varying ages. Of the adults, four are elders. From the remaining 17, six are wives, originally from another clan. The other 11 are adults, eight men and three unmarried women.

### SEVENOAKS

Lying northwest of Brightwater and Eoric's Stead, it is relatively poor. Sevenoaks is the 'misfit house' or 'trouble stead' where the quarrelsome, lazy, bungled and the botched of the clan seem to gravitate to cause trouble. It is a village of half-carls and cottars, a village of pigs and sheep with few cows.

There are 12 people in the stead. 6 are adults and 6 are children of varying ages. Of the adults, one is an elder. From the remaining five, one is a wife from another clan. The other four are adults: three men and one unmarried woman.

The thanes and carls at these two villages are from the Osmanning bloodline, and within two degrees of kinship. The cottars come from across the clan; the wives come from mostly neighboring Cinsina clans.

### HORSE REST

This large village is the center of the Two-Pine clan. Some think the settlement gets its name for being a stopping point for travelers going from Jonstown to Jarolar Keep,

but the village actually gets its name from being where the Two-Pine mercenaries rest over the winter.

Horse Rest is home to 400 members of the Two-Pine clan; 220 are adults and 180 children. There are thirty-six elders of the clan here (60+). There are 60 thanes here, including the chieftain, his ring, and the priest and priestess of the clan. Most of the other thanes and 'carls' are full time soldiers who earn their living as sell-swords — possession of sword, spear, cuirass, mail, or linothorax is more important to the status of 'carl' than a plough team or oxen. The thanes also own horses, and the cottars who don't yet have the kit to count as full-time warriors can serve as auxiliaries, hoping to win their own equipment on a successful campaign. The thanes here vie against each other to win men to their service — the more spears a man can command, the better he can negotiate a price from potential employers.

Horse Rest is often half-empty in Fire Season, with most of the mercenaries away and only their families and the old and infirm present. Most of them drift back in Earth Season; there is little harvest here, but as war slows elsewhere so do the offers of employment. In Dark Season, the village is packed with returned soldiers wintering with their families. By Storm Season, Horse Rest can seem a little crowded and drunken brawls are not uncommon. In Sea Season, the soldiers often 'warm up their skills' with cattle raids on their neighbors, and the thanes begin traveling away to Jonstown or Boldhome to look for contracts for the forthcoming campaigning season.

Like most settlements that border on Stagland, Horse Rest has a palisade wall to keep the inhabitants safe from the Telmori, and the settlement often swells with travelers on the Greenhaft Trail who need to stop for the night. A single watchtower in the center of the village provides early warning of attack.

"Brightwater is also the safest place to be when Wildday comes at dusk tonight," Borngold Many-Brothers reminds them. "I will accompany you that far, to ensure you are safe tonight. We still dispute Stagland with the Telmori and their packs hunt there. Without magic or iron you can't penetrate a werewolf's hide, so it's best to stay safely in Brightwater with Gringle until the day after tomorrow."

"I have my own suspicions," Borngold adds, "that the Telmori are behind these attacks."

Jaranil shakes his head when Borngold blames the Telmori, but says nothing.

Buthur just listens, saying little, and giving one-word answers. He has no interest in the PCs, who he looks down on.

Kangharl tells PCs not to believe that rebels are behind the banditry on the Jarolar Trail: "If you ask me no one needs to look any further than the thugs at Horse Rest. I'd confront their chieftain Kulbrast Offirson, or even better his wife, Isbarnessa Boarscar. She is the one who really runs that clan now."

### Find my Daughter

After the briefing, Darna Longcoat approaches the PCs. Her eyes are puffy, and her usually immaculate appearance seems rushed, neglected. Kangharl Black-Brow steadies her, providing an arm to lean on. "My daughter is missing. With the Telmori stirring under a new leader Jorgar Sog and raiding our borders, the clan has too few people to send a search party for her. Search for her in Brightwater and Sevenoaks for me. Please. Her birth parents are there and she may have made some foolish move to return to them." Darna pauses to wipe tears. "I will be in your debt for this."

This is an unusual opportunity; Darna resists being in anyone's debt. If any of the PCs are already in her debt, she may simply call in that favor now. If the debt does not cancel a PC's debt give the PCs a Directed Improvement for the Ability *Owed a Favor By Darna Longcoat*. If a PC agrees to look, but then fails to locate Darna's daughter, consider giving the PC a Flaw of *Failed Darna Longcoat*.

Buthur overhears the conversation and interjects: "If you have something of your daughter's, I can track her. My price is twenty silver Jonstown guilders — a reasonable fee for the return of one to you so dear."

Darna wipes away her tears, and passes a piece of folded material to Buthur, "She loved this snood, if you can find her, then you will have your reward."

Darna clutches at the shoulder of the PC leader as they leave. "I would rather not be in debt to a Moon Dog," she tells them. "Find her if you can."

### Collaborators

Later, Farandar Orendalsson and Kullina the Fat approach any of the PCs who have shown rebel sympathies — out of earshot of Buthur and Phargentes. "The Empire presses High King Broyan hard in Heortland, they hope to take Whitewall, and with that crush Orlanth. Fazzur's supply lines for his campaign in the south are long, running from Tarsh, through Sartar and into Volsaxiland. The rebels attacking his caravans may yet halt his advance to the south.

"Whoever these bandits are," Farandar tells them, "they are distracting Phargentes and drawing Lunar units here, instead of

the royal road. Lead this Buthur on a 'wild goose chase' for a few days, but don't bring him to the rebels. Gringle knows what to do, he won't sell the rebels out, if he knows where they are."

### Next Steps

Jaranil gives the PC with the highest Air Rune one of the clan treasures to use during the Patrol — a Lightning Band. The PC can use the clan's Magic Resource rating to Augment his own Air Rune when hurling lightning bolts from his spear. (This is a loan, and represents the PCs gaining Community Resources for the episode.) Borngold tells the PCs to remember, "If you meet Telmori in Stagland, you will need magic to drive them off." Jaranil also tells the PCs to take horses from the stables near the Great Hall.

From here the direction is up to the patrol leader. Most likely they will follow Jaranil's advice to visit Brightwater first, and continue the search from there.

Buthur will only talk to the 'leader' of the PC group, following the cue given by Jaranil. If asked where he wants to go first, he says, in heavily accented Sartarite: "Let us follow suggestion of your leader and in Brightwater start."

## BRIGHTWATER

It is close to nightfall on Fireday when the PCs reach Brightwater. With dusk, Wildday will come, and the Telmori will transform into werewolves. Since the 'Years in Hiding' sensible folk have taken shelter behind village walls in this region — people are afraid of the howls of the wolves in the dark.

The patrol consists of Borngold, the PCs, Buthur, his companions and a squad of seven Dogeaters reporting to him. The squad speaks little Sartarite, and so do not interact with the PCs, keeping to themselves.

Gringle will be eager to offer his kin hospitality and more grudgingly, to their Lunar companions; he makes it clear — no one should be outside on Wildday.

### Gringle Harvest King

Gringle greets visitors to Brightwater and invites them into his hall. He is warm towards his kin, but colder towards Buthur. At one point he turns to a PC and asks, "Who is the dog, and who holds his leash?"

In Sea Season, food is scarce, as the winter stores empty and nature has provided no bounty yet to replace it. Nevertheless, Gringle manages to provide the travelers with a hearty rabbit stew and some cider to drink.

With Buthur present Gringle lies when asked what he knows about the bandits, telling everyone: "We have seen no sign of bandits this year, and we were not even aware that a caravan to Lorthing Vale had been ambushed. I thought all the bandits were along the royal road between Boldhome and Dangerford. Apart from that we have had the usual troubles with a Two-Pine cattle raid that took a few of our best milkers, and our hunters ran into a Telmori pack in Stagland a week ago — they were lucky it was not a Wildday. If you are not looking to recover our cows, or drive off the wolfmen, I fear your journey here is wasted."

Afterwards Buthur approaches the leader of the PCs, saying: "Gringle is lying, I can smell it on him." He sniffs the air as he

speaks, to emphasize the point. "I want you to lead us on the Jarolar Trail so I can sniff out the scent and track those bandits to their lair."

Success in a contest by the PCs will reveal that Gringle is hiding something. If the PCs speak to Gringle, or he learns of the patrol's intent, he speaks anxiously to the PCs. "I do have contact with the 'rebels', who have been ambushing the caravans, and they have been here — I will try to warn them to flee the area. Buy me what time you can."

Gringle means his kin at Sevenoaks, but won't say that, allowing everyone to think that he means rebels hiding in the woods. Further contest success may reveal that Gringle continues to conceal something.

Suspecting Gringle of subterfuge Buthur dispatches the Lion and the Hunter to spy on him and Orsta.

#### ***Orsta Trades-With-Trolls***

Neither Gringle, nor his wife Orsta are aware that Saroosa is in the area, and if the PCs ask, deny all knowledge of her. Orsta is visibly upset about the mention of both Saroosa and Darna.



Gringle tries to comfort her, but Orsta rebuffs him: "She is my daughter, I carried her in my belly, and that bitch has no right, no right, to raise her," before storming out.

Gringle apologizes, before excusing himself to comfort his wife. If asked about Saroosa's father, Gringle will tell them that Argrath is over at Sevenoaks' stead, with 'those no-good brothers of mine.'

If the PCs suggest heading over to Sevenoaks, Gringle tries to dissuade them. "It is almost dusk, and the werewolf pack we encountered recently may try their luck for a few sheep. This is very upsetting for my wife; I thought we had put all this behind us. I will handle this, leave it with me."

Buthur produces the snood Darna gave him, saying, "I can easily find her scent, and claim my reward from Darna. For a small fee, perhaps five silver guilders, I would be willing to allow mother and daughter a few moments, before returning her to her guardian's care."

"Five guilders!" Gringle shouts, his face becoming red. "You foul cur! I suggest you find Fazzur's bandits, and leave us alone."

"Very well," Buthur tells him, "but back will I be, once we have dealt with these bandits."

In reality, Gringle is more concerned that Buthur may sniff out his kin as bandits if the patrol heads there than about the price Buthur is asking or upsetting Orsta.

#### ***Howl***

Buthur climbs onto the palisade as dusk falls. The Red Moon is full in the sky behind him, and he turns and raises his face to the Moon and howls. An answering howl, that of the Telmori werewolves comes from the wilderness of Stagland. Everyone in the stead shudders.

"I don't trust him, he's part wolf himself," Borngold says of Buthur.

#### ***Into the Night***

The news that Saroosa has run away spurs Orsta to look for her at Sevenoaks where her father is. Once the patrol has left, under the cover of darkness she will head to Sevenoaks, in the belief that Saroosa might be seeking out her father Argrath. She chooses to risk the danger of meeting the Telmori to see her daughter. The Hunter follows her into the night, and the Lion returns to warn Buthur.

The PCs watch the Lion enter and speak hurriedly to Buthur.

Buthur approaches Borngold and the PCs' leader, and informs them: "Gringle's wife has fled into the night."

She seeks her daughter, or to warn the bandits. Either way, I will find her. You are charged with helping me by your chieftain, so I expect you to follow me."

"We would not leave one of our own to the werewolves," Borngold tells him.

Gringle is shocked, and hastily straps on his armor, grabbing his axe and shield, urging Borngold, Buthur and the PCs to follow. The Dogeaters remain in Brightwater — they are not charged with the pursuit of "some local villager who decides to go wandering on a Full Moon."

Buthur and the Lion lead Borngold and the PCs in pursuit of Orsta. Buthur has the piece of Saroosa's clothing given to him by Darna, and sniffs air ahead of him, sometimes dropping to all fours and rooting through the earth. The trail leads them to Sevenoaks.

At Sevenoaks the PCs find Orsta, arguing loudly with Argrath, as Vogarth and Invarth watch in amusement. On seeing Buthur, Orsta approaches him.

"You said you could find my daughter for five guilders. Find her for me now and you will have your reward," she says.

Wolves howl in the near distance.

"They have her scent," Buthur says. Turning to the Hunter he smiles, "Well old friend, you sought to hunt werewolves, now is your chance. The hunt is on!"

If the PCs don't speak up, Borngold will offer his and their services to track Saroosa down. Argrath asks to join them. Vogarth and Invarth offer to help, "For five guilders as well." Orsta spits at them, but they laugh off her insult. "Why would we go out on a Wildday night without pay?" they say?

The group heads off into the night.

After a half-hour, the PCs catch up with Saroosa; she tries to sprint away, but the Lion will catch her if none of the PCs do. Caught, Saroosa sobs and struggles against her father and mother who try to comfort her.

She cries out, "I must find Orkarl at Eoric's Stead!"

Eoric's Stead is not far.

If the PCs succeed in a contest against a High resistance, they realize they are being followed. If the PCs do not, then they hear Buthur and the Hunter conferring in a language they do not understand. Buthur cocks his head and scents the air, and then approaches the PCs. "We are hunted, a group of Telmori werewolves and their beast brothers. The fools are upwind, and I have smelt every step they took. Such poor hunters are nothing to be afraid of."

The Hunter is eager to track them himself, and suggests taking a group behind the shadowing Telmori whilst the main group presses on to the safety of the palisade at Eoric's Stead.

"Long ago you promised me the chance to hunt werewolves in payment, old friend. It is time for you to make good on that promise," the Hunter tells Buthur.

Buthur nods his acknowledgement. Borngold decides to join the Hunter, telling the PC leader to take Saroosa and her parents to Eoric's Stead, but asking if "you can spare one or two axes, with good magic, to join us." It is up to the PCs if anyone joins the Hunter and Borngold.

A howl rises in the distance.

"They must know we have scented their pursuit. Run, run now for Eoric's Stead," Buthur tells the PC leader.

However, the Telmori are not as foolish as Buthur believes. They have laid their own ambush further down the trail, and the hunters following Buthur and the PCs have deliberately exposed themselves upwind to flush their quarry, Buthur and the PCs, into the ambush. As the Hunter waylays the trailing group of Telmori, Buthur's group will stumble into the other ambush.

The Telmori werewolves waiting to ambush the PCs number seven hunters, led by a brave, each accompanied by their wolf brother. The chasing pack has just four hunters.

There will be at least one fight, and one side or the other may outmaneuver the other to gain the upper hand. With their wolf brother fighting at their side the Telmori are a Very High resistance; against un-enchanted weapons or magic they are a Nearly Impossible resistance.

Treat the encounter as an Extended Contest.

This is a tough fight, and the PCs may struggle. Have Borngold fight alongside PCs who are struggling — treat this as an Assist with a rating of 1W2.

Buthur hangs back from the fight.

Once the more competent PCs have had a chance to triumph, but whilst other PCs continue to struggle, end the fight with the arrival of Orkarl Iron-Beard. Orkarl is a killing machine and his sword cuts through werewolf hide without pause. As werewolves and wolves fall howling before him, the Telmori objective changes to Disengage.

After the fight, Borngold and the Hunter skin the werewolves they have killed. Orkarl refuses to allow the werewolves he killed to be skinned, saying, "We should honor the fallen, not take their hides as trophies."

Saroosa tells Orkarl she wants to join Humakt. He nods, but tells her he can do nothing now. "You must wait, for patience is a virtue. But at your initiation daughter, I will speak for you, and show you Death's path, if you still long for it. I swear this."

Saroosa seems mollified by his promise, and is content for Orkarl and Borngold to take her back to Sevenoaks. Saroosa agrees to spend time there, until Buthur returns to take her back to Darna Longcoat.

Returning to Sevenoaks, observant PCs (a contest against a suitable Ability) may notice Gringle spending time deep in conversation with his brothers; they seem hostile and angry, but he seems insistent. Gringle is warning his brothers that Buthur and the PCs are searching for the bandits who have been preying on caravans on the Old Saint's Road, and that they need to lie low, for now.

## STAGLAND

With Saroosa returned to her parents, the patrol can concentrate on finding the bandits. Buthur is eager to leave: "The trail may grow so cold, that even I may not be able to find it. We must leave."

As Wildday turns to Godsday, and dusk turns to dawn, Buthur demands that the patrol departs Brightwater for Stagland.

### Bandit Trail

The PCs say goodbye to Borngold and Gringle and head into Stagland. These 'wild lands' are light woodland, where the Red Cow hunts but the PCs realize there are opportunities for ambush

everywhere. Buthur regularly stops to sniff the trail, or root about on all fours amidst the vegetation along the sides of the road. After hours pass, near to the junction with the Greenhaft Trail, Buthur eventually leads the patrol off the road to a clearing where the bandits obviously camped and divided their spoils. Broken amphorae from the caravan litter the ground. Buthur sniffs everything, muttering, "They were here, this is where they divided up the loot.

"I can track them from here," Buthur tells the PCs triumphantly.

The trail leads from the ambush site, through Stagland, to Horse Rest. These are Two-Pine clan lands, and the PCs should be aware that they are traveling in lands owned by a hostile clan. Game Masters who want to create another encounter might have the PCs' group come across a Two-Pine hunting party in Stagland, before they reach the clan's border (see Encounter 27 in the Sartar Companion).

## HORSE REST

Arriving at Horse Rest, the locals treat the PCs with contempt, bordering on outright hostility. The PCs are from Red Cow, a clan hostile to the Two-Pine and are accompanied by Lunar bounty hunters. People jeer at them as they traipse through the muddy streets. They will quickly be intercepted — such a large body of armed men cannot pass without notice — and taken by thanes of the clan to the chieftain's hall.

### *In the Hall of Kulbrast Offirson*

As is required by the Orlanthi hospitality rite, the Greeting, Kulbrast Offirson offers the PCs 'water'; he offers nothing else. It is obvious he believes that the PCs' presence here is trouble. His wife, Isbarnessa Boarscar, the Ernaldan priestess with the mutilated face sits at his side, often whispering into his ear.

If questioned about the bandits Kulbrast says he knows nothing: "The Two-Pine sell their services to guard the caravans that use these trails, protecting them from the Telmori. We do not ambush them. Your accusation just inflames the 'bad blood' between our clans. Show more care in your words."

If the PCs mention the stolen Red Cow cattle, Isbarnessa goes red in the face with anger exclaiming, "Orlmarl!" She sends one of Kulbrast's housecarls to fetch him.

Orlmarl enters, and nods to Kulbrast. Orlmarl has been drinking and has a haunch of beef in his hand; he is accompanied by four of his sworn men. Isbarnessa asks him about the cattle, and Orlmarl freely admits to having taken them.

"If you can't keep your cattle safe, Red Cow, they you don't deserve them. Though I have to say that all that grass along the Heort Creek," he bites into the haunch and juices run down his chin, "does make good beef."

The PCs might rise to this goading. PCs who have the Air Rune might have to treat it as a Flaw in a contest to remain calm against such provocation. If the PCs become angry, Orlmarl will happily exchange insults until Isbarnessa calls her husband's name, and he in turn tells Orlmarl and the PCs, "Orlant's hospitality protects everyone in this hall. Do not anger the gods by your words or actions!"

Orlmarl stares hard at Kulbrast and then he turns to the most aggressive of the PCs. "If you want to settle this matter of

honor, I will meet you in seven days on Isle Dangerous, and we can decide who Orlanth thinks has the right of it!"

## Information

Malan Hardbargain approaches Buthur, the Lunar soldiers, and the PCs. He is torn between preserving the neutrality of the market at Horse Rest, and currying favor with the Empire, but as the bandits are of the Red Cow, an old enemy of the Two-Pine, he decides to reveal that Vogarth and Invarth are the 'bandits'.

Selling the information for twenty pieces of silver, Malan tells Buthur: "You are looking in the wrong clan. Ask the Red Cow why three men from Sevenoaks village have been selling amphorae of Tarshite wine and grain, stamped with Imperial Army seals, in the market here lately. Either they have become successful traders of late, or the bandits have paid them off. Maybe they *are* the bandits!"

Buthur immediately realizes he is in a quandary. The PCs are kin to Vogarth and Invarth, and Buthur does not know where their loyalties lie.

"Your clan has sworn oaths to the House of Sartar to protect the roads," he tells them. "Your chieftain has ordered you to help me bring these bandits to justice. Does not your god say, 'Obey chosen leaders?' Swear now to help me apprehend them."

Don't give the PCs time to confer, ask them what their choice is: swear or not. Remind the PCs that killing their own kin is kinstrife — the worst thing that can happen in a clan, the crime without compensation. The clan *has* sworn an oath to the House of Sartar to keep the roads free of bandits after all — and the Sevenoakers might be exiled as oath-breakers if nothing else.

Buthur will leave anyone who does not swear to help him behind, and head out to Sevenoaks in pursuit of the bandits.

## SEVENOAKS

Buthur is keen to reach Sevenoaks before word reaches the 'rebels' — especially if some of the PCs refused to swear loyalty to him. He is not sure if the residents of Sevenoaks are the bandits he is seeking, or if Venharl himself is behind the raids and they are accomplices, selling the plunder in Horse Rest. Riding into Sevenoaks he is determined to interrogate the locals, and still hopes to track down Venharl.

He also intends to drag Saroosa back to Darna, and increase his profits for the whole trip.

Vogarth will meet all visitors to Sevenoaks. He is arrogant and dismissive of both Buthur and the PCs authority — telling them to "get off my land." Buthur tries to rely on the PCs to give him the advantage of numbers and asks them to detain Vogarth whilst he searches the stead. That search quickly turns up Saroosa who is hiding in a barn. She struggles and fights, but Vogarth is quick to dismiss her, and tells Buthur to take her back to Darna if that is what he came for. At every turn, Vogarth denies knowing where Venharl is.

When his men find plunder from the Lunar caravans in a root cellar, Buthur remains blinded by his pursuit of Venharl. "So you sell Venharl's goods in Horse Rest?" This may be the first the PCs have heard that Buthur's real quarry is Venharl — though they will certainly have heard of the Sartarite rebel.

The climax of events in Sevenoaks depend upon the PCs. Buthur is determined in his pursuit of Venharl, and won't accept the locals do not know where he is. Some developments might be:

- Buthur offers Vogarth ten silver guilders to guide him to Venharl. Vogarth might accept, leading Buthur into Stagland where he intends to bushwhack him, relying on the PCs to switch sides.
- The PCs persuade Buthur to "look the other way" by paying him off, with loot taken from Vogarth, his brother, and Argrath. Buthur is a bounty hunter not an agent of the Empire, and he might be persuaded to drop the matter if someone made it worth his while. Especially if he believes that he will lose if it comes to a fight.
- Vogarth calls on the PCs as kinsmen to kill Buthur and his men. Vogarth is happy to dispose of the bodies afterwards, in return for any loot they carry, and keep silent if the PCs tell Broddi and Phargentes that Venharl's men ambushed them, and Buthur was captured.
- The PCs persuade Buthur to arrest Vogarth, his brother, and Argrath. Phargentes will be pleased, but Sureela will be disappointed that Venharl was not captured. PCs who collaborate in turning over their kin to the Empire will be treated with suspicion for betraying their own, although Broddi will be grateful to be rid of the Trouble People and the demands for action from the Empire.
- Vogarth and Invarth decide to 'take on' Buthur and the Lunars, hoping the PCs join them as kinsmen.

If the climax develops into a fight, Buthur will try to escape, sacrificing the Dogeaters and his companions if he has to. If he manages to escape then he will head for the wilderness of Stagland, confident he can lose the PCs with his superior senses.

Should Buthur escape, he will head towards Stonegate in Jomesland. With Tatouka's aid Buthur seeks to return to Dangerford and there seek justice against the Red Cow from Illaro. Illaro will dispatch orders to Phargentes, with instructions to force Broddi to hand over the rebels who betrayed Buthur, or face heavy fines. Broddi consents, but allows Farandar and Kullina to warn the PCs before the Lunar garrison can appear to arrest them.

## PLAY OF THE GAME

This episode, like *The Missing*, is designed to introduce the players to elements of the setting. As such it is something of a tour. This episode can introduce the Moon Dogs, the Two-Pine clan, and the Telmori — it might be the PCs' first encounter with werewolves.

This episode is intentionally open, allowing the PCs to explore the southern border of the clan at will, pushed by the threat of banditry, but drawing them into the personal conflicts within the clan. At some point it is likely the PCs will be faced with the issue of helping Buthur or their kin. Each choice is hard. The players' reaction here may be influenced by the failure of Vogarth and Invarth to help in the search for Saroosa.

Fighting with the residents of Sevenoaks risks kinstrife. Broddi might subsequently outlaw the Trouble People, but

without any offense against the gods, such outlawry does not lift the burden of kinstrife from the PCs if they kill their kin. Bear in mind, if one of the Trouble People kills a PC, kinstrife is still the result. The exact consequences of kinstrife are up to the Game Master, but the usual impact is to hasten the Great Darkness and invite chaos into the clan. The clan might decide that later events in 1619 are the result of this kinstrife and choose to perform the Summons of Evil in the Sacred Time of 1619 to purge the clan of its curse. Playing that outcome out is left up to the Game Master.

Helping Buthur does the work of the House of Sartar, but risks disapproval from the PCs' kin, for collaborating with the Empire. Farandar Orendalsson and Kullina the Fat will not trust the PCs if they act for the Empire over their kin.

If the PCs side with the Trouble People against Buthur, Broddi will be suspicious of any story they come up with to explain his death, even if he allows Phargentes to believe it. If the PCs betray Buthur but he escapes, the PCs will become Sword Rebels, forced to live in hiding. Their kin will shelter them, and give the food and a place to hide, but they must constantly be wary of the Lunar garrison, Moon Dogs hunting them down, or Moon Winds betraying them. The narrator is free to determine how much they want this to intrude into future events in the campaign, but 'public' appearances by the PCs should always carry the threat of exposure for their crimes. At the same time, the PCs will have increased credibility with the rebellion.

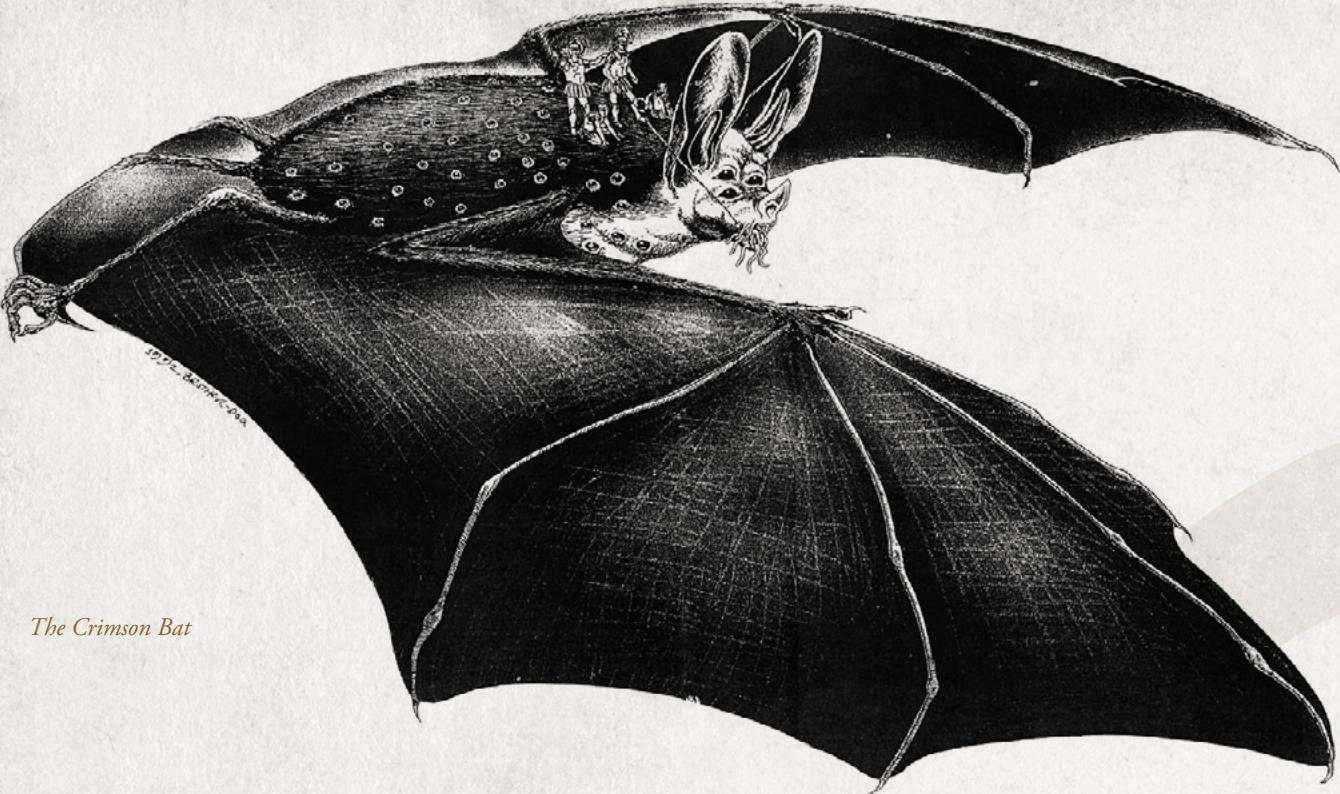
It is possible that one of the PCs will agree to duel Orlmarl at Isle Dangerous in a week.

On the day, Orlmarl will arrive in a chariot, pulled by two horses, flying through the air. Darkot Strong-Thewed stands beside Orlmarl in the chariot. Everyone at Isle Dangerous to watch the duel is impressed — that is Hofstaring Treeleaper's charioteer they all say. People cheer — the PCs should get the impression that it is their opponent everyone idolizes and supports, not them. Darkot sets out the conditions of the duel — to first blood, and the loser's weapons and armor will belong to the winner. Orlmarl should be a Very High resistance. With no personal grudge against them, Orlmarl is not interested in killing the PC, but in humiliating them. When interpreting the contest outcome remember he is keener on making them look foolish than on causing permanent injury. If the PC wins they get a fine scale mail hauberk, helmet, sword, shield and spear. The armor is clearly recognizable and the PC might want to take an Ability of *Armor of Orlmarl*.

Because Orlmarl challenged them, the PC has the right to be represented by a champion. Amongst the Red Cow housecarls, Jarstak Bristle-Beard will happily step in for a PC who chooses to decline the challenge. If Jarstak stands in for the PC in the fight, then Orlmarl strikes with deadly force, cleaving Jarstak's head in two. As Jarstak's head falls to the floor he exults, "Orlanth! This death was for my brother. Hallarax will be avenged! I will take blood vengeance on all those who killed my brother!"

The consequences of any killing here resonate between the Two-Pine and the Red Cow. Broddi and Kulbrast will settle for the payment of wergild to prevent a feud, but there is bad feeling about the incident in both clans.

If the PCs kill Orlmarl here, then he cannot help them travel to the Underworld in the *Three New Stars* heroquest.



*The Crimson Bat*

## FLIGHT FROM THE BAT

### BEGIN WITH

On ~~xx~~ the dire news from the north is confirmed — the Crimson Bat, a Chaos demon controlled by Lunar sorcerers, has come to Sartar — and is now in Dangerford. The red glow hanging over Dangerford is clearly visible from Red Cow Fort.

The last time the Crimson Bat was in Sartar was during the invasion of 1602. It leveled Runegate, and led the assault on sacred Boldhome.

### CAST

Broddi Strong-Kin, Gringle Harvest-King, Ashart Dusk-Eater, Ivartha the Skinner, Vastyr Bloody-Shirt, Aethelric the Girl, Orstalor Spearlord, Kostajor Wolf-Champion, Black-Paws Helkos

### SITUATION

*Sartar Companion* outlines the Crimson Bat's passage through Sartar in: *The Crimson Bat Comes to Sartar* (for convenience, we provide a brief summary of the relevant events below). Here we present a Red Cow episode based on that event.

### TROUBLE

#### *The Red Inn*

News of the Crimson Bat has driven many to wine. The Red Inn, despite its connections to the Empire is over-flowing. With

Queen Ivartha here, many of her household are in the inn, along with caravan guards, and Dogeaters from the garrison, warming themselves by the great fireplaces. The chill of winter seems even harsher with news of the Bat.

Puppeteers called "You Do," are giving a show in the inn. They are a husband and wife team, he lies on the floor to use hand puppets, whilst she stands over him with string puppets. They have two girls acting as assistants on either side with stick puppets.

Begin with the PCs in the inn, warming themselves by the fire. Give them some time to ask questions about the Crimson Bat. Most folk know only rumors of a terrible Chaos demon that destroyed Runegate during the invasion. The Lunar soldiers speak of the Crimson Bat as the steed of their Red Goddess, who carried her to victory.

One of the Dogeaters, drunk on too much wine, throws his bowl of wine over "You Do" shouting, "This puppet show is dull." He grabs one of the two assistants and shouts "Dance for me. Dance! At least there would be entertainment in that!" His comrades give him a drunken cheer.

The puppet show stops.

Vastyr Bloody-Shirt stands up, walks over and punches the Dogeater in the face, and he goes down like a sack of barley. "Manners!" he shouts. "I was enjoying the puppet show."

At that the other Dogeaters stand up. One of them cracks his knuckles. "I'm going to re-arrange that ugly face of yours," he taunts Vastyr. Vastyr looks around; his eyes fix on the PCs' table and he says to them, "Well, aren't you the Brave Tribe? There is a brawl brewing here Red Cow, and I need some support." At that point the Dogeater punches Vastyr in the face.

Frame the contest as 'giving the other side a good beating' over deaths. A brawl breaks out between the Dogeaters and

# THE CRIMSON BAT

The Crimson Bat is a Chaos demon alive in the Middle World and bound in service to the Red Goddess. It takes the form of a giant, crimson bat with multiple long tongues, tentacles around its mouth, dozens of eyes all over its body, and other hideous Chaotic details. The Crimson Bat flies through the air with a distinctive slow beat of its wings. In times of peace, it is some 20 yards from head to tail, with a 90-yard wingspan.

The Crimson Bat exerts a pulsating red radiance that acts in all ways as the Lunar Glowlime for Lunar magicians. This only affects Dangerford in this scenario.

Anyone approaching within a mile of the Bat hears its terrible scream. Getting any closer is a contest against a High resistance. Failure means that the PCs are to flee the horror if possible. Seeing the Bat is another contest, but against a Very High resistance. Coming within 20 yards of the Crimson Bat is Nearly Impossible. In addition, the Consequences of Defeat or Benefits of Victory from the results carry forward to checks to stand in future encounters with the Crimson Bat. A PC suffering a Complete Defeat will always flee Crimson Bat in the future.

## THE CRIMSON BAT COMES TO NORTHERN SARTAR

On Waterday, Fertility Week, Darkness Season, the Crimson Bat and its cult leave the vicinity of Alda-Chur. For the next

Vastyr and the PCs. Vastyr shouts at anyone foolish enough to draw a blade — this is a brawl and all that is expected to be taken or given is punches, head-butts, kicks, and perhaps a broken jar or chair leg. If any of the PCs persist, have Baztak, the Great Troll bouncer appear early, to disarm and knock the miscreant senseless.

Have the fight broken up by Baztak and the arrival of Phargentes and Queen Ivartha, who admonish their sides, throw coins at Erinala “for her trouble, and the damage” and then take their respective ‘hotheads’ outside into the cold night air to ‘cool off.’

### *If You Want Trouble*

Ivartha drags them all back to the Great Hall, where she stays in winter. When they arrive, she chews Vastyr and the PCs out.

“With the Empire looking for Bat Food,” she says, “you all seem to be looking to make yourselves the winners in that deadly lottery. Keep your heads, or I won’t be able to talk Phargentes out of handing you over.

“If trouble is what you want, trouble is what you will get. You can accompany me to Dangerford tomorrow, to see what is to be done about this demon.”

Afterwards she orders stew for herself, Vastyr, and the PCs. Camille the Quick and Janara the Swarthy join them. Make introductions as Ivartha makes the PCs tell everyone something about themselves, and then asks those members of her household present to do the same.

four weeks, the Bat wanders northern Sartar, “visiting” in turn Dangerford, Jonstown, and Fox Hollow, finally arriving in the Killard Vale at the end of Illusion Week. Each Freezeday, at least 25 people are offered to the Bat, sometimes more.

The Bat and its Feeders terrorize the local tribes. The Dinacoli and Cinsina tribes offer up rivals, feud starters, and notable rebels. The Jonstown council sweeps Fools Hill and offer beggars, outlaws, and clanless folk. The Culbrea tribe suffers indiscriminate attacks by the Feeders; the horrified tribal king can do nothing but watch in despair.

News of the Bat’s activities spread throughout Sartar. The awful monstrous power of the Crimson Bat is made clear: nothing can stop the Red Goddess.

## THE BAT FEEDERS

The five Bat Feeders are elite warriors of the Crimson Bat. They enable and assist the mundane functions necessary for the regular feeding of the Bat and accompany and guard the Bat’s priests.

The Feeders are distinctively garbed with crimson cloaks and silver and red fanged masks. They are fearsome combat specialists and expert hunters of human prey. They attack with kopis and magical red fangs. Each leads a team of at least five armed cult initiates on the hunts for Bat Food.

## A DEMON IN DANGERFORD

Dangerford is in a state of panic, with refugees fleeing away from the town. When the Bat approached Dangerford from Alda-Chur a number of people fled as first a ‘low red star’ appeared in the sky; more fled as a broad crimson glow made all the animals skittish; even more left when the screams drove away the wildlife. When the Bat landed on Dead Horse Hill most of the remaining folk ran. Most fled to kin within the clan, some fled to kin outside the clan, and still others fled to Red Cow Fort.

Those that remain do so out of a sense of duty, because their fear over their property exceeds their fear of the Bat, or foolishness.

Some Dolutha clanfolk decided to avoid becoming Bat Food by joining the cult of the Crimson Bat as lay members. Most were just scared, but the Bat Feeders promised them that provided they found other people to feed the Crimson Bat, they wouldn’t become Bat Food themselves. Desperate kin betray the hiding places of the Dolutha rebels to the Empire, in fear of the Crimson Bat.

Korolfin Longeye remains at his post, steadfast, like his god. He has a few thanes to help him, but most have to try not to tremble in fear every time the Bat screams. Korolfin tries to protect the deserted village, fearing looting.

Paranoia and fear reigns within Dangerford. Those who have not fled are hiding hoping to avoid becoming Bat Food, or plotting to make sure somebody else is.

### *On the Road*

At first, the trail between Red Cow Fort and Dangerford seems eerily quiet, even in winter. No birds hunt or sing, no squirrels forage for nuts.

As the PCs progress they encounter stray cattle, pigs and sheep moving in the opposite direction; animals that should be safely stabled in a byre in the dead of winter. The animals are skittish, stampede easily, and flee any attempts to capture them. Many will die exposed out in the cold, but Ivartha tells everyone there is no time to round them up. "We must look to people first now," she says.

Later, the PCs encounter their first refugees. Huddled against the cold, an oxen pulling a cart jammed with possessions, the elderly, and children. "The Crimson Bat, a Chaos demon has come," they say, "don't go on to Dangerford, go back to Red Cow Fort. Even High King Broyan and Queen Kallyr Starbrow would be no match for that monster."

The PCs may try to question the refugees, and can learn the information about the situation in Dangerford above, if they can calm someone long enough to talk to them. Most people just want to be as far away from Dangerford as possible now.

Ivartha is resolute about continuing on to Dangerford. "I am the Queen. I must look to all my people, those who flee, and those who stay." To the refugees she says, "Go! Find shelter in Red Cow Fort with Broddi Strong-Kin. Tell him I said to take you in."

The people will thank Queen Ivartha and hurry on, anxious not to be too close to Dangerford now.

Vastyr and Camille exchange worried glances.

"Don't worry, I'll distract it with a giant wooden moth," says Janara. No NPC laughs.

### *Enemy at the Gates*

As the PCs approach Dangerford the crimson glow over the town seems to rise higher and higher into the sky, until everything is suffused with a scarlet glow. If the PCs ride horses, they struggle to control them, once they get within a mile of Dangerford — the animals do not want to approach any further. No skilled horsewoman, Janara's horse bolts and she holds on desperately. Give a PC the chance to save her, if not, Queen Ivartha chases down the bolting horse and reins it in. Janara chooses to walk after that, unless one of the PCs offers her a lift on their horse. If a male PC saves Janara, she will flirt with him, and try to get him to let her on his horse with him. She will continue to flirt with and tease the PC. Janara does not want anything; apart from enjoying the game of proving she is pretty enough to get whatever she wants from that PC.

The gates to Dangerford Village are guarded by Lunar soldiers. As the PCs approach it is clear that a family and their cart are being barred from leaving. The guards, who seem more interested in the farmers trying to leave the fort, wave Queen Ivartha through.

"Ivar Quickstep has given firm orders. No one leaves Dangerford Village. Now return to your homes," says the commander of the Lunar soldiers, a member of the Tarshite Light Foot.

"But please sir," says the farmer, "I have a wife and children, let me get them away from that demon."

Ivartha ignores this altercation — she is focused on heading on to the fort.

The PCs might try to intervene. The guards are firm, and can summon help if needed. However, they are also perturbed by the Crimson Bat, and might be persuaded to let a simple family flee if there are no rebels amongst them. Vastyr and Camille will prevent violence here; they have no interest in stirring up the Lunars with the Crimson Bat so close by, and will quickly warn off players who look like drawing blades. Vastyr will even beat them down if they try (a Very High resistance).

Camille the Quick questions the guards as to the whereabouts of Korolfin Longeye. The commander of the guards shrugs. He has no idea where Korolfin is: "Try Geo's, drinking to blot all this out I suspect," he says, shaking his head.

Camille is concerned. "Korolfin Longeye is not a man to desert his post, or fail to put guards on the gates of Dangerford. This is bad!"

Ivartha leads them on, across the ford and to Dangerford Fort. With every step, Lunar activity increases, the shrieks from Dead Horse Hill grow louder, and the glow more intense.

Once they cross the ford at Isle Dangerous, the PCs can clearly see the Crimson Bat resting atop the hill. Having the courage to keep going when this Chaos demon is so close is a contest. The resistance is Very High.

It takes the form of a giant crimson bat with multiple long tongues, tentacles around its mouth, dozens of eyes all over its body, with giant ticks crawling through its fur. It is some 20 yards from head to tail, with a 90-yard wingspan. A bright crimson glow emanates from the Bat, suffusing the area.

### *Proscription*

Should the PCs still be with Ivartha, she approaches the gates of the fort. Hastur Tarsh-Born is on guard, and he refuses to allow her entry to Dangerford Fort, telling her that Ivar is in conference with the Garrison Commander and asked not to be disturbed.

Queen Ivartha turns to one of the PCs, one who she believes is tough, and says, "Persuade him!" It is up to the PC to decide how to persuade Hastur. If the PC fails, Vastyr steps up and lays him out with a punch, and then leads everyone over his prostate form into the Fort.

When Ivartha and the PCs enter Ivar's hall, he is seated at a table with Illaro Broken-Back and a man wearing a silver bat mask. Both are wrapped in furs against the cold, though a fire burns. Lunar scribes scribble furiously as Ivar dictates, "Hallarax the Last Orlanthi, Ashart Dusk-Eater," then Ivar falls silent at Ivartha's entry.

"Dear Queen Ivartha, welcome," says Illaro, "Ivar was just helping me prepare a list of proscribed persons. The Bat must be fed, and according to my colleague, Mernapur, we must find twenty-five souls to feed it this week. A fine chance to rid ourselves of some troublemakers, don't you think?"

"You will not feed my people to that demon," Ivartha begins.

"Of course," Illaro replies. "If you and your companions would like to take their places, I am sure your people would sing of your self-sacrifice. No? How sad, such a wasted chance for skalds to sing of you. Still perhaps you could find me Kallyr Starbrow, Orngerin Thundercape, Venharl Stormbrow, and

Orstalor Spearlord? I thought not. Then join us and decide who we should proscribe instead."

Ivartha turns to Camille and nods to the PCs, "Get out of here, I will see you at Geo's later. Vastyr, you stay with me."

### ***Fear and Loathing in Dangerford***

Camille takes them through the streets of Dangerford. "First we must find Korolfin," she tells them. She heads toward the cult center and the Elmal temple, believing that she will find him there.

When the group reaches the temples they find a group of armed men, surrounding a woman and her crying children. The farmer and his family gather in front of the corner statue to Ernalda. "Help us mother Ernalda," the woman cries.

Korolfin stands between the mob, lay members of Crimson Bat, and their quarry. "You shall not have this woman, she is your kin, and you will bring doom on the clan," Korolfin tells them.

Baranwulf, one of the mob shouts: "Doom has already fallen on the Dolutha! When Brofin killed King Garralor, he cursed us all. This woman gave bread to that rebel priest, Hallarax. She should become Bat Food for that, and with her life she will purchase ours."

"Help Korolfin," Camille tells the PCs.

Again the choices here are up to the PCs: fight the gang, intimidate them, etc. Korolfin will not fight to kill his kin, so will hang back and let the PCs intercede. Korolfin is paralyzed between his desire for right action, and his unwillingness to bring further kinstrife to the Dolutha. If forced to fight, he will try to wound or stun his kin.

After the fight, Korolfin will be grateful to Camille, who he knows, and the PCs. He tells them that Dangerford has "lost its mind" as kin turn on kin in an effort to avoid becoming Bat Food. "This is a test, the Great Darkness is upon the Dolutha," he tells them, "and now the Eater of Skin tries us."

Korolfin and Camille converse in private for a while, and then she takes them to Geo's.

If PCs question Korolfin's lack of action he retorts, "This clan already knows too well the anguish of kin killing kin. Should I kill kin, to end the killing of kin?"

### ***Geo's Creek Inn***

A number of lay members of the Crimson Bat loiter outside Geo's. They believe that rebels probably hide inside, but are too afraid of Geo's protective magic to enter.

Inside Geo's is surprisingly empty — most folks had enough sense to leave.

Camille introduces the PCs to Inganna, a woman with a hooded blue cloak with wolf fur trim, long braid, and a scarred face. Camille asks after Hallarax but Inganna shakes her head. Wherever the old man is, he has not made it here.

Give the PCs a few moments to interact, and Vastyr and Ivartha enter the room. Ivartha walks up to Inganna and Camille and tells them that Hallarax the Last Orlanthi was captured in a hayloft, betrayed by his own niece. He has been taken to the Crimson Bat for sacrifice.

Ivartha warns the PCs against any rescue attempt, but tells them: "Get Ashart Dusk-Eater to safety in Torkan's Vale! The Bat Feeders will be on the way, and I don't trust those damn Sardalings not to sell out their kin to avoid feeding the Bat themselves. Go now; tell Broddi that I told him to get Ashart to Torkan's Vale."

Ivartha, Vastyr and Camille remain behind in Dangerford. Janara will accompany the PCs if she is playing with the heart of one of the male PCs.

### ***ESCAPE FROM RED COW FORT***

#### ***Run You Fools, Run***

There has been little debate in Broddi's hall — the ring is unanimous for once — Ashart Dusk-Eater must be escorted to safety in Torkan's Vale. Farandar Orendalsson is already donning his mail, and his back-boy has fetched his spear and shield. "No



*Geo's Creek Inn*

one wants to cross Stagland in winter,” he tells the PCs, “but I have need of stout hearts to save our Wind Lord.”

As he speaks the door bursts open, Kernalda Other-Ways enters the hall. “The Bat Feeders are here,” she shouts. “Ortossi tried to delay them at the gate, but they pushed on to the citadel. They are meeting with Phargentes right now, and he has summoned his Dogeaters.”

Broddi turns to Farandar and the PCs: “Run, get Ashart out of here. I’ll not have our priest become food for that demon! Run, now!”

Kullina the Fat approaches one of the PCs, perhaps an Ernaldan, a rebel sympathizer, or best of all both and hands her an embroidered sack, still warm and smelling of freshly baked bread. “This is Splendorbread, from Kesta’s oven,” she says, “it helps to endure the trail, wounds, or loss, and those who eat it will be restored.” Treat this as giving the PC use of the clan’s Magic Community Resource for healing only. If the PC fails in a contest when using Splendorbread, they have exhausted their supply.

#### **Hide and Seek**

Farandar Orendalsson leads the PCs through the bothies of Red Cow Fort. Every few steps he raises his hand for them to stop, and they all check over their shoulders to make sure they are not being followed. The Bat Feeders are in Red Cow Fort — searching for their quarry: Ashart Dusk-Eater.

Farandar leads the PCs into the bothy where Ashart is hiding, along with his wife, Hinalda the Enduring. Gringle Harvest-King is there as well — both he and Ashart look out of breath, and underdressed for the cold of winter. Aethelric the Girl, your guide into Torkan’s Vale, lounges on a bench, idly playing with his spear, seemingly untroubled by events.

Everyone knows that any door-to-door search will soon find Ashart here. The group debates the best way to escape from Red Cow Fort and get to Torkan’s Vale.

- **Ashart Dusk-Eater:** Ashart might be a portly figure, but he is still a Wind Lord and capable of putting up a good account of himself. He suggests that they use the Cliff, as no one will expect it. He knows he could not fly everyone out of the fort from there, but he should be able to cushion their landing so that they could all jump into the water below.
- **Farandar Orendalsson:** is all for fighting their way out through the gates: “Head out! It’s what they will least expect.”
- **Gringle Harvest-King:** is aware of the tunnels under Red Cow Fort, and one that leads to the far side of the Heort Creek, from the *Stealing the Giant’s Cows* heroquest. He knows they could be a good way to escape, but he is afraid of being followed by the Empire revealing the tunnels’ secret.
- **Aethelric the Girl:** asks pragmatic questions. “Where will the escapees get cold weather clothing — there is snow and ice on the ground outside? Should they take horses from the chieftain’s stables before fleeing? What about supplies of food?”

Allow the PCs time to enter the debate and come up with suggestions on how to escape. Allow time for everyone to speak,

but before the discussion drags, interrupt the scene with a loud knock at the door.

“Open up in the name of Commander Phargentes and the Red Goddess!”

Aethelric gets to his feet, and Farandar draws his axe. There is a heavy crunch against the door as the soldiers outside begin trying to barge their way in. Gringle begins throwing the bedding off the sleeping platform to reveal a trapdoor: “Down here there is an escape tunnel; it’s why we use this place.”

Farandar looks grimly at the door, which is splintering under renewed assault. “Some of us will need to give these soldiers a bloody nose, so that we have time to get into the tunnel. Who is with me?” He turns to Aethelric, “Lead them out, we will meet at Willandring’s forge.”

Gringle hands around wooden masks, with the faces of the Thunder Brothers on them, for everyone. “Wear these so the Empire will not know your faces.”

Presumably some PCs choose to join Farandar. Unless the PCs volunteer otherwise, Aethelric leads the others into the tunnel. Ashart goes in the middle of the group; Gringle brings up the rear.

The PCs can choose which one of the two groups they wish to join.

Farandar’s plan is to take the rearguard of the fight, open the door, allowing whoever is breaking the door in to spill, then fight their way out, scattering into Red Cow Fort and leading the pursuers away from the fleeing Ashart. In the close confines of the bothies, he hopes to be able to evade the pursuers.

Farandar will listen to other plans from the PCs, but as the crunch against the door begins to splinter the wood, and debate will be short.

Farandar pulls the door open to reveal a group of Dogeaters, commanded by Phargentes himself, accompanied by a Bat Feeder, Lorenhuyar the Relentless, and his initiates.

Frame the contest here to be about drawing off the assault from the bothy long enough to allow those inside to escape not just a stand-up fight. It should be a running battle as Farandar leads a charge straight into their surprised opponents, and barreling through them tries to lure them into following them into the tight maze of passages in the bothies, and then lose them.

It may be best to frame this as an Extended Contest, to capture the ebb and flow of the situation. You should consider this contest to have graduated goals: hold off the Lunars, and escape from them. The PCs should decide which is more important. If they don’t get a Major or Complete Victory, this may let Lunars into the tunnels in hot pursuit, or have the PCs pursued across Red Cow Fort.

Both Phargentes and Lorenhuyar should be considered Very High resistance. Farandar will face Lorenhuyar, unless one of the PCs chooses to face him down. One of the PCs should face Phargentes, as he is a recurring NPC and you want to build enmity between him and a PC.

The Consequences of Defeat should mostly be interpreted as injuries, but PCs who get a Major Defeat risk being captured, as they would have to be carried, and those who suffer a Complete Defeat will be captured (see *Captured!*)! Farandar will leave any who fall, but the PCs can try to carry them as far as kin, in the hope they can hide out.

The plight of those who flee through the tunnels depends on the attempt by Farandar to lead off pursuit. If Farandar's diversion draws off pursuit, then they emerge from the storm doors of a root cellar of a larger bothy, and can sneak to Willandring's Forge. If Farandar's diversion fails to draw them away, the Bat Feeder's initiates enter the bothy, find the tunnel, and drop down inside to pursue. They will be just behind the fleeing PCs in the tunnel, follow them up out, and they blow hunting horns to raise the alarm.

If the rebels escape the Bat Feeders, then Gringle suggests using the secret tunnels under the fort. He knows of a route through the tunnels which emerges on the far side of the Heort Creek. If the rebels don't lose the Bat Feeders, they can still meet here, but Lunar forces will be in hot pursuit. The most likely option is to storm the front gate, or go over the cliff, but make the PCs key to the choice.

If the PCs fly over the cliff, the Bat Feeder and his initiates may surprise them when they sprout bat wings and fly to attack them.

If the rebels don't get any breathing room, they may struggle to gather supplies of food or warm clothing.

If the PCs don't evade pursuit in the bothies, Lunar pursuit once they are out of the fort will be swift. If they do manage to evade pursuit, the Feeders and Dogeaters will resume the search for them, but only once they have left Red Cow Fort, giving them a head start.

## STAGLAND

Remember it is Dark Season, so snow and ice cover the ground outside the fort, it is bitterly cold, particularly at night, and there is no food to be had by foraging. Travel in the snow is difficult, needing snowshoes, or skating down the frozen Heort Creek. Without a fire at night, the risk from exposure could cause frostbite or death; with a fire the risk of detection by pursuers is heightened.

Farandar, Aethelric, Gringle and Ashart all suggest traveling by day, and, if they can throw off pursuit, sheltering with kin at night whilst traveling down the Heort Creek, before heading into Stagland. Gringle and Ashart suggest hiding out with kin until pursuit passes, but Farandar and Aethelric are keen to keep moving.

Ashart suggests they may need to set up an ambush for any pursuers, instead of just waiting for them.

### Pursuit

Make the pursuit freeform: trying to get supplies from frightened kin, disguising the trail, ambushing pursuers, or even being ambushed by Dogeaters and Bat Feeders.

It is about 10 miles south to Torkan's Vale, along the Heort Creek, and then 10 miles into Torkan's Vale to the Still Lake where Orstalor is in hiding. Aethelric and Farandar both know the route to the Still Lake.



Red Cow villages lie along the Heort Creek, which has frozen over. These folk are kin and should help the PCs, but they are also frightened by any talk of pursuing soldiers and the risks of hiding Ashart Dusk-Eater; they are very aware that they and their families could be crucified or fed to the Bat for collaborating with the rebels.

Beyond the Red Cow villages, Stagland is hunting land, disputed with the Telmori. In winter, the Telmori are holed up, so encounters with the wolfmen are unlikely. The main enemy, other than the pursuing Lunars is the cold and wet.

### Betrayal

If the PCs shelter in a Sardaling stead, they may be betrayed. For example, the PCs might hide in Tarkalus Bigger-Boat's stead. If he becomes aware of pursuit, he will sneak out of his hall at night, to try and find and alert the pursuers. It is possible that a PC sees him leave.

Tarkalus heads upriver, skating along the Heort Creek until he finds the Lunar camp. Entering the camp, he tells the guard on watch, "I know where you can find Ashart Dusk-Eater."

Tarkalus will return to the stead just before dawn, hoping no one noticed his absence. Again, it is possible that a PC sees him arrive, which would alert them to the impending attack.

At dawn, the Lunars assault the stead. Tarkalus has left it unbarred. Roused from sleep by shouts, the PCs have to scabble for weapons, with no time to don armor, and fight their way out. Again, they will not have time to gather supplies or protective gear for the journey, and will have to struggle through the wilderness.

### Exposure

Surviving the wilderness is a contest. You might want to run it as an Extended Contest, but intersperse other scenes between the rounds, as a PC learns to cope with the wilderness in winter or suffers injury from the cold. PCs who have completed their contest against exposure can assist others with their struggle if needed.

### Campfire

Make time to have a 'campfire' session to allow PCs and NPCs to interact. Build relationships between the PCs and NPCs. Use this opportunity to make the NPCs three-dimensional.

## TORKAN'S VALE

### *The Still Lake*

Orstalor and the Mudhens are in hiding on one of the crannogs on Still Lake. If the PCs are still being pursued at this point, arrange a dramatic intervention with the Mudhens arriving to drive off their pursuers. The Mudhens outnumber the small pursuing force, so they seem safe, for now.

Orstalor will perform the Greeting and welcome the PCs into his hideout. It is winter, but the Mudhens hall on the crannog is proof against wind and water and has a warm fire. The Mudhens will hand around porridge and heated wine to warm their visitors.

It may take a moment or two for the PCs to realize there are other guests here. An old man with long white hair and beard, wrapped in bear furs, sits near the fire. A middle aged man, who may be his son, sits beside him. Both are well dressed, but in a strange combination of buckskins and fine city linens — also note that they wear odd bone and flint necklaces.

Aethelric reaches for his spear and shouts out, "Black-Paws! Telmori!" He looks ready to stab them both.

Ask the PCs what they want to do. Make it clear there are Telmori here, but strangely dressed. Can the PCs overcome their *Hate Telmori* (which will be at the level of their *Red Cow Clan* keyword)? Do they draw weapons? Do they try to restrain Aethelric?

Ashart and Farandar step forward. "Stop!" Ashart cries, "These Telmori are loyal to Sartar." Farandar tries to push down the PCs blades saying, "These men are friends."

How do the PCs feel, with Red Cow ring members and priests, defending their most hated enemy?

The Mudhens move to interpose themselves. "The obligations of hospitality lie upon you, and upon me, or you will be oath breakers and cursed by Orlanth!" cries Orstalor. "These men are loyal to the House of Sartar, and guests in my hall."

As tempers calm the old man speaks up.

"I am Kostajor Wolf-Champion. I am the son of Ostling Four-wolf, whom you called 'King of the Telmori,' and of Onelisin Cat-Witch the granddaughter of Sartar. My five sons are the Helkos Brothers.

"I formed part of the Telmori bodyguard to Prince Jarolar Longstride of Sartar. I saved Jarolar's son, Prince Jarosar Longarrow, from the disastrous defeat at Dwarf Run. I was on Tarkalor Trollkiller's ring, during his war with the Kitori and the struggle against the Red Moon in Tarsh. I saved Tarkalor's son Terasar in Grizzly Peak. Even in my old age, Prince Terasar sought my counsel. I was too old then to fight with the Household of Death, but I sheltered Kallyr Starbrow when she fled Lunar assassins."

Give the players a moment to take in they are in the presence of a hero, whose history is that of their kingdom.

Aethelric refuses to remain 'around the fire' with a Telmori, going to sit at the far end of the hall. He turns to the PCs and says, "I hope you will join me, or are you wolf lovers too?"

Ask the players if any of the PCs join Aethelric. If they do, they will have his loyalty for showing their mettle in this hour; if they do not, he will identify them as wolf-friends to key Telmori-hating NPCs such as Queen Ivartha, Borngold Many-Brothers, and Vastyk Bloody-Shirt. Those NPCs will react with disfavor

toward the PCs if they seek their aid in future; treat this as -6 injury to their relationships with them.

Those who stay can enjoy the stories of the old man, as he tells tales of the Princes of old, and the struggles in the Troll Woods and in Tarsh. Farandar, Orstalor, and Ashart will count the PCs as rebel friends afterwards; treat this as a Benefit of Victory of +3 to relationships with these NPCs.

Kostajor is a kindly old man, patient with the PCs, and happy to tell stories of the past. He is obviously educated and not some 'savage' as the players might conceive most Telmori to be. Black-Paws, his son, is much more hesitant around the PCs, and protective of his father.

Make it clear that Kostajor's lineage and the Telmori Royal Guard remain loyal to the House of Sartar. Explain that Kostajor's alliance with Kallyr is part of that, as was their attack on the Maboder, who had betrayed the kingdom during the invasion. You should also reveal Kallyr fought alongside the Telmori in that struggle. For those who still doubt the rebels, but chose to listen to the old man, these revelations may be challenging. Some may even realize that Kostajor and Black-Paws are heirs to the throne! Both brush this off, if it is mentioned, but this news may also disquiet some PCs.

Finally, make it clear that Ashart and Farandar have a good relationship with the Telmori and seem friendly to Kostajor. Again this may be challenging for the PCs.

### *Leaving the Still Lake*

Orstalor and Ashart take counsel together on the edge of the crannog and return looking grim. "The Empire may decide to come looking for us in force," Orstalor tells the PCs. "These crannogs provide protection against patrols, but once discovered, we like to leave for a while."

"We have decided to split into two groups," Ashart says. "The Mudhens, led by Orstalor, are going to take the fight to the Empire along the Creek, and try to free those who have been captured to feed the Crimson Bat — I am not the only one at risk here. Another group, led by Black-Paws, will head into the Wolf Hills and hide out at his den there, until this passes over. Orstalor will send word when we can return to Red Cow Fort."

Aethelric and those PCs who have shown hostility towards the Telmori should go with Orstalor. Others can choose, though some should guard Ashart, as Broddi instructed.

## THE WOLF HILLS

For those PCs who enter the Wolf Hills, make it clear they are journeying into territory they have always known to be forbidden and hostile. Tales of clanfolk captured and skinned alive should be present in their minds when they think about these hills.

Gringle Harvest-King leaves the party here — heading back to Red Cow Fort to inform Broddi of Ashart's safety. He tells the PCs to follow Broddi's orders — stay with Ashart and help to keep him safe.

The Wolf Hills are quiet in winter. Most of the Telmori are in the deep caves of the hills, where their winter stores are, hibernating along with Grandmother Earth. Kostajor and Black-Paws keep the PCs on a tight leash, discouraging them from wandering off. They may pass long-barrows, and Kostajor will

tell the PCs they contain the bodies of the ancestors but that only Tergavi, the shamans, may enter them. "These places are forbidden, do you understand?"

Eventually they blindfold the PCs. "This last journey you must make unsighted, as it is the location of our winter den," Kostajor tells them. Ashart and Farandar remain un-blindfolded and can guide them. PCs who cheat may be caught — and Kostajor will simply cast them adrift, to survive on their own. They lead the PCs to a cave where their pack lives.

This is their winter den, a deep cave extending deep underground where it is warm in spite of the winter outside. The PCs are not permitted to push too far into the cave — where the mothers and children are — but instead are given space near the cave entrance where a fire is kept burning by a plentiful supply of wood.

Kostajor extends his hospitality to the PCs — he will protect them, provide a place by the fire, and food and water, provided they promise not to injure the Telmori whilst they are here. Everyone knows the gods protect oaths of hospitality.

Black-Paws and Kostajor are regular visitors.

Kostajor talks often of the past. He only becomes upset when talking of his wolf brother. He will not mention that Jomes Hostralos kills him — nor that he wears his skin — but Ashart will tell the PCs in confidence to avoid awkward questions.

Black-Paws talks often of his own son Ostling, who is a hostage in Queen Ivartha's household. Black-Paws is proud that his son keeps Sartar's peace with his presence, but worries about Ostling given Queen Ivartha's hatred of the Telmori.

### ***Wolf Running***

The PCs spend at least one Wildday in the cave before the rebels send them the news that the Bat has passed.

When Wildday comes Kostajor will guide the PCs into a side-chamber of the cave, away from the main thoroughfares. "Tonight, Talor's Curse means we all must take our wolf form. Not all of the people, especially the young and hotheaded, can calm their savage beast hearts when the wolf-time is upon them. Remain here and you will be safe, for I will guard your cave. I am too old now to run in the snowy woods, but I am strong enough to keep you secure."

The PCs are unlikely to witness the Telmori transformation. If someone sneaks off to catch a glimpse feel free to describe the cracking bones, stretched jaws, and sprouting fur of man becoming wolf, but also have them succeed at a contest to avoid being detected by the wolves and chased by angry young Telmori, who desire only to tear the interloper of their rites to pieces.

Amidst howls from werewolves and wolves, an old wolf with gray and white fur enters. He lies in front of the entrance to the PCs' cave. Occasionally another group of wolves approaches the PCs' cave, their eyes shining in the firelight. The old wolf rises to his feet and growls, and the other wolves slink back into the darkness.

One wolf is different. This wolf sniffs along the ground, and when it raises its head, the PCs see it has empty sockets where its eyes should be. Its shadow moves unnervingly in the firelight, until the PCs realize it is not mirroring the actions of the blind wolf — but moving quite independently.

The old wolf circles the newcomer; both snarl at each other, and nip at each other's heels. Eventually the old wolf lands a bite on the blind wolf's rump, and he trots off.

Just before sunset the next day, the old wolf disappears. Later, Kostajor returns to the PCs' cave accompanied by Black-Paws. The old man seems tired and worn out, as though last night drained him.

If anyone asks who the blind wolf was, Kostajor says, "That was Jogar Sog, my great-nephew. He has little time for Heortlings, and does not like your presence here in this cave. But he respects my authority, for now."

### ***Free at Last***

If none of the PCs are with Orstalor let them know that the Crimson Bat has moved on, have Black-Paws tell them he has received word it is safe for them to return home. They are blindfolded and taken by the Telmori to a rendezvous at the Finger with Kullina the Fat and Kernalda Other-Ways. Both Kullina and Kernalda are courteous to Black-Paws, and gift him with a mule laden with honey and bacon in thanks for looking after Ashart and the PCs.

## **AMBUSH AT CINSIN BRIDGE**

Orstalor and the Mudhens operate along the Creek and its tributaries, where they are strong enough to evade the Empire. Whilst the Bat is in Dangerford and when it heads south along the Boranini River to Jonstown and the Lorthing River to Fox Hollow, Orstalor and the Mudhens harry the Bat Feeders and the Lunar regiments in the Jonstown area assigned to aid them (see *Sartar Companion*, page 12 for a full list).

### ***White Crow Inn***

In a bold attempt to free victims captured by the Feeders, Orstalor decides to strike when the Crimson Bat travels down the King's Road to Jonstown. This journey passes down along the Lorthing River, crossing it at Cinsin Bridge.

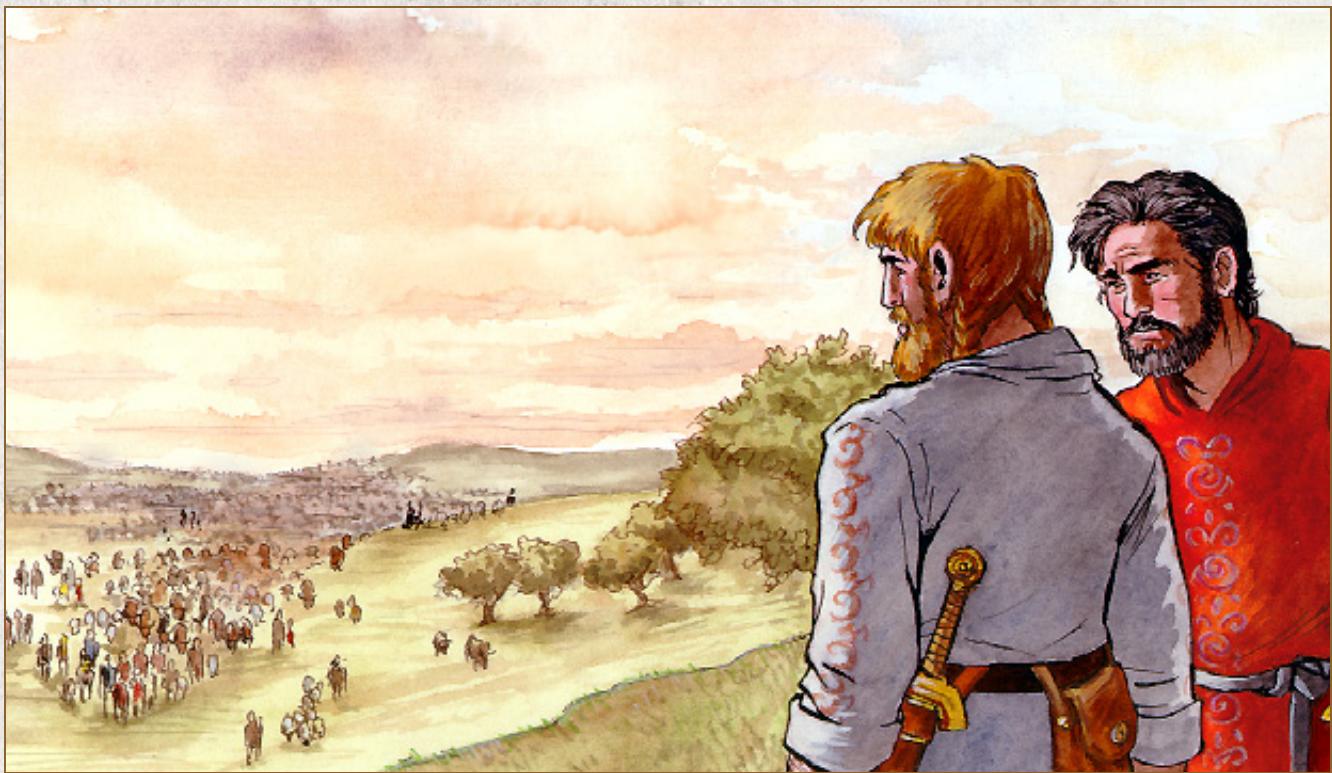
Orstalor's plan involves infiltrating the Frithan village before the Bat arrives, disguised as an Issaries caravan taking goods from Jonstown back up to Dangerford and Alda-Chur. He plans to wait at the White Crow Inn, until the Crimson Bat reaches the area and free the sacrifices from the Lunar baggage train when the Lunar column is divided and crossing the bridge. Then he plans on escaping by getting the Lorthing River to raise a mist that conceals his band.

Orstalor has some mules that Kullina uses to send him supplies, and most of his men can pose as caravan guards. If a PC is suitable, he may ask them to impersonate merchants; otherwise some of the Mudhens take that role and the PCs can pose as caravan guards, or even entertainers making their way north.

### ***Refugees***

The King's Road is jumbled as people flee the advance of the Crimson Bat. Most are scared and panicked Dolutha and Frithan clan folk, clutching a few treasured possessions, hoping to return for the rest once the Bat has gone.

Amidst the panic, the flaw in Orstalor's plan becomes clear: the refugees might recognize the PCs or the rebels, and some might



turn them over to the Bat Feeders to save their own lives. Have one of the PCs approached by a Frithan refugee and his family. “Aren’t you so-and-so’s boy he asks? She’s my cousin on my father’s side. Didn’t I see you at that wedding, three years ago?”

Perhaps one of the PCs overhears one refugee whisper to another: “The Mudhens are here! They’ll help us; everything will be all right now Orstalor is here.”

The PCs might try to encourage the refugees to keep quiet, and even weed out those who might betray them. Treat it as a contest that gives a Plot Augment to attempts to evade discovery by the Lunars.

When riders of the Arrowstone Cavalry accompanied by a Bat Feeder and his initiates enters the White Crow Inn, ahead of the Bat, they are looking for fleeing rebels, not a group whose aim is to head towards the Bat, which may give the PCs deception a chance. Before the assembled inn the Bat Feeder declares: “Those who worship the steed of the Red Goddess, the Crimson Bat, will be chosen last as its food. You can secure your own safety by providing a rebel as food. Join us!”

If the PCs did not secure a Complete Victory earlier, one or two eyes glance towards them.

The PCs need to fool the Bat Feeder when he interviews the refugees looking for rebels. Failure will result in drawn swords as the Bat Feeder and the Arrowstone Cavalry attempt to apprehend the rebels (perhaps after a distant cousin has fingered them).

If Orstalor’s guerrillas are exposed, they will find it too hard to fight their way up the crowded road through the advancing Lunar columns to reach the victims — so Orstalor will call a retreat and use the Lorthing River to create a mist to help them escape. The PCs might object, wanting to use the mist to rescue the victims. Convincing Orstalor is a contest; if the PCs win give them their level of Defeat in the contest with the Bat Feeders as

a penalty to attempts to free the victims, representing the alert spreading through the Lunar ranks.

The first warning the PCs get of the Crimson Bats approach is flocks of birds flying south overhead, obviously agitated. Animals follow: deer, cattle, pigs, sheep, and cats moving south, at times in a stampede. Some people may be trampled or gored as the animals flee. Something is obviously badly spooking the animals, and coming south.

If the PCs remain, they witness the Crimson Bat flying down the road towards and over Cinsin Bridge. Make them check to stand their ground; a number of the Mudhens flee in terror at this point. The beat of the Bat’s wings forces most people to the ground, hanging on to shelter to avoid being knocked down. Attempts to injure the Crimson Bat are foolish, with a +W5 on the base resistance. PCs who try such foolishness might dissolve in a cloud of acid, corrupted by a spray of hot burning blood from an eye, or be wrapped by a tentacle and dragged up into the Bat’s mouth.

The Empire has no need to protect the Crimson Bat; it is beyond the threat posed by mere mortals.

#### *Victims*

The victims walk toward the back of the train, hands tied behind their back, in a coffle. Their guards are lay members of the Crimson Bat cult whose own personal safety relies upon ensuring these victims do not escape. Most of the guards are outlaws: murderers, thieves, and bandits turned over by the authorities in Alda-Chur, Herongreen, and Dangerford. The Bat Feeders picked them out for this role, knowing such criminals are self-interested and thus highly motivated to ensure the prisoners don’t escape.

Brenessa the Sow leads the guards. In other set of circumstances she might have been part of the coffle herself. Harvar Ironfist’s

men rounded her up, and she and some of her former gang have been doing their best to stay alive. Most of the Indigo Gang are slowly going mad in the constant presence of the Crimson Bat — all have developed nervous ticks, some stare into the distance.

Freeing the victims probably means killing or scaring off most of the guards. The guards know they will die in their charges' place — and so are a Very High resistance.

Cunning players might try to turn the guards to the rebels cause, and get them to flee with the victims under cover of Orstalor's mist. That is possible, but the guards are so frightened by the Crimson Bat that it is a Very High resistance.

If there is a fight, soldiers from the column will head toward the area, but are slowed by pushing through the refugees. If the PCs overpower the guards, they will be able to see the soldiers from the Mirinite Swords shoving their way through the crowds to reach them. And then the Crimson Bat turns, and with an ear splitting scream, begins to flap toward Orstalor and the PCs.

Orstalor screams at everyone to run as mist begins bubbling forth from the Lorthing River.

Treat this as an Arduous Auto-Success. The PCs will see a great shadow passing overhead in the mist, and hear screams as the shadow descends and plucks up another victim. But they escape up the Lorthing River.

Orstalor finds them, exhausted by the side of the river, after danger has passed and urges them on to Red Cow Fort.

#### **Maboder Bandit: Brenessa the Bandit Queen** ☐☒☒

Brenessa the Sow was five when her mother hid her within the earth and saved her from the Telmori who killed her kin. Destitute and alone her mother became a slave to Jomes to survive and Brenessa with her.

Brenessa's life at the steadfast was brutal. She was beaten for clumsiness and mistakes and subject to the unwanted attentions of the men. Brenessa learned to hate the people of Wulfsland under their lash.

Brenessa escaped from slavery and fled to Alone. Life there was little better. Forced into prostitution to earn enough to eat, Brenessa still felt herself to be a slave. She fled to the Indigo Hills, where the outlaws hid.

Brenessa was drawn by love to Baranwulf One-Ear, a bandit. For her he had all the romance of Orlanth the Outlaw come to free Eralda. When she found him in the mountains, she became his wife and soon became second-in-command of his gang.

When Baranwulf died she took his place. The Indigo Gang hid in the Indigo Mountains, dodging trolls, but keeping on good terms with the Torkani. They preyed on the caravans winding their way across the Donalf Flats, taking goods and coin and selling survivors into slavery at Pimper's Block.

#### **Maboder Bandit: Brenessa the Bandit Queen** ☐☒☒

**Faction:** Daughters of Mabodh

**Age:** 23

**Keywords:** Bandit

**Magic:** Initiate of Eralda ☐

**Look:** Short, long dark hair

## EPILOGUE

With the Bat passing south to Jonstown and Fox Hollow, the immediate danger passes for the Red Cow. Ashart returns to hiding. The PCs most probably become involved in the clan's struggle against the Chaos flood sweeping down from Snakepipe Hollow, following the Crimson Bat.

#### **Gringle's End**

Through pillow-talk with Vastyr Bloody-Shirt, Sureela Far-Traveled learns the identity of those who helped save Ashart Dusk-Eater. Learning that Gringle Harvest-King and his wife, Orsta Trades-With-Trolls have hidden Ashart for years, she decides to make an example of them. She has Phargentes arrest them, and take them to the citadel for questioning. After torture, when the pair reveal names of rebel contacts, she has them crucified outside the gates of Red Cow Fort with a warning read aloud that, "Those who harbor enemies of the Red Goddess, will join them in their fate."

At some point afterwards, Sureela Far-Traveled will approach one of the PCs in disguise. Most likely whomever Vastyr would have identified as their leader. She will attempt to seduce them, so that as with Vastyr she can begin to pump them for information on the rebellion and its plans.

Resolution of this situation is left to the Game Master.

## PLAY OF THE GAME

*The Missing* is a kick-starter episode for understanding the Red Cow clan. *Flight from the Bat* is a kick-starter for the players understanding the tribe and the Red Cow's neighbors. As in that episode, include your own scenes so that you can use it to introduce NPCs from outside the Red Cow who you feel may be significant given the Narrative Hooks that the players created.

The PCs might flee from the Crimson Bat, failing a contest to stand against Chaos. There is no shame in this; everyone knows that only the Uroxi are strong enough to confront Chaos without fear.

The PCs might try to save Hallarax in Dangerford. Ivartha and Vastyr try to warn them off — the numbers of Lunar troops, the presence of the Crimson Bat itself — but the PCs may persist. Allow them to try, but don't be afraid to use High and Very High resistances as the PCs try to free prisoners from the Lunar camp. Such an attempt might be noted in any future election.

If the PCs do free Hallarax, their best option is to take him to Red Cow Fort and from there into hiding in Torkan's Vale along with Ashart.

PCs face becoming Bat Food if captured. The most likely reason a PC ends up at risk is because they have suffered a Major or Complete Defeat in a contest with the Dogeaters and Bat Feeders. Carrying a wounded PC will slow the group's attempts to escape — and a Game Master should apply a penalty of -6 to those who need to help. For that reason, Farandar is keen to leave the fallen behind. Ashart is less willing to leave a fallen companion behind, and will try to get them to kin, who he hopes can shelter or hide them. This may lead to a heated debate amongst the group.

The wounded have to escape and evade, then persuade kin to hide them. Escape and evasion for any wounded person

probably involves crawling, or hobbling using a stick to a hiding place, remaining concealed until pursuit passes, and then trying to reach the safety of kin. That is a Low resistance in Red Cow Fort, Moderate along the Heort Creek, and High in Stagland. In addition, not all kin will be willing to shelter someone who is wounded and on the run from the Empire. Taking in a rebel is a crime that can get you and your family crucified. If the Dogeaters and Bat Feeders come calling, and the PC cannot be hidden from them, then there is as much danger to those sheltering the PC as the PC. In this case, it is likely they are dragged off to become Bat Food too.

If taken, try to give the PC a chance to escape by their own efforts. Most likely they will be taken to Red Cow Fort, to await other prisoners, then escorted to Dangerford, bound and in chains. Be sympathetic to reasonable plans. If they can't, use Orstalor or Venharl and the Storm Rams to rescue them; the former is an especially good option if other PCs have met Orstalor and joined his raiding up and down the Creek against the Crimson Bat's servants.

It is possible that Phargentes, the garrison commander, dies hunting the PCs during this session. If the PCs defeat him, it is better to leave him wounded to return and seek revenge than kill him off, but if a PC finishes him off, you will need to generate a replacement. Illaro Broken-Back will swear an oath to track down Phargentes' killer and crucify him on the citadel of Red Cow Fort.

It is possible that the PCs try to kill Jogan Sog in the Wolf Hills. This is Nearly Impossible without magic or Rune Metals to hurt him in werewolf form, Very High with them. Jogan's fetch will also act in the fight, and has a Very High resistance as well. Kostajor will not defend anyone who gives up the protection of his hospitality to fight with Jogan. As Jogan is the one who violates Kostajor's hospitality — the PC breaks no oath in tackling Jogan.

If Jogan is defeated, then most likely he acquires a new injury that he will seek vengeance for, and perhaps a new affliction he has to rely on the spirits to counter. If the PCs succeed in killing Jogan, a Complete Victory, you have two options for events in 1620. The first is to have Black-Paws lead the Telmori uprising, perhaps finally pushed too far by Heortlings who stretch the meaning of Sartar's treaties and break oaths of hospitality when given shelter from their enemies. The second is to decide that the PCs' action in the cave means that there will be no Telmori uprising. It was a Complete Victory after all. At that point, let the dice fall as they have and decide on new episodes for 1620 with the Telmori threat eliminated. Perhaps the Maboder rebels begin causing trouble for Jomes instead...

One scene not considered here, is that the Bat Feeders and Dogeaters get close enough to the PCs in the Wolf Hills that the Telmori decide to ambush them, and ask the PCs to help. Judge such additional scenes by pacing, the PCs might have had enough fighting by now, but you do get to create bonds between Telmori fighters and the PCs, which become telling in 1620.

If Brenessa survives the encounter with the PCs, then she might recur as an NPC as might the Indigo Gang. Outlaws and bandits, reforming the Maboder clan by eliminating Jomes might give them the chance to 'come in from the cold' in a new Sartar.

Some players might object to Gringle's death, being given no chance to save him. Push those players with questions "You were wearing masks, who knew who you were?" Make it clear that Gringle's death introduces a new mystery.

When Sureela appears, you might find it easiest to be upfront that the Lunar spy who betrayed Gringle is seducing them, and let the dice decide whether or not the PC betrays his kin, unwittingly.

## THE HORROR IN THE DARK

### BEGIN WITH

It is Dark Season. Snow lies on the ground outside the stead, work is over for winter, and everyone huddles around the hearth to tell stories. Talk still centers on the horror of the Crimson Bat visiting Jonstown, Dangerford, and Fox Hollow.

It is a Brightnight when the sky is free of clouds, the stars shine bright, and it is unbelievably cold. You need to wear fur just to step out of doors without freezing to death. When you inhale you can hear your nostril hairs crack as they freeze in the cold air. At least there is no wind.

The PCs are visiting the village of one of the Rivals. Pick whichever one is appropriate for your game. It is a surprise when Ortossi arrives, accompanied by a patrol. Depending on where the Rival's village is they have most likely come by skate down the frozen surface of the Heort or Danda. On land they use snowshoes. Stripping off their heavy wolf furs, they quench their thirst with ale and warm themselves by the fire. All look tired. Ortossi tells the villagers to "bar your doors tonight." He goes on to tell them that, "A warped and twisted Chaotic horror struck last night, killing three, breaking their necks before ripping open their throats and drinking their blood. He then murdered two women, eviscerating them and feasting on their entrails."

Broddi has sent to the tribe for aid, in the meantime Ortossi advises that the "militia should gather, and everyone should cluster together in a couple of the longhouses. Use your horns to summon help." Then he and his companions swaddle themselves in their furs, strap on their skates, and head down river.

### CAST

Broddi Strong-Kin, Ortossi Ketilsson, Jaranil the Thunder, Kangharl Black-Brow

### BRIGHTNIGHT STORM

This is not a storm, but a night with no wind or clouds, a rare winter occurrence in Dragon Pass. As its name implies the night sky is visible clearly overhead. It is almost unbelievably cold.

## FILBAR THE THUNDERER ●†▼

Filbar is a tall man with craggy features weathered by the wind and sun. He is wiry and gravel-voiced. His toughness and endurance are legendary amongst the Red Cow herdsmen. People think of him as most at home in the wilderness. He is absent for long periods, not climbing crags or cliffs but hunting new victims. They disregard his taciturn nature as 'not a people person,' but in fact, Filbar believes he is less likely to slip up, the less he says.

Filbar is ruthless with no compassion for the weak. He rules his family through physical domination, backing his sons and wife down in any disagreement and taking his fists to them if he needs to. The first ogre born for a generation he has had to work hard to survive for so long. He is conscious that Orlevor's accident stems from his decision, and threatens them all. He seeks to put that mistake right.

### Filbar the Thunderer ●†▼

**Bloodline:** Tormakting

**Faction:** His Family

**Age:** 49

**Keywords:** God-Talker, Herder, Ogre

**Magic:** Devotee of Cacodemon ♀

**Look:** Handsome, gravelly voice, pursed lips, wrinkled and craggy skin

## ORLINARA HORSE-TRADER □▼●

A beautiful woman with an athletic build; many were surprised when Orlinara left her home with the Orlmarthing clan to journey to the Red Cow but pleased she seemed such a good match for Filbar. Locals still tell tales of the time Orlinara rescued a pregnant ewe, carrying it over her shoulders, whilst three seasons pregnant herself. She keeps to the stead and does not spend time much time socializing; her neighbors are saddened by this and not suspicious.

Orlinara met Filbar at the Cacodemon temple in Snake Pipe Hollow, where they still travel for the Holy Day — on the excuse they are visiting her family in Colymar lands. No one has ever bothered to check her story.

She defers to Filbar because he is stronger and older but she dominates and bullies her children; her instinct is to boss the weak around — an instinct she tries to hide when with the 'animals' from nearby steeds.

### Orlinara Horse-Trader □▼●

**Bloodline:** Tormakting

**Faction:** Her Family

**Age:** 42

**Keywords:** Herder, Ogre

**Magic:** Initiate of Cacodemon ♀

**Look:** Long dark hair, tall and well-muscled, large entrancing eyes, soft voice

## ORENDAL FILBARSSON ●‡▼

The youngest of the Filbarssons' boys, Orendal chafes at the restrictions of his home and is desperate to leave. He wants to go to Jonstown and sign on for one of the mercenary companies. He dreams of travel, adventure, and dominating the 'animals.'

Good looking, he is popular with the Blueberry girls and delights in his ability to have anyone he wants, or take those who refuse him. Charismatic, despite his bullying the other young men look to him for leadership.

### Orendal Filbarsson ●‡▼

**Bloodline:** Tormakting

**Faction:** His Family

**Age:** 20

**Keywords:** Herder, Ogre

**Magic:** Initiate of Cacodemon ♀

**Look:** Tall, good-looking, athletic build

## BRASTALA OLINARASDOTTIR □†▼

The youngest of the Filbarssons, Brastala is a beauty by any standards. Young men from the Blueberry, Dolutha, and Wulfsland all want to seduce her. She has willingly been with many, knowing her beauty is as much a weapon as her physical strength. Many would do her bidding without question, enthralled to her beauty. The Women's Circle thinks she will make a good match for the clan, but complain Filbar seems hesitant to let her go.

She is horrified by her brother's transformation — no matter how holy — and thinks it will bring trouble to the family. She despises her parents for not thinking ahead; she believes herself so much smarter than them. She would like Orendal to take her away with him when he leaves — and join a mercenary company. She hopes to initiate into the cult of Humakt.

### Brastala Olinarasdottir □†▼

**Bloodline:** Tormakting

**Faction:** Her Family

**Age:** 16

**Keywords:** Herder, Ogre

**Magic:** Lay Member of Cacodemon ♀

**Look:** Tall with dark hair, pretty face, with piercing eyes and full lips

## THE HORROR: ORLEVOR THE HANDSOME (†▼●)

Orlevor was once a handsome young man, loved by many a young girl of the Blueberry clan, and admired by many a boy in the Red Cow. Although something of a bully to those who were weak or fearful, Orlevor was popular amongst the other young herders during the summer months when the animals moved to the summer grazing around Far Shielings.

Orlevor was transformed by the ceremony, and is turning into a fiend of Cacodemon. He stands some twelve feet tall, with huge bat-like wings that at full extent have a wingspan of twenty feet. His skin is thorny and turning soot black in patches. His

feet and hands have turned into savage claws, and he is growing a serpentine tail. His face is lengthening into a snout filled with needle sharp teeth; his hair falling out in clumps and his ears becoming bat-like. He reeks of carrion and sulfur.

Orlevor is smart and cunning, not some idiot monster. Cleverer than most humans, his first thought following the transformation was “I have been *so* stupid.” His feelings of hunger and rage are overwhelming at this stage of his transition and he reacts irrationally. He needs to feed regularly to sustain the transformation his body is undergoing. He thinks less and less of himself as a person and increasingly as a fiend.

### The Horror: Orlevor the Handsome (two)

**Bloodline:** Tormakting

**Faction:** Himself

**Age:** 22

**Keywords:** Fiend

**Magic:** Devotee of Cacodemon

**Legendary Abilities:** Bite, Claw, Rake with Claws, Thorny Skin

## SITUATION

A family of ogres lives in secret amongst the Red Cow clan. Filbar the Thunderer, his wife Olinara Horse-Trader, their two sons Orlevor the Handsome and Orendal Filbarsson, and their daughter Brastala Olinarasdottir live at Far Shielings. They are quiet and keep to themselves, as do most people who live here. Filbar herds sheep during the summer months, helped by his two

## CACODEMON

Cacodemon is a remnant of the army of the Devil. During the Great Darkness, some people began to follow Cacodemon and participated in his rituals, eating man flesh. These were the first of the ogre race, and with other Chaos races, ruled a wide area of Genertela in the Darkness. Trolls, aided by Waha in Prax and other heroes elsewhere, suppressed the ogres and drove Cacodemon off.

The Cacodemon cult is all that remains of that time, and the ogre race, whilst scattered is still intimately connected to Cacodemon. Worship involves the sacrifice of sentient beings to Cacodemon. The Cacodemon sends his servitors, the fiends, to consume the offered soul. A fiend is a Chaos demon similar to the Cacodemon in appearance, but about twelve feet tall, with claws, large bat wings capable of flight and a tail; sooty dirt begrimes its thorny skin and it is accompanied by a stench of sulfur and carrion.

An ogre's natural tendencies to devouring other humans always reveal themselves when an ogre wanders within five miles of a Cacodemon holy place. Cacodemon has holy places in Snakepipe Hollow in Dragon Pass and on Ogre Island in Pavis.

sons. The two boys are good looking and popular with the girls. They are often seen at Fordstone. During the winter, the Far Shielings' population drops to just over a dozen people, most of whom live here because they like the isolation.

They have successfully concealed their true nature by being careful to leave Red Cow lands and kill strangers, usually travelers on the way to Jonstown, anyone encountered in the Wolf Hills or Torkan's Vale, and sometimes unfortunates on the streets of Jonstown.

When the Crimson Bat passed through Dangerford, the family made a pilgrimage to Jonstown where they intended to use the Chaos demon's presence to ensure the success of their sacrifices to Cacodemon. The results of their ritual were more than they expected. Orlevor the Handsome was transformed by the ceremony. Slowly at first, but then more rapidly, he has warped into a Chaotic horror beyond recognition and filled with base desires and instincts. His first attacks fell on the people wintering in Far Shielings. Now his hunger drives him further afield.

His parents fearing discovery have tried locking him in their root cellar, but he breaks out once his hunger becomes great enough. Filbar works to cover his tracks, and Olinara to defray suspicion. They know they should flee, that Orlevor's transformation has all but doomed them but the winter is now too fierce. They hope to be able to wait out until the thaw and flee to Pavis. They have become desperate and will kill anyone visiting Far Shielings who they believe might discover the truth.

## ACTS, SCENES AND BEATS

### DARK OF WINTER

#### *The Horror Attacks*

The horror sunders the doors to the Rival's hall with a single blow. The wooden doors fly into the room in huge splinters. The shrapnel strikes down a carl, Kornos Ever-On, who falls, a large spear of wood protruding from his chest. Cold air blasts into the hall from outside. People scream and run for other doors.

Any encounter with a Chaotic horror frightens most people, and the PCs need to win a contest to stand their ground (see *Sartar Companion*, page 105). PCs who have no other Ability can use either their *Red Cow Clan* keyword — the Red Cow have courage as a virtue — or any divine affinity.

The horror grabs one of the cottars in the hall, Estavos No-Bull, and swings him by his feet through the air, dashing his brains out against a wall.

The monster is hungry, remorseless, and relentless, but blinded by anger and hate. Those who flee have a good chance to escape while the horror destroys the hall and butchers the livestock.

Standing up to the horror is a challenge. Without Chaos or ogre-killing magic, fighting the horror is Nearly Impossible. Even accounting for Multiple Opponent Penalties — no more than six PCs can attack the horror at once — the PCs are likely to be in trouble. The Rival tells the PCs to flee: “We must summon help from a Wind Lord of Orlanth.”

Encourage the PCs to Disengage from the contest. With the horror maddened with rage, disengagement should be Moderate or Low resistance. Alternatively when Naming the Prize, the



*The Horror Attacks*

PCs could choose only to hold the horror off long enough for people to escape. This option has a Very High or High resistance instead. If the PCs choose to stand and fight anyway be prepared for some to be badly mauled or killed. Multiple Opponent Penalties may even the odds enough to drive the horror off. You might need Ortossi to return to drive off the horror at this point, perhaps with Ustarna Try-Much arriving to heal the injured.

#### *Flight into the Night*

Fleeing into a Brightnight has its own dangers. Away from the warmth of the hearth, frostbite is likely within 10 minutes. Within 15 minutes to an hour, people will begin to develop hypothermia. Unless the PCs bought time for the evacuation, or took precautions following Ortossi's warning, the refugees will be in trouble.

The rest of the village will now be alerted. The Rival will try to organize an evacuation, but he should call upon the PCs to help carry it out. As the Rival, talk through with the PCs the choice between running now or holding off the horror long enough to make their escape. Make it clear the Rival now considers the PCs to be people to call on in a crisis. Villagers who see the horror for the first time may break and run, fleeing ill-prepared into the night. Many will die, stumbling ill-prepared into the dark. Some simply lie down and die.

Gathering the militia might be enough to hold the horror off. The Rival will propose trying to form a shield wall with the militia to keep the horror from the refugees whilst everyone escapes. If you have already run a Group Extended Contest in the hall, choose a Group Simple Contest here.

Without suitable protection, the refugees' flight to the nearest village is Nearly Impossible. With suitable protection, it is still

## COLD WEATHER GEAR

Orlantli cold weather clothing depends on layers to trap heat and fur to keep the wind out. Commonly Orlantli just wear a second tunic or skirt, or even a third. In the heart of winter, people need a little more protection. They keep their head warm by wearing a fur hat, conical in shape, made from strips of bear or wolf fur stitched together and fastened under the chin with a leather strip. A woolen scarf protects the face. A sheepskin jerkin helps keep the body warm, and sheepskin leggings covering the calves and lower thighs help keep legs warm. Often the wool is left unscoured so it keeps the wet out. In addition, winter clothing includes mittens made of sheepskin, with the fur on the inside, sheepskin boots, again with the fur on the inside, and a heavy winter cloak. The best winter cloaks are fur, made from wolf or bearskin.

High or Very High. Appropriate abilities include the *Red Cow Clan* keyword — all Heortlings have experience in extreme cold weather. Defeat indicates casualties on the march from frostbite or hypothermia.

If the horror is Defeated, it will slope off into the night, if Completely Defeated to die. Following the trail of blood it leaves will lead any pursuers to Far Shielings.

If the village is abandoned to the horror, it will destroy in frustration. Hall doors, posts, and walls will be smashed, collapsing some roofs. Animals unable to escape will be butchered in their stalls; many of those that flee will freeze to death in the cold. It will be a hard winter for the folk of the village.

### Monster Hunt

If the horror was injured when it attacked, the PCs may want to follow their defeated enemy back to its lair. The horror uses its wings to fly away. Although the creature's flight seems slow and cumbersome, it can outdistance someone on foot, unless they overcome a credibility test using magic (such as using your Air Rune **G** divine affinity to fly or a Movement Rune **A** divine affinity to keep up over snow). This may separate the PCs as most likely not everyone can keep up and affecting multiple people with such magic is Nearly Impossible. The horror retreats home, to the Filbarssons' stead at Far Shielings.

In an effort to distract pursuers once it reaches Far Shielings, the horror will use its Darkness divine affinity to perform *Cacodemon's Cloak of Darkness* feat. Following it is a Very High resistance at this point. From there, the horror returns directly to Far Shielings.

### NO WORD FROM FAR SHIELINGS

Jaranil the Thunder turns up with several companions and explains attacks started last night (a clue for the players as in Far Shielings they will learn that they started three days ago). The thanes are leading patrols up and down the Heort and Danda. The weather has been too bad to reach Far Shielings, Burnt Oak, Highstead, and the other villages in the interior. With warmer weather today, Jaraniil wants to send expeditions to bring help to these villages.

Jaranil reaches into his satchel and produces a woolen bundle that he unwraps before showing it to the PCs. It contains a small glass sculpture of a Butterfly. He whispers in its ear and it flies to one of the PCs, landing on their shoulder to softly speak the Wind Lord's message: "Greetings from Jaraniil the Thunder."

Jaranil tells the PCs: "This is a Glass Butterfly, servant of Issaries the Talking God, and a treasure of the Red Cow. Take it with you in case you should run into the horror. The Butterfly will reach me. Try to stay out of its way and alive until we can get there." Jaraniil shows the flint-tipped, rune carved ashen spear he carries. "This is the Meteor Spear that Garan gave us when he fell from the Sky World to Seriasdova. It will strike the horror down. Call me and I will come."

Travel into the interior is by snowshoe. Treat it as a Costly Success with Defeat indicating cold injuries like frostbite or mild hypothermia. Walking speed in snowshoes is about 2 miles per hour.

### Far Shielings

At Far Shielings, the signs of trouble are evident. At the main settlement one of the longhouses is partially burnt, the wind blows drifts of snow through the broken doors of another. There are fresh graves in the urnfield.

Elmalandti the Lynx emerges from one hall and shouts for the expedition to "come inside where it is warm." Once inside the PCs see the aftermath of the attack; the injured lie by the fire with broken limbs and horrific wounds. "Thank Orlanth that you have come," Elmalandti begins, "the monster struck three nights ago. We could do little to stop it; those who tried died. Their bodies lie in the urnfield now."

"After the first attack, people were afraid to return, but we could not flee to Red Cow Fort into a Brightnight with the injured or the elderly. After a night hiding in the woods where many got frostbite or hypothermia, we returned. There's been no attack since. We haven't been able to journey to the outlying steads. No one has heard from the Ragnarssons, the Minarythssons, or the Filbarssons. Someone must go out there."

There are two tasks here: help the people of the village and travel to the outlying steads. If for any reason NPCs visit the Filbarssons alone, they do not return alive, presumably prompting an investigation.

### Helping Far Shielings

The village needs medical care and help to secure the buildings against the winter and someone to round up scattered livestock. Everyone has been too afraid to wander from the village for the latter, convinced the animals must be dead.

Fixing both longhouses will take a few days of hard labor to cut wood, drag it to Far Shielings, saw planks, and replace damaged walls, doors, pillar, and roof. The PCs should try to make the residents as comfortable as possible until spring, perhaps by cannibalizing one of the two steads to make one. Any healer may have to work tirelessly to heal the injured. The locals ask the PCs to track down any surviving livestock, already meager here, return it to the village where they can butcher the animals, and smoke them for food.

Treat this as a Group Simple Contest as everyone pools his or her efforts to help. PCs can use their *Red Cow Clan* keyword if they have nothing else, to mend, gather, track, and herd. PCs who failed the terror contest with the horror earlier should use the Consequences of Defeat from that contest as a penalty to this — they are too afraid to go down to the woods.

Alternatively the PCs might suggest that the residents head to Red Cow Fort. Elmalandti points out that travel across the clan's lands in the heart of Dark Season will be very hard on the old and young, and he will need all the help he can get. "Is it not better to remain here, than to flee?" he asks.

Persuading Elmalandti to leave has a High resistance. Treat assisting the people to return as High. Interpret Defeat as deaths amongst the refugees, and a penalty to the PCs' *Red Cow Clan* keyword for having suggested the course of action.

### To The Ragnarssons' Stead

The Ragnarssons' Stead lies under a mile from Far Shielings about thirty minutes in snowshoes. Once there the PCs find destruction. The stead has collapsed, its roof fallen in. As the PCs approach, they find the half-eaten corpse of a woman and two young children in the snow. Searching through the remains of the stead reveals the part-eaten remains of an older man and his two adult sons.

There is little to do here apart from burning the dead, and bury their ashes in a jar in the urnfield.

### To The Minarythssons' Stead

This stead is also the scene of butchery with half-eaten corpses, but the stead is not wrecked, and its doors still open and shut. Some of the corpses are armed but curiously it appears from the broken

spear haft protruding from one corpse so were their opponents. The corpses of three Blueberry clan folk, two young women, and a young man in their late teens are amongst the dead.

Outside someone notices smoke rising from a nearby byre. The final Blueberry girl, Varsena Stillwaters, hides there. She is scared and suspicious of the PCs, they could be more ogres. She is dressed in scavenged cold weather gear and armed with a hand axe. Varsena does not want to be found and flees the PCs' approach, abandoning her cooking pot. Chasing her down is one option, any Victory should capture her, and any Defeat makes her harder to capture or talk to. Winning her confidence and proving that the PCs are not ogres may encourage her out of hiding. If the PCs opt for this approach, any Victory coaxes her out of hiding with a Benefit of Victory for finding out what happened.

Gaining information from her will be tough. She is traumatized and utters phrases like "The ogres will gut you and roast your hearts, just like the Minarythssons."

She and her friends were invited to visit the Filbarssons' stead by Orlevor the Handsome for a romantic tryst and drinking. They knew trekking in winter was dangerous, but they were eager to win the approval of the Filbarsson boys. They arrived at the Minarythssons' stead to find everyone dead. They fled to the Filbarssons' but on the way people clad in winter clothes, faces covered against the cold, attacked. (The attackers were Orendal and Brastala in disguise, trying to cover for their brother's murderous rampage.) One of the Blueberry boys, Hervald War-Born, was killed, and the remainder scattered. Some headed to the Minarythssons' stead but the raiders tracked them down. "They killed them all," she says sobbing, "and then they butchered and devoured the dead."

She is unwilling to go back to Far Shielings or Fordstone alone. If the PCs drag her with them she accompanies them, dropping caustic hints that everyone will soon be dead. If anyone asks if she thinks that the Filbarssons are her attackers, she sinks to the ground, hugs her knees to her chest, and begins rocking herself, saying, "I don't know, I don't know. I just want to see Orlevor, he loves me."

### ***The Filbarssons' Stead***

The Filbarssons' stead shows little of the damage common at the other Far Shielings' steeds. There are recent repairs to a root cellar, but the Filbarssons explain that a hungry bear smashed the doors down whilst looking for food. "Thank the gods but we have not seen that horror up here. Hopefully Jarani will kill or drive it off, before anyone else is hurt." The Filbarssons offer food, ale, and a place by the fire. "It is getting late and you would not want to be walking back to Far Shielings now. Who would like a game of Sword and Shields? I have had no new opponents since the flocks returned in Earth Season." If anyone asks about Orlevor, the Filbarssons look sad and explain that he went down to the Minarythssons' stead a couple of nights ago. "I think there was some get-together with some Blueberry youngsters."

Varsena does not speak out about any obvious lies of the Filbarssons, such as Orlevor, she just prepares to take blood vengeance in the night with her axe. If asked she will retort with a sarcastic "Well what do you think?" clearly indicating her belief that the Filbarssons are guilty.

If anyone tries to access the root cellar, the Filbarssons refuse. They don't explain why, they just refuse entry. If anyone tries to gain entry, they let them, hoping that Orlevor will kill the intruder. Meanwhile they will gather swords, shields, spears, and helmets and fall on the others.

Spotting the Filbarssons' tissue of lies is a contest. Any Victory reveals the Filbarssons are liars and acts as a Benefit of Victory to confrontations with them. Any Defeat indicates the PC believes them to be plausible, and forms a penalty to confrontation. Use a Group Simple Contest as the PCs may have varying opinions.

Remember that the Filbarssons are kin, so killing them is kinstrife (*Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* page 217), which risks bringing exile on the killer and divine wrath on the Red Cow. Of course, if the Filbarssons are consorting with Chaos, the crime is so foul that the chieftain will retrospectively outlaw them (*Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* page 218), and praise the PCs for ridding the clan of the threat. However, it is important to be sure. If the PCs do not confront the Filbarssons and decide to stay the night, the Filbarssons decide to murder them. Their approach is simple, let the horror attack in the night, hang back, and if the horror weakens the PCs enough, join the battle. If the PCs seem to be having an easy time of it, they hope to fall back on the ruse of pretending that they are just more victims of the horror. If anyone enters the root cellar, it is a scene of horror.

Use the pass/fail cycle for the resistance, but treat the monster as +1W to the base resistance or Nearly Impossible, whichever is higher. Even with Multiple Opponent Penalties this will be tough for the PCs to face alone.

The PCs can summon aid using the Glass Butterfly Jarani gave them. If Jarani is summoned he uses the *Vanganth Feat* (*Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*, page 122) to fly him and Kernalda Other-Ways to assist. By flying, they cover ground far faster than by snow shoe and can be with the PCs within half-an-hour of receiving the message from the Glass Butterfly, about an hour in total.

If Jarani reaches the PCs and the horror is loose then his plan is simple, he and Kernalda will swoop through the air, out of the horror's reach, pelting it with magic and javelins, while the PCs form a ring of shields around the horror to prevent it fleeing.

Jarani also carries Voriof's Crosier and he hands it to the PC with the highest Air Rune rating. Many-Breath has magic to kill ogres, drowning them with a cloud of water that pushes into their lungs through their mouth and nose. Through the crozier, the PC can use the Red Cow Magic Resource rating for the fight. Give the PC a specific Ability bonus of +6.

A Wind Lord, as he fights the horror Jarani shouts:

*Foul slime, curse of existence, be gone!  
Turn your back and flee from me.  
I will kill you, you are evil.  
Lie and whimper before me.*

When Jarani hurls the Meteor Spear, it leaves his hand with a deafening crack, returning to his hand after impaling the horror.

With Jarani and Kernalda making the first attacks against the horror, Multiple Opponent Penalties ought to allow the PCs to stand and fight.

If Jaranil appears, realizing they are doomed the Filbarssons' first instinct is to flee, relying on Orlevor to hold up any pursuit. The PCs have to stop and kill them. Jaranil has no interest in prisoners — Chaos should be destroyed. The ring has issued clear instructions because they do not want word of the clan's ogre curse to spread.

The PCs might retreat to Far Shielings to allow enough time for Jaranil to reach them. The Filbarssons are likely to have second thoughts if the PCs left and hunt them down at Far Shielings. Outnumbered the Filbarssons unleash the horror to smash the main hall, and kill everyone inside. Elmalandti is beside himself shouting at the PCs, "You fools, you have killed us all!" Allow the PCs to face the horror for an exchange or two before Jaranil arrives and orders them to break off while he and Kernalda tackle the horror. Then have Jaranil order them to give chase to the fleeing Filbarssons.

## PLAY OF THE GAME

Begin with The Horror Attacks. Next steps from there depend on how that played out. Most likely, the PCs did not kill or

seriously injure the horror so they will end up trying to survive the attack and exposure to the elements. It is a good idea to hint strongly to the PCs that attempting to fight the horror is too much for them. Chaotic horrors are frightening to most people who are not members of the Urox cult; and even most Uroxi will get help if outmatched.

If the horror is injured or dying it flees back to Far Shielings and the PCs should be able to track it. Even if they do not think to do that themselves a leader like Jaranil or Ortossi may suggest it. In that case, events play out much as described in Far Shielings, but the horror is injured or dying.

Maximum game fun has the thane send the PCs to the Ragnarssons, Minarythssons, and then the Filbarssons. Suggest to the PCs that this route makes the most logical path to travel from nearest stead out to furthest. Don't try to force it if the PCs choose a different strategy. Most likely, the players want to outwit the scenario in this case, and will get a reward from trying to do so. The lack of information from the other steeds though means they will actually struggle to uncover what is happening at the Filbarssons even more. A PC who blunders into the root cellar may get a great deal more than they bargained for in this case.

# • Chapter 4 •

# 1620

## CONFLICTS

### WAR AGAINST THE TELMORI

Kostajor Wolf-Champion is dead, a giant snake killed the old man, crushing him as he slept. The Telmori Howl lasts for days, and even Prince Temertain shows respect.

Unknown to any, his murderer is Jogar Sog. Jogar diverts the blame, blaming the Ernalda cult for sending the snake. If any Ernalda PCs stayed with Kostajor and Black-Paws he accuses them, saying that the Telmori should never have welcomed Cinsina guests — betrayal was inevitable. The Free Sartar faction within the clan believes this rumor, and shuns the Ernaldan PC as having betrayed Kostajor. The Wolfskinners by contrast congratulate the PC on a “job well done.” Denials are not believed without effort.

Jogar agitates for the Telmori to take their revenge on their enemies. Jogar lost one of his eyes to Aethelric the Girl of the Red Cow, and the other to Jomes Hostralos. He is a spiritual leader, given visions of his people’s destruction at the hands of their neighbors. “When my eyes were taken I saw a vision,” he preaches, “the Great Liberator will come to Boldhome and break our people, the cutters of Grandmother Earth will be unfettered from Sartar’s treaties, and they will kill and scatter our people.”

Jogar tells the Telmori, the Sartarites are weak from the passage of the Crimson Bat, and the subsequent flood from Snakepipe Hollow. With Jomes absent in Boldhome, advising Prince Temertain, it is the time to rise: before the prophecy comes true.

The Telmori have never forgotten their defeat by Jomes in the Wolf Hunt. Despite their support for the Royal House, the wolf brothers detest the tribes of the Jonstown Confederation and expect their betrayal. Jogar’s words attract many to his cause.

### GORAM WHITE-FANG AND JOGAR SOG

Goram White-Fang remains loyal to the House of Sartar. For this reason he keeps the Telmori Royal Guard in Boldhome throughout Jogar Sog’s uprising.

Goram does not believe that Jogar’s uprising will succeed. He fought against Jomes during the Wolf Hunt, and understands the quality of his leadership, and the support

## THE RING

**Frekor Deep-Woods** and Borngold Many-Brothers lead the clan against the Telmori. Frekor has warned repeatedly about this day. He reminds everyone of the destruction of the Sanchali, the Years in Hiding, the fate of the Maboder, and the Wolf Hunt.

For once, **Broddi Strong-Kin** and **Griselda Gray-Tresses** are amongst the voices calling for war — neither believes the wolfmen can be bargained with.

**Darna Longcoat** uses **Farandar Orendalsson** to suggest the Red Cow should let their rivals waste their strength in conflict with the wolfmen. Farandar notes that the Emerald Sword and other Dinacoli clans, and the Two-Pines clan of the Culbrea, have sent men to Jomes’ call. “Far better they should waste their strength than us.”

**Kullina the Fat** points to Jomes’ failure to support the Red Cow in their fight with the Dinacoli. “What do we owe him after that judgment?” Many in the clan ask the same question. Both Kullina and Farandar know Kallyr Starbrow has allied with the Telmori, using their loyalty to the House of Sartar, and see this uprising as a threat to the Empire not the Cinsina. They know little of the internal conflict between Jogar Sog and Goram White-Fang.

## THE HERO WARS

### SEA SEASON

Everyone learns that Kostajor Wolf-Champion is dead when the Telmori raise a great howl that lasts for days. He was old, but the manner of his death, crushed by a snake, and his service to the House of Sartar mean that even the Cinsina show respect.

he has amongst the tribes of the Jonstown Confederation. He believes that the people can only suffer from this uprising, but his voice is lost beside the demagoguery of Jogar.

Privately Goram mistrusts Jogar, because he believes the Ituvanu meddle with powers that will prove beyond their control.

Black-Paws Helkos demands a ransom for Green Meadows children from the Red Cow. Broddi sends the PCs to get the children back, and the PCs discover Telmori massing in Torkan's Vale. See the episode *Kidnapped*.

The fighting with the Telmori means the Red Cow become keen to obtain more iron, used for spearheads and arrow points, and needed to kill werewolves. If the Game Master has the *Sartar Companion*, this is an ideal time to run *The Gifts of Stone* adventure (*Sartar Companion*, page 223). Instead of the Oath of Boldhome, the PCs might undertake the initial tribute as part of the Cinsina's Cold Hard Iron Tribute (see page XX).

At Whitewall the commander orders the Crimson Bat to assault the city and exterminate the defenders, whom he calls 'the last Orlanthi.' Astonishingly, the Bat is repelled, though at great cost to the defenders.

## FIRE SEASON

The Lunar Army conquers Heortland. The foreign adventurer, Rikard the Tiger-Hearted, is captured and offered the kingship, but destroys the crown and goes into hiding. Only Whitewall remains a center of resistance to the Lunar Occupation.

Concerned by gossip of large Telmori war camps gathering in Torkan's Vale, Broddi sends the PCs to Jomes to warn him of the danger. Jomes is absent in Boldhome but the PCs witness and escape an attack by Telmori warriors on Stonegate. See the episode *Danger in Wulfland*.

Jomes returns from Boldhome and persuades Queen Ivartha to raise the Cinsina and march into Torkan's Vale to wipe out the Telmori. See the episode *Kill Telmori*.

## EARTH SEASON

At the Goose Day ceremonies, Darna Longcoat falls to the ground, frothing at the mouth. When the god-talkers rush to her side, her eyes roll back in her head and she speaks in a sweet but unearthly voice:

*The end of the age comes,  
And village walls will be soaked,  
In the crimson gore,  
Of the blood of the doomed.*

*The winds will stop,  
Spring will not come,  
And cries to the gods will go unheeded,  
The Dark shall come again.*

*It will be a time of ice,  
A time of axe and sword,  
There will be too little wood,  
To burn the numbers of the dead.*

*No more the Ring in the Sky,  
The three new stars must rise,  
To guide in the Great Dark,  
Or all will be lost.*

When Darna comes around, she remembers nothing of her words. The women say Kev has sent this vision to warn the clan — but they are divided as to what it means.

## IMPORTANT NPCs

- Black-Paws Helkos
- Borngold Many-Brothers
- Broddi Strong-Kin
- Darna Longcoat
- Farandar Orendalsson
- Kullina the Fat
- Jarani the Thunder
- Jogar Sog
- Frekor Deep-Woods
- Ivartha the Skinner
- Leikorl the Shadow
- Vastyr Bloody-Shirt
- Aethelric the Girl
- Ostling Spotted-Fur
- Orlmarl the Charioteer
- Estavia GoldEyes

## KIDNAPPED

### BEGIN WITH

The mood in Broddi's hall is angry. The chieftain sits in his chair, surrounded by his ring. Frekor Deep-Woods and Borngold Many-Brothers argue with Farandar Orendalsson and Kullina the Fat.

Broddi calls for silence breaking through the argument: "I have reached my decision. Darna Longcoat will take the ransom the wolfmen have demanded to their rendezvous. Once the hostages are free, Borngold is free to hunt the kidnappers down, and recover our treasure."

### CAST

Black-Paws Helkos, Borngold Many-Brothers, Broddi Strong-Kin, Darna Longcoat, Farandar Orendalsson, Kullina the Fat, Jarani the Thunder, Jogar Sog

### SITUATION

Black-Paws Helkos, the Telmori war chieftain, has kidnapped children from Green Meadows village and issued a ransom demand to Red Cow. The price is an extortionate demand for sheep, pigs, and beer. He threatens to sacrifice the children on the next Wildday if the clan does not meet his demands. He also promises to kill the children if the clan makes a rescue attempt.

Black-Paws' demand is extortionate because he needs to obtain supplies not just for his band, but for the packs gathered in Torkan's Vale under Jogar.

Jogar has been gathering the Telmori to him in recent weeks, speaking of a vision in which he saw them attacking Stonegate. He tells the assembled braves his spies amongst Temertain's bodyguard assure him the hated Jones is in Boldhome. Now is the time to strike at his home in Stonegate.

## CONNECTED EPISODES

Danger in Wulfsland, Emissaries, Patrol

## ACTS, SCENES, AND BEATS

### IN THE HALL

#### *Loyalties*

This scene exposes the divided loyalties amongst the Red Cow toward the Telmori. Play on the loyalties the PCs are most invested in: to the clan, to the rebellion, to chosen leaders.

This scene foreshadows the rivalry for Broddi's chieftaincy, as the key players all seek to exploit this crisis for their own ends. It also foreshadows the coming struggle with the Telmori.

Broddi calls on the PCs to form part of the rescue mission: "You will accompany Darna and see to it our children are returned safely, then you will join with Borngold in hunting down those dogs, and making sure that they learn never to kidnap Red Cow children again."

Darna approaches the PCs. She singles out one of them, who she believes shows strong leadership and tells them: "I want you to lead the expedition to Two Crowns, Borngold can take over from there. Take the ransom and the mules we need to carry it,

and organize enough good fighters to protect our caravan. When they are ready, you will lead us into Stagland."

Darna nods to one of her assistants, who brings forward a wooden chest. Darna opens it and pulls out an iron axe. "Take this gift in anticipation of the service you will render. This axe, Wolfbiter, will help you to cut down the Telmori, our enemies."

This is an extremely valuable gift — make the PC aware that by accepting it they enter Darna's debt. By refusing it they risk offending her. Give the PC a Directed Improvement of *Wolfbiter, Iron Axe* if they accept and a Directed Improvement of *In Debt to Darna Longcoat*. If they refuse give them a Directed Improvement of *Spurned Darna Longcoat*.

Borngold approaches any of the PCs he knows to be enemies of the Telmori (which is probably anyone who is not publicly known to be part of the Free Sartar faction). His brow is furrowed: "We cannot let these werewolves take any reward for kidnapping our children. If we do, others will come to take our children as well. We must make an example of them, so that all Telmori know never to touch a Red Cow child. We cannot let Broddi's weakness put us all in danger."

Borngold turns to whoever Darna's leader is and says: "Darna has gifted you a pretty bauble for your service. We both know I should be leading this rescue mission, to ensure that our children are safe. I am glad Darna has such faith in you, but do not hesitate to call on my advice when you need it." As usual Borngold comes over as patronizing although his offer of support is well meaning.

Borngold has a particular word for any PC accused of Kostajor's death: "I know I can count on you, wolfkiller."

Farandar approaches any PCs he knows to be friends of the rebellion (probably anyone allied to the Free Sartar faction). He



*The Exchange at Two Crowns*

takes them into his confidence: "Do not let Borngold stir up a war with the Telmori! We must not forget who the real enemy of Sartar is, the Lunar Empire. The Telmori Royal Guard has long been loyal to the House of Sartar, and provided we keep to Sartar's treaties, so will they. I have met Goram White-Fang, leader of the Royal Guard, and I can trust that wolf brother. Kallyr herself has allied with the Telmori against the Empire, and we all know the Maboder deserved their fate. They were once our enemies, and refused to fight in the defense of our homeland."

If the PCs were amongst those who accompanied Ashart to the Wolf Hills in 1619, Farandar reminds them that they learned Kostajor was a friend to the House of Sartar.

Farandar shuns any PC framed with Kostajor's death.

### Expedition

The PC has to organize the expedition. Darna will help secure mules for their caravan and source goods for the ransom from the many storehouses in Red Cow Fort.

Give the PC in charge of the expedition access to the clan's Wealth Resource, for use in negotiating with the Telmori.

Jaranil the Thunder will send out the call for some of the better-equipped members of the militia — the short call — to join the PCs. He only selects those who have some magic to kill werewolves.

Jaranil will offer all the PCs advice: "Save the children first, but then crush the wolfmen. We have too many enemies thinking we have grown fat and weak, we must show them what the Brave Tribe is made from. Bring back wolfskins and throw them at Broddi's feet, to show how we treat those who would steal our kin."

## PROOF OF LIFE

### Two Crowns

The Red Cow mule train sets out from Red Cow Fort, traveling through Stagland. The band consists of Darna Longcoat with eighteen mules and four cottars to help drive them escorted by Borngold, Aethelric and Frekor Deep-Woods commanding six armed men in addition to the PCs.

The Telmori set the exchange to be at Two Crowns, a landmark in Stagland where two old statues of kings, twenty feet high, their names long forgotten, stare at each other.

It may come as a surprise to the Red Cow, but this is no simple warband. There are eighty Telmori camped here, an entire den, half are women and children, and of the remainder, only twenty are braves; there are as many wolves as adults. The PCs won't discover this without scouting.

### Scouts

If the PC in charge does not decide to send scouts to investigate Two Crowns, Borngold will 'helpfully' suggest scouting would be wise.

Any PCs scouting ahead of the expedition find the Telmori pack camped at Two Crowns.

The wolves watch the approaches to the camp. Scouting for the missing children is a contest. Success allows the Red Cow scouts to see the size of the Telmori camp and that the

children are tied up in its center. Failure alerts the camp to the scouts. If alerted the camp will rouse, Black-Paws will threaten to kill the children, fearing a Red Cow double-cross. Treat the Consequences of Defeat as a penalty in the Exchange.

### The Exchange

Black-Paws is cautious about bringing the children out to begin with; he wants the ransom placed in the center of the clearing before he brings them out. Things are particularly fractious if the Telmori spotted their scouts.

Darna will tell her chosen PC to ask for proof of life. Black-Paws will not send all the children forward at once, and at most to prove life he will bring one out to show them.

If the PCs met Black-Paws in the Wolf Hills during *Flight from the Bat*, and if one of the PCs is an Ernaldan and Jogar has accused her of killing Kostajor Wolf-Champion, he will be even more hostile and far less trusting. He demands the PC he believes responsible for his father's death is handed over, as part of the settlement. Borngold won't support this, but Darna might if she sees the PC as a potential future rival.

Run this as a contest, with the PC chosen to lead the expedition. Frame the contest as trying to ensure the best possible exchange for the Red Cow clan. The right use of confidence and intimidation could reduce the amount the Red Cow needs to pay. Remember the PC should use the Red Cow's Wealth Resource and the Game Master should applying effects from the contest result using the Resource Depletion table.

Most likely the Red Cow and the Telmori will end up swapping children for a mule full of the ransom, one at a time, with tension ratcheting to what happens when the last child is exchanged.

Darna will be pressurizing the PC to let her get the children to safety. If the scouts know the numbers, Borngold will not support a sudden attack, preferring to stalk and pick off the Telmori one-by-one. But if no one knows how big the camp is, Borngold will lead an attack as soon as the children are safely in Darna's hands.

If there is a fight here the den spills out of the woods, and the Red Cow find themselves outnumbered by the braves, as well as every man, woman and child who can pick up a spear or tomahawk. Any fight here is Nearly Impossible for the Red Cow due to the sheer numbers against them, and the PCs may find themselves fleeing such an unequal encounter. Treat this as a Group Simple Contest.

Borngold will be stung by any Defeat here — but will blame it on the lack of intelligence offered by the PC leader when they failed to send out scouts.

Unless the PCs get a Complete Victory (unlikely) there will be Telmori survivors and Borngold will still be eager to hunt them down.

## PURSUIT

### The Hunt

Once they have freed the children, Darna takes a small escort back to Red Cow Fort. If there was a fight and there are wounded, Darna takes those in need of healing back with her.

Borngold asserts that as per Broddi's instructions, he is in charge now and he will lead the hunt for the Telmori. The PC

might resist being relieved of command, there is a loss of honor and the expedition may just have lost an initial skirmish, but the PC ought to obey Broddi's wishes. If a PC objects, Borngold challenges him or her to a duel (see *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*, page 216) to first blood (anything else would be kinstrife).

Borngold will be constantly judging the performance of the PCs, making snide remarks about their ability or competence. The PCs might come to dislike Borngold because of this, but it is also important to show him as a competent leader and have him offer the PCs his respect as they demonstrate competence.

Borngold will use hit-and-run tactics to harry the pack, picking off stragglers or individuals, pushing the pack back to their territory.

The following scenes are provided for the pursuit, though they are not all required. You should run '*Ambushed*' when you are ready to move on to the next scene.

### **Stragglers**

The Red Cow warband comes across a group of stragglers — two young men are pulling a travois; an old woman swaddled in furs lies on the travois. An old wolf lies on the end of the travois, curled around the woman's feet. Three women and four children walk nearby; one of the children is under-five, clutching a ragged doll in one hand. One of the women berates the two young men, who are struggling with their burden. Wolves accompany all of the adults in the band, and there are three wolf cubs as well.

Borngold grasps his axe, and motions to the warband to form a wedge behind him. He hisses to them: "No prisoners!"

The Telmori will put up a fight, but will ultimately pose little threat to the Red Cow. The question here is to whether the PCs happily participate in the slaughter of Telmori children, or resist. If they do object, then frame a scene to see how the others react. Treat their *Red Cow Clan* keyword or any *Hate Telmori Ability* as a Flaw to stop this. If the PCs lose the contest, not only does the warband attack but other members of the clan may distrust the PCs in the future as "wolf lovers." Crass remarks and insults may flow in the PCs' direction. If the PCs win then Borngold's influence with the warband wanes as they perceive him as "frothing at the mouth like a mad Uroxi."

### **Scouting Ahead**

Borngold sends the PCs scouting ahead of the Telmori pack, which moves slowly with its pregnant women and children.

The PCs discover the Telmori pack must pass through a wooded defile. The steep slopes provide a perfect place from which to ambush the pack, hurling missile weapons and retreating before the Telmori can close.

There is insufficient time to return to the main warband — but the PCs could launch their own ambush here.

### **Ambushed**

The Telmori decide to turn the tables on their pursuers. They try to lure their opponents into an ambush with the bait of a small group, one of whom is being dragged on a litter, presumably hurt, and left behind in case they slowed the band down.

Borngold dispatches the PCs to give chase: "Hunt them down, they are wounded, this should be an easy kill, even for you."

Once the PCs give chase, they are drawn into a dead-end in a steep-sided hollow, the decoys escaping by rope while missiles rain from above. The Telmori objective here is to escape, having split the Orlanthi.

In the meantime, the main part of the Telmori warband has ambushed Borngold.

During the fight in the hollow the PCs hear the blowing of a horn — meaning that Borngold's band is in trouble. They need to race back to save him.

When the PCs reach them the remaining Telmori have ambushed the warband at a ford across a wide stream. Many of the short-call men lie dead, their blood staining the brook red. Only Borngold remains standing, badly wounded, and blowing his horn to summon help.

The PCs need to rescue Borngold and in doing so will earn his respect and friendship.

After the fight it is clear a number of the warband have been captured and dragged off by the Telmori as prisoners.

### **Prisoners**

Anyone captured by the Telmori encounters will be taken as a prisoner to Jogar Sog's camp near Wolf Stand. Borngold will refuse to leave any man behind, stating that, "Our comrades will die, unless a man steps up to do this job."

## **THE GATHERING**

Eventually the pursuit of Black-Paws' band leads the Red Cow to a huge Telmori encampment near Wolf Stand in Torkan's Vale. There are about 20 packs camped here, some 800 Telmori. Many are bachelor packs of young men. The Red Cow is outnumbered and cannot hope to fight this many Telmori. Allow the Red Cow a vantage point on a hill to see Black-Paws arrive in camp. Whoops and cheers fill the air and warriors dance for joy as he shows them the spoils of his raid.

A figure strides out to meet Black-Paws. At first, he seems to cast no shadow, and then watchers realize his shadow is there, but it moves independently of him. He is naked but for a badly stitched leather cloak made from a patchwork of skins. There are two dark holes where his eyes should be and he seems to sniff his way.

Borngold recognizes him. "Jogar Sog," he tells the others, "one of their shaman. Aethelric cut out one of his eyes and Jomes took the other. Now he snuffles his way about. He has gathered the packs. I suspect this many have not gathered since the Maboder were overrun."

Borngold is eager to return to Red Cow and warn the Cinsina that Jogar Sog has roused the packs, but if there are prisoners tells everyone they must first free the captives. "That cloak of Jogar Sog's is made of human skin and our ancestors would not forgive us if we let our kin be bound into his cloak."

Freeing any prisoners requires stealth, outnumbered as the Red Cow party is. Brute force would be Nearly Impossible. The Game Master should adjudicate other resistances depending on the plan.

Whether the PCs sneak into the camp, or try to creep away immediately one ideal ending to this scene is to have a Telmori scout stumble across the Red Cow, raising an alert with a Howl rousing the camp. As the Telmori take up the Howl, it becomes clear the Red Cow must flee for their lives.

The PCs must escape the massed gathering of Telmori. The Howl continues to rise behind them, growing in intensity as wolves and men begin trying to run the 'spies' down before they can take word of the gathering out of the valley.

Treat escape from the pursuing Telmori as an Extended Contest. Any Victory represents the PC escaping, and any Defeat represents the PCs surrounded by large numbers of howling Telmori.

## RAISING THE ALARM

When the PCs deliver news of the pending Telmori invasion to Broddi at Red Cow Fort, everyone is in shock at the thought of the Telmori gathering in such large numbers. Broddi calls for Jaraniil the Thunder, and has him send housecarls to find Queen Ivartha. "We must alert Jomes," he says.

## PLAY OF THE GAME

Avoid falling into the trap of simply having the PCs follow orders with this episode. Darna Longcoat rarely acts directly preferring the agency of others, whom she can blame for failure. She will always ask a PC to take the initiative or accomplish some risky task. Of course, Darna makes out that she is doing the PC a favor by offering them responsibility and they owe a debt of trust to her.

At the same time, you want the PCs to interact with the NPCs. Without that interaction there is no variation to this episode, which could simply be a chase. Putting some tension amongst the pursuers helps increase the conflict. If the PCs have rivals, increase the tension further by including them in the party.

Paying the ransom, and failing to recover it will deplete the Red Cow's Wealth Resource by -3.

The Telmori make the exchange on Clayday, so it is unlikely the PCs need to worry about an involuntary transformation into werewolves. This day suits Black-Paws too — he needs to get the mules carrying the supplies to his camp, and being in wolf form would not make that easy.

It is possible that injured PCs will be captured by the Telmori, and taken to Wolf Stand. Jogar Sog will want to torture captured prisoners for information, before finally flaying them alive in front of the gathered packs and sowing their skin into his cloak. Captured PCs should be given opportunities to escape captivity before they meet this fate; some captured NPCs meeting this grisly end should be enough to motivate escape. All sorts of common escape ruses such as feigning sickness, digging out under the edge of the hut, goading your captors to use you for target practice then dodging their javelins to escape, etc., should be possible. PCs who escape may lead a rescue effort.

## DANGER IN WULFSLAND

### BEGIN WITH

Broddi Strong-Kin summons the PCs to his hall. Queen Ivartha is there too. Both look tired as though they have been talking long into the night. Their households lie sleeping on the

benches, collapsed from exhaustion. Broddi brings forth a chest. Reaching inside he pulls out a delicate Glass Butterfly. With the Telmori massing along Torkan's Vale, Broddi and Ivartha need a sure way of communicating with Jomes. He asks the PCs to take the Butterfly to Jomes at Stonegate.

It is Fireday and tomorrow is Wildday. Queen Ivartha stresses the importance of reaching Stonegate before Wildday when the Telmori take wolf form. She offers the PC leader a gift of iron, either a sword, ten arrowheads, or two spear points.

## CAST

Broddi Strong-Kin, Jomes Hostralos, Jogar Sog, Ivartha the Skinner, Tatoukal Blackbeard

### HIORD THE TALL GÖT

From the Dolutha, Hiord left his clan when he could not stand Ivar Quickstep's rule any longer. He has adventured in Pavis and Heortland.

Hiord is typical of the wandering Orlanthi mercenary who has served many masters from the old chieftain Arnal, Krogar Wolfhelm a Pavic Wind Lord, and Rikard the Tiger-Hearted a Malkioni adventurer. He has little loyalty to nations such as Sartar; instead, he follows 'strong men.'

Hiord justifies himself to rebels by saying Jomes is 'different' from the normal run of Lunars. He regards most anti-Lunar Sartarites as 'naïve.'

#### Hiord the Tall Göt

**Bloodline:** Jarosarings

**Faction:** Own Two Feet

**Age:** 38

**Keywords:** Mercenary

**Magic:** Initiate of Orlanth &

**Look:** Short beard, streaks of gray hair, tall

### BARLANTH OX-STRONG GLUX

A huge bull of a man, Barlanth is the headman of Sunny Brook. An Orlanthi farmer of Aggar stock, he came here ten years ago following Jomes Hostralos in search of new land. Full-of-life, happy to knock heads together, he is determined to save his investment in this land, and the buildings. He has sweated blood and tears for this land. His wife is buried here, and he won't be forced out.

#### Barlanth Ox-Strong Glux

**Nation:** Aggar

**Faction:** Own Two Feet

**Age:** 46

**Keywords:** Farmer

**Magic:** Initiate of Barntar G

**Look:** Goatee beard, muscled, balding

## KOSCHEI SON-OF-THE-OX ອົມໄຊ

Koschei is Barlanth's son and Griselda's husband. An initiate of the Seven Mothers, his father never understood his conversion to the Lunar Way. Koschei is more pragmatic than his father.

### Koschei Son-Of-The-Ox ອົມໄຊ

**Bloodline / Nation:** Aggar

**Faction:** Imperial Loyalists

**Age:** 22

**Keywords:** Farmer

**Magic:** Initiate of the Seven Mothers ●

**Look:** Beard, handsome, shaved pate

## GRISELDA ອິນໄຊ

She is pregnant and in labor. Griselda is a feisty young steadwife, who came from Tarsh to settle in the new land, and build a prosperous future for her children and grandchildren. She is a tough frontierswoman. She married the handsome young Koschei, and is mother of his two young sons.

### Griselda ອິນໄຊ

**Nation:** Tarsh

**Faction:** Imperial Loyalists

**Age:** 20

**Keywords:** Farmer

**Magic:** Initiate of the Seven Mothers ●

**Look:** Long brown hair, heavily pregnant, short

## HROTHGAR THE SLAVE ຮົກ\*

This slave is a former Maboder thrall. A young man when Jomes took the land, he is now in his forties, a good age for a slave forced to work the land. He wears a big heavy bronze collar, with chains, the legacy of one fight too many with a master. He hates the Telmori who destroyed his tribe, but he hates his masters too. Barlanth sees his slaves as little more than animals.

### Hrothgar the Slave ຮົກ\*

**Tribe:** Maboder

**Faction:** Daughter of Mabodh

**Age:** 42

**Keywords:** Thrall

**Magic:** None

**Look:** Short brown hair, beard, short

## SITUATION

Jogar Sog has sounded the war drums and his band raids Wulfsland in force. Jogar Sog is convinced the fighting in Heortland has drawn off the strength of the Empire. With Jomes frequently absent in Boldhome, now is the time to strike.

Jogar Sog's intelligence is better than the Cinsina's and the PCs will not find Jomes in Stonegate. However, they will be able to leave the Glass Butterfly with Jomes' lieutenants and so ensure communication between Red Cow Fort and Stonegate. As in the Years in Hiding the Orlanthi prepare to retreat to their forts for protection from the Telmori.

The PCs need to be at Stonegate by nightfall. The new day, which begins at dusk, is Wildday, the day of the Full Moon and the day when the Telmori take wolf form.

## CONNECTED EPISODES

Emissaries, Kidnapped, Kill Telmori

## ACTS, SCENES, AND BEATS

### EMISSARIES

#### *Patrol*

As the PCs set out toward Stonegate, they encounter a patrol of Jomes' mercenaries. There are six of them, all mounted. Hiord the Tall leads the patrol. The members of the patrol are mercenaries but otherwise use the Sartar Patrol encounter from *Sartar Companion* (page 134).

The patrol 'offers' to escort the PCs to Stonegate.

If asked, most are aware the Telmori braves have been bolder of late, and that the smoke signals and drums speak of a shaman Jogar Sog who will 'lead the people to victory.'

If questioned, Hiord will explain that Jomes is in Boldhome, but tells the PCs that Tatoukal Blackbeard will talk with them.

### DRUMS ALONG THE CREEK

Drums begin to thump out. Hiord turns to everyone: "Telmori war drums! Jogar Sog is on the move." He addresses the PCs: "We are close to Stonegate, about two miles. I want to head out to Sunny Brook and evacuate the people there to Stonegate. My mission is to escort you to the Stonegate. I will take you straight there if you demand it. I cannot let you go alone. But if you are willing to put yourselves at risk for Jomes' people, I am sure he will reward you."

For any PCs who think about heading for Stonegate use their *Red Cow Clan* keyword as a resistance to be overcome — as they ignore the Red Cow virtue of courage and hatred of the Telmori.

If the PCs agree to go to Sunny Brook, the patrol leads on at a good pace. Hiord tries to get people without horses to double up, or run holding onto the saddle pommel for speed.

#### *Sunny Brook*

Telmori surround the steadfast. There are guards on the palisade wall, but too few against a concerted attack. Surrounding the village is the walled homefield, and byres, barns, root cellars, folds, and sties. An outlying barn is on fire.

Telmori are everywhere in the farmyard and buildings — naked, tattooed, their faces painted black. Wolves run everywhere, howling and snarling over the bodies of sheep in the fold.

Hiord tells the PCs he wants to get into the village, and then out again. "The countryside is alive with Telmori and it is only a



*The Telmori lay seige to Sunny Brook*

matter of time before they gather enough courage to storm the walls. If we leave them, they will be overrun."

The steadfast is home to eighty-five people, of whom forty are adults and the remainder children. Of the adults, twenty are members of the militia, armed with spear and shield. Five members of the militia are veterans of the Biliz Highlanders and act as watch commanders for the village.

Surrounding the village are twenty Telmori braves and their wolf brothers. They are too few to have the courage to storm the walls and decided to wait for nightfall when they will transform into werewolves.

Any attempt to leave will be hampered by elders and children. There are insufficient mounts for everyone and the Telmori would pick off stragglers. For increased complexity, having Griselda go into labor will increase the difficulty in making a run for it.

The PCs potentially have three options. The first is to endure the Wildday assault on Sunny Brook, sheltering behind the safety of walls the wolves must breach. The second is to try to attack the besiegers or at least to lead them off, allowing the villagers to flee to the safety of Stonegate. Lastly, they could try to send for help from Stonegate or Red Cow Fort, hoping reinforcements can arrive in time to relieve them.

The first is likely to end badly. A shaman arrives to aid the Telmori, and he unleashes a wolf spirit which first terrifies the defenders with a howl (Very High resistance) and then charges into the gate of the steadfast, bursting its crude rope hinges as it knocks the gate down. The wolf men follow in a howling mass. A lack of Rune Metal weapons or killing magic means the villagers cannot hope to kill one werewolf for every life they lose. A simple numbers game will lead to the village being overwhelmed and its inhabitants massacred. The PCs may be left trying to flee from the jaws of the wolf men, dragging survivors in tow.

The second holds more promise, if the PCs attack before nightfall and inflict severe enough casualties to rile the Telmori into giving chase or rout them. Scouting parties though may still dog any escape to Stonegate.

If the PCs chose the third it depends on their choice. At Red Cow Fort Queen Ivartha and her household can render aid and

can drive off the werewolves. At Stonegate, they may be overwhelmed by the tide of the attack and unable to send help back to the beleaguered Sunny Brook. See below for options at this point.

## STONEGATE

Whether the PCs endure at Sunny Brook, press on without rendering aid, or try to escape, or send here for aid, they must eventually come here to complete their mission.

Refugees stream into Stonegate. From the high watchtower over the fort, Jomes' mercenaries scan for approaching danger, as people push and shove to enter the safety of the fort's wooden palisade. Inside people beg space by the hearth from kin or just camp where they can.

Tatoukal Blackbeard provides some kind of order, recording names, making notes on maps. When the PCs arrive, Tatoukal asks about their experiences and takes notes. If they mention Sunny Brook Tatoukal shakes his head. "Poor devils," he says, but gestures around. "I cannot spare anyone — we expect an attack here."

If the PCs ask about Jomes, Tatoukal tells them he is not at Stonegate, but in Boldhome, where he has command of the military forces in Sartar, in Fazzur's absence. He will accept the Glass Butterfly on Jomes' behalf if the PCs offer it.

The Glass Butterfly can save the day for the people of Sunny Brook and Stonegate. Either Tatoukal or the PCs can use it to summon help from Red Cow Fort (in fact the PCs might have thought of this earlier, saving one of their number the risk of heading cross country from Sunny Brook).

Tatoukal tells the PCs: "Jomes took many of the Bordermen with him to Boldhome, as part of his household. We are under strength here. I would take it as an act of friendship by the Red Cow if you would help our defense." Tatoukal is a capable administrator, but not a warrior, and he is out of his depth leading the defense of Stonegate. Give the PCs the opportunity to step up to lead, if not have Hiord take command of the Bordermen.

If any of the PCs are well known within the rebellion, Maboder slaves may make contact with them. They invite the PCs to a meeting with the slave's god-talkers of Ernalda. These women will talk movingly of the plight of many of the former Maboder women, who survived the Telmori onslaught only to end up destitute and enslaved into Jomes' service. They will try to play on Red Cow fears of Jomes following the Lunar settlement with the Emerald Sword, suggesting that they too may one day find themselves enslaved.

They urge the PCs to join with Enastara the Red, telling them that Kullina the Fat and Farandar Orendalsson already support them.

## Assault on Stonegate

A horn sounds in the watchtower and a shout "Close the gate, close the gate!" It has been held open all this time to allow the

last of the refugees to reach safety. In the distance, there is a huge answering roar. Anyone on the watchtower sees werewolves burst through the trees, running fast. The timber gate seems to creak and groan and Hiord shouts, “Put your backs into it!” The werewolves move with unearthly speed, their paws glowing with fiery red magic. Some burst through the entrance, just as the doors slam shut behind them, and begin attacking the gate guards.

The PCs’ actions should be allowed to decide the day here. Allow them to witness the last of the gate guards falling and make it clear no one else is close enough to close the gates in time. Frame the contest for the PCs to make it clear that the prize is that they need to close the gates before the main body of the werewolf assault can burst in. The PCs need to wind the windlass which pulls the gates shut. Up to four of them can combine their efforts on this. Spare PCs can Assist them. That assistance might be to fight off the werewolves who have already made it through the gates and are intent on preventing the PCs from closing it.

If any of the PCs working the windlass obtains a Victory, allow the PCs to close the gates before more werewolves can burst into Stonegate. Additional guards arrive to help finish off those few who have made it in already. A Defeat for all the PCs working the windlass means they have failed to close the gate. Individual PCs who suffer Defeats are most likely wounded to their Defeat level, though the Game Master should determine this from the narrative at the table.

If the PCs close the gate, the werewolves circle the fort. One or two use magic to leap atop the walls but the veterans of the Biliz Highlanders are able to mob and kill them with magic and iron. Each time the wolves come in more force, and each time the thinly stretched Bordermen look more like losing the struggle.

Play out a siege in this case, as the wolfmen seek to take the fort before Wildday ends and the defenders seek to hold it. The PCs should be on the wall when the wolfmen attack, and directing the battle. If any PC is leading, have him make a roll against a High resistance to keep the werewolves from overrunning the wall. The shaman from Sunny Brook may appear, to unleash a spirit wolf to burst the gates, but the gates here are the famous stone gates, and blunt the wolf spirit’s attempt.

If the gates or walls are overrun, the werewolves burst through and into the fort, terrorizing the inhabitants, tearing apart anyone they find. Many of the mercenaries die, outnumbered and overwhelmed. The residents fall back to the buildings, barricading themselves inside, and trying to ignore the screams of the livestock. The werewolves even smash through doors and shutters on a few of the less well built buildings, often the homes of slaves and massacre them.

Eventually help arrives, summoned by the Butterfly. Ivartha and Jomes appear, with a relief force, comprising both their households and the Red Cow warband. Jomes Hostralos shines in his burnished breastplate and greaves as he walks. He barks commands and men jump into action. Ivartha is a tempest, cutting her way through the werewolves, who fall back howling.

Once the camp is relieved, wine is passed around amongst the defenders; healers wash and tend to wounds. Jomes strides authoritatively around the fort; it is obvious his men worship him.

After speaking to Tatoukal, Jomes approaches the PCs, “I was with Queen Ivartha when your word arrived. Broddi tells me

that you brought the Glass Butterfly, and Tatoukal and Hiord have told me how steadfast you were in defense of my lands.”

He clasps the hands of each of them in turn. Then he addresses them as a group. “You will always be welcome at my hearth here in Stonegate, and I would welcome you amongst my Bordermen” he tells them. “We must stand together, brothers in arms against the wolfmen.”

Allow the PCs a Directed Improvement under their *Red Cow Clan* keyword of *Friendship of Jomes Hostralos*. Of course Lunar-hating PCs may refuse this keyword. The Game Master may count this Ability as a Flaw — rumor will reach the rebellion of their help for the Wulfslanders.

He embraces Broddi, and then returns to attend to his own people.

If anyone questions Jomes about the judgment on the Red Cow he will say, “That was Gordius’ judgment, not mine.”

## PLAY OF THE GAME

In play-testing, the PCs always headed to Sunny Brook to try to save the village. Most groups tried a ruse to draw off the Telmori, such as trying to draw the Telmori off to chase one group of PCs whilst the others helped the refugees to safety, or trying to decapitate the Telmori leadership in the hope the others would flee. No one in play-testing used the Glass Butterfly to summon help at that point.

If the PCs do summon help at Sunny Brook, be careful to avoid the focus of attention switching to Queen Ivartha for the remainder of the episode. Make it clear Queen Ivartha wants them to carry out Broddi’s mission to Stonegate, whilst she returns to Red Cow Fort to warn the Cinsina. She tells the PCs to expect her coming at Stonegate — this gives you the chance to have the PCs lead the defense there, until she arrives.

Jomes will be grateful for the PCs’ aid, and spends time with them, treating them as fellow soldiers in the struggle against the wolfmen. It would be a mistake to become too familiar, and Tatoukal will take PCs who do so aside for a chat. Jomes is still a Field Commander, and the PCs are just barbarians.

This episode has a lot of fighting. If you have PCs whose abilities focus on talking, remember the negotiators amongst the PCs play a key role in convincing the folk of Sunny Brook to leave. Healers may have to assist a pregnant woman, or one who has recently given birth on the trail to Stonegate. In the final battle there will be many casualties and healers can help by keeping men alive. A healer might also face a normal Telmori wolf, instead of a werewolf as an opponent.

## KILL TELMORI

### BEGIN WITH

Queen Ivartha and Jomes are recruiting spears in Red Cow Fort. They plan an expedition into Torkan’s Vale to kill the Telmori massing there.

Borngold Many-Brothers and Frekor Deep-Woods raise Queen Ivartha on a shield so that she can address the crowd.

With their support, she speaks to those who might volunteer to join Jomes' raid into Torkan's Vale.

"Jomes and I fought against the wolfmen many years ago, and now we need to raise the tribes to fight again. Jogar Sog does not respect the treaties his people made with the Royal House of Sartar. Even Goram White-Fang speaks against him.

"We need people to march with us to Torkan's Vale and kill Telmori. Your ancestors will bless this work, because the Cinsina are the wolf killers, and the Brave Tribe who have stood many times with stout hearts against the werewolf menace.

"Borngold Many-Brothers and Frekor Deep-Woods, my own dear kinsman, support me now, and I hope you too, seeing their example, will also join me."

She also points out that Jomes is offering to pay each recruit two silver guilders a day during the campaign, four guilders for each day of fighting, and ten for the pelt of a werewolf.

Jomes is clear: "Bring me Jogar Sog's head!"

## TWIST

It should be clear that Jomes couldn't muster the manpower to tackle the Telmori from the Lunar garrison — especially as so many troops are fighting in the Holy Country to the south. This not only means that many of those taking part are mercenaries fighting for Lunar coin, but also many question the Empire's ability to effectively garrison Sartar. Eventually though someone always ends the conversation with: "Of course the Empire has the Crimson Bat." Everyone nods, and the conversation ends. Who could resist the demon?

## CAST

Borngold Many-Brothers, Frekor Deep-Woods, Ivartha the Skinner, Kullina the Fat, Farandar Orendalsson, Broddi Strong-Kin, Leikorl the Shadow, Vastyr Bloody-Shirt, Darna Longcoat, Aethelric the Girl, Black-Paws Helkos, Jogar Sog, Ostling Spotted-Fur

## CONNECTED EPISODES

Danger in Wulfsland, War

## ACTS, SCENES, AND BEATS

### Rebels

Red Cow rebels like Kullina the Fat, or Farandar Orendalsson, try to talk the PCs out of joining the muster. "The Telmori are loyal to the Royal House of Sartar," they say. "Jomes is our enemy, and his people have taken Maboder lands. We must not help him to keep those lands."

### JOMES' MUSTER

Jomes musters his army outside Stonegate on **Gto** of 1620. The serried ranks gather before a large flat rock in front of a wooded copse from which the leaders can stand and address them. The army comes from many places. There are Jomes' Border Wulf Peltasts, mercenaries from across the Jonstown Confederation:

## HOW MANY SOLDIERS?

Jomes' muster comes to 500 fighting men and an equal number of porters, healers, cooks, and other camp followers. Jomes draws a core of a hundred men from his own mercenaries; the bulk remainder comes from the tribes of the Jonstown Confederation with other groups providing no more than a hundred fighters.

Cinsina, Culbrea, Malani, and Torkani. There are men and women from the Aranwyth tribe here too, for they often war with the wolfmen and Dinacoli, Tarshite mercenaries and Lunar adventurers, and his best troops, the Lunar vexillae: Legate Bisomen's Men, the Scorching Swords, and the Silver Shields. The Cinsina tribesfolk mutter about having to fight alongside their enemies. There are no regular Lunar units here, all of those are required to prosecute the war in the Holy Country, or garrison Sartar. Therefore, Jomes must rely on his own men and the Sartarites.

Jomes addresses the assembled troops. "The Telmori have taken hostages, murdered innocent farmers, women, and children, and entered lands that by treaty do not belong to them. Too long have we allowed their actions to go unpunished; they grew bold and fearless because of our tolerance of their actions. This will be a hard fight, some of you gathered here will not return from it. However, there is glory and honor in the fight against the wolfmen who have killed so many of the ancestors of the people here."

### Execution

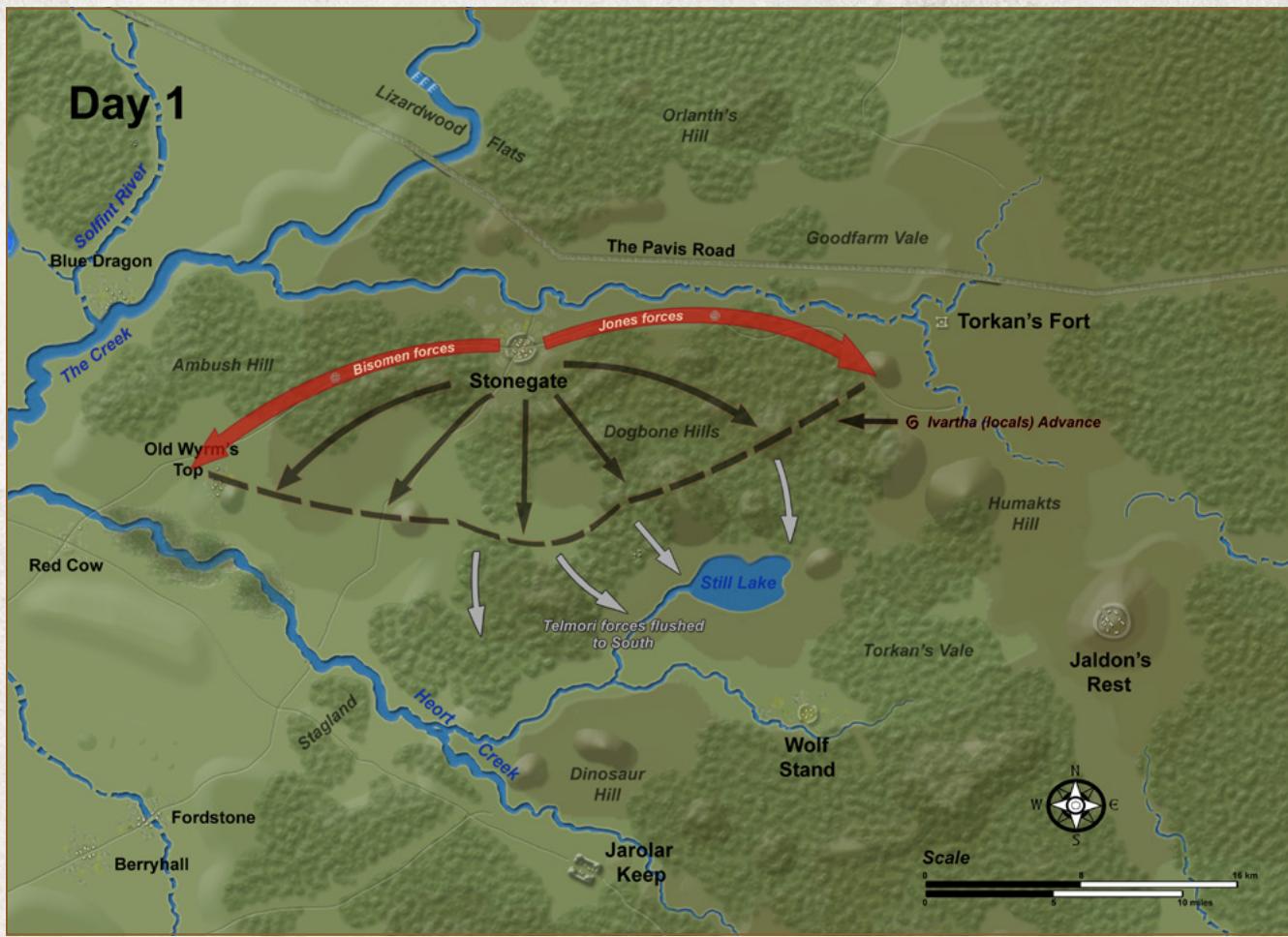
Queen Ivartha steps forward. She gives a signal and Vastyr and Leikorl drag forward a Telmori prisoner, bound in iron chains. The hostage looks proud and defiant. "Ostling Spotted-Fur," the queen says, "Kostajor Wolf-Champion agreed to keep to the Wolf Hills and hunt no further than Torkan's Vale. Your life was given to keep that oath. When Jogar broke that oath, your life was forfeit."

Vastyr and Leikorl bend Ostling over a crude stone block. Queen Ivartha signals to one of the PCs to climb up onto the rock. She says, "Strike Ostling dead, to prove our word to the Telmori."

This is an execution, and the PC should understand Queen Ivartha is testing their mettle. Do they hate the Telmori enough to take whatever action is needed?

If the PCs step up, Ostling speaks to them defiantly: "My great-great grandfather was Sartar, the Bondmaker. He united all the tribes. He wed the sacred queen. He built the King's Road. He founded Boldhome. The kingdom bears his name. My great-grandfather was Prince Saronil, the Bridgemaker. He crushed the Lunars in battle with a long axe. He protected the people from dragon ghosts. He built a great tower. My grandfather was Kostajor Wolf-Champion. He rescued Prince Jarosar, and Prince Terasarin in battle."

"You owe me your fealty, as a member of the House of Sartar. Kill me, and you end this line."



*The Campaign against Jogar Sog Day One*

Jomes speaks: "Who will avenge your line then? Prince Temertain?"

Everyone laughs, some even say it: "Temertain is a fool."

Jomes motions to the PCs: "Go on."

It is possible the PCs may balk at this point. If so, Ivartha sends Leikorl the Shadow forward to execute Ostling. But Jomes and Ivartha now doubt the PCs have the mettle required. Give them a -6 Consequence of Defeat to influence either in future.

Before the PC (or Leikorl) can obey, an enormous snake slides out of the copse onto the rear of the rock, its eyes glow an unearthly red color and it passes through Ostling's legs, rearing up over him to protect him.

The snake is some thirty feet long, and two-three feet broad. It is a constrictor, with a huge head the size of a man's torso, its jaw can dislocate to swallow a man whole. It has a sandy-brown body with black blotches outlined in dusty green flecks. Ernaldans recognize it as an Ooling, a marsh dwelling snake, sacred to Asrelia that lives in marshland and often defends earth temples, but no one has ever seen one this big!

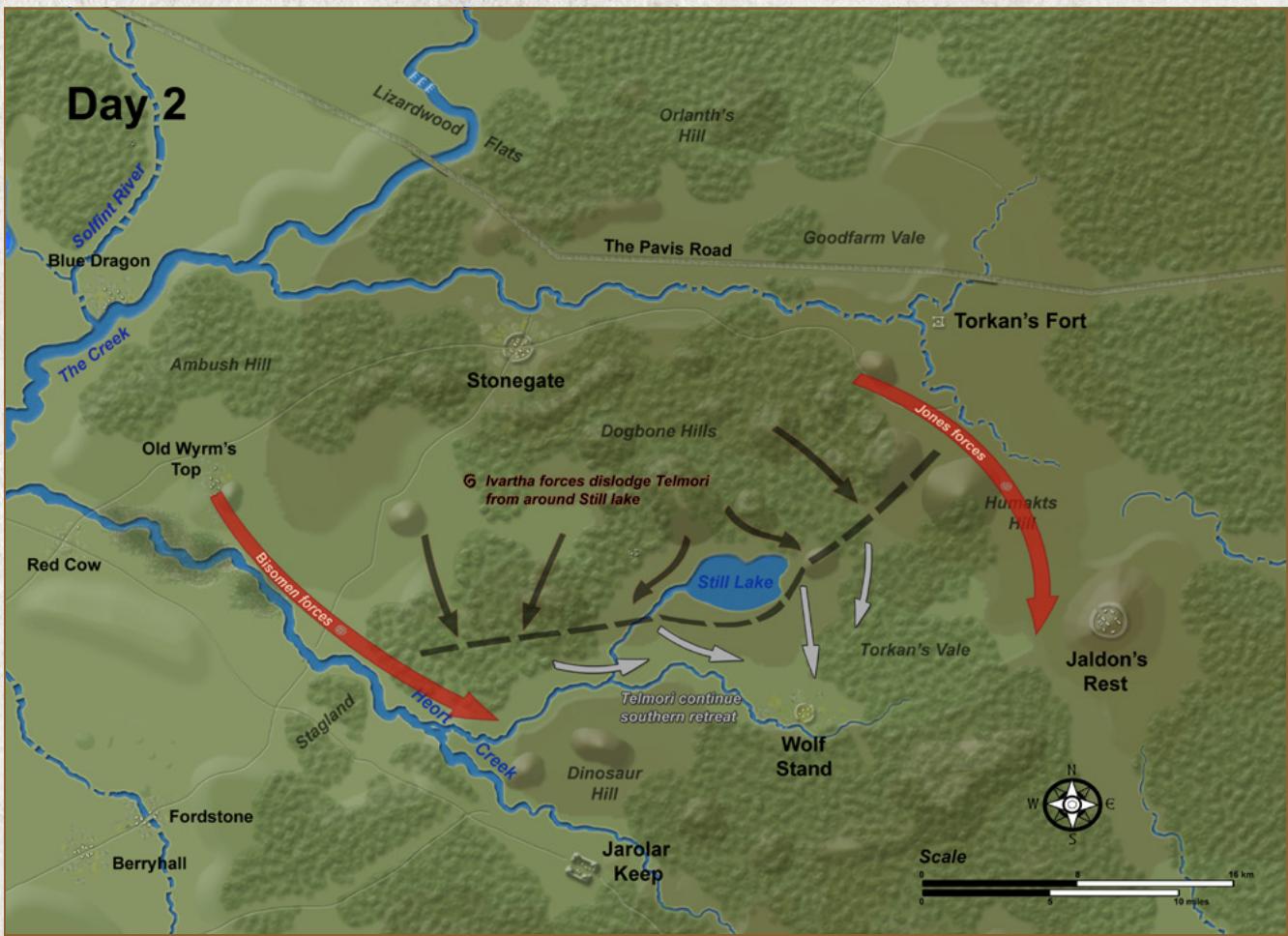
"Ivartha and Jomes," says the snake in sibilant tones. "I, Jogar Sog, see you through this serpent's eyes, for your kind left me none of my own. However, my eyes are open to see the treachery of your people, how you encroach on the lands the mighty Prince Sartar gave to us. My ears are open to hear the empty words that you speak of treaties and obligations. No son of Telmor shall die

again to keep our word to you. We will rise again to drive your plows from the flesh of Grandmother Earth."

The snake lurches forward easily snapping Ostling's chains. Ostling runs for the woods and the snake rears up to embrace and crush his executioner. The snake will try to kill both the PC and then Jomes and Queen Ivartha. Their households will try to protect them from the snake. A snake this size is a Nearly Impossible resistance, however a lot of people can attack a monster this size so reduce the target number for the PCs with Multiple Opponent Penalties, counting Ivartha and Jomes' household. Consider starting the first PC on a Very High resistance, unless they have a lot of Hero Points to burn. In addition, make it only a High resistance to flee the snake — the executioner might well be advised to run instead of fight.

If the PCs do think to pursue Ostling and capture him, Jomes and Ivartha praise them. If not then unless the PCs actively aid his escape, Vastyr Bloody-Shirt appears dragging Ostling behind him. Queen Ivartha and Jomes will ask the PC to repeat the execution (or Leikorl if the PCs balked).

If they do execute Ostling, after the fighting is done Broddi will approach the PC who did the deed. He tells them Many-Breath the clan *wyter* is very anxious — because they have offended Sartar, a demigod. Broddi suggests the only thing they can do is offer sacrifices, but killing one of a god's kin is not likely something the PC can shift the stigma of.



*The Campaign Against Jorgar Sog Day Two*

### THE MARCH TO TORKAN'S VALE

Following the muster Jomes divides his forces into three parts. One group, by his command, marches around the Dogbone Hills to the west, to enter the mouth of Torkan's Vale. The second group, directly under Jomes' command, marches around the Dogbone Hills to the east, to enter Torkan's Vale between Humakts Hill and Jaldon's Rest. He sends the third group, under Queen Ivartha's authority, through the Dogbone Hills, to flush any Telmori into the Torkan's Vale. The PCs are included in Queen Ivartha's group.

The army sets out **0+0** of 1620. An Army on the march can make between 5 and 15 miles a day, depending on the size of their baggage train, and the amount of fighting they need to do.

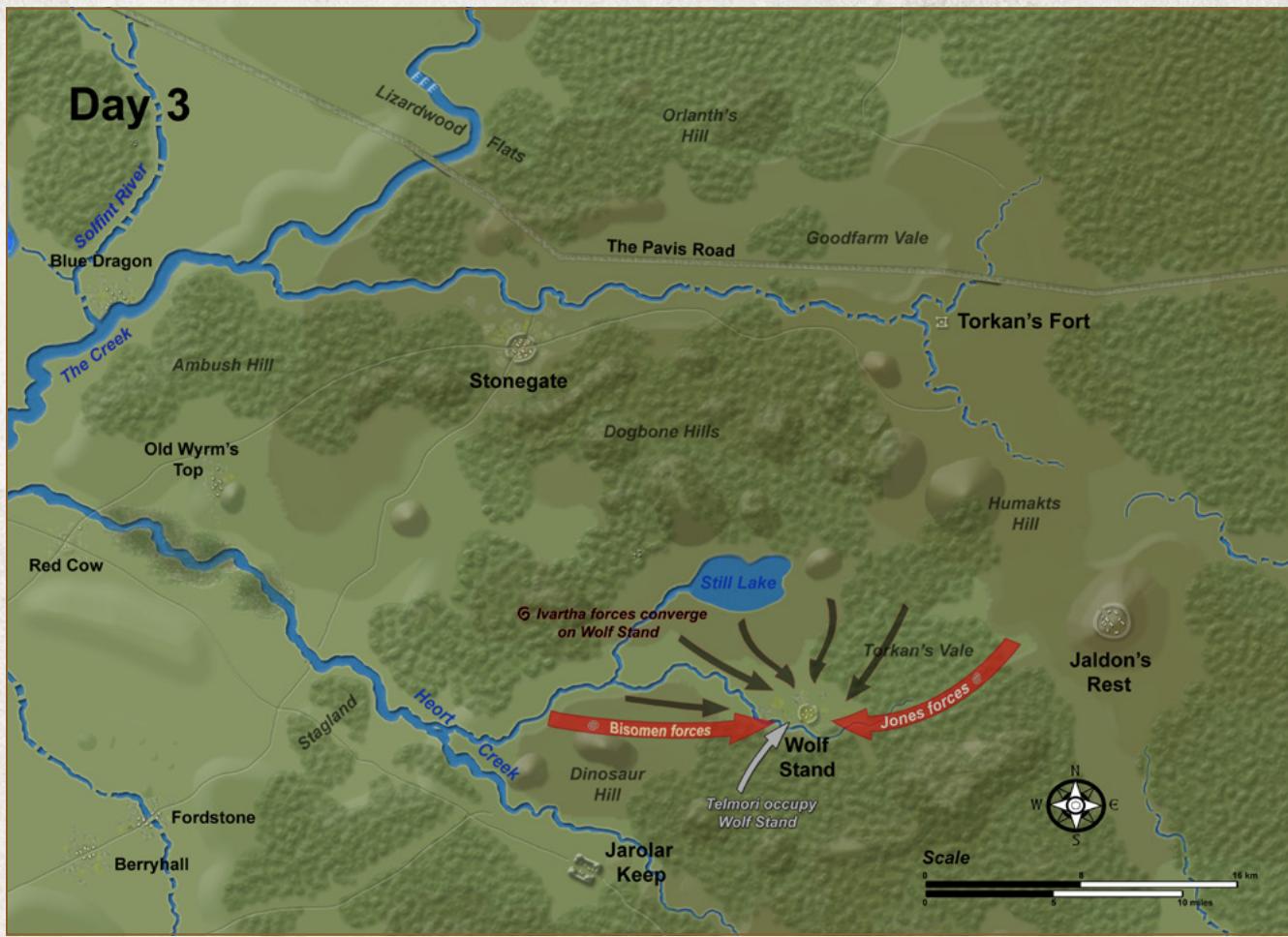
Jomes' first group, commanded by Legate Bisomen, has to travel some 25 miles to march around the western portion of the Dogbone Hill. They are the largest group, and include the other vexillae and have most of the baggage train. They also need to proceed slowly enough to that they do not outpace Ivartha's group who have the heaviest fighting in the center, and thereby stop the Telmori spilling out of the trap along the sides of the Dogbone Hills. Jomes' plan has them reach the mouth of Torkan's Vale on **\*+0**. Jomes is aware that his troops must endure a Wild Day, when the Telmori transform, but also wants to maximize the power of the Lunar magicians in the group.

Jomes' own group has to travel a similar distance, 25 miles, though the country is more difficult. He leads the Border Wulf Peltasts and troops he believes can keep a good pace moving through hills whilst skirmishing with the enemy. He also plans to arrive on **\*+0**.

Ivartha's group only has 15 miles to go, but is expected to bear the heaviest fighting, as the Telmori are ranging throughout the hills. They need to flush the Telmori into the valley, where Jomes' pincer movement will crush them, so their line needs to avoid gaps and holes where their Telmori could dodge the encirclement and bubble out behind Jomes' lines. Jomes expects them to make 5 miles a day, a lot of stopping and starting to ensure their line is tight, and again reach the valley on **\*+0**.

Torkan's Vale is some 15 miles long, it will take Bisomen's group two days to move from the mouth to Wolf Stand, sweeping the Telmori before them. Jomes and Ivartha's group remain in position, closing avenues of escape, apart from the Wolf Hills, until Bisomen reaches Wolf Stand where they will join the attack.

If the PCs did not refuse Queen Ivartha, then this is an ideal opportunity to have the PCs get closer to her. Following the *Flight from the Bat*, and Ostling's execution she regards them as "people I can trust." Allow them to interact with her household. They may even encounter Ivartha talking to the



*The Campaign against Jogar Sog Day Three*

Blue Ghost in her command tent — and the Blue Ghost may even acknowledge the PCs if they prove themselves, such as by saving Ivartha's life.

#### **The Dogbone Hills**

Queen Ivartha moves her forces in a broad line running along the Dogbone Hills, to drive the Telmori out of the hills.

Life for a soldier on campaign is long periods of boredom where nothing happens, privation camping in the field, confusion as rumor of incidents filter along the line but nothing seems to be happening where you are, punctuated by moments of action. Try to represent this by mixing violent encounters with the Telmori alongside mundane struggles against life on campaign.

#### **Ambush**

Telmori braves ambush the PCs as they move through a gully in the hills. This encounter is particularly likely for groups scouting ahead of the main column. The Telmori outnumber the PCs' group and they rain down javelins, using the advantage of height. The PCs need to fight their way out.

#### **Bloody Rebels**

Supplies to the troops come by means of mule trains. The caravans have to be guarded and Ivartha uses her ordinary

troops to escort the mule trains moving back and forth behind the front line of her advance. The mule train is vulnerable to attacks by Sartarite rebels, keen that the Telmori deal Jones a defeat.

The rebels here are from the Storm Rams. Venharl wants Jones driven from Wulfsland; to those who question the threat posed by Jogar Sog, Venharl simply smiles and says: "We must trust those Telmori loyal to Sartar will deal with him in time. For now we need to deliver Jones a bloody nose."

This might lead to the PCs, who would normally be sympathetic to the rebellion, forced to choose between fighting off the rebels to assure supplies to Jones' army, and aiding the sabotage themselves. They may even know or recognize some of the Storm Rams who are raiding the caravan.

#### **Enemy Mine**

Jones' mercenaries come from across the area and may include enemies of the PCs such as Emerald Sword or Two-Pines clansmen, rivals such as Dolutha clansmen, or people to whom the PCs are ideologically opposed such as serving or former Lunar soldiers. Throw some or all of these into the group of warriors the PCs are with to create conflict. Personal enemies, such as members of the Emerald Sword clan who took part in *The Burning of Lhankpentos the Blind* are especially good at creating this kind of conflict.

You can also lead into future conflict by introducing people who the Red Cow will later feud with such as members of the Two-Pine clan. Friendships formed now will be tested by the feud later.

**Orlmar the Charioteer** is assigned to the PCs' warband. A Wind Lord, Orlmar regards himself as the leader of the group. A braggart, he is always boasting about what he has done and what he will do. He is also a bully and tries to push the PCs around continually, mocking their achievements and abilities, seizing on any of their failures to belittle them. Orlmar orders the PCs about, often giving them the worst duty — 'dig those latrines, chop firewood, and carry water.' He is also more than willing to fight with anyone to prove his dominance of the warband. He may beat up NPCs who resist him as an example to the PCs of what awaits them if they cross him. (Orlmar reappears in 1622, and any bad feelings the PCs develop here may influence how the *Three New Stars* heroquest plays out.)

**Estavia GoldEyes** is assigned to the PCs' unit for magical support; a small bodyguard of four Arrowstone cavalrymen accompanying her. The cavalrymen are unhappy in the wooded hills, but Estavia is keen to kill Telmori.

She will preach to those she accompanies, but often in an informal way, telling stories of her old life, and how the Red Goddess liberated her. The PCs may or may not respond well to having a Lunar priestess in their midst, but challenge these assumptions by having her assist them in combat with the Telmori with her magic. Can the enemy of my enemy be so bad?

#### *Wet and Miserable*

For two days it rains. The ground turns to mud; everyone is wet through and has little opportunity to get dry. In the wet weather heavy packs cut into the PCs' shoulders leaving sores, and their feet are blistered in their boots. It proves impossible to get a fire going at night, so no one has a hot meal. Everyone moans and everyone is miserable. Morale amidst the militia is falling and a number of those present talk about deserting, heading back to their farms instead.

Do the PCs give up? Can they persuade others not to desert and to see it through?



*The Battle of Wolf Stand*

#### *Wild Day*

The Telmori attack the main body of Queen Ivartha's forces on **WTØ**. Queen Ivartha's forces are expecting an attack on Wild Day, when the Telmori transform. Word has passed down the line: "When Wild Day comes, the Telmori will try to break out. Be ready! Iron weapons and magic."

The onslaught comes at dusk, just after the transformation. They come as a massed pack of wolves and werewolves, howling through the trees. They have little tactics, just hatred, and they boil out of the woods to assault the PCs' group. Their goal is to break through Ivartha's line, and then encircle pockets of Ivartha's troops and cut them down, or just escape the trap.

In the main ranks, those without strong magic or iron may panic, fearing their impotence against the wolfmen. The Queen's Household will need to be everywhere to prevent casualties and they can't be. As men and women break from the line and run, the wolves pursue their routing enemies and kill them.

Whether this is about survival or killing depends on the abilities of your PCs. For those with weak magic then this becomes about staying alive, by co-operating and not panicking. For those with better magic this becomes about protecting the main force, driving off the wolfmen, and ensuring that they do not break through the line.

After this, the pressure on Ivartha's forces ease, as the Telmori retreat before them to Torkan's Vale.

#### *Betrayal*

Jogar tries to strike at Queen Ivartha using Leikorl the Shadow. He sends a captive snake spirit to attack and possess Leikorl, using his scalp to create the connection at a distance. The spirit possesses Leikorl, and at the next opportunity he strikes out at Queen Ivartha.

The PCs should be there when this happens, and have a chance to be the ones who stop it (if not Vastyr saves her from death). They might have some inkling that something is wrong. The snake spirit possessing Leikorl struggles with speech, and Leikorl speaks haltingly and with sibilant tones. His eyes seem red and bloodshot too.

The PCs might overpower Leikorl in the hope of exorcising the possessing spirit but they will need to find a shaman to perform the exorcism.

#### **TORKAN'S VALE**

When Jomes' troops enter Torkan's Vale, the Telmori realize the main thrust is not coming through the Dogbone Hills, but down the mouths of the valley. Outflanked, Jogar Sog beings to retreat from the Dogbone Hills toward Wolf Stand. Queen Ivartha's forces note the opposition appears to melt away, and make faster progress through the hills.

# THE PIRATES OF THE CREEK

The descendants of those clans who migrated to the lowlands south of the Creek hold an old enmity with the Ducks (*Sartar, Kingdom of Heroes* p.233). The Ducks have never forgotten the old wrong which saw them forced from their ancestral homes along the Creek-Stream River and the humans have never forgotten being compelled to abandon their homes and farms in the wake of the assaults of the walking dead from the Upland Marsh.

Following Starbrow's Rebellion and the scapegoating of the ducks, many Cinsina used the bounty on duck heads of the Great Duck Hunt as an excuse to enact their revenge. The ducks went into hiding, and the local riverfolk, encouraged by the Empire, moved in on the Ducks shipping trade.

The Empire gave contracts between Kethaela and Dragon Pass to its own supporters, so the ducks turned to piracy and plundered their boats. Faced with a loss of trade, the Empire ended the bounty on duck heads.

After the Empire's bounty on ducks expired, some of the Ducks, who had hidden from their persecutors, began to return to the Creek. They began to operate the Duck Boats (*Sartar, Kingdom of Heroes* p.319) once again, now competing with the human river folk who had tried to muscle in on their monopoly along the river, often violently.

Many of the Empire's own supporters felt betrayed by the Empire, which had promised them the lucrative river trade. Every so often the tension boiled over, and the Governor announced a new Duck Hunt, forcing the ducks to flee until it ended.

Learning to live with a price still on their heads, a few of those ducks who turned to piracy, never returned honest shipping when the Duck Hunt's ended preferring to keep raiding the river folk boats that had moved into their trade.

In 1618, the two most famous Duck pirates are:

- Errol Bloodbeak. Captured by bounty hunters during a Duck Hunt, Errol was sold into slavery. Estal Donge purchased him (*Sartar, Kingdom of Heroes* p.307) to perform as part of her 'aviary' and amuse her guests. Errol led an escape, killing the guards and earning his nickname in the process. He has hated the Empire, and Estal Donge since. He assisted Kallyr Starbrow and her household and she issued him with a 'letter of marque' in the form of a stone cylinder, to 'prove' his acts further the rebellion. In truth, Bloodbeak is a rogue who feathers his own nest not Kallyr's.
- Brila, Queen of the Creek. Notable for her ivory white feathers, black crest, and penchant for wearing only a red silk girdle, Brila, and her band of black-feathered raiders are feared along the Creek. Sensuous and mercurial, the river folk speak in whispers of the horrors that await the hostages forced to dance for the pleasure of the Queen of the Creek. She raids riverside villages as well as towns and has become a scourge of humans up and down the Creek. She is infatuated with Harrek, the White Bear, though she has never met him, only knowing of him by reputation.

Units scouting ahead of Jomes' army risk being too far ahead of their own force and being outflanked if the Telmori surge back. PCs working in a scouting role still risk being caught in a fight with the Telmori rearguard.

Once in Torkan's Vale, Jomes should be an inspirational figure. If the PCs are in real trouble then have Jomes arrive with his household to save the day. If the troops become despondent and everyone is deserting, have Jomes appear to steady their nerve. If Jomes settled the feud with the Emerald Sword, contrast the hatred many of the Red Cow have for Jomes for his judgment against his strong leadership in the field against the Telmori.

## Atrocities

The PCs come across the bodies of scouts, ambushed and killed by the Telmori. Their bodies have been hung up from trees, and flayed, perhaps whilst still alive. Flies buzz around the decaying corpses and the sickly sweet smell of death makes some of the warband vomit. Many of the NPCs talk darkly of the revenge they will exact if they find Telmori themselves.

The scouts report a Telmori camp ahead. This is not just Telmori braves, but children and elderly as well. These wolfmen have obviously been slowed by the need to take their dependents with them, dragging sledges with the particularly old, or carrying their young. The NPCs in the group are keen to fall on the camp

and murder everyone they can find. This Telmori brutality ought to be avenged.

How do the PCs feel about joining in with what may turn out to be a massacre?

## Rebel Alliance

The Storm Rams and Miki's Mudhens continue to harry the advancing troops of Jomes' army. Perhaps the Storm Rams or Miki's Mudhens attack the PCs' column. Fighting with the rebels may trouble many of the PCs.

Eventually Jomes' army is too numerous for the rebels and they escape into the Good Place until things blow over.

## Wolf Stand

Everyone begins to realize the final battle will come at Wolf Stand. The Telmori gather there, trying to defend the hill long enough to stage a break out of Jomes' encircling forces on Wildday.

Jomes takes command of the siege and orders foraging parties into the Dogbone Hills to cut wood for scaling ladders and rams. He has no desire to wait for Wildday and wishes to press home his advantage as soon as he can, before his foe can escape. He plans his attack for the half-moon still giving Lunar forces good magic. Jomes leads the assault on the gate, urging forward the men with the ram, seeking to take the gates.

Run the assault as an Extended Contest. The PCs might fight with Jomes at the gate if they don't mind taking orders. Otherwise let them use ladders to scale a section of the wall, and perhaps aid Jomes by opening the gates from the inside. Once Jomes' army enters the battle ends and his army turns to slaughter. No one is spared, as Jomes is determined to teach the Telmori a lesson.

Ideally the PCs confront and kill Jogar here, earning praise from Jomes and Queen Ivartha. Jogar is a Very High resistance — his fetch and wolf brother count as Secondary Contestants in the contest. Black-Paws Helkos is also here, and will try to join the fight with the PCs at Jogar's side. He is a Very High resistance. He may curse at the PCs, if he still believes they are responsible for his father's death.

In addition, Jogar has a bodyguard of Telmori who fight at his side, members of the Telmori Royal Guard, equipped with weapons and armor. They should be a High resistance in any fight and face off with the fighters in the PC group.

If the PCs lose the contest, or win but it seems Jogar or Black-Paws will escape, Jomes kills them single-handedly. This should be witnessed by the PCs, raising more questions about just how the Red Cow should treat this man.

Some weeks later, all will be given places of honor at a victory feast hosted by Ivartha in Red Cow Fort. The queen will give Jogar's killer an iron sword — Wolfsbane — as a gift. There are murmurs around the hall; such a gift is almost priceless. Men stand on their feet and cheer Ivartha's gift.

Jomes presents Black-Paws' killer with a fine krater — a large vase used to mix wine and water — beautifully decorated with scenes from the campaign, its centerpiece a scene of the PC's victory over Black-Paws. "Its twin is my own hall," he tells the PC, "so I might remember your victory that day. The gates of Stonegate will always be open to you."

In addition, if the PCs did not think of it, Jomes presents them with the pelts of Black-Paws' and Jogar's wolf brothers,

turned into short cloaks, fashioned with the wolf's head as hood. "These will keep you warm in many cold winters to come," Jomes tells them.

If the PCs killed Jogar and Black-Paws, then Queen Ivartha has the killers raised on shields as the victorious alliance of Lunars and Sartarites celebrates their victory.

## TRIUMPH

With the Telmori forced back from Torkan's Vale, and given a bloody snout in the process, Jomes declares the campaign over.

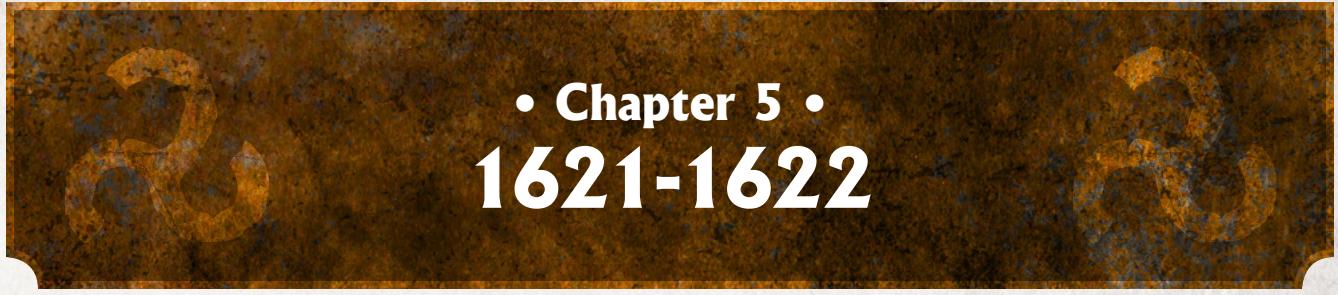
He organizes a triumphal parade in Jonstown, and at the shrine to 'Hauberk' Jon he pays silver for any wolf pelts his soldiers bring back from the campaign. That night the inns of Jonstown fill with soldiers, drinking, gambling, or whoring away a portion of their wages, before returning to their homes.

## PLAY OF THE GAME

Try to emphasize the brutal nature of fighting in the Dogbone Hills. The terrain, wooded hills, makes sight lines short, and an enemy ambush or camp can lie just through the next patch of woodland or over the next hill. Every step is a hard one in cost of blood and courage.

This episode will be dull if you just make it one fight after another. Focus as much on tensions amongst Jomes' army as much as the actual fighting. The presence of NPCs in the group helps to create dramatic tension, so be sure not to isolate the PCs. Join the PCs up with NPCs who they would normally struggle to co-operate with (see *Enemy Mine*). Play on the distrust and tension within the group.

With Jogar Sog and many of their youths dead, the Telmori don't have the braves or the desire to continue threatening the Sartarite tribes. Although the clans carry on having trouble with roving bachelor packs, the threat the Telmori posed to the Jonstown Confederation has ended, for now.



# • Chapter 5 •

# 1621-1622

## CONFLICTS

### ORLANTH IS DEAD

In 1621, a major historical event, thought by many later scholars to begin the Hero Wars occurs — the Death of Orlanth. The episodes here focus on the aftermath of that event, the Great Winter, and the PCs' attempts to save the Red Cow clan.

#### *Killing Orlanth*

Working under the direction of Tatus the Bright, the Lunar Empire has completed a major ritual triggering huge magical effects. When Whitewall fell, the god Orlanth was fettered in the Underworld. Everywhere within a radius of 250 miles the wind stops and goes to dead air, the same area that the New Lunar Temple would defend. This area includes all of Dragon Pass, Prax, Heartland, and Esrolia, and parts of Aggar and Holay.

Outside of that circle, however, a secondary effect occurs. All of Dragon Pass became an 'air hole,' and all the nearby air moves in to fill it. At the edge of that area, the wind simply fades into nothing, coming in from the outside and just as quickly but gently disappearing. It goes away. It goes nowhere, just away. This area becomes known as the Windstop.

Within a couple of weeks, most of the winds in Glorantha are affected and blow steadily (more or less) toward it. Many contemporary chronicles record the event.

A secondary, and perhaps even more significant effect occurs, unanticipated by the Lunars. Within the area of the Windstop, the Earth Goddess Eralda goes to sleep and does not awaken. Children are not born, seeds do not sprout, fruit does not grow, and, within the radius of dead air, the winter does not end.

After the fall of Whitewall, the priests and god-talkers cannot contact Orlanth or Eralda, and all attempts by members of those cults to work magic with their Rune affinities fails.

The Red Emperor declares an Extra Full Moon Year throughout the Heartland of the Empire to celebrate the defeat of the 'Rebel Gods.' All full citizens are granted a year without taxes, and commoners are invited to join in the official revels held in all the temples of the Seven Mothers and the Red Goddess.

No such benefits are granted to the provinces, nor are their celebrations so grandiose.

#### *Freeing Orlanth and Waking Eralda*

Orlanth and Eralda do not restore the world during Sacred Time, meaning winter does not end within the radius of the Windstop. This is the Great Winter, which Orlanthi prophecy claim heralds the doom of the world! For two seasons spring does

not come. It just gets colder and colder until everything seems either frozen or dead. Many die in the struggle to simply survive.

On Clayday of Disorder Weak of Earth Season 1622, the Heortlings, under High King Broyan and Kallyr Starbrow, stage a desperate stand against the Empire at the Battle of the Auroch Hills. They triumph — through courage and inspiration they surprise and defeat their enemies. Those Orlanth cultists who fight at his side, the New Breathers, can work magic again.

Orlanth is still chained, but his breath can be felt.

At the same time, the PCs travel to the Other Side and return three dead stars to Orlanth's Ring. These new stars mean members of Orlanth's cult can work magic again — although their use of Orlanth's Air Rune is limited to the domains of the resurrected stars and require the rites of the Three New Stars for now.

In Esrolia, Queen Hendira of Nochet is pulled from power by a coup, and the Lunar Temple in Nochet destroyed. The struggling pro-Lunar Red Earth Alliance is attacked and their factions thrown out of many cities. Spring returns.

Eralda still sleeps, but her love warms the world.

### SURVIVING THE GREAT WINTER

We recommend you begin play *in media res* in Sea Season 1622 with the episode *Orlanth is Dead*. The players cannot affect many of the events in 1621, and they are best occurring off-stage. Focus not on the run-up to the killing of Orlanth, but its aftermath.

This is a survival story. The question is not can you stop the disaster, but how do you survive it?

Because you may want to use flashback scenes to the disaster — if the players wanted to describe the PCs' action during the crisis, or simply experience the event — we provide an outline for 1621, in the usual format.

Some groups might wish to play out the events of 1621, being uncomfortable with skipping time. We provide enough information to play that out, if you prefer, but no episodes set in that time period. Narrators may also have episodes of their own that they wish to run following the events of 1618-1620. We suggest running those in 1621 before the Great Winter, which occurs at the end of 1621 anyway.

During the Great Winter, the clan shelters in Red Cow Fort. Clanfolk began filtering in after the failure of the tribe's One Day ceremony at Larnste's Table and they keep arriving during the Sacred Time.

By Sea Season 1622, as winter stores in village root cellars became exhausted, most of the clan have taken shelter within the fort's walls. The fort has great storage pits holding surplus grain and barley from fat years; the clan lives on ale and porridge.



*The Extent of the Windstop*

Any place where people can survive becomes a beacon of hope; refugees soon begin flocking into Red Cow Fort. The numbers threaten to overwhelm the Red Cow. Telmori raiders, Hollri ice demons, and Imperial soldiers threaten anyone left outside, and even those inside.

The clan seems doomed until Kallyr Starbrow offers to help them get aid from the stars!

## THE RING

The Helerings, particularly the Kerenelling bloodline, still have magic and **Borngold Many-Brothers** leads Kernalda Other-Ways and Aethelric the Girl in defending of the clan.

Voranga Many-Sorrows does her best to heal, cleansing wounds, disease, and cold injuries where she can. They are particularly active against the Telmori threat, and on each Wildday, they gather those with magic to protect Red Cow Fort and the refugees against hungry Telmori bands. People say, "Staunch as Heler" a lot when referring to Borngold. However, even the Helerings are limited by the lack of rain clouds in the sky for their best magic. Borngold has sympathy with Broddi's willingness to allow in refugees, but he criticizes the decision to retreat to Red Cow Fort, "Abandoning our homes and livestock to the Telmori."

**Frekor Deep-Woods** continues to hunt for food in Stagland, despite the danger from the Telmori; he brings in meat to the starving clan, and the hunters are welcome though their numbers thin from clashes with the wolfmen.

The farmers rage against **Farandar Orendalsson** — he has not done enough to save their livestock, there will be no *Stealing of the Giant's Cows* this year and no Red Cows will be born — but he seems more interested in helping the rebels. Farandar does indeed spend more time with Orstalor and Venharl and even visits King Ranulf in Lorthing Vale — he is determined to fight the Empire. Farandar focuses not on the refugees but on Lunar converts saying “They got into bed with the Empire, let them lie in it now. We should not allow converts in the fort, or feed them from the clan’s stores, even those who Broddi still calls kin.” The clan farmers call for his replacement.

**Kullina the Fat** speaks in his defense, pointing to the Great Winter as the “true face of the Empire.” She works against the Lunar missionaries who try to win converts from the clan; scrimping and scraping what resources she can to prevent clan folk seeking the support of the Seven Mothers. She will be most bitter at Ustarna Try-Much’s conversion.

**Darna Longcoat** has organized lavish ceremonies to contact Ernalda, only to discover she sleeps. Now she tries to help by dispensing to everyone from the clan’s stores and even from her own personal wealth. Wherever she gives aid to the needy, the message is always the same, “Return the gift when you can.” She exploits the situation to build a web of political support — which she will try to wield after the crisis. She goads the young men into raiding the Dolutha — “pick over their abandoned steeds for food for the table” — and later to raid the Emerald Sword and Two-Pine clans.

**Broddi Strong-Kin** and **Griselda Gray-Tresses** do not approve of these raids, but Darna whispers “violence is always an option.” Instead Broddi and Griselda try to save as many as they can, both from the Red Cow and neighboring clans. They believe they should act as the Vingkot did in the Darkness, welcoming refugees.

Of the leading thanes, **Kangharl Black-Brow** cares about the Red Cow folk above others. He talks of admitting ‘good friends’ from the Blueberry, Frithan, and Underwillow, but dismissing the others as “beggars all, who will crowd out our homes and starve the Red Cow, yet never give us anything in return for such a priceless gift.” He calls for Broddi to raid “the Lunar loving Dinacoli, and feed hungry mouths with their bread.”

## WHERE IS QUEEN IVARTHA?

The clans turn to the tribe and in particular Queen Ivartha in this time of trouble. Queen Ivartha epitomizes Cinsin the Red during the dark years struggling against the Telmori. She moves from clan center to clan center, bringing what help she can. She even goes to Dangerford, although Ivar Quickstep despises her presence.

Her household helps the clans to patrol. They fight off monsters and heal where they can. Queen Ivartha looks tired and haggard, sleeping little, always running here and there. Her biggest concern is the Telmori and the Wolfskinners work to keep them from overrunning the Cinsina.

Use Queen Ivartha as a *deus ex machina* plot device to pull the PCs out of trouble when they get in over their heads. For example, if they are about to be overrun by Telmori or Hollri, have Ivartha’s household show up to drive them off. The other use is to give the PCs tasks from the Queen. “Fetch this, kill

that, and help these people.” Whilst at first the PCs may feel like servants, this allows them to get closer to Queen Ivartha and earn her friendship and respect. If the PCs are close to Ivartha from events in 1620 she may even ask them to join her traveling from refuge to refuge.

## EVENTS

### SEA SEASON

#### *The Siege of Whitewall*

Despite General Fazzur Wideread’s success pursuing military objectives in the Holy Country, his planned invasion of Esrolia is put on hold, because Tatius the Bright needs troops for the siege of Whitewall. General Fazzur takes a small force into Esrolia anyway, leaving Tatius in charge of the siege. Whitewall is important to Tatius, because when he captures it he fulfills his criteria for killing Orlanth, an important part of the ritual for his Reaching Moon Temple.

A Giant’s Cradle comes down the River of Cradles (in Prax) for the first time in hundreds of years. The Empire tries to seize it, to take its magical secrets for themselves. A band of rebels led by Argrath free the Cradle and successfully steer it out into the Homeward Ocean.

### FIRE SEASON

Fazzur Wideread leads his picked band of specialists to assist Queen Hendira and her family, who are trying to establish a full Lunar temple in the city of Nochet. With this assistance, several blocks of tenements are burned, and the foundations laid to start a grand building.

### DARK SEASON

On **Gt• 1621**, Tatius the Bright launches his final assault on Whitewall. The Crater Makers hurl meteors from the moon; they destroy the Orlanth Temple. The Seven of Vistur build seven long ramps from the ground to the wall; Imperial hoplites, glowing with protective magic, lead the attack up the ramps. However, there are almost no defenders there. The Lunar troops find only a handful of corpses. None of the rebel leaders, including High King Broyan and Kallyr Starbrow, who were at Whitewall, are found.

Suddenly, the wind stops. No wind blows, and the few clouds in the sky stand absolutely still and do not move or change shape.

No magic works if it comes from Orlanth or Ernalda. No *wyter* speaks, no Umbroli wind blows. Divination receives no answers except death, doom, and the absence of the deities.

Today, and over the next few days, everyone notices it is harder for them to do anything without being winded. This affects all the worshippers of the Orlanth and Ernalda pantheon.

Members of the Sardaling bloodline, who have not converted to the Moon travel to the mission at Red Cow Fort, keen to convert and embrace the protection of the Seven Mothers.

Rites fail! The Lunar Empire sends its troops to enforce the prohibition on the worship of Orlanth, which makes things even harder. Nevertheless, the ceremonies are performed. Nothing happens.

Deserted by their gods the downtrodden cottars and stickpickers of the tribes begin to convert to the Lunar religion. The followers of the Seven Mothers point out to their kin "Orlanth is Dead." Many convert.

On Ancestor Day, The Ancestors arrive and, as they have in recent years, speak only of troubles and dark times ahead. The Ancestors might state they experienced something similar during the Great Darkness, when Orlanth was questing and Ernalda was asleep. One by one, almost every other deity went away. It ended when Heort performed 'I Fought, We Won.' Then the Sun rose.

## STORM SEASON

Storm Season starts, but still no winds blow from the north or anywhere else, and no snow clouds gather overhead.

Jomes issues orders to withdraw his troops into the forts and cities. In Red Cow Fort the drawbridge to the Lunar citadel is raised up and few visitors admitted. The Empire appears to be preparing for a long siege.

Refugees flock into Red Cow Fort, disturbed by recent events. They make camp in the bothies. Every day more-and-more of them pilgrimage to the Lunar garrison. They sit in front of the ditch and walls, on the snow, begging for help. Broddi sends his people to round them up and offer them food from his own stores. Mahome's Fire Alynx no longer keeps the fire in the Great Hall burning.

The cold worsens. All water freezes, even inside houses with hearth fires. Huge amounts of wood are needed to make any warmth, and logging parties go out in the cold to collect more.

Soon the bothies in Red Cow Fort are overflowing with the dispossessed. Across Cinsina lands, many poor folk simply abandon their farms, and head into Jonstown to seek the protection of the Empire and the Seven Mothers cult.

Amongst the Cinsina everyone wants a little bit of magic to help them fight the Telmori; everyone worries 'without magic, how do you kill werewolves?' On Good Winds Day, the Kolating are able to perform the so-called 'Twenty-One Charm.' During the rites the shamans reach into bags and pull out special fetishes. Everyone who can takes one, which has some kind of non-wind spirit stashed inside in case they need a last stroke of luck. The charms are relatively weak; the best Kolatings are at their own private rites, busy defending from invisible assaults.

Queen Ivartha organizes a gathering at Larnste's Table on Orlanth's High Holy Day. Everyone who can make it tries to do so, despite the cold weather and the Imperial patrols.

Nothing happens. The rite fails. The sacrificial fires abruptly go out; they are stone cold, and cannot be relit. The meat is all

burnt or like jelly, spoiled by cold. Runes are cast, and the sticks break when they hit the floor. Priests read the livers of the beasts, and they are diseased. People who normally hear the gods go deaf.

A dead animal, gutted and spitted over the cold fire, bleats and staggers off the spit before men hack it to bits. Its blood flows and sizzles upon the ground and the smell of rotten flesh fills the sacred grounds. Men weep, women fall senseless, and old people slump dead to the ground.

That night the dark gets darker, as if the stars are being pinched out. The cold grows hard and thick, so that all the earth freezes solid and more than solid, so heavy that a sheen of ice coats everything.

Those who did not admit it before hear it again, and cannot deny it: "Orlanth is dead."

All work is simply dropped, left in place as whole clans abandon their steads and head for the hills. Some leave slowly, gathering herds and blankets. Others just go. In the Red Cow clan, everyone flocks to Red Cow Fort. Broddi sends out the message "Come to Red Cow Fort now, bring only what you can carry. Seek refuge from the Great Winter."

The day after One Day, messengers set out from Bullblood to the south. They skate along the rivers, or tramp on snowshoes. They stop only briefly, spreading a message of hope from the exiled High King Broyan, "This is the Great Darkness, prepare for the fight."

## 1622

### SEA SEASON

Winter food stores dwindle and many grow hungry. Griselda has prepared for this, filling the Red Cow's great storage pits with food for just such a disaster. She has put aside enough for a year. New refugees keep arriving from clans that did not put aside enough food, and the stores diminish. Broddi points to the ancestors' actions and welcomes them inside.

The Empire sends bands of soldiers and magicians and warriors into the hills to disrupt the bold and the desperate.

The Telmori have little or nothing stored for hard times, and when winter fails to dissipate become hungry. Desperate starving bands increasingly raid their neighbors — at first they are opportunistic, looting abandoned steads, but soon they need to attack refugees, and places of safety.

Fazzur Wideread is relieved as Governor of Dragon Pass. Tatius the Bright becomes the new governor and tells Jomes to 'keep order' in Sartar but gives him no additional resources to do so.

This is the starting point for your own game. The episode, *The Great Winter*, covers the trials of the Red Cow clan as they seek to survive through this period.

### FIRE SEASON

Ghouls explode from the Woods of the Dead to reap the harvest of corpses. Frozen trees make it difficult to cut firewood and there is little to spare for funeral pyres; permafrost makes it too difficult to dig graves in the iron hard ground. Many of the dead lie where they fall and the ghouls have a bounteous harvest.

Minaryth Purple begins trying to acquire the secrets to reach the Cauldron of Pieces and the Resurrection Thrones.

## CAN I HAVE 21 CHARM?

Give a Directed Improvement to any player who loses their magic of a 'twenty-one' charm under their Air or Earth Rune. The exact charm is up to negotiation by the PC and the narrator, but look at the Cult of Kolat (see *Sartar Companion* page 269) for inspiration if you need to. Emphasize that this is the PCs "last chance" magic.

Under High King Broyan, rebel bands concentrate on getting warriors together. They move about constantly after giving out instructions on times and places to muster. Farandar Orendalsson and Kullina the Fat support the rebels when and where they can. The bothies of Red Cow Fort become an important stop for rebels as they move around the countryside.

Tatius moves most of his army to protect his newly laid temple foundations. He sends small bands of his best warriors into the icy lands to do as much havoc as possible. These troops are ruthless and short tempered. They start to slaughter everyone out in the wilds under the assumption that every one of them is a rebel.

King Ranulf raises the Windstorm banner in Fox Hollow in Lorthing Value, and leads the Culbrea in rebellion against the Empire, drawing forth people who are either inspired or fatalistic.

Farandar Orendalsson leads a band of Red Cow rebels south, heeding the call from High King Broyan. Many in the clan mutter that he and his men should have remained to protect Red Cow Fort.

On 620 1622, the Cinsina try to return dead stars to the sky, unfettering Orlanth's magic, and return spring, waking Eralda. Kallyr Starbrow is essential to their actions; afterwards she heads south, leading the Sartarite rebels in support of High King Broyan. See the *Three New Stars*, which covers how the Red Cow clan survives the trials of the Great Winter.

## EARTH SEASON

On 11, Still Day, 1622, High King Broyan starts the Summons of Evil at Twotop in the Auroch Hills forcing the Lunars to come to him at a time and place of his choosing to increase the odds of victory.

Although this is the Black Moon day, when many Lunar magics are weak or even unusable, the Lunar commander, General Tashkeveth knows the Orlanthi have no magic at all.

The High King reveals the Orlanthi can use the secret of Brastalos, the 'No Wind,' to work magic.

The Battle of the Auroch Hills is a Lunar military catastrophe. Broyan's forces rout General Tashkeveth's forces.

## THE RISING OF THE CULBREA

Tatius has withdrawn troops to protect the new Temple of the Reaching Moon. The garrisons of Sartar's cities and towns become depleted and can do little more than patrol their immediate vicinity and keep the roads open. For some, like the Culbrea, this means there is a little or no Lunar presence on their land in 1622. Tatius does not care — the Great Winter will kill most of them, or when he completes his Reaching Moon Temple he will easily be able to mop up the rest.

Kallyr Starbrow and other rebel leaders have been guesting with the Culbrea during the Great Winter. They persuade Ranulf, despite his fears for hostages held by the Empire — including his own daughter — to withdraw the Culbrea's recognition of Prince Temertain as the Prince of Sartar. This was a key stipulation of the peace treaty following the 1613 rebellion, and the Culbrea are now in violation of that agreement. The Culbrea motts then kill Lunar missionaries and outlaw Lunar sympathizers — the first word the Empire gets of their rebellion is when some of these turncoats stumble into Jonstown and Boldhome. There is little Jomes or other local commanders can do, given the conditions.

Rebels flock to Lorthing Vale, the Culbrea home, seeking safety from the Empire, joining Kallyr and her followers. By this point, rumors will undoubtedly reach the Red Cow of the Culbrea uprising.

With Lunar troops in Jonstown, Dangerford, Red Cow and Wulfsland, Queen Ivartha is quick to squash any suggestion that the Cinsina rise up too — she is far more worried about the threat of starving Telmori, and the explosion of ghouls from the Woods of the Dead, to think of rebellion against the Empire.



In Esrolia, Queen Hendira of Nochet is pulled from power by a coup, and the Lunar Temple in Nochet destroyed. The struggling pro-Lunar Red Earth Alliance is attacked and their factions expelled from many of the cities. The land awakens, and the winter ends.

Farandar Orendalsson and his followers return from the Battle of the Auroch Hills to Red Cow Fort as New Breathers. They choose not to join the Three New Stars Rites — bonded together by their experience.

The PCs bring the Three New Stars back into the sky and unfetter Orlanth for those who use their rites.

Although spring returns, nature is in turmoil. The weather is turbulent, as it tries to rebalance. Sometimes it seems to be spring, summer, and autumn all in the same day. Some crops grow dramatically only to die off in a sudden frost, others flourish too fast and rot before the harvest.

By Clayday of Fertility Week of Earth Season the seasons returns to normal, but by then it is too late to grow crops or make hay.

## DARK SEASON

Dark Season comes with a sense of foreboding. There is not enough hay to feed the animals, and many more must be slaughtered. At least there will be salted meat to feed the people of the Red Cow, though there is little barley for beer, bread, or porridge. Those clans that have few animals to slaughter starve. The Underwillow slaughter their few remaining sheep, and become beggars from their kin in other clans, starving and poor.

## REGAINING MAGIC

### THE NEW BREATHERS

Participants in the Battle of the Auroch Hills have freed Orlanth for their personal use. They may be unaware of exactly what they have done, and many take time to discover their magic remains with them, and that they can give it for a few moments to others by giving them some of their breath. The New Breathers' actions do not free Orlanth for anyone else though.

### THREE NEW STARS

Those who participate in the Three New Stars Rites can work magic with Orlanth's rune affinities. The scope of the magic is limited and defined by the stars the PCs returned to the sky from the Other Side — but this is better than nothing.

### ERNALDAN MAGIC

Following the return of spring, Ernaldans have access to magic once again. Their ceremonies succeed and their magic works. The Seven Mothers missionaries say that it was always the Goddess' intent that Ernalda should return, once Orlanth had been defeated, and she should seek a new husband now.

For the survivors the hunger leaves them prone to illness and with so many animals slaughtered it will take years for the clans to recover.

Raiding the neighbors may be one way to ensure survival and conflict between the clans is unusually fierce for winter.

Queen Ivartha asks the PCs to travel amongst the Cinsina clans to spread word of the Three New Stars Rites. This is difficult in winter, and the Queen and her household accompany them from clan to clan.

The Red Cow priests, Ashart Dusk-Eater and Broddi Strong-Kin, will seek to work with the Three New Stars; they respect the PCs as the participants of the heroquest, but seek to use their knowledge of ceremony and ritual to gain influence within the Three New Stars. Verlain Never-Doubt will become a regular visitor to the PCs as well, often meeting with Ashart and Broddi. Ashart tries not to say it, but the message that the tribe supported the quest and expects to be allowed to direct its benefits should be clear.

## STORM SEASON

As the weather breaks there is some optimism for the New Year. Raids increase in frequency though as struggling clans look to a military solution to fill their bellies. Rebel leaders try to negotiate between the clans, preventing them from turning on each other, but most do that by encouraging loyal or neutral clans to raid Lunar sympathizing clans. Salissa Three-Husbands (pushed by Darna Longcoat) goads the Red Cow to raid the Emerald Sword and Dolutha.

Orngerin Thundercape approaches the PCs and tells them the rebels want to make a big effort on One Day to spread the Three New Stars Rites. Orngerin tells the PCs the Jonstown Confederation plans to support the rites in a ceremony at Larnste's Table. Many people from across Sartar attend, to obtain access to Orlanth. The PCs, as leaders of the Three New Stars, finds themselves increasingly important, moving in the circles of kings, queens, and priests.

The PCs meet Kallai Hairy-Breeds; like Verlain he expects the Cinsina's role in the heroquest to mean he has a voice in the direction of the Three New Stars. Verlain will take him 'into the fold' without asking permission from the PCs. Again the PCs should be realizing politics around their new band is growing.

Among Lunar sympathizer clans, the Great Winter pushes many previously neutral folk to side with the rebellion. The cost of alliance with the Empire is seen as too high when people start counting the corpses. Across Sartar one in six people outside the cities die before the worst of the crisis is over. Nearly everyone has lost kin. The Red Cow loses two hundred and fifty people to cold, starvation, and violence. Many of them are the old and young. Other clans suffer a similar death toll.

"The Hero Wars are here," people say and talk of an old prophecy of Dragon Pass attributed to Cragspider:

*A mighty clash of heroes comes in the Last Days.  
Kitchen-boy, poetess, warlord, lost soul,  
Three-pronged king, and dragonlord,  
Battle for the fate of the universe.  
The globe is dim, I cannot see who wins,  
But the battles are fierce and glorious,  
Hardly shall any inhabitant of the Pass escape.*

# RESOURCES, BACKGROUND EVENTS, AND CRISIS TESTS

The Great Winter has a terrible effect on the Red Cow's Community Resources. We recommend that if you do not normally put the clan record sheet in front of the players for a session, you should do so for these episodes.

Make sure the players understand the mechanics of Community Resources; particularly how these temporary changes from Background Events become Changes to Resource ratings. For the events here, remove the cap of two permanent point changes per season.

Begin by penalizing the clan's Resources to reflect events prior to play in Sea Season. At the beginning of each subsequent season, events further impact Resources. Don't use Resource Fluctuation during 1622; instead refer to the season-by-season guide below for changes to the clan's Resources reflecting day-to-day events.

For example, at the beginning of Sea Season the Red Cow suffer a penalty of -1W to their Wealth; without intervention, this becomes a permanent change of -6 at the end of Sea Season.

Resource Crises are one way to drive the scenes you play out in the Great Winter. See which Resources come under pressure and run appropriate scenes.

The threat of permanent changes to Resources should spur PCs to action; encourage them to instigate or take part in actions improving the clan's Resource ratings.

If any Resource ratings fall to zero or below, the clan is in danger of disintegrating. If at the end of a season a Resource falls permanently below zero, the clan disintegrates. The future direction of the campaign: attempting to found a new clan, or temporary settlement of the now vacated lands by Lunar allies such as the Wulfslanders or Emerald Sword is up to the Game Master.

## WEALTH

In Sea Season, the Red Cow abandonment of its villages and retreat to Red Cow Fort results in a significant, if hopefully temporary, loss of wealth for the Red Cow. Penalize the Red Cow's wealth by -1W.

In Fire Season, the arrival of refugees from other clans, overwhelms the clan's limited resources; deplete the Red Cow's wealth by -1W.

In Storm Season, Salissa Three-Husbands goads the clan into raiding the neighbors; her objective is to restore some of the clan's lost wealth i.e. bolster the clan's Wealth Resource.

## MORALE

In Sea Season, the Death of Orlanth undermines the morale of the whole clan — their gods are unreachable and cannot offer them protection. Deplete the clan's morale by -12. The lack of any support from the gods undermines the clan's morale and the bonds of the community are strained. Note that unless the PCs bolster morale this will be zero. Reflect this in conversions to the Seven Mothers, and people simply leaving the clan. Ultimately this collapse in support becomes too great and the Red Cow decides to elect a new chieftain.

We cover this event in 1623, but you can run it earlier in your game if events dictate.

In Fire Season, the increasing number of people flooding in to Red Cow Fort leads to overcrowded cramped conditions where tensions run high, spilling over into conflict. Deplete the clan's morale by -12. Most likely, the clan is below zero for a second successive season, and conversions and defections continue. In addition, trouble flares in Red Cow Fort, as refugees and clan folk come to blows.

If the *Three New Stars* heroquest succeeds, those who join the Three New Stars Rites find hope in the darkness: boost the clan's morale by the heroquest's victory.

If the PCs fail, the Great Winter still ends through Kong Broyan's actions, but the Cinsina are too broken by the failed quest to gain from the return of spring. It is likely the clan's morale will collapse below zero permanently. The clan loses faith in its leaders and falls apart.

## WAR

In Sea Season, the clan's patrols come into conflict with Imperial troops, who are foraging or just hunting for rebels. The fights often result in casualties amongst the clan's thanes and warriors. The Imperial troops kill some and others are left nursing wounds. Deplete the clan's War Resource rating by -6.

By Fire Season, the patrols are fighting for control of the clan lands with Telmori, Ghouls, and Hollri. The Imperial troops continue to harass and kill survivors too. The clan's patrols continue to suffer casualties. Deplete the clan's War Resource rating by -6.

## PEACE

Chief Broddi welcomes refugees to Red Cow Fort in 1621. Many members of the clan mutter privately about his decision, but Broddi takes the clan's welcoming of refugees in the Vingkotling Age as his guide. Many look to the Red Cow for leadership, perceiving nobility within their generosity. The Red Cow's Peace Resource rating gains from his inclusive approach. Increase the Red Cow's Peace Resource by +6.

In Fire Season if the Red Cow continue to welcome refugees their Peace Resource rating gains a +6 for that season (with a possible permanent raise at the end of the season).

Note that the changes to Peace and Morale work in opposition here. While Broddi continues to welcome refugees his status as a statesman increases, as does his influence amongst other clans, but his status within his own clan falls. His actions lead to his downfall in 1623.

## MAGIC

In Sea Season, the loss of all Orlanth and Ernalda magic along with contact with the clan *wyter* Many-Breath badly weakens the clan's Magic Resource rating. Drop the Red Cow's Magic Resource rating by -1W. This will put the Red Cow's Magic Resource rating below zero. Reflect this in increased disease and illness amongst the refugees crowded into Red Cow Fort; the gods' protection has failed. Also, reflect this in increased conversions to the Seven Mothers, as people search for usable magic.

The situation persists in Fire Season; deplete the Red Cow's Magic Resource rating by -4.

Successfully performing the *Three New Stars* heroquest bolsters this Resource (as well as the Morale Resource). Increase the clan's magic according to the PCs' Benefits of Victory.

## SETTING CHANGES

### ORLANTH AND ERNALDA MAGIC FOLLOWING ORLANTH IS DEAD

No magic works if it comes from Orlanth, Eralnda, or their subcults. None: feats and affinities do not work. The clan and tribal *wyter* cannot be contacted — Broddi is unable to talk to Many-Breaths any longer.

For clarity, the following deities continue to have magic: Ana Gor, Chalana Arroy, Donandar, Elmal, Engizi, Ermal, Heler, Humakt, Issaries, Kero Fin, Kolat (but no wind spirits), Lhankor Mhy, Maran, Odayla, Redalda, Urox, and Yinkin.

The Red Cow will rely on the Heler worshippers to provide much of the clan's magical defense and healing. The Dolutha rely on their Elmal, further strengthening Ivar Quickstep's hand.

## ORLANTH IS DEAD

### BEGIN WITH

Nearly everyone is crowded into Red Cow Fort. Chief Broddi issued the call "Come to Red Cow Fort for safety. This is the Great Darkness, we must prepare for the fight. Bring with you only what food and personal possessions you can carry. Bring with you only your finest breeding pairs of cows, sheep, alynxes, and pigs. Come quickly because this will only become worse."

### CAST

Ashart Dusk-Eater, Broddi Strong-Kin, Jaranil the Thunder, Kernalda Other-Ways, Ustarna Try-Much

### SITUATION

The steeds in Red Cow Fort are crammed full to overflowing as people bed down amidst their kin and stable their best breeding animals. The bothies are packed with people seeking shelter from the cold. The chieftain's hall and Thunder Brother's Barracks are crammed full with refugees. There is insufficient room. Tents fill the spaces between bothies and walls; the poorly sheltered inhabitants shiver by great fires.

Darna Longcoat has ordered the storage pits opened and surprisingly Griselda Gray-Tresses agreed without dispute. The clan has food to feed its hungry mouths, but Griselda and the grandmothers ration it fiercely. They make a daily porridge.

In the center of Red Cow Fort, the Lunar mission has raised its drawbridge. Smoke and laughter come from within. Guards watch from atop the gate towers and the commander's tower. Every so often signal mirrors on the towers flash. Sometimes

## ORLANTH'S RING

During this period, Orlanth's Ring no longer appears in the sky, making its customary journey from Stormgate to the Pole Star. People all over Glorantha notice this phenomenon, and even if they are far from Dragon Pass, this change in the sky is understood to be a portent of doom and causes great consternation.

a heavily armed party rides out, pushing its way through the assembled refugees, riding them down if in the way. At other times, guards rush out to clear a path with spear butts (and points if needed) for an incoming patrol. It is clear that the Lunar Army still functions but they do not stop to help the starving locals.

Conditions are permanent winter. There is no wind and little cloud cover, which makes conditions similar to a Brightnight. The temperature during the day rarely climbs above 5°F, with temperatures at night falling to -15°F. Anyone without proper protection develops frostbite within 15 minutes and hypothermia within an hour. Death follows shortly after. Cold weather clothing is essential to survive. The Heort and Danda are frozen over, the Creek has ice floes and frozen sections. The ground is covered in ice and snow. It is as hard as iron to dig in due to permafrost. People and abandoned animals freeze to death and die.

### CONNECTED EPISODES

Cattle Raid, Emissaries, Patrol, War

### ACT, SCENES, AND BEATS

*Red Cow Fort, Death of Jaranil, We Won't Go, Ghouls, Tax Farmers, and The Wolf at the Door* let you show the PCs the plight of the clan and its neighbors in the Great Winter. We assume the episode starts in Red Cow Fort and from there the scenes may lead PCs out to any of the surrounding locations. *Moon Dogs*, and *Arkar's Tax* provide threats to the clan. We also provide two small adventures *The Resurrection Thrones* and the *Picture Door*, which provide preparation for the heroquest in the *Three New Stars* episode. In *Play of the Game*, we suggest how to weave them together.

### RED COW FORT

In total, over a sixth of the Red Cow clan dies during the Great Winter.

Exposure kills many; particularly the old and the young huddled in the bothies. There is never enough fuel to keep the hearth fires burning, or enough room for all to sit close enough to stay warm.

Exposure is a risk to any PCs who lack adequate cold weather protection when venturing outside during the Great Winter (see *The Horror in the Dark*).

Disease kills many more. With Orlanth and Eralnda's protection gone, Malia's disease spirits stalk the clans, and with

people's resistance lowered by cold and hunger, many get sick and many of those die. The bothies are home to regular outbreaks of the Creeping Chills or Thunderlung. Without healing magic, all anyone can do is comfort the dying — some flee to the House of Peace in Jonstown for healing from the White Healers, but most die on the road.

Of course, the Seven Mothers provide healing to converts, and Estavia GoldEyes heals those who renounce the old ways and turn to the Red Goddess. Many do.

The PCs may succumb to illness as well. The PCs should resist with abilities indicating toughness, stamina, endurance, or general rude health. Failure indicates the PC has become sick, and suffers physical disability until they recover.

Hunger kills fewer, for the Red Cow has put aside barley in its great storage pits for bad years. Many who once cursed Broddi now bless his foresight as they eat their gruel and drink their beer. Even so, the thanes have to be present when the food is doled out from the pits; at times it descends into desperate scenes as people scrabble for their rations of food. The PCs may be called upon to manage the food distribution and face heart-breaking choices over rationing to children and infants.

Kangharl tries to organize foraging parties to bring back "the Red Cow's treasure, left at the steeds," and asks the PCs to join him. It is possible that Hollri or an Ice Crawler attacks the party (see below) or desperate Telmori, Two-Pine, or trolls. Soon he is calling for "raids against the Dinacoli, to feed our hungry mouths with their salted beef and porridge," and he tries to persuade the PCs to mount raids on the neighboring clans.

Raiding the neighbors means you survive by consuming their resources instead of your own, allowing you to live longer. That's not to mention there are things in abandoned villages just waiting to be taken: plows, looms, pottery, and metal goods left behind in a panic. As Red Cow Fort runs low on food Kullina the Fat points out the Empire has food in reserve at Dangerford, Jonstown, and Stonegate. A raid could carry off supplies that will see folk through the winter.

See the *Cattle Raid* and *War* episodes for more on raiding. Raiding can be used to bolster the clan's Wealth Resource.

Of course, afterwards everyone remembers the clan who prospered at the expense of the neighbors and despises them.

Refugees from the Blueberry, Frithan, and Underwillow begin stumbling in to Red Cow Fort. They beg for admission, a place by the fire, a little food. They tell dark tales of what is happening outside. At first, everyone is welcoming to friends — "these clans are our good friends, we should let them in."

When it gets crowded people say: "There is not enough room for Red Cow folk now."

Chief Broddi reminds everyone of the ancestors and the god's demands of hospitality. "Our ancestors let the Cloud Folk in and gave them a place in the clan." Everyone remembers then and welcomes the new people. Darna Longcoat seems keen to personally welcome the refugees into the clan and help them get started with generous gifts from her own store of wealth, but people grumble about the "number of hungry mouths."

More people come, and some of them are Goodhaven, Dolutha, Greenhaft, Erlending, and Toena. These are members of the tribe, and allies, but there is not enough room.

Folks no one knows: Godori and Siganti from the Torkani, and Gray Fox from the Aranwyth come as refugees to Red Cow Fort. Everyone petitions Broddi; some to let them stay, some to make them go.

Trouble between the refugees and the clan members flares up regularly — as clan members with a sense of entitlement to the fort's stores and protection argue with refugees. Kangharl Black-Brow is active in stirring conflict, despite the clan's obligation to hospitality. As the situation worsens, refugees who arrived early begin to resent newer arrivals, anxious that what meager offerings the Red Cow can make the refugees will soon become exhausted. The established refugees become worse than the Red Cow in causing trouble with the incomers.

When the 'rule of the bothy' that the oldest visitors should make way for new arrivals breaks down, Kestald Far-Traveler (see below), a thane from Green Meadows, refuses to leave for Blueberry newcomers. As the PCs wander across the situation, the newcomers, led by Brofin Hard-Axe have formed a mob outside the bothy where Kestald and other refugees from Green Meadows have taken shelter. Brofin and his men are determined to break into the bothy and evict Kestald by force. A crowd has gathered — many are refugees who claim the Red Cow is not following the rules on access to the bothy; others are Red Cow folk angered their resources are being given to outsiders.

If the PCs do not diffuse the situation, it is certain to lead to violence. This will have consequences beyond the Great Winter, as the Blueberry clan is a Red Cow friend.

Occasionally Estavia GoldEyes leaves the safety of the citadel, though always accompanied by guards. She preaches to the refugees of the word of the Goddess and offers food from the Poor Fund (potato-bread, onions and red berries) to anyone who becomes a Lay Member of the Seven Mothers. She offers healing to Lay Members who are injured or hurt and says, 'We are all us.'

Some of the clan converts. Most are sick and cannot get healing for frostbite, pneumonia, etc. Some are hungry and don't find enough in the daily porridge ration to fill their bellies. The clan is outraged by every conversion, but can offer little alternative.

Estavia GoldEyes wanders out amongst the refugees preaching. Many have severe frostbite injuries and Ustarna Try-Much pleads with Estavia "I have no magic, I can do nothing to heal them, and I will have to amputate many toes, fingers, ears and noses. Can you help them?"

Estavia replies, "There are too many for me to help alone, but I could teach you so that you could help them once again." Ustarna nods. When Estavia finishes preaching she takes Ustarna into the Lunar citadel with her.

Estavia comes to preach again a week later and Ustarna returns with her. She looks tired, but wears clean fresh white clothing, and has shaved her head bald. She moves amongst the people and begins healing them. Her fingers work magic again, and she soothes frostbitten fingers and toes. Some recoil from her in horror because her magic has a crimson glow.

If a PC approaches her and asks what has happened she looks sad. "Queen Deezola provides where Eernalda cannot. The needs of the people outweigh my needs. We are all us." The PC can now clearly see a Red Moon Rune tattooed on her arm. As she

heals, Estavia moves amongst the sick telling stories of the Red Goddess' mercy.

Some refugees come to the PCs and ask what they should do. "Should we let Ustarna heal our child," they ask, "her fingers are so cold?"

Following Ustarna's conversion, when the missionaries return to preach, someone else, often a mother looking to care for her family, converts to the Lunar Way.

## HOLLRI

These demons are usually confined to the snowcapped peaks of the mountains, descending only in winter to Dragon Pass. They stalk the cold wastes now, ambushing and killing living things wherever they find them. The PCs might encounter the Hollri attacking refugees or livestock. They might come across a clan enemy such as the Two-Pine, Emerald Sword, or Telmori engaged in a fight with the Hollri. The PCs must make a choice: defend people against demons, attack the survivors, or abandon both sides to their fate.

The Hollri might gather in enough strength to assault Red Cow Fort itself!

Hollri, or ice demons, are beings composed entirely of ice. When Hollri form they are small, but increase in size and power over the course of several decades or centuries. They develop innate magical abilities, such as freezing breath, light, or the ability to travel through solid ice without leaving any trace.

### Hollri

**Significant Abilities:** Hurl Icicles, Ice Dagger, Ice Spear, Shield of Ice

**Exceptional Abilities:** Freezing Breath, Large, Pass Through Ice, Strong, Touch of Cold

**Weaknesses:** Fear Warmth, Melted by Heat

**Consciousness:** Sentient

**Relevant Statistics:** 800-1000 lbs, 10-12 feet tall

Converting to the Seven Mothers is straightforward. Go and join the other people who listen to the missionaries when they speak and accept the food they hand out. New converts do not suffer the wrath of their old gods; their agents of reprisal are as impotent as they are.

Many Orlanthi consider the converts as outlaws, however the Red Cow accommodates their Moon Winds for now, and does not exile them. The converts have magic, food, and can seek shelter in the Lunar garrison if threatened.

The Two-Pine have little agriculture, and in some ways this has protected them for they always have to store winter food and fuel. As the winter drags on their stores begin to become exhausted. They only know one way to replenish them, to raid and take from their neighbors.

A frontal assault on Red Cow Fort is madness, but Orlmarth the Charioteer leads a group of Culbrea thanes in disguise as refugees. They smuggle weapons past the guards hidden on mules loaded with their meagre possessions which are in fact just looted from abandoned Red Cow steeds. This proves their undoing when someone recognizes a vase from their home and demands to know how the Two-Pine group got it. The PCs should be drawn to the ensuing struggle as accusations of 'looters' ring out and the Two-Pine try to intimidate their way out of the situation.

It goes from bad-to-worse when someone recognizes Orlmarth, and the Two-Pine reach for their weapons.

Orlmarth orders his men to take hostages. His plan is to demand food in return for freeing the hostages.

If that fails, or they seem to be losing, Orlmarth will simply teleport out, taking his four storms (his sworn men) with him. At that point the remaining Two-Pine raiders offer ransom in return for their lives.

The Two-Pine raids continue, unless someone negotiates with them (see *Tribute* below).

Ashart Dusk-Eater hides in Red Cow Fort amidst the crowds, hoping the Lunar authorities will not recognize him and no one will betray him. Of course, before long a new convert knows his whereabouts, and betrays him to the authorities in the citadel. Soon the Empire's Moon Dogs hunt through Red Cow Fort. Ashart asks the PCs to help him escape — it's possible they have already aided him in the episode *Manhunt* and he trusts them.

Where can he hide? Brightwater has strong walls and is still a place of safety. It's far enough away from the authorities, but the journey down the Heort Creek will be hazardous, even on skates.

Bounty Hunters continue to operate in Red Cow Fort, looking for those rebels driven to its safety by the cold. Orstalor and Venharl might take refuge here, or Orngerin Thundercape. There may be running battles in Red Cow Fort as traitorous clan members or refugees betray these rebels for some soup, a piece of bread, or the chance to sit by the fire.

Finally, Red Cow Fort may seem like a refuge that few would challenge, but the fort itself comes



*Hollri attack during the Great Winter*

under assault from Hollri. The PCs should be foremost in the defense of the fort against these monsters, or organizing the safety of the refugees or care of the wounded.

### ***Death of Jaranil***

Chief Broddi calls the PCs into his hall. Refugees pack the proud hall, sitting with a few treasured possessions on the once proud mead-benches. They stare blankly into the fire, coughing with chest infections, some moaning with the pain of frostbitten toes or fingers. Chief Broddi sits on the high seat. Kernalda Other-Ways stands at her chieftain's side. The PCs wait whilst Broddi finishes discussing a dispute that has boiled over between two refugees over a loaf of bread. Then he summons the PCs forward. "Two days ago I sent Jaranil to Brightwater. It was a routine patrol, nothing more, with the chance to see if any of the animals had survived thus far and might be slaughtered. He has not returned. Find him! I need him!"

On the way to Brightwater, the PCs encounter a column of refugees. Their few meager possessions are crammed into ox-carts. They ask the PCs: "Is it safe at Red Cow Fort?" When questioned they tell the PCs that, "Raiders came at dawn, killing and burning. We managed to escape with our lives but many were not so lucky."

One or two ask the PCs about relatives: have they seen them ahead on the road, but the PCs have seen no one.

When the PCs reach Brightwater, they find it occupied by a unit of the Mirinite Swords from Jonstown.

Smoke hangs in the air from burning steads torched by raiders. There is a smell of sulfur. Haze. Something burning somewhere: a thatched roof, the smoldering ashes, and pillars of a hall. There are dead bodies lying in pools of blood, staring glassy eyed and homes with missing doors, collapsed roofs, broken pots, chests broken open, scattered clothing. Cats wander mewing throughout the ruined steads.

The Lunar Empire has been preparing for the Death of Orlanth, but has not stockpiled enough food for all its garrisons. Local commanders send the troops out to forage amidst the abandoned villages, rounding up livestock, gathering grain and vegetables.

The soldiers kill the animals for slaughter and throw their corpses along with jars of grain, and bales of hay onto enormous sledges. Teams of new converts to the Seven Mothers pull the sledges on ropes. Most are Orlanthi men, following the example of Danfive Xaron in paying penance for their former life. Their overseer, Ohorlan the Penitent, exhorts them to greater efforts, declaring: "Hard work will free you!"

They are systematically stripping the village and piling animal carcasses and jars of food onto makeshift sleds. There are seven wooden crosses in the center of the village and crucified on them are Jaranil the Thunder and his patrol. The PCs notice that some of the figures on the crosses still move, they are not dead yet. As the PCs watch, too far away to intervene, their commander walks up to Jaranil. From under a military blanket, he pulls a spear. Even at this distance, it is clear it is the Meteor Spear, a clan treasure. He stabs it into Jaranil's side whilst his men laugh.

Do the PCs try to avenge Jaranil and recover the Meteor Spear? If the PCs return to Red Cow Fort without acting, many

will lose faith in them as agents for the clan. Kullina the Fat will be incensed: how could they let this go un-avenged? How could they let the Meteor Spear fall into Lunar hands? Chief Broddi is more sympathetic and points out the danger of Lunar reprisals. People mock Broddi as weak more openly now, and the Rivals (see page XX) hold court in their halls openly criticizing his leadership. If the PCs act, everyone is saddened by Jaranil's death, but relieved at the recovery of the Meteor Spear.

With Jaranil's death, Chief Broddi appoints Ortossi as his successor, even if a PC seems an obvious candidate. This shocks everyone. Broddi dislikes Ortossi as a brute, and everyone knows it. Broddi simply says, "Desperate times call for desperate measures."

### ***I Won't Go!***

Chief Broddi asks the PCs to retrieve some people who will not leave Green Meadows for the safety of Red Cow Fort. Broddi's instructions are clear: "I can't protect them there, bring them into Red Cow Fort." Jarkorl Snow-Whiskers, and the farmers at Green Meadows refuse to come to the fort. They are determined: "We need to stay here to protect our livestock and homes," they say. "There is no room for them in Red Cow Fort."

One of the thanes, Kestald Far-Traveler, tells the PCs: "Folks here are perfectly capable of looking after themselves, we don't need to shelter behind Broddi's walls."

Allow the PCs and Jarkorl to debate for a while, but before taking it to a contest, interrupt the conversation with an attack

## **ICE CRAWLER**

These spider-like monsters are another non-native species seemingly drawn into Dragon Pass by the Great Winter. They are vicious hunters and form a nasty foe for a patrol, group of emissaries, or caravan. An ice crawler is a large arthropod adapted to life in cold conditions and high altitudes. It stands about three feet high and has a body about six feet in diameter. Covered with coarse white hair, these predators are fearless in pursuit of prey. They stand on eight stout, powerful legs and are equipped with fearsome mandibles. Each leg ends in a series of hooks allowing it great traction on ice and snow. Its head is shaped like a small round pillow ringed with eyes, which allow it a full 360° panoramic view of its surroundings at all times. Its vision extends into the infrared spectrum, allowing it to pick out living things against mountain glaciers or snow-covered hills.

### **Ice Crawler**

**Significant Abilities:** Fearsome Mandibles, Run on Ice or Snow

**Exceptional Abilities:** Find Prey, Infrared Vision, Panoramic Vision

**Consciousness:** Sentient

**Relevant Statistics:** 200-300 lbs, 6, wide, 3 feet tall

by a pack of Ice Crawlers. These creatures have gained strength in the unnatural winter and they attack settlements, travelers, patrols, or bands of refugees.

After the assault the PCs will find it easy to persuade Jarkorl to lead his people to Red Cow Fort and away from the dangers of the Great Winter.

#### ***The Wolf at the Door***

The impact on the Great Winter is terrible for the Telmori. The Telmori dens do have food reserves for the winter, but little surplus; as the winter stores run out, they rely on the bounty of spring. Spring should bring fresh plants to gather, and animals to hunt. As winter drags on, no green shoots appear, the animals starve and die, and game becomes scarce. The Telmori dens starve. Their only option is to hunt further afield, competing with the Sartarite hunters who suffer in the same way, or raid their neighbors to steal their winter stores. The Red Cow has trouble with Telmori packs throughout the Great Winter.

The PCs are on patrol when they come across a group of refugees and their animals struggling through the snow. There are two-dozen refugees but they are making heavy going. They have three ox-carts laden with possessions and a small flock of sheep and some prize cows. The refugees blow their horns and signal their presence to the PCs — a common sign their intent on Red Cow lands is not hostile.

Suddenly one of the PCs notices a pack of wolves appear behind the refugees and lope after them. The refugees begin goading their oxen, but the carts slip and slide in the snow. A few begin running but tumble over on the icy ground.

It is Wildday, as any PC can tell from the Full Moon in the sky. The wolves look big. Telmori!

If the PCs decide to help the refugees, they may be able to reach them before the Telmori if they have Movement magic.

However, the PCs may not realize the Telmori they can see are flushing the refugees into an ambush. More Telmori are waiting for the refugees to be driven into their killing ground.

Killing Telmori without magic is Nearly Impossible. When the PCs *Name the Prize* remind them werewolves are immune to non-magic weapons. With no magic, how will they kill them? One option is for the PCs to try to help the refugees flee, abandoning their possessions, more importantly their livestock to the Telmori. Despite their situation, some of the refugees (named Gultar Flat-Stone and Korli the Dove) argue with the PCs saying, “We have lost everything else, at least let us save this.”

After the incident, the same question is on every lip around Red Cow Fort, “Without magic, how will we fight the wolfmen?”

The Great Winter strikes the Blueberry particularly hard. They have no refuge like Red Cow Fort or Dangerford Fort to fall back on; many head to Fordstone, but the number of refugees begin to overwhelm the clan.

Telmori packs, suffering from the Great Winter, sweep west into Blueberry lands. Many farmers die fighting the wolfmen who come to steal their flocks and herds of sheep and cattle. Edrath the Wise tries to hold the clan together as best he can; he tries to cluster the clan into three defendable villages. Queen Ivartha’s household responds in their hour of need, moving between the villages with supplies and news. Nevertheless, many

flee to Red Cow Fort or Jonstown. Edrath calls for help, and Ivartha and Broddi respond, asking the PCs to join the effort against the wolfmen.

If the PCs visit the Blueberry, they will find the clan under siege from raids by Telmori packs. If the PCs offer help, Destoral the Short, the Blueberry Warband Leader, asks them to help kill the pack leader and thus drive the Telmori off.

The Telmori are desperate, with too few winter stores, and need to steal food just to survive. When Blueberry warriors find them, Destoral is in no mood for mercy. The pack keeps moving, usually from abandoned village to village, taking what shelter they can in the Blueberry’s former homes.

#### ***Ghouls!***

If the PCs visit the Dolutha, they find them gathered in Dangerford to shelter; Twisted Morganeth has persuaded her kin to pool the resources of food they have available and every day feeds the clan from her soup pot, eking out their meager resources. The Soup Pot rite feeds everyone as long as they all share. Sadly, divisions within the clan led to food hoarding, which weaken the rite, and lead to hunger. Although people knew there would be enough to go around if all share everything they have, few in the clan trust others not to hoard and so ‘hold a little back.’ The lack of trust means many starve when they need not.

The Dolutha are anxious and wretched. Arnal the Ghoul Thane plagues them, and the people are afraid to travel at night or alone. Twisted Morganeth and Gudny Gold-Lamb beg the PCs’ aid, saying even the Dolutha dead do not have any dignity. She tells them there are dead on the King’s Road, frozen to death, and she fears the ghouls will make them their next meal. She offers to show them where, in the hope that they can fight off the undead.

Twisted Morganeth guides the PCs onto the King’s Road, searching for dead travelers. Gudny Gold-Lamb and a posse of carls and thanes accompany them. The group soon comes across ice-covered corpses. They are frozen as they died, their eyes shut as though asleep, covered in a layer of frost. Crows and ravens feed on the dead, jabbing at their eyes and entrails with their beaks.

Staking out the corpse-field is an act of endurance, huddled in furs against the cold, waiting for the ghouls to come. When they do, they come in force, for many starving individuals have joined King Brangbane, swelling the ranks of his ghoul army.

Twisted Morganeth and Gudny Gold-Lamb have no idea Arnal leads the ghouls; they will recoil in horror when they see him amongst the ghoul raiders. Twisted Morganeth’s anguished scream alerts the ghouls to the ambush; they raise their own howl. Arnal laughs at Gudny and Morganeth: “You left me for dead, but my king, Brangbane, gave me a new life. Now I shall feast on all your flesh as you once hoped the wolves would feed on mine.”

Many of the Dolutha break in terror and run. Arnal laughs manically and urges his forces forwards. Gudny seems rooted to the spot, paralyzed with fear. Arnal, the ghoul thane is at least Very High resistance, though his ghoul army may be weaker.

If the PCs help drive off the ghouls, they gain the gratitude of the Dolutha, particularly Morganeth. She seems broken by the

experience of seeing Arnal as a ghoul, and on their return sobs uncontrollably of the horror to Gudny Gold-Lamb.

If the PCs lose the contest Arnal strikes down Gudny Gold-Lamb but Twisted Morganeth escapes. Later Morganeth searches for Gudny's body but cannot find it; she realizes the ghouls have taken it for food.

Success in aiding the Dolutha will bolster the Red Cow's Peace Resource. Choose the most appropriate contest result to add to the Resource.

#### **Moon Dogs**

After a time the Empire decides anyone not holed up in one of the towns or cities, or dying in their villages is probably a rebel, and Tatus the Bright issues orders to kill them on sight.

When the PCs are out of Red Cow Fort, have Moon Dogs see them and attack. These enemies do not try to negotiate; they are on a seek-and-destroy mission to wipeout any remaining Sartarite rebels they can find.

Of course, the Empire suffers from the weather conditions too. Away from the safety of Lunar strongholds most Lunar troops rapidly lose enthusiasm.

You can make this encounter more interesting by varying the terrain. For example, set it on a frozen river: the Orlanthi may have the advantage of skating, over Lunar patrols marching in hobnailed boots. Clever PCs may be able to take advantage of weak ice or slippery surfaces during the contest and should gain a Situational Modifier.

If the PCs hid Ashart, or other rebels, in Brightwater, they may now have to race against time to get them out, as Moon Dogs decide to "flush the rebels" out of those places. This might be a fight against a small group of bounty hunters, or it could be a flight from overwhelming odds to a new hiding place.

Once the hinterland becomes unsafe Ashart's only suggestion is to hide in the tunnels under Red Cow Fort. It is sheltered from the elements, and provides protection from the Empire. Of course, everyone is nervous. With so many strangers in Red Cow Fort, someone might see the clan's great secret and sell out the rebels hiding under the fort. But what options are there, now only a few places of safety remain against the Great Winter.

#### **Arkat's Tax**

The Sazdorf Trolls (see *The Gifts of Stone* in the *Sartar Companion*) send Chief Kozakang to meet with Chief Broddi and his ring. The Red Cow clan has an old friendship with the trolls, so everyone hopes the trolls will help. The trolls have winter survival skills, and they can survive in and even prefer the current cold temperatures in Dragon Pass. Perhaps the Red Cow could hire the trolls to help patrol the clan's lands?

Everyone is a little surprised when Chief Kozakang demands the 'Shadow Tribute' or 'Arkat's Tax.' "This is the Darkness," the troll says. "This is our world and if you want to survive then you must pay us tribute." The clan may ask what they get in return for such tribute. Kozakang says: "If you pay the tribute then we will not eat you. This is Arkat's Tax that he gave Uz the rights for, because of Uz help in defeating the Bright One. Because you are good friends to Uz we will not ask you for taxes owed from the past."



*Moon Dogs use the Great Winter to hunt-and-kill rebels in Sartar*

Chief Broddi and the ring refuse to pay: "We have always had friendship with the Sazdorf, and we are shocked they will not help us now."

The trouble does not end there. The Sazdorf begins raiding Red Cow clan lands. Mostly they just loot the outlying steads abandoned by people, taking away pottery or metal goods, and letting their trollkin eat the homes. The first time a patrol comes across a looted stead they are confused by the bite marks where lumps of pillars, doors, and walls seem to have been chewed away. The PCs may encounter troll looters. The trolls see the Great Winter as an opportunity and so the PCs will have to fight them off. From across the clan there are regular reports of trolls and people fighting.

The problem becomes so bad that Broddi has to act. He sends the PCs to the Sazdorf to negotiate a settlement: "See if you can come to some agreement over 'Arkat's Tax' before the trolls eat everything."

Chief Kozakang greets the PCs and handles the negotiations again. The trolls are motivated by injured pride — they once ruled Dragon Pass — and the desire to exploit the human's difficulty as much as possible. At the same time, they cannot afford losses; so prolonged fighting with humans will always hurt the trolls more than people. They hope to gain by intimidation now, and it is possible to call their bluff.

The contest here affects clan Resources. A loss depletes the clan's Wealth Resource as the Red Cow agrees to pay Arkat's Tax to the trolls. A Victory bolsters the clan's War Resource, as the trolls agree to help the clan patrol its lands (for a modest fee).

## BEYOND THE CINSINA

### *The Resurrection Thrones*

Farandar Orendalsson asks the PCs to join him in the Chieftain's Hall. When the PCs arrive, they find him sitting with Kullina the Fat and an old man with a long white beard wearing purple robes. Farandar asks the PCs to sit and introduces them to Minaryth Purple (see *Sartar Companion* page 25). Kullina and Farandar speak to the PCs of the graveness of the situation Sartar faces, and only magical means can save everyone now.

"Minaryth believes he has a way to loosen Orlanth from his bonds," Kullina says, "but he needs our help obtaining secrets that will help him figure out how."

Minaryth explains he has been looking for ways to free Orlanth. "Within the Jonstown Compendium there is a reference to a carving of the 'Resurrection Thrones,' where Polaris readmits the dead to the Sky on one of the walls of the Star Tower of the Illavani. I need to see that carving."

Farandar explains that Minaryth has asked the Red Cow to provide an escort as a favor, because of the Red Cow's friendship with the Orlmarth.

"Unfortunately," Minaryth tells the PCs, "the Star Tower now lies ruined, its wreckage amidst the Cinder Pits of Starfire Ridge, and Venebain's demons haunt the Pits. The Orlmarthi know magic to protect travelers from the demons; we will need their help."

Minaryth can tell the PCs the story of the Cinder Pits as outlined in the *Sartar Companion* (page 40).

Minaryth leads the PCs to the Orlmarth (see *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* page 288). He needs to call at the Jonstown Library and so he chooses to travel there via the King's Road, then on to Runegate (see the *Sartar Companion*) and on to the Starfire Ridges.

We suggest narrating the journey as an Arduous Auto-Success as they witness suffering around them. You can use material from *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* and the *Sartar Companion* to improvise adventures if you prefer, perhaps to show the situation at Runegate during the Great Winter (see *Sartar Companion* page 55). There Selelmal the True performs a *This World* heroquest — *Elmal Defends the Camp* — and shines with a radiance that keeps the Great Winter away from Runegate. The cost is that many foes are drawn to Runegate as a result. The narrator may also want to use the Encounters section of the *Sartar Companion* to improvise road encounters for their journey.

It is also possible to use other scenes from this episode during that journey such as *Ghouls*.

The Orlmarth welcome the Red Cow party, though it is obvious the clan suffers as everyone else does in the Great Winter. At Old Man Village (see *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* page 290) Chief Gordangar and his ring assembles to hear the request from their Red Cow friends. The Orlmarth stage a modest feast, for the clan has little other than barley beer and gruel, and their Red Cow visitors tells the tales of Cinsina lands. Afterwards, everyone is saddened by the woe of the Great Winter.

The PCs seek the aid of the red-headed woodpeckers of the Orlmarth in defeating the Venebain demons of the Cinder Pits — in *HeroQuest Glorantha* terms they are asking to use the

Orlmarth's Magic Resource. Gordangar insists Erinina Copper-Axe and Orlgard Korlmarsson accompany the expedition; Minaryth readily agrees.

This is not enough to convince the Orlmarth ring, who require a deeper commitment.

The PCs succeed if they choose to pay a price — with no contest if they agree to pay that price.

We leave the Orlmarth's price to the Game Master, although we do provide a couple of suggestions. The Orlmarth's price must be something requiring a meaningful sacrifice by one of the PCs; something must be given up to save the clan, something that means something to at least one PC. Remember that the Red Cow and Orlmarth are friends — the Orlmarth will not ask for something that looks to harm either clan, but further bind their relationship together.

Perhaps one of the PCs is unmarried and the Orlmarth ask that he or she marry to cement the bond between the two clans. If the PC is male, then perhaps they have a sweetheart who they must now forsake for their new Orlmarth bride, or perhaps they must divorce their current spouse. If the PC is female they must leave the Red Cow to live with their new husband — taking them out of the game. Remember the marriage must involve some sacrifice.

Although the woodpeckers guard the Cinder Pits, they themselves need a guardian. What price could be more appropriate than the PC should give up their life amongst the Red Cow after the quest and come to live in the Guardian Woods, protecting the sacred forest against those who would profane them or seek to harm the woodpeckers that live there. The guardian's existence will be a hermitic and lonely one, but filled with sacred purpose — and again takes the PC out of the game.

If the PCs agree to these terms, then Chief Gordangar calls forth the leader of the PCs group and Morganeth White-Eye. He has the blind woman tattoo the PC with the sacred woodpecker marking of the Orlmarth clan, which will allow him to call upon the red woodpeckers' aid in the Cinder Pits.

If the PCs fail to reach agreement with the Orlmarth clan, Gordangar does not prevent them entering the Cinder Pits and trying — he just believes they are doomed.

The Cinder Pits are covered with thick ash and stone boulders, and marked by small explosions of super-hot stinking gas. The heat of these smoking vents melts the winter snow, resulting in bubbling and noxious mud pots. There are many large boulders and other rock formations. Blackened skulls rest atop many of these stones and numerous skeletons are scattered throughout the area.

Minaryth leads the expedition into the Cinder Pits. He begins examining the blocks, occasionally asking the PCs to bring staves or spear hafts to lever them over to examining a hidden underside. The heat of the steam, at first a blessed relief from the usual cold, soon makes the work hot and miserable. It is clear Minaryth does not know where to look, and this may take some time.

The Venebain demons want nothing more than to take vengeance upon Orlanth and his followers for trapping them in the Middle World. When Minaryth finds the right stone, it has two or three blackened skulls atop it, as though it were an altar.

## VENEBAIN DEMONS

Venebain's minions are made of living fire, taking the form of angry red-skinned men with long blazing hair and multicolored wings. They breathe flame and poison, and carry burning spears or flaming stone. They are always clad in red-gold plates of metal covering them completely.

### Venebain Demons

**Significant Abilities:** Fly, Living Fire, Metal Plates

**Exceptional Abilities:** Breathe Flame, Burning Spear, Flaming Stone

**Consciousness:** Sentient

**Relevant Statistics:** 100-150 lbs, 7-9 feet tall

Minaryth turns to the PCs: "Under here," he begins, "this is the carving I read about in the Compendium." Just then the PCs hear a sizzling sound, like frying bacon, and suddenly the Venebain are upon them.

The Venebain should be a Very High resistance. If the PCs gained the support of the Orlmarth clan, they can call on the red-headed woodpeckers for aid against the Venebain. A swarm of the woodpeckers flock from the Guardian Woods into the Cinder Pits to attack the Venebain. The PC who has the woodpecker tattoo can use this swarm as a 12*W* Augment for a PC fighting a Venebain demon. There should be enough Venebain demons to provide a challenge to the PCs, at least one per PC. With the Venebain attack beaten off, Minaryth and the PCs can turn the stone over, and copy down the carving of the Resurrection Thrones.

The PCs should be able to copy the images for the seventh belt from the *Three New Stars* episode below. If the PCs ask Minaryth what it means, then he replies: "Means, means! Well, I would have thought it was obvious. It means Polaris must be willing to take into the Sky a god who has fallen. We can put stars back in the Sky using their corpses. Perhaps the Broken Ring can be made whole."

If the PCs ask about Polaris or the Broken Ring, a priest or divine affinity rune contest lets them know: Polaris is the name of Rigsdal when he served the Emperor, not Orlanth, and that he is the Pole Star; the Broken Ring is Orlanth's Ring — which has not been seen in the Sky since his 'death.'

### *The Picture Door*

Farandar Orendalsson asks the PCs to join him in the Chieftain's Hall. When the PCs arrive, they find the hall crowded with petitioners for Queen Ivartha who has recently arrived with her household in Red Cow Fort. Amidst the hubbub and confusion, Farandar guides the PCs to where Kullina the Fat talks to Minaryth Purple.

Kullina and Farandar speak to the PCs of the graveness of the situation Sartar faces, and that only magical means can save everyone now. "Minaryth has been toiling long into the night," Kullina says.

Minaryth explains that he is looking for ways to return Orlanth — but one promising avenue requires access to a relief carved on the Picture Door in Boldhome.

"The Cauldron of Pieces is a potential route out of this crisis, but the scrolls in the Jonstown Library holding a copy of the carvings on the Picture Door depicting the Cauldron were lost or stolen."

Minaryth also explains the Empire has forbidden access to the Top Pocket, where the Door is located, and covered the Door in lead. "They are afraid of what is written on that door. Copy it down for me."

Minaryth will accompany the PCs. Travel to Boldhome will take the PCs via Dangerford and then down the King's Road. You can treat this as an Arduous Auto-Success and simply narrate their struggles against the Great Winter. You can intersperse some other scenes in this episode into that journey such as *Wolf at the Door* or *Moon Dogs*. You can also use material from *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* and the *Sartar Companion* to improvise adventures if you prefer.

For a full description of Boldhome see *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*, pages 241-245.

The Cinsina tribal manor lies here in the Right Arm, surrounded by the manors of the other tribes. The tribal manor consists of a longhouse and some stables for use of the guests. Orldarmon Blackbeard of the Underwillow clan keeps the tribal manor. It is comfortable, if not luxurious.

Like anywhere stable and secure, refugees have overrun the tribal house. However Orldarmon is running a 'first in, first out' policy so the party can stay here, crammed into a sleeping space on the floor, provided they are happy to evict someone else. Orldarmon expects a gift in return for hospitality. Only simple fare is available to eat though, and guests are encouraged to dine in the town.

The Cinsina is now the second largest tribe in Sartar, after the Colymar, and they rise to that status. People come and go from the manor house, lobbying for the Cinsina interests at the Prince's court, or trading in the Boldhome marketplaces. This can be a good opportunity for the PCs to meet members of the tribal ring: Verlain Never-Doubt might be here to petition the Prince for help, or Kallai Hairy-Breeds might be here looking for adventure, provided it strikes a blow against the Empire.

The narrator should feel free to improvise incidents in Boldhome.

Conflict within Boldhome is dangerous, as Prince Temertain has outlawed dueling. The Lunar authorities arrest any duelists and fines or worse are common punishments. See *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*, pages 304-309 for an example of how this might play out.

Boldhome is not as overrun with refugees as the lowland cities — and there is less of an apocalyptic feel. There are a number of reasons for this: the cold is worse here in the mountains; the limited access to the city; and there is open space in the city for refugee camps.

Prince Temertain and Estal Donge make a show of helping the refugees by visiting the camps and making vague promises of food and shelter, but these are never met. The Seven Mother's mission does win many converts from amongst the desperate, and they run the refugee camps here, in the Prince's name.

The cold temperatures, and the short hours of daylight masked by the mountains, make Boldhome icy — so few people move about outside unless they have to. This includes the Empire's patrols, for its soldiers have no more desire to be outside.

The Picture Door lies in the Top Pocket — which is deserted except for Lunar patrols. The East Pocket, below Top Pocket, home to the Orlanth temple, was once patrolled too — but the Empire has stopped trying to prevent access to the temple since the death of Orlanth. The Lunar pocket, where the garrison is stationed lies below the East Pocket — which means that anyone approaching the Top Pocket is easily visible making the climb during the day.

A file of the Beryl Phalanx (see *Sartar Companion*, page 120) is stationed on guard duty here. Because of the cold, the patrols have taken over a large house in the pocket, a former palace of a rich and wealthy family, and turned it into a guard shelter — though it is little more than a hearth with a suspended cauldron of hot stew.

The PCs need to defeat the guards or evade the patrols to reach the Picture Door, and copy down the carving of the Cauldron of Pieces there. The Hellmouth, Cauldron of Pieces, and Fields of Plenty are emerging from the lead, which seems to have flaked away — though the PCs may need to peel some away to get at the full carving. There are other enigmatic images where the lead flakes away; one in particular may catch the PCs' eye: a dragon's head swallowing soldiers, priests, and kings from below. The PCs should be able to copy the images from the fifth belt of the *Three New Stars* episode below.

If the players manage to evade the Beryl Phalanx, have them meet the guards as they try to leave. Either way the PCs will leave injured hoplites or corpses behind them. Even if the PCs hide the bodies, the soldiers here will be missed the next day, and the Imperial authorities will begin looking for the killers. Security at the exits from Boldhome will increase — the PCs may have to bluff their way out to avoid the guards searching their belongings and uncovering their copy of the Picture Door's reliefs.

The PCs may ask Minaryth about the meaning of the bas-relief. He tells them: "This will take some time, I must compare these symbols against my notes, but this, yes, this is clearly the Cauldron of Pieces, and perhaps the Cauldron of Ver too. Moreover, yes, this, this is the Hellmouth, which is well known to us."

If the PCs ask a priest about the Hellmouth, or succeed in a Moderate resistance context using their divine rune affinity, tell the PCs the Hellmouth is a gateway in the Underworld beyond the City of the Dead leading deeper into Hell.

See *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* pages 336 and 338 for other myths the PCs can learn about the Underworld from their priests and Minaryth Purple.

## PLAY OF THE GAME

Look through the season description to get a feel for how these scenes could unfold. The theme is apocalyptic. The Game Master should show the PCs that life, as they know it, is in peril. Only at a few strongholds do the Sartarites survive, and the increasing pressures on those few places of safety mean that even those beacons of hope seem to be flickering.

Of course, the key to running survival stories is the players must be able to win some victories — unrelenting death and doom becomes dull and the players tend to despair of their actions making any difference and feel powerless.

In play-testing, the game always began by showing the situation in *Red Cow Fort*. Narrators then used Resource Crisis to drive the direction of the episode. What Resources are most at risk? Can the PCs bolster them before the clan starves, is overcome by its enemies, or disintegrates? After that the order in which the narrator ran material should depend on the mood at the table, its tolerance for post-apocalyptic imagery, and the players' interest in events outside Red Cow Fort. By this point in the campaign the PCs will have relationships with NPCs and the players may be keen to play scenes which reveal the fate of those NPCs in the Great Winter. We encourage the narrator to prepare or improvise such scenes for their own game.

One option is to intersperse scenes from the deterioration in the countryside such as *I Won't Go* and *Death of Jaranil the Thunder* with material based in *Red Cow Fort* so that the PCs appreciate how much things are falling apart.

To provide the players something positive, the narrator can then run *Picture Door*. That journey lets you run *Wolf at the Door* and *Moon Dogs*, as part of their route to the capital, giving the PCs a sense of the situation across Sartar. One danger to be aware of is to

## AROUND THE WORLD

This event is noticed around the world.

During the events of *Orlanth is Dead*, the air disappears from an area 250 miles across, centered on Whitewall. Within that area, Orlanth is dead and Ernalda sleeps, the air remains still, breathless, and the winter does not end. Within that area no priests at holy sites can contact the gods, and those who travel to them from outside the area on their high holy day, by flying to Kero Fin for example, cannot.

Outside of that area of effect, for people living in locations such as Ralios and Umathela, the winds still blow, spring comes as expected, and people continue to be able to work magic.

At the same time the wound in the air sucks air from around into it, rushing to fill the hole. When it reaches the hole it vanishes. This weather event has an effect across Glorantha as the normal pattern of weather is supplanted by a movement of air toward Dragon Pass. The winds increase in intensity as they draw closer to the edge of the area of effect, becoming hurricane force at the border, but then die off once they cross into the Windstop.

And everyone is aware of changes in the Sky, Orlanth's Ring no longer traverses the Heavens.

Across Glorantha Orlanthi priests know that their god has been wounded, and explain what has happened in terms of local conflicts and threats.

A few set out for Dragon Pass, to learn the truth.

avoid an extended series of adventures far from home that mean the PCs lose any sense of why they are going to Boldhome, or the threat to their home and kin.

On the PCs' return to the Red Cow, we returned to the poor state of affairs in Red Cow Fort. You can extend outward again, show the situation with the Dolutha in *Ghouls*, meet with the Sazdorf Trolls demand for *Arkat's Tax*.

By this point, most groups are bored of the post-apocalyptic misery and are ready to take direct action to end the Great Winter. At that point run the *Resurrection Thrones*. Once the PCs return from that, they have the pieces of the *Three New Stars* heroquest and you can go straight into that episode.

## THE THREE NEW STARS

### BACKGROUND

The ring summons the PCs to the chieftain's hall in Red Cow Fort. Kallyr Starbrow and Minaryth Purple are there; Orngerin Thundercape and members of the Silent Wind hero band accompany them. A tall man in a hooded cloak, conspicuous by his stature, accompanies them, but is not introduced.

Kallyr tells the PCs that she wants them to recover three missing pieces of the god Orlanth; three stars which went missing from Orlanth's Ring.

Kallyr explains the number of stars in Orlanth's Ring has not always been the same. Two disappeared at the Sunstop more than a millennia ago, then reappeared. Another fell three hundred years ago during Orlanth's Battle with the Red Goddess at Castle Blue. (*Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* page 85). "Stars can fall, and can rise again," she says. "We believe that there are 'Corpse Stars' which are dead already, and so were not imprisoned by the Lunar ritual. Returning these stars to the sky could offer help to Orlanth's worshippers in the Middle World."

Kallyr knows the Red Cow clan is in trouble. She also knows this is an opportunity to win over the Red Cow, who have wavered in support for the rebellion. "This is the Red Cow's last chance, perhaps everyone's" she tells the PCs. "You must bring back the missing stars from Orlanth's Ring, weakening the fetters binding him, and providing a light for people in the Great Darkness."

Broddi tells the PCs: "The doom of the world is upon us; we cannot go on. We must act now to save our kin, our neighbors, and our friends."

"To provide the support of the rebellion," Kallyr says, "I need the Red Cow to recognize my claim to be Prince of Sartar and not Temertain."

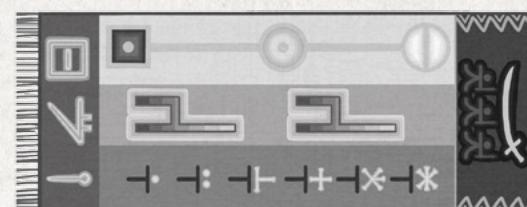
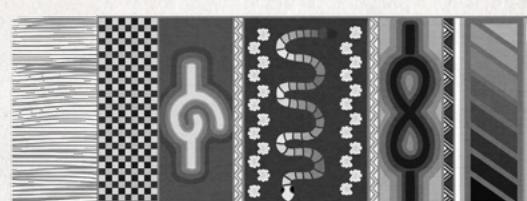
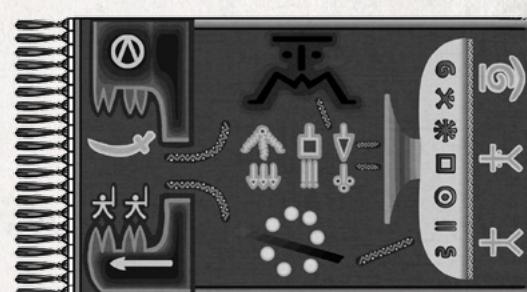
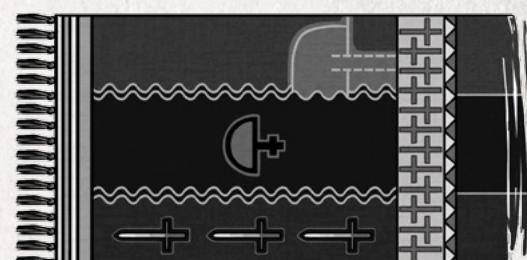
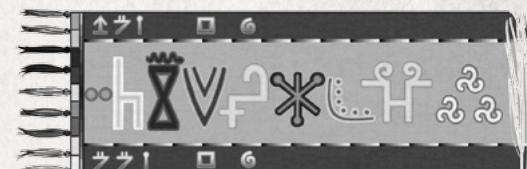
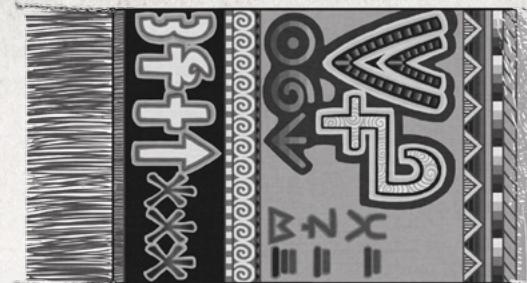
The PCs have to agree in order to participate; Orngerin makes them swear an oath to help Kallyr take her rightful place as Prince of Sartar.

If any PCs refuse, Broddi tries to persuade them. The PCs may try to negotiate their support, or ask for more in return, but participating in the quest requires them to support Kallyr as Prince of Sartar.

Some players may object to this, feeling railroaded into agreeing support to participate in the adventure; make it clear that Kallyr is exploiting the in-game difficulties of the tribe to force it into supporting her. The Game Master might choose to run this as a contest with the prize concessions won from Kallyr — such as renouncing her support of the Telmori, or their use as part of her Royal Bodyguard.

### MINARYTH'S BELTS

Minaryth shows everyone a set of belts and explains the meaning of the runes on them, explaining that the Lhankor Mhy cult has been working since the crisis began to put together this information. "No one has done this before; you will be cutting a new path, assembled from fragments of other myths. These were created under my direction, and they are all our knowledge of how to perform this quest."



Minaryth's Belts

This is a complicated heroquest, and there is a lot of information to impart to the players. Use the props of the belts, and provide the myths as handouts that can be studied later. Do not race through this, even if the temptation for the players is just to 'get on with it.'

#### ***The First and Second Belts***

Minaryth tells them, "The first and second belts are instructions for the ceremony to cross over to the Other Side. Inner Mountain and Air Man are the roles — Earth priestess and Storm Voice — of the ritual leaders. The amounts of sacrifice are shown. The second line shows the ritual must be performed at Dawn, and Air and Sky must be present to cross over. Kallyr will take the Sky role, and one of you must be Air."

"The participants must be Orlanth, Earth Axe, Spear, and Sword, with three others. The ceremony involves Inner Mountain and Air Man, and must use the Fertility snake rites and Invoke Doom."

#### ***The Third Belt***

"If Mastakos is present, the participants can go straight to the Court of Silence," the Sage explains. "If he is not present, they have to follow the Path of the Dead to the Court. The Third belt shows the journey into the Underworld, which Mastakos can avoid."

"I have brought a follower of Mastakos with me, who will be able to take you to the Court of Silence," says Kallyr.

She introduces Orlmarl the Charioteer. Orlmarl pulls back the hood on his cloak to stand before the PCs. The PCs may have met Orlmarl whilst fighting the Telmori or during the *Manhunt*. Regardless, everyone knows Orlmarl is a famous Sartarite hero, the Charioteer of Hofstaring Treeleaper and now of Ranulf Stand-Tall. He is also a member of the Two-Pine clan and bears a grudge against the Red Cow.

## **THE NAMERS IN THE GREEN AGE**

"The first leader in Brilliantia was Genert. He was a Namer. With a band of his equals, Genert went about the whole of Brilliantia and gave names to the things they encountered. He gave names to everything, and so the totality of everything was in turn named after him. Thus Genertela became the second name of the lands of Brilliantia, and the name is still used today.

"When we Journey to those simple times we can still speak that Universal Tongue. Everything can speak to each other, because there is only one way to communicate and everything is able to do so. The Divine is all around us there. We speak Genert's Tongue. Be warned, though: a Journey to Genert's Era is dangerous to anyone who has not learned they are, in fact, a Small God. The power of that simple, first language is such that uttering it at any time causes something to be created. If you do this, and do not know the secrets of being a Small God, the consequences of your actions will have the same disastrous consequences they had for those original beings. The Universal Language is the Language of Creation, and so any petty utterance creates something."

Ask the PCs how they feel about this? Are they happy to rely on an enemy for this quest?

If the PCs refuse to take Orlmarl with them, Kallyr asks them "Do you really wish to put your clan at risk, by walking the Path of the Dead, just to pursue a petty feud?"

If the PCs say that, yes they are, Kallyr relents, politely dismisses Orlmarl, and tells the PCs they will have to perform Orlanth's rite to enter the Underworld instead.

#### ***The Fourth Belt***

Minaryth continues, "The fourth belt describes accessing the Corpse Stars. Orlanth's Ring once held more stars; three parts of Orlanth's Ring have died since the Dawn. Two disappeared at the Sunstop and the other was torn out during the battle between Orlanth and the Red Goddess at Castle Blue. No one knows much about them, they have not been contacted for generations; and nothing survives in writing to preserve the memories.

"The Hellmouth is always dangerous, and now the Lunars are usually there. There are two paths from the mouth through the throat, though the chomping jaws may mean only one is open. One is the womb of the mother into the Fields of Bliss. These are part of the Green Age and hard to leave, and those who do exit have to leave some part of themselves behind.

"The Cauldron of Pieces contains chopped up pieces of gods; you need to choose from among the heads bubbling in the cauldron. You will be choosing the three missing stars of the Orlanth's Ring. I believe this cauldron is in fact the Cauldron of Ver, a treasure of the Vingkotlings: Orlanth took it from the Sea Gods and it gave the life renewing powers of water.

"In the Green Age, I believe you will need to join the Namers, and name the Corpse Stars.

"I consider the Cauldron of Pieces the wisest path, for it is always dangerous to Heroquest to the Green Age. Many who have heroquested there fail to return, and those who do come back are often damaged somehow.

"I believe that you may be able to bring back the powers of the Cauldron of Ver for your clan as well, by wagering part of your soul in an attempt to steal its waters."

#### ***The Fifth Belt***

"The fifth belt concerns using Lorion, the Skyriver, to reach the Sky World. The Resurrection Thrones are in the Sky World, so you need to reach them, after you have obtained the Corpse Stars in the Underworld. We needed a way to get you into the Sky from the Underworld. Luckily for us, this is something the Red Cow knows. The Red Cow have knowledge of Heler's secret of the Golden Tear, which he taught to Sshorga."

Voranga Many-Sorrows explains the Golden Tear, "Heler found a quiet place in the Middle Air and he prayed to his mother, the Great Waters, and the powers behind those. He was called to give his sacrifice, and he gave to humankind the ability to weep the golden tear.

"I will tell you this secret now: the Golden Tear is not just a tear like crying, but a tear like a rip in the fabric. Heler offered to give Sshorga an entryway into the upper Sky World. He knew of that opening because he was the Lord of the Golden Tear. He initiated the Blue Dragon, Sshorga, into the secrets of the Young God.

## HOW ORLANTH CONQUERED THE STARS

When Orlanth wished to pass through the sky into the Inner Heavens, he encountered much resistance. First, the Queen of Heaven tested his resolve by sending Pur to seduce him. Orlanth was not stupid and he knew her task, but he dallied with her anyway, for he knew what he would need from her for the future. When he was finished, he spurned her and continued his upward spiral.

Next, the General of Heaven tested Orlanth's strength by sending Dergi against him, but Orlanth defeated him easily. While Orlanth was fighting, Artia the Bat tried to cover him, but Orlanth knew the Nightdaughter of old and could not be blinded as Yelm was. He swept away the Bat with little effort.

After the first three failed, Jagrekriand himself came forward, released at last to fight the Liberator. He fought with fire and mace against spear and lightning, and even broke the wheels from Mastakos' chariot. But, he could not overcome Orlanth, who sent Jagrekriand screaming from the sky in payment for what the Red God had done to Umath, Orlanth's father.

With the Red God cast down, the stars knew fear. In desperation, they released Sh'harkazeel the Sky Dragon against Orlanth. It wrapped itself around Orlanth from his left foot to his chin, encircling his body seven times and lifted its great head to stare Orlanth in the face. But the Rebel was

not paralyzed like the other gods. He expanded his great strength and freed himself from the monster, then with a single blow chopped off its head. He left the corpse as a symbol of his victory, and its blue blood flowed across the sky like a flood, forever painting the sky dome.

Bearing the green head of the dragon in his left hand as his trophy, Orlanth encountered no further resistance from the stars. At last, he reached the Upper Sky, and demanded that he be allowed to enter the sacred Inner Heavens.

The Mistress of Dance spoke for her lord and answered that Orlanth could pass, but that he must join her lord's dance first. "Is it this one?" ask Orlanth, and did his war dance. So violent were his movements that Silonia retreated in shock, and Orlanth approached the Pole Star Gate.

"No," said the Pole Star, "we would never do that dance," But when the stars showed Orlanth the dance Pole Star wanted, they could only do Orlanth's war dance.

Humbled and afraid, the dancers bowed to Orlanth. Rigsdal swore allegiance to Orlanth, and revealed all of his powers and secrets to the Great God. Rigsdal said, "Great Sir, command what you will, but leave my people to themselves."

Orlanth did so command. "Dance," he said, "to my tune and lilt." Then he played his tune that rocked the skies, and the stars and their protectors all danced with him. Thus did Orlanth gain his entryway into the Inner Heavens.

"This is another secret: the Young God is a constellation whose presence in the Sky River marks the beginning of the year.

"You must worship the Young God from the Underworld with the Golden Tear rites. This will bring you to his realm in the Sky River. From there you will be able to continue your quest."

Voranga will initiate Orlanth and Heler worshippers into the Young God's sub-cult, which costs a Hero Point. The sub-cult's only magic is to open a door into the Otherworld at the Young God's home on the Sky River.

Minaryth turns to the PCs: "This is the moment where the Red Cow must support you — otherwise you will not be strong enough to pass the barrier between the worlds. Everyone here will shed a tear for you when you ask it, and their sacrifice will help you cross to the Other Side."

Voranga provides the leader of the group with a gilded bowl, which represents their clan's support: "Use this bowl to take everyone's tears for this rite."

### ***The Sixth Belt***

Minaryth now resumes speaking: "You must travel to the City in the center of the Sky World. The sixth are some steps that lead you across the Sky World. We only have guesswork for this part, though this is the myth of *How Orlanth Conquered the Stars*. You will arrive in the Heavens at the place of the Young God — we know this is the Great Port of Princess Starry Eyes, which lies on the boundary of the Middle and Other Worlds. From there, you must reach the City, for that is where Rigsdal will be."

### ***The Seventh Belt***

"Next, on the seventh, we have entry to the Emperor's hall. The Resurrection Chairs are here. By placing the stars in the chairs, we will be able to return them to the Sky. However, the Emperor and his court do not permit anyone to take these chairs and be reborn easily. You must convince Rigsdal of the rightness of their return."

## PREPARATIONS

### **WHO ARE THE PCS?**

The PCs will have to determine the mythic roles they are representing in their quest. Kallyr will take the role of Rigsdal, and be Sky for the preparations. She tells the PCs, "I cannot accompany you into the Sky World though my heart belongs there." She absentmindedly touches the jewel in her forehead, and then continues, "My duty lies to the south with High King Broyan. I must lead Sartar against the Empire."

Kallyr works with the PCs to assign them their roles, making sure the key positions are taken. If you do not have enough PCs for all the roles, pick clan or tribal leaders, preferably those the PCs have relationships with.

The main hero of the quest is Orlanth, for the duration of the quest the hero is the god. The quest also requires: Earth Axe, Spear, and Sword. Ask the PCs why they might fit one of these roles; look for an Ability, perhaps a Rune Affinity, a mundane Ability or — at a stretch something metaphorical. The remaining

## THE RED SWORD 6

The sword of Cinsin the Red, this iron sword is a work of art. The elaborate handle is made from iron, bronze, and horn and decorated with red glass. The sword is carried in a scabbard fashioned from iron and bronze. The bronze plates are decorated with elaborate scrollwork and red glass.

The sword functions as a sidekick in play and has the following abilities:

### Runes

#### 6 Air 11W

Fight without wielder + 2  
Cut through anything +1  
Wounds never heal + 2

### Other

**Keyword:** Proud 13

The sword is famous for its ability to fight without a wielder. It also has a Flaw, which is that the sword wants to *Kill Telmori* when it meets them — and is quite capable of doing so without being wielded. The sword's Flaw has the same rating as its highest Ability.

Finally, the sword is cursed in that it will at some point cause the death of its wielder. Cinsin the Red was the first to die, when the sword flew from his hand because Cinsin had spared Heljar the Telmori war-leader's children. Many kings, queens, and champions of the Cinsina have refused to wield the sword for this reason. Whether or not simply being lent the sword by Queen Ivartha is enough to invoke this doom on the PC is up to the Game Master. Queen Ivartha does wield the sword, and has accepted it will be her doom.

three roles are blanks — actually you can have any number of PCs here, you just need to fill the core roles.

Minaryth advises the group they will need a trickster to help them survive being devoured by the Hellmouth. Queen Ivartha offers them Janara the Swarthy to aid them: "Beware Janara's schemes, but I have told her to help you pass the Hellmouth and she will do that."

### TRIBAL SUPPORT

Queen Ivartha gives the PCs the Red Sword of Cinsin, for use during the heroquest. This provides the PCs with a connection to the tribal *wyter* and allows the PCs to draw upon the tribe's support during the heroquest.

The PCs can draw on the Cinsina's Magic Resource rating, once, during the quest, through the sword. Even the tribe's Magic Resource has suffered badly from the death of Orlanth and Ernalda; however, enough residual magic remains for a rating of 1W2.

Vastyr Bloody-Shirt explains to the PCs: "With this Kallyr has tricked us into supporting her too, and the Cinsina are bound to the results good or ill. The queen is uncertain of its

wisdom; she has no love for Kallyr. This is the last roll of the dice for the Cinsina, winner takes all."

Kallyr Starbrow presents them with an inlaid and paneled wooden box, inside are three coals. "These cold embers are from Sartar's brazier," Kallyr tells them, "they will hold the light of the stars until you can reach the Resurrection Thrones."

### CLAN SUPPORT

The Red Cow support is to help the PCs cross to the Sky World from the Underworld, by weeping their tears. The support takes the form of a small golden bowl to catch the PCs tears (see above).

### PREPARING FOR A HEROQUEST CHALLENGE

Minaryth tells the PCs that when they are at the Cauldron of Pieces, they can invoke a Heroquest Challenge to obtain the Cauldron of Ver for their clan. The PCs have to determine which hero will invoke this Challenge and what Ability he will stake. The Ability should be a divine rune affinity, and imply some form of change, renewal or life, such as: 6 Air, 2 Movement, ● Water, or X Life. They need to prepare a ritually prepared item to hold the heroquest reward. This should be tied in with the objective of the PCs' quest. The Game Master must determine the Ability the heroquest enemy shall stake.

## PERFORMING THE QUEST

### TIMING

#### Windsday, Movement Week, Fire Season

Minaryth has identified Windsday of Movement week as the most auspicious day to launch the quest.

This is Lawstaff Day, an Orlanthi Holy Day, when the priests recite Orlanth's laws; it precedes the tribal moot, when the tribal king or queen dispenses justice. As such, the Cinsina gather at this time to petition Queen Ivartha. Such a gathering is ideal for harnessing the support of the tribe.

It is also a day associated with Orlanth as Thunderous, the storm, and the Unfettered One, Larnste, the breaker of bonds. What better day to free the winds?

### THE ARMING OF ORLANTH

The Cinsina tribe gathers for this attempt; at this point only working as a whole tribe does anyone have sufficient resources left to provide the necessary sacrifices and people to make the attempt. This is last ditch even for the tribe though, if this fails then even the whole tribe working together will not be able to make this kind of effort again.

The tribe gathers on Windsday of Movement Week of Fire Season. The priests agree this combination gives the most auspicious timing for freeing Orlanth with the aid of the stars.

Kallai Hairy-Breeks and Verlain Never-Doubt lead the tribal ceremonies, which begin at dawn. The tribe has decided to try this attempt at Larnste's Table; this is the holy place of Orlanth the Unfettered One, and Kallai and Verlain feel that this is the best place to make an attempt to free Orlanth from his imprisonment.

Darna Longcoat acts as Ernalda and performs the *Arming of Orlanth* (Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes, page 192). As she 'arms'

Orlanth with his sword, spear, and axe, she calls forth the appropriate PCs to stand at Orlanth's side.

Kallyr stands in the middle of the ceremonial ground: the diadem in her forehead glows with blinding starlight and she is very hard to look at.

## CROSSING THE THRESHOLD

### *Crisis and Rage*

If Orlmarl the Charioteer helps, taking the role of Mastakos, the PCs travel directly to the Courts of Silence. He instructs the PCs to climb onto his chariot.

The chariot runs down Larnste's Table, Orlmarl guiding the horses from his position on the yoke. Everyone cheers as they hurtle past. The charioteer takes them west, the chariot launching into the air, as he calls to his horses, "Up Crisis, up Rage."

They travel across Genertela, west across the vast oceans, on over the Lands of Dusk and then plunge down into the Underworld.

The PCs will not recognize these places, but the Game Master might wish to show them a map of their westward journey, passing over the Rockwood Mountains, Felster Lake, and the Neleomi Sea. They fly westward over the oceans from Genertela and across Luathela. Mastakos guides his chariot over the Land of Dusk and then plunges through the Gates of Dusk into the Underworld.

In the Underworld Orlmarl guides his chariot on past the Nightwood, and over the River of Swords, until it arrives at Havan Vor.

### *Orlanth's Path*

If the PCs refuse Orlmarl's assistance, they must follow Orlanth's Path into the Underworld. The PCs leave the ceremony and the world breaks apart around them. No stars illuminate the Sky, only the baleful Red Moon. They follow the path west through a ruined lifeless landscape of burnt homes and shattered mountains until they reach the bottom of a great mountainous cliff, rising high into the sky.

The rock wall is dark and ominous. At the base of the cliff is a massive gate with huge bronze doors some 45 feet high. The doors are slightly ajar and depict guardians and denizens of the Underworld, along with the souls of the Dead. Great locks and bronze door bolts can be seen on the front of the door; they are clearly meant to bar the door from whatever is on the other side of the gate. Standing in front of the gate are two demonic guardians, each standing twice the height of the tallest man.

The first guardian is a monster with a canine face with bulging eyes, a scaly body, a snake-headed tail, the talons of an eagle, and four sets of wings. In his hands are a mace and an axe. This demon is obviously male and is called Kaldar in Orlanthi myths.

The second demonic guardian is even more frightening to behold. Her face is dread and awful, and glares terribly. She has the fangs of a snake and the tusks of a boar, naked breasts, a hairy body, hands stained with blood, long fingers and claws, and the talons of an eagle. In her hands are writhing snakes. This demon is obviously female and is called Sinjota in Orlanthi myths.

A success against a moderate resistance for a PCs' divine rune affinity should hint to them the myths tell that Kaldar and Sinjota are hard to bypass working together, but much easier alone.

Kaldar and Sinjota are Nearly Impossible to bypass if they are together. If the PCs are Defeated, the guardians ignore them until the PCs try again to overcome them.

Distracting one of the guardians allows the other guardian to be overcome more easily. For example, one hero may seduce one of the guardians (at Moderate resistance), allowing the other PCs to attack the remaining guardian (at Very High resistance). The PCs may come up with other distractions; most likely, those should be given a High resistance.

If a PC successfully seduces Kaldar or Sinjota, there should be consequences. A woman who seduces Kaldar will give birth the next year to a child destined to play a major role in the Hero Wars. A man who seduces Sinjota will sire a demonic entity who may end up aiding its father, or perhaps pursuing him, depending on the Game Master's wishes.

Assuming the PCs pass the Gate of Kaldar, the immense bronze doors slam shut behind them and the sound of many locks and bolts closing can be heard. The way back is shut and the only way forward is an endless spiral stairway carved out of the rock. The stairs lead down into the formless black, winding around a seemingly bottomless pit. Hours, perhaps days — perhaps weeks — are spent descending those stairs. It is impossible to keep track of time or distance.

## WELCOME TO THE UNDERWORLD

The Underworld is always different every time it is entered. It is a confusing irrational place, mysterious and fearful. Places move around, and change shape and size. Certain places always are present, but their relative location may change wildly. The Path of Silence always leads to Havan Vor, but it does not always pass

### THE UNDERWORLD

#### ORLANTH AND ERNALDA MAGIC IN THE UNDERWORLD

In the Underworld, PCs who worship Orlanth and Eernalda will sense the presence of their gods again — and be able to do magic. The reason is simple: their gods are here, and in the Underworld, they can reach them.

#### THE GUIDE OF SOULS

Depending on the path into the Underworld they take, the heroes most likely have a magical guide called a psychopomp or 'Guide of Souls' who will lead them to Havan Vor and beyond.

The Guide of Souls will not help the heroes overcome any obstacle in the Underworld, but may help the heroes understand what those obstacles are.

Although the guide is not specifically identified as Issaries, all embody some part of his power as the Psychopomp.

# THE SHADE OF GARAN THE LOW STAR ⚭

If the PCs do not guess, let them roll against their *Red Cow Clan* keyword to realize the shade is that of their clan's helper in the Great Darkness, the Star Captain Garan. Garan was a son of Helamakt and Senstena, one of the Low Stars. He fell from the sky to aid Serias, a descendant of Vingkot, whose clan had been scattered.

Garan and Serias formed a new tribe, the Garanvuli,

one of the Star Tribes named for the Star Captains who founded them.

Garan will be avuncular and try to give the PCs advice as they travel the Underworld. He cannot directly help them, only guide them to Havan Vor. The denizens of the Underworld will not interfere with him and will seem to show him respect.

## NARANGROSING

Narangros was the leader of a pack of demonic hounds noted for their jaws and their howls that could be heard up to the Sky. Narangros the Bad Dog killed Yinkin's children and murdered his lovers. The spirits of the Narangrosings still plague those clans descended from Yinkin.

The Narangrosings, often called Hellhounds or bad dogs, resemble nightmare visions of dogs, with red eyes, powerful jaws to crush bone and black and red fur. They vary in size: the smallest are the size of a man, the larger ones are the size of a horse, and the largest can stand twenty feet at the shoulder with ten foot long legs and their head alone the size of a grizzly bear. Many of the largest have pronounced features such as multiple eyes, or ten-foot long tongues. The smaller ones tend to leap into the attack in an attempt to knock their foe to the ground before biting them. The larger ones rely on their sheer mass to knock opponents to the floor.

Narangrosings speak with gruff hoarse voices, usually to taunt and mock their opponents.

### Narangrosing

**Significant Abilities:** Bite, Leap, Knockdown Foe, Rend, Terrible Howl

**Exceptional Abilities:** Huge, Trample

**Consciousness:** Sentient

**Relevant Statistics:** 1000-1500 lbs, 6-20 feet tall

by Nightwood and over the River of Swords; sometimes it crosses the River of Hate or even the Ocean of Despair. The deeper you go in the Underworld, the closer to the formless Chaos of Predark you get and the more irrational and fearful it becomes.

## GENERAL ENVIRONMENT

In the Underworld, no sun, stars, or planets light up the sky. Indeed, there is no sky above, only a vast empty blackness. The air is both stagnant and poisonous, or howling and malevolent. The ground is broken and treacherous, following no rational

geological rules. Jagged mountains like obsidian flints laid on edge co-exist with endless swamps and bottomless pits.

## THE GUIDE

If the PCs pass the Gate of Kaldar, on the far side they meet a figure. At first an intense white light seems to emanate from and surround a figure blocking the path blinding them. As the light dims their eyes recover. The figure ahead appears to be a herdsman by the alynx at his feet; he wears a simple skirt, with an unscoured woolen cloak across his back and a broad-brimmed hat on his head. He leans heavily on a spear.

"Come now," he says to them, "you have many miles to go and promises to keep!"

He begins walking, using his spear as a walking staff. His alynx responds to his whistles, and he uses it to herd the PCs forward and keep them on the path. The PCs have the feeling they are being driven, like sheep, to their fate.

"Ifrendal points your way," he tells them, pointing his spear in the direction he wants the PCs to walk.

The black shadow cat sits up on its hind legs and says, "Follow your captain."

## NIGHTWOOD

The path skirts the edge of an immense and foreboding dead forest. It is shadowy and gloomy within bowshot of its outer edge. To penetrate further is to leave behind almost all light, leaving only a gray gloom. Patches of fog drift about, odd lights appear and disappear. A path leads through the forest, glowing with a silvery light. This is the 'Silver Path' Orlanth took when he came to the Underworld on the Lightbringers' Quest.

If the PCs pass through the forest, they hear the howling of wild dogs, a sound that makes the hairs on the back of their necks stand up. The howls are frightening and the PCs must use an appropriate Ability against a High resistance, or be penalized by fear and dread for the rest of the scene. The PCs might try to elude their pursuers, and those who failed the test might well want to, but the pack has their scent and escape is a High or Very High resistance. If the PCs fail to elude their pursuers, a pack of Narangrosings attacks them — the Narangrosings are Telmori heroquesters, drawn to Nightwood by their Red Cow enemies.

The Telmori heroquesters might include NPCs known to the PCs — who become their heroquest foe. Goram White-Fang



*This map shows the Path of Silence through the Underworld. The Dead pass between Nightwood and the imprisoned giants, and then through the Plain of Black Ash until they reach the River of Swords. They cross the Perjurors Bridge and must pass Janak the Gatekeeper. If they have not forsaken themselves, they can then enter the City of the Dead and receive judgment in the tower of Havan Vor.*

might even be the enemy of one of the PCs, if a PC killed his kinsman Black-Paws Helkos, or Jogar Sog.

When people heroquest on Holy Days they are one of the faceless minions of the gods — individuals cannot be recognized. However, when people heroquest as individuals from myth they attract opponents of similar power. Over time, these same people may be drawn into the quest as regular opposition to the heroquester (and vice-versa). Although people take on the role of a god on the Other Side, in these cases it becomes possible to discern the identity of the person under the mask. For this reason, the Orlanthi call this side-effect of heroquesting the Face Dance and the foe is called a Face Dancer. It is also called Prey Love, Spider's Singer, etc.

## PATH OF SILENCE

After their encounter with the Bad Dogs, the PCs continue on their path until they see an endless procession of the recently deceased — the ghosts of the dead and gone. They see brides, unwed youths, and old men bowed down with suffering. There are girls with their tender hearts freshly scarred by sorrow. They see great armies of battle dead, stabbed by spears or slashed by swords; men of war still draped in bloodstained armor. There are Sartarites and Lunars,

Volsaxings, Malkioni, Praxians, Esrolians, and Grazeland Pony Breeders: men and women of every nation known to them. Some are kings and thanes borne by noble steeds, others are naked or wear meager scraps of cloth. Some are mere skeletons, other are intact; all bear the markings of their Life and Death.

Trolls, broo, Beast Men, and every other mortal race join the march of the Dead. All are united in death and silence; none talk or quarrel. They all parade with a common purpose and goal: to reach Havan Vor, the Court of Silence.

The PCs should join in the great endless parade of the dead as it winds its way through the Underworld. It is a profoundly disturbing procession as the PCs realize all mortals are humbled by the power of Death and regardless of their deeds amongst the Living, one day they too will again walk the Path of Silence.

Participating in the procession of the Dead threatens their connection with the Living. The PCs must find some connection to the world of the Living, be it their god, their rune affinities, their community, their loved ones or their enemies. The contest resistance level should be at least Moderate. Failure impairs their connection with the world of the Living until they chose to dedicate themselves to either the Life Rune or the Death Rune. Success gives a Benefit of Victory to the Ability used — they have withstood the power of Death.

## RIVER OF SWORDS

After leaving the periphery of Nightwood, the PCs travel the Path of Silence for a seemingly endless amount of time across a plain of black ash. They cannot tell if it has been ten hours, ten days, or even ten years. Here the Underworld is silent, without weather, and without any change in the gray darkness.

An incredible din of crashing metal on metal startles the PCs! Beyond the Path of Silence is a deep gorge. At the bottom flows a river of turning swords, locked in an everlasting battle without any participants. It is obvious that any who fall down into that River of Swords will be sliced into pieces, and periodically severed arms, legs, torsos, and heads bob in the violent current.

The Path continues parallel to the River, until it reaches a great bridge made out of a million bones.

At the center of the bridge stands a giant skeleton holding aloft an immense bone staff. As the Dead file by the skeleton, it ignores many of them but others it knocks off the bridge with its staff, into the chasm below. The PCs' guide explains: "You must prepare yourselves for the first judgment. Janak confronts perjurers and oath breakers upon the bridge."

### JANAK AND THE PERJURERS BRIDGE

Janak tries to knock any PC who has committed perjury (or any other violations of an oath) off the bridge. Discuss the matter with your players. Have any of the PCs violated an oath? Have they broken hospitality? Did they execute a member of the House of Sartar (Ostling)? Were they leader of the PCs who betrayed Buthur Dog-Nose and failed to bring Vogarth, Argrath, and Invarth to justice for their banditry, despite their oaths to the House of Sartar?

If the answer is no, this should be a contest of Moderate Difficulty against an appropriate Ability (Truth Rune, clan keyword, Honorable, and so on). If the answer is yes, it is Nearly Impossible to avoid being knocked into the River. Frame the contest creatively; the PCs may try everything from a legal argument to a combat with Janak! Provide Situational Modifiers as appropriate.

If Janara is with the PCs, then Janak knocks her into the river below. The PCs see Janara screaming and being sliced to pieces.

## HAVAN VOR

After crossing the Perjurers Bridge, the PCs continue to follow the Path of Silence across the bleak and blasted landscape of the Underworld.

Eventually, they see the tower of Havan Vor: a great black spiked tower reaching up endlessly beyond sight. Surrounding

the tower is a silent city of gray stone: the City of Dead. Here the dead wait until they are summoned to Havan Vor for judgment.

A stone wall covered in brightly colored murals and bas-reliefs depicting protective gods and demons surrounds the City of the Dead. A great open gate leads into the City and towards Havan Vor. Around the gate are carved powerful protective spells placing the city under the authority of entities variously named Darhudan and Darhudana, Grandfather and Grandmother Mortal, Daka Fal, and Havan Vor.

If Orlmarl took the PCs he leaves them here at the City of the Dead.

The Shade of Garan will tell the PCs, "You must demand entrance of Culsvula, the porter of gates of the Tower of Havan Vor, and must pass through the tower to go further. Remember, you must not appeal to your gods for aid in your quest when before Darhudan and Darhudana, and demand to be cast into the pit — for that is the way to the throat."

The City is vast with hundreds of thousands of tombs, mausoleums, monuments, crypts, sarcophagi, urns, and other buildings of the dead. Above everything looms the round black tower of Havan Vor with its all-embracing gates.

At the gate to the tower, great golden doors depict the judgment of the Dead by Darhudan and his sister Darhudana in a series of bas-relief friezes.

### CULSVULA

The door is closed and the gate is watched by a winged guardian, a beautiful bare-chested female carrying a key and a flaming sword: she is Culsvula, the porter of Havan Vor. When the PCs ask to enter, she demands who they are, and says: "Why have you come to the Court of No Return? What makes you travel the road from which no traveler departs?"

After stating their reasons, the PCs enter Havan Vor, the grim Court of Silence. They are in a vast hall, with hundreds of doors leading out. High above, thousands of gods watch from their gallery. In the center is a great dais where Darhudan, King of the Dead, sits upon his high throne. To one side sits his sister Darhudana and on the other sits his scribe.

### THE KING OF THE DEAD

Darhudan wears a crown of Darkness set with golden jewels and his face is a mirror. He is garbed in a voluminous black robe bearing magical signs upon it. He has a great key ring with keys for 500 doors, each of which lead to another part of the Underworld. Around him throng the dead; some on their feet, some seated, all clustering around the Judge of the Dead, silently pleading for his verdicts. When the PCs approach the dais, the King of the

### KNOCKED INTO THE RIVER OF SWORDS

Most likely a perjuring PC is doomed. If Janak knocks a PC off the Bridge of Bones into the River of Swords, he will be damaged to a degree commensurate with his level of failure.

A PC who is knocked into the River of Swords eventually finds himself out of the heroquest. He will have a Consequence of Defeat from his wounds in the River of Swords that require special healing at a Chalana Arroy cult temple or similar great magic.

Dead addresses them: "This is the realm of shadows, of sleep and perpetual night. Here you must confront your deeds in the world of Men. Those who were honest and fair will have their gods to plead for them. The wicked will stand alone, condemned."

Before they can speak, Darhudan faces the PCs and their deeds, both good and ill, are reflected in his face. Ask each PC to remind everyone of his or her most righteous and infamous deeds — these are reflected in the mirror-face of Darhudan.

Darhudan then asks, "Who shall plead for these mortals?"

This is the time for the PCs to spurn the support of their gods and choose their own path. This is difficult; the traditions of Havan Vor are ancient and innate to all mortals. However, the death of Orlanth has upset the Great Compromise, and as a result PC worshippers of Orlanth or Eralda find challenging the established order easier. A PC must succeed in a contest using their Air, Earth, Water, Movement, Death, Fate, or Disorder Rune. For an Orlanth or Eralda initiate the resistance is High; for other initiates using these runes is Very High. Other runes are Very High for Orlanth and Eralda initiates, Nearly Impossible for others. More than one PC can try, only one need succeed. If all the PCs fail, their gods will plead for them and they return home having failed the heroquest.

If a hero succeeds, he renounces the protection of the gods and demands to be cast into the Pit. The Dead raise unearthly cries and Darhudan cries out: "Not since the Disrupter ransacked my hall have the Living dared challenge me so!"

Darhudan orders the PCs to be cast into the Pit. A host of demons seize the PCs and carry them to an iron door covered in evil-looking symbols. Other demons unlock its many bolts and wards. As the door creaks open, Darhudan speaks again to the PCs: "The gate to Hunger, Madness, Fear, and Disease now stands open wide and for you it shall be easy to pass."

With that, the PCs are thrown through the door; it is slammed shut behind them, and they hear the many locks being engaged one by one.

## THE PIT OF HELL

### CORRIDOR OF FEAR

The PCs find themselves in a stone passageway leading down in the darkness. As they stumble downwards their hands feel the contours of a strange and frightening relief cut into the walls. The corridor emanates dread and fear, and the PCs feel terror welling up within them.

If Janara was sliced to ribbons in the River of Swords then she reappears here, stumbling through the dark. She tells the PCs that though she was torn to pieces, enough parts of her collected on the shores of the river, which were able to crawl together so that she could reassemble herself. She then stole Culsvula's keys, and jumped into the pit before Darhudan could speak to her.

Janara can make light magically, and she creates a small glow above her hand allowing the PCs to find their way, and to see the bas-reliefs along the corridor depicting various hideous demons of the Underworld. Janara seems to find the horrific pictures amusing.

Dehori demons stalk this corridor, seeking out new victims to witness their horror show. Each PC should face a Dehori demon before leaving the Corridor of Fear. Only allow those PCs who have already overcome a Dehori to Augment or assist another.

## DEHORI

Dehori are children of the god Dehore. Cloaked ever in shadow and muttering in darkness, Dehore is commander of the shades, and sends his minions to those who serve him.

A Dehori's physical presence is made entirely of darkness so they are essentially insubstantial creatures formed from out of the shadows or inky blackness. Fashioned from the Darkness they can be dissipated by light, and vanish in bright sunlight. Dehori form different shapes to perform different tasks — often they appear as a hooded man or woman, floating in a pool of darkness. Up close they assume a frightening countenance, with large mouths of razor sharp teeth and wide flaring nostrils with which they sniff the air. Few have eyes.

They attack by engulfing its victim, draining the heat from their body, exposing them to hypothermia and frostbite, and exposing him to visions of horror and madness. Tendrils of darkness flow into a victim's mouth, nose, eyes and ears from the Dehori. Some victims die of exposure, others shock and the remainder go mad. Because the Dehori flows around weapons, fists, and armor, resisting a Dehori requires abilities representing physical or mental toughness. Red Cow clan members at least have *Courage* at the same rating as their *Red Cow Clan* keyword.

They usually appear *en masse*, and exhibit or incite terror, hunger, lust, thievery, and other base emotions.

### Dehori

**Significant Abilities:** FearShock, Freeze, Insubstantial

**Exceptional Abilities:** Move through Shadows

**Weaknesses:** Light

**Consciousness:** Sentient

**Relevant Statistics:** Insubstantial

## THE SWAMP OF DESPAIR

Eventually the passageway opens into a vast, stinking swamp. The waters are choked with the bodies of the damned upon which feed a host of demons, monsters, trolls, and other Underworld horrors. The damned struggle in the black goop of the swamp, limbs flailing wildly, and gulping down sludge when they try to speak until they are dragged again below the surface. The air above the swamp is poisonous from the reeking odors below.

Describe the journey here as an Arduous Auto-Success.

## THE HELLMOUTH

After the swamp, the PCs make their way to an enormous fortress, ringed with high jagged walls of iron. A high stairway leads to the only gate: the ravenous maw of a great iron-fanged monstrous beast with three eyes. Its jaws open and shut with a

## ELEVENS

The Emperor Vanyoramet founded the Elevens before the Dawn. Originally, they were recruited from criminals and misfits; over time, they became a way of foreigners and others without status joining society. The Alkothi offer captured slaves a chance to join the Elevens — their souls are ritually slain in the Great Enclosure. The worthy remain with Shargash while their bodies and minds live on to serve him in the Middle World — the mortal remains of the unworthy are burned. Elevens are walking dead men until they finish eleven years' service. Their experience of the Underworld makes them almost without fear or mercy.

The Elevens train for close quarter combat: mace, shield, and dagger. They wear ankle-length scale mail coats and helmets. Their beards are long and elaborately curled and their skin is coated in ash and smoke, giving them a pallid gray appearance.

They worship Shargash, the storm and war god of the Dara Happan pantheon. Shargash is the God of War, the source of all fighting arts, Yelm's most violent son, Shargash participated in the making of the world, and in the making of Alkoth and its traditions. He is always trouble, ready to turn his violence against any foe.

His worshippers can pull down sky shattering bolts of thunder, inspire worshippers to acts of fanaticism, and wield the mace and spear of Shargash himself. They can use Shargash's magic to manipulate smoke and fire.

### Elevens

**Significant Abilities:** Berserk, Dead Man Walking, Fearless, Furious Blows of Shargash, Knife Fighting, Mace and Shield Fighting, Scale Armor, Sky Bolt

deafening clamor like the crack of a whip. The demonic beast could devour entire armies without sating its hunger.

Lunar heroquesters guard the Hellmouth to deny Orlanthi passage. Tatus the Bright has dispatched a unit of Elevens, from the Dara Happan city of Alkoth. There are, as their name implies, eleven of them. The Elevens should be High or Very High resistance.

Janara exclaims: "Elevens! Walking Dead Men from Alkoth. Servants of Shargash!" Then she skips past the surprised Elevens, scattering flower petals she pulls from a pouch, and leaps into the Hellmouth before they can react. The surprised guards turn to the PCs and attack.

If the PCs climb the stairs, the maw opens and closes furiously. Warn them that anything entering that iron maw will be devoured and mangled. At the same time, the maw is the only gate into the fortress; the PCs cannot fly over it for there is no real Air, they cannot dig under it, for below is the stone of the Underworld. The PCs must pass through the Hellmouth.

If they do not, they will be trapped in the Swamp of Despair, without any chance to return to Havan Vor or the Middle World. Once they enter the maw, the Hellmouth

devours and consumes them — an experience of horrible pain and wrenching disorientation.

Describe to the PCs the terrible pain they experience as their bodies are pierced, then crushed by the iron teeth; limbs are severed, blood spurts forth; again and again the teeth close on their bodies until death comes, a blessed relief from the agony.

### *In The Throat.*

Janara the Swarthy reassembles the PCs — some might awake screaming as they experience the horrific process of having their mangled organs stuffed back into body cavities, or limbs re-attached. Janara smiles sweetly throughout: "Hush now baby don't you cry, mummy will kiss it better."

As the first PC comes around they witnesses the somewhat disturbing sight of Janara pulling the next set of body parts from a sack, collating them together (and getting confused as to which part goes with which corpse). She then urinates on the body, claiming that is an important part of the magic, before breathing into the body's mouth, which Janara calls the 'kiss of life.' The body parts join and the 'victim' awakens, coughing and spluttering, soaked in urine, but otherwise unharmed by the ordeal.

The PCs find themselves in the Throat, a long tunnel, its walls seem to be made of rock, but pulse disturbingly with life when touched and shake if injured, throwing everyone off their feet.

In the throat, there is a choice to make between the Cauldron of Pieces and the Fields of Plenty. Following the instructions on the belt, the Cauldron lies to the right and the Fields to the left.

Janara may decide to choose for everyone else, re-assembling him or her once she has chosen a path. Janara wants to go to the Fields of Plenty — to experience the pleasures available there. The PC in the role of Orlanth must succeed at a contest to prove his authority; Janara will only obey the PC (even if they are still in pieces) if she is sufficiently afraid of what punishment will befall her.

If the PCs decide not to go to the Fields of Plenty, Janara will decide to betray them later as an act of revenge.

## THE CAULDRON OF PIECES

The right hand branch of the throat exits onto gray plains of ash. They seem featureless, dunes of the ash stretch in every direction and there are no obvious landmarks. Overhead, one of the PCs surely notices Orlanth's Ring filling the otherwise dark sky above them. The ring moves through the sky, and the PCs have to follow it to find their way across the ash plains. The journey takes seven days and nights — though on the ash plains, there is no sun in the sky and it is hard to determine the passage of time.

After seven days, the PCs realize the sky above is filled with clouds, and amidst them is a whirling storm that twists and turns. The wind force increases as the PCs head toward the eye of the storm, threatening to knock them off their feet. At the center of the storm, the winds drop again, and the PCs are within the eye of the storm — the Eye of Orlanth. Lying under the heart of the storm is an immense cauldron, with diminutive figures scurrying around it. Initiates of Orlanth feel the presence of their god in the storm above them — and know he watches them.

The cauldron is an immense bronze pot, its outer surface etched with scenes from the stories of gods, many of whom are



*Dwarves swarm over the Cauldron of Pieces*

now broken and chopped up inside it. Floating in a mysterious blue fluid with an oily rainbow sheen are miscellaneous body parts, the bits and pieces of broken gods jumbled and mixed together. Only the severed heads bobbing in the liquid are easy to identify. Cranes hang over the cauldron.

The cauldron is as deep and limitless as the oceans — indeed this is known to the Orlanthi as the Cauldron of Ver, the Drinking Giant's Cauldron — Orlanth took it from the Sea Gods and it has their life renewing properties.

Next to the cauldron is a huge crucible sitting over an intense furnace and below the crucible are three molds. It should be obvious to the PCs that their goal is to melt parts from the cauldron in the crucible and then fill the molds.

Dwarves (*Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*, page 261 and *Sartar Companion*, pages 112-113) swarm over the cauldron tending to pipes, tanks, cranes, and other humming and pulsating devices which crackle with energy. Most of the dwarves wear tough dragon-hide aprons; the pockets on the front stuffed with tools. They carry strange protective equipment such as brass goggles fitted with obsidian lenses slung around their neck or gas masks, with long snouts and hoods made from leather, and small circular crystal covered eyeholes. A number of overseers in robes and tall hats consult charts, occasionally ordering a dwarf here or there.

The dwarves order large stone golems called Jolanti around, using them to shift large objects into and out of the cauldron, stoke the furnaces under the crucible, etc. A host of tiny humanoids swarm over the apparatus, their hands and feet formed into the tools they need to polish, tighten, and scrub the cauldron.

The machinery is operated by means of a huge rotating drum of brass, over twenty feet

high, which is accessed from a platform. Anyone standing on the platform can see into the cauldron and rotate the drum by turning a wheel. When the wheel is turned, the Jolanti chained to a capstan begin walking in circles, causing gears to grind, and the whole drum to rotate. A series of runes are inscribed on the drum, some glowing, and when a rune passes the operator on the platform, it locks for a brief moment, before clicking on if the wheel is turned again. If the wheel is left on a lit rune, a lever is unlocked and pulling it causes a grabber suspended over the cauldron to begin collecting the required parts from the cauldron, dropping them into the crucible. Jolanti take the strain on a pulley to move the grabber. The parts melt in the crucible, and the molten god-bones are then poured into a mold: for remaking.

The players might believe that the machinery is a puzzle to be solved — it is not and to avoid wasting time the Game Master should explain its workings so that they can operate it.

The lit runes correspond to the runes of the Corpse Stars below; selecting one of those runes selects one of the Corpse Stars at which point one of the coals Kallyr gave the PCs will begin to glow.

The dwarves ignore the PCs if they climb onto the platform; they are simply robotic workers, toiling away at their given tasks. If the PCs try to speak to them they mutter about the 'work schedule' and ignore them. The dwarves only react if attacked or if the PCs try to interrupt the working of the machine.

Operating the machine counts as interfering with it and will cause the iron dwarves to attack. The PCs may have filled one of the molds at this point.

In the latter case, a squad of iron dwarves, assigned to protect the workings here will attempt to kill or drive off the PCs. The iron dwarves wear a

#### **SEEKING PASSAGE**

*Remember you cannot bring material items back from the Other Side. PCs might want to take the dwarven blackpowder weapon. They can do so, but the weapon only remains in their possession whilst they are on the Other Side, and cannot be cemented. The best option is to treat a flintlock pistol as the 'special effect' for the result of any contest. If the PC loses the Benefit of Victory, he has run out of powder or slugs for the weapon, or it has misfired.*

suit of armor: breastplate, greaves, vambraces, and closed helmet, and carry two-handed axes and war hammers. In addition, one of the squad carries a single shot flintlock pistol that shoots an iron slug. The dwarf also carries reloads of black powder and iron. They are a Very High resistance in a fight.

Presuming the PCs drive away, or otherwise overcome the iron dwarves, they can attempt to fill the molds from the pieces and make new gods.

### The Cauldron of Ver

One of the PCs might decide to try to recreate the Cauldron of Ver here. The Cauldron of Pieces is itself too big to move, but a PC might try to take some of the liquid, assuming that it is where the power resides and not the container itself. There is no easy way down to the liquid in the cauldron, but the cranes and pulleys might allow the PCs to lower one of their number to the surface.

By lowering someone towards the surface, that PC might be able to scoop water from the cauldron into a container. The swirling waters of the cauldron resist being taken from it; they pull at anything that touches the surface threatening to suck the PC into the cauldron. Treat this as a *HeroQuest* challenge. The PC needs to have declared the Ability before the quest began: an Air, Movement, Water, Harmony, or Life divine affinity. The resistance of the waters of the cauldron is Very High.

If the PC succeeds their community *wyter* gains a new Ability, *Cauldron of Ver*, and knows a magical rite that allows



Babeester Gor

## MOUNTAINS OF THE MOTHER

The Mountains of the Mother is the sleeping form of the Earth goddess. Heortlings might recognize this as their goddess Ernalda, but to a Praxian this mountain range is the Eiritha Hills and the Gash is the Paps. These are the same place, one in the Underworld and one in the Middle World, and both give access to the Green Age from within the Womb of the Mother.

them to renew or restore life as part of its Magic Resource. The Benefit of Victory bolsters the community Magic Resource rating. The water can use the power to heal injury at the normal resistance, even to resurrect the dead, though this faces a Nearly Impossible resistance. The ritual involves a cauldron; the worth of the cauldron can provide a Situational or Plot Augment. For example if the PCs obtain enough bronze to make a bronze cauldron, give the cauldron a Plot Augment of +4.

## THE FIELDS OF PLENTY

### THE GASH

To reach the Fields of Plenty from the Hellmouth, the PCs head across country to the Mountains of the Mother. The same featureless, dunes of the gray ash stretch in every direction. However, there is one obvious landmark: the Mountains of the Mother notable for the twin Peaks of Milk, the Wide Hip Cliffs, and the Ample Legged Hills. What first seems a small set of black hills in the distance grows as the PCs approach until they realize that the snow-capped Peaks of Milk are over 12,000' high.

If present Janara japes, jests, and indulges herself as they travel — she seems happy to be headed toward the Fields of Plenty.

Between the spurs of the Ample Legged Hills, in the Wide Hip Cliffs lies the Gash: a vertical slit in the rock, 6,000' high but only 100' wide. It is dark within, but many of the PCs, the men particularly, will experience a sense of dread at entering.

If Janara is present, she cracks jokes about traveling into the Gash and into the Womb of the Mother, lightening the mood of dread.

As they approach the Gash there is a blood-curdling scream and Babeester Gor steps forth from the darkness. She carries a great double bladed axe, which she wields with both hands, coated in gore. She has painted her limbs and arms in black and red and is taller than any mere human.

“Mortals, go away,” she cries, “this place is forbidden to you.”

The PCs notice she wears a necklace made from dried and withered male genitalia.

“I am Babeester Gor, daughter to Ernalda, who sleeps. Who are you mortals to tread in this sacred place, and what do you so foolishly seek from the gods?”

To pass Babeester the PCs must convince her that their need is great enough for her to relax her guard, or defeat her in combat.

If anyone has harmed the Earth, then Babeester attacks him or her, without negotiation. She will not strike a deal with enemies of the Earth, for she is the Avenging Daughter.

Fighting Babeester Gor is a Nearly Impossible resistance for any man, though only Very High for a woman as Babeester's best fighting magic works against men. If a male PC suffers a Major Defeat then Babeester Gor mutilates the body, cutting off the genitalia, and draining the blood to make her blood beer. A PC Defeated in this manner will need a full season to recover from their injuries in the Middle World but will also be rendered impotent, and no healer will be able to reverse that, only another heroquest. Babeester will happily fight a champion, but she will also fight the PCs as mob, in that event, she will pay Multiple Opponent Penalties. The best strategy for the PCs is to work together, with male PCs striking first and female PCs striking at the end, with Babeester suffering the highest penalties against her, and the lowest resistance.

Convincing Babeester Gor is a Nearly Impossible resistance for any man, but only a Very High resistance for an Eralda initiate. Ask the PCs for their arguments to convince Babeester, award a situational bonus to arguments that the women and children of the clan will suffer if they do not return to aid the people or other similar argument.

Babeester is the guardian and avenger of the Earth and is swayed by appeals to protect mothers and children; she is little convinced by oratory or rhetoric and these abilities suffer a Stretch penalty; use of an **□** Earth Rune affinity should get a situational bonus; however, use of an **⑥** Air Rune divine affinity is a Stretch: "You have failed to protect the Earth, do not speak, you will only make more false promises."

If the PCs fail to pass Babeester, Janara steps forward: "I will give my life Daughter, so you know how serious our people's need is. Come make your beer from my blood."

With that, she pulls a knife from her boot and slits her own throat. Blood spurts in an arc, spraying across the ashy ground. Janara's knees collapse and she falls to the dirt. Where her blood falls, the ground turns green with grass and new shoots. Babeester leaps forward and catches Janara's blood in a pot.

When the last of Janara's blood drains away she stands up: "Your companion's sacrifice shows to me the depth of your need. Pass then."

As the PCs approach the Gash she says: "You will not wake Eralda from her sleep, this is not the time. Pass though, in submission and under the shadow of the axe and swear that you will not injure the Earth, your mother."

She makes each of the PCs pass under her great axe, and swear an oath not to injure the mother. If the PCs break this oath Babeester Gor will appear

and attack them, as above. This oath also binds the Cinsina tribe, who support this heroquest, in *This World*. If the PCs injure the Earth in the Otherworld Babeester Gor herself appears to attack them; if they injure the Eralda cult in the Middle World, then the Babeester cult will send avengers against the tribe, and perhaps Unani and Abylgani (see *Sartar Companion*, page 253).

### THE WOMB OF THE MOTHER

Entering the womb, the PCs find themselves in the dark. As they head away from the entrance, they find the light of the cave mouth fading. In the dark, the PCs discover their senses begin to fail: soon they can't see, hear, smell, or touch anything — including each other. This sensory isolation continues until the PCs' very sense of self fades away.

Slowly the PCs begin to experience again: but they have lost all sense of self. They find themselves in the creation time of the Green Age: lush plants and exotic animals surround them, everything is tinged with emerald shades, but the PC has no sense of where they end and a plant or animal begins. It is all simply an experience of being. There is no language, for words need someone to name the parts, and no one knows there are parts. It is a world before separation, where the binary opposites of the real world have no meaning. The cosmic unity is idyllic; the PCs know no hunger, fear, anger, desire, pain, sadness, or misery. They also do not know fullness, courage, indifference, pleasure, happiness, or joy. These opposites are meaningless, life just is. Reach out and there is food for the taking from the nearest branch; slaughter, butcher and eat an animal and it rises from its own bones shortly afterwards.

### INJURING THE EARTH

*What does it mean to 'injure the Earth'? If someone through action or inaction allows a god-talker or priestess of the Earth to come to harm, a pregnant or nursing mother (animal or human), an innocent (any child before initiation), or profanes sacred ground Babeester will determine the PCs to have broken their oath.*

### FULL DISH AND SPOON

The Bright Emperor enslaved everyone and demanded absolute obedience from everything. But, there was one force he could not control, and that was freedom. One little freedom became many, and they began to bring bigger freedoms. Finally, the Great Sky lay upon the Fertile Earth and begot Umath Ever-Changing, the First Storm, who would bring change to the Bright Emperor's stagnant realm. Umath was an upstart god at first, with only a few crazy and dangerous brothers at his side. Gradually he gathered gods and men to his band and with their help reshaped the world.

## RICH SWAN

At first, no one was ever hungry, for Asrelia contained enough to feed everyone. But, suddenly some people were hungry! Ernalda stopped the hunger by teaching people how to do the right ceremonies. These allowed people to find her sister Esrola, who had been trapped behind a terrible mask by Angdartha, the cruel servant of the Bright Emperor. This was the first worship, one of the actions separating mortals from deities.

### *Awakening*

How do the PCs experience consciousness, the notion of the self, or individual? The clan questionnaire gives an answer as to how a PC's clan first discovered notions of self: Asrelia handed out treasures to the ancestors. The Red Cow's ancestors received the Full Dish and Spoon — their consciousness began with the masculine universe: war and violence. PCs from other clans will have others (for example women who married in, may have received the Rich Swan). Depending on that ancestral choice, the PCs experience one of the two events below.

The PCs find they are suffocating, unable to breathe and confined, trapped, and unable to move. A sense of panic, a need to escape overwhelms them: a desire to be born from the womb of the mother and into the world. The PC must tear a place for himself or herself in existence or risk being imprisoned. The PC should use one of their runes to do this; the resistance to the PC's attempt should be Very High as the Universe resists being torn by the individual's entry into it. Give a Situational Modifier of +6 to anyone using the **6** Air Rune to break free, for this primal, violent act was how the **6** Air Rune emerged. At worst someone can always use their *Red Cow Clan* keyword here, this is an ancestral event they have experienced on Holy Days.

The PC begins to experience a terrible gnawing in their belly, an intense pain, which is accompanied by feelings of weakness and tiredness. The PC is experiencing hunger for the first time. Feeding means the PC must recognize their difference from the plants and animals around them, and even the parts of those plants and animals. Failure risks the PC falling into a coma from starvation. The PC should use one of their runes to do this; the resistance should be Very High as Angdartha seeks to hide Esrola's bounty from the PC. Give a Situational Modifier of +6 to the **□** Earth Rune, for with it comes understanding of the rituals to prepare food such that the cycle of life will be respected and new food will come from the waste parts of the old.

### *Other*

A PC may come up with their own way to awaken into full consciousness. As above, the PC should use one of their runes to do this; but any PC that does gains an Impaired State of Adversity (-6) to their *Red Cow Clan* keyword: they have put their own sense of personal identity before the clan.

## THE MISHAP HOUSE

A PC who fails to awaken falls into a coma in the Middle World and cannot be woken. The clan's healers tend to them, saying they have fallen into the Mishap House. Once per season the PC can re-attempt the roll to awaken. Recovering at this point does not result in Illumination; instead the PC awakes in the Middle World from their coma and is likely to experience depression and a feeling of being sundered. The Game Master might want to give them a Directed Improvement of a Flaw of *Sundered from the All* to reflect their depression.

A player whose character is trapped in a coma may wish to play another character until their former character recovers.

### *Illumination*

This experience of being reborn into the Green Age is overwhelming for the PCs. It is an experience of the All. The All is the cosmic unity preceding the division of the world into self and other, us and them. Such an experience challenges people who normally experience the world of individual consciousness and identity; they realize the convenient divisions of the world into nameable things: runes, animals, peoples, etc., is but a pale shadow of the cosmos. They see love and hate for being the illusions they are.

A PC who awakens has become Illuminated. A common manifestation is the awareness that the normal barriers and separations that differentiate the world's things can be ignored. An Illuminated individual views ethics, morals, mythology, deity, magic, and the world in a solipsistic manner.

This is one of the great dangers of the Green Age, and this kind of experience can lead to enlightenment or madness. This is one reason why priests warn of the dangers of heroquesting to the Green Age; the Lunar Empire heroquests to the Green Age because it prepares its worshippers for this kind of cosmic revelation.

### *Janara*

If Janara died, she re-appears here, simply telling the PCs that she, "Drank my own blood beer, and thus returned to life, tricking Babeester with her own trick." She refuses to elaborate further. Confronting the All seems to have little effect on Janara who simply says, "All the world is an illusion, otherwise there would have been none of us to ever think we were."

## THE GREEN AGE

The Green Age is dangerous for all actions here have consequences. If the PCs act outside the boundaries of this episode, for example one of them hunts and eats one of the strange animals encountered by the Namers, the Game Master should create long-term consequences for the Red Cow in the Middle World — deriving from the nature of their actions in the Green Age.

## THE NAMERS

A wandering group approaches the PCs. Their leader is Genert, a very large and handsome figure, who carries a staff from which living vines grow; he glows with a green light and he introduces himself and his band — the Namers: “We are creating a Universal Tongue in which all might speak. Come now and help us name what we find, because to different people are given different names. Join our song of universal creation.”

Genert and his band wander happily throughout the paradise of the verdant gardens of the Green Age, naming, mainly the plants and animals they find. The air is clear and filled with pleasant scents, though the sky seems somehow lower than the PCs are used to, almost within easy reach. The light is soft and diffuse. The gentle people here lead a Paleolithic lifestyle; they use stone, wood, and bone tools and live by hunting animals or gathering plants, yet they harm nothing for whatever they take is reborn or regrows. Everyone and everything can speak to each other, because there is only one way to communicate and everything is able to do so.

Genert’s melodious and harmonious band includes: Flamal the Lord of Plants, Seyotel the Song of the Forest, Ronance the Good Shepherd, and a family who call themselves the Three-Bean Circus. Seyotel leads the great song as the Namers wander and Genert and the others add the new names of animals and plants to her harmony. Bright flowers bloom and beautiful birds and butterflies dance around the singers. The PCs recognize some of the creatures and vegetation but much are unknown to them: giant armadillos, immense land sloths, giant birds, and bear-dogs, some sort of deer-aardvark, a legless cat-like creature slithering on the earth like a snake, and more.

As they meander through the land Genert occasionally turns to one of the band to name what they have found, sometimes they answer, adding a new name to the song, and sometimes they seem stumped and Genert nods and bestows names for them.

### *The Field of the Corpse Stars*

Genert and his band come across a field of Corpse Stars during this expedition, and Genert asks the PCs to name the stars there.

To know the name of the god, the PC must succeed in a roll against his or her Storm Tribe mythology Ability. Any PC who is an initiate of a Storm Tribe cult can use their divine rune affinity for their knowledge of mythology (see *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* page 79). A successful mythology roll also tells the PC the facts about the Corpse Stars below.

If they know the name of the god, and speak it, Genert nods, and the PC realizes that a coal in their box has ignited.

The consequences of naming the first corpse star encountered may surprise the PCs, until they realize naming it adds it to their collection.

If the PCs fail to name three Corpse Stars Janara will name any missing stars. The stars that Janara will name are in order: Varnaval, Tanian, and Korolful.

## THE CORPSE STARS

These gods are not all forgotten, though some are; however, even those who are remembered are not worshipped by the Orlanthi today, except perhaps collaterally. They died during the Gods War, and so can now be found here. Many gods died during the

Gods War, so the presence of a broken Air God amongst the corpses of the stars is hardly surprising.

The choices here are long term — and should be reflected in your game. Orlanth’s Ring will contain its full complement of eleven stars following Orlanth’s liberation at the Battle of Pennel.

Restoring these stars to Orlanth’s Ring will be a first step in restoring them into the ranks of actively worshipped gods. At first they will receive collateral worship as part of the Three New Stars — however, as the Hero Wars progress they could be worshipped as individuals again.

It takes 500 worshippers before any of these deities amass enough worshippers to become a sub-cult of Orlanth or a similar deity. It would take 2000 worshippers before any of these deities could support a small cult on their own. Of course, it is up to you and your players whether that happens in the Hero Wars.

### **6 Varnaval the Shepherd King**

This is the corpse of Varnaval, the Shepherd King. Varnaval tamed the rams and hitched them to his chariot, raided the foreigners and forced them to pay tribute. Aided by the Iron Ram, he waged war upon the foreigners and conquered the world, until they murdered him with demons and sorcery.

Varnaval has no worshippers now; he was replaced by the worship of a foreign deity Heler, and in particular Voriof the Shepherd and Uroth the Blue Ram.

### **\* Siwend the Hunter**

Siwend first came to notice when Orlanth chose him as one of his Discovery Band. Siwend was already carrying his bow and arrows at that time. He helped Orlanth to explore the world. Afterwards he led people out into the wilderness, and to help them live comfortably taught them what we now called hunting. He was one of the raiders in the famous Plundering of Aron, but when Hedkoranth received more praise for his deeds, Siwend began going on fewer raids. His wife is Indeg, who made the thorn basket that always has another handful of dried berries in it.

Siwend has no worshippers now; he has been replaced by the worship of a foreign deity Odayla. In many tales of the Plundering of Aron, it is Odayla who competes with Hedkoranth not Siwend.

### **\* Korolful the Keen**

This corpse is of one of the forgotten Star Captains who followed Orlanth into the Heavens. Like all Star Captains, his stories emphasize that men make their own inheritance; he values pride, independence, and initiative. He is the Shooting Star who speeds across the sky to attack his enemies with burning flame. Korolful is a master of bow and spear, the weapons of the sky.

Korolful has no worshippers now; they all died in the Great Darkness.

### **□ Baroshi, the Avenger**

Baroshi’s father Varalz was a Vingkotling king who often helped Orlanth fight against Chaos. His wife, Baroshi’s mother was Enori. They lived at Rich Home. After the Spike was destroyed, and the Devil led his Chaos Host to destroy the survivors huddled in Dragon Pass, they first besieged Rich Home. Angered by their presence, Maran Gor collapsed the Earth to trap the Chaos Army.

King Varalz went to meet the Chaos army, and defend his queen who was in labor with his child. Termain Osboropo, a son of the Devil ambushed and killed him. The queen gave birth, and then went to fight Termain. When she did not return, their infant child, Baroshi, leapt from his nurse's grip and strode off to seek vengeance. Aided by Maran Gor he killed Termain.

King Varalz and Queen Enori were annihilated by Chaos, and cannot be worshipped. Their son Baroshi has no worshippers. One of his first requests of his worshippers will be to find his parent's temple beneath the Caves of Chaos in Snakepipe Hollow and recover the sacred treasures of his cult there.

#### ◎ *Saren, Elmal's Charioteer*

Saren is the driver of Elmal's iron-rimmed chariot; he holds the reins while Elmal hurls sun spears at the enemy shield wall. He stands ready whilst his lord fights on foot — to return should his lord need to withdraw on his chariot.

When Elmal crosses the sky each day, he rides in Saren's gilded chariot. Saren keeps a steady path, whatever the obstacles. Two white horses pull the chariot: Shine and Aflame. Elmal's chariot can cross the vast distances of the Heaven in a single day. Saren himself is faster than the blink of an eye.

Saren has no worshippers now, the Orlanthi do not use chariots routinely and Mastakos, Orlanth's charioteer fulfills any ceremonial needs.

#### III *Oonil the Skillful*

Oonil the Skillful accompanied Orlanth when he left the Spike with his Discovery Band. He had learnt to master the sounds of his breath, and so could easily speak, trade, and communicate with people Orlanth met and smooth out any trouble Orlanth caused.

Oonil was fascinated by the crafts of the people the Discovery Band met — he was always keen to learn new things. Often he put together ideas from disparate people in new ways better than the original. He learnt what was common in one place, was valuable in another, and he provided for the band by setting up exchanges between the haves and the have-nots. Oonil has no worshippers now; the foreign god Issaries and the many artisan gods such as Gustbran the Smith and Orstan the Carpenter replaced him.

The Red Cow clan's favored Old God is Harana Ilor, the goddess of Harmony, and the PCs should remember this.

#### △ *Tanian, the Fiery Waters*

Tanian is the son of Lorion, the Celestial Serpent, and Boveluru,

Goddess of the Celestial Waters. He fought alongside Heler in many battles and joined the Storm Tribe when Heler took Orlanth as his king.

Tanian is the impossible water that burns, and his most famous manifestations are the firebergs and the rain of fire. The God Learners summoned him at the Battle of Tanian's Victory; with his powers, they defeated the Waertagi and gained mastery of the oceans. The EWF knew of Tanian too, and revealed the Inner Dragon enabling him to be both fire and water.

No one has used Tanian's power since the end of the Second Age — he was 'forgotten' along with so many other God Learners secrets.

### THE GOLDEN TEAR

The PCs have obtained the Corpse Stars, either through the Cauldron of Pieces or by joining the Namers in the Green Age. Either way they must now take their coals into the Sky World, and place them on the Resurrection Throne.

A PC who initiated into the cult of the Young God must lead this ceremony. If no such PC survives, the quest fails because the PCs have no way to reach the Sky World. (Kind Game Masters may wish to figure some way out for the PCs, but that is outside the scope of this book.) If an initiate of the Young God is still here, they know the Golden Tear rite. This rite allows them to tear a rent in the fabric between the worlds and travel to the Young God's home at the edge of the Sky River.

The PC must collect tears into a golden bowl by approaching each PC and asking them for their tears. Ask the PC what sad memory they think of when they cry. Once they have their tears, and their own, the celebrant must call upon the aid of the Cinsina, back home. When they do this a gentle rain of tears falls upon the PCs. The rain splashes over them and into the bowl.

In the Middle World, everyone in the Red Cow feels a moment of overwhelming sadness and cry for the events of the Great Winter. The PCs perceive images of sadness from their kin — relatives dying from exposure, hunger, or cut down by monsters or Imperial troops.

The PCs find themselves drawn to the bowl, which seems to grow larger and larger, until they realize it has become a golden city surrounding a bay and they are falling towards it.

### THE SKY WORLD

The path of the sun, Elmal's path in his chariot, is below in the Sky World. When someone looks up, they just see a diffuse brightness — Dayzatar, the Sky of the Sky.

## ORLANTH AND MAGIC IN THE SKY WORLD

Once the PCs leave the Underworld and cross into the Sky World, tell them the coals glow very brightly and hot, and they find that they can do magic again — feeling a connection to the Corpse Stars they carry with them. Orlanth worshippers will find they can do magic again as well, but their magic is limited by the Corpse Stars they chose. When a worshipper

describes magic he needs to identify how a corpse star would provide that magic. For example, if the PCs bring back Tanian, they may be able to use the Air Rune to turn rain to fire, but won't be able to use the Air Rune to fly.

Ernalda worshippers do not have access to magic — their goddess still sleeps.

## PRINCESS STARRY EYES

In the Storm Age, when the waters invaded the Heavens, Princess Starry Eyes lived on a small island. She settled an argument between two great river serpents. She directed one, Sramak, the Outer Ocean, to hold up the Sky Dome, and the other, Lorion, into the Sky World. At the beginning of each year the three of them meet on the island to sacrifice together. Her city became such a place of peace and tranquility that many other gods came here to take their ease.

The inhabitants of the Sky World are the Luxites, the Sky People. They are angelic beings, tall, handsome, and proud. Mostly they are radiant, clad in white, and serene in interaction. King Arraz rules over the Luxites. They have different classifications and groups, known to astrologers but less important here.

## THE SKY RIVER

### THE GREAT PORT

#### *When is this?*

The PCs enter the Sky World on *Godsday, Truth Week, Fire Season*.

#### *Welcome to the City*

The Great Port is a large city of bright yellowish stone, mostly of flat-roofed one-story buildings. It is horseshoe shaped, built on a range of hills forming a natural amphitheater surrounding the great harbor. A number of large squares provide markets and places for the city folk to gather. All the roads in the city lead down to the harbor's edge like the spokes of a great wheel.

The harbor is surrounded by a sea wall, with two tall towers of red stone on either side of the mouth. Buildings surround the harbor edge: warehouses, chandlers, markets, and inns. In the harbor, a myriad of boats bob in the swell from the Sky River.

The Great Port lies on the edge of the Sky Dome, where the sky meets the waters of Sramak's River on which Gloranth floats. It thus lies on the confluence between the Oceans and the Sky World — sail far westward on Gloranth's oceans, beyond the known edges of the world, and into the Great Port, then beyond into the Sky World along the Sky River.

The Sky River is so vast anyone looking out from the harbor would easily believe that they looked out upon an ocean.

The residents are Luxites who ply their trade upon the Sky River, visiting islands all along its length. The port is also home to heroic adventurers from the Middle World who sailed into the Sky.

If the PCs ask about passage upriver most of the Luxites seem unresponsive: "King Arraz's rules are strict," they say, "no passage for outsiders upriver." However, they point the PCs toward a harbor side inn called the Tattered and Torn. They tell the PCs the inn is popular with strangers to the Great Port — most of its clientele are not Luxites but travelers from the Inner World. "Perhaps you will find a captain willing to take you upriver there," they say.

## THE YOUNG GOD

The Young God is a shadow or outline of a colossal person, whose feet are in the Great Port and whose head is in the arch of the sky. His faint but fair features are surrounded by a halo of hair of dimly golden curls. People see the Young God as a momentary glimpse at best, or do not see it at all. Give the players the option to decide for themselves if their PC sees the Young God.

### THE TATTERED AND TORN

The Tattered and Torn is a harbor-side inn favored by mariners from the Middle World who cross to the Sky River. Its clientele are men and women of renown in their own communities — humble sailors do not sail amidst the stars.

The inn is run by Lo-Yin. She is popular with all the regular patrons, always greeting them with a ready smile and their favored food, drink, or other relaxation. She has well-appointed rooms where the officers of the vessels that dock here often sleep. There is a bathhouse attached where visitors can wash away the dirt of the road, have their clothes laundered, and receive massages. The bathhouse is also a brothel, but Lo-Yin is discreet about this, for the Princess would not be happy to find such an establishment in her city. Most of the staff washed up here, after being lost at sea where the Middle World and Otherworld barrier was thin; hence, the name of the establishment. A few are slaves, purchased from captains like Montalk.

The inn is expensive, a room and meal costs a golden wheel. If asked Lo-Yin explains all other currencies are useless in the Sky World. She will trade for luxuries she cannot obtain from the Luxites at a favorable rate. This is how Lo-Yin is able to keep the Tattered and Torn provisioned.

#### *Landlady: Lo-Yin* ●★★★

Lo-Yin washed up in the Great Port after her Turtle-Barge became lost in Kahar's Sea of Fog. 'Demons' attacked the ship, destroying it, and Lo-Yin survived by clinging to a piece of wreckage. Slipping in and out of consciousness she wound up in the Great Port. She was taken under the wing of Madam Ernalor, the woman who formerly owned the Tattered and Torn and claimed to have done so since the Second Age. When she passed away, Lo-Yin took over the establishment; she regards the continuance of the Tattered and Torn and the welfare of her staff as her priority — she will do nothing to jeopardize that; beyond that she is accommodating to her customers.

#### **Landlady: Lo-Yin** ●★★★

**Culture:** Kralori

**Age:** 33

**Keywords:** Sailor

**Magic:** Initiate of Thrunhin Da, the Blue Dragon of the Deep (●)

**Look:** Dark hair artfully piled on her head, plump, silk kimono, smoking from an opium pipe

If the PCs ask for help in locating a captain to take them upriver, she tells them: "It is a bad time to travel, King Arraz has patrols up and down the river looking for pirates and smugglers. You would be better off to wait until they pass. More captains will take you then, few would try it now."

If the PCs ask how long that will be, Lo-Yin shrugs her shoulders: "Who can say? If you are desperate, there is only one who will take you for now, the very buccaneer King Arraz seeks: Captain Montalk of the Darkening-of-the-Skies." Lo-Yin gestures towards a booth at the back of the inn.

### WORKING PASSAGE

Captain Montalk, a garishly dressed dark troll, sits with two of his officers: a tall blond-haired man with a large axe, Osirin, and a dusky skinned, heavily tattooed woman, Abenna. Trollkin scurry around him and a blue-skinned woman with a heavy bronze collar around her neck kneels at his feet.

Captain Montalk refuses to 'talk business' until everyone has eaten or drunk. The food is raw meat and fish served with rice, the drink, a strong troll beer, or rice wine. Once everyone has had their fill, Captain Montalk will listen to the PCs' request.

"Going upriver is dangerous at this time. There are King Arraz's patrols, and Shargash and Artia pass along the river," Montalk tells them. "What can you pay, for such a dangerous journey? Slaves are always good; will some of you take your places on the Darkening-of-the-Skies' benches?"

If the PCs do not agree to a third of their compliment becoming galley slaves, negotiating passage on the Darkening-of-the-Skies is a contest. For Montalk the prize is: more slaves for his benches. On a Defeat some of the PCs will have to

take their turn on the benches, in order for Montalk to agree passage.

Once the PCs have made their bargaining, Montalk will seal the bargain with more beer, before calling for his crew to take ship.

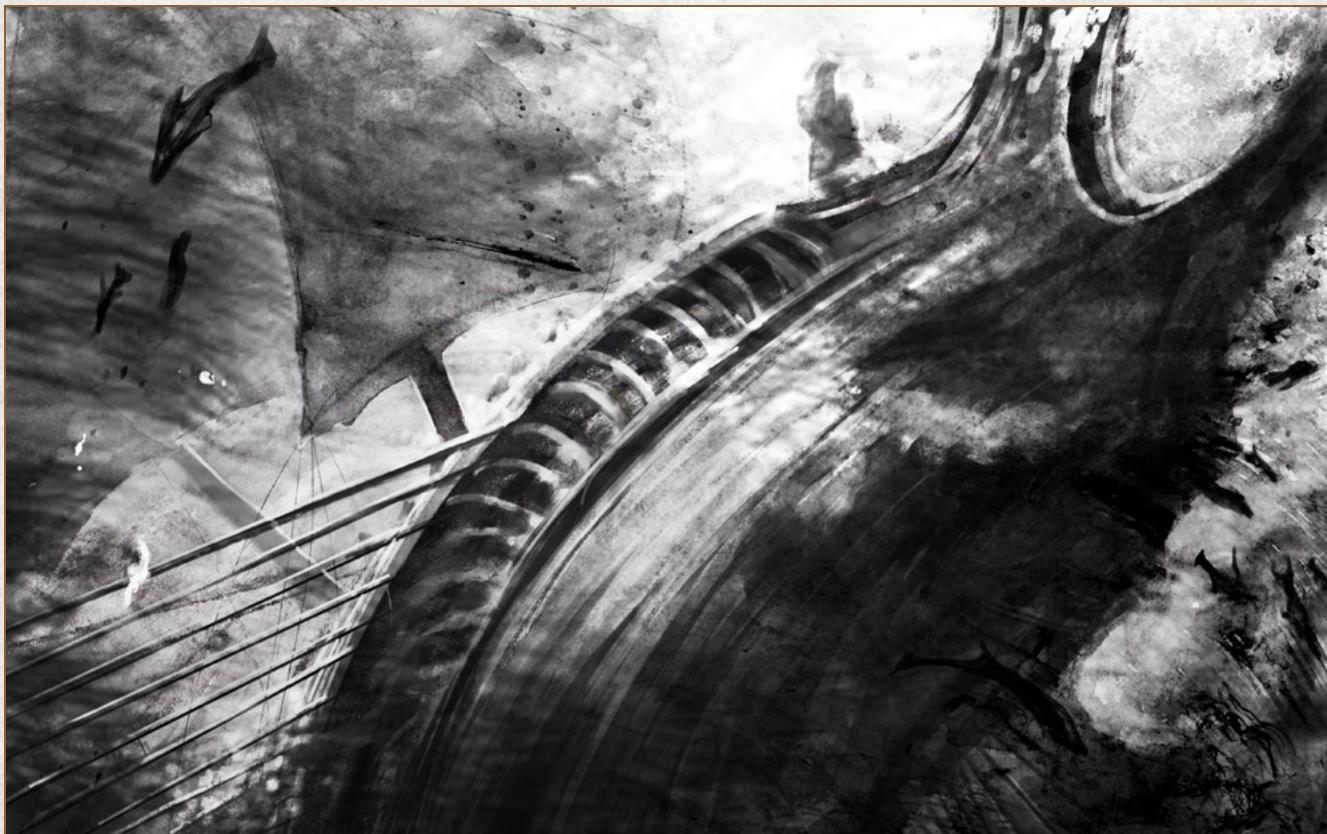
### THE DARKENING-OF-THE-SKIES

The Darkening-of-the-Skies is one of the famous Black Galleys of the trolls. It is 138' long, 17' wide (24' with the rowing frame), with a 6' draught and displaces some 180 tons. It has 24 rowing benches to a side, each with three oarsmen. There are two steering oars aft. Three masts provide for the ship to use wind instead of oars.

Accommodation is either on the rowing benches or a deckhouse at the stern and bow. During the day, the trolls rig the sails as a tarpaulin to keep off the worst of the sun, preferring to sail at night.

The wooden vessel is painted black, in the way of the trolls.

The Darkening-of-the-Skies has a crew of 5 officers, 20 sailors, and up to 144 rowers. The rowing benches are the preserve of the damned: slaves and undead corpses. The slaves come from across Glorantha, but Captain Montalk regularly purchases them in Kareshtu in Pamaltela. As a result, many of those at the benches are black-skinned Agimori or blue-skinned Veldang from the southern continent. The PCs may never have seen such people before. The undead come from the same stock: when slaves die from toiling at the oars, Montalk brings them back as undead, much to the horror of their former bench mates. The undead corpses can toil without tiring, rowing day and night, and against the current; without them, it is doubtful



*The Darkening of the Skies sails the Sky River*

## MY PCS DON'T WANT TO SAIL WITH MONTALK

The journey with Montalk is the Pur 'station' of the *How Orlanth Conquered the Stars* quest. Like Orlanth, they must dally with an enemy who has something they want. PCs who refuse this station will eventually drop out of the quest in the Great Port to return to the Middle World.

The PCs may be expecting something more 'literal' — the seduction of a beautiful woman perhaps — but the Other Side often works by substitution and allusion — one reason why heroquesting can be so difficult.

that the Darkening-of-the-Skies could cross Boveluru's Current into the Sky; but they do deteriorate quickly because they do not heal the wear and tear of laboring at the oars — so Montalk always needs replacements.

Some of the PCs may struggle with Captain Montalk and his crew. Humakti despise undead and the cult of Zorak Zoran; Orlanthi despise slavery. Yet, there is little choice — for who else is there to take them up the Celestial River? Of course, those PCs may go along with the captain, hoping for an opportunity to mutiny...

### Captain: Montalk Wave-Breaker ●၃ၤ

Captain Montalk is a dark troll. He wears a loose-fitting turban to keep the sun from his head and ears, and a pair of obsidian sunglasses when in the bright light outside. His clothing is garish: a collection of badly clashing colors and styles but made of rich silks, cottons, and furs. He wears giant pantaloons, and garish gold sandals. If anyone mentions his taste in clothing, Captain Montalk looks puzzled and tells them his clothes "seem good to me."

Captain Montalk claims to have learnt the secrets of sailing from Dastalak Boat-Eater himself, who in turn sailed with Dormal the Opener. After leaving his native Jrusteli Islands, he circumnavigated the world, trading cargos, before deciding to follow Dormal and sail west over the edge of the known world. Now he makes his living sailing the boundaries between the worlds. Ostensibly, he trades curiosities from the Middle World for the forgotten magical trinkets and treasures from along the Celestial River; in practice, he is a pirate of the Celestial River.

Captain Montalk is a hard captain, who beats his great drum to demand greater exertion from his crew at the oars. He does not suffer challenges to his authority, and has killed at least two men who mutinied. His huge war maul is never far from his side. Still, his skill as a sailor means his crew respects him — who else could have led them to sail against Boveluru's Current and lived to tell the tale? Montalk sees no evil in his decision to keep slaves, or raise undead to crew his ship: "The strong have always ruled the weak and the flesh of the dead means nothing to them."

Montalk enjoys the simple pleasures: food and strong-drink; curiosity and a love of adventure drive his travels, not greed.

The PCs might simply decide to steal a sail and ship out of port. They will have to kidnap crew to help them sail the vessel unless they have sailors amongst them. Hostage sailors will try to jump ship as soon as possible, and other ships will try to intercept them as they leave port. If the PCs succeed with the plan, the Game Master will need to modify the events below to reflect that.

One of the PCs should notice that when they take ship with Captain Montalk the coals that contain the sparks of the Corpse Stars begin to burn a little more brightly.

### Captain: Montalk Wave-Breaker ●၃ၤ

**Race:** Dark Troll

**Age:** 27

**Keywords:** Sailor

**Magic:** Initiate of Zorak Zoran (●)

**Look:** Big pantaloons, garish clothing, turban

### Value Trollkin: Bobber ●၃ၤ\*

A trollkin of above average intelligence, 'Bobber' is Montalk's personal valet: he fetches, cleans, mends, and generally arranges everything his master needs. Bobber does not do this work alone: up to four other trollkin help him; the numbers of his assistants rise and fall as they die in accidents, from Montalk's wrath, or Montalk simply decides to eat them.

Bobber dislikes disorder or breaking routine. When the PCs are aboard the Darkening-of-the-Skies, he will constantly point out their mistakes and failings. With his constant whining, he hopes to persuade Montalk to reverse his decision and maroon the PCs in the Sky World.

Bobber is dedicated to meeting Montalk's needs, and it would be foolish to try and persuade him to rebel — he would pretend to go along with the plot, only to betray its instigators. His team of servants is his eyes and ears, always listening for whispers of betrayal.

As well as his master's day-to-day needs, Bobber has trained his team to be Montalk's bodyguards, drilling them to fight with knives. They would not make a serious opponent, but their vicious defense might give pause.

### Value Trollkin: Bobber ●၃ၤ\*

**Race:** Trollkin

**Age:** 17

**Keywords:** Valet

**Magic:** None

**Look:** Breechclout

### First Mate: Osirin Bloody-Axe ၆ၤ

Osirin is an Ygg's Islander who once sailed with the famous Harrek the Berserk. He has raided ports along the southern

coast of Genertela from the Mirorsea to Ozur Bay and joined with Montalk after his old ship met the Darkening-of-the-Skies off the Seshnelan coast and lost the resulting fight. Osirin cut a bloody swathe through Montalk's pirates that day; Montalk offered Osirin and the survivors of his crew a choice — join the Darkening-of-the-Skies or be shot full of arrows. Osirin and the survivors have fought for Montalk ever since.

A tall man, standing over 6'6" tall, Osirin believes in blood and bronze, and what they buy: life, gold, strong drink, and the company of women. He regards slavery as normal: the weak should serve the strong, and divides the world accordingly. For Osirin Umath's maxim that, "Violence is always an option" is a way of life. In battle, he and Montalk fight with their gods' fury.

Osirin holds the PCs in contempt until he sees them prove themselves as warriors. Until then, he bullies and mocks them, daring them to duel him if they dislike his words. Insults mean nothing to Osirin from those who have not bested him in battle. Once someone has done that, he will treat them as a companion worthy of respect.

In battle, Osirin wields an axe called Howl-Bringer. Used to fighting on the pitching deck of a boat, he foregoes armor, favoring only a leather and bronze helmet.

#### First Mate: Osirin Bloody-Axe ♂✉

**Culture:** Wolf Pirate (Ygg's Isles)

**Age:** 26

**Keywords:** Sailor

**Magic:** Initiate of Ygg (6)

**Look:** Furs and leather, long yellow hair and beard, tall

#### Helmswoman: Abenna the True ♀✉

Abenna is from the Rightarm Islands in the Holy Country. She is both the Darkening-of-the-Skies Helmswoman and the ship's Opener, capable of conducting the Dormal rites allowing a ship to safely sail Glorantha's oceans. Osirin Bloody-Axe protects her from harm for this reason.

Like her kin on the Rightarm Isles, Abenna was born to sail, splashing about in boats from her earliest years. Osirin Bloody-Axe, who had lost his own Opener in a sea battle, needed to kidnap one to escape and kidnapped Abenna. At first, she resented the gruff pirate, but after realizing that her life on Three Step Isle would be one of servitude and drudgery she petitioned to join his crew. She had to kill another crew member to earn her place aboard — which she regrettably, but skillfully did, with net and trident.

Abenna slipped into the pirate's life, making one compromise after another until she ended up in Osirin's bed. Underneath, Abenna struggles with the life she has led. She has loved the adventure, sailing along the Celestial River, but she despises the treatment of the slaves on the benches, and the undead corpses make her uncomfortable. She might be persuaded to join a mutiny against Captain Montalk. Certainly, she has had friendly exchanges with Sadiya-ma.

#### Helmswoman: Abenna the True ♀✉

**Culture:** Rightarm Islands (Holy Country)

**Age:** 22

**Keywords:** Sailor

**Magic:** Initiate of Pelaskos (●)

**Look:** Dusky-skinned, heavily tattooed, long dark hair

#### Overseer: Banti Montalk-Owned ♂✉

Banti Montalk-Owned is a towering figure, his muscles taut as iron from years at the benches. He still wears the collar and fetters of a galley slave, but he no longer toils at an oar. Instead, Banti oversees the slaves, his cruel bullwhip lashing out to punish any act of disobedience and stamp out mutiny.

Banti has a deep bellowing voice, with which he cajoles and curses the slaves in equal measure. He despises weakness, and discourages slaves from helping each other.

Banti is a eunuch; when Banti was sold to Captain Montalk the seller presented the Captain with a ceramic jar containing Banti's genitals. The magic of this ritual ensured Banti cannot rebel against Montalk.

Banti's job is made easier by the threat that killing a slave is no obstacle — for Montalk can simply bring the corpse back to life as an undead to serve again, and provide a warning to others. With his huge hands, and bulk, Banti has squeezed the life from slaves, clamping his hands around their throat and pressing his thumbs into their eyes.

Banti embraces slavery as the natural order. He rejoices in Montalk's ownership and finds the idea of rebelling against his enslavement as taboo. He believes enforcing slavery is a sacred duty — and he finds talk of freedom 'unnatural.' He particularly despises the blue-skinned Veldang, describing them as lazy, callous, and untrustworthy.

Such is Captain Montalk's trust in Banti that when the Darkening-of-the-Skies rams a ship, Banti fights alongside the crew, swinging his yatagan (a recurved sword), and laughing disconcertingly.

#### Overseer: Banti Montalk-Owned ♂✉

**Culture:** Kareeshtu

**Age:** 26

**Keywords:** Sailor

**Magic:** Initiate of Ompalam ✘

**Look:** Black-skinned, rippling muscles, shaven head, tall, slave collar and bracelets

#### Oarswoman: Sadiya-ma Montalk-owned ♂✉

Blue-skinned Sadiya-ma is a Veldang from Kareeshtu in Pamaltela, where people live in bondage. Montalk purchased her from her former master, who had intended to execute her for trying to flee. She wears a collar and chain, serving at Montalk's whim. Most of the time, she rows at the benches, but sometimes Montalk summons her to the deckhouse, to amuse him.

The Veldang people grow fewer in number with each Age. Although she has learnt to play the dutiful slave to Montalk, Sadiya-ma desires freedom, and the chance to return her people to greatness.

Sadiya-ma is strong, rowing at the benches has given her a lean body and muscles. She has fought her way to lead amongst the galley slaves, in brutal fights with improvised knives and clubs. The Veldang on the benches look to Sadiya-ma for leadership, and were she to mutiny, would join her; the other slaves might follow her leadership, if pressed. She hopes to persuade Abenna to join them, knowing they will need the helmswoman if they are to return to the Middle World.

She hates Banti Montalk-Owned, even more than Montalk, for his collusion in the oppression of the slaves on the benches.

Sadiya-ma remembers her people's ancient association with the Blue Moon; she whispered words with a priestess of the Seven Mothers in Nchet. If she learns the PCs oppose the rise of the Lunar Empire, she will consider them enemies. This will not stop her conspiring with them to mutiny, but she will turn on them once the ship is in her hands.

#### Oarswoman: Sadiya-ma Montalk-owned ◉■π

**Culture:** Kareeshtu

**Age:** 25

**Keywords:** Sailor

**Magic:** None

**Look:** Blue-skinned, long white hair, muscled figure

## WELCOME ABOARD

Captain Montalk and his crew ready the Darkening-of-the-Skies with efficiency, finishing the stowing of supplies for their journey upriver.

Banti strips those PCs who are assigned to the benches — returning their possessions to the other PCs because they are not “part of the sale.” A local smith fits bronze collars around their necks, with a long chain attached, which is run through a ring in the decking of the ship in front of the PCs oar bench. The redsmith also fits manacles on their wrists and ankles — enough for them to move at a shuffle, or use an oar, but little else.

One of the PCs, preferably the physically weakest should be locked into the benches beside Sadiya-ma. Another, perhaps one who has a hatred of the undead, might be chained next to an undead rower.

Captain Montalk begins to beat his drum as Abenna guides the ship out of port, urging the rowers to begin drawing the ship out of port. Banti cracks his whip, lashing the new recruits once or twice to ‘welcome’ them aboard.

Osirin gives a running commentary to the passengers. “After we leave the port, we’ll head for between the Willows and the Tree Islands, then on the Dragon Islands. The Rice Paddy, where we will leave you so that you can set out for the City that lies beyond that. It will take us about two days to make the journey. After we leave you at the Rice Paddy, we will sail on to Valind’s Ice Palace.”

## SKY RIVER BOATS

The boats of the Sky River have a crescent shaped hull, broad at the beam, tapering to a point forward, which lifts out of the water, and square at the stern. They are flat-bottomed, without a keel. They are made from bundles of reeds, fitted together with doweling rods, and lashed together with rope. There is a decking of wooden planks for the crew, under which the cargo is stored. Some boats have a deckhouse for shelter. Oars propel the boats, using rope instead of a gunwale. A number of the boats also have a square sail, of bright cloth, rigged amidships. A steering oar directs the boat in the current.

The Game Master may want to include a few scenes of life aboard giving the PCs a chance to meet the crew. Some suggestions are:

- One of the PCs chained in the benches notices that a nearby Veldang slave, named Kindu, is sick. Every time he slacks off, Banti beats him, and it soon becomes clear Kindu will die either from fever or a beating. If a PC on the benches tries to intervene, protest, or help Banti whips them.
- Have the PCs on the benches roll to see if they become sick or injured from the demands of rowing. Apply any Consequences of Defeat to further attempts to resist the same contest. On the second failure for any PC, have Sadiya-ma successfully render them first aid — removing up to two levels of adversity. Banti later has her tied to the mast and flogged for her intervention
- The Captain invites the PCs to join him for dinner at his table. Bobber and his crew serve dinner — with course after course washed down with strong beer. The menu is troll-friendly including fried worms, crickets, rhino beetles, silk-worm larvae, scorpions, and weaver ants along with starfish and sea urchins. The PCs may be relieved to find the main course is a stew, until afterwards they discover it is trollkin. Captain Montalk becomes quite offended if the PCs don’t eat.
- Osirin bullies and mocks one of the PCs, perhaps teasing them about former companions who now work the benches, and the likelihood of their becoming undead rowers. If they react, he offers to duel to first blood to decide who apologizes.
- One of the PCs spots Abenna talking to Sadiya-ma. A moment later Banti walks over and a furious row develops. Abenna skulks off, and Sadiya-ma feels Banti’s lash.

## THE TREE

### When is this?

The PCs pass the Tree on *Freezeday, Disorder Week, Earth Season*.

### Ambush at the Willows

The Darkening-of-the-Skies sails northeast from the Great Port across the Sky River. Abenna steers the ship to the north of a group of heavily forested islands in the center of the stream:

"Those are the Erenbaya Islands," she tells the PCs. "The large one is the Tree, but you can see the Fork off to one side, the Branch and Root. It is a dangerous place to dock: the elves say that it is home to four exiles: the traitor, his kin, the patriarch, and the builder. We will give them a wide birth."

As the Darkening steers north of the Erenbaya Islands, the PCs see the northern shore of the Sky River, covered with a dense forest of willows growing along the banks and out into the water. They bend, rustle, and move casting dark shadows on the water.

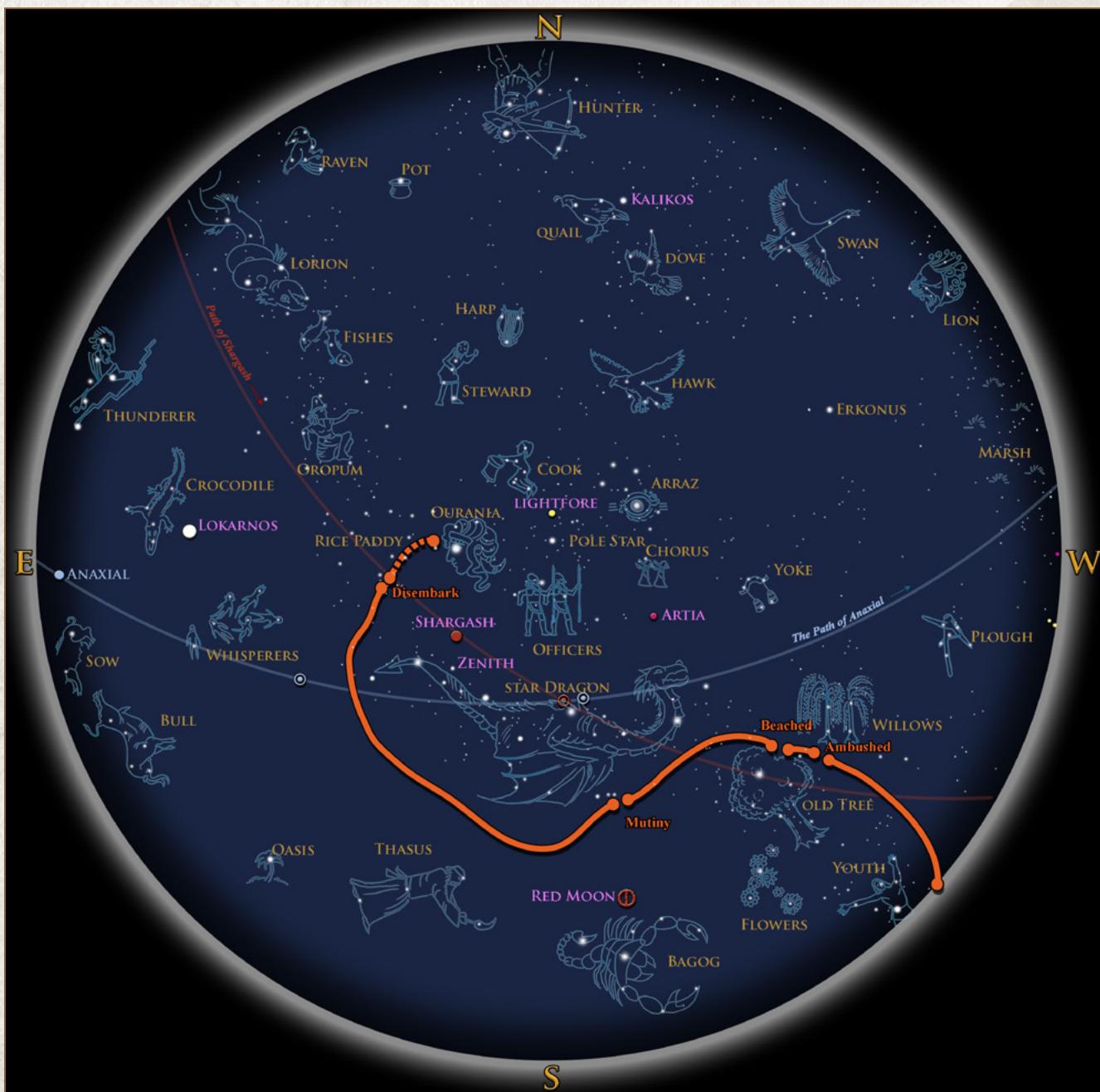
A fiery red dot appears in the sky ahead of them. A loud roaring sound accompanies the passage of the red dot, which grows ever closer. Captain Montalk shouts: "Shargash!" The Orlanthi know that this is another name for Orlanth's enemy: Jagrekriand. The crew musters to defend the ship.

As the fiery red dot draws closer, it is clearly a great chariot, driven by a red-haired god. Flames follow in its wake, and the sound of thunder peels across the sky.

Captain Montalk, Osirin, and Abenna confer; realizing that there is little hope of avoiding a fight. The captain begins to beat his drum and Banti lashes the slaves with his whip, urging them to greater exertion.

As the chariot passes overhead, warriors jump from the chariot and fall to the ship as meteors, crashing onto the deck sending splinters of wood flying in all directions. The deck catches alight.

Have any PCs on the rowing decks contest against a Very High resistance to avoid being burnt. A fire catches amidst the rowing benches — but Banti refuses to let any of the rowers aid the fallen or try to put out the fire, lashing them to keep them rowing at the benches. The PCs watch in horror as some of the rowers, chained



to their benches, burn alive. The mainmast catches alight as do the sails, forming a burning pillar in the heart of the ship.

The meteors shimmer and stand, taking humanoid form. Shargash's warriors are Hell Men, who will try to destroy the ship and kill everyone aboard. The Hell Men are a Very High resistance, though see below. There should be at least one Hell Man for every three PCs. They spit fire at opponents out of range, and grab those close enough, pulling them into their fiery embrace to burn and catch alight.

On a mythology roll against a Very High resistance a PC may be aware of useful facts about the Hell Men: normal weapons cannot harm them, simply melting when they touch their molten bodies but water will damage them.

If a PC is struggling in a contest with a Hell Man, Abenna organizes a bucket-chain and throws seawater over the Hell Men to cool and crack them; this acts as an assist to the PC with a rating of 10*W*.

Treat this as a battle and instead of narrating the whole engagement, just focus on the actions of the PCs. The Darkening-of-the-Skies will win this fight, and whilst a few NPCs amongst the Montalk's pirates die, the named NPCs just suffer a few nicks and cuts.

Banti refuses to free the slaves, but Sadiya-ma will try to inspire them to defend themselves, beating the Hell Men with oars, or strangling them with chains. Osirin will show more respect to any PCs who join and acquit themselves well; treat any Benefits of Victory/Consequences of Defeat as a modifier to interaction with Osirin.

Captain Montalk will extinguish the flames, summoning a blob of darkness he directs about the deck, snuffing out any fires it touches.

#### Beached

Abenna examines the damage to the Darkening-of-the-Skies. She informs everyone the ship needs repairs: the mainmast needs replacing and the damage to the hull repairing. The trees of the willows are unsuitable, but the trees growing on the heavily wooded Erenbaya Islands are suitable. Captain Montalk laughs: "Then tonight, if we are lucky we will dine on elf pulp."

Abenna beaches the Darkening-of-the-Skies on a sandy cove on the largest of the Erenbaya Islands: Tree. Captain Montalk leads the away party; he takes Abenna to help select a suitable tree, and Banti to oversee a group of slaves, Sadiya-ma among them, who will cut the wood. All of the PCs should be included in the expedition. Osirin is left in charge of the ship.

#### Into the Woods

The island is covered in trees inland from the beach; the land climbs steadily away from the beach toward the center of the island as the expedition heads inland.

The forest is mostly evergreens such as fir and cedar, all excellent materials for a mast. However, Abenna is looking for one tall and straight enough. Although the forest is dense the gloom is illuminated by the trees themselves which all glow with a faint white light.

A few of the slaves become spooked, sensing the expedition is being watched. Banti whips them, shouting orders at them to

## HELL MEN

The Hell Men of Alkoth are the souls of the dead, remade by Shargash. These Shadzorings have molten humanoid bodies, the breath of Shargash — the fire of the Underworld, covered in a thin skin of ash and cinder. As they move, their rigid skin cracks and breaks, and flame and heat spill out, before the crack's edges melt and reseal. Their mouths and eyes are open holes into their molten core. They radiate intense heat and anything combustible coming too close to them catches alight.

### Hell Men

**Significant Abilities:** Ash and Cinders

**Exceptional Abilities:** Embrace of Flame, Spit Fire

**Legendary Abilities:** Immunity to Un-enchanted Weapons

**Weaknesses:** Water

**Consciousness:** Sentient

**Relevant Statistics:** 200-300 lbs, 8-10 feet tall

## ORLANTH AND JAGREKRIAND

This encounter is more obviously the fight between Orlanth and Jagrekriand in *How Orlanth Conquered the Stars*. In the night sky at this time, Shargash reaches the Dragon Isles as he moves down the Celestial River. Without knowing why, many of the Cinsina look to the Heavens at this exact time, to see Shargash moving through the constellation of the Star Dragon. After this encounter, anyone opening the box is almost blinded by the bright light from the coals, which glow with a blue-white flame. The box is now uncomfortable to hold and the interior is scorched and charred with heat.

### DERGI FIGHTS ORLANTH

In *How Orlanth Conquered the Stars* the General of Heaven sends Dergi against Orlanth to test him. The PCs may be waiting for this encounter, but Shargash is the only martial obstacle on the river. Missing stations are not uncommon on heroquests.

keep marching. The PCs can make a contest against a moderate resistance to note some ape-like creatures moving through the high branches, following them. If the PCs suggest pursuing or driving off these watchers, Montalk dissuades them: "They are little threat and we will be done soon enough."

Eventually Abenna selects a cedar tree and Banti hands a couple of axes to slaves and tells them to begin chopping. When they tire, he rotates more slaves into the line. The tree is soon

felled and crashes to the forest floor. There are cries of alarm in the forest, and birds shoot up into the air; everyone becomes nervous. Montalk tells everyone to remain alert.

Banti then hands out small hand axes and has the slaves strip the branches and foliage from the tree. With that done, he has them attach chains to the log, and begin dragging it back.

The expedition is about halfway to the ship when the ambush happens. A tall figure, 8' or 9' in height, steps onto the trail ahead of them; the figure has pale silvery skin, and green pine needles for hair. He wears scale armor made from silver bark and carries a bow in his hand. A copper axe is fixed in the ground before him. He bellows: "I am Velas Traitor's Kin, guardian of this forest. You have stolen from my forest, and you must pay for the life you have taken."

There are a number of choices:

- **Fight!** Velas draws his bow and begins shooting arrows at the expedition; a slave falls with an arrow through this throat. At that moment, the trees explode with runners — ape-like creatures — covered in pine needles instead of fur. They burst from the canopy throwing sticks and stones. Velas Traitor's Kin is a Nearly Impossible resistance in a fight. He begins any contest with his bow, but then switches to his axe. Remember that Captain Montalk Banti, and Abenna are here and simply describe them as engaged in combat with Velas. Give Velas a Multiple Opponent Penalty of -9 against the first PC reflecting his duel with them, increasing by -3 for each PC in turn.
- **Negotiate:** The PCs might try to negotiate: what would Velas take in compensation for the wrong done to him, after all that is the Orlanthi way! Velas will negotiate, but money or jewels hold little interest to him. Magic or perhaps slaves to toil in his forest provide much better alternatives. Velas may take a fancy to the coals of one of the Corpse Stars the PCs carry and offer to trade the new mast for one of them. Decide on the resistance from the value of whatever the PCs offer.

## WHITE ELVES

The White Elves were the first children of Flamal, and were related to the trees growing on the slopes of the Spike in the God Time, shining with their own inner light. As Flamal's children spread over the world, the lesser green trees we know today evolved. With the destruction of the Spike, most of the celestial trees were destroyed and, along with the forests, the white elves. Only one pocket now remains, the Erenbaya Islands of the Celestial River. Only four White Elves found refuge there: the traitor, his kin, the builder, and the patriarch.

If the PCs can overcome Velas, they can return to the ship with the new mast, if not they must abandon it in the woods.

Either way, Montalk, Abenna, Sadiya-ma, and Banti should survive the encounter, but many slaves may die.

• **Flee:** The PCs can decide simply to run; the last thing they see is Montalk, Banti, and Abenna fighting with Velas. Runners boil from the forest in every direction, hurling sticks and stones from the trees; the vegetation itself tries to stop them with vines whipping around their legs and arms. Treat escape as an Extended Contest — Defeat indicates injury while trying to flee.

On returning to the ship, Captain Montalk and Abenna order that the ship cast off, fearing further attack. Even if they have the mast, there is no time to affix it. Instead the Darkening-of-the-Skies heads for the Dragon Isles under the power of its oars.

If any slave PCs fled, Montalk orders Banti to whip them. He makes an example of them, whipping them in front of the crew and other slaves. "So we punish all those who betray us," Captain Montalk says. If any PCs flee who are not slaves, then Osirin mocks them as cowards.

## THE DRAGON ISLES

### *When is this?*

The PCs pass the Dragon Isles on *Waterday, Disorder Week, Earth Season*.

### *The Isles*

The Dragon Islands are obviously part of a huge dragon carcass — massive chunks of flesh and bone. The proportions are terrifying; one of the claw islands is as big as Isle Dangerous. There is a clear torso, chopped from the head and gut, its wings still bloody; it is the size of Darsh Peak in the Quivin Mountains. The islands are coated in gore, and stink with the rot of eternity.

### *Harsh Discipline!*

As the Darkening-of-the-Skies rows downriver Banti drives the rowers on the benches hard; there are gaps now on the benches from the encounter with Shargash the Sun-Chaser and Velas.

Sadiya-ma is absent and unable to champion the slaves' cause; Captain Montalk has summoned her to his quarters for entertainment. There he clothes her in silks and bells and has her dance at the end of her chain for the crew and his guests; everyone can see the hate in her eyes.

In her absence, when a slave collapses from exhaustion — perhaps on the bench of one of the PCs — Banti flies into a rage. Taking his yatagan, he spills the exhausted slave's entrails onto the decking. The slave dies in agony, still fettered on the bench.

## ORLANTH AND ARTIA

The encounter at the Tree substitutes for Orlanth's encounter with Artia the Bat in *How Orlanth Conquered the Stars*. Again, once the PCs escape from the Island, the coals grow hotter, and shine more brightly. The coals are too hot to touch now, and the box becomes uncomfortable to carry unless heavily wrapped in cloth. Opening the lid produces a blinding light.

That night, after Sadiya-ma has been returned to the benches Captain Montalk appears. He sews up the slave's entrails and mouth with gut and a bone needle. Then he calls upon his god Zorak Zoran. Darkness shrouds him and the slave like a cloak; when it clears, the slave sits upright at the benches, ready to serve his captain again, as an undead.

The PCs hear Sadiya-ma pass word along the benches: "When we beach to repair the ship — mutiny!" The PCs among the slaves may keep the information to themselves, or pass it on to the crew. If the PCs pass the information on, then Captain Montalk maroons Sadiya-ma for plotting mutiny, and frees the PCs. The PCs avoid the later mutiny scene, but Game Masters should have Sadiya-ma escape exile and return to have her revenge later.

## MUTINY

The Darkening-of-the-Skies was badly damaged by its encounters with the defenders of Heaven, and Abenna tells Montalk he must put in at one of the Spine Isles. Montalk is reluctant, like many of the crew, finding the Dragon Isles unsettling, but with much of his ship damaged by fire, he has little choice.

The Spine Isles are bleak points of rock rising out of the water, but Abenna finds a sandy beach where three or four of the spine plates have formed one island and beaches the ship. The crew disembarks and camps in tents along the beach. Banti organizes the slaves into work parties to repair the ship and fit the new mast. Banti should pick from amongst the enslaved PCs to form the work party assigned to preparing the mast. They are chained in a pair, and given hand axes, then told to strip the timber back, and carve it into a mast. Abenna supervises the work, whilst Banti wields his whip if any balk at the task.

Meanwhile Captain Montalk and the crew set up awnings over the main deck for shade, and prepare a feast.

Sadiya-ma approaches the slave PCs on the work gang, bringing them water in a bucket to drink. While she holds out a ladle full of water for them to drink she whispers: "You have weapons. Kill Banti now! I will try to persuade Abenna to join us, if not, I will kill her myself." She then moves amongst other members of the work gang, offering the same advice.

The PCs have but a moment to warn Banti and Abenna if they chose to do so, otherwise the slaves attack. If the PCs alert Banti, he quickly raises the alarm, bringing Captain Montalk and the crew from the ship to face the mutineers. The PCs may have to fight a round or two with vengeful slaves at Banti's side, before help arrives.

If the PC slaves join the mutiny, have them face Banti; penalize them with a -6 Situational Modifier for being chained together and having only tools for weapons, but give Banti a -3 modifier against the second of the PCs as a Multiple Opponent Penalty.

Sadiya-ma persuades Abenna to join the mutineers. She draws her knives and joins Sadiya-ma in the fight for the Darkening-of-the-Skies.

Noise of the battle reaches Captain Montalk and the crew on deck. Montalk cries out: "Those ungrateful dogs, we'll cut them all down. They will row better as undead corpses anyway." The crew grabs their weapons, just as the first of the slaves clammers aboard the ship.

The mutiny descends into a melee on the beach or aboard the ship. Captain Montalk will issue orders to take Abenna alive: he needs the Opener when he returns to the Middle World.

Depending on which side the PCs choose, decide which opponents they face — some should certainly fight with the leaders on either side, others may just face nameless, faceless crewmen or slaves. If the PCs join the mutiny, try to match the PCs up with a member of the crew that they may have had a confrontation with.

Determine the results of the overall contest from the PCs' results — if the PCs win, their side wins, if the PCs lose, their side loses.

If PCs are on the losing side the winners will maroon any survivors here on the Dragon Isles and sail away. If the PCs are on the winning side, their voyage can continue.

If the winners maroon the PCs, it is up to the Game Master to adjudicate attempts to escape from the Dragon Isles. The islands are bleak, and have no trees from which to make a boat. Likely strategies involve lighting signal fires and begging passage from a passing Luxite ship, or overpowering its crew.

Either way it is likely they will be here some time and will not make the dates outlined below. They might return to find that spring has come to Dragon Pass again. Many people may see the Three New Stars as less important to the liberation from the Great Winter, than if they had returned at the same time as High King Broyan's triumph.

## THE RICE PADDIES

The Darkening-of-the-Skies drops its passengers off on the north bank of the river. The PCs can see the endless rice paddies stretching out before them. The paddies are flooded, and the green shoots of rice plants can be seen growing in them. Scattered villages abound, where Luxite peasants and their water buffalo tend the fields. In the distance, to the north, the PCs can see an immense city, dominated by tall ziggurats rising up at its center (see below).

The peasants here are nervous and avoid strangers. If the PCs do try to interact with the people, a village headman typically speaks to them. He tells them go to the city, where outsiders are welcome. "I am sorry for our lack of hospitality, however the people are afraid they will become polluted by contact with you."

## THE CITY

### *When is this?*

The PCs enter the City on *Clayday, Disorder Week, Earth Season*. As the PCs enter the City, unbeknownst to them High King Broyan confronts General Tashkeveth at the Battle of the Auroch Hills. If the PCs succeed, it may be that their actions played some part in liberating Orlanth for the New Breathers there. In the night sky, Orlanth's Ring would normally be entering the City.

### *The Celestial City*

The Resurrection Thrones lie in the City. The City is the central region of the Sky, home to the Great Houses and officers of the leaders of the Celestial Realm, who serve the Emperor Yelm.

Dominating the center of the City, three tall ziggurats loom high above the other buildings and walls. These three stepped

## CERTAMI

The certami are winged warriors who serve Arraz, King of the Sky People. They appear as incredibly handsome human men with long golden hair and glittering, multicolored wings. Armed with splendid glittering swords and spears, magnificent enchanted golden hoplite armor covers much of their bodies save for their wings and heads.

The certami are as old as the Sky, but were not apparent until needed. They sprang up to defend Dayzatar when Heaven was invaded, and have never failed in their duties. As common soldiers for the angelic host, they are low in the celestial hierarchy, but display a fanatical devotion to the gods they serve and protect. They show an appropriately Dara Happan sense of morality and justice, and know they are far superior to mortals.

### Certami

**Significant Abilities:** Dara Happan Ethics, Fly, Handsome, Proud, Tall, Tough

**Exceptional Abilities:** Embrace of Flame, Spit Fire

**Consciousness:** Sentient

**Relevant Statistics:** 175-200 lbs, 7-9' tall

ziggurats are the stars of Arraz (the King of the Sky People), Ourania (sister of Polaris), and Polaris (the General of the Sky). Atop each ziggurat is a gilded throne, and the god is enthroned there. The gods are too blindingly bright to look upon, and anyone who tries for too long risks going blind. Walls surround each of the ziggurats. From a distance the melodious hymns sung by the Celestial Choir can be heard, beyond the understanding of mortals but of marvelous beauty and harmony.

The City is walled and guarded and accessed only by gates. The walls within the city are made from white stone fitted together perfectly. The walls shine brightly in Dayzatar's light, and the PCs will find themselves squinting against the brightness.

To the south of the city lie huge rice paddies, along the flood plains of Lorion the Sky River. People toil in these paddies growing food for the people of the Sky World.

Distinct areas of the City are constellations in the Sky:

- **The Chorus:** Home to the priesthood of the Celestial Choir. These are vast temple complexes with towering pillars and statues.
- **The Officers:** The homes of the officers of General Polaris' armies. These are the wealthy households of the nobility amongst the Luxites.
- **The Steward:** The administrators of the great households and the Emperor's Court. These are modest townhouses where the bureaucrats, scribes, craft masters, and administrators of the great households live.
- **The Cook:** The servants of the great households. Many of the people here live in tenements. These are the poorer Luxites.

## THE KING AND QUEEN

### ARRAZ

Arraz is the King of the Sky People and governs the great Celestial City.

### OURANIA

Ourania is the Queen of Heaven. From the fiery tears of her left eye came a goddess, named Supla, who bears up all prayers, which are sent to the Queen of Heaven, requiring no sacrifice save the tears of your suffering. From her right eye came Musa, the goddess who bears the light of her wisdom directly to the minds of Inspired women and men. Ourania is the Chief of the Celestial Choir who sing the praises of Lord Dayzatar.

### Aliens

The residents of the City ignore the PCs' arrival at first — they are beneath notice as the citizens go about their day-to-day business.

That swiftly changes if the PCs cause any disruption to the smooth running of the City — the citizens will recoil from them in increasing alarm. If the PCs do not leave quickly, first a crowd, and then a mob of citizens coalesces to confront them.

"You are not from here are you? Which district do you come from? Is King Arraz aware you are here? Go away, you are polluting this place," shouts the mob.

As the commotion intensifies, the certami arrive, determined to keep the peace and restore the orderly functioning of King Arraz's city. They listen to the mob, and, concerned the PCs are aliens in the City and contaminating it with their profane presence, drive them out.

If the PCs try to avoid disrupting the flow of the City they might get quite close to Pole Star's Fort before people begin to notice them. This plays out pretty much the same way, as one or two people gather at first to question them, followed by more and more people until their way is blocked and the certami come.

This scene should turn into the PCs having to push their way through the teeming masses to reach Pole Star's Fort.

### The Gate

Pole Star's grand ziggurat lies at the center of the City behind its own high walls. Only one entrance permits entry: the Pole Star Gate. Polaris has entrusted Silonia, Mistress of the Dance, with guardianship of the gate. She is under strict instructions not to allow anyone to enter Polaris' Court, and would forbid entry to the PCs unless the one representing Orlanth agrees to join Pole Star's dance.

Pole Star is the General of Heaven, which move to his strict choreography. To agree to join his dance is to agree to the fixed shape of the Heavens; this would be a mistake for the PCs as agreement means that the PC taking the role of Orlanth cannot petition Polaris to allow the Corpse Stars to join the Heavenly dance. A kind Game Master may allow players who forget this advice from Minaryth to roll against their divine rune affinity with a resistance of High, to remember this.

If the PC refuses Silonia, he must, as Orlanth, dance a new dance. Ask the PC how their dance reflects their desire to include the Corpse Stars in the sky. It might be a war dance — to indicate the Orlanthi need to march to war against the Red Moon, but it might equally be a dance of the fertile rain to bring new life into the Sky World. If a player provides a particularly poetic description, reward them with a situational bonus of +6.

If the PCs fail to persuade Silonia to allow them access, their only hope lies with breaking into Polaris' citadel. High walls surround Polaris' citadel, and his Star Captains patrol the battlements. The Star Captains are Polaris' household troops, drawn from the best fighters and greatest adventurers in the Sky World — they killed so many of Engizi's followers when he invaded the Sky it turned blue with their spilt blood, and they descended like flaming meteors to protect the last people in the Great Darkness. They wear bronze armor composed of a chest plate, abdominal bands, and shoulder protection. They carry bright, bronze-coated round shields, and carry heavy spears for throwing and fighting. They are a Very High resistance, if the PC can make it over the wall, which is a Nearly Impossible resistance.

Failure here means the PCs cannot complete the heroquest and must return to the Middle World.

### Orlanth and Silonia

The Mistress of the Dance will try to prevent the PCs from reaching the inner city, just as she tried to prevent the intrusion of Orlanth. She knows the PCs seek to change the order of the Heavens and tries to trick them into consenting to the existing order — only by proposing a new one, can the PCs, like Orlanth, proceed.

### The Gap

When the Spike exploded (the Luxites call it the World Pillar) it left a great hole in the Sky. Polaris built a wall around it.

### The Ziggurat

If the PCs enter Pole Star's Fort, he descends from the top of the ziggurat and introduces himself as Rigsdal. He shows the PCs to three gilded thrones, which lie on one of the lower levels of the five-tiered ziggurat below his own throne and guard post. A crowd has gathered at the foot of the ziggurat, teeming masses of the Sky World come to witness and perhaps oppose this event.

“These are the Resurrection Thrones, and if it is your desire to see these stars take their place in the great dance of the sky, place their tokens upon them.” If the PCs place the tokens on the thrones, ghostly images of the gods hover in the thrones.

Rigsdal steps forward and asks: “If any among you object to these gods being returned to their place in the Sky, speak now, or forever hold your peace.”

A number of figures step forward from the crowd, hefting weapons. “Very well then,” says Rigsdal turning to the PCs. “By Trial of Combat you must prove the right of these stars to ascend into the Heavens once again, and defeat those who would keep them out.”

The PCs’ opponents, the Keepers, depend upon the Corpse Stars they chose — these opponents are those who have the most to lose from their return. The Corpse Stars enemies fight the PCs

together in a general melee. There will be at least one opponent for each Corpse Star, but double up on opponents if you have more than three PCs.

All of the Keepers are at a Very High resistance.

⑥ **Varnaval the Shepherd King:** The Dara Happans seek to oppose Varnaval, because the Ram People were an important enemy in the Gods War who threatened Dara Happa. The Ram People sacked the Dara Happan city of Elempur but were defeated by the Emperor Urvairinus. These Dara Happans wear full hoplite armor, and carry large round shields and long spears. If there is more than one of them, they fight together.

✗ **Siwend the Hunter:** The Narangrosings will oppose another hunter, especially one who took part in the Plundering of Aron being added to the sky. These are Telmori heroquesters, drawn into conflict with their enemy the Red Cow (see the notes in the Nightwood scene on page 243).

✗ **Korolful the Keen:** His opponents are the Red Cow’s ancestral enemy, the ogres. The PCs may not realize that these strong, tall, handsome opponents, wearing scale mail and carrying swords are anything other than some unknown tribe. However, if one of the PCs suffers a significant Defeat, his opponent will use a parting slash to try to cut and eat part of them. On a Complete Defeat, an ogre may fall on his victim, tearing off chunks of flesh with his teeth.

□ **Baroshi, the Avenger:** Baroshi’s opponents are scorpion men (see *Sartar Companion* page 137), who resist his anti-Chaos powers being added to Orlanth’s Ring. Even the other opponents may be angered by their presence in the group opposing the entry of the Corpse Stars into the Sky and will not team up with them.

○ **Saren, Elmal’s Charioteer:** The trolls, or Uz, oppose the entry of Saren into the Sky. These are big troll warriors with lead armor and heavy leaden mauls. They wear darkness as a cloak around them. They are bigger than the trolls the PCs will have seen commonly.

☰ **Oonil the Skillful:** The Vadrudi, the sons of Vadrus such as Gagarth, Ygg, and Valind, oppose Oonil. These are barbarian warriors, clad in bronze chain mail and carrying barbed iron spears. They oppose the rise of civilization amongst the Storm Tribe for its weakening influence. They are cruel, and always try to injure victims further with a parting blow.

✗ **Tanian, the Fiery Waters:** The Waertagi are a blue- and green skinned humanoid race, known to dwell in huge ships made from the bodies of mile-long sea dragons. These ships were small cities, floating ports, each with its fleet of smaller ships and related tribes of merfolk and undines. The God Learners, who harnessed Tanian’s magic to send great firebergs against them, drove the dragonships from the oceans in the Second Age. For this reason they resist his re-admittance to the sky.

If the PCs manage to Defeat the Keepers, Rigsdal tells them: “You have defeated the Keepers in Trial by Combat; none now have a claim to prevent these stars returning to the Sky. I recognize that Orlanth and his kin have the right to a place in the Heavens, after all, is not Orlanth King of the Gods? Place the coals bearing the spark of their life upon the Resurrection Thrones, so that the Sky might be healed.”

## ORLANTH AND POLE STAR

Orlanth persuaded the Heavens to dance to his tune and rhythm. Like Orlanth, the PCs must persuade the Heavens to take on the shape they desire. This is a major event, for the PCs will make a change to Glorantha and so shape the Fourth Age to come when the Third Age has ended in the Hero Wars.

The Dara Happans know the unmoving star at the center of the heavens as Pole Star; the Orlanthi know the star as Rigsdal. Both are aspects of the same celestial body. Here we use Rigsdal to refer to the star when it 'dances to Orlanth's lilt and tune.'

If the PCs fail then Rigsdal says: "The consequences of disturbing the pattern of the dance are always great, in this case too great. I am sorry, but I will not return these gods to the Sky World."

### Starfall

However the quest ended, the PCs return to the Middle World from here, finding themselves falling back toward the Middle World. At first, they see a square shape, floating in a sea of blue. It grows larger and larger until they can make out the green and brown of Genertela and Pamaltela; a little later, they see the Jrusteli Islands too. They dive toward the northern continent, the Rockwood Mountains becoming more distinct as they fall, and then Dragon Pass. Finally, they see the Quivin Mountains and Larnste's Table, where they land.

Outsiders see meteors falling towards Larnste's Table where they land with a boom, knocking people nearby to the ground.

The PCs find themselves lying or kneeling in small impact craters on the surface of Larnste's Table. The ground around them has fused into glass with the heat of their passage.

Farandar and Kullina have waited for their return.

## AFTERMATH

### *When is This?*

If the PCs succeeded, then when Windsday begins at dusk, everyone looks up to the sky and sees three new stars in the sky, where Orlanth's Ring should be. Those PCs who are initiates of Orlanth realize they have magic when they see the New Lights (as everyone starts calling them) at the Pole of the Sky World. The stars vanish that night though, as Orlanth's Ring would when it begins its journey through the Underworld. The appearance of these new stars is noticed across the world, and many people wonder what this could mean.

The contest results should be used to bolster the Red Cow's Magic Resource.

Word filters through about the Battle of the Auroch Hills over the next few days. People may even meet the New Breathers when they come north with the message of High King Broyan's victory. The New Breathers are surprised the PCs can do magic, and were not with them on 'Brastalos Day' but listen to their tales of the Sky World.

One week later, on *Windsday of Harmony Week in Earth Season* the PCs all experience the same dream: they are conducting the Three Star Rites for all their kin, and sacrificing to the new stars. If they tell the priests, chieftain, or ring, they will ask them to repeat



*A sixth of the clan dies during the Windstop and its aftermath.*

# THE THREE NEW STARS

## WHAT HAPPENS IF WE GET LESS THAN THREE STARS?

If the PCs resurrect less than three Corpse Stars, the effect of their magic is lessened. If they bring back two stars then Orlanthi magic has a -3 Situational Modifier when used; if they bring back one star then Orlanthi magic has a -6 penalty.

## AROUND THE WORLD

This event is visible around the world.

During the events of *Orlanth is Dead*, those Orlanthi outside the area of effect of the New Lunar Temple, living in locations such as Ralios and Umathela keep their magic. However, they are aware of the changes in the Sky. Across Glorantha, Orlanth's Ring no longer traverses the Heavens.

From each of these lands heroquesters set off to the sky to return Orlanth's Ring to its rightful place. Heroes from those lands, such as Garundyer in Ralios, each work to return the stars to the Sky and have their own story of how they obtained the Three New Stars.

their dreams. They check and confirm details and tell the PCs: "We must gather the clan and you must perform these rites."

The clan hastily gathers and sacrifices to the new stars. Ashart tells the PCs one of them must become a priest and lead the rites, because they have no magic from Orlanth. The other PCs become god-talkers.

That night, *Fireday, Harmony Week, Earth Season*, the new stars appear again and follow the path Orlanth's Ring would

This is normal. In Glorantha great events are often the result of many heroquesters journeying to the Other Side.

## FREEING ORLANTH

The Three New Stars are just one solution to 'freeing Orlanth.' For another example, the New Breathers at the Battle of the Auroch Hills exploit the Still Day of Brastalos.

None of these release Orlanth, but parts of him leak out of his prison.

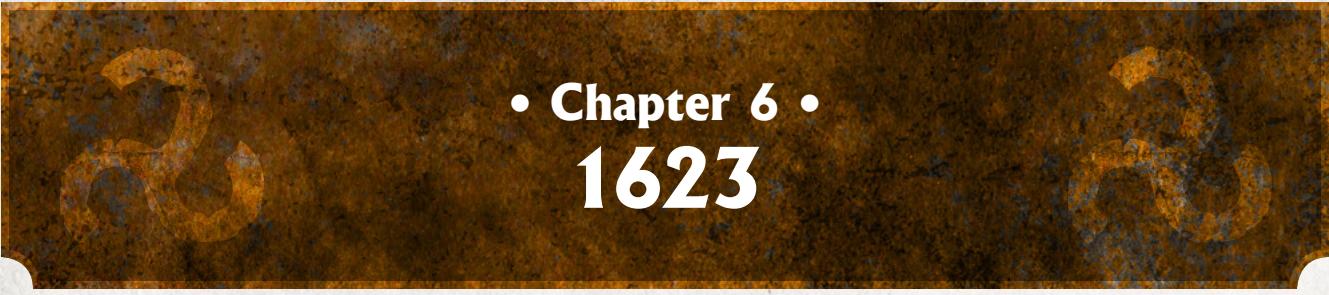
Orlanth holds the Movement Rune and is the inheritor of Larnste the Unfettered One — escaping bonds is what he does. Imagine a bag filled with air and then squeezed tight; air leaks out of the weak points such as the seams. The PCs of the Three New Stars and the New Breathers are weakening those seams of Tatius' prison, and the air is leaking out.

At the Battle of Pennel, the bag is ripped open, and all the remaining air bursts out.

Afterwards, Orlanth's Ring returns to the Sky World. Now the ring has ten orange stars and one green star. People call the ring the Eleven Lights now.

take. Across the world stargazers note that the Three New Stars traveling where Orlanth's Ring once went and wonder at the struggle in the Heavens. Surely a portent of the Hero Wars.

The clan sacrifices a red cow, a white cow, and black cow. The participants feel a connection, not to Orlanth, but to the Three New Stars, and realize they can do magic through them. Afterwards all the Orlanth initiates in the clan who participate have magic again.



# • Chapter 6 •

# 1623

## CONFLICTS

### THE RISE OF THE CULBREA

The Culbrea tribe has rebelled. Their king, Ranulf Stand-Tall, has raised his banner, and led his tribe to the Battle of the Auroch Hills. The Culbrea refuse to pay taxes to the Empire, and kill the tax collectors. They expel or murder the missionaries, and mercilessly outlaw Lunar sympathizers. Kallyr Starbrow and her household base themselves in Lorthing Vale at the king's hall in Fox Hollow. Venharl Stormbrow and Orstalor Spearlord are frequent visitors.

Jomes can do little. With so many troops lost at the Battle of the Auroch Hills, protecting Tatius' new Reaching Moon Temple, or fighting in Esrolia, he needs what he has to hold the cities, towns, and roads. Lorthing Vale becomes 'bandit country' and apart from brave or foolish vexillae, the Lunars no longer enter it. Tatius does not care; once his temple is complete, the rebellious tribe can be annihilated.

Ranulf is anxious that the Culbrea are once again the most important tribe in the Jonstown Confederation. The Cinsina oppose that; they have become the strongest since three Culbrea clans joined them, and Queen Ivartha wants to hold onto their allegiance. The Culbrea demand the lost clans are returned to them from the Cinsina: Greenhaft, Blueberry, and Goodhaven, but Queen Ivartha stands firm. Whilst she has no love for the Empire, she also has no desire for her clans to be under the Culbrea yoke instead.

#### KING OF THE CULBREA: RANULF STAND-TALL 62W

A member of Hofstaring Treeleaper's household, Ranulf betrayed his king during Starbrow's Rebellion. He fled the Lunar Army besieging Larnste's Table instead of standing at Hofstaring's side. The Empire, believing him a simple farmer and coward, elevated him to the tribal kingship as a puppet ruler.

People called him Ranulf Turn-Tail after that. To many it seemed he was just another Orlanthi leader who had taken the safe option of collaborating with the Empire, and raising his crops and cattle.

King Ranulf never forgot his failure at Larnste's Table. He took heart that Orlanth had taken responsibility for his errors and corrected them. In 1622, when Lunar forces gathered, he raised the Windstorm Banner, expelled the Empire's soldiers and missionaries from Lorthing Vale, and marched to help High King Broyan.

People called him Ranulf Stand-Tall after that. His feats on the battlefield that day earned him a reputation of merciless

thoroughness. Known for his farmyard sayings, Ranulf has taken to saying: "For the field to thrive, evil weed must be torn out by the roots."

#### King of The Culbrea: Ranulf Stand-Tall 62W

**Tribe:** Culbrea

**Faction:** Free Sartar

**Age:** 45

**Keywords:** King

**Magic:** Initiate of Orlanth — Barntar and Rigsdal sub-cults 6

**Look:** Short-beard with a long mustache, long graying hair braided down his back, fond of farmyard analogies

### THE RETURN OF FINDAR LONGSWORD

With the Rising of the Culbrea, Findar Longsword returns to the Two-Pine clan. Findar is the clan's most famous chieftain of recent years, who regularly took tribute from the Red Cow and Blueberry. Accompanying him is the Black Hill Band, thanes who accompanied Findar into exile and form the core of the revitalized Two-Pine warband.

Findar is keen to lead the Two-Pine to war and challenge Kulbrast for leadership of the clan.

#### TWO-PINE REBEL: FINDAR LONGSWORD 6T

Findar Longsword is a renowned rebel. For years his Black Hill Band has harried the Lunar supply lines between Alda-Chur and Jonstown — he has gained plunder from those raids, but turned it all over to the poor downtrodden farmers of occupied Sartar. His exploits are notorious and he has even fought running battles with the authorities on the streets of Jonstown. As a result, few clanfolk would give him up; when he was finally caught in 1620 it was by betrayal from within his own camp. Even then he escaped to fight again.

A Wind Lord of Orlanth, Findar epitomizes the womanizing, daredevil, adventurous hero, just one step ahead of angry husbands and the authorities. He is charismatic and generous, and men flock to his hall to serve him, even if that 'hall' is a tent in the hills, on the run from the Empire.

With the Rise of the Culbrea, Findar is determined to return his clan to its rightful place as the Spear of the Culbrea. To do that he needs to teach the Cinsina their place, and make the 'lost' clans feel the error of seeking protection from Queen



From left to right: Ranulf Stand-Tall, Findar Longsword

Ivartha instead of King Ranulf. He intends to do that by taking the Seven Tributes once again.

#### Two-Pine Rebel: Findar Longsword G+I

**Tribe:** Culbrea

**Faction:** Free Sartar

**Age:** 51

**Keywords:** Rebel

**Magic:** Initiate of Orlanth 2

**Look:** Trimmed white hair and beard, handsome, orange eyes

### THE SILENT WIND RETURNS

With the Rising of the Culbrea, Orngerin challenges Jost Bronze-Side for the leadership of the Greenhaft. His message is “overthrow Jost Bronze-Side and return the clan to the Culbrea.” Queen Ivartha considers him a thorn in her side — if the Greenhaft secede, other former Culbrea clans might too, weakening the tribe.

We leave the outcome of this to the Game Master to decide, and to involve the PCs in as she sees fit.

### BLOODY SWORDS AND RED COW TRIBUTE

The Culbrea demand the Red Cow Tribute, but the Red Cow clan refuses to pay, threatening war. When the Red Cow refuses to pay tribute to the men of Lorthing Vale, Ranulf will unleash the Two-Pine, ‘to take what the Red Cow owe.’

The Two-Pine clan needs to complete bloody rituals to fuel their war magic. They begin their Bloody Sword Tribute raids as part of the rituals sacrificing swords wrested from the corpses of their former owners.

King Ranulf accepts this escalation saying: “Every garden needs its weeds pulled once in a while.” The result is almost certainly a bloody feud will begin between the Red Cow and Two-Pine. With King Ranulf backing the Two-Pine and demanding tribute from the ‘lost’ clans, Queen Ivartha becomes involved too, which threatens to spread the conflict until the Culbrea and Cinsina are engulfed in a life and death struggle.

Jomes is not able to intervene to prevent two tribes going to war. With the Culbrea occupied fighting their northern neighbors he has one less enemy to deal with.

Lunar military strength has been severely reduced following the Battle of the Auroch Hills. Tatus the Bright has pulled many of the surviving troops south to his Reaching Moon Temple site, to form a protective cordon. The regiments stationed in Sartarite cities and forts are at half-strength at best, and in some cases no longer effective.

Within this campaign, halve the number of Mirinite Swords and Doblain Dogeaters stationed in Red Cow Fort and Dangerford. Following losses at the Battle of the Auroch Hills, the Arrowstone Cavalry are not an effective fighting force in Sartar in 1623 and 1624.

Jomes sends Sureela Far-Traveled to stir up trouble between the two tribes, pretending to be both a Cinsina and Culbrea killer at times as she stokes the feud. Ingkot Sharp-Eyes is Jomes’ eyes and ears within the Red Cow, stirring up lies of atrocities committed by the Culbrea.

The Red Cow might be able to obtain aid from the Moon Dogs through Jomes, to hunt and kill Culbrea leaders, but for many this could be a step too far.

Kallyr Starbrow could negotiate a peace, but Queen Ivartha will not countenance recognizing her authority by asking her. The PCs, as the Three New Stars band, do have contact with her. If Orlmar the Charioteer accompanied the PCs on the *Three*

*New Stars* heroquest, they may be able to use that contact to open negotiations with the Two-Pine clan.

We do not provide specific episodes for use with the feud with the Culbrea, but the Game Master should see the *Cattle Raid*, *Feud*, *War*, and *Peace Weaving* episodes for ideas on how to run the conflict. (As an example for more ambitious Game Masters, in one play-test, the players chose to assist Orstalor Ironplow and Malan Hardbargain in healing Death Hollow, to bring peace with the Two-Pine clan.)

Of all the Rivals (see page XX), Kangharl Black-Brow stands to gain the most from the conflict with the Two-Pine clan as it plays to his agenda of a strong Red Cow not living in fear of its neighbors. He will exploit that.

### TINKER, SPY: INGKOT SHARP-EYES ●○●

Ingkot the Tinker and his beloved mule, Mara (short for Maran Gor on account of her stubbornness) are a common sight in the lands along the Creek. An itinerant merchant, a northerner perhaps by his accent, Ingkot seems little harm to anyone. He trades in old pots, pans, and household tools. He mends the broken ones, knowing enough smith-craft to beat out dents, sharpen edges, or melt and mold old into new.

A drunk, who likes strong cider and un-watered wine, he is not particularly good at his job, but he will work for food and somewhere to sleep. People welcome him despite his faults because the children enjoy his stories.

Ingkot is a master of storytelling, knowing just how to make children laugh or cower in fear, and adults ponder. He can take on parts, changing his appearance with tricks of costume and voice and a little conjuring.

Ingkot's reputation has earned him a place at the halls of thanes and chieftains, guild masters, and elders. This is very useful to Ingkot, because he is a spy for Jomes. The gossip, tittle-tattle, scuttlebutt, and rumor he collects all feed his paymaster's picture of events.

Ingkot has plied his trade among the clans of the Creek so long he does not remember his former identity, save that he once attended the Lunar College of Magic, and still knows some devastating spells to burn and maim enemies. His only friend is Dushi the Patient, a Jonstown whore, whom he loves, but uses for the information she pumps from her customers.

He communicates with Jomes by the Twin Ruby. This paired magical crystal, the blood of some dead god, allows communication, whatever the distance between the two holders. Ingkot wears one half as a pendant beneath his rags; Jomes wears the other half as a ring.

#### Tinker, Spy: Ingkot Sharp-Eyes ●○●

**Faction:** Lunar Empire

**Age:** 48

**Keywords:** Spy

**Magic:** Mage of the Lunar College of Magic ●

**Look:** Blue eyes, smells bad, unkempt gray hair and beard

### DOLUTHA EXILES

Following the Great Winter, Broddi welcomes a number of Dolutha exiles into the Red Cow including Twisted Morganeth, Korolfin Longeye, and Inganna Koscheisdottir. Over the year more and more Dolutha exiles drift into the clan and this will cause trouble in the future as they agitate for Red Cow aid in expelling Ivar. Broddi resists calls to help them. He points out that the Red Cow has enough trouble with a resurgent Culbrea. Farandar Orendalsson, spurred by Orlamkt Nine-Winds and Morgan Sword-Tongue, begins agitating with the Dolutha to try and raise his profile as an alternative to Broddi.

### BRANGBANE, KING OF THE GHOULS

The numbers of ghouls in the Woods of the Dead swelled during the Great Winter and now they must range further afield in search of fresh 'livestock' to support their growing numbers. See *Into the Woods of the Dead*.

### GO YOUR OWN WAY

At this point the Game Master may find their campaign begins to diverge from events outlined in the year-by-year campaign here. This is to be expected, especially as the PCs are empowered by the Three New Stars. Do not fight these changes; embrace them, for the players are making the game their own. In one play-test, for example, the PCs persuaded the Cinsina Ring to declare independence, just as the Culbrea had done, and expel the Lunar missionaries and garrisons from Cinsina lands. The consequences, the breakup of Red Cow and Dolutha leadership and Jomes' impotence to respond with military force took the story in a new direction.

## THE RING

Unless a PC is obviously ready for the role, then Broddi replaces **Farandar Orendalsson** as Barntar on the ring with **Jarkorl Snow-Whiskers** in return for his support. Broddi cites Farandar abandoning the clan to fight with Broyan at the Battle of the Auroch Hills in his reasoning. If a PC could take this role, remember Broddi will be looking for loyalty to his chieftaincy and his isolationist agenda.

Farandar is outraged; prompted by Kullina the Fat he begins gathering support to run against Broddi for the chieftaincy. Kullina is determined to see a pro-rebel leader take the chieftaincy of the Red Cow.

At this, **Kangharl Black-Brow** and **Borngold Many-Brothers** begin their own campaigns for election. Darna Longcoat is Kangharl's main supporter, she calls in the wealth of favors she has accrued over the years, perhaps including from the PCs, to help Kangharl's campaign.

### THE HOUSECARLS

Hard years of struggle have left the clan's Housecarls brutalized, particularly the struggle to survive the Death of Orlanth. There is little joy in the Thunder Brothers hall, but plenty of grim-

faced determination. Ortossi Ketilsson leads the bodyguard since Jarani the Thunder's death in the Great Winter.

Two new housecarls join following the events of the Great Winter.

**Orlmakt Nine-Winds** was a rebel who has recently returned to the clan of his birth. Broddi has to honor his aid to the people in the Great Winter by making him a thane, though Ortossi objected that Orlmakt was more interested in 'becoming chieftain of the Dolutha than defending the Red Cow.'

There is truth in Ortossi's accusations for Orlmakt, who was one of the New Breathers — those who fought at the Battle of the Auroch Hills and regained Orlanthi magic early — fought a guerilla war in and around Dangerford after the Battle of the Auroch Hills and he hates the Sworn Knives. Ivar Quickstep hates Orlmakt for his breaking of Ferfal's Fire — an act he believes was deliberate — and spurns Red Cow friendship while Orlmakt "is given sanctuary in Red Cow Fort."

**Morgan Sword-Tongue** fought with Orlmakt at the Battle of the Auroch Hills and hero worships his friend. He supports his friend's hostility to the Dolutha chieftain and agitates for the clan to take action against the Moon Winds of Dangerford.

### HOUSECARL: MORGAN SWORD-TONGUE 62†

Morgan Sword-Tongue proved his courage as a warrior fighting at the Battle of the Auroch Hills when he saved Farandar Orendalsson and was amongst the New Breathers who brought word to the clans that Orlanth still lived.

He is a friend of Kangharl and often drinks with him. Having returned from serving as a mercenary in Pavis, Morgan now joins Kangharl in his calls for raids against the northerners instead of peace. This angers Broddi who calls for Ortossi to silence the 'troublesome' housecarls.

Morgan is tall, dark, and handsome. He is popular with the women; however, he has given his heart to his wife Halda Mistress-Of-Tales and will dally with no one else.

Morgan's mother is Griselda Gray-Tresses. Griselda often scolds him for not listening to Broddi. Morgan fears her tongue and she can keep him in check. He lost his father to the Great Winter, and his death fuels his hatred of the followers of the Moon. He is sympathetic to the Daughters of Mabodh whom he feels have a birthright to Wulfsland.

#### Housecarl: Morgan Sword-Tongue 62†

**Bloodline:** Sarostiping

**Faction:** Free Sartar

**Age:** 25

**Keywords:** Mercenary

**Magic:** Initiate of Orlanth 6

**Look:** Curly dark hair; handsome; short dark beard; tall; sarcastic sense of humor; skinny

### HOUSECARL: ORLMAKT NINE-WINDS 62†

Orlmakt Nine-Winds accidentally broke the Dolutha's sacred spear 'Ferfal's Fire' while guarding a Red Cow emissary. The diplomatic mission ended in disaster, with the Dolutha, ignorant of what had happened, believing the Red Cow had deliberately broken their clan's sacred treasure. The emissary had to flee. The two clans' bad blood now had another cause. Orlmakt, too ashamed to admit his part, fled his home to become a mercenary.

He began as a caravan guide, traveling as far as Balazar. Then he fought for whoever would pay, in the many conflicts of the Pass.



From left to right: Ingkot Sharp-Eyes, Morgan Sword-Tongue, Orlmakt Nine-Winds

Coming of age during the Lunar Occupation, he hates the Empire. He initiated to Orlanth in secret, and when he took a job, it was always to fight against the Empire.

Returning to Dragon Pass, he joined the rebellion. Eventually, Morgan Sword-Tongue, a battle companion invited him home. To everyone's surprise, he returned with a Dolutha wife, Marlesta the Pony Girl. Ortossi quickly welcomed such an experienced sword among the housecarls.

Since the Battle of the Auroch Hills, Orlmakt has fought to liberate the Dolutha from their Lunar sympathizing chieftain Ivar Quickstep. He rails against the Sworn Knives mercenaries who guard the Dolutha chieftain. Twisted Morganeth supports him, but Broddi Strong-Kin has refused to help the Dolutha rebels overthrow their chieftain.

Farandar Orendalsson and Orlmakt Nine-Winds are friends from youthful adventures.

#### Housecarl: Orlmakt Nine-Winds 621

**Bloodline:** Tormaking

**Faction:** Free Sartar

**Age:** 27

**Keywords:** Mercenary

**Magic:** Initiate of Orlanth 6

**Look:** Clumsy; hooded-cloak; short brown hair; stubble

## THE HERO WARS

### SEA SEASON

Broddi replaces Farandar Orendalsson on the ring with Jarkorl Snow-Whiskers, citing Farandar's trip to the Battle of the Auroch Hills as 'desertion' of the clan.

Jarkorl Snow-Whiskers focuses on organizing the *Stealing of the Giant's Cows* — no red cows were born to the clan during the Great Winter and if the clan is to replenish its herds, it must succeed this year. If the PCs have yet to participate in the quest, Jarkorl will certainly approach the 'heroes of the Three New Stars' to lead it and ensure success for the clan. Jarkorl is under pressure to succeed to prove he is worthy of the job. The heroquest is an opportunity for the clan to bolster its Wealth Resource, by using some of its Magic Resource.

There is continued trouble with the ghouls since the Great Winter. Their numbers have swollen and they raid Torkani, Dinacoli, and Cinsina clans for new thralls. The Red Cow sponsors an expedition into the Woods of the Dead (see below).

The Blueberry clan asks for help when the Two-Pine demand payment for the Wolf Tribute. The Blueberry doesn't want to pay these bullies, can the Red Cow help? See the *Emissaries* episode for advice on how to run a mission to help friends.

Later, King Ranulf Stand-Tall of the Culbrea visits the ring and demands payment of the Red Cow Tribute. "Now that the Occupation is ending it is time 'order was returned to the farmyard,'" he tells the ring. A large warband accompany King Ranulf in an effort to intimidate the Red Cow into compliance. His thanes see this as an ideal opportunity to test the Cinsina's

mettle, before asking for their old clans back. King Ranulf outlines the options Sartar once set the clan: pay off the Culbrea or they will take your cows by force.

Broddi is worried. The farmers are angry. The thanes are ready for war. However, the Red Cow is just one clan and badly outnumbered by the Culbrea. See the *Cattle Raid* episodes for advice on how to run this.

More people begin flocking to the Three New Stars — someone will probably suggest the Three New Stars needs organization — Verlain Never-Doubt will raise the issue if the PCs have not done so by this point. Verlain will approach the PC who took the role of Orlanth in the *Three New Stars* heroquest and remind them of the story of Orlanth's Ring:

*"We will sit in a circle," Orlanth said, "And all who sit in this circle agree to listen to each other before acting. That is the first rule to keep peace among us."*

*He also said, "I shall create a sacred Ring by selecting the most suitable from among you. Whomever is selected will receive magical gifts as a sign of office and authority."*

Verlain turns to the PC and says: "The Three New Stars must have a ring, so that we can speak in peace."

The organization of the ring is up to the PCs but Verlain will suggest the positions of: Lhankor Mhy, Issaries, Hedkoranth, Esra, Kero Fin, and Eralnda. He volunteers to be Hedkoranth.

The PCs will need to indulge in negotiations to fill the positions on their ring. Note that although there are goddess positions on the ring, most members of the cult will be male. It is the positions of Food Keeper, Midwife, and Stead Mother that may be more significant. Those who are disappointed may harbor resentment against the PCs' continued leadership.

Unless the leadership is careful, as the Three New Stars become well known the mission in Red Cow Fort feels such obvious worship of Orlanth cannot be tolerated. Sureela and Bolik spy on the New Stars hoping to learn the leadership's identity through their contacts. If they do discover who the ring is, Phargentes will declare the Three New Stars leaders to be outlaws and sets a price on their head.

Being declared outlaw makes it difficult for the Three New Stars leadership to enter Red Cow Fort without disguise. Even then they risk betrayal. If informers do recognize them, Phargentes and his troops will attempt to capture or kill them. Like Ashart, the leadership will need to live on the run.

Most people in Dragon Pass are illiterate and communication is via word of mouth so distance from Red Cow Fort makes the PCs safer. In Dangerford, Stonegate, Jonstown, or Boldhome the risk of recognition by an informer is low, and although it can make a great adventure do not overuse it.

If the Three New Stars work with the rebellion Jomes may well set the Moon Dogs on their trail, which may lead to episodes escaping Lunar assassins.

Of course Culbrea lands are free — the leadership could head there — but a feud is about to erupt between the Cinsina and the Culbrea.

## FIRE SEASON

The Two-Pine raid into Red Cow lands, intent on killing and taking swords as part of their Bloody Sword Tribute ritual. See the *Feud* episode for advice on how to run this.

The feud escalates and the Culbrea and Cinsina are soon at *War*. The conflict draws in the two tribes as each side sends *Emissaries* in search of allies. The Culbrea recognize neither the Empire nor Prince Temertain, so making peace is difficult. See *Peace Weaving* for more on how to run this.

## EARTH SEASON

Whilst traveling the PCs hear a prophecy of the Hero Wars (see *Sartar Companion*, page 164).

## DARK SEASON

Terrible news reaches the Red Cow from the Torkani: Mistress Race Trolls active on the surface world! A great swarm of thousands of trolls, trollkin, Dehori, and giant insects of every sort has crossed over the western Rockwood Mountains into Dragon Pass. The Torkani reports Tovtaros hunters describe seeing them in Dagori Inkarth. At first, few chose to believe them, but Minaryth Purple is said to be taking the rumors seriously. No one is sure what the presence of Mistress Race Trolls means — but everyone is sure it is bad for the humans of Dragon Pass — where trolls have often ruled.

## STORM SEASON

Broddi Strong-Kin is ousted as chieftain of the Red Cow.

## SETTING CHANGES

There are about 1250 people in the Red Cow clan. Before the Death of Orlanth and the Great Winter, there were about 1500, but the clan lost roughly a sixth of its people to violence, starvation, and cold. Every family has lost many loved ones.

Of that 1250 people, about 690 are adults and the rest are children. Of those adults, about 110 or so have lived long enough to become elders of the clan (50+). They are roughly equal numbers of men and women.

# INTO THE WOODS OF THE DEAD

## BEGIN WITH

Someone is missing from the village. It will help to draw the players in if the missing person is a dependent or friend of one of the PCs. If not, it is Brastala Dawn-Child who goes missing, a young unmarried woman from the village. Her family is worried. She was visiting a far-off pasture, taking her father some bread, cheese, and ale for the mid-day meal he forgot to take with him that morning. They fear the worst. Her mother imagines all sort of dreadful scenarios, that she is lying with a broken leg dying of exposure, or a Telmori raiding party has taken her. If the PCs

do not organize a search, someone will. Sounding a horn, the women summon the men back to the village to form search parties. An old dress gives the village's best hunting alynxes the scent and the search heads out.

The PCs should be the ones to encounter the ambush laid by the victim's abductors who are lurking to waylay and deter further pursuit. The PCs will first know that ghouls oppose them when they hear the howl. NPCs might well flee, and PCs will need to resist to stand their ground. Following the howl, the ghouls will attack any who have not fled. Clad in scale armor and wielding bronze swords, these are experienced killers. The ghoul thanes should be High or Very High opponents.

If the PCs overcome the ghouls, they may free their captives from a slave coffin.

## CAST

Ghoul Thanes, Orkarl Iron-Beard, Sarostip Cold-Eye (*Sartar Companion*, page 14), Darkot Strong-Thewed

## SITUATION

Following the ghoul raid, Orkarl Iron-Beard persuades Broddi to let him recruit swords for an expedition into the Woods of the Dead. If the ghouls still hold Red Cow captives this will be a rescue mission, and time will be of importance. If the captives were freed, this will be a punitive expedition against King Brangbane. Orkarl has raised support from Sarostip Cold-Eye from the Jonstown Humakt temple. The Humakti cause tension in Red Cow Fort with the housecarls, who dislike armed strangers about. Many of the locals complain their gardens wilt from all the grim followers of death in the fort.

## ACT, SCENES AND BEATS

### HUMAKT'S HILL

The Humakti go first to Humakt's Hill to offer sacrifices for the coming expedition. This is an opportunity for the PCs to make a significant sacrifice or oath to the gods (see *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* page 86). Many NPC Humakti will make such vows.

### THE WOODS

The Woods are supernatural and forbidding. Some of the militia will fear entering the Woods of the Dead and will need persuasion to press on instead of 'guarding the mules' for the others. If the expedition is trying to rescue captives it will need some means to find them, perhaps magic, or perhaps an alynx offered a piece of clothing or treasured personal possession to help them sniff out the trail. Alynxes will be hesitant to enter this unnatural environment and may need coaxing.

### *Avoiding Patrols*

Ghoul thanes patrol the woods to guard against intruders. The expedition probably has scouts, perhaps PCs in advance, and ghoul thanes might try to kill a scout if they see them first. The goal is to kill the patrolling ghouls before they can raise the alarm with their howl. Besides the effect of howling



*Brangbane, King of the Ghouls*

ghouls on morale, the howl will travel from village to village alerting all the Woods of the Dead. That warning will allow King Brangbane to raise a large force of three to four dozen ghouls to fight off the raiders.

#### ***The Village***

The expedition reaches a ghoul village and tries to rescue human captives. The ghouls are unlikely to surrender their thralls without a fight, and will try to raise a howl, to alert other villages and scare off the attackers. Overseers may fight as desperately as the ghouls, aware they can expect little mercy from their fellow inmates when freed. Ill-disciplined militia may break cover when glimpsing sight of friends or family, ruining any ambush. After the battle is done, a victorious expedition will see and hear of the horrors of captivity by the ghouls.

#### ***Escape***

With captives to protect, Orkarl and Sarostip agree escaping is the best option over picking a fight with Brangbane's forces. Rounding up tired and beaten captives to escape proves a challenge. Prisoners need to be broken free from their chains, and they will take their vengeance on any surviving overseers.

Most of the captives are traumatized by their experiences and likely to take panic at the first hint of pursuit, possibly scattering into the woods when they hear the ghouls howling. Initially the escaping expedition may only meet scouting parties. They should try to kill scouts before they can raise the alarm.

Once the alarm is raised, the main body of the hunt will join the howling and begin pursuit through the woods. There are two-to-three dozen pursuing ghouls. If the ghouls pick up the trail, heroic rear-guard actions to buy the refugees time to escape may be the order of the day. Escape out of the woods and into sunlight is likely to be a good conclusion, with the ghouls choosing to howl in frustration from the shadows over heading out into daylight.

## **PLAY OF THE GAME**

This is a horror story and the focus is less on defeating the ghouls, than on the discoveries the PCs make of the cruel mockery of Sararite life practiced by the ghouls.

Following the events of the Great Winter, this scenario represents the clan being proactive, instead of just being pushed around by events.

Further expeditions, to face and defeat Brangbane himself are possible, but outside the scope of this book.

The PCs might want to call upon the support of the Finger Women during the escape; in fact the Game Master might wish to remind them of this option. However, anyone who has broken an oath to the House of Sartar finds that the Finger Women will not come to their aid; instead the ghosts admonish them for betraying their vows to the kingdom.

## ELECTION: A NEW CHIEFTAIN

### BEGIN WITH

On Clayday of Fertility Week, during an Ernaldan ceremony called Loom Blessing Day, Darna Longcoat reads the omens for the year ahead. “The ancestors are displeased with Broddi Strong-Kin,” she tells the women. “They will withdraw their protection from us if we do not elect a new chieftain. The Red Cow needs a chieftain for turbulent times, not a tired old appeaser.”

The Women’s Circle is shocked, but word of the auguries leaks out, and soon the whole clan clamors to replace Broddi as the chieftain of the Red Cow. Campaigning begins and carries on until the moot in Storm Season.

Farandar Orendalsson makes his bid for the chieftaincy, quoting the Forosilssaga: “A clan makes its own store of luck, not from what its ancestors did, but from its own actions.”

He turns to his assembled supporters, “Too long the Red Cow has relied on doing nothing — the policy of Broddi is always to avoid conflict. You cannot avoid conflict, look at the clan’s losses in the Great Winter. It is time for the Red Cow to recognize they must make their place in the world, just as Umath and Orlanth did.”

### THE STAR HUSBANDS

The husbands of the daughters of two of Vingkot’s sons also have a cycle of foundation stories. They founded two of the Star Tribes, the new tribes formed after Vingkot’s death. The Star Husbands were gods or heroes who followed Orlanth into the Heavens but returned to protect the people of their wife or lover. Their stories emphasize that men make their own inheritance; to quote the Forosilssaga:

*Land-loveless gold-thrower, third son’s daughter,  
Born with naught but joined with proud raven-feeder.  
A thundering storm gave them a fine dowry,  
Held firmly with fierce battle-stave.*

The Star Husbands founded their tribes out of the remains of the Lastralgortelli, and protected them from the Dara Happans.

He then quotes Garan, the Star Captain ancestor of the Red Cow: “Once I was just a herder on my lord’s lands, but with my spear Ifrendal — I made a kingdom.”

### CAST

Broddi Strong-Kin, Griselda Gray-Tresses, Kullina the Fat, Farandar Orendalsson, Borngold Many-Brothers, Frekor Deep-Woods

### SITUATION

Broddi is angry at Darna’s prophesy, but Ashart is insistent before the ring — Broddi must go and the clan needs to elect a new chieftain. Broddi and his household will be bitter at what they see as a betrayal by Darna, feeling the clan is ungrateful for the many sacrifices he made during the Occupation.

Ashart declares the election should take place at the Storm Season moot, to allow Official Business to be conducted.

The Rivals (see page XX) represent alternative paths for the Red Cow — all of which lead to increased conflict.

**Kangharl**’s message is one of war with the Dinacoli and the Two-Pine — blood vengeance for old wrongs. The heart of his support is at Tormakt’s Farm and the Tormakting bloodline. Darna Longcoat is his strongest adherent; many people owe her favors and Darna might move to collect. Darna expects Kangharl to be her puppet when he is in power, regardless of the election promises he makes. She can bring the housecarls and many of the clan’s Ernaldans to his cause. Her beauty will sway the hearts of several others. Many see Kangharl as the new chieftain in waiting even before the election and he begins to hold meetings of his ‘shadow ring’ at Tormakt’s Farm as an alternative to Broddi at Red Cow Fort.

**Borngold** hates the Telmori and is determined to drive them back to the Wolf Hills. Queen Ivartha might campaign on his behalf, dispensing gifts liberally knowing Borngold would bring support for her war against the wolfmen. Frekor Deep-Woods backs him simply because he shares his fear of the wolfmen. Kernalda Other-Ways will support him and may sway some of the housecarls from Kangharl. Ortossi gives his loyalty to Kangharl because he speaks of taking vengeance on the Red Cow’s tribal enemies, but Borngold might hope to shift his allegiance with dark tales of the wolfmen. The Kerenelling bloodline might well support their kinsman, though Borngold has fewer sworn men than the other candidates. Voranga Many-Sorrows is an asset to his election hopes, though she is too erratic for the campaign trail.

**Farandar** wants to see support for the rebellion, and to drive Jomes from Wulfsland. He would hope for support from the Free Sartar faction. Kullina the Fat backs him though she demands aid for the Daughters of Mabodh. Morgan Sword-Tongue and Orlmakt Nine-Winds are friends and Farandar expects their support. As a result, Farandar promises to oust Ivar Quickstep from the Dolutha. Venharl Stormbrow would campaign on his behalf, but he can only speak from hiding and so sends gifts to those Farandar needs to influence.

# ACTS, SCENES AND BEATS

## RUNNING FOR ELECTION

One of the PCs might decide to run for election. The clan particularly fetes the leader of the Three New Stars. If none of them think of it, Orkarl Iron-Beard approaches one of the PCs (any Orlanthi initiate, probably whoever represented Orlanth on the

### THE CLAN MOOT

The clan moot is where all of the adults of the clan have an opportunity to gather and discuss issues facing the clan. The moot is an ideal event for PCs to become involved in clan politics.

The moot meets at least once a season; the ring meets much more often in the interim. The moot lasts for a number of days not hours, and the start is often timed to coincide with Holy Days or other gatherings. The clan market is often held at the same time.

There are four types of business at the moot:

- **Ritual business:** opens the moot. As with all Orlanthi ceremonies it begins at dusk, when the priests open the sacred space and summon the good gods and goddesses. Sacrifices are made, the entrails read for omens, and offal burnt on the altars for the gods. Commonly only the chieftain, priests, god-talkers, and other holy people attend, although if the moot coincides with a Holy Day ordinary folk join at sunrise for the main ceremonies.
- **Official Business:** the lawspeaker begins a recitation of a third of the law at dawn on the following day, often influenced by any cases being brought before the court. At noon, the **Law Court** convenes with the chief and the ring presiding. They hear all the jurors and plaintiffs and business continues until done. This might take a day or two. The court cases often draw big crowds, especially if the people involved are notorious.
- **Emergency business:** deals with the seven dangers to the clan: strangers, foreigners, enemies, hostile gods, disease, hunger, and Chaos. If serious enough, the ring may decide to suspend normal business and just discuss the threat to the clan.
- **Unofficial business:** occurs throughout the moot because it is an ideal time for people to meet. People gather with old friends to laugh, drink, and gossip. Alliances are formed as thanes gift clansfolk to win their support, especially if a public vote is to be held. People always like it when the clan big shots come knocking on their door to ask for their support. Parents seek out the matchmaker to find matches for children of suitable age. Entrepreneurial folk trade surpluses or handicrafts and pottery and bronze items from the people of Red Cow Fort.

*Three New Stars* heroquest) and suggests he will support their candidacy for the chieftaincy of the Red Cow.

There are strict requirements for an Orlanthi chieftain and all the candidates must prove themselves in the Chief Tests at the Storm Season moot:

- Initiate of Orlanth.
- Healthy, spontaneous, just, and hospitable.
- Have two good horses, a metal helmet and byrnie, two good swords, and six spears.
- Have a magical treasure.
- Three clan folk must vouch for them and relate deeds of honor, judgment, and courage.

Fulfilling these conditions may create adventures in themselves.

#### Winning Support

It is up to the PC how they chose to win support for their candidacy. The Game Master will need to craft scenes around visiting those with whom they have established relationships over the preceding years. Orlanthi politics involves significant horse-trading; this is a culture where a ‘gift demands a gift’ and everyone expects something for their support: money, land, cattle, position, and vengeance on their enemies. Many of those whose support the PCs hope to win will have conflicting interests and success will involve navigating a course between them.

Of course, nothing helps the PCs’ cause more than a block vote, and winning over all the leaders of a faction. The support of the Women’s Circle may also be vital, and with it influence over their husbands.

#### Supporting a Candidate

It is possible the leader of the Three New Stars does not want to stand for the chieftaincy. In that case, all of the candidates will want to win the support of the Three New Stars to their candidacy. Having the endorsement of the PCs who saved the Cinsina tribe will be seen as likely to win a high proportion of the clan’s vote.

In this situation, the episode plays out as below, but the PCs’ focus is likely to be on joining their fortunes to the winning side, or supporting a candidate who represents their beliefs.

#### Darna Longcoat

Darna Longcoat supports Kangharl through the web of debts the clanfolk owe her. Some PCs may be amongst those who owe Darna such a debt. She will seek this moment to call it in, asking them to support Kangharl as chieftain. A PC may deny her request; in that case, use any Ability indicating their indebtedness to Darna Longcoat as a Flaw when negotiating with the remainder of the clan. No Orlanthi likes people who do not honor their word.

## THE STORM SEASON MOOT

Everyone is gathered in Red Cow Fort. The bothies fill with people from across the clan lands, eager to vote for a new chieftain. Everyone says, “Broddi Strong-Kin was a good man, who saw us through troubled times,” but everyone agrees it is time for new leadership.



### Horse Trading

You do not want to run NPCs contending with NPCs as the climax.

If a PC has entered the contest, we want the resolution to be a one-on-one fight. For this reason the Game Master should remove two of the candidates during the days of horse-trading at the moot preceding the elections.

Amidst the bothies, people look for and promise each other support. The candidates begin to get a feel for who the clan supports and who may win. At that point some candidates will drop out, reasoning they can gain more from joining their fortunes to a candidate who will win, promising the support that carries them over the finishing line, than continuing to fight on.

The safest choice for the Game Master is to choose who opposes the PCs to create the clearest choice for the clan — which of the Rivals (see page XX) most opposes the PCs' views.

The PCs' maneuvering might mean one or more of the Rivals would tend to throw their support behind the PC candidate. In this case, be fair to the PCs by giving them a contest to draw these Rivals over to the PC. Use any Benefit of Victory from that contest in the election. Note the positions on the ring desired by the rival candidates for their support are mutually exclusive; if the PC wants a candidate to take a lesser position, then make the resistance one level higher (Nearly Impossible at most).

If nothing else presents itself, Kangharl is likely to end up with the most support as events with the Culbrea work to his advantage.

If the PCs express little interest in the outcome, just have Kangharl declared the new chieftain.

**Kangharl** has the greatest support of the candidates. He might switch his support to a PC if they have been active in 'taking the fight' to the clan's enemies. The resistance to winning Kangharl's support will depend on the PCs' actions in the feud against the Emerald Sword and the Two-Pine. If the PC took an active role in the feud, Kangharl may support him (Easy to Moderate); if

an appeaser, Kangharl will resist him (Very High to Nearly Impossible). Decide the exact resistance depending on how much the PC supports or opposes the goals of the Coming Storm faction.

Kangharl wants a place on the ring; he fancies Jarkorl Snow-Whisker's position as Barntar, perceiving himself as a leader of the 'common man.'

**Farandar** has less support than Kangharl. Many see him as too aloof. His support comes from the rebels; his lieutenants in the New Breathers work tirelessly on his behalf. He will support the PC candidate, if the PC can demonstrate their support of the Rebellion. The actions of the PCs in the *Three New Stars* heroquest mean Farandar already regards them as 'the right kind of people.' He wants either Barntar or Voriof on the PC candidate's ring. The resistance to gain Farandar's support depends on their support for freeing the Dolutha and Maboder. If the PCs' support one of these, it is High, if they support both, it is Moderate, and if they support neither it is Very High. If the PC is a Moon Wind, it is Nearly Impossible.

**Borngold**'s support derives from the Cinsina's fear of the Telmori — it is not an appeal based on a vision of a better future, but one based on the horrors of the past, such as the damage done by the wolfmen. Whilst nearly everyone agrees with him, his message of fear does not attract the same kind of support that Kangharl and Farandar have. However, if one of them was to lose support, their followers would easily transfer to Borngold. His most likely path to victory is as the compromise candidate.

Borngold will trade his support for the position of Voriof on the ring and a promise to oppose the Telmori. It is High to obtain if the PC promises to support the Wulfslanders, Very High if he wants to drive them out.

**Bolik Red-Turner**, pushed by Sureela Far-Traveled, and Ustarna Try-Much, and Tarkalus Bigger-Boat, begins to gather the Moon Winds of the clan "with one voice."

Following the Great Winter, Bolik can call on over a hundred supporters in the clan. He hopes to assure seats on the ring for his supporters, by promising his block of votes to someone else.

Bolik will approach the PC candidate to offer his support, in return for any seat on the ring. Does the PC accept Bolik's aid? If not, one of the other candidates apart from Farandar will, in return for supporting their goals. A PC will have difficulty gaining both Farandar and Bolik's support, as Farandar will refuse to work with Bolik. Persuading Farandar to accept Bolik on the ring has a Nearly Impossible resistance.

### ***The Stump***

The candidates all speak to the clan before the vote. The clan gathers in the benches on the Mooting Stage and the candidates for the chieftaincy take turns to speak before their kin, persuading, cajoling, and bribing their way to victory.

This contest should use the Climatic Consequences table, so it is possible to win but still suffer a state of adversity. This represents the winner having alienated some or all of the clan in their rise to power. Healing that injury requires reconciliation with the injured parties.

Once the new chieftain has been decided, the whole clan rises to their feet to shout their name, raising their voices so that the gods might hear their thunder.

The chieftain would normally say his vows, but the Empire's ban on the worship of Orlanth means it must wait until the chieftain can leave the fort and head to Grave Hill in secret.

### ***Betrayal***

Unless the PC agreed to add Bolik's support, Sureela Far-Traveled decides to 'welcome' the new chieftain into office by crucifying the troublesome priest Ashart Dusk-Eater for holding Orlanth worship at Grave Hill.

Knowing the Red Cow will want to induct their new chieftain with the appropriate rites, they put their spies to work. Bolik Red-Turner and Ustarna Try-Much work with members of the clan who converted in the Great Winter to learn just when the chieftain intends to take his vows.

The Game Master needs to play the situation out: how careful is the new chieftain to avoid detection of his or her rites of office; a naïve act of faith in all the clan's loyalty to Orlanth could be a costly first lesson. If they can discover the time and place, then Phargetes Grinning-Scar turns up with detachment of Doblain Dogeaters to arrest everyone.

If that happens, Ashart will be crucified outside the gates of Red Cow Fort as a warning.

Afterwards Sureela 'suggests' to the new chieftain that renouncing Orlanth and joining the Seven Mothers would be the proper way to absolve his or her guilt. Treat attempts to refuse as a Very High contest. Failure means that the Empire imposes punitive taxes, reducing the clan's Wealth by the level of Defeat.

### ***Re-Organizing the Ring***

After the new chieftain's election, the clan holds a victory feast — and the new chieftain takes his place on the high table. Of

course, politics does not pause even for the feast; established members of the ring want to know their fate, and those who received promises of advancement and favor from the new chieftain ask when they will be fulfilled.

For the new chieftain it quickly becomes clear everyone is waiting for his decision on the ring so that the clan can get back to day-to-day business. In addition, the ring is the new chieftain's first real test, can he or she balance the competing forces in the clan?

Many PCs might be hoping for positions on the ring. Of course if the chieftain appoints them to positions they cannot deliver, they may find their tenure short. The chieftain risks the clan's Resources declining if poor leaders take on positions of authority. Any PC in line for a position still needs to persuade the chieftain to hand it over.

If a PC won the election, the Game Master should challenge them with PCs and NPCs vying for the same position. They may have already promised some positions, but this will not prevent others making their case, and arguing what support they could bring, or gifts.

If an NPC won the election then PCs may have to fight for positions they were promised, or might choose to campaign for positions they hoped to obtain if their candidate had been elected.

## **PLAY OF THE GAME**

After giving the PCs the opportunity to save the tribe with the *Three New Stars* heroquest, this episode gives the PCs a chance to become the 'movers and shakers' within the Red Cow.

Not all Game Masters will be comfortable with the PCs as the chieftain and the ring. In that case, you might want to ask your players to roll up new characters. This is practical for the day-to-day duties of the chieftain and his ring are often the dull routine of running an economic co-operative of over a thousand people.

Nevertheless, the Orlanthi have a hands-on approach to leadership and it may be easier to answer the question 'why is it the PCs who would resolve this crisis' if they *are* the leaders of the community. For many players at this point of the game, the chance to direct affairs is welcome.

Making the PCs the leaders of the clan also makes it easier to engage them in conflict with Lunar, tribal, and rebel leaders. The PCs are now the people these groups need to influence and the PCs can interact with them now on an equal footing.

If the PCs are also the leaders of the Three New Stars band, they now have considerable influence across the Cinsina. Queen Ivartha will begin to treat them as near-equals and other clan leaders will court them.

A final alternative is to mix the two styles of play. Put the promoted PCs into semi-retirement, bringing them out for 'missions of state,' whilst playing day-to-day adventures with new PCs.

If the chieftain does not have a Mastery Rune Affinity then they should heroquest to obtain the Mastery Rune. There are a number of well-known Orlanthi heroquests where a new chieftain can prove his leadership to obtain this rune, known as the "Crown Tests".

# • Chapter 7 •

# 1624

## CONFLICTS

### DOLUTHA TROUBLES

Throughout the year, trouble continues with the Dolutha.

Inganna Koscheisdottir begins actively stirring up rebellion. She petitions Orstalor Spearlord to launch raids on the Dolutha, targeting the farms of Lunar converts. The Dolutha are poor and have little plunder, but the raids undermine Ivar's leadership. The rebels recruit from the Red Cow when organizing these raids.

Ivar Quickstep is furious at the rebels' presence at Red Cow Fort and the heightened status of the Red Cow with the Three New Stars cult. He is determined to teach the Red Cow some humility, hoping that will dissuade the new chieftain from backing any rebellion. To this end, he encourages the young men of the clan to launch cattle raids.

We do not provide specific episodes for the Dolutha trouble of 1624 but Game Masters should use the material in *Cattle Raid*, *Feud*, and *Peace Weaving* for inspiration.

### THE DAUGHTERS OF MABODH

As rebellion stirs in Prax and the Holy Country, the Daughters of Mabodh become more aggressive.

Enastara the Red convinces Venharl Stormbrow and his Storm Rams to find common cause with the Daughters. She points out that a blow against Wulfsland strikes at Jomes and the Lunar Occupation directly. Enastara begins working on the rebels amidst the Red Cow, trying to persuade them to join these raids — and provide a refuge for the rebels doing the raiding. Kullina the Fat and Farandar Orendalsson champion their cause amongst the Red Cow.

This divides the clan. Many remember how Jomes punished them in the settlement of the feud with the Dinacoli. Others point to his leadership in putting down the Telmori leader Joger Sog's rebellion, and later decisions that benefited the Red Cow. Many of the clan's Moon Winds are loyal to Jomes, and would inform on rebels within the Red Cow who they knew were supporting the Daughters.

**FREEFORM**  
*From this point, The Coming Storm becomes necessarily more freeform. The PCs should have risen to become community leaders, and perhaps even the chieftain and ring of the Red Cow. As such, the direction of your campaign will be informed by the PCs' reaction to wider events. In these years, the Game Master will need to do more preparation to create episodes matching the events in their campaign. Review the events here, and decide how they will affect your game.*

## THE HERO WARS

### SEA SEASON

Orstalor Spearlord begins raiding Dolutha farms along the Creek. Orlmakt Nine-Winds gathers spears from amongst the Red Cow to join the raids

## THE NEW CHIEFTAIN

Note that play in this year will also depend on outcome of leadership contest in 1623:

- **Kangharl:** If Kangharl wins there is certain to be conflict with Dinacoli, as Kangharl seeks revenge. He may also try to settle scores with the Culbrean if the feud was not settled in 1623. Kangharl may try to make peace with the Dolutha — they are after all part of the Cinsina and the tribe's manifest destiny.
- **Farandar:** If Farandar wins, support for rebellion grows. He will encourage the undermining of Ivar Quickstep with Dolutha rebels, and support the

Daughters of Mabodh against Jomesland. If the feud with the Culbrean still rages, Farandar will try to find a solution with King Ranulf and ally with the rebels.

- **Borngold:** If Borngold wins he will become more aggressive in actions against the Telmori, and show considerable support for Jomesland.

The ousted Rivals may also make trouble for the new chieftain, especially if they are not given places on the ring, and may work against the chief's agenda. This may depend on how badly they were defeated and thus the extent to which they think they retain the support in the clan.

with the Mudhens. Inganna and Orstalor are generous with the plunder, which attracts ambitious youngsters to their service.

Ivar is no fool and realizes the Red Cow forms a large part of the raiding parties. In revenge, the Dolutha raid throughout Sea Season bringing calls from the farmers for more patrols to prevent the raids and from others to steal Dolutha horses in revenge.

The situation escalates and Ivar demands Illaro Broken-Back does something. Illaro increases patrols along the Creek, and orders Phargetes to help. When Orstalor proves effective at 'drowning' his units, Illaro enlists help from the Emerald Sword clan. They begin a concerted campaign to take back control of the waterways and the Dolutha's border with the Creek.

Kallyr Starbrow aids in the raising of the Sky Ship, which returns the Boat Planet to the sky for the first time since the end of the Second Age. People are stunned by this and wonder what it means.

Queen Ivartha comes to speak to the *Three New Stars* heroquesters to ask what they know; she sees them as her experts on Heavenly affairs now. Many people worry the changes in the sky portend evil, the doom of the world.

News reaches the clan of continued fighting in Esrolia occupying some Heortlings and many Lunar troops. The Empire is decisively defeated by the Warm Earth Alliance, at the Battle of Pennel, a strategic ford. During the battle, the Solanthi and Ditali deserted the Warm Earth Alliance for the Lunar Empire. Harrek the Berserk, the White Bear of prophecy, a demigod of destruction, is so enraged by the betrayal he leads an assault on the Lunar forces turning the day. Many people are openly calling High King Broyan the Liberator.

Following the battle, Orlanth's Ring, now composed of eleven stars instead of eight, triumphantly appears out of the Stormgate

and rapidly climbed a third of the way up the Sky Dome. On that day, Orlanth is released from his fetters. Orlanth's rites succeed for everyone, not just the New Breathers, and without the need for the Three New Stars Rites.

The Lunar Empire reels.

People across the world see this and those who have little contact with Dragon Pass wonder what this new configuration of Orlanth's Ring portends. Women miscarry throughout Peloria and people pray for the Red Emperor and Great Sister to protect them.

## FIRE SEASON

People start drifting away from the Three New Stars cult, now they can get magic without their help.

The Lunar Army barely leaves its strongholds, unless Tatius commands them. Although Sartar is slipping from his control, Tatius cares little; once the Reaching Moon Temple is complete, the kingdom can be brought back into line.

Enastara organizes raids against the Wulfsland settlers. Venharl Stormbrow leads the Storm Rams against the settlers too.

Jomes is incensed by this and by the raids against the Dolutha. In a conference in Dangerford, he tells Illaro to get control of the security along the Creek.

## EARTH SEASON

Argrath White Bull comes to visit the PCs. By this point, few people perform the Three New Stars Rites — Orlanth magic is available again, and their own priests take on the role of explaining the 'new stars' in Orlanth's Ring. See *The Eleven Lights*.

Following the harvest, the Puppeteer Troupe visits Red Cow Fort (see, *Sartar Companion* page 164).

## DARK SEASON

Harrek and the Wolf Pirates plunder the City of Wonders in the Holy Country.

Argrath White Bull had already risen to the leadership of the White Bull Brotherhood amongst the Animal Nomads. He now summons the hero Jaldon Goldentooth and leads the Praxians to sack Corflu.

Rebel Humakti assassinate Prince Temertain. Only one person weeps real tears at his burning: Estal Donge.

Goram Whitefang dies striving to defend his Prince, and the Telmori blood connection to the House of Sartar is severed. The Telmori Royal Guard disbands, abandoning their homes in Boldhome, and returns to the Wolf Ridges.

Across the clans of the Jonstown Confederation people

# Orlanth's Ring



*In 1624, Orlanth's Ring returns — with 11 stars!*

rejoice — their Royal House is no longer ‘tainted’ by association with the wolfmen. Queen Ivartha throws a celebration feast for Goram’s death in the Great Hall at Red Cow Fort.

## STORM SEASON

A herd of magical cloud sheep grazes on the clan’s lands (see *Sartar Companion*, page 162).

In Prax, Argrath White Bull’s nomad horde liberates the city of Pavis from the Lunars. The Lunar garrison refuses to surrender, but the nomads shatter the city walls. After the victory, Argrath demands the nomads put the garrison to the sword and the nomad horde sacks the city.

## THE ELEVEN LIGHTS

### BEGIN WITH

Farandar Orendalsson and Kullina the Fat approach the PCs with news. “Argrath White Bull is in the Red Cow lands,” they say, “he is at Black Glass Ruins, and he has asked to see the heroes of the Three New Stars.”

Since the re-appearance of Orlanth’s Ring after the Battle of Pennel support for the Three New Stars Rites has fallen away, so for someone to ask the heroquesters to visit him is suddenly unusual.

Kullina and Farandar do not know why Argrath seeks to meet the Three New Stars leaders, just that he has delayed his journey to speak with them.

If any of the PCs ask who Argrath White Bull is, Kullina answers. “The Liberator (for that is what Argrath means) is an adventurer and a very dangerous man. He summoned a Giant’s Cradle to float down the River of Cradles to bring him to Harrek and the Wolf Pirates. It is said that even the White Bear could not keep him dead, so he became Harrek’s lieutenant. He sailed around the world and brought the Wolf Pirates to Esrolia to free it from the Empire. He hates the Red Moon and knows its secret weaknesses. He knows secrets no man should know, but is favored greatly by Orlanth.”

### CAST

Farandar Orendalsson, Kullina the Fat, Chief Kozakang, Argrath White Bull,

### SITUATION

Argrath White Bull is traveling to nearby Jaldon’s Rest — a stone cairn on the border with Prax where the Praxian hero Jaldon Goldentooth is buried. There Argrath and the White Bull Brotherhood intend to raise the ancient hero to lead an army of Praxians to liberate Pavis.

To reach Prax from the Holy Country, where he has been fighting alongside Harrek, Argrath has traveled through Sartar. His route has taken him to Clearwine, where he has kin, and the Hill of Orlanth Victorious, where he joined the worship of Orlanth with Kallyr Starbrow and Ranulf Stand-Tall.

Traveling into Cinsina lands he wants to meet with the heroes who brought the Three New Stars into the Sky — an event Argrath witnessed from the far south of Glorantha.

In his circumnavigation Argrath worked with magicians from many different traditions amongst the adventurers of Pavis

and the Wolf Pirates. He has learned to weld those disparate magicians into a unit by creating new secret societies focused on a *wyter*. Argrath also became Illuminated by his Arkat-worshiping companion, Mularik Ironeye, although since then, his knowledge of mystical secrets now far outstrips Mularik.

With war with the Empire approaching, Argrath realizes the Sartarites will need regiments of magicians to counter those deployed by the Lunar Empire and he tries to recruit the leadership of the Three New Stars to join them.

## ACTS, SCENES, AND BEATS

### THE SARTAR MAGICAL UNION

#### *Black Glass Ruins*

Although it is fall, the Black Glass ruins already feel like winter. The shadows across the ruins are long and blot out the weak sun. People shiver. The shadows move, sliding up and over walls and through alleys, as if alive.

The ancient town here was melted, as if someone had left a city made of wax out in the hot sun too long. Dragon fire liquefied the buildings, walls and roads; the heat turned stone into obsidian. The sharp edges of the obsidian threaten to cut the hands, feet, elbows and knees of a careless traveler.

Insects buzz and skitter everywhere. Fist-sized ham beetles fly through the air, some are caught in webs by spiders the size of alynxes; the spiders inject their ensnared victims with poison to turn their insides into a mush they can drink later.

This is an alien place, a place of darkness, and a place for trolls.

Argrath has camped out here with some three-dozen companions, bivouacked in one of the larger ruins. Argrath is moving with stealth, to avoid Imperial entanglements as he nears his destination at Jaldon’s Rest. The largest group of followers is Esrolian, but there are Wolf Pirates, and even more exotic foreigners in their numbers.

As such, he does not meet with either Queen Ivartha or the Red Cow chieftain (unless the chieftain is a PC or Farandar). Both those groups may be offended if they later discover the PCs met with Argrath, and believe the PCs have made choices about whom they will support in the Hero Wars — Kallyr Starbrow and the rebels.

#### *The Sazdorff*

As PCs arrive, Sazdorff trolls led by Chief Kozakang (see *Sartar Companion* page 234) are leaving from a conference with Argrath. Lagor the Sword-Troll and his sword-wielding trollkin marching in step behind them, accompany him. In addition Kozakang is accompanied by a dark troll assistant and his four trollkin slaves, who carry their baggage. As they leave the conference, they are bowed so low they are practically supine, but upon seeing the PCs they rise up into a battle stance.

The PCs might have met Chief Kozakang during the Great Winter. He won’t recognize them — but the PCs might bear a grudge for the Sazdorff demands for Arkat’s Tax during the Great Winter. How do they feel about the ‘king of the trolls’ speaking with Argrath?



### Argrath

Sentries note the approach of the Red Cow party, but Farandar and Kullina know the password to give and the group is ushered through.

Argrath and six close companions are poring over maps spread over a trestle table.

Argrath and his companions look odd. You recognize Argrath's Sartarite tattoos, but many others are strange to you. He is a clean-shaven man with long red hair and orange eyes. He has a strange rune of three arrows, each pointing in a different direction, tattooed on his forehead.

He wears unfamiliar clothing — a wrap-around skirt and ornate tunic made of silk. His face is weathered from sun and salt, and upon seeing the PCs he smiles as if at some private joke.

His companions are odder still — one is a dark-skinned Agimori from the West and another has a slate-blue skin, darker than any member of the Kerenelling bloodline and one eye forged out of iron. There are others too: an Esrolian Earth Priestess; a Yelmanion lord; and a strange Praxian woman wearing silk trousers. The only companion that might be familiar is Tosti Runefriend, a Lhankor Mhy sage from Jonstown.

One of Argrath's companions whispers in his ear and another brings Argrath a bowl and a towel and he washes his hands. The bowl is then offered to the PCs. Argrath nods and walks over to the PCs. He begins the Greeting ritual with them, welcoming them to his camp.

"Strangers! Who comes this way, to a place not allowed to everyone? Do you come in friendship, or as a foe?" Argrath asks.

The leader of the PCs should respond they are friends to continue the ritual.

"I am the Liberator and the White Bull. I am the Destroyer. The Avenger. The Red Moon's Other. I am the King of Battles. The Turner. The Twisting Wind. I am the Savior of the Elder Giants. I am the one the White Bear could not keep dead. I sacked cities with Harrek the Berserk and stole secrets from across the world.

"I freed Orlanth.

"I am Arkat and I have returned to Liberate the world from Gbaji.

"If you help me, I will help you. A gift for a gift."

If the PCs balk or ask what connection Argrath has to them, he pauses and says: "I am a Sartarite. I grew up on the Starfire Ridges, amongst the Orlmarthi. The Lunars murdered my kin and I fled to the Wastes after I avenged them. An old friendship exists between the Orlmarthi and the Red Cow, and Orlanth says that friends are better than treasure, and I would count the Red Cow amongst my friends.

"I have other claims upon your loyalty, but it is not right to invoke them now."

Sharp-eyed PCs (or those specifically asking about his tattoos) notice that Argrath is tattooed with the same runes of the House of Sartar as Kallyr Starbrow is!

Once the introductions are complete Argrath will ceremoniously offer the PCs 'water' — and has his companions serve the PCs bowls of refreshing Clearwine from an amphora in the room; Argrath will offer the PCs 'a blanket to sleep under' — and his companions bring forth finely patterned woolen blankets from Esrolia; he offers the PCs 'meat' — and his companions bring forth a selection of fine roast meats: mutton, beef, bison, and ham beetle.

Finally, he says: "And I offer you more: duty, which is offered only those who would sit close to me, in my family."

The PCs can refuse of course. If they do, Argrath will thank them, be polite in the hope that he can approach them again, but dismiss them to resume planning his journey to Jaldon's Rest.

If the PCs accept, Argrath smiles and says, "Although Orlanth's Ring has returned to the Sky, the work of the heroes of the Three New Stars has not

*Argrath teaches the Eleven Lights the secrets of the Sartar Magical Union*

ended. Your role lies in the Hero Wars. You were once the Three New Stars, but you must become the Eleven Lights!

"If Sartar is to be free we must have magicians who can beat the Lunar College of Magic on the field of battle," he tells them. "I know a way to create a bond between you, something like a clan, and something like a ritual. I will find a *wyter* for the Eleven

Lights, and that will let you join your power and give it to your leader. The sum of your abilities will allow you to work greater magic than you each could on your own.

"One amongst you must be the High Priest, and he will lead the ritual I teach you to create this magical union. The *wyter* will communicate with the High Priest. The High Priest must choose three Chief Priests to serve him, one for each of your patron gods — the Three New Stars. Each Chief Priest must in turn find three Priests to serve them, who in turn must command three followers.

"Some amongst you may feel you have little magic to offer. You can contribute as well. You will need a Chief Bodyguard to report to the High Priest — and he must recruit housecarls to defend you when you conduct your rituals. The High Priest and Chief Bodyguard may need men of the camp too."

Let the PCs decide roles.

## ARGRATH'S COMPANIONS

### MULARIK IRONEYE

Arkati Illuminate. From Rindland, originally of the zzaburi caste and descended from Arkat with some Darkness blood. He is Illuminated and is a fierce warrior despite being a sorcerer. He has dark blue skin and ascetic features; one eye is made of iron, able to see into the Other World and view the world with RUNEQUEST Sight.

### ELUSU THE TRICKSTER

Illuminated Trickster. Originally of the High Llama Tribe, Elusu failed her clan initiation rites and survived, after murdering her own family. She met Argrath as a fellow slave of the Bison Tribe. She gains magical power through transgressing against cultural and mythical norms. Sex, murder, drugs, and mad behavior all give her power — preferably combined.

### SIR NARIB

Western sorcerer. An adventurer from Pithdaros, Narib was once a sorcerer in the service of King Rikard of Malkonwal. When his king fled from the Lunar Empire in 1620, Narib formed a "company" with the surviving sorcerers; Sir Narib's company found its way to Esrolia. He entered into Argrath's service after the Battle of Pennel Ford.

### TOSTI RUNEFRIEND

This Lhankor Mhy priest has traveled to Kralorela and learned forbidden magic of both the EWF and the God Learners. He has quested to climb the primeval Spike, seeking the secrets of the Runes at the very feet of the Celestial Court.

### TARKALA THE LOVER

Illuminated Earth Priestess. This snake priestess of Eernalda from Esrolia grants power and counsel to the lovers she chooses. She helped liberate the Goddess from the Underworld and has mastered many secrets of life and death.

### RURIK RUNESPEAR

Illuminated Yelmalio Light Son. Perhaps the most famous Yelmalio cultist from Pavis, Rurik Runespear joined Argrath to defend the Giant's Cradle against his fellows in Sun County. He accompanied Argrath on his voyage around the Homeward Ocean, and has experienced the vision of the Many Suns.

## THE EGG MAN

### Grave Hill

Argrath, Farandar, and Kullina take the PCs to Grave Hill to perform the ceremony to create their union. Argrath's companions make quick work of killing the Lunar guards at the temple. Treat this as an Arduous Auto-Success.

Argrath brings one of his men to fetch a Wind Hawk egg, which he presents to the High Priest. "This will be the soul of your regiment, do not allow it to be taken in battle or destroyed. If that were to happen the Eleven Lights will no longer be a union and your magic will fail."

Argrath explains nothing else about the egg for now.

Argrath leads the ceremony, sacrificing two red cows and opening the sacred space for the gods. Lesser gods crowd around, drawn by the sacrifices of the living.

### Hatching the Egg

Before the ritual to find a *wyter* for the Eleven Lights, Argrath sits down to speak to the assembled leadership of the Three New Stars. He wears no tunic, and he is tattooed with dragons, strange birds, and even Arachne Solara and her web! Argrath carries a blue sword that looks like it was carved out of bone, and in his other hand he holds a strange bronze thunderbolt.

"Today we will make a new thing," he begins.

"The Path of Highest Magic requires Liberation. One must destroy all concepts and rest in the space of emptiness to walk the Path of Highest Magic.

"To truly be Orlanth, you must do what Orlanth could not or would not. You must train to share the same breath as the god, to face what he could not as he would have.

"You must master not just the Four Breaths but also the Three Secret Breaths, which are harmony, self-extinction, and total consciousness."

He raises his strange blue sword in his left hand, "You must cut the Dragon Head off yourself, take it with your left hand and make it part of you. You must slay the dragon and wield its power."

There are murmurs amongst the Three New Stars — what does Argrath speak of? This sounds like the talk of the Empire of the Wyrms Friends or even Lunar Riddlers?

“You must scatter yourself on the winds, so that you do not exist. Only then can you master all.

“You must couple with the goddess and become one with the world in order to liberate yourself. As the world, you can transcend it and yet not be devoured by the Void.

“You must become One with your Other so that you can give birth to something new.

“You must devour yourself so that you can give birth to an egg that creates us new. Let us devour our inner self so that we might give birth to some with the power to defend us from our enemies.”

As if on command, there is an awful sound like thunder and the egg held by the High Priest begins to crack. Winds begin to rise. The participants feel a terrible pain in their abdomen — mothers will recognize them as the pangs of labor.

“We must hatch an egg, and give birth to something new. This will be your creation story, and when you remember these rites, you will be able to work together.”

The labor pains intensify.

“So I call upon the gods and goddesses to come forward, and decide who will support them in their path.”

Many of the priests cry out in fear and pain.

### **The Hatching of the Eleven Lights**

The PCs must choose amongst the lesser gods Argrath has summoned to inhabit the chick.

To emulate this, run the Clan Generation Questionnaire (see *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes*, page 37) to generate the Eleven Lights *wyter*.

However, do not ask questions that occur in The Era of Time — the union does not yet have a history.

In addition, the lesser gods Argrath summoned have some things in common, and so the answer to some questions is fixed, and should be provided by the Game Master, and some are more constrained so the answers must come from a lesser set.

2. The Treasured People — 2 Full Dish and Spoon.
5. Why You Joined Orlanth — Only answer 1-4.
6. Your Earliest Famous Event — Only 1-5.
7. Ancient Enemies — The magical union gains ancient enemies from the Three New Stars that they picked.

Varnaval the Shepherd King — Dara Happans.

Siwend the Hunter — Dogs.

Korolful the Keen — Ogres.

Baroshi, the Avenger — Scorpion Men.

Saren, Elmal's Charioteer — Trolls.

Oonil the Skillful — Bandits, Thieves and Pirates.

Tanian, the Fiery Waters — Rivers.

12. The Die Off — 4. A Star Captain, fell screaming from the sky.
15. The Heortlings — Only 2. a-e We followed a great hero who came down from the Heavens.

The *wyter* does not have a history of awakening a deity at the Dawn, but the PCs awakened the patron deities of their union — the Three New Stars.

At the end of this, the new magical union will have likes and dislikes just like a clan. Anyone who joins the union gains those new prejudices. They might be in conflict with existing

prejudices from membership of the Red Cow clan. That is something the player will have to decide the PC chooses amongst during play.

Some choices may cause real tensions for the Eleven Lights, such as enmity with the Rivers leading to tension with Wandle and Orstalor Spearlord, or hostility to Bandits, Thieves and Pirates causing tension with the Wolf Pirates.

The final ceremony, Service for Two, takes a night and a day. Argrath sacrifices a red and black bull, draining the blood into a bowl (perhaps the Cauldron of Ver if the PCs obtained it). He then asks each person who would join the community to come forward, prick their thumb, and add their blood to the bowl. The High Priest should be first, followed by the Chief Priests and so on.

Argrath pours the bowl over the chick, which shimmers with a silvery light, which gradually fades.

The Eleven Lights forms a new community in the game and you should begin to track its Resources. We provide the initial Resource numbers for these.

The Game Master and the players should work out the *wyter*'s abilities from the mythic history together. However, depending on the Three New Stars the PCs returned, the *wyter* gains one Ability for each of patron deity. In addition, the *wyter* gains the Ability of *Starfire* described below, representing its connection with the stars that fell to aid the people during the Darkness.

- Varnaval the Shepherd King — Iron Ram Charge.
- Siwend the Hunter — Sky Bow.
- Korolful the Keen — Shooting Star.
- Baroshi, the Avenger — Burn Chaos Thing.
- Saren, Elmal's Charioteer — Star Javelin.
- Oonil the Skillful - Move as One.
- Tanian, the Fiery Waters — Burn Water.

### **ELEVEN LIGHTS RESOURCES**

Magic: 12 

War: 9 

Morale: 18

Peace 18

Wealth: 12

### **ELEVEN LIGHTS WYTER**

**Manifests As:** Wind Hawk.

**Runes:** The combined runes of the Three New Stars.

**Abilities:** The abilities manifested by the *wyter* depend on the mythic history of the *wyter* and the Three New Stars patron deities chosen by the PCs.

In addition the *wyter* always has the *Starfire* Ability.

All of these abilities require a ritual to perform, a slight variation of this: the priests set up three altars, one for each patron god, and a Chief Priest performs sacrifices to that patron deity with his assistant Priests and followers. In the center the High Priest stands with the Storm Hawk circling above, summoning and directing the power.

The magical effects here are powerful, capable of a range of 20-25 miles and affecting regiments — they only function when the magicians act in concert. The exact range and power depends

## WIND HAWKS

Tarena bred children of mortal form. She herself never landed from her endless flight until the Golden Archer brought her down with a magical arrow, a magical friend, and a curse. After she fell, the Great Archer took pity on Tarena. He took shape just like hers, built a nest atop a tall tree, and helped raise the first brood of hawks. These Wind Hawks are sacred to Orlanth, and seek to destroy all eagles for their lord.

The Wind Hawk is a raptor with short, broad wings and a long tail. It is brown above and barred brown or white below with a dark brown or black barred tail. They have a black eye stripe and dark red eyes. Females are significantly larger than males. Males, 18–22" long with a 35–41" wingspan. The female is much larger, 23–25" long with a 43–50" wingspan.

upon the number of magicians working together. If they are below strength, the effect described here is weakened.

The Eleven Lights have one limitation — they can only use their magic when Orlanth's Ring is in the Sky, not when Orlanth is in the Underworld.

The ritual renders the priests helpless — they must perform a 'hatching' to bring this magic into the world, and like a woman in labor they are physically helpless at this time.

Because this ritual takes time, the bodyguard provides protection for the ceremony when it takes place.

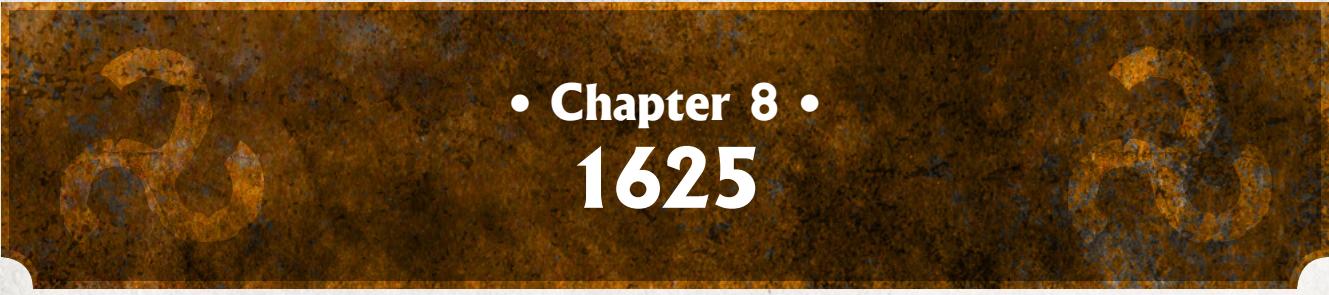
*Starfire* — The Eleven Lights have the ability to summon a rain of starfire from the Heavens. First the Three New Stars in Orlanth's Ring flare, then it becomes clear that something is falling from each of them, with a silvery trail lighting the sky behind it. As they fall the shooting stars begin to break apart, into smaller stars, all falling toward the ground. These stars break apart in turn and when they get closer have a fiery trail behind them. By the time the falling stars come close to the ground, they are incandescent white-hot fragments filling the sky over the battlefield and hard to look at — at night they illuminate the whole battlefield — and bright white flame and smoke trails behind them. When they strike the ground they burst, showering white-hot lumps burning remorselessly through clothes and armor. The fragments cannot be easily extinguished and burn their victims through to the bone.

### *Farewell*

With his work here done, Argrath prepares to depart. He encourages the PCs to cultivate the Eleven Lights, heroquesting to learn more of the powers of their patron deities and filling out their ranks with the magicians and priests they need. "The Hero Wars are coming, and your future lies in the wars that will decide the fate of every living being in Dragon Pass.

"And now I must go and awaken an old enemy!"

With that Argrath and his men depart.



# • Chapter 8 •

# 1625

## CONFLICTS

### THE DRAGON RISE

Despite the major setbacks of the past two years, the Empire pursues its plan to open a new Temple to the Reaching Moon. Tatius tells his lieutenants, agents, and client kings all resistance will be swept away once the Temple to the Reaching Moon is completed.

In 1625, when the stars are right, the Empire begins the inauguration ceremony for its new temple. Kallyr Starbrow directs a commando raid to disrupt the ceremony, raising a Dragon under the temple. The monstrous Dragon kills the Empire's local leaders, assembled priests, magicians, and many of their best troops and obliterates over half the Imperial Army. With most of the Empire's army gone, Kallyr Starbrow raises the people in rebellion, driving the remaining garrisons from the towns and cities.

A hastily mustered Sartarite army liberates Boldhome and goes on to besiege Jonstown. The rebel army, aided by insurgents within the town, storms the city walls and overcomes the garrison.

With the Empire's military forces routed, attention turns to preparation for the Emperor's inevitable counter-strike. Kallyr Starbrow tries to build an army to keep Sartar free.

### THE HERO WARS

Kallyr Starbrow leads a great quest and raises the Younger Storm Dragon. This disrupts the ritual to empower the new Reaching Moon Temple, while the Dragon devours the Lunar Army in Sartar.

#### SEA SEASON

The Lunar Army defeats Argrath at Moonbroth. The Lunar Field School summons another demon. Despite initial reports, Argrath is not killed and retreats to Pavis.

The Lunars defeat and kill Broyan. Lunar magicians from the Field School of Magic use terrible magics to summon and bind a demon they direct to murder him.

#### FIRE SEASON

There is a rebellion in the Grazelands. The Stallion King sends the Lunars home with dirt when they come for their annual

tribute. King Pharandros of Tarsh puts down the rebellion. Recruiters come to the Cinsina looking to hire cavalry to take part in the fighting. The Red Cow and Dolutha have no love for the Grazeland Pony Breeders and some join King Pharandros' forces, riding out with the Phargentite cavalry who go to help.

#### EARTH SEASON

On Black Moon (or Clay) day, Harmony week, at the new Temple to the Reaching Moon, Lunar magicians attempt to call down Heaven to earth with a great ritual dance — with each person representing a star. A red nimbus appears around the black moon, and they see it begin to flicker.

Kallyr Starbrow leads a small band of rebels to disrupt the opening ceremony of the New Reaching Moon Temple. They follow the myth of *How Orlanth Conquered the Stars* to invade the ceremony, and at the key moment when Orlanth meets Sh'harkazeel the Sky Dragon in the myth, the great dragon slumbering below the new Lunar temple awakens. In four bites, it swallows all the Lunar magicians, Lunar officials, Sartarite turncoat leaders, and the gathered Lunar regiments. Then it turns over once, knocking down everyone for twenty miles around, and leaves a crack in the earth stretching for ten miles.

In Sartar, only the garrisons in the cities and forts remain now — and Jomes in Boldhome has fewer than 2000 men, most of his regiments are at quarter strength following the Battle of the Auroch Hills and the Dragonrise. These are too few to resist an uprising.

Kallyr musters an army from the rebel forces across Sartar and whole tribes including the Culbrea. They march on and seize the city of Boldhome from its leaderless and under strength garrison.

The Cinsina and other tribes of the Confederation rise to overthrow their local garrisons, and join with Kallyr to take Jonstown.

#### DARK SEASON

King Pharandros of Tarsh reacts to Starbrow's revolt by sending a Tarshite army to reinforce Lunar rule in Alda-Chur — Harvar Ironfist was killed in the Dragonrise. With the north secure, the Tarshite generals plan a counter-attack to bring Sartar back under their heel.

Kallyr Starbrow petitions the tribes to provide troops for the fight. She is only moderately successful, and an outnumbered, ragtag army marches to meet the Tarshites. They clash at Dangerford, and the rebels take the day through sheer inspiration.

Following a meeting in Boldhome Kallyr, forges a new ring of Sartar and those present declare her Prince of Sartar.

# THE STORM BREAKS!

## BEGINS WITH

Orstalor Spearlord is camped in Wandle Bog. The Mudhens are with him; many have injuries and have obviously been in a fight. He summons those who have aided the rebellion: Kullina the Fat, Farandar Orendalsson, Enerin Bristle-Beard, and Kernalda Other-Ways. In turn, they ask the ring and chieftain to come, in secret, to a meeting in the bog.

Do the PCs have the trust of any of these people? If so, they are invited too. Everyone knows something *big* has happened. People talk of a major Lunar military disaster in the south. Everyone saw Orlanth's Ring rise on the wrong day, and journey across the sky in six hours, and the dragon-shaped cloud that covered the moon on □/□/□. The priests have been trying to understand what these portents mean.

In Red Cow Fort, Phargentes Grinning-Scar and Estavia GoldEyes are nervous — but seem to have no more idea than anyone else what has happened.

The Empire interrogates anyone who comes through Red Cow Fort from the south.

## CAST

Orstalor Spearlord, Kullina the Fat, Farandar Orendalsson, Enerin Bristle-Beard and Kernalda Other-Ways, Voranga Many-Sorrows, Wandle, Bolik Red-Turner, Ustarna Try-Much, Willandring the Giant, Jomes Hostralos

## SITUATION

Word of the liberation of Sartar is spreading only as fast as the survivors of its battles. The result is that the many Imperial garrisons are unaware their high command has been wiped out. The events in the sky on the night of the Dragonrise, when everyone saw Orlanth's Ring rise on the wrong day and spiral around the sky in a mere six hours, has filled the garrisons with foreboding, but they are as yet unaware of what it signifies.

Jomes was not at the inauguration of the New Temple of the Reaching Moon, but at Boldhome. The rebel command believes

him dead in the fall of that city — though no one has recovered a body. Jomes managed to escape, and is heading for Stonegate, in the hope of securing his own lands and holding out for relief from Tarsh.

Until he and his companions reach Stonegate, no word will pass through official channels to Red Cow Fort, Dangerford, or Jonstown — giving the rebels the advantage of surprise.

Kallyr Starbrow has tasked Venharl Stormbrow with leading her host to conquer Jonstown, and he makes his way to the tribal kings and queens of the Jonstown Confederation: Malani, Culbrea, Cinsina, and Torkani. In the meantime Kallyr's other followers, such as Orstalor Spearlord, fan out to the forts, aware those clans will not join the siege of Jonstown whilst their own lands remain occupied.

## CONNECTED EPISODES

War

## ACTS, SCENES AND BEATS

### RED COW RISING

The trip through Wandle Bog requires guides for those who do not know the way, and sacrifices at the bridges to honor Heler.

When the PCs arrive, they find Orstalor sitting with two women; one is Voranga Many-Sorrows his sometime lover and the other, a woman with long flowing hair, but made of water is Wandle, the nymph of the Heort Creek.

When everyone is assembled, Orstalor reveals: "Boldhome has fallen to Kallyr Starbrow. She leads our rebel forces — we call ourselves the Candle Dancers since the Shiprise. Along with the Culbrea tribe — the Headhunters, we took back the city. She put the garrison to the sword."

There is a commotion and as everyone asks questions Orstalor tells the story of the Dragonrise, "Most of their command, all their magicians, and half their army, all wiped out in an instant. Now is the time for us to rebel. Kallyr is liberating her own Kheldon tribesmen. We must liberate the clans of the Jonstown Confederation now. You must take back Red Cow Fort!"

Not all of those present jump at the chance to raise the clan in rebellion. The usual suspects from the Eye of the Hurricane faction speak out. Kallyr Starbrow has failed once before, they



In 1625, the Dragonrise breaks the Empire's rule of Sartar

remind everyone, "We liberated Jonstown once before. The Empire took Sartar back and punished the leaders."

The debate turns on belief; no one other than Orstalor has seen liberated Boldhome, or witnessed the Dragonrise. But everyone felt the Earth tremble and saw the gigantic True Dragon in the sky spiraling around Dragon Pass and circle Mount Kero Fin.

Is the Empire really a spent force in Sartar and Heortland? Orstalor and the Free Sartar faction try to convince everyone of the truth of that, the followers of the Eye of the Hurricane try to persuade people to caution.

### ***Betrayal***

Wandle suddenly stands up, looking around and speaks:

*More than gentle breezes stir,  
In sedge and rustling reed.  
Unwelcome ears take heed,  
Lurk and listen as we confer.*

There is a start from within nearby bushes and the sound of people running.

"Stop them," cries Orstalor, "before they can warn the garrison."

The spies are Bolik Red-Turner and two Sardaling fishermen who brought him into the marsh in coracles. Now they try to paddle away, hoping to lose their pursuers in the bog.

Wandle can guide the pursuers, she knows what happens within her own waters, but as the pursuers are on foot, they have to take a longer route to catch the spies. Allow pursuing PCs to use the clan's Magic Resource rating to Augment their pursuit, representing Wandle's aid.

If the PCs capture the spies, they should not kill them, after all, they are kin, and that would be kinstrife. There are two options here. The first would be to hand them over to Orstalor for punishment; Orstalor is not keen on the idea of being judge, jury, and executioner. The second is for the chieftain to outlaw them. For now, though it is most likely that everyone simply decides to tie them up.

If the spies escape, the Lunar garrison will get news of the events of the Dragonrise and warning of the plan to liberate Red Cow Fort. They will shut the citadel and send messengers to Stonegate and Dangerford asking for reinforcements.

### ***Capture the Citadel***

If the PCs have the advantage of surprise, the drawbridge to the Lunar citadel in Red Cow Fort is down, although guarded. Four guards stand on one side of the ditch, two stand on the other, with another four on duty by the block and tackle used to raise the drawbridge over the ditch. Two guards also stand in the watchtowers at either side of the gate.

Orstalor will point out the goal of any assault has to be to capture the gate before the drawbridge can be raised. If the drawbridge is taken, even if the gates are closed a ram can be brought to them. If the drawbridge is closed, it will be impossible to get a ram to the gates.

Orstalor's suggested plan is to disguise rebels as merchants looking to trade supplies with the garrison. The supplies will be in an ox-cart and concealed within it will be four men, who will

join the two merchants in trying to kill the winch operators. Meanwhile, with weapons concealed by cloaks, the remainder of the Red Cow assault party will hide amidst the bothies and houses, charging forward in support when the moment is right.

Orstalor is open to suggestions on ways to improve this plan, especially if they make use of PCs' abilities. He will press the issue of time however — an over-elaborate plan will likely fail, simply because word may reach the Lunar garrison of the Dragonrise.

The PCs should be included in the party trying to capture the gate.

Run this as an Extended Contest with a graduated prize of survival and preventing the drawbridge being raised. This means that a PC might choose to sacrifice their life to ensure the drawbridge is not raised, use the rules for Pyrrhic Victory in that case.

In addition to the guards on the inside of the drawbridge, the PCs will need to contend with those in the gate towers who shoot sling stones and throw javelins at them (treat as an assist to embattled Lunar soldiers).

If the PCs capture the windlass for the drawbridge, the Red Cow warriors will be able to storm the citadel.

If Bolik has betrayed the Red Cow the drawbridge will be shut and the gates closed, the Lunar garrison will be manning the walls of the citadel, confident that they have sent word to Jomes.

Orstalor calls a conference and asks for ideas. A frontal assault across the ditch seems like madness to him — the rebels would be cut down negotiating the ditch, by slingers stationed on the garrison walls, and burning oil poured from the ramparts.

Orstalor is open to any idea and may suggest a few himself:

- Build a wooden bridge to span the gap, running forward with it, sliding it into place, and then bring a ram across it.
- Fill in the ditch with earth and wood to create a bridge the rebels can attack over.
- Flyers could enter the citadel by soaring over the towers and forcing the gates from within, lowering the drawbridge, and welcoming their comrades across.
- Using magic to breach a section of the citadel walls and charge across — does anyone have such magic?

The Game Master will need to adjudicate the success or failure of such efforts. Use an Extended Contest to resolve, with the prize being the capture the drawbridge and gates, and add Situational Modifiers as appropriate.

If all else fails, the Red Cow can lay siege to the citadel, hoping to starve the Lunar soldiers out, and holding Red Cow Fort against any reinforcements that may come from Wulfsland. The Lunar camp has enough food to last for several weeks though, and if Red Cow forces are tied up here, they will be unable to send men to the siege of Jonstown or the Battle of Dangerford.

Eventually the Lunar troops will sue for peace, asking to be allowed to return north of the Creek in return for surrendering the citadel. They will ask for oaths as proof of the Red Cow's good intent. If no one accepts then the Lunar forces, when they begin to starve, and realize that no help is forthcoming, sally

forth to break out of Red Cow Fort. This is likely to result in a fight at the bridge, and perhaps within Red Cow Fort itself, as the troops attempt to cut their way free.

## JOMES

Jomes is not dead. He survived the rebel assault on Boldhome and escaped to Jomesland. Now, he leads the Border Wulf Peltasts to Red Cow Fort, determined to break the siege or recapture the Fort.

Jomes' forces have no siege train with artillery and engineers to batter the fort into submission. Jomes knows that the Red Cow have enough food in their storage pits to hold out longer than he can keep his troops encircling the fort. Therefore, he must rely on a quick assault to carry the day.

### *Assault on Red Cow Fort*

Jomes relies on Moon Winds from the Sardaling bloodline to make rafts and ferry his troops across the Wandle with their siege ladders, in an effort to storm the less well protected riverside of the fort. He hopes to rely on the Sardaling god-talkers of Sky-River Titan to prevent Orstalor calling on Wandle and Krikans to drown his troops as they try to make the crossing.

Meanwhile there is betrayal from within Red Cow Fort. Ustarna Try-Much, sympathetic to the Empire, heals Willandring the Giant of his hamstring. Released from his bondage, Willandring takes the bronze greaves, helmet and immense spear he has fashioned in secret from their hiding places, dons his armor and begins to lay waste to everything within Red Cow Fort. Intent on the life of the chieftain, he tries to kill everything in his path. If he can kill the chieftain, Willandring attempts to break down the wall, to allow the Lunar assault to enter. Treat Willandring the Giant as a Nearly Impossible resistance, but remember Multiple Opponent Penalties can wear him down.

If Willandring the Giant is beaten Jomes will fail in his assault; he loses too many troops to drowning, when his priests cannot overcome Wandle and Krikans, and his assault is blunted. The survivors cannot raise enough ladders to overwhelm the wall at any point, and retreat, suffering more losses as they try to cross the river again. We suggest treating the remainder of the battle as a Simple Contest for PCs to see if they survive the battle with a Moderate or Low resistance.

If the PCs cannot defeat Willandring then he succeeds in killing the chieftain and many of his household (unless they are PCs, in which case run a contest to see what happens), and goes on to smash one of the walls allowing the Lunar assault into the fort. When the Border Wulf Peltasts burst into Red Cow Fort mayhem ensues. Still the Wandle has reduced their numbers, but now amidst the panicked civilians of the Fort they can set about the work of slaughter. The Lunars fire buildings and cut down unarmed men, women and children. Treat the battle as a Group Simple Contest using a Very High resistance. The overall Defeat here depletes the Red Cow's War and Wealth Resources; in addition injure the PCs according to their individual contest results.

If the Imperials win the Lunars do not stay. Jomes decides he has little hope of holding the fort. They take hostages as they leave, focusing on rounding up women and children.

### *Peace Treaty*

If Jomes triumphs he uses the Glass Butterfly the Red Cow sent him to try to negotiate peace. He will keep to Wulfsland if the Red Cow will keep to their side of the Wandle. If he sacked Red Cow Fort and took hostages Jomes' bargaining position will be stronger, he threatens to kill the hostages if the Red Cow attack Wulfsland. His orders to kidnap women and children were to persuade other Cinsina clans to hold back from war.

This is a key moment for the clan and the PCs should be involved in the decision. The Wolfskinners among the Red Cow are happy to make peace with Jomes instead of leaving a dangerous power vacuum but the Free Sartar faction wants to support their allies amongst the Daughters of Mabodh and ensure their return to their rightful lands. Do the PCs support Jomes or the Daughters of Mabodh? If Jomes has hostages, few within the Cinsina have the will to sacrifice them to oust Jomes from Wulfsland.

Even if Jomes experiences losses at Red Cow Fort, storming Stonegate is beyond the might of the Red Cow clan alone — they will need the support of Queen Ivartha and the tribe.

Queen Ivartha is loath to turn on Jomes, and will only be persuaded if she believes the Daughters of Mabodh represent a viable alternative. If the Red Cow lost the battle, and Jomes has hostages from across the Cinsina, she will prefer to agree terms.

## FATE OF THE MOON WINDS

Many of the clan collaborated with the Empire, some converted to the Red Moon. Ustarna Try-Much and many of the Sardaling bloodline collaborated with Jomes' attempt to retake Red Cow Fort.

The fate of the Moon Winds is up to the players. Hardliners call for them to be outlawed, and killed if they return to Red Cow clan lands. Those who suffered at the hands of the Moon Winds are prominent voices for this faction. Others speak up for many of the Moon Winds, suggesting not all of those who follow the Lunar way acted as traitors and urging the clan to remember that many are kin.

The Women's Circle is a prominent voice here, calling for outlawry for those who aided the Empire, but inclusiveness toward others. "Remember," they say, "if Starbrow's Rebellion fails again, we will be judged by the Empire as we judge their children."

Still other people say that this is different. The Hero Wars are upon us: new stars, new planets, the White Bear of prophecy. The clan will need to be strong to survive and must exile the traitors.

## PLAY OF THE GAME

How the fate of the Moon Winds plays out is beyond the scope of this book. The decisions made have a significant impact on the setting in years to come. Does the Maboder tribe return? Does the Red Cow clan split to avoid kinstrife or try to accommodate its differences? The PCs should be central to these decisions — this is what the Hero Wars are about, making choices about what sort of future the Fourth Age of Glorantha will bring. The little choices made here shape the world to come.

A compromise may be the best solution. Splitting the clan to allow the Sardaling bloodline and other Moon Winds to

resettle on the east bank of the Wandle may prove an acceptable alternative to kinstrife.

It is possible the PCs will round up the Moon Winds after storming the citadel with the implication that Ustarna will not be able to heal Willandring. In that case, have some of the Women's Circle plead for Ustarna's freedom, claiming she has only ever wanted to heal. If the PCs resist entreaties to free her, Ustarna will not be able to heal Willandring, and Red Cow Fort will not be betrayed. Allow the PCs to profit from their foresight in preventing the betrayal from within.

The events here form one of the main climaxes of the campaign — the liberation of the Red Cow from the Lunar Occupation. The players will not want it to be too easy, for that will rob them of the pleasure of victory, nor so hard the campaign ends with the whiff of failure.

## THE LIBERATION OF JONSTOWN

### BEGINS WITH

Venharl Stormbrow has ridden into Red Cow Fort at the head of his Storm Rams. He claims to be a general in Kallyr's Candle Dancers — a Sartarite regiment few have heard of before.

"It is those rebel bands who fought with Kallyr during the Shiprise. My Storm Rams, Orstalor's Mudhens, Thundercape's Silent Wind, and Gyffur's Hidden Gale are amongst them." He tells the Red Cow he intends to requisition the citadel in Red Cow Fort in the name of Kallyr, Prince of Sartar, for use by the Candle Dancers and announces he is gathering troops, "To march on Jonstown."

He turns to the High Priest of the Eleven Lights and says: "Your Magical Union must now take its place amongst Kallyr's war host."

### CAST

Venharl Stormbrow, Ivartha the Skinner

### SITUATION

Jonstown remains the only town in Lunar hands, and the key to ending the Lunar Occupation of Sartar. Kallyr and the Sartar High Council gather their forces to assault the city. Everyone remembers Starbrow's ill-fated rebellion and is concerned about a counter-attack from Tarsh, so they want to capture Jonstown as soon as they can.

The Dragonrise has wiped out most of Jonstown's garrison and only the First Tarshite Light Foot and Bagnot Foot remain, along with the Doblain Dogeaters. Survivors from the Arrowstone Cavalry and Mirinite Swords have reached the city with tales of the destruction at the New Temple of the Reaching Moon, but are too few to muster. Two small companies of mercenaries, the Gray Cloaks and the Dirt Eaters remain as well. Marofdul

of Bagnot commands the city, Tovtarim the Prefect having been lost in the Dragonrise.

### CONNECTED EPISODES

The Storm Breaks!, The Battle of Dangerford

### ACTS, SCENES AND BEATS

#### THE LIBERATION OF JONSTOWN

##### *Venharl*

Venharl is in overall charge of the Sartarite assault on the city. He has the loyalty of the Candle Dancers and Kheldon tribal host, but the tribes of the confederation dispute his authority. Ivartha the Skinner of the Cinsina, Yrsa Nightbeam of the Torkani, Ranulf Stand-Tall of the Culbrea, and Amalda Edrufsdottir of the Malani all claim to be "first" amongst the others.

As ever, the tribal leaders dislike each other as much as they dislike Venharl.

Venharl's seizure of the old Lunar citadel at Red Cow Fort may not be to the liking of the Red Cow. They might feel that having ousted one squatter from their clan center, they do not want another. Venharl is determined: he talks about the oaths the Cinsina made to the Royal House of Sartar generations ago to support the kingdom. "Kallyr is Prince of Sartar now, and if she says the Royal House need to station soldiers in Red Cow Fort, then you have given word that you will support her."

If the PCs broke their oath to the House of Sartar in *Manhunt* or *Kill Telmori*, Venharl adds: "Have not the Red Cow broken their oaths to the Royal House before? Would you risk your clan's doom by doing so again? Billeting these soldiers here should remind you of your oaths."

People are unhappy about breaking their oaths again by refusing Venharl, saying: "Has the clan not suffered enough?"

He reminds the Eleven Lights that they owe fealty to Kallyr, probably including the chieftain, if a PC became chieftain.

If the Red Cow complains that he is behaving like a tyrant, Venharl listens — the Orlanthi hate tyrants. In that case, Venharl will negotiate with the Red Cow for compensation for the loss of the citadel. The Red Cow could use this compensation to bolster any of their clan Resources.

Venharl cannot wait to starve the Empire out of Jonstown, needing to muster the army against a counter-attack, so he needs to assault the city. At this point his newly formed Sartarite army has no siege train to construct siege towers. Attempts by flyers to enter Jonstown are beaten back.

Venharl decides to use magic to aid his assault. Entarios the Supporter and the Greenstone Temple come to aid him! The priestesses set up altars, half a mile from the walls of Jonstown, and sacrifice boars and sows to Ernalda for her aid.

Venharl has the army form up in ranks, as though they were about to assault the city.

The priestesses begin singing a hymn together. As they sing the ground in front of them begins to froth and churn. Everyone feels the ground begin to tremble. The frothing stills for a moment, and then something burrows through the earth, raising



*Along the assault ramp, rebel forces pour into the Old City of Jonstown*

the ground behind it, heading straight for the walls of Jonstown. As the burrowing inches its way forward it rises, creating a ramp, broad enough for a dozen men, slowly rising to meet the walls of Jonstown.

#### ***The Assault***

The PCs form up on the siege ramp. Venharl puts skirmishers at the front, to exchange missile fire with the defenders on the wall as the ramp creeps its way closer to High Hill. Behind them, he puts his heavy infantry, to storm up the ladders and take the battlements, clearing the path for the medium infantry behind to push into the city.

Venharl gives the order for the army to advance. Carrying ladders and rams they follow the path of the ramp, just behind its expanding scarp face. Eventually the great ramp meets the walls of the Old City of Jonstown and stops, just below the battlements.

With a blast of trumpets, the assault of Jonstown begins.

The Empire rains sling stones, javelins, and boiling oil down on the attackers as they approach the ramparts; then they fight hand-to-hand to keep the besiegers from the walls. The Sartarites' ramp allows them to breach the walls around High Hill and take the Old City. They fall on the Lunar soldiers defending the old town and the Seven Mothers temple, slaying and burning.

When the invaders take a section of the wall and warriors begin to pour in, the defenders rout and run for the New City. A

few attempt to hold the Grizzly Gate but the fearful groaning of the stones unmans them, and they join the frantic retreat across the bridge. Some of the Imperial troops make an orderly retreat down Sartar's Seat into the New City and the Lunar garrison.

Once the Sartarites hold the Old City and seize both ends of the bridge, the garrison's fate is sealed. Expecting no quarter, and giving none, the Lunar troops fall back to the garrison street-by-street. The Lunar commanders, instilling their men with a fear of what will happen to them at the hands of the vengeful Sartarites, mount a defense of the streets leading away from Sartar's Seat. They barricade streets with overturned wagons and furniture, position slingers on rooftops and hurl javelins and rocks. They make the rebels pay in blood for every inch of ground.

Eventually the Sartarite warbands push the Imperial troops back to their garrison. The stronghold shuts its doors tight and the Lunars prepare to make their last stand. The Sartarites dismantle the barricades for firewood and pile wood up against the wooden palisade and set fire to it, intending to show no mercy to their former overlords.

They send fire arrows and flaming brands over the walls, until the roofs of the barracks are alight. As walls and gates crumble some of the trapped troops try to flee and are cut down.

Look at the *War* section for advice on how to run a battle. Treat this as an Extended Contest as the PCs fight their way into Jonstown against determined resistance from troops who know they will all be massacred anyway if they try to surrender. This

should have a Very High resistance. Each round may represent a new phase on the conduct of the battle: across the ramp, onto the walls, street fighting, and the burning of the garrison. Use the Climatic Consequence table for the results of this fight — some of the PCs may die in the liberation of Jonstown.

#### *The Sack of Jonstown*

With the garrison destroyed, many of the rebels decide to sack Jonstown. Their fury first turns on the Lunar quarter, where they break into buildings, drag their inhabitants into the street and slaughter them, loot the contents and then fire them. A few Imperial citizens seek shelter in Tovtarim's theater but are ruthlessly hunted down and slain.

Then the pillaging and looting begins to spread, as does the arson of houses and shops. A haze of smoke lies over Jonstown. The air fills with the sound of shrieks and screams, and the horrible sweet stench of burning bodies.

A delegation approaches the PCs. They are desperate to find who is in charge and ask them to help stop the sack. There are guild merchants pleading for their shops and livelihoods, sages terrified the fire will spread and consume priceless documents, and priestesses of Chalana Arroy, eager to stop the killing.

The PCs have a chance to intervene and bring to an end the sack of Jonstown. The PCs might take action themselves to halt those around them from their riotous conduct; or they might seek Venharl or one of the other leaders to restore order; or even find the Jonstown authorities and help them take control of their city again.

If the PCs succeed, the city authorities will remember their actions with gratitude. If they fail, much of Jonstown is pillaged before order can be restored, damaging the Jonstown Confederation's economy for years to come.

## PLAY OF THE GAME

The two key themes of this episode are the further rolling back of the Lunar Occupation and the emergence of a new order in Sartar.

The latter theme paves the way for future episodes beyond the end of this campaign. Sartar will have been liberated, but the shape of the liberated kingdom may not be what everyone expects. This is just the first of the transformations of the Sartarite state from a loose federation to something more organized, more controlled.

Venharl Stormbrow is a more ambivalent figure than Orstalor Spearlord. Where Orstalor is the Red Cow's friend and confidante during the Occupation, Venharl is a Sartarite nationalist who deems the kingdom more important than any clan or tribe within it.

Other voices will emerge in the newly liberated Sartar too, voices for whom even Sartar is too small a stage, and for whom the bringing down of the Red Moon is more important than anything else. The Red Cow may not like their new superiors any more than they liked the old.

However, the opportunity exists for the PCs to gain new revelations. Fighting alongside those from different clans and tribes, they may learn to overcome prejudices and work for a higher goal — that of Sartar or bringing down the Red Moon.

# THE BATTLE OF DANGERFORD

## BEGIN WITH

Kallyr Starbrow calls the PCs to Red Cow Fort. The Fort buzzes with visitors. There are horses everywhere; their riders sit around campfires sharpening their swords and lances or practicing with swords and shields.

There are warriors here from all across Sartar. Men and women from the militias of the Swenstown and Wilmskirk Confederations dig latrines and stake out campgrounds.

People mill about the entrance to the Citadel and you have to push and shove to get inside. Rumors fly thick and fast: "The King of Tarsh has sent General Fazzur Wideread south," and "the army is big, some say ten thousand men."

"The last time we pushed the Empire out of Sartar, Fazzur's relief column crossed at Dangerford. I believe he will try to cross there again," says Kallyr, drawing a map in the ground with a stick. "However, Fazzur is a wily old dog and I cannot commit these regiments until I am certain where we must face them. If we control Dangerford Fort, a small force might be able to delay any Lunar scouts from crossing, allowing the army time to muster."

"If the reports of his numbers are true, he outnumbers us," she tells them. "We have to defend at the crossing of the Creek where their numbers cannot be used to outflank and surround us." Kallyr draws in the dirt as she speaks, starting with two lines for the Creek and then units on either side. When she discusses the envelopment, she rubs her stick over the Sartarite side, obliterating it.

Kallyr looks tired, with dark circles under her eyes; it is obvious she has not slept in days. A healer fusses around her, trying to get her to drink herbal tea. "The inevitable gut rot of an army on the march," says Kallyr as she drains the foul smelling brew. "Ah, my old friends, we have come so far, and are so very close now. We can rest soon."

Rumor has it that she has not lit the Flame of Sartar.

"My scouts and spies tell me that the Empire has abandoned Dangerford," Kallyr tells them. "I need the Eleven Lights to rouse the Dolutha and hold Dangerford Fort."

## CAST

Kallyr Starbrow, Ivar Quickstep, The Dolutha Ring, Venharl Stormbrow

## SITUATION

A Tarshite army of five thousand men, commanded by Fazzur Wideread, begins marching on Godsdays (Full Half Moon) of Harmony Week of Fire Season from Alda-Chur, reaching Herongreen Fort on Waterday (Dying Moon) of Death Week. They remain camped there over the Black Moon on Clayday.

The Dinacoli welcome the Tarshites — celebrating their arrival as liberators from Kallyr Starbrow and her Sartarite rebels. Orlanthi spies set out to take word to Sartarite commanders.

On Windsday (Crescent Come Moon) of Death Week, the Tarshite force at Herongreen Fort marches south to try to cross at Dangerford. Kallyr begins marching towards Dangerford from Red Cow Fort, now knowing the Tarshite army will try to cross there.

#### *Lunar Forces at the Battle of Dangerford*

Commanded by Fazzur Wideread, the general who crushed Starbrow's Rebellion in 1613, the following regiments are arrayed against the rebels at Dangerford:

#### *Provincial Army*

**Veterans Cavalry:** 500 Heavy Cavalry.  
**2nd Furthest Cavalry:** 500 Heavy Cavalry.  
**3rd Furthest Cavalry:** 500 Heavy Cavalry.  
**Bagnot Foot:** 1000 Heavy Infantry.  
**Dunstop Foot:** 1000 Heavy Infantry.  
**1st Furthest Foot:** 1000 Heavy Infantry.  
**2nd Furthest Foot:** 1000 Heavy Infantry.  
**Golddedge Foot:** 1000 Heavy Infantry.  
**Talfort Foot:** 1000 Heavy Infantry.

#### *Cavalry Corps*

**Antelope Lancers:** 500 Heavy Cavalry.  
**Bell Temple:** 500 Heavy Cavalry.  
**Char-un:** 500 Heavy Cavalry.  
**Whipstock:** 500 Heavy Cavalry.  
**Arrowstone:** 500 Heavy Cavalry.  
**Goldwave:** 500 Heavy Cavalry.  
**Uplands:** 500 Heavy Cavalry.  
**Queen's Horse:** 500 Heavy Cavalry.  
**Starkin:** 500 Light Cavalry.  
**Moon Arrow:** 500 Light Cavalry.

**Paper Strength:** 12,500 — however no regiments are at full strength, and the march south in the freezing conditions has rendered many of Fazzur's troops incapacitated through cold related injuries.

#### *Rebel Forces at the Battle of Dangerford*

The Swenstown, Jonstown, and Wilmskirk Confederations have raised their tribal militias and sent them north to aid Kallyr. Surprising everyone, the Ducks have sent help too! After the years of the Occupation the tribal militias are ill equipped and poorly organized, but determined to keep their freedom. These units are at a third to half of their paper strength, and the Heavy units field as Light in many cases due to a lack of equipment.

The Malani and Colymar have not sent their forces, and their militias instead watch the crossing at Two Sisters, fearing an attack on Runegate.

The Culbrea host, the Headhunters, have given Kallyr their loyalty, as has the Kheldon host, the Antlercase. She also commands the rebels who

fought with her at the raising of the Sky Ship, and at Boldhome and Jonstown — the Candle Dancers, as well as the Kheldon tribal host. These units have all suffered losses in the battles to liberate Sartar's forts and cities and are at half-strength.

#### *Sartar City Militia*

**1st Mounted Jonstown Confederation:** 500 Heavy Cavalry.  
**2nd Mounted Jonstown Confederation:** 500 Heavy Cavalry.  
**1st Mounted Swenstown Confederation:** 500 Heavy Cavalry.  
**1st Mounted Wilmskirk Confederation:** 500 Heavy Cavalry.  
**1st Mounted Boldhome:** 500 Heavy Cavalry.  
**2nd Mounted Boldhome:** 500 Heavy Cavalry.  
**1st Jonstown Foot:** 1000 Light Infantry.  
**2nd Jonstown Foot:** 1000 Light Infantry.  
**1st Swenstown Foot:** 1000 Light Infantry.  
**1st Wilmskirk Foot:** 1000 Light Infantry.  
**1st Boldhome Foot:** 1000 Light Infantry.  
**2nd Boldhome Foot:** 1000 Light Infantry.  
**1<sup>st</sup> Duck Point:** 250 Light Infantry (Ducks).  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Duck Point:** 250 Light Infantry (Ducks).  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Duck Point:** 250 Light Infantry (Ducks).

#### *Rebel Army*

**Antlercase:** 500 Heavy Cavalry.  
**Headhunters:** 500 Heavy Cavalry.  
**Candle Dancers:** 500 Light Infantry.

**Paper Strength:** 10,500 — no regiments are at full strength.

Though the Sartarites are outnumbered they will take the day through sheer inspiration and force General Fazzur to retreat. Sartar is free!

## CONNECTED EPISODES

The Storm Breaks!, The Battle of Dangerford

## ACTS, SCENES AND BEATS

### DANGERFORD

Let the players come up with a suitable plan to seize control of Dangerford Fort. The option we consider here is rebellion and insurrection.

### Rebellion

The Red Cow party might ask a number of NPCs to help them persuade the Dolutha to rise up. They may already have come across the Dolutha exiles in Red Cow Fort: Twisted Morganeth, Inganna Koscheisdottir, Korolfin Longeye, Morgan Sword-Tongue, and Orlmakt Nine-Winds. These exiles

## FAZZUR IN WINTER

*This episode takes place in Dark Season. Generals have mustered their armies to fight, despite the risks of losing their soldiers to exposure, because the control of Dragon Pass is at stake. This is unheard of. Fazzur has taken the bold decision to launch a winter attack in order to defeat the Sartarites before they can organize. The Creek is high, and the water icy cold — those who fall in risk hypothermia and death. Ice clings to both shores. Snow and a hard white frost covers the ground. The days are bright but short, and the nights are bitterly cold.*

have long lobbied the Red Cow for help in overthrowing Ivar Quickstep — now could be their time to act.

The exiles are all outlaws and cannot brazenly walk into Dolutha clan lands — any member of the Dolutha might kill them on sight. However, they can enter the clan lands in secret and rouse those Dolutha loyal to Orlanth and Sartar to rise up against the occupiers.

If the PCs decide to help in rousing the Dolutha, they may know enough about Ivar's betrayal of Good Arnal to sway his people against him (a +6 Situational Modifier).

Even if the people are ready to revolt, someone has to confront Ivar. No one within the clan wants to worsen the Dolutha's time by having kinstrife on their hands. And so the exiles ask the PCs to remove Ivar from office.

### **Insurrection**

Korolfin gives the PCs advice, "Ivar is not yet lost, and the steadfast loyal thane still smolders within him. Make him see he is being deceived by the Teller of Lies, then the dawn may come for the Dolutha after their Long Night."

If the PCs travel to Dangerford Fort as Red Cow, Cinsina, or House of Sartar emissaries, the Sworn Knives will usher them into Ivar's hall — but first demand their weapons. Refusal means the Sworn Knives will bar admission. Concealing weapons is a contest.

Ivar sits huddled in his furs. Word of the Dragonrise has reached him, and with it he sees he has lost his wager that backing the Empire was the easy path to Dolutha advancement.

Burning with injured pride at this reversal of fortune, when the PCs' delegation arrives, Ivar tells them that the Dolutha will not join Starbrow but will join with King Petrad of the Dinacoli in welcoming the "Tarshtite army of salvation."

If the PCs try to get Ivar to see that he has been deceived (by Elmal's foe the Teller of Lies) run it as a Group Simple Contest. Allow each player an attempt to persuade Ivar to see how he has been corrupted by honeyed-words whispered in his ear. The resistance is Very High, but Multiple Opponent Penalties apply.

If Ivar realizes he has been deceived, he rises to his feet, shrugging off the furs he wears year-round. "I would not be loyal to Orlanth if I believed him so easily defeated," he says, lifting his shield from the wall and smashing it into the surprised Hastur's face and then uses its sharp rim to cut his throat. The Sworn Knives reach for their weapons; they will try to kill the PCs and Ivar, and seize control of Dangerford.

If the PCs cannot persuade Ivar to see the error of his ways, he orders the Sworn Knives to kill them: "For they have come to my hall with the desire to overthrow me." Hastur orders his men to "form a line" and has his soldiers advance on the PCs to cut them down.

Either way this is likely to end in a fight in Ivar's hall in Dangerford Fort as the PCs battle the Sworn Knives. If Ivar has not seen the error of his ways, he should duel with one of the PCs.

If there are too many Sworn Knives for the PCs to defeat, the Game Master should have rebellious Dolutha clan folk storm the fort to help them kill the remaining mercenaries.

### **Liberating Dangerford**

If the PCs manage to raise rebellion, then outside, in the streets of Dangerford, a battle rages between the garrison and the Dolutha outlaws. Eventually the garrison breaks and flees across the Creek, heading into Dinacoli territory.

The Dolutha have been liberated! There will be a moment of celebration, but gradually the approach of the Tarshtite army brings everyone to their senses.

Twisted Morganeth and Korolfin take charge of the Dolutha. They try to evacuate those unable to fight from Dangerford. Under Twisted Morganeth's leadership, the refugees flee to Red Cow Fort, cementing ties between the two clans, forged in exile. Meanwhile Korolfin raises what men he has, and joins them to the Eleven Lights bodyguard.

"This is our home," Korolfin tells the PCs, "and our blood and treasure should be spent defending it against an Empire that has brought us so much pain."

### **The Battle of Dangerford Fort**

Scouts from the Moon Arrow cavalry reach Dangerford before the main body of either army. General Fazzur Wideread gives these troops orders to hold the crossing until the main army arrives.

The expeditionary force consists of troops from the Moon Arrow, under the command of Belkar Arimsson. There are over 250 cavalrymen in Belkar's command. Belkar and his men will try to seize control of the fort first, then the town. The fort is strategically important because any army approaching the ford must pass by the fort, and whilst it remains occupied, anyone holding the fort can rain down slingshot and arrows on everyone trying to cross or sally forth to attack them.

Find out the PCs' plan. The Game Master can use Korolfin, Morgan and Orlmakt to offer advice and prompt. Patrols and sentries will give the rebels warning of the approach of the Empire; without it Belkar's men may surprise them. Dangerford Fort is easily defended but Dangerford Village has no walls along the banks of the Creek, relying on the river itself as defense. This means there are no ramparts for anyone holding the crossing to hide behind, except at Dangerford Fort. Improvising barricades from carts, fences from households in the village, and rubble will give the defenders some protection against missile fire. Communication between the Fort and Village could use smoke, flags, trumpets or signal mirrors, but Orlanthi have magical options under the Air Rune such as to Send or Hear Words on Wind and the PCs will doubtless come up with more. The players might decide to lay traps, such as caltrops in the river or pits on Isle Dangerous. Be conscious that they only have limited resources and limited time; where do they get the caltrops, how many pit traps can they organize?

The aid of the Dolutha boosts the Eleven Lights War Resource by a Situational Modifier of +6. Use a War Resource of 12 **tl** for the Moon Arrow cavalry.

Refer to the template episode *War* on how to run a battle. The PCs' leader should contend with Belkar to determine the overall outcome of each battle, with the group playing out contests for their part in key moments of the battle.

Without a siege train, Belkar has little desire to storm Dangerford Fort, but he has orders from General Fazzur that he

does not want to disobey. With no time to construct a battering ram or build a siege ramp, and with no artillery to attack the walls, Belkar has to rely on ropes and crude grappling hooks to climb the walls. Aware that an attack by day would be suicide, Belkar tries a night attack on Clayday, when there is no moon to reveal his assault. His men's faces blackened, Belkar tries to catch the defenders unaware and seize the fort.

If Belkar's raid fails then his forces decide to ignore Dangerford Fort and try to take control of the crossing anyway, by seizing the crossing points and Isle Dangerous. How difficult this is depends on the improvised defenses the PCs have put in place on the Village side of the Crossing.

If the PCs lose control of the fort or crossing, they may want to counter-attack to retake it themselves.

This may result in a to-and-fro struggle. After each exchange use the Resource Depletion table to reduce the War Resource of the combatants. Apply any penalties to leadership abilities as well, as the troops' confidence in a losing commander falls.

Belkar is not stupid and does not waste his men fruitlessly, but he also knows his mission carries with it great possibilities for advancement for the man who held Dangerford. If his War Resource falls to 12, then he sounds the retreat, ceding the rebels the crossing.

The Dolutha are not suicidal either. If the Eleven Lights War Resource falls to 12, then the Dolutha abandon their weapons and flee — heading for the safety of Red Cow Fort.

If the battle for control of the crossing continues, relief only comes on the morning of Clayday when Kallyr's war host arrives. With the Imperial Army up the road, there is little time for celebration.

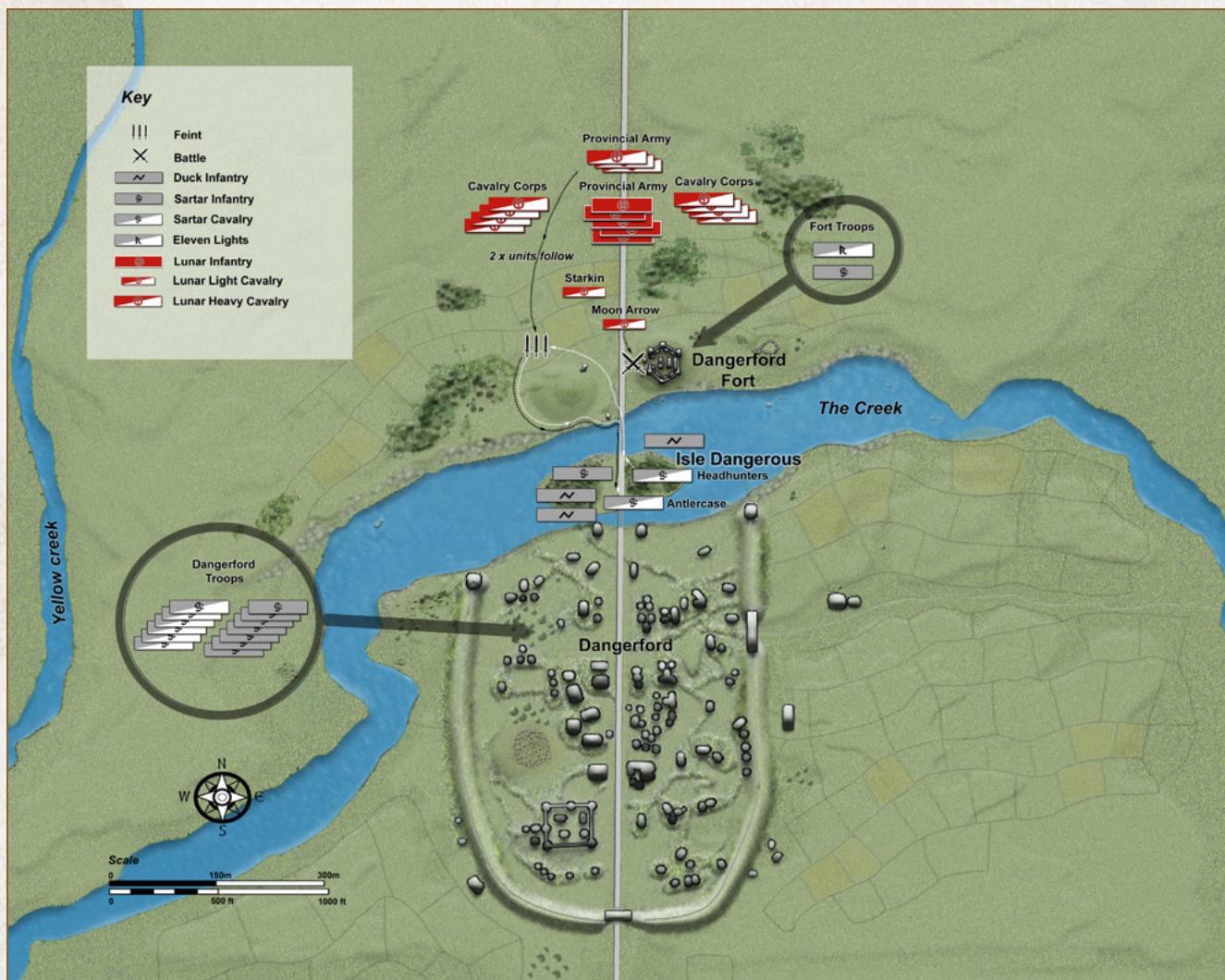
## THE FREEDOM BATTLE

The Battle takes place on Windsday of Death Week. Ten thousand troops drawn from the Provincial Army under General Fazzur Wideread try to take the river crossing at Dangerford.

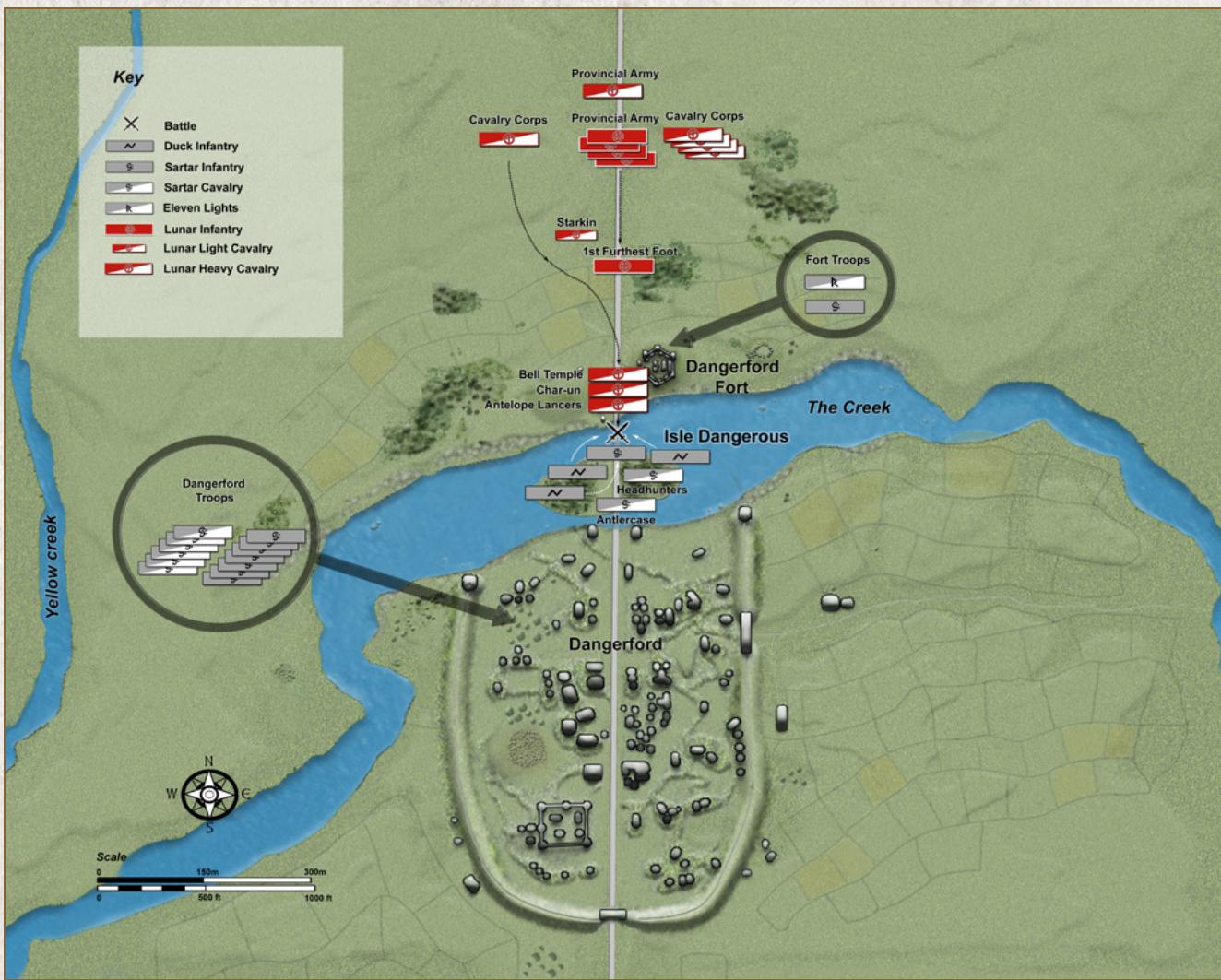
The rebels call it the Freedom Battle.

Kallyr positions the bulk of her forces along the southern bank of the Creek in Dangerford Village, stationing her infantry to hold the banks, with her cavalry on their flanks. The walls of the village protect them to the east, west, and south, and she puts some of her greener troops on those walls — to screen for raiders and to stay out of trouble. She sends the Candle Dancers along with the Eleven Lights, the PCs, to hold Dangerford Fort. She stations the Wilmskirk Foot and the Ducks on Isle Dangerous.

In response, Fazzur draws up north of the crossing, with his infantry in the center and his cavalry on his wings.



Maps showing the progress of the Freedom Battle: #1 Battle Begins



Maps showing the progress of the Freedom Battle: #2 Battle for Isle Dangerous

See the *War* section from Common Activities for advice on how to run a battle.

The outcome of this battle is predetermined — a Sartarite win drives the Empire out of Sartar — so frame contests around the PCs' quest for personal glory (or cowardice) on the battlefield.

We provide scenes below for various points in the battle.

#### *The Eleven Lights*

"This is your hour," Kallyr tells the PCs, indicating the position of Orlanth's Ring in the zenith of the sky at night. "The Eleven Lights can win this day. Orlanth's Ring is with Pole Star."

She orders her household to help the PCs set up their altars on the upper level of the tower in Dangerford Fort. (If the PCs failed to hold Dangerford Fort, Kallyr uses the guardhouse over the East Gate of Dangerford Village for all three altars.)

"My Candle Dancers will fight alongside you and hold Dangerford Fort, I believe you have fought together before" she says. The leaders of her regiment — Orstalor Spearlord, Venharl Stormbrow, and Orngerin Thundercape — join the PCs in Dangerford Fort along with their warbands. They defer to the Chief Bodyguard of the Eleven Lights, but intend to station men on the walls and in the towers.

"When the time comes," Kallyr says, "let your Starfire rain down upon the Lunar forces. Turn the tide when it seems we might fail."

Emphasize to the PCs that their ritual takes time, and it won't be possible to use Starfire during the opening scenes of the battle. Once empowered the High Priest can summon Starfire whenever they need — but performing the ritual a second time would take longer than this battle might last, so such a usage ought to be decisive.

#### *The Coming Storm*

Kallyr's housecarls raise her on a shield, supported on their shoulders, so that everyone can see her as she addresses her troops.

"A dozen years ago I led you in throwing the Empire out of our land. Some of you here with me today, were with me then. We failed then, we submitted to Fazzur's yoke, and Hofstaring fell. We will not fail again," Kallyr begins falteringly at first, but her voice gathers more strength, the star jewel glowing brightly upon her forehead.

"We endured. They took our lands, made slaves of us, and even tried to fetter the Wind. But we did not falter in our

faith that we would be free again. We have lost our kin, cattle and wealth to the Empire. Today is the day you all take blood vengeance for those wrongs.

"Look to the man to your left and right. You are free men. We forced the Empire out of Sartar. No Lunar soldier hides in our cities and forts now. No tax collector beggars our kin. We are free.

"Today you defend that freedom against the coming storm.

"Don't fight for me. Fight for yourselves, fight for the man to your left and right, fight for your kin at home. This is your battle for your freedom. This is the Freedom Battle.

"General Fazzur comes to take your freedom. What do you say to him?"

The crowd softly raises their voices, "No..."

"General Fazzur cannot hear you! What do you say to him?" asks Kallyr again.

"No! No! No! No!" replies the shout from thousands of throats, echoing around Dangerford. Spears and swords rattle against shields, building to a crescendo. "No! No! No!"

"No!" becomes the cry at the Freedom Battle.

### **Battle Begins**

The battle begins with Kallyr sending the Headhunters and Antlercase north of the Creek to harass the Lunar camp and retreat, so as to lure the Empire into the killing ground of the ford. They ride up to the Lunar lines and throw javelins at them. The inexperienced 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Furthest cavalry break from the Lunar lines to give pursuit. As they chase the rebels into the water and across the ford they run straight into the Wilmskirk Foot and Ducks who make short work of the cavalry in the slippery shallows around the island.

A Thunder Shout goes up from the Sartarite lines.

Fazzur chooses not to wait for the rebels to get more organized and marches his Foot regiments down to Dangerford Fort and the crossing. He uses his cavalry to screen his approach.

### **Battle for Dangerford Fort**

Fazzur has decided he needs to take Dangerford Fort. He has brought scaling ladders, grappling hooks, and siege artillery such as ballistae and arbalests. Whilst his cavalry take control of the northern bank, the 1<sup>st</sup> Furthest Foot seeks to storm the fort.

The Tarshite assault on Dangerford Fort is bloody, but the magicians need to focus on their ritual and can do little to help. The Candle Dancers, and the Eleven Lights bodyguard must hold the walls, weathering Fazzur's attempts to sweep the walls with artillery before grappling hooks and scaling ladders come over the battlements. Other troops try to smash the gates with a huge ram, comrades shielding those carrying the ram from missile fire from the fort with shields over their heads.

The battle on the walls is brutal and gory; a scene of ferocious sword and axe work and flaring combative magics. Some parts are lost for minutes at a time until one of the leaders, Orstalor, Venharl, or Orngerin organizes a counter-attack to clear the section of parapet of attackers. At one point some of the Furthest Foot might break through and make it into the courtyard and then to the tower. The Eleven Lights bodyguard must certainly hold off the assault!

The Chief Bodyguard of the Eleven Lights is in command of the defense and should succeed in a contest to hold Dangerford Fort. On a success the rebels hold the Fort, on a failure they are overrun and must flee — the Eleven Lights magical ritual will be ruined in this case.

The results of the Chief Bodyguard's contest form a Plot Augment to the PCs when they resolve contests for their individual parts in the battle.

### **Battle for Isle Dangerous**

Fazzur resolves to take Isle Dangerous. He directs his cavalry, the Antelope Lancers, the Bell Temple, and Char-un to seize control of the northern part of the ford and the island. The Ducks and the Wilmskirk Foot fight bravely but the cavalry is relentless.

After the shield wall bristling with spears beats off the Antelope Lancers, the Thunder Shout from the rebels is full-throated. By the time they repel the Bell Temple assault so many lie dead the shout is ragged and the Creek flows red with blood. Stabbing long spears and cutting swords all exact their grim toll. The rebel ranks are fraying, barely enough shields overlapping in the center, the flanks of the shield wall in tatters.

Then the Char-un smash through the remaining defenders, their two-handed kontos lances twice as long as a man is tall, propelled by the weight of their warhorses. The defenders stagger and collapse backwards, their line buckling and breaking; those still standing now in full rout, scrambling desperately to the southern bank, the pursuing cavalry at their backs. The ducks save some of the men and women of Wilmskirk from drowning or being cut down as they flee. The blood-spattered survivors are few, pulled from the freezing water by their comrades in Dangerford Village.

The Char-un cavalry now holds Isle Dangerous. Cries go up to take it back, but Kallyr holds her line.

The Eleven Lights magic is still not ready.

### **The Big Push**

Fazzur dispatches the Bagnot Foot to make a second attempt at Dangerford Fort. At the same time he tries to push across to the southern bank.

The second assault on Dangerford Fort is much like the first, so treat this one as a Costly Success as the defenders work to keep the Eleven Lights ritual intact. If the PCs suffer Defeats, it may be that the Bagnot Foot has taken the walls and gates of Dangerford Fort and that the survivors of the Candle Dancers hole up in the tower, trying to keep the defenders out long enough to allow the ritual to be completed.

Fazzur begins the assault on the southern bank by sending more of his cavalry across the water from Isle Dangerous. Waves of cavalry break on the Sartarite ranks. The ford becomes blocked with the bodies from both sides, people, and horses. The cries of the wounded and dying fill the air, the clash of bronze on bronze, and horses screaming in their death throes. The Goldwave, Starkin, and Queen's Horse cavalry regiments break on the Sartarite line, but then the Arrowstone push across the bank and into Dangerford Village.

The fighting is fierce, but Fazzur begins sending his infantry across the Creek behind the cavalry to fight in the press. The

infantry come in waves, but they make their toehold on the southern bank a solid beachhead and begin grinding their way inexorably through the Sartarite ranks. The superior numbers of the Tarshites, who outnumber the Sartarites, begins to tell.

### **Stemming the Tide**

If the PCs have kept their Eleven Lights ceremony going for all this time, they can use their Starfire ritual to rain down hell upon the Lunar ranks and turn the tide of battle:

Meteoric lights arc down through the Middle Air leaving silvery trails. Each bursts into a multitude of fragments accompanied moments later by the thunder of detonations, throwing a dance of white light and shadow across the field of battle. The Tarshites barely have time to look up in wonder — and terror — before the Starfire falls amongst them. The conflagration devours men and horses. Splattered by the molten armor and accoutrements of dead comrades, the survivors lose all military cohesion, converted into a disorganized rabble. Their regimental standards ignite, spirits howling in agonizing torment. Confined together, confronted by horror, every soldier fights for their own survival seeking any means of escape shoving, stabbing, and screaming in total rout.

Only the bodyguard surrounding General Fazzur stands firm, shields locked together, protected from the incineration by the strength of his personal banner.

Across the river the scene of ruin momentarily stuns the rebels.

### **Rout**

As the Lunar Army disintegrates, the rebels charge across the ford yelling war cries to fall on their foe and the slaying begins.

General Fazzur tries to stem the rout and regroup the survivors of the onslaught to a steady retreat; despite his efforts the vengeful Sartarites cut many down as they flee. The few remnants of the once proud host fall back to Alda-Chur where they take refuge.

A huge shout goes up from the Sartarite ranks, “I fought, We won!”

## **PLAY OF THE GAME**

This scenario covers both the liberation of the Dolutha as well as the Freedom Battle.

With the fall of Ivar Quickstep, the Cinsina are entirely freed from leadership by Lunar sympathizers and are fully part of a free Sartar.

One tricky question in the liberation of the Dolutha is kinstrife. There are more converts in the Dolutha than the Red Cow, and more chance the Dolutha will end up fighting each other. Whilst for the outlaws, this is of no concern — legally they are no longer Dolutha — for those members of the clan that rise up this is kinstrife. Killing Sworn Knives and Lunar soldiers is permissible, but fighting kin brings the ruin of kinstrife.

The liberation of the Dolutha may well end in tragedy with kinstrife threatening to break the clan. The Dolutha will need PCs to atone for the crime, but they already have a history of kinstrife to contend with.

The Dolutha may be doomed to break apart in the early days of the Hero Wars, the tragedy of their kinstrife forever blighting the clan in the eyes of the gods, who remove their protection from the clan. It is likely the clan stumbles from tragedy to tragedy until it meets its fate. The ‘tragedy of the Dolutha’ is outside the scope of this book, but may be an interesting direction for future episodes of the Game Master’s own creation.

The Freedom Battle is the climax of the campaign. With it, Sartar can breathe free again. The episode is set up so that the PCs can act in a decisive moment in that battle.

Take some time before battle begins for role-play in Dangerford Fort with the Candle Dancers. The PCs will have met many of these rebels during the campaign — this is the chance for the PCs to be together with these NPCs at the climax of the campaign. Feel free to add other personalities from the campaign your PCs would appreciate having together at these final climactic moments.

We assume the PCs win the battle for Dangerford Fort. If they lost their part, the remainder of the battle is uncertain. Kallyr will still carry the day, but the PCs won’t be the heroes of the clash of arms. If this might prove too unsatisfying you can make the outcome of the first wave assault on Dangerford Fort a victory and the PCs’ part in it a Costly Success. We treat the second assault as a Costly Success anyway.

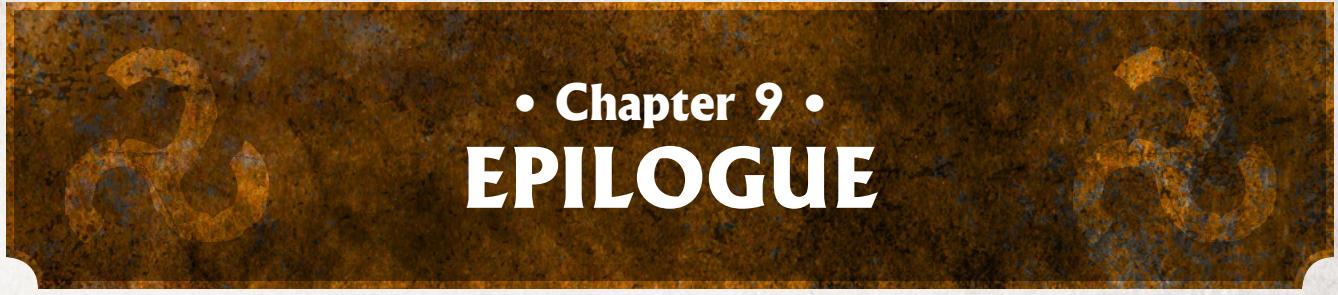
You may want to remind the player of the Pyrrhic Victory rules. If a player was so-minded the Chief Bodyguard’s defense of Dangerford Fort might be a heroic death for them and many of the troops under their command. If that happens, don’t run Fazzur’s second assault as it would demean the sacrifice made in the first battle. The Bagnot Foot all die in the hell that is Dangerford Fort at that point, and cannot attack.

If the PCs cannot summon their Starfire, Kallyr’s charismatic and inspired leadership is what stems the tide. Seemingly everywhere at once she rallies the Sartarite forces again and again until they push the Tarshite army back into the water. The Sartarites fight with a desperation born of the years of the Occupation and their attacks become frenzied, berserker assaults on the enemy. Again, remind any players about the Pyrrhic Victory rules at this point. Pressed back upon their own reserves the Tarshites begin fighting through their own rear lines to escape the furious Sartarite assault. They break and run.

In this outcome although the battle is still won, the cost to the Sartarites is far greater, with 50% of their troops dead to some 30% of the Tarshite forces. If the Eleven Lights strike, this situation is reversed, Sartarite casualties are around 30% but the Tarshites suffer 50% casualties.

With the First Battle of Dangerford, a success for the newly liberated kingdom, the Lunar Occupation has ended. For the first time in a generation, Sartarites are free.

The Hero Wars hold many trials for the new nation yet, but these are beyond the scope of this book. If you have played through from the beginning, the liberation of the Red Cow clan may be an ideal place to stop, or at least pause for breath before picking up your story. The newly freed kingdom has many threats and challenges before it, but perhaps the players should enjoy this victory first.



## • Chapter 9 •

# EPILOGUE

## FREE AT LAST?

### THE HERO WARS HAVE ONLY JUST BEGUN

The liberation of the Kingdom of Sartar may be a good point to pause the campaign — this is certainly a high note and skalds will sing of those who took part in these events for many years to come.

The immediate question for each clan after liberation is the fate of their collaborators, the Moon Winds. Most can be outlawed for turning their backs on Orlanth and Eralda, and once exiled be killed by those seeking vengeance. Everyone hears of other clans who drive out and even slay their collaborators; the Moon Winds become jittery and some pack their bags to head north to Alda-Chur. Yet for many, these 'collaborators' are friends and kin, and in some clans, including the Red Cow, not everyone finds it easy to take revenge on them.

The fate of Wulfsland may be undecided. The Sartarite High Command wants to drive Jomes out of Sartar, seeing him as a dangerous fifth column, but with Kostajor Wolf-Champion and his sons dead, many believe the Telmori now have few if any ties to the kingdom, and the presence of Jomes in Wulfsland could keep them in check a little longer. Queen Kallyr claims to have the

loyalty of the Telmori, but this does not placate the Cinsina, who still do not trust her. In the meantime, the Daughters of Mabodh call for the freeing of their people. The struggle for Wulfsland will occupy much of the Jonstown Confederation in 1626.

Subsequent events of the Hero Wars lie beyond the scope of this book.

In 1626, Tarsh will try to overcome Sartar again, hoping to strike before the new kingdom can be put in order. Queen Kallyr and Queen Leika Orlkensorsdotter (of the Colymar) will defeat the Tarshite army at the Battle of the Queens, but at great cost.

In 1627, Argrath returns to the Eleven Lights, seeking their help in reclaiming the Far Place of northern Sartar from the rule of the Lunar Empire.

In addition, there are two later events of the Hero Wars that stem from material in this campaign.

The first is that Argrath brings aurochs back to Dragon Pass to fulfill an ancient prophecy. He does this by successfully completing *The Stealing of the Giant's Cows* and the three quests of *The Testing of Red Cow Fort* (not included in this book). The Cinsina cooperate with Argrath on these quests.

The second is that Argrath repays Cinsina help in returning aurochs to Dragon Pass by driving the Telmori from the Wolf Hills. The human victors of Argrath's battles against the wolfmen become known as the Wolfskins, for they wear the pelts of their victims, and become a very highly honored band of warriors wherever they are recognized.

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