



The Dark Eye

**THE WHITE LAKE**  
**THEATER KNIGHTS I**







Theater Knights 1: The White Lake





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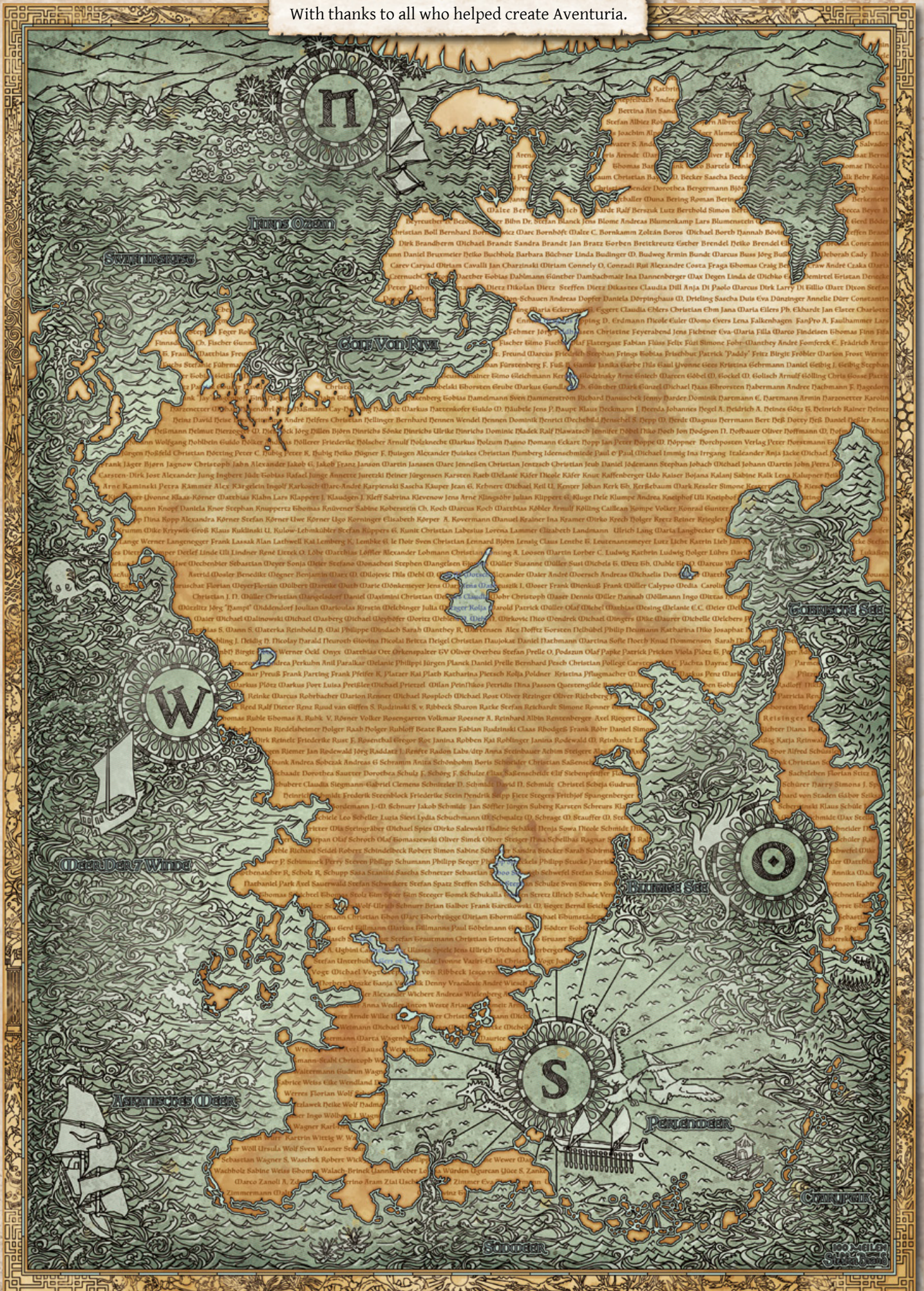
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With thanks to all who helped create Aventuria.





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To make a scene easier for the heroes, use the suggestions in this paragraph.



To make a scene more difficult for the heroes, use the suggestions in this paragraph.

• *Read-Aloud Text:* You can read or paraphrase these sections for your players. They contain no GM-only information.

• *GM Information:* This information is for the GM, and is not meant for the heroes. It is sometimes just useful background information.

• *Rumors:* When heroes try to gather information, they might hear gossip and hearsay. Rumors are marked with a + (true), a - (false), or a +/- (partly true, partly false).

• *Regarding NPC Stats:* The stats given for NPCs contain all information relevant to the scenario but might not be complete, as we do not necessarily include every skill with a rating higher than 0. This is especially true for NPCs with a large number of skills, such as spellcasters and Blessed Ones (for example, the stats for a powerful mage NPC might not include SR in *Prepare Food*). Feel free to add applicable skills, as you see fit.

• These boxes contain important information about the game!

### Quality, Prices, and Beds

Taverns and Inns are rated by levels associated with their (Q)uality, (P)rice, and (B)eds. *Quality* indicates the establishment's overall condition, *Price* modifies the prices listed in the *Core Rules* for services and goods by the given percentage, and *Beds* indicates the maximum number of beds available.



NPCs with this symbol play an important role in future official adventures.



NPCs with this symbol hold a position that will prove important in future official adventures, but the character itself can be replaced with another one of your choosing.



NPCs with this symbol do not appear in future official adventures. You can reuse them freely in your campaigns and adventures.



NPCs with this symbol are important to the campaign and will likely be in other official campaign books. You can easily replace them, if the new character fulfills the same function (e.g. employer, arch-nemesis for the campaign). Outside the campaign, the character is considered a Pawn.

Level	Quality	Price
1	Miserable hovel	Very cheap (50% of normal price)
2	Dirty dive	Cheap (75% of normal price)
3	Simple inn	Normal (normal price)
4	Good middle-class tavern	Expensive (150% of normal price)
5	Exquisite hotel	Very expensive (200% of normal price)
6	Luxurious hotel	Extremely expensive (400% of normal price)

### Currency Calculator

Unless otherwise noted in a general stat block, any mention of money refers to the country's currency. Most parts of the Bornland accept Middenrealm coins.

Bornland	Middenrealm	Value in Silverthalers
Batz	1 Ducat	10
Groat	1 Silverthaler	1
Farthing	1 Haler	0.1



# Introduction

*The cowards escaped with goat and cart,  
Of ours, just thirty remained.*

*The goblins beat the drum to war,  
But Lionsford we claimed.*

—from the epic poem *Kor's Chosen*, by Aljosha of Pilcrest,  
about 200 FB

*"Then Orvai Kurim thrust his mighty tusks into the flesh of  
the iron man and ripped the skin from his bones in big, bloody  
rags. And with his hot breath, Orvai Kurim melted the iron  
bones and forged them into a large bowl. And with his urine,  
Orvai Kurim bleached the torn skin and made it supple. And  
with his swift fingers, Orvai Kurim stretched the skin over the  
bowl to make a drum. And into the belly of the drum, Orvai  
Kurim spat all the rage and vengeance Nacka Rachti awoke in  
him. And the iron men themselves shall suffer the horror they  
sought to bring to the suulak."*

—myth of the Lungai Theluzi, as told by Triinuun  
Stonetooth, modern

## GM Introduction

Greetings to the Twelve!

In your hands you hold **The White Lake**—the first of six adventures in an exciting new campaign for *The Dark Eye* surrounding the legacy of the Theater Knights in the Bornland and the search for the legendary goblin, Timbal. These adventures are designed for sequential play, but you can also play each as a stand-alone adventure or even omit an adventure from the campaign. To simplify this, we mark important elements with the following symbol:



Many of these elements will appear in successive adventures, so it is a good idea to write down the outcome of these encounters. Some of the players' decisions will have significant consequences for the scenario, as their heroes are at the center of the action. Important characters such as Leudara of Firunen, the Blessed One of Rondra, appear throughout the campaign, lending additional cohesion to the story.

## Campaign Background

Full of spells and secrets, the Bornland is a wild, primal landscape. Nearly 1,000 years ago, the immortal high queen of the goblin empire, Kunga Suula, was overthrown in a long, bloody battle by the Rondranian Order of the Theater in Arivor. Legend says the cruel demigod Kor manifested in the end to lead the Theater Knights to victory, and that Rondra's son also played a part in conquering the goblins' power center, Wjassuula.

To this day, Bornian noble families trace their heritage back to the Theater Knights. But despite all the Church of Rondra's work, horror stories still exist of the greed, decadence, and bloodlust corrupting the order from the time of its victory against the goblins in 220 FB until its destruction by the Emperor Priests in 337 FB. Whether the Theater Knights succumbed to the arch-demon Xarfai, or perhaps the Nameless God, is lost to history and does not seem to negatively affect the bronnjars' (their descendents) reputation. Perhaps uniquely, in the capital city of Festum, people pay no attention to ancient stories about cruel goblins; and the third generation of goblins living in festum enjoys full burghers' rights. Mantka Riiba, the goblins' leader, wants to earn these rights for other goblins in other cities, as well.

After the fall of the Shadowlands, the Bornland began to return to the trade power it once was. While the traditional nobles rule as they see fit over their serfs and their lands, there is a growing exchange between the Free Alliance trade houses and the Norbard families, whose kaleshkaskas (coaches) carry goods to the most remote country regions. This exchange of violence on the one hand, and financial power on the other, creates the **first campaign conflict**: nobles and traditionalists versus the Free Alliance and the Norbards. This conflict, along with Bornland's involvement in the campaign against the Heptarch, Helme Haffax, lends power to the *Alliance of Kor's Sign*, a newly reinvigorated cult. In the past few decades, the small sect found support among the ruling families, and it now seeks power in the area between the Born and Walsach rivers, to get rid of "snake worshipers and moneybags" and revive old, bloodthirsty traditions.

The **second campaign conflict** has to do with the awakening of the Bornland. The primal powers of river and land reclaim what humans took, and change is everywhere. Animals are uncharacteristically aggressive; farmers are reporting ghostly images of past battles in their fields; and much, much more. The inhabitants try vainly to make sense of these events. Opinions abound, but few actual insights exist.

Hundreds of Bornian warriors sent on a pilgrimage by Noble Marshal Nadjasha of Lionsford are said to have met the soul of the land, received a mysterious seed, and planted it by the Giant's Castle at Firunen. Many viewed the mighty oak tree that sprang up a short time later as a sign the land accepted the humans as its new rulers. But even the most popular heroes of the pilgrimage—the busy steward Jucho of Elkinen and the impoverished Count Linjan of Elenau—do not know what future task the country will ask of the humans.



The Alliance of Kor's Sign and its allies use the Theater Knights' old knowledge to exploit the events surrounding the awakening. The Order of the Ram leads expeditions to the Overwals, the scholars Thezmar Alatzer and Alwin K. Nodwinger study old goblin artifacts, and the witches surrounding Zelda of Ilmenstone sense the building eldritch power and ruminate about it at their meetings. But Kunga Suula, who goes by the name Mantka Riiba in Festum, is one step ahead of them all, as she experienced a similar awakening one-thousand years ago.

## The Adventures

This first adventure is an introduction to the Bornland, with its peculiarities and special narrative atmosphere. In it, the heroes witness goblin magic's eldritch power in the year 1039 FB, manifesting in a horrible drum ritual. They meet a pair of goblin lovers, get their first insights into the awakening and the Alliance of Kor's Sign, and learn about some sympathizers' motivations. Tough negotiations between belligerent Festumers and three Norbard families lead to a journey through the Marches and the snowy Red Sickle Mountains that culminates in a finale of steep cliffs, drum beats, and goblin caves.

The campaign consists of six volumes altogether, along with some smaller scenarios covering the ruckus in Festum in the spring of 1038 FB (set 6 months prior to this adventure) through the Noble Marshal's election in the winter of 1040 FB. The heroes travel and explore the Bornland's forests and swamps, the Red Sickle, the Walmountains, the plains of Seweria, the Born and Walsach rivers, the Bornwood and many small villages, as well as larger cities such as Neersand, Irberod, Firunen, Norburg, and Notmarch. With the aid of the Theater Knights' lost secrets, they also discover the mystery behind the awakening itself. They fight dragon riders, river pirates, evil cultists, and wild creatures until they solve the land's mystery and determine what Fate has in store for its inhabitants.

### Bonus Content

Please visit [www.ulisses-us.com](http://www.ulisses-us.com) for bonus downloadable content for the Theater Knights Campaign, including background information on the kingdom of Bornland (the setting for this adventure) and a glossary of common Bornian terms.



## Appropriate Heroes

Characters from the Bornland, particularly those who care deeply about the country, are especially suitable, but this campaign is also of interest for Norbards, children of bronnjars, goblins, witches, and Blessed Ones of Ronda or Kor, since these heroes must confront other members of their communities. Goblins, Norbards, witches, and other exotic heroes should be bound early on to respectable personalities, such as priests or nobles, to enjoy some measure of safety as their wards. If your players are interested in such things, you can discuss concepts like serfdom and squiredom.

The battles against the Alliance of Kor's Sign require strong sword-arms, and fighting professions usually take interest in the basic campaign motives of honor and tradition. There is no reason players cannot choose heroes from an old, Bornian noble house, though we caution against using characters from the Ask family in this campaign (for reasons that will be clear later).

Rangers could shine in this campaign, as the heroes' long journey leads through mountain ranges, dense forests, and treacherous swamps—often in unpleasant weather. Also, do not underestimate the value of skilled sailors on the Bornland's waterways. Social heroes may do well with negotiations, research, and interrogation—situations in which sensitive aesthetes, ponderous politicians or cultivated courtiers would quickly reach their limit. The same goes for Blessed Ones prepared to enforce their authority with violence, if need be.

Magically gifted heroes, especially those who follow intuitive traditions, might experience the awakening of the Bornland more intensely than their counterparts. In addition to witches and mages, zibiljas or goblin shamans are especially appropriate for this campaign. Druids are rather rare and few elves remain in the Bornland, but either would be appropriate, as well. Scholars will be seen with suspicion among illiterates; as rare as exotic birds. There are some magical phenomena for them to study, but they won't have much to do in the campaign unless they are also interested in studying the awakening, the history of the Theater Knights, the Norbards, or the magic of goblins, zibiljas, and witches.

Characters from southern Aventuria will suffer during the Bornian winter, while orcish heroes and those from barbaric cultures will not enjoy the Rondanian populace. You should not use heroes in this campaign who are unaccustomed to the basic rules of peaceful coexistence, or who ignore concepts such as town, family, state, and property.



## Hero Motivation

The heroes' employer in this adventure can use payment or sympathy to get them started in the campaign. If you want to give the heroes a deeper motivation, tie their backgrounds to the peaceful coexistence of the Middenrealms, Norbards, and goblins—the Bornland's three great ethnicities. The heroes should be concerned with the stability of these relationships, as seen in the examples below, and should rely on it because of their families, social standings, or convictions.

- The heroes are knights or warriors from the Bornland, Horasian Empire, or the Middenrealm, who follow the glorious heritage of the Theater Knights and want to protect the faithful from the threat of dark powers
- The heroes are Norbards or goblins, whether traders or rat catchers, who do not consider the bronnjars suppressors or enemies
- The heroes are all urban characters—Blessed Ones of Hesinde, scholars, or members of merchant families—who value free trade and hold few prejudices
- The heroes are Bornian spellcasters studying the awakening of the Bornland and its effects on the inhabitants

Some heroes might have prejudices against a certain group, but their prejudices should not be strong enough to make cooperation impossible.

A second motivating factor for the heroes could be the awakening itself. In addition to everything mentioned above, the awakening might affect the heroes' homes, property, or futures, and they want to find out what is happening. Examples could include a hero's home village becoming overgrown, trouble with the family farm, mysterious findings at the family gravesite, spontaneous ensoulment of a precious family heirloom, and so on. A green leaf symbol marks the scenes affected by the awakening.



## The Story So Far

This section contains a GM summary of the adventure and background information for the campaign.

### The Atmaskot Parade

From 925 to 928 FB, Atmaskot Blood-drinker, the Thorwaler, occupied Festum's warehouse island and blockaded the kingdom's most important trade harbor.

The city guard finally managed to apprehend the pirate, and angry Festumers skinned Atmaskot before he was drawn and quartered, and used his skin to make the Thorwal Drum. The restoration of the warehouse island was accompanied by the beats of this drum. Thus, the tradition of the Atmaskot Parades began: every year, on the 8th of Phex, the longshoremen carry straw effigees—called Atmaskottjes—throughout the streets of the warehouse island. Recently, the campaign against the Heptarch Helme Haffax and the subsequent rise of patriotic feelings caused the event to expand, and in Phex 1038 FB, the parade marched through half the city and ended with a symbolic quartering of the largest Atmaskottje in the Great Market. The traditional burghers celebrated, but many groups did not approve of the open hatred against strangers presented so candidly. Protests from the goblins, Norbards, and scholars from the Hesinde Village were ignored, as usual, and the beating of the drum resulted in riots and confrontations between the city guard and exiled Maraskans, young Norbards, and angry Thorwalers. The public is unaware that the awakening fed their emotions. Members of the council, whose previous worries were ignored, quickly demanded the parades be abolished. However, members of the city guard, the guilds, the newly wealthy, and the faithful of Rondra joined together to insist the parade tradition continues in its current form. Soon, the Grand Council (Festum's town council) was at a deadlock, the final decision—just as many other, more important decisions—delayed.





### The Thorwal Drum

Much like a common guard drum, this drum's corpus has a closed lower end and one skin stretched over the opening. The drum head actually is made of Atmaskot Blood-drinker's skin. The circumstances surrounding its creation are still visible, as the makers paid no attention to artifice and blackened shreds still hang down on the edges. The corpus was given a new coat of red paint for the parade. Because an enemy's skin was used to cover the drum as part of a brutal revenge campaign, it is perfectly suited for use in a ritual meant to stir rage and bloodlust (see *Orvai Kurim's War Drum* on page 9).

### The Drum's Purchase

The drum ended up at the Surjeloff Trading House via a plot between the former Noble Marshal, Jucho of Dallenthin, and Persanzig. It was to be brought discretely to the Hardener Speckles, where three Norbard families live on their houseboats, safe from the hostilities of nearby bronnjars. However, despite all secrecy, an anonymous tip concerning the whereabouts of the drum found its way to the city guard. Captain Elkman Timpski decided to try to retrieve the patriotic symbol to eliminate the shame of having lost it in the first place.

### Recent Weeks

In the autumn of 1039 FB, before the lakes of the Speckles freeze over, Captain Timpski organizes a campaign. He plans to purchase the drum using donations from wealthy Festumers—or else reclaim it by force with an armed group of supporters, if necessary. The wealthy prince Joost of Salderseed has agreed to back Timpski; he is willing to protect the drum in his castle and have it brought to Festum for the parade every year. Both the captain and the prince believe reclaiming the drum will both garner them prestige and silence their enemies in the Grand Council.



Meanwhile, military matters are underway in Bornland. Linjan of Elenau gathers supporters for a campaign against Tobrien, to defeat Helme Haffax and his followers. At winter's end, the most honorable bronnjars of the March and the Festenland set out from their estates, creating a power vacuum that gives the Alliance of Kor's Sign a chance to take control. Planning ahead, the Alliance infiltrates many noble houses and strengthens traditional social

trends—such as Timpski's campaign. The Norbards of the Speckles are the Alliance's perfect scapegoats, much like the Surjeloffs are a prime example of the "miserable moneybags of the Free Alliance who would steal a decent man's last shirt." An escalation in the Speckles could create an important precedent to allow nobles to deal more roughly with traders and Norbards in the future.

### Jääni and Bruutsh

Arguments about the Thorwal Drum also dominate conversations in Hesinde's Village, Festum's scholarly center. A society of Nandus believers organizes regular "thoughtful gatherings," inviting goblins to participate. These attempts at interracial understanding eventually bring forth the Red Choir. Two young goblins regularly attend these events: Bruutsh, the brave rat catcher, and Jääni, the goblin sorceress Mantka Riiba's promising student.

During vinous celebrations with songs and poems about chivalry and love, as well as a deep fascination with horror stories and dark occultism, the undying love of the two goblins grows—as does their friendship with Olko Knaack, a young mage. However, as goblins do not tolerate alcohol well, Jääni makes a horrible mistake about two weeks before the heroes begin their adventure. While drunk, she blurts out secrets—which Olko carelessly writes down in his vademecum—among them, hints about *Orvai Kurim's War Drum*, a ritual that can instill bloodlust in warriors via the beating of a drum. Ruefully, Jääni admits her mistake to her teacher and, as punishment, is ordered to spend three years in the Red Sickle with the goblin sorceress Triinuun Stonetooth of the Lungai Theluzi tribe, hopefully learning to appreciate the privileges of a life in Festum.

Mantka Riiba's trustworthy servant, Prähnwart—a goblin tanner journeyman—will accompany the young sorceress on her trip to the Red Sickle. However, Bruutsh does not want his beloved to leave, and follows them. In the ferry village of Hamkeln, they run afoul of Jaruslav of Cherrydale-Krabbwitzkoje (who wants to join Timpski's band). The three insist on their burgher's rights, but—such is a goblin's life—they are mocked and taken captive. Prähnwart escapes, but Jääni and Bruutsh suffer the noble's cruel capriciousness. In Festum, Prähnwart turns to Olko, who immediately decides to save his friends.




## Adventure Overview

Their recruiter hires the heroes to peacefully resolve the negotiations between Timpski's men and the Norbards of the Speckles. Olko also seeks their help to free Jääni and Bruutsh.

On their journey to Harden, the heroes experience winter in the Bornland. They witness Theater Knights' traditions being kept alive in places they visit, and notice strange events caused by the awakening of the Bornland. When they reach the Speckles, the situation seems complicated at first, and everything points to an eventual armed conflict between the Festumers and the Norbards. The heroes must first earn the Norbards' trust, then craft an agreement over the drum's price—all while avoiding several attacks. They can also try to free the enslaved goblins, but not before the goblins try to use the Thorwal Drum to take revenge against their torturers. Using the *Orvai Kurim's War Drum* ritual, they bring the negotiations to a violent and bloody conclusion and escape into the Red Sickle. The heroes—along with Tuminka Trebritzki, the zibilja, and Leudara of Firunen, the Blessed One of Rondra—pursue the goblins into the mountains, where they must deal with trolls, snow, wild beasts, and the goblins of Triinuun's tribe. They find the fleeing goblins in the tribe's home cave, but experience the drum ritual's effects a second time.

## The Awakening In-Game

 The awakening is a decades-long process, so reveal its secrets to your players carefully. In-game, the heroes witness several events with similarities—the first signs of the awakening. Old, mystical natural forces of the land, plants, or magical creatures make themselves known to the human-dominated world. In addition to this mystical trait (we call it *primal*) the events caused by the awakening have the following in common:

- Wherever the awakening rears its head, one sees faces—shapes appear in tree bark, patterns in moss, nicks in old masonry, tracks in the snow, ripples in water, and rust on metal. Sometimes the faces are vague, sometimes they are clear, and in rare instances, they are accompanied by a far-off whisper.
- The awakening is always connected to rage. We describe rage as any human, animal, or other mortal being's destructive emotions—everything from sleeplessness, to hopeless desperation, to aggression, to burning hatred.

In the March, the heroes experience the effects of the awakening several times. We indicate scenes affected by the awakening with a green leaf symbol for easy reference. A detailed description of the awakening's background follows in a later adventure. The heroes should begin to grasp the pattern of primal events, faces, and rage around the end of the *second* campaign adventure. Using magical or karmic powers, some events can be traced to awakened spirits of the dead or fleeting arcane surges, but there are no such explanations for the changes in Nature—nothing but a spontaneous gathering of elemental power.

## The Magical Drum Heads

Many legends exist about the Goblin Timbal. Some speak of a powerful war drum, made of goblin or human skin, which gives boundless strength to warriors; others speak of an uncontrolled elemental power; and still others believe it reveals a hidden path over the Iron Edge. These legends are all true, in their own way. But before the heroes ever see their first Goblin Timbal, they will likely learn about the special goblinoid magic that results when it is beat. Only a few of Kunga Suula's chosen students are aware of this magic.

### Orvai Kurim's War Drum

#### Add-On Rule

A ritual for causing *bloodlust*, in which a goblin sorceress paints images of boars and spears on a drum head with a paint made of ochre and blood, and then beats the drum.

**Check:** INT/DEX/CON

**Effect:** The sound of the drum causes *bloodlust* in members of the race whose skin was used to create the drum head. Without a successful *Willpower (Resist Threats)* check with a penalty equal to the ritual's QL, all appropriate intelligent creatures or animals suffer the state *bloodlust* (see the *Core Rules*, page 35). The effect radius is 16 yards. Beating the drum takes 1 action; the *bloodlust* lasts 2D20+QL combat rounds.

**Ritual Time:** 30 minutes

**AE Cost:** 16 AE

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** QL x 3 days

**Target Category:** Mundane objects (drums)

**Property:** Object

**Traditions:** Goblin Sorceress

**Improvement Cost:** C



# The Road to Adventure



In this segment of the adventure, the heroes meet a mage named Olko Knaack and travel to the Hardener Lake District during the onset of winter. Along the way, they experience some effects of the awakening and find their first clues about the machinations of the Alliance of Kor's Sign. By the end, they should have achieved the following.

- The heroes meet one of their three possible employers (see page 13) and learn about the Thorwal Drum
- The heroes promise to see the Thorwal Drum delivered peacefully to Timpiski and Jaruslav in the Hardener Lake District
- The heroes learn that Jääni revealed a secret that could be connected to the drum, and that she and Bruutsh were kidnapped by Jaruslav
- The heroes accompany Olko to Harden and get into an altercation with Rudjev of Arauken, who, pleasing unto Kor, preaches the tradition of the Theater Knights—intensifying hatred against “Norbards and moneybags.”



## The City of Festum

### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*Skillfully designed by the Theater Knights, the smooth and tidy roads of Bornland are the pride of the powerful trade houses. On all sides of the Great Market, you'll find the beautiful neighborhoods of the grand burghers and guild masters. Toward the harbor are quays and warehouses, as well as goblin and Maraskan neighborhoods—flanked by the warehouse island, source of the Festumers' wealth. Many refugees from Tobrien still live outside the city walls in the shabby huts of day laborers and longshoremen, which stand in sharp contrast to the villas by the river and the scholarly rooms of Hesinde's Village. Festum is a city of traders. Here one can buy almost anything that is traded on Aventuria's oceans. There are temples to each of the Twelvegods and their children, and even temples of Rastullah and Rur and Gror. Apart from the countless taverns and inns, the city boasts concert halls, theaters, academies, museums, and even a zoo. And let's not forget Norbard Meadow, where the kaleshkas of four Norbard families, or meshpochas, await the onset of winter.*



## Festum, City of Wealth

**Region:** Bornland

**Population:** 33,000 humans (including 3,000 Maraskani exiles) plus 3,000 goblins and many Norbards and Nivese

**Governance:** Free city; governed by the Grand Council, which consists of 300 council members, and by the Close Council, which consists of 12 council members

**Temples:** All of the Twelvegods, plus Rur and Gror, Swafnir, Rastullah, Mokosha, Ifirn, and other demigods

**Trade Goods:** important trade port; seat of great merchant houses; shipbuilding; leather and leather products; meskinnes (a sweet liquor made from oats and honey)

**Major Pubs and Taverns:** The Market Hotel (Q6/P6/B22, best hotel); The Old Lighthouse (Q3/P3/B10, sailor's tavern); The Reef of the Withering Throats (Q1/P2/B28, dirty dive); The Two Masks (popular meeting place for theater goers, Q5/P6/B-); Lavaitzis Inn (Q3/P3/B18, popular with Norbards)

**Special Features:** Seat of the Noble Marshal, zoo, dragon museum, Mercury Hall (academy of the Gray Guild, main properties are Influence and Object), Grand Festum Cavaliers' Academy (warrior academy), convent of the Hesinden Draconites, Hospital of the Therbûnites (healing order of Peraine), The Noble Marshal's School for Officers and Warriors, Admiral Seweritz Naval Academy, main office of the Northland Bank, Maraskan district (New Jergan), Hesinde's Village with Mage Academy and main workshop of the alchemists of the Red Salamander Society, goblin ghetto

**Arrival:** The heroes could find themselves in Bornland's capital for a variety of reasons. Perhaps they traveled here over the coastal road between Neersand and Vallusa, or sailed from the north along the Born, the country's largest river.

**Mood in the City:** Metropolitan feel; citizens are very proud of their city and the freedoms they enjoy.

Scholars, bronnjars, and impoverished bridge barons all reside at the mouth of the Born. Each of the city's small neighborhoods has a certain charm: the half-timber houses of the old city decorated to honor saints; the Tanners' Quarter outside the city walls, inhabited by goblins; Hesinde's Village—where institutions of culture, art, and science cluster; or the loud and bustling New Jergan, the Maraskani exiles' newly chosen home.

### Rumors in Festum

When the heroes try to gather information, they might hear gossip and hearsay. Rumors are marked with a + (true), a - (false) or a +/- (partly true, partly false). The heroes can receive the following rumors on their way to Harden, giving them a pretty good picture of interesting topics in the Bornland: the new Bornian national pride, the prejudices against Norbards and goblins, the old arguments between nobles and burghers, and the awakening.

### General Rumors

- “We have it all here. Goblins, Maraskans, Norbards, Nivese—there's even a temple of Rastullah. Does it work? Well, I say... there are all sorts, eh?” (+)
- “Old Stoorrebrandt left ages ago, and the Free Alliance took over the trade. It's much better, now, despite the many Norbards—it helps the city. (+/-)
- “You must visit Hesinde's Village. There is so much to do there: Concert halls, galleries, a pleasant nightlife, and a very cultured audience.” (+)
- “Have you heard about the riots during the Atmaskot parade in the spring? The city guard took quite a beating, but it's their own fault. They should restrict their cruel spectacle to the warehouse island, as they have in the past.” (+)

### War Against Haffax

- “Soon, there will be no more demon slaves in the south. The Empress declared a call to arms in the Middenrealm, and the Bornian bear will fight alongside the Garethax fox.” (+/-)
- “Linjan of Elenau is gathering all the Bornland's fearless warriors; they'll defeat Helme Haffax for sure. Does Linjan pay well? Ha! You're not from around here, are you?” (+)

### Racial Understanding

- “I have no issue with goblins. As long as they stay in the Tanners' Quarter and make themselves useful, it's all good.” (matter of opinion).
- “Thorwaler scum! One hundred years ago, Atmaskot Blood-drinker laid siege to our great city. But we showed him! We skinned him and had him drawn and quartered!” (+)

### The Awakening

- “Recently, ghost sightings are becoming increasingly common. It's superstitious nonsense, of course. Old Norbard fortunetellers spread these tales to drive more business their way.” (-)
- “The land is awakening, and it steals the people's power! That's why I am always so tired in the morning.” (possible).
- “My brother-in-law's normally peaceful dog got mad about something and attacked his ox. Just bit down and wouldn't let go. He had to choke the beast to get it to let go. It was horrible!” (+)

### Scenes in Festum

Use the following scenes—which introduce campaign themes, present typical conflicts, and give the heroes a feeling for the growing patriotism in Bornland—to describe the general mood in Festum.

**The Angry Bronnjar:** 🧔 Gerwin of Growinsk-Wetpants (40; potbelly; balding at the temples; wears green; carries a



mace at his belt; *Willpower* 4 (13/11/9), SPI 1) is standing in line in front of the heroes at the shop of **Jandrim Twigler** (42; rail-thin; narrow mustache; smells of soap; *Willpower* 6 (9/12/13), SPI 1), a Free Alliance trader. The noble is short on cash and wants to use his “good name” to put items on credit, as he has done for years. But the Free Alliance no longer allows credit purchases (rioters plundered many of the shops and stole their lists of debtors during the Atmaskot riots). Angrily, the bronnjar challenges the trader to a duel and asks the heroes to be his witnesses. The trader threatens to have a professional swordsman take his place in the duel, whose fee the Free Alliance would pay. If the heroes don’t take control of the situation with a successful *Intimidation* (*Threats*) or *Fast-Talk* (*Manipulate*) check, the irate noble returns the goods and leaves.

**The Tanner’s Journeyman:** From the stall of the goblin leather merchant, **Suulfried Siedemann** (20; broken tusk; bronze armband; often tugs his ear; *Willpower* 4 (10/9/12), SPI 0), the heroes hear someone yell, “catch that thief,” and see Norbard **Wassilij Gotowitsh** (14; long hair; dark-red gugel; has a perpetual cold; *Body Control* 4 (11/11/10), *Fast-Talk* 2 (11/10/12); *Willpower* 2 (11/10/12), MOV 8, SPI 1) fleeing with a bundle beneath his arm. If the heroes do not react, other people present stop the boy. The guards arrest Wassilij, though he claims he is innocent. He says he tried to sell leather to Suulfried, but refused to accept an unfair price. The goblin then tried to blackmail him and called for the guards, so Wassilij ran. Suulfried claims he paid for the leather, but the Norbard wanted to keep the goods and the money; however, he has no proof of this.

In fact, the young Norbard speaks the truth. But, it is his word against Suulfried’s. The goblin has a burgher’s letter, and Wassilij is a stranger and of age. Therefore, according to city law, Wassilij will lose his right hand if the heroes cannot convince the sergeant of the guard **Veltinger** (late 20s; small, graying mustache; relaxed; *Willpower* 3 (12/12/10), SPI 1) to free him with a successful *Fast-Talk* (*Subterfuge*) check.

**The Veteran:** A former mercenary, **Jadvige Hornfield** (late 30s; drags her left leg; eye-patch; smells of prunes), begs the heroes for money. Mutilated during a battle against the marauders of Uriel’s campaign nearly twenty years ago, she must beg to survive. If the heroes give her something, a city guard named **Rina Roughfinjer** (28; red curls; missing front tooth; firm handshake) unexpectedly claps them on the shoulder to salute their respect for the home country’s defenders. If not, she investigates the heroes, as they obviously have no respect for the Bornian homeland. For Rina’s stats, use the stats of a guard (see page 32).

**The Red Choir:** A group of two dozen goblins wearing Praiosday clothing, led by young Middenrealm composer, **Reijkad Wheelwright**, (44; chubby; narrow nose; red vest; monocle) take position in the market. They are part of the Red Choir, an opera project from Hesinde’s Village, meant to integrate the goblins into Festum’s society. With a short speech, Wheelwright informs the curious audience who they are and announces their plans for a big performance during the Noble Marshal’s election next winter. Then, the choir sings a sad, patriotic song with impressive melancholy (we suggest *O theures Vaterland*, from Franz Schubert’s opera, *Fierrabras*).





## Possible Employers

Someone the heroes trust, who shares similar goals and values, should request their involvement. Here are three examples of possible employers, all of whom pay—at most—a reward of 20 batz per head, but only half the sum in advance. Any of these employers will also provide the heroes a kaleshka coach (4 seats inside, 2 on the coach box, and standing room at the back, if need be), for use during the assignment. Three Warunker horses—Deitline (brown), Jorna (brown with white blaze), and Ossyra (white with brown spots)—pull the kaleshka, which is driven by coachwoman ♀ **Marja ter Munden** (early 30s; thick, dark eyebrows; deep-set eyes; quiet; unlucky around fire; loves dried fruit; hates beards; always needs new blankets because her old ones are burned; *Driving* 8 (12/13/13)). One seat is taken by Adeptus Olko Knaack (see page 17), who will travel with the heroes. Perhaps an acquaintance recommends the heroes to the employer, the employer notices them during some heroic deed they perform for the city, or they are simply paid with a bond from the Northland Bank that is signed by the employer. If the task seems too great for the heroes, it is not a problem—it is possible the employer has misjudged the actual size of Timpski's band.

• This riot was the subject of the Heroic Works adventure *The Thorwal Drum*. All important facts from that adventure are included here in this scenario.

### Information about the Task

The heroes should receive the following information from their employer:

- Beating the Thorwal Drum during the city guard's Atmaskot parade is tradition, but it caused a riot last spring. • The riot might be connected to the awakening. Due to these events, the Grand Council discussed abolishing the parade, but initially the various factions dug their heels in and for a long time now it has seemed that a firm decision one way or the other is not possible.
- Captain Timpski of the City Guard advocates continuing the parades. Many traditional Festumers agree with him, as do some of the patriotic nobles who live outside the city.
- Most of Timpski's opponents are minorities who feel threatened by the parade: goblins, Norbards, Maraskani exiles, and many small traders. Alwin K. Nodwinger (see page 14) is their spokesman.
- The Surjeloffs successfully plotted to steal the drum and took it to the Hardener Lake District, where three Norbard families live on houseboats (for more about the theft, see the *Heroic Works* adventure, *The Thorwal Drum*).
- Timpski raised funds to purchase the drum, but also gathered armed men to take it back if he could not

purchase it. Tempers are flaring. The houseboats are safe for now, but the Norbards could die when the lake freezes over.

- The heroes must join Timpski and ensure a peaceful exchange. While this will not end the arguments about the Thorwal Drum, the factions are beginning to relax, and perhaps the Grand Council can finally come to a decision.

### The Employer's Role



The employer you choose affects future adventures in the campaign; however, all three are traveling the Bornland, are interested in the awakening, and share the heroes' position that the Alliance of Kor's Sign are enemies. Perhaps, sometime after the adventure, the heroes might want to discuss an important question with their employer: What does the land want from us?

### ♀ Umerika Surjeloff

**Brief Description:** Mid 50s; expert trader; petite; subtle but expensive clothing; tight braid; strangely unmoving brow.

**Function:** Employer of business-like or shady heroes





**Background:** Umerika was involved in transporting the drum to the Speckles, but wants to keep this secret. Her plan to calm the situation by getting rid of the drum did not work, because she underestimated Timpski's ambitions and the number and generosity of his supporters. If the repulsive drum must return to the city, she feels the Norbards of the Speckles should at least profit from the transaction.

**Animosities:** Laziness, impertinence, superficiality

**Portrayal Tips:** Keep your body straight. Fold your hands. Move your body rarely, your head more often. Speak softly, and politely. Be brief, but precise.

**Important Stats:** *Commerce* 14 (16/14/14), *Empathy* 10 (16/14/14), *Fast-Talk* 11 (13/14/14), *Willpower* 8 (13/14/14), *SPI* 2.

**Special:** The heroes receive a bilingual document (Garethi and Alaani, written in Kuslik Signs) stating that they are representatives of the Surjeloffs. It provides -1 CHA to *Etiquette* (Manners), *Fast-Talk* (Subterfuge, Manipulation, and Flattery), and *Commerce* (Haggling) checks when dealing with nobles and Timpski's men, and +1 CHA to these checks when the heroes are dealing with Norbards.

#### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*The leader of the Surjeloff Trade House greets the heroes in the kontor, in a surprisingly quiet room with a wooden veneer. An extremely tidy desk and large filing cabinet dominate the room. She speaks politely and soberly, always befitting the social standing of the hero she is addressing. Two bald Norbard men with big muscles, glorious mustaches, and sharp sabers stand discretely within shouting distance.*

#### Rumors Regarding the Surjeloffs

- "Their trade house is among the most powerful in all the land. Their leader, Irgoj, is a true socialite. And then there's his sister... What's her name again?" (+)
- "These Norbards... they're cheaters, all of them. I'm glad they're not allowed to own property in the Bornland. But here in Festum, the laws of the Theater Knights are ignored." (+/-)
- "I greatly respect the Surjeloffs. When my shop was doing badly, they gave me credit, and the interest was fair." (+)
- "Yeah, I heard the Surjeloffs had the Thorwal Drum stolen from the city guards' headquarters. If that's true, I'm done with them!" (+/-)
- "Good for them, if they did have that miserable drum taken out of the city. Now there might be some progress with the Grand Council." (possible)

#### Magister Emeritus Alwin K. Nodwinger

**Brief Description:** 78; brilliant mage; chic, expensive mage robes in traditional design; always smoking a smelly pipe; thin, reedy voice; talkative.

**Function:** Employer of scholarly and humorous heroes

**Background:** Nodwinger is a sympathetic and far-traveled object mage. As a Council of the Arts member, he hears many rumors about the drum conflict and from the Grand Council. Breaking the stalemate in the Grand Council is important to him, but he is more eager to ensure the well-being of Olko, his student.

**Animosities:** Stupidity, deviousness, intolerance

**Portrayal Tips:** Be scientific, absent-minded, and old-fashioned. Get caught up in conversation and lost in details. Gesticulate wildly. Always speak as though you have a pipe in your mouth.

**Important Stats:** *Afraid of Insects* III, *Commerce* 6 (17/14/15), *Empathy* 6 (17/14/15), *Willpower* 7 (14/14/15), *SPI* 3.

**Special:** The heroes receive papers identifying them as representatives of Mercury Hall, the mage academy. Presenting this document could help or hinder their negotiations with either party. Roll 1D6: on a 1-3, the heroes receive +1 CHA to all *Etiquette* (Manners), *Fast-Talk* (Subterfuge, Manipulation, and Flattery), and *Commerce* (Haggling) checks; on a 4-6, they suffer -1 CHA to these checks.





### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

The old mage lives near the City Stage in a half-timbered house decorated with many avante garde paintings and sculptures. He greets the heroes with a warm handshake in his rather chaotic library. He snaps his fingers, and a cart with tea and pastries rolls over. Again, and again, he lights his pipe with a small flame from the tip of his index finger. To open the lock on his magically-secured safe and give the heroes their prepayment, he is forced to use the last charge in his magical ring. He must do so because he cannot remember the key word, even after three attempts.

### Rumors about Magister Nodwinger

- “See this salt shaker? The magister himself enchanted it. It wasn’t cheap, but as long as I use it to season my food, no one can poison me. I admit that it is sometimes a bit unpleasant on my desert...” (+)
- “He loves to smoke pipes. He’s said to have three dozen or so. Some say he smokes to drive away the gnats. You know mages...” (+)
- “The magister sometimes gives Interdisciplinary Universal Knowledge seminars in the garden at the Temple of Hesinde. He talks about his travels to Khunchom, and so on. It’s confusing, but interesting.” (+)
- “The magister represents the Council of Arts in the Grand Council. He opposed the Atmaskot parades from the beginning. At first, I thought he was being overly cautious, but when the riots started, I realized his wisdom.” (+)

### Jucho of Elkinen and Ramsford

**Brief Description:** 45; excellent warrior; inexperienced politician; first streaks of gray in his hair; dimple on his chin; plain chainmail; average coat with elk fur trimmings; powerful voice.

**Function:** Employer of heroes who are warriors, nobles, and other dignitaries.

**Background:** Jucho is an ethical, lucky bastard with a youthful charm; he is tolerant and suffers the anguish of lofty, chivalrous ideals. For nearly a decade, he has supervised the (few) estates in Bornland—small dots spread out over the land,—so he is rarely in Festum. During the troubles about the drum, he took a stand against the parades; and since then, many blame him for the drum’s disappearance. These accusations bring him hateful glances and challenges to duels, as well as a rebuke from the Noble Marshal, who does not want her commanders involved in city politics. He wants to save his reputation, but in a subtle manner.

**Animosities:** Cowardice, dishonor, boredom

**Portrayal Tips:** Make grand, slow gestures. Mistakenly use rude expressions and notice too late that they are inappropriate for your social standing, but laugh off the embarrassment—unruffled, like a true statesman.

**Important Stats:** *Commerce* 8 (14/13/15), *Empathy* 10 (14/13/15), *Willpower* 4 (15/13/15), *SPI* 2.



**Special:** The heroes receive papers identifying them as representatives of the steward (–1 *CHA* to *Etiquette* (Manners), *Fast-Talk* (Subterfuge, Manipulation, and Flattery), and *Commerce* (Haggling) checks when dealing with Norbards; +1 *CHA* to these checks among nobles and Timpiski’s men).

### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

The Bornian steward greets the heroes in the Lion Castle, outside Festum. He has a splinted leg and a fresh scar on his brow. Dusty trophies of his many adventures line the castle’s cobweb-covered walls. His nicked, two-handed sword, which he calls “Martinet,” stands in the corner of his drafty study.

### Rumors about Jucho

- “Ten years ago—by accident, it’s said—he almost became the Noble Marshal, but Ashford the Drunk was chosen instead.” (+)
- “Our Jucho is a tireless fighter for all that is just. That’s why he remained the steward under the new Noble Marshal. He is also an extremely lucky bastard.” (+)
- “Noble Marshal Nadjesha lets Jucho stay in office only because of his good looks. She doesn’t have a suitor, yet. And that’s why Linjan of Elenau can’t stand him. Linjan wants Nadjesha for himself.” (+/–)
- “Jucho has participated in the Noble Marshal’s marathon. Such a brave man! Unfortunately, he ran in the wrong direction and didn’t win.” (+)



### Alternative Ways to Meet the Employers

If it seems unlikely your heroes would seek out these employers on their own, make contact through a mentor or good friend who recommends or is indebted to one of them.

- The heroes could meet Magister Nodwinger through Reijkad Wheelwright (a composer and the Red Choir's musical director), or through Mantka Riiba (goblin sorceress and leader of the goblins in Festum). Many former colleagues, acquaintances from his travels, and tolerant Blessed Ones enjoy having discussions with the Hesinden mage and support him whenever possible—any of them could also serve to introduce him.
- Mystics with a connection to nature can contact Umerika Surjeloff through the witch Bisminka of Jassuula, or through Mokasha's high priestess, Beeta Bavedis. Umerika also has connections to the Mistress of the Free Alliance, Radjula Swerenski, as well as to industrious, long-distance traders and crafters in Festum. She might even agree to meet disreputable characters, if well-known figures from the underworld were to recommend them.
- High-ranking, honorable heroes could be sent to meet Jucho of Elkinen by Gernot of Halsingen (Master of the Domain of the Church of Rondra); one of the warrior academies; the Noble Marshal herself; or even the devious Jucho of Dallenthin and Persanzig, who founded the Order of the Ram and has contacts as far away as the Horasian Empire.

### Olko

This young mage should accompany the heroes on their journey. It would be nice if they decide to help Olko on their own; however, any of the following scenes could also provide a reason to bring him along. When Olko eventually reveals his rescue plans, he tries to conceal the secret he learned from Jääni.

**Debts:** A hero bets or plays a game against Olko. If Olko wins, instead of demanding payment, he requests a seat in the kaleshka. If Olko loses, he admits he has no money, but offers to work off his debts on the journey.

**Bluff:** A hero runs into trouble in one of Festum's bad alleys. Olko drives away the rogues with a daring bluff: "If I expand this ball of light, a greasy stain will be all that's left of you!" To repay Olko, the hero can take him along on the journey.

**We'll Go!** While comforting the depressed goblin, Prähnwart (see page 8), in the student-frequented tavern called the *Temple of Rum and Grog* (Q3/P4/P16), Olko raises his glass and swears he will try to save Jääni and Bruutsh. If the heroes raise their glasses, too, he is confident they will join him. You can use this scene before the heroes meet their employer.

**Bodyguards:** If necessary, Nodwinger can hire the heroes to protect Olko. He knows of Olko's plans, but he also knows that the rules of the *Codex Albyricus* might not be enough to protect Olko from a confrontation with angry bronnjars. He wishes to keep his concerns secret from Olko. Even if a different employer hires the heroes, Nodwinger can claim a favor to bring up the question of Olko's protection.

### Olko Knaack, Adeptus Minor

**Brief Description:** 20; experienced guild mage; Nodwinger's favorite student; lanky; strawberry-blond hair; light beard with some gaps in growth; wears a gray mage's robe with symbols stitched on the hem; wears thick clothes beneath it in winter, which make him look bulky.

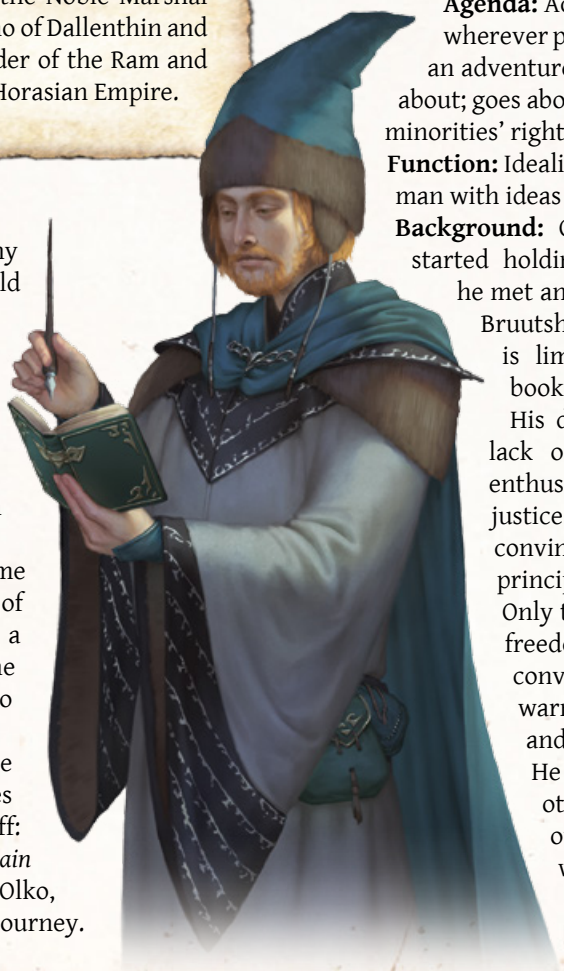
**Motivation:** Olko wants to save his friends, Bruutsh and Jääni. He feels partially responsible for Jääni's banishment because he wrote down the drum ritual. His scientific ethos forbids him destroying his notes for his friends, which only reinforces his feelings of obligation.

**Agenda:** Accompanies the heroes and helps wherever possible; is thrilled to finally go on an adventure like those he has read so much about; goes above and beyond when fighting for minorities' rights.

**Function:** Idealistic, likable ally; well-read young man with ideas so lofty, he needs protection

**Background:** Olko and some fellow students started holding *intellectual gatherings*, where he met and became friends with Jääni and Bruutsh. His knowledge of adventuring is limited to what he has read in books, and he wants to prove himself.

His determination makes up for his lack of experience; he shows great enthusiasm and has a strong sense of justice. As a follower of Nandus, he is convinced the Bornland's splintered principalities must become one nation. Only then can all people have dignity, freedom, and equality. If it comes up in conversation, he praises the goblins' warm culture, peaceful matriarchy, and naivete toward sex and death. He is quick to befriend goblins and other minorities, and sometimes outdoes himself with daring bluffs when fighting for their rights. He has great respect for real heroes and helps them whenever possible.





**Animosities:** Injustice, disloyalty, self-pity

**Portrayal Tips:** Act enthusiastic, tolerant, and open. Use loanwords often. Discuss topics of interest with passion, yet rationally and respectfully. Disarm tense situations with a friendly laugh.

**Fate:** He doubts his suspicions about the power of the drum ritual. Experiencing the *bloodlust* himself damages his world-view. The Alliance of Kor's Sign kidnaps Olko later during the campaign, and the heroes are unable to rescue him right away. These events further serve to severely rattle the young mage's mind.

**Special:** Small notebook in which he often writes; strips of otter fur hang beneath the rim of his pointy mage's hat and can be tied under his chin to keep his ears warm.

*"You see, if we were a nation, you wouldn't have to listen to this bridge baron's insolence."*

*"Have you seen it? Just like the knight Rondramir in The Final Atonement!"*


*"I've got this."*

## The Journey to Harden

The heroes begin their journey about two weeks after Timpski's force set out, and about one week after the goblins were kidnapped. Their route consists of three parts: first, they travel along the Born Road—named for the river that runs alongside the river—to Hamkeln and then on toward Cherrydale; from there, they proceed along a dirt road to Harden itself. We presume the heroes use the kaleshka (coach) provided by their employer. If they decide to journey on foot, their travel time doubles.

## From Festum to Hulga

The trip from Festum to Hulga takes two days by kaleshka, four days on foot. The path leads the heroes along the Born Road, through the village of **Alderow** (Inhabitants: 300; Inns: *The Dead Crow* (Q3/P3/B12), *Ash Court* (Q3/P4/B20)), famous for its dried, fermented, and distilled cherries, as well as its Alderower mandrake-men carvings.

The heroes spend their first night in **Nivesel** (Inhabitants: 500; Temples: Travia, Rondra; Inns: *The Swan* (Q4/P5/B22), *The Bustling Weasel* (Q3/P2/B5)), a small town settled by the Theater Knights shortly after the founding of Festum. Some of the buildings from that time still remain. In the marketplace,  *Girte* (19; freckles; cheeky; loves cats; hates fish; needs a new earring) hovers nearby offering a guided tour for 1 farthing per person. Her tour includes the site of the old city gate, some collapsed walls, and an old guard tower without a roof. She can share some common knowledge about the Theater Knights: they were a powerful order; they were pleasing unto Rondra; they freed Bornland from the goblins; and they were defeated by the devious Sun Legion of the Emperor Priests.

### Olko Knaack

COU 14 SGC 14 INT 13 CHA 13

DEX 12 AGI 11 CON 13 STR 10

LP 31 AE 36 KP – INI 12+1D6

DO 6 SPI 2 TOU 1 MOV 7

**Fate Points** 3

**Social Status:** Free

**Special Abilities:** Adept's Rope, Area

Knowledge (Festum: Hesinde's Village), Binding of the Staff, Eternal Flame, Staff Apportation, Professional Publications (Magical Lore), Tradition (Guild Mage), Writing (*Persuasion: Political Pamphlets*)

**Languages:** Native tongue Garethi III, Bosparano III, Alaani II, Goblinish II, Tulamidya I

**Scripts:** Kuslik Signs, Nanduria Signs

**Advantages:** Increased Arcane Power II, Spellcaster, Trustworthy

**Disadvantages:** Bound to Artifact (Staff), Negative Trait (Curiosity), Principles (Freedom, Learning, Understanding)

**Combat Techniques:** Brawling 10 (12/6), Polearms 9 (11/6)

**Mage's Staff, Long:** AT 10 PA 8 DP 1D6+2 RE long  
**PRO/ENC** 1/0 (heavy clothing) (armor modifiers already included)

### Skills

Physical: *Body Control* 2, *Carousing* 5, *Feat of Strength* 1, *Perception* 5, *Self-Control* 4, *Stealth* 2, *Swimming* 2

Social: *Empathy* 4, *Etiquette* 6, *Fast-Talk* 4, *Persuasion* 6, *Streetwise* 4, *Willpower* 6

Nature: *Animal Lore* 2, *Orienting* 4, *Plant Lore* 3, *Survival* 1  
Knowledge: *History* 7, *Law* 5, *Magical Lore* 9, *Myths & Legends* 8, *Religions* 4, *Sphere Lore* 3

Craft: *Alchemy* 4, *Commerce* 5, *Driving* 3, *Woodworking* 2

**Cantrips:** Hand Warmer, Signature

**Spells:** *Armatrutz* 6, *Balsam Salabunde* 7, *Blinking Flash* 7, *Corpofesso* 7, *Manifesto* 6, *Motoricus* 7, *Odem Arcanum* 10, *Silentium* (Elves) 7, *Wall of Fog* (Elves) 5.

**Equipment:** Notebook, wilderness package, winter clothing, long mage's staff.

**Combat Behavior:** Olko is smart enough to stay in the background during fights and cast an *Armatrutz*. If a friend is in serious trouble, he uses *Blinking Flash* or *Corpofesso* before entering close combat.

**Escape:** Olko attempts to hold his ground, even when hurt. He would die for true friends.

**Pain +1 with:** 23 LP, 16 LP, 8 LP, and 5 LP or less.





### Bornland in Winter

The first snow begins to fall in Bornland during Efferd; in 1039 FB, there is a strong frost by the time the Harvest Festival ends at the beginning of Travia. The lakes are already freezing over, and more snow will fall from Boron on. The roads are busier than in milder years, as people want to finish their business quickly; whether transporting the last harvest to town, storing food for the winter, or simply trying to reach their winter homes.

There is not yet enough snow to close the roads, but large snowbanks make travel difficult. There is an overall Cold Level of 2 (see *Core Rules*, page 346); appropriate winter clothes and traveling in the kaleshka prevents hypothermia. For more information about traveling through snow and ice, see page 56. Eventually, the heroes must continue their journey on foot and find they have few opportunities to warm themselves in taverns.

A tree root grew so quickly under an old tower that it damaged the interior stairs. If the heroes use their imaginations, they see what looks like a screaming face in the tree bark (a successful *Perception* (Spot or Search) check at -1). Olko insists on taking a closer look using magic, and attempts to climb the tree to cast an *Odem Arcanum*. He asks for help to reach the top (a successful *Climbing* (Trees) check); if he fails, he suffers falling damage from a height of 6 feet and his assistant, if any, suffers 1D3 DP (ignoring PRO) from being struck by the falling mage's body.

After passing through **Flowerfield** (Inhabitants: 50; Temples: Peraine, Travia; Inns: *Wooden Spoon* (Q3/P3/P8)), named after the breathtaking flowers in the garden at the temple of Peraine, the heroes reach **Hamkeln** (Inhabitants: 100; Inns: *The White Bull* (Q3/P3/B8)) on the second evening of their travels. Here, a ferry—at a cost of one farthing per leg—crosses over to **Hulga** (Inhabitants: 250; Inns: *Bear Tavern* (Q4/P3/B10)).

### Rumors During the Journey

Timpski's men, as well as Jääni and Bruutsh, visited each town the heroes stop at or pass through, and some of the innkeepers and travelers remember them.

### About Timpski's Force

- “The captain was ranting about homeless Norbard scum and crows from the Free Alliance. Said they didn't care about tradition and stole a war drum... It was the Festumers' pride, or something like that.” (+)
- “Yes, they were here, about two weeks ago, I'd say. They had a chest with them. Heavy thing. And they kept watch over it. Probably contained some treasure.” (+)

- “There were maybe twenty of them. And their leader hired some additional mercenaries here in the tavern. A Thorwaler was among them.” (+)

### About the Goblins

- “I don't usually allow goblins in here. But, they were dressed decently and they paid well. So, I thought, 'Why not.'” (+)
- “I have slain five goblins, myself. But there was something about this goblin. Nobody dared get near him.” (+)
- “They told great stories about the knight Rondramir and Princess Alrique. Well, some of their stories were a bit cheesy. But they sure knew a great many...” (+)

### About Jaruslav

- “Always brawling and cheating on his wife. And him married to such a nice baroness...” (+)
- “He thinks he must prove himself. So, he always travels with a whole lance's worth of followers: squire, groom, serfs—and a dog.” (+)
- “He can't stand Norbards. I wouldn't be surprised if he followed those mercenaries.” (+)

### Overheard in Hulga

- “They were here about a week ago. The lord of Cherrdale-Krabbwitzkoje had it out for those goblins. When they paid, he said the money was stolen.” (+)
- “He tied up two of them; the third one ran away. Well, it is what it is.” (+)
- “He went to Cherrydale, which his mother rules. Yeah, don't get me started.” (+)





## Scenes with Olko

Use the following scenes to expand on Olko's personality and bind the useful travel companion more strongly to the heroes.

**The Pipe:** In the kaleshka or during dinner at one of their stops, Olko lights a pipe with his special blend and offers to share it with the heroes. Heroes who partake must make a successful *Carousing* (*Resist Drug Confusion*) check, or suffer one level of the condition *Confusion*.

**The Villain's Beard:** An insolent noble (or trader, coachman, or dwarf) harasses Olko. Olko challenges the annoying man to a drinking contest, with a 20 batz bet the man cannot afford. Olko accepts the man's beard as his bet, instead. Half a keg of meskinnes later, Olko falls from his chair, dead-drunk—but having won the bet! The mage bravely suffers through his werewolf, honors the beard, and eventually gives it to a hero in exchange for saving his life.

**The Single Room:** When an innkeeper refuses to rent a room to a goblin or Norbard (preferably a hero, could also be a different minority,) Olko becomes enraged. He slaps a handful of silver on the counter and threatens to turn the innkeeper into a newt ("Do you know what hibernation is?") if his companion does not get the best room in the place.

## Information from Olko

The heroes can learn more about the love story between Jääni and Bruutsh from talking with Olko. Have him relate their conversations in Hesinde's Village, where he and the goblins sang, drank, read about legends of the Silver Horde, and performed readings from heroic plays by Doghoof. Share how the goblins fell in love after some initial, shy meetings, and how Bruutsh borrowed chainmail to properly propose to Jääni. Make the goblin couple likable, even though their behavior might surprise those who understand goblin culture. By the end of this scene, the heroes should have received the following information.

- They discussed the ongoing argument about the Thorwal Drum during a celebration in Hesinde's Village
- Legend says that a Goblin Timbal existed during the time of the Theater Knights. The Kunga Suula made it from human skin to bring death and terror to the Rondranians, and tales say it could level mountains.
- Jääni knew these stories; but, in the version she told that night, the drum was made of goblin skin and involved a ritual the Theater Knights stole from the goblins.
- While drunk, Jääni let slip that there is a goblin ritual to enchant drums. It is for this reason she was sent away.

## From Hulga to Cherrydale

From Hulga, the heroes travel through the March. The road to Cherrydale is in decent condition; it takes the heroes one day to travel the whole 30 middenmiles in the kaleshka, or two days on foot.

### The Town of Cherrydale

**Inhabitants:** 600

**Ruler:** Duchess Marja of Cherrydale; as the ducal family rules over the counts of Harden and Hulga, as well as the barons of Meskinneskoje. Cherrydale is one of the wealthiest towns in the March.

**Temples:** Rondra, Travia; shrine of Hesinde


**Trade and Commerce:** Agriculture; cherries (fresh, preserved, dried, and pressed into wine); apple yards; traditional crafts and a few grocers; leather products; meskinnes (liquor made from oats and honey)

**Inns:** *Honeypot* (Q3/P3/B4), *Shrub and Bustle* (Q3/P3/B14), *Hotel Cherry Blossom* (Q4/P4/BS22)

**Military:** 10 bailiffs, 25 conscripts on horseback

### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*The imposing white wall of Cherrydale, with its five splendid towers and its cherry and apple orchards covered in snow, make your surroundings an almost unreal winter dream. The landscape has steadily grown wilder in the last few hours of your journey, but the town promises an evening in pleasant civilization. The largest wall tower is the home of the duchess. Two large, white banners bearing the house coat of arms—a circle of seven white cherry blossoms on a red background—hang to the right and left of the gate. The main street is clean and lined with whitewashed houses, interspersed with grocers, picturesque workshops, and inviting inns. However, beyond the main street, Cherrydale also has its poor sections and hard-working serfs.*

A successful *Streetwise* (*Judge Location*) check at +1 leads to  **Bernisha** (born in 993 FB; baker; always touches those with whom she speaks; loves carrots; hates skirts; needs more sleeping drugs; *Willpower* 5 (11/11/13), SPI 1), the person with the most information in Cherrydale, in about 5 minutes. Without the successful check, it takes the heroes an hour or so to find her. Bernisha knows Jaruslav's entourage came to town two weeks ago, with two captured goblins, and they spent the night in the duchess' tower. The goblins were chained up; Jaruslav claimed it was because they had tried to escape.



## Visiting the Duchess

■ **Marja of Cherrydale** (64; gray braid, usually worn pinned up; charming; dignified, stern-looking; loves cheese, especially Raudupser Garlichbiter; hates paperwork; needs entertainment; *Willpower* 11 (15/14/15), *SPI* 3) is happy to receive the heroes if they make a good impression on her servant, ■ **Pedder Jublinski** (about 40; scrawny; suffers from a dry cough; loves perfume; hates snow; needs candle wax; *Willpower* 4 (12/13/12), *SPI* 1). The players must make a successful *Etiquette* (*Manners*) check to do so. Each QL gives a bonus to *Fast-Talk* (*Flattery*) against Pedder's *Willpower* (*Resist Fast-Talk*). Marja automatically receive heroes with the advantage of Noble. The duchess tells the heroes her third-born son took the goblins to the Hardener Lake District to entertain his men, and he wants to support Timpski. Without Jaruslav's intercession, she would not have let Timpski and his company into the town, for security reasons. A successful *Empathy* (*Discern Motivation*) check at +1 reveals the duchess does not approve of Jaruslav's actions, but she does not openly criticize him, as he is family.

With a successful competitive check using *Fast-Talk* (*Manipulate* or *Flattery*) at +3 (or *Intimidation* (*Threats*) at +1), or for 5 groats, Pedder gives the heroes the same information, and mentions that he doubts whether the goblins will still be alive when the heroes catch up to them.

## From Cherrydale to Harden

In the 75 miles from Cherrydale to Harden, the heroes have the best chance to discover where the Festumers camped. However, the road is much worse than before, and the heroes manage to travel fewer miles each day. With the kaleshka, it takes them two days; on foot, they need four. Halfway to Harden, the heroes reach the new hamlet of **Stellnitz** (Inhabitants: 50; Inns: *Harden's Rest* (Q1/P3/B50)), which is only a few decades old. This spartan gathering of stables and barracks essentially serves to accommodate traveling troop formations on their way to Harden. Over the years, a few farmers settled here to supply the barracks with additional food. Here, the heroes learn Timpski bought a dozen cows to supply his troops just five days ago. As further bronnjars join his cause, his force has grown to an army of nearly 50 men and women.

## Wolves

### Optional Scene

Packs of hungry wolves roam the densely wooded area north-west of Cherrydale. As food is scarce during the winter, they are interested in the heroes' horses. The heroes can shake them off with a chase (see *Core Rules*, page 349) or fight them.

## Wolf

**Size:** 3 to 4 feet long

**Weight:** 100 to 120 pounds

**COU** 14 **SGC** 14(a) **INT** 13 **CHA** 12

**DEX** 14 **AGI** 13 **CON** 13 **STR** 13

**LP** 22 **AE** – **KP** – **INI** 14+1D6

**DE** 7 **SPI** –2 **TOU** 0 **MOV** 12

**Bite:** AT 14 DP 1D6+3 RA short

**PRO/ENC:** 0/0

**Actions:** 1

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Darksight I, Exceptional Sense (Smell)

**Special Abilities:** Locked Jaws

**Skills:** *Body Control* 7, *Climbing* 0, *Feat of Strength* 5, *Intimidation* 7, *Perception* 7, *Self-Control* 4, *Swimming* 7, *Stealth* 7, *Willpower* 4

**Number:** 1D6+2 (small pack)

**Size Category:** Medium

**Type:** Animal, non-humanoid

**Loot:** 15 rations of meat (tough), fur (worth 5 silverthalers)

**Combat Behavior:** Wolves avoid fire. To approach a character carrying a torch or standing by a campfire, the wolf must make a *Self-Control* check. If it fails, it flees (or at least does not get any closer). If the heroes kill the alpha wolf, the rest of the pack flees. If the heroes know about alpha wolves, they must make a successful *Perception* (*Spot*) check to locate it among the other wolves.

**Escape:** After loss of 50% LP, or after the alpha wolf's death

**Animal Lore (Wild Animals)**

◆ **QL 1:** Wolves avoid fire.

◆ **QL 2:** Wolves can sometimes transmit diseases, including rabies.

◆ **QL 3+:** If you kill the alpha wolf, the rest of the pack runs away.

**Hunting:** –2

**Pain +1 with:** 17 LP, 11 LP, 6 LP, and 5 LP or less







## Harden

### The Town of Harden

**Inhabitants:** 500

**Ruler:** Countess Bilgunde of Harden; her family established the barracks.

**Temple:** Peraine

**Trade and Commerce:** Completely tailored to the needs of the barracks

**Inns:** *The Tin Cup* (Q2/P2/B20) a roomy, soldiers' bar; *Mares' Stable* (Q4/P5/B2), a brothel.

**Military:** 200 conscripts and 25 warriors of the March Barracks.

The town of Harden grew up around the March Barracks. Almost half a regiment is stationed here—mostly conscripts, but also captains, who were transferred here for disciplinary reasons. The fortress consists of four stone guard towers and a double wooden palisade. Inside are parade grounds and barracks, the simple home of Countess Bilgunde of Harden (30; broad shoulders; expansive brow; fur coat with three dangling fox heads; commander of the barracks; loves power; hates snoring; needs a goal in life; Willpower 6 (13/14/14), SPI 2), and other functional buildings such as arsenals, stores, and stables. The local crafters and mountain cow breeders see to the needs of the barracks, and the serfs work to keep the soldiers supplied with food.

A successful *Etiquette* (Rumors) check at a +3 means the heroes already know that the officers who live here have a

bad reputation. Timpski made a good impression on them, but did not convince the officers to accompany him; at least, not yet. Also, Timpski bought cattle here. Jaruslav's retinue came through the town, as well, and the goblins he had with him looked quite miserable. The heroes don't know it yet, but the Festumers' camp is about 15 miles ahead at Deepwater, a lake at the north-eastern edge of the Lake District.

## The Tin Cup

### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*The beer at The Tin Cup is thin and cheap, the meskinnes burns your throat, and the smoke-filled room smells like sweat. Nevertheless, customers occupy the barn-like tavern at all hours of the day, and it is busiest when guard shifts end and the conscripts pour in to complain about their instructors and try to impress each other by boasting about their deployments or pranks they have played.*

The following NPCs are not always present, but many conscripts are similar in nature, so feel free to use these descriptions for any generic conscript. If you like, you can have a conscript reappear later at the Speckles (use squire or guard stats from page 31–32).

- Like many soldiers in Harden, conscript Halvja Vorlinsk (18; thick blond braid; smokes a pipe) lives a cycle of guard duty, drinking, and sleeping. She does not have much to say, but likes to drink with new people.
- Captain Norbo of Duderow-Trocken (27; pointed beard; stiff knee; transferred here as punishment) thinks he is an adventurer and tries to seduce women with made-up, heroic stories.
- Having been given grief at the end of her shift by her sergeant, conscript Selwine ter Stijneren (16; chubby-cheeked; athletic) is looking for trouble. She tries to provoke a hero and seeks any excuse to brawl.
- Conscript Erlan Gruber (17; scarred face; gangly; from a Tobrien refugee family) volunteered for this post, but quickly grew disillusioned. He spends his free time at The Tin Cup playing drinking games and throwing daggers.

### Alliance of Kor's Sign Activist



While at *The Tin Cup*, the heroes meet their first Alliance of Kor's Sign member: Rudjev of Arauken (early 30s; black hair; handsome; trimmed beard; melancholic charm; wears a leather helmet with a neck guard, which conceals the tattoo of the nine-fingered claw on his neck; loves drums; hates cowards; for more information, see page 22).

The second son of a landless, Sewerian noble house that serves the counts of Notmarch (*History* (Bornland) –1),



Rudjev tries to recruit fighters for the Alliance. He is rather careful, though, as the time to reveal the Alliance has not yet come. For now, he spreads propaganda the Alliance can later use to build partnerships: a return to true, knightly virtues and the end of the *reign of the moneybags*. His rhetoric has a profound effect on many unhappy veterans and hot-blooded young soldiers, alike. If the heroes present themselves as mercenaries or neutral adventurers, he also addresses them. If not, they witness one of Rudjev's speeches, although they cannot discern his true motives.

### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*A warrior wearing black, studded leather armor raises his voice at the neighboring table, loudly asking, "Who freed the Bornland from goblins and dark magic? The knights! With swords in hand, with shining armor—daring and brave! Who built the roads that the carts and coaches drive on? The knights! Who built the guard towers and castles, to protect us against beasts and goblins? The knights!"*

*The conscripts at his table murmur in agreement, and he continues, "Why do the fat-traders in Festum think they can rule us and decide where we live, where we work, how we treat our serfs? That's not what our ancestors fought for!"*

*More conscripts have gathered closer to the table, some visibly drunk, all nodding and shouting their agreement.*

*He yells, "No! That is not what they spilled their blood for, what they gave their lives for! They fought for us—warriors, soldiers, and knights—so we could stand on the battlements of our fortresses, swords in hand, and look at our land with honor and pride! THAT is what they fought for! And to that, I drink!" Those gathered around the table raise their glasses amid the cheers. The situation dissolves back into general conversation, but some pat the speaker on the back, saying, "Finally, someone who dares to say it."*

### Confrontation!

#### Optional Scene

If desired, the heroes can engage in a battle of words with Rudjev. After an exchange of arguments at the table, make a competitive check using *Persuasion (Discussion)*. The heroes can also decide to rebuke the man more violently, in which case sufficient conscripts (use *mercenary* stats from page 33) join him to give each hero one opponent. After no more than 10 CR, the guards on duty appear and end the brawl. If the heroes do not release Rudjev, they are thrown out of the barracks.

### Rudjev of Arauken

COU 14 SGC 12 INT 12 CHA 13

DEX 10 AGI 12 CON 13 STR 14

LP 35 AE – KP – INI 12+1D6

DO 6 SPI 1 TOU 2 MOV 7

**Unarmed:** AT 12 PA 7 DP 1D6 RE short

**Mace:** AT 14 PA 7 DP 1D6+4 RE medium

**Mace and Wooden Shield (passive):** AT 14 PA 8 DP 1D6+4 RE medium

**PRO/ENC:** 3/0 (leather armor) (armor modifiers already included)

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Natural Orator, Noble I / Negative Trait (Short Temper), Obligations II (Alliance of Kor's Sign), Personality Flaw (Prejudice against Norbards)

**Special Abilities:** Forceful Blow I, Inured to Encumbrance I,

**Skills:** Body Control 5, Empathy 6, Fast-Talk 6, Feat of Strength 5, Intimidation 7, Perception 4, Persuasion 10, Self-Control 8, Willpower 4

**Combat Behavior:** Rudjev prefers to use Forceful Blows; his shield is more of a status symbol. He prefers to use words.

**Escape:** When he has less than 15 LP remaining

**Pain +1 with:** 26 LP, 18 LP, 9 LP, and 5 LP or less

The purpose of this scene is to show the Alliance of Kor's Sign ideology is more common in the Bornland than the heroes might think, even though they do not know what to do about it yet. Rudjev enjoys the protection afforded by his military status, something he will still possess if the heroes meet him again later, as part of the Festumers' group.



If the heroes defeat Rudjev, they disrupt the Alliance's plans without even knowing it, and therefore have fewer enemies to defeat later. Rudjev should survive the adventure. Some individuals from the Hardener Barracks join the Alliance of Kor's Sign later in the campaign, giving the (false) impression that Bilgunde and her conscripts are enemies.





# Skirmishes and Negotiations

By the time the heroes reach the Festumers' camp at Deepwater, the Norbards are already reeling from the first attack. The thin ice prevented an all-out attack, but several members of the Trebritzki family are hurt from arrows and bolts, and they have no interest in negotiating. Besides, they cannot retreat with their boats because the connecting channels between the lakes are frozen.

There are two important parts to the adventure at this point: first, the heroes must win the Norbards' trust to create a situation in which negotiation is possible; and second, during negotiations, both sides try to gain the upper hand. The onset of frost is advantageous for the Festumers, because when the ice grows thick enough to support them, nothing prevents their full-scale attack.

In this segment of the adventure, the heroes should achieve the following.

- Convince Jaruslav and Timpski to negotiate peacefully
- Win the Norbards' trust to make negotiations possible. During negotiations, they get introduced to Tuminka Trebritzki, the zibilja
- Free Jääni and Bruutsh, who end up hiding from the heroes
- Bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion without too much bloodshed
- Experience the bloodlust caused by Jääni's ritual, which sets them on a chase after the two goblins

The sequence of events is not fixed; the heroes decide what to do next, based on the information you give them about characters and events. This scenario includes plenty of material you can use to make the story exciting. Scenes not marked as *Optional* are important to further the story; they introduce key NPCs or provide information to keep the story moving. Use the *Optional Scenes* if they seem appropriate—for instance, if the heroes end up focusing on the wrong situation or there is no flow in the action. Olko spends most of his time at the camp, keeping an eye on the goblins.







The Norbard families are spread out all over the Speckles, and it is no easy task to make the encounter with them both exciting and clear. To embellish the situation a bit, you can decide a member of the Trebritzki family betrayed them before the heroes' arrival. In this case, the drum is with them in the Deepwater—and the Festumers know it. In this situation, the Aunt's tasks (see page 42) can take place here and serve to build the Trebritzki's trust. However, if the Festumers manage to surround the Trebritzki on the lake, the Trebritzki are at a great disadvantage. Even worse, if the Trebritzki families do not work together, they cannot expect help—in the form of relief supplies or guerrilla attacks against the Festumers—from nearby meshpocha.

### Leudara of Firunen— Blessed One of Rondra

Right away, the heroes meet Leudara of Firunen (for stats, see page 26). Present her as a tough, but respectable agent, interested in fair results. In everyday conversation, she is friendly and sometimes cracks jokes; but, all levity goes away and she becomes very solemn when discussing serious matters. During the negotiations, her sympathies lie with the Festumers; however, she tries to remain neutral and follow the virtues of Rondra.



Don't rush this scene. The meeting reveals important knowledge about Leudara, which will prove helpful to the heroes later in the campaign: her intimacy with the demigod, Kor; her hardness against her own people; and her responsibility to and confrontation with the primal powers of the land.



#### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*Through the heavy snowfall, you see the silhouettes of three figures. As you get nearer, you see that two of them are snarling Born bears standing on their hind legs. They are bleeding from several wounds and menacing a woman who wears the regalia of the goddess Rondra. Two other figures lay on the ground behind her, getting covered in snow. The animals strike out, attacking the Blessed One with heavy blows. She yells battle cries, trying to drown out their roars, but the heavy snowfall muffles her shouts like cotton. The bears' blood mixes with her own to stain her regalia red, and hundreds of snowflakes whirl around after each of her sword blows, as if mocking her rage. She may not be able to hold out for much longer.*



#### Born Bear

**Size:** 10 to 11 feet tall at the shoulder

**Weight:** 1200 to 1500 pounds

**COU** 14 **SGC** 12 (a) **INT** 12 **CHA** 12

**DEX** 11 **AGI** 11 **CON** 20 **STR** 21

**LP** 60 **AE** – **KP** – **INI** 13+1D6

**DE** 6 **SPI** 0 **TOU** 5 **MOV** 10

**Paw:** **AT** 13 **DP** 1D6+6 **RE** medium

**Bite:** **AT** 11 **DP** 2D6+2 **RE** short

**PRO/ENC:** 1/0

**Actions:** 2 (at most 1 x Bite)

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Exceptional Sense (Smell) / Negative Trait (Curiosity)

**Special Abilities:** Forceful Blow I (Paws, Bite), Takedown (Paws)

**Skills:** *Body Control* 4, *Feat of Strength* 12, *Intimidation* 10, *Self-Control* 12, *Willpower* 4

**Number:** 2

**Size Category:** medium

**Type:** Animal, non-humanoid

**Loot:** 100 rations (meat), fur (30 silverthalers), trophy (teeth and claws, 5 silverthalers)

**Combat Behavior:** Bears stand on their hind legs, attack opponents with blows of their paws, and try to bite them.

**Escape:** After losing 50% of their LP; but, if frenzied, they fight to the death.

#### Animal Lore (Wild Animals)

- QL 1: Bears can run faster than humans.
- QL 2: Bears are curious and have an excellent sense of smell.
- QL 3+: Bears sometimes enter a state of bloodlust when hurt.

**Hunting:** –3.

#### Special Rules

**Berserker:** Make a *Willpower* check each time a Born bear suffers a level of *Pain*. On a failure, it becomes enraged and gains the state *bloodlust*. The bear receives +4 to all melee attacks and +2 DP, but cannot defend, beginning with the next round. The *bloodlust* lasts for 2D20 CR. The bear can end the *bloodlust* by making a successful *Self-Control* check (once per combat), after which it suffers two levels of *stupor*. Otherwise, the state ends with the opponent's death, or after 1 hour.

LP Loss	Pain
45 LP (¾)	+1 pain
30 LP (½)	+1 pain
15 LP (¼)	+1 pain
5 LP and less	+1 pain



### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*After your victory against the bears, the Blessed One thanks you with a curt nod and turns toward the two wounded lads lying on the ground and whimpering. Both boys—almost children—have narrow shoulders and are clad in leather armor and tabards. With barely a glance, she gives a dry command: “Arlin, Semkin! Get up! Pull yourselves together!” The two boys obey. They support each other, clutching their wounds and leaving red stains in the snow. Switching her long sword to her left hand, the Blessed One takes a step toward you and raises her right fist to her heart in an old-fashioned warrior’s greeting. “Thank you for your help. I am Leudara of Firunen. Greetings in the name of Rondra!”*

Leudara greets the heroes in an old-fashioned warrior manner that follows the tradition of the Order of the Theater (*History (Bornland)* check at +3). The tabards of her copanions, Arlin and Semkin (for details, see page 31) reveal they are squires of the houses Krabbwitzkoje-Rantzigsford and Salderseed-Niveselground (*Etiquette (Heraldry & Family Trees)* check at +3). All three have lost 3D6 LP and are thankful for the heroes’ help. Leudara politely refuses any offer of magical or karmic healing, showing her own rigorous expectations of her function as role-model (*Empathy (Discern Motivation)* check at +1). Besides, the Church of Rondra does not believe in using healing spells. Leudara claims the bear meat for everyone and invites the heroes to accompany her and the squires into the Festumers’ camp.

The squires only speak when addressed, but the heroes learn the following information from Leudara.

- The squires are from Timpski’s band of fighters, sent to scout the area. Leudara accompanied them because of a feeling she had
- Jaruslav is in Timpski’s camp. Twice, Leudara has had to prevent him from slaying his two imprisoned goblins while he was drunk
- The Festumers attacked the Norbards as soon as they arrived, and never even attempted to negotiate for the drum. The Norbards are staying out of sight, and are keeping the drum’s location a secret.
- If the heroes inform her of their assignment, Leudara says she is thankful they have come. She hopes progress will be made with the heroes as mediators.

### Leudara Argentalis of Firunen, Blessed One of Rondra

**Brief Description:** Late 30s; tight braid; thoughtful brown eyes; confident stride; strong voice; skilled Blessed One of Rondra; inexperienced Alliance of Kor’s Sign cultist.

**Motivation:** Wants to make her own destiny; believes her faith in Rondra and the agenda of the Alliance of Kor’s Sign can be united due to recurring visions she has experienced

**Agenda:** Wants the Festumers to regain possession of the drum, while keeping Rondra’s laws—based on her home temple’s commands; Later, when she learns of it, she wants to get the war drum ritual into the Alliance’s possession.

**Function:** Aloof, but trustworthy ally of the heroes; Leudara prevents ruthless behavior from the Festumers using her authority as a Blessed One, and sometimes takes advantage of peoples’ expectations of her to manipulate them.

**Background:** Leudara is here to represent the temple of Rondra in Firunen, as well as to witness the Rondranian course of the negotiations—and ensure it, if need be.



The Alliance of Kor’s Sign has already infiltrated the temple, and Leudara is supposed to secretly scout for possible allies. She depends on her authority as a Blessed One of Rondra to do so, but does not reveal she is a cultist.

**Animosities:** Loss of control, cowardice, stupidity

**Portrayal Tips:** Give clear, reasonable answers, but say only what needs to be said. Allow a smile to cross your lips





occasionally. Act more relaxed and content after a fight. Change the subject when conversation focuses on you.

**Fate:** Leudara plays an important role in the campaign and beyond—possibly as an enemy of the heroes. This adventure gives the heroes a chance to get to know her before the fight against the Alliance of Kor's Sign begins. She is a member of the sect, but wrestles with the conflict to her duties as a Blessed One of Rondra. She knows Rudjev of Arauken, but they have different assignments and keep their distance.

**Special:** If the heroes get to know Leudara better, they begin to see character traits pleasing unto Kor, bridled only by her stern, Rondranian training: she enjoys competition; loves power; and is ruthless—at times even greedy and cruel. Ways in which this translates to everyday life: Leudara eats and drinks more than is usual for one of her station, always makes sure to get her share, and tries to secure a good place to sleep early on. She enjoys betting and ends discussions by putting her foot down.



Compared to other Blessed Ones of Rondra, she takes a moment longer to make sacrifices or assume responsibility, and strikes quicker and harder when there is insolence. Despite this, she does honor Rondra's laws.

*"Pull yourself together!"*

*"This is no joke! Now, go!"* (a successful *Empathy* check lets you see her amused grin).

*"It was necessary. You will see."*

#### Examples of Scenes with Leudara

- Leudara is very stern when it comes to discipline. When Arlin tries to start trouble with a hero ("Shut up, you Norbard!"), she makes the squire sit beside the hero for the rest of the journey. When she turns away after reprimanding him, an *Empathy* (Discern Motivation) check at +1 reveals her trying to hide a rakish smile. Arlin (Willpower 2 (12/11/9), SPI 1; see page 31) stops his sulking with a *Fast-Talk* (Flattery) check at -1.
- The heroes can convince Leudara to share about some of her adventures, but it takes some effort. At first, she hesitates; but, after she gets going, she describes in detail a battle she once fought against a horde of swampcreeks. After that, she stops talking abruptly and remains silent, as described above.
- She finds a reason to involve Semkin (for details, see page 31) in an unarmed duel with a minority hero (for example, a goblin, Norbard, or Thorwaler). One possible reason might be a battle of honor to claim a seat in the kaleshka. Semkin, who is in love with her, obeys, but loses the battle due to his previous wounds. Only later does it come out that Leudara arranged the fight to prove the hero's courage so she could introduce him in the camp as a "worthy fighter" whose honor she does not doubt.



#### Leudara of Firunen

COU 15 SGC 12 INT 12 CHA 12

DEX 10 AGI 15 CON 13 STR 13

LP 31 AE - KP 38 INI 14+1D6

DO 8 SPI 2 TOU 2 MOV 7

Fate Points 3

Social Status: Free

**Special Abilities:** Area Knowledge (Firunen), Feint I-II, Forceful Blow I, Grapple, Inured to Encumbrance I, Leader, One-Handed Combat, Onslaught, Skill Specialization (*Self-Control*, *Religion*, *History*), Tradition (Church of Rondra)

**Languages:** Native tongue Garethi III, Bosparano II

**Scripts:** Kuslik Signs

**Advantages:** Blessed One, Increased Regeneration II, Real Fighter

**Disadvantages:** Bad Habit (Egoistic, Glutton), Decreased Karmal Power VII, Obligations II (Firuner Temple of Rondra), Principles (Church of Rondra)

**Combat Techniques:** Brawling 12 (14/8), Swords 14 (16/9), Two-Handed Swords 12 (14/7)

**Unarmed:** AT 13 PA 7 DP 1D6+2 RE short

**Rondra's Crest:** AT 13 PA 5 DP 2D6+2 RE medium

**Long Sword:** AT 16 PA 9 DP 1D6+5 RE medium

**PRO/ENC** 4/1 (chainmail) (armor modifiers already included)

#### Skills

Physical: *Body Control* 6, *Climbing* 3, *Feat of Strength* 4, *Perception* 5, *Self-Control* (*Stay Conscious*) 8 (10), *Swimming* 2

Social: *Empathy* 5, *Etiquette* 5, *Fast-Talk* 4, *Intimidation* 6, *Persuasion* 9, *Willpower* 6

Nature: *Orienting* 3, *Survival* 3, *Tracking* 1

Knowledge: *History* (*Bornland*) 7 (9), *Law* 4, *Religion* (*Rondra*) 8 (10), *Warfare* 7

Craft: *Treat Wounds* 5

**Liturgical Chants:** The Twelve Blessings, Bless Object 4, Encourage 5, Enforce Honor 6, Pain Tolerance 6, Protect the Defenseless 6

**Equipment:** Long Sword, Rondra's crest, chainmail, bearskin coat, tabard, wilderness package

**Combat Behavior:** Leudara prefers to fight with one hand; her fighting style is quick and agile, despite her chainmail. She only uses her Rondra's crest to take enemies down quickly. She never ambushes or attacks enemies with inferior numbers, but she does use feints. She rarely uses liturgical chants, and she is not interested in equitable armament.

**Escape:** Leudara does not run away from a fight

**Pain +1 with:** 23 LP, 16 LP, 8 LP, 5 LP or less.



## Squires and Guards

### The Campsite

The Hardener Lake District covers many square miles; it includes nearly sixty lakes and ponds, surrounded by bushes and reeds, all supposedly connected by small, hidden streams and channels. Timpski's men set up camp next to a medium-sized lake called the Deepwater. The camp consists of 14 large tents and a few smaller ones. The camp population includes about one dozen longshoremen and guild members, two grand burghers from Festum, a handful of mercenaries, and six shetzes (knights) from the March, plus their entourage—all in all, about fifty armed men and women and a dozen horses. Tent space is divided by nobles and burghers. The placement of the tents indicates the important spokesmen are Elkman Timpski, the guard captain, and the shetz Jaruslav of Cherrydale-Krabbwitzkoje.

**Special Places:** In addition to the living tents, there are the bronnjars' colorful tournament tents, where the squires sleep, a paddock, a cattle fold, and the splendid tent of *Ertzel Underkamp* (see page 31). There is also an infirmary tent, run by *Sumjev Jannerloff* (see page 31); a kitchen tent, where squires and apprentices take turns cooking meals; and even a tool cart and a small anvil for the blacksmith, *Ugo Bootjack* (see page 31). Of course, the cooks and the blacksmith demand payment for their services (1.5 x the listed price). Timpski's tent holds an iron-shod chest containing 600 batz to pay for the drum. Timpski wears the key to the chest around his neck.

**Camp Life:** Life in the camp consists mostly of waiting. To entertain themselves, people tell stories, sing songs, flirt, and sometimes gamble and drink. Of course, this all leads to envy, jealousy, and false accusations—sometimes even

brawls. Timpski keeps his guards in check, but most of the other people tend to behave better when Leudara is present, dealing with any internal infractions themselves. Leudara's well-prepared masses and the goblin fights allow for some diversion. The general mood is becoming more and more heated; the people are angry about the Norbards' superior lodgings, and are tired of the cold, dreary food, which becomes sparser with each day.

**Services:** Food is served at the kitchen tent twice per day, and a guard stands at the ready to ensure there are no exceptions. Timpski, Underkamp, the nobles, and the Blessed Ones eat alone and receive better rations. Leudara forgoes this privilege. The night watch has three, 3-hour shifts but only 2 guards, who take turns. Every day, Timpski sends out two groups of three scouts each. Two other groups go hunting, which Timpski arranges with the nobles who have hunting rights in the area—whether inherited or leased.

**The Enemy:** From the shore, the heroes can see two inhabited houseboats, surrounded by a thin layer of ice. Timpski's men are guarding the escape channel, so the Norbards are safest in the middle of the Deepwater.

**Prisoners:** You can read more about Jääni and Bruutsh in *Freeing the Goblins* (page 32).

### Loyalty and Power

The guards and longshoremen follow Timpski mostly because of their indignation at the *Norbard scum* who want to *take away* part of their tradition. If the heroes are working for the Surjeloffs, the guards and longshoremen don't trust them.





• If smart heroes use the bronnjars' remorse against them, all *Persuasion* (Discussion, Conversation, and Public Speaking) checks and *Fast-Talk* (Hard Sell, Manipulate, or Flattery) checks receive a +1 bonus.

The mercenaries are here because they are being paid. They do not question the heroes' assignment, as the heroes are guests of the Blessed One of Rondra.

The nobles follow Timpski hoping for adventure or because of old family bonds to Jaruslav or Joost of Salderseed. They all share prejudices against city folk, which lead

to resistance if the heroes are working for Nodwinger.

Most bronnjars are ashamed they did not join the Middenrealm's campaign against the Heptarch, Helme Haffax, so it's easy to suggest they are cowards, whether

All members of the group respect Leudara, but the Blessed One does not join in the negotiations.

### ¶ Shetz Jaruslav of Cherrydale-Krabbwitzkoje

**Brief Description:** mid 20s; Skilled knight; big and strong; luxurious black beard and curls; red cheeks; deep voice.

**Motivation:** Wants to make a name for himself among the nobles of the March, to escape his family's shadow.

**Agenda:** Jaruslav uses his connections to the bronnjars to support Timpski's attempt to recover the drum. He can sense things others can't and uses that knowledge to hurt the hated Norbards. He enjoys torturing the captured

goblins, which earns him money and respect in the camp. Secretly, Jaruslav hopes to capture a hot-blooded Alhanian woman—a tribute to the beautiful Chrenja Gotowitz, who broke his heart when he was 16.

**Function:** Powerful, but easily manipulated opponent of the heroes; as co-leader with the captain, he is the rumbling, impulsive, and shrewd one; which might mean trouble if Jaruslav harms the interests of any bronnjar.

**Background:** This third-born son of Marja, the duchess of Cherrydale, is unshakable in his love for his country. The shetz does not like Norbards or traders in general. He believes Leudara's involvement is unnecessary, and he mistrusts the heroes, especially if they are not nobles. He only accepts their presence for Timpski's sake, as he thinks they also do not need to be involved. Jaruslav's coat of arms shows his low succession rank and his marriage downward into a vassal house. Marja of Cherrydale felt she contributed enough when her oldest children served in the fight against Haffax. She did not want to risk her line of succession, so she married Jaruslav to the daughter of a baron whose family is dependent on the Cherrydales and poses no threat to her holdings. •• This responsibility weighs heavily on Jaruslav, causing him to often drink one too many meskinnes. In turn, his short temper flares even more quickly; leading to brawls, harmless challenges to duels, and—most often—beatings for Jääni and Bruutsh.

**Animosities:** Goblins, moneybags, Norbards

**Portrayal Tips:** Act as though you are always right. Take up lots of room, be loud and brash. Start swooning and be annoying when speaking to beautiful women. Slur your words sometimes. If it is unclear how you should respond, laugh at the other person and make the other bronnjars laugh with you.

**Fate:** Recovering the drum does not bring him the glory he craves. He begins seeking other challenges and his hatred of the Norbards grows, eventually leading him to the Alliance of Kor's Sign. The heroes meet him in battle later during the campaign.

**Special:** Jaruslav's rivalry with Timpski is hard to miss. The shetz is the connection to the nobles in the campaign, which means he brings the most fighters to the group; though they tend to be a bit stubborn. Joost of Salderseed, who rules the Lake District in name, is father to Jaruslav's squire, Jeterine (see page 31). For this reason, Jaruslav believes he is the direct representative of the prince and, thus, commander.

"That is...OUTRAGEOUS!"

"You will regret this, mark my words!"

"Well, hello, there, darling..."

•• A clever hero might think to use Jaruslav's strained relation with his mother, the duchess, against him with a successful *Fast-Talk* (Manipulate or Flattery) check at +1.





### Shetz Jaruslav of

#### Cherrydale-Krabbwitzkoje

COU 13 SGC 10 INT 11 CHA 12

DEX 11 AGI 13 CON 15 STR 15

LP 42 AE - KP - INI 12+1D6

DO 7 SPI 0 TOU 3 MOV 7

Fate Points 1

Social Status: Noble

**Special Abilities:** Area Knowledge (Cherrydale), Feint I, Forceful Blow I+II, Inured to Encumbrance I+II, Mounted Combat, Skill Specialization (*Riding* (*Combat Maneuvers*)), Tilt

**Languages:** Native tongue Garethi III, Alaani I

**Scripts:** Kuslik Signs

**Advantages:** Noble II, Increased Life Points V, Rich III

**Disadvantages:** Decreased Spirit I, Negative Trait (Pushy Toward Women), Personality Flaw (Arrogance, Vanity)

**Combat Techniques:** Bows 12 (13), Brawling 11 (12/8), Lances 14 (15/9), Shields 13 (14/9), Swords 14 (15/9)

**Unarmed:** AT 11 PA 7 DP 1D6 RE short

**Long Sword:** AT 14 PA 8 DP 1D6+4 RE medium

**Long Sword (and Wooden Shield, active):** AT 14 PA 11 DP 1D6+4 RE medium

**War Lance:** AT 14 PA 8 DP 2D6+2 RE -

**Longbow:** RC 13 RT 2 DP 1D6+8 RE 20/100/160

**PRO/ENC** 5/1 (scale mail) (armor modifiers already included)

#### Skills

Physical: *Body Control* 8, *Carousing* 8, *Feat of Strength* 10, *Perception* 6, *Riding* (*Combat Maneuvers*) 10 (12), *Self-Control* 6, *Swimming* 6

Social: *Empathy* 3, *Etiquette* 6, *Fast-Talk* 5, *Intimidation* 6, *Seduction* 7, *Willpower* 3

Nature: *Animal Lore* 4, *Orienting* 3, *Survival* 5

Knowledge: *Law* 2, *Myths & Legends* 5, *Religion* 4, *Warfare* 6

Craft: *Commerce* 6, *Treat Wounds* 4

**Combat Behavior:** Jaruslav uses the advantages of mounted combat whenever possible. He rarely uses his shield, prefers Forceful Blows, and relies on his heavy armor. He only uses ranged weapons if others use them.

**Escape:** Jaruslav believes surrendering is shameful, but he does so with *Pain III*.

**Pain +1 with:** 32 LP, 21 LP, 11 LP, and 5 LP or less.



moneybags from Festum will be indebted to him, and he won't have to pay so many tolls at the gate." (+)

☛ "All those bronnjars in one place for such a long time? I would drink too. Poor goblins, they're the ones who suffer for it." (+/-)

☛ "Even though he rants about the Norbards, a black-eyed Norbard beauty would melt his heart." (+)

### Guard Captain Elkmán Timpiski

**Brief Description:** 33; short; thin, red hair; stubble; wiry body, but chubby-cheeked; loud, brassy voice; skilled guard; average council member

**Motivation:** He wants to recover the drum, using force if necessary. He hopes to earn the respect of the conservative Festumers and a seat in the Close Council.

**Agenda:** Organizes and drives the group to the Speckles; meddles a lot in camp and believes he is responsible for everything—he has organized the whole recovery effort, after all. When there is trouble among the commoners, the matter is first brought to him, and his decision usually ends the conflict.

**Function:** Ruthless, but pragmatic opponent of the heroes; hard to judge, which makes him an unpredictable risk.

**Background:** Timpiski is a city boy who feels unsure outside the city walls. He tries to fight this uncertainty with constant physical movement (the heroes can see this with a successful *Empathy* (*Discern Motivation*) check).



### Rumors about Jaruslav

☛ "He wasn't allowed to fight against Haffax, because his mother is afraid for his life. So, she married him off to the boring Krabbwitzkojerin, to keep him close by." (+)

☛ "His squire, Jeterine, is the daughter of the Prince of Salderseed. That's why he acts like he's a Marshal." (+)

☛ "Smart as a fox, that Salderseed. Sends Jaruslav to do his dirty work with the Norbards. If it works, the



### Elkman Timpski

COU 12 SGC 12 INT 15 CHA 12  
DEX 12 AGI 13 CON 13 STR 13  
LP 31 AE – KP – INI 13+1D6  
DO 7 SPI 3 TOU 2 MOV 7

#### Fate Points 1

**Social Status:** Free

**Special Abilities:** Alertness, Area Knowledge (Festum: Harbor, Old Town), Combat Reflexes, Defensive Posture, Feint I, Forceful Blow I, Foxian, Grapple, Inured to Encumbrance I, Lip Reading, Skill Specialization (*Streetwise*)

**Languages:** Native Tongue Garethi III, Tulamidyia I, Alaani I, Goblin I, Thorwalian I.

**Scripts:** Kuslik Signs

**Advantages:** Increased Life Points III, Increased Spirit

**Disadvantages:** Obligations II (Festum), Personality Flaw (Creepy, Prejudices against Nobles)

**Combat Techniques:** Brawling 13 (14/8), Crossbow 13 (14), Swords 12 (13/7)

**Unarmed:** AT 13 PA 7 DP 1D6 RE short

**Long Sword** AT 14 PA 8 DP 1D6+4 RE medium

**Light Crossbow:** RC 14 RT 8 DP 1D6+6 RA 10/50/80

**PRO/ENC** 3/0 (leather armor) (armor modifiers already included)

#### Skills

**Physical:** Body Control 8, Perception 8, Pickpocket 5, Self-Control 8, Stealth 6

**Social:** Empathy 8, Etiquette 4, Fast-Talk 7, Intimidation 6, *Streetwise* (Ask Around) 10 (12), Willpower 6

**Nature:** Orienting 7, Ropes 6

**Knowledge:** Law 7, Religions 4, Warfare 5

**Craft:** Commerce 9, Driving 4, Treat Wounds 6

**Combat Behavior:** Timpski avoids combat by first threatening with his crossbow. When in doubt, he uses it defensively. He bluffs when possible and tries to make opponents surrender with *feints* and *forceful blows*. His favorite combat maneuver is to grapple his opponent.

**Escape:** After receiving *Pain II*, he negotiates and surrenders, though you can never be sure when Timpski will seek revenge.

**Pain +1 with:** 23 LP, 16 LP, 8 LP, and 5 LP or less.



He thinks the heroes are an annoyance, but accepts their presence to keep the peace with their employer from Festum. When dealing with Jaruslav, he has the upper hand in that the retrieval of the drum is a city matter, he has a lot of experience dealing with traders, and he is viewed as the expedition's spokesman.

**Animosities:** wanderlust, infidelity, naivety.

**Portrayal Tips:** Lower your head slightly and look up at people from below. Choose your words carefully and coolly. Use rude words occasionally (Timpski grew up at the harbor and deals with criminals every day).

**Fate:** Timpski does not earn a seat in the Close Council, but his reputation grows in Festum. The heroes meet him again later on during the campaign.

**Special:** Timpski gained the rank of guard captain by knowingly allowing his predecessor, *Urjelke Oakburner*, to walk into an ambush staged by vengeful Maraskans. This fact is known only by his adjutant, *Bershin*, who does not dare speak of it to anyone.

#### Rumors About Elkman Timpski

- “He knows his stuff. Has fought his way up through the ranks.” (+)
- “He’s like a dog with a bone! Timpski has caught everyone he’s ever gone after, and he will catch these thieving Norbards, too.” (+/-)
- “He organized the whole expedition. Made speeches at the market, raised money, hired mercenaries. He has my respect; I couldn’t achieve all that.” (+)
- “How embarrassing, to have the drum stolen on his watch. No wonder he puts on airs like that—his job is on the line.” (+)

#### The Noble Retinue

The following characters are meant to serve as inspiration when portraying the crowd at the campsite. For best results, choose characters in which your heroes might have interest.



If the heroes get to know some of these characters, feel free to use them again in future adventures. Mercenaries and journeymen move about frequently, while shetztes and their retainers could end up joining the Alliance of Kor’s Sign or fighting against it. Note that some of these characters also appear in future published adventures, though with smaller parts to play.

#### Additional Characters

More nobles and their retainers could come from the Irberod or Geestwindskoje families. To create a new noble, combine one of those names with a location name, such as Bulltown, Alderow, Flowerfield, Balgerick, Keyrock, Larsach, and so on. Most of these are bridge nobles who need money badly.

♣ *Bronnjar Shetz Jadvice of Krabbwitzkoje-Sirsinkis* (35; broad nose; pale skin; wears a helmet with a creaking visor; uneducated, but insightful; loves braised elk; hates Elkman Timpski, needs reading and writing lessons, but does not like to admit it) is Jaruslav’s sister-in-law. She despises him, and joined his expedition only out of family loyalty.

♣ *Shetz Friedebald of Salderseed-Salletground* (21; crooked nose; spotty, brown beard; loves his horse, Vigo; hates dried fruit; needs a successful adventure to impress his bride’s parents) is a hanger-on whose family lays claim to some of the lakes in the Speckles.



### Bronnjars

COU 14 SGC 12 INT 14 CHA 12

DEX 11 AGI 14 CON 15 STR 15

LP 36 AE - KP - INI 12+1D6

DO 6 SPI 2 TOU 3 MOV 7

**Unarmed:** AT 12 PA 8 DP 1D6+1 RE short

**Long Sword:** AT 13 PA 7 DP 1D6+4 RE medium

**Two-Handed Sword:** AT 13 PA 4 DP 2D6+4 RE medium

**War Lance:** AT 13 PA 8 DP 2D6+2 RE -

**Longbow:** RC 12 RT 2 DP 1D6+8 RA 20/100/160

**PRO/ENC** 4/1 (chainmail) (armor modifiers already included)

**Special Abilities:** Forceful Blow I, Inured to Encumbrance I, Mounted Combat, Tilt

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** individual, common: Negative Trait (Arrogance, Vanity)

**Skills:** Body Control 8, Feat of Strength 9, Intimidation 7, Perception 7, Riding 12, Self-Control 10, Stealth 2, Swimming 3, Willpower 5

**Size Category:** medium

**Type:** Intelligent, humanoid

**Loot:** Depends on the shetz; random find of 4D6+4 farthings

**Combat Behavior:** per individual

**Escape:** After losing 50% LP

**Pain +1 at:** 27 LP, 18 LP, 9 LP, and 5 LP or less

### Squires

COU 13 SGC 12 INT 13 CHA 12

DEX 11 AGI 13 CON 14 STR 14

LP 33 AE - KP - INI 11+1D6

DO 6 SPI 1 TOU 2 MOV 7

**Unarmed:** AT 10 PA 6 DP 1D6 RE short

**Short Sword:** AT 11 PA 6 DP 1D6+2 RE short

**Longbow:** RC 12 RT 2 DP 1D6+8 RA 20/100/160

**PRO/ENC** 4/1 (chainmail) (armor modifiers already included)

**Special Abilities:** Forceful Blow I, Inured to Encumbrance I, Mounted Combat, Tilt

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** individual, common: Negative Trait (Arrogance, Vanity)

**Skills:** Body Control 6, Feat of Strength 7, Intimidation 5, Perception 5, Riding 10, Self-Control 8, Stealth 0, Swimming 3, Willpower 3

**Size Category:** medium

**Type:** Intelligent, humanoid

**Loot:** Depends on the squire; random find of 2D6+4 farthings

**Combat Behavior:** per individual

**Escape:** After losing 50% LP

**Pain +1 at:** 25 LP, 17 LP, 8 LP, and 5 LP or less

### Squires

👤 *Jeterine of Salderseed* (15; long, blond braids; tall for her age; loves adventure stories; hates her life as squire; needs an outlet to rebel) is Jaruslav's squire and the second daughter of the Prince of Salderseed.

👤 *Semkin of Irberod-Karkriwen* (17; mid-length red hair, coarse beard that only grows on his cheeks; loves Leudara, hates goblins; needs strong role models) is Jadvige's squire.

👤 *Arlin of Dragonclasp* (15; chewed nails; dark rings under his eyes; loves honey bread; hates Norbards; needs respect) is Friedebald's squire.

### Servants

👤 *Sumjev Jannerloff* (20; half-Norbard; whistles through his teeth; loves his potted ivy (which he has named *Nuknuk*), given to him by a Nivese friend; hates nothing; needs protection from the other camp members' hostilities) is Jadvige's horse groomer.

👤 *Pjerov Graupelponder* (44; chubby; walks hunched over; wears a hood to hide that he has only one ear; loves silence; hates people in general; needs a soul healer) is Friedebald's horse groomer.

### Serfs

👤 *Ilmin* (16; weak chin; brown hair; extremities are often blue from cold; very lazy; loves being drunk; hates winter; needs new shoes) is Jaruslav's serf.

👤 *Rassia* (18; brown hair; petite; button nose with freckles; loves sailboats, but has never seen one; hates Jadvige; needs *Sulja Hinzke* to shelter her for a year when she escapes to Festum, so she can be free) is Jadvige's serf.

### The Festumers

Again, for best results, when using these stats for generic NPCs, choose characters with whom your players will enjoy interacting. Use the same tips as for the nobles in the previous section.

### Guards

👤 *Bershin Valroder* (23; brown, curly hair; gangly; loves sea shanties; hates Ertzel Underkamp; needs a lover) is Timpski's right-hand man.

👤 *Sulja Hinzke* (19; blonde ponytail; muscular; loves Rassia, the serf; hates Jaruslav; needs to be consoled over her brother's death) is a member of the city guard.

### Craftsmen

👤 *Ertzel Underkamp* (41; grand burgher; pot-bellied; bald; expensive clothes with fur trim; loves being right; hates all Norbards; needs this expedition to succeed, to outweigh corrupt dealings that could cost him his office) is guild master of the rope and sail-makers guild.

👤 *Ugo Bootjack* (22; small and sturdy; trimmed mustache; always trying to stop smoking; loves snowball fights; needs something for his back pain) is a smith journeyman.

👤 *Jagotin Stipkov* (15; watery, glazed eyes; loves winning; hates anything he does not understand; needs a good



performance evaluation from Underkamp) is a rope maker's apprentice.

### Longshoremen

👤 *Vigo Jannerloff* (28; broad shoulders; tattoo of an anchor on his forearm; hoarse voice; loves his three children; hates Friedebald's horse, Vigo; needs glasses) is a longshoreman from Festum.

👤 *Warja Wolpjes* (21; long, dark blond locks; always wears a hat; charming and good-looking; loves dancing; hates bores; needs a meskinnes every day) is a longshorewoman from Festum.

### Mercenaries

👤 *Torstor Nellgardson* (22; Thorwaler; ash-blond; full beard; tattoos; loves Azilajid; hates meskinnes; needs a friend who agrees with him) is a mercenary who serves Underkamp. He does not care about the political importance of the Thorwal Drum.

#### Guard/Mercenary

COU 14 SGC 11 INT 13 CHA 11

DEX 10 AGI 13 CON 13 STR 13

LP 32 AE – KP – INI 12+1D6

DO 6 SPI 1 TOU 2 MOV 6

**Unarmed:** AT 11 PA 4 DP 1D6 RE short

**Dagger:** AT 10 PA 3 DP 1D6+1 RE short

**Halberd:** AT 11 PA 2 DP 1D6+6 RE long

**Sword:** AT 11 PA 4 DP 1D6+4 RE medium

**Light Crossbow:** RC 10 RT 8 DP 1D6+6 RA 10/50/80

**PRO/ENC:** 4/1 (chainmail) (armor modifiers already included)

**Actions:** 1

**Special Abilities:** Feint I, Forceful Blow I, Inured to Encumbrance I

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Negative Trait (Faith in Authority)

**Skills:** *Body Control* 5, *Feat of Strength* 5, *Intimidation* 6, *Perception* 8, *Self-Control* 6, *Stealth* 6, *Swimming* 2, *Willpower* 5

**Size Category:** medium

**Type:** Intelligent, humanoid

**Loot:** Depends on the guard/mercenary; random find of 2D6+4 farthings

**Combat Behavior:** Guards and mercenaries use their crossbows to attempt to force their opponents to surrender. If they are unsuccessful, they shoot once and then fight with their halberds, using Feints and Forceful Blows. In cramped surroundings, they use their swords, instead. They gang up on an enemy when given the chance.

**Escape:** per individual; with 2 levels of *Pain at the latest*.

**Pain +1 at:** 24 LP, 16 LP, 8 LP, and 5 LP or less

#### Burgher from Festum

COU 12 SGC 12 INT 13 CHA 12

DEX 13 AGI 12 CON 12 STR 12

LP 29 AE – KP – INI 12+1D6

DO 6 SPI 1 TOU 1 MOV 8

**Unarmed:** AT 10 PA 6 DP 1D6 RE short

**Dagger:** AT 9 PA 5 DP 1D6+1 RE short

**Club:** AT 7 PA 2 DP 1D6+2 RE medium

**Knife:** AT 9 PA 3 DP 1D6+1 RE short

**PRO/ENC** 0/0

**Actions:** 1

**Special Abilities:** None

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** None

**Skills:** *Body Control* 4, *Feat of Strength* 3, *Intimidation* 2, *Perception* 2, *Self-Control* 2, *Stealth* 3, *Swimming* 2, *Willpower* 10, *Craft skill used for profession* 10

**Size Category:** medium

**Type:** Intelligent, humanoid

**Loot:** Depends on the squire; random find of 2D6 farthings

**Combat Behavior:** Burghers try to avoid violent confrontations. If forced to defend themselves, they use clubs or daggers; but they try to run away if given the chance.

**Escape:** per individual; burghers flee after receiving 1 level of *Pain*.

**Pain +1 at:** 22 LP, 15 LP, 7 LP, and 5 LP or less

👤 *Azilajid Graupinski* (24; tanned; scar on her brow; dozens of small braids; ring in her lower lip; loves Torstor; hates arrogant nobles; needs to have an argument every day) is a mercenary who serves Underkamp. She is a second-generation Maraskani exile, and did not want to let Torstor undertake this go on this campaign alone.

### Freeing the Goblins

Olko insists on freeing his friends as soon as possible. Bruutsh and Jääni wear iron collars and are tied to trees by Jaruslav's tent. One of Jaruslav's people guards them around the clock, and their belongings are kept inside the tent. The goblins must fight Jaruslav's dog, Storko, for scraps of meat and to entertain callous camp members.

### What is the Law?

A successful *Law (Bornland)* check at +3 shows there are two conflicting positions, with no real compromise:

👤 The camp is on Cherrydale land; so, as son of the duchess, Jaruslav can judge criminals as he wishes—Festum city law has no jurisdiction here. By law, goblins fit somewhere between serfs and beasts, and thus they are considered property. It has always been the nobility's task to get rid of goblins, and Jaruslav is applauded for cleverly turning his obligation into entertainment. Generally, Bornlanders believe all



### Storko the Dog

COU 12 SGC 11(a) INT 14 CHA 13

DEX 9 AGI 14 CON 9 STR 10

LP 13 AE – KP – INI 13+1D6

DE 7 SPI 1 TOU 0 MOV 12

Bite: AT 13 DP 1D6+2 RE short

PRO/ENC: 0/0

Actions: 1

Special Abilities: Locked Jaws

Advantages/Disadvantages: Exceptional Sense (Smell)

Skills: Body Control 7, Feat of Strength 4, Intimidation 4, Perception 7, Self-Control 7, Stealth 4, Swimming 6, Willpower 2

Numbers: 1

Size Category: small

Type: Animal, non-humanoid

Loot: 8 rations (meat), fur (5 halers)

Combat Behavior: Storko threatens with snarls and barks. He only attacks when attacked or when Jaruslav commands him to do so.

Escape: After losing 50% of his LP

Animal Lore (Domesticated Animals)

- QL 1: Storko is a crossbreed, probably a mix of Bornlander and bloodhound.
- QL 2: Dogs rarely attack humans, but can be trained to do so. This one appears to have been trained to do so.
- QL 3+: Taking a dog's food—as the goblins must, or else they'll starve—is a show of aggression.

Hunting: -1

Pain +1 at: 10 LP, 11 LP, 4 LP, and 1 LP



goblins are thieves, and most people would say Bruutsh and Jääni should be happy Jaruslav shows them mercy by allowing them to live.

- Olko, a respected citizen of Festum, testifies that the goblins lived in Festum for more than a year and a day. So, by law, they are considered free, even without a burgher's letter, and are no longer less than serfs. The theft has not been proven, and all witnesses present owe fealty to Jaruslav. Therefore, both he and the goblins must be brought before an independent court in Festum. Until then, they can be held as wards, at most, and must be treated well.

### Background

Jaruslav's reasons for his actions are vague, at best. Near the Born, he wanted to take his anger out on the goblins. But when they actually stood up to him with the confidence of burghers of Festum, he charged them with stealing money so he could take them prisoner. In Cherrydale, he realized he could make them fight and earn money gambling on the outcome, so he decided to throw them into chains and keep them alive.



### Paths to Freedom

Olko helps as much as he can. He does not let the heroes forget about the goblins.

**Stealth:** The heroes must find a way to sneak past Storko and the guard (for guard stats, see the character boxes). Removing the bolts from the goblins' metal neck rings requires appropriate tools and a cumulative *Pick Locks* (Bit Locks) check at a+3, 1 second, 10 attempts (after 10 attempts, the check is considered a failure).





**Purchase:** Leudara does not permit the heroes to purchase the goblins, as slavery is outlawed in Bornland.

**Duel:** A noble hero can challenge Jaruslav to a joust to resolve the legal dispute.

**Intrigue:** Jaruslav's stubborn squire, Jeterine, has considerable influence on Jaruslav and might be able to convince him to set the goblins free. But first, the heroes must convince her to help (*Empathy* 2 (12/10/11), *Willpower* 1 (11/10/11), SPI 1).

**Negotiation:** If the heroes demand an explanation, the shetz digs in his heels. He does not listen to arguments once he has made up his mind, but he sometimes gets confused when faced with contradictions and might be steered toward a compromise. He does not want to give up his earnings from the fights, but his reputation as honorable man is more important to him.

### Consequences

If Jaruslav learns the heroes freed the goblins against his will, their reputations suffer and they may incur a penalty of 1 to future social skill checks (GM choice). The knight might also challenge them to a duel, or insist they pay a punitive fine of 25 batz. And Leudara may demand a deed of atonement. The heroes enter negotiations with the Norbards with this penalty, which they can only avoid by presenting an alternative, believable scapegoat. Make four *Willpower* (*Resist* (*Appropriate Skill*) 3 (12/11/9) checks, representing the whole camp.

If the heroes don't succeed in helping the goblins escape, Olko waits at most until the day before the drum is handed over to use his magical powers to free his friends.



### Hiding

While Jääni and Bruutsh are glad to be free, the humiliation they suffered at Jaruslav's hands runs deep. They have lost all trust in humans and want revenge. They hide in the nearby woods and await their chance. Shortly before the drum negotiations come to an end, Jääni secretly casts the *Orvai Kurim's War Drum* ritual (see page 9) on the Thorwal Drum. Then, the two wait for the drum to exchange hands. They want to make all humans present feel the rage of a goblin sorceress, and they have the advantage of surprise on their side.

In the meantime, present one or more of the following brief encounters to remind the heroes that the goblins still linger nearby.

- The heroes are led to an abandoned hiding place by goblin tracks Bruutsh was careless as he ran from the camp, and the heroes can follow his tracks (Tracking (Humanoid Tracks) check at a -1) to an abandoned hiding place where the goblins killed a boar—an

impressive feat. The hiding place offers a good view of the negotiation site

- An embarrassed mercenary asks the heroes if they have seen two of his daggers. He believes he misplaced them or perhaps gambled them away while drunk. In fact, Bruutsh stole them.

- Olko wanders off, and returns after a few hours. While out, he found unusual objects (red paint specks, ground-up tree bark, and boar bristles) from Jääni's drum ritual, but he cannot place them. To avoid endangering his friends, he tries to keep his findings secret.

### Jääni Grayreth, Goblin Sorceress

**Brief Description:** Inexperienced goblin sorceress; 17; rust-red fur; claws painted green and ocher with alchemical paint; wears durable, city clothes made from rough linen and wool, a striped wool cap, and robust leather shoes. Her capture and subsequent journey has left her clothes somewhat torn and her nail polish splintered. When she is with the Lungai Theluzi tribe, Jääni tries to fit in by wearing many charms: a bird feather, rat teeth, and tree bark. She walks rather clumsily in her leather shoes.

• Be careful when revealing this information, or the heroes might try to prevent the drum scene (*Bruutsh Must Drum!*, page 49) altogether. If that happens, Jaruslav beats on the drum during the gathering to mock the goblins, thus activating the spell. "So, you want to play the drum? Ha!"

**Motivation:** Wants to be with Bruutsh and live in freedom; takes her banishment from Festum very seriously; wants revenge for being captured and tortured.

**Agenda:** Gladly accepts help (especially from Bruutsh) and waits patiently for the right opportunity; uses magic as efficiently as possible.

**Function:** Native romantic soul, driven to the edge by cruelty; female role in a tragic love story; main opponent of the heroes

**Background:** Jääni and Bruutsh came to know Olko in Hesinde's Village, where they read sentimental literature together. Since then, she holds very un-goblin-like ideals of love and heroism. Because she betrayed a secret, her teacher, Mentka Riiba, banished her to the Red Sickle for several years; but, on her way, Jaruslav took her prisoner.

**Animosities:** Injustice, intolerance, callousness

**Portrayal Tips:** Pull up your upper lip when smiling. Instead of contributing to long discussions, nod or shake your head, in a friendly way. Occasionally hum a little melody.

**Fate:** Jääni appears in future adventures and thus should survive this one. Her experience in the wilderness and



the abuse she suffers causes her to cast off some of her romantic notions. Bruutsh's fate is especially important here—whether the heroes are villains who kill her lover, or benefactors who forgive a stupid deed and bring the pair home safely, it makes a big difference for Jääni.

**Special:** To determine Jääni is a goblin sorceress, the heroes must either catch her performing a ritual or have some prior knowledge or suspicion and search her bag. Her bag contains a small, decorated bone club, a knife, needles and thread, a paintbrush made from pig hair, and several pots of paint. The iron collar restricts her magic, and she cannot cast any spells while still a prisoner.

*"Thank you, good lord. You are, without a doubt, a hero."*

*"Do not speak of justice! Not to me, not after this deed!"*

*"Bruuuutsh!"*

### Special Ability: Tradition (Goblin Sorceress)

Add-On Rule

- Goblin sorceresses must be female
- Elemental Affinity: receive a +1 bonus when summoning elemental creatures of humus, air, and ore
- Goblin sorceresses can learn goblin rituals and create and use traditional artifacts of their culture
- The tradition's primary attribute is Intuition

**Requirements:** Spellcaster

**AP Value:** 100 AP

### ❧ Bruutsh Smuddelvlies

**Brief Description:** Experienced rogue; 19; reddish-brown fur; two rings in his left ear; wears rugged clothes made from green sailcloth, stuffed with straw against the cold.

**Motivation:** Wants to be with Jääni and live in freedom—preferably in a real city; wants revenge for his capture and torture.

**Agenda:** Has a big mouth and takes great risks—both to be taken seriously and to be a brave hero so he can impress Jääni. He shares all that he owns with her and defends her with tooth and claw.

**Function:** Charismatic daredevil whose love leads him to capture, and then forces him to fight the heroes

**Background:** Bruutsh grew up in the Tanners' Quarter of Festum, and did not have an easy life. He found the love of his life in Jääni, but his family is skeptical. Literature taught him the ideals of bravery and chivalry that the goblins once banished from their culture, with good reason. In the heat of the moment, or to exact revenge, he gladly throws away his ideals to act more *like a goblin*.

**Animosities:** Boredom, moral cowardice, betrayal

**Portrayal Tips:** Squint. Talk back to anybody who tries to patronize you. Grin widely and show all your teeth when insulted. Talk like a 1980s action-hero.

### Jääni Grayreth

COU 13 SGC 11 INT 14 CHA 9

DEX 15 AGI 14 CON 12 STR 12

LP 27 AE 29 KP – INI 14+1D6

DO 7 SPI 1 TOU 1 MOV 9

**Fate Points** 1

**Social Status:** Free

**Special Abilities:** Area Knowledge (Festum: Tanners' Quarter, Hesinde's Village), Tradition (Goblin Sorceress), Writer (Seduction (Love Novels))

**Languages:** Native tongue Goblinish III, Garethi III

**Scripts:** Kuslik Signs

**Advantages:** Darksight I, Good Looks I, Nimble, Resistant to Cold, Spellcaster

**Disadvantages:** None

**Combat Techniques:** Brawling 10 (11/7), Daggers 9 (11/7)

**Unarmed:** AT 11 PA 7 DP 1D6 RE short

**Heavy Dagger:** AT 10 PA 6 DP 1D6+2 RE short

**PRO/ENC** 0/0

**Skills**

Physical: Body Control 8, Climbing 4, Perception 8, Self-Control 4, Stealth 8, Swimming 2

Social: Fast-Talk 7, Intimidation 2, Seduction 7, Willpower 4

Nature: Animal Lore 7, Fishing 2, Orienting 5, Plant Lore 8, Survival 7, Tracking 7

Knowledge: Magical Lore 4, Religion 2

Craft: Leatherworking 4, Prepare Food 2, Treat Poison 2, Woodworking 4

**Cantrips:** Stay Dry, Siren Call

**Spells:** Manifesto 10, Placidity 5

**Rituals:** Elemental Servant 4, Orvai Kurim's War Drum 10

**Equipment:** Heavy dagger

**Combat Behavior:** Jääni tries to avoid combat.

**Escape:** After losing 25% or more LP

**Pain +1 with:** 20 LP, 14 LP, 7 LP, and 5 LP or less



**Fate:** Bruutsh might survive this adventure, but does not live past the third adventure in this series.

**Special:** Bruutsh is brave and cunning, but rather unskilled. His deeds in the Red Sickles only succeed with the help of the area's tribal goblins, whom he leads skillfully due to his having read more than one book about warfare, and because he is very streetwise.

*"Take that, villain!"*

*"Get your hands off her, or I'll rip you to pieces!"*

*"Let them come. I am ready."*





## Scenes in the Camp

The following scenes introduce important NPCs and illustrate life in camp. Don't use them all at once, and try to concentrate on what your players are interested in to advance the story line.

### Arrival

Leudara's and the heroes' arrival causes quite a stir in the camp. The shetzes Friedebald and Jadvige look for those responsible for their squires' injuries, Ertzel Underkamp complains that now more mouths must be fed, and the first meeting with Timpski and Jaruslav is icy. The camp is more likely to accept the heroes once Leudara vouches for them and explains their role in providing the bear meat (check using *Fast-Talk* (*Hard Sell* or *Manipulate*) +1) or they learn that the heroes arrived by order of their employer (modifier depending on the letter of recommendation).

Timpski is the first to accept that a neutral party is necessary to contact the Norbards. He and Jaruslav unwillingly promise not to attack for the course of the negotiations, but in return, the heroes must report their progress to Leudara at least once every day. Once that is settled, the heroes' kaleshka is assigned a place at the edge of the camp.

### Bruutsh Smuddelvies

COU 13 SGC 10 INT 14 CHA 13

DEX 12 AGI 14 CON 12 STR 12

LP 29 AE - KP - INI 15+1D6

DO 7 SPI 0 TOU 1 MOV 9

Fate Points 2

Social Standing: free

Languages: Native Tongue Goblinish III, Garethi III.

Scripts: Kuslik Signs

Advantages: Ambidextrous, Darksight I, Exceptional Sense (Hearing, Smell), Good Looks I, Increased Toughness, Resistant to Cold

Disadvantages: Negative Trait (Vengeance), Personality Flaw (Arrogance), Bad Habit (First)

Special Abilities: Alertness, Area Knowledge (Festum: Tanners' Quarter, Hesinde's Village), Blade-Catcher, Combat Reflexes I, Cross-Block, Leader, Mounted Combat I, Precise Thrust I, Two-Handed Combat I, Writer (Myth & Legends (Fairy Tales))

Combat Techniques: Brawling 12 (13/8), Daggers 12 (13/8), Thrown Weapons 12 (13)

Two Heavy Daggers: AT 13 PA 7 DP 1D6+2 RE short Javelin: RC 13 RT 2 DP 2D6+2 RA 5/25/40

PRO/ENC 0/0

### Skills

Physical: Body Control 7, Carousing 6, Climbing 7, Perception 6, Self-Control 4, Stealth 5

Social: Empathy 6, Fast-Talk 7, Seduction 5, Streetwise 8, Willpower 5

Nature: Animal Lore 7, Orientate 5, Plant Lore 8, Survival 7, Tracking 1

Knowledge: Law 3, Myth & Legends 8, Religion 2, Warfare 4

Craft: Pick Locks 5

Combat Behavior: Reason tells Bruutsh to use goblin tactics, like ambush, thrown javelins, and escape. Sometimes, however, the temptation of heroism is too great, and Bruutsh attacks from the front and takes great risks—especially if the enemies are already battered and he wants to save an ally. This may result in Bruutsh's capture.

Escape: Usually after the first attack, but in close combat Bruutsh fights to the death.

Pain +1 with: 22 LP, 15 LP, 7 LP, and 5 LP or less.




### Goblins vs. Dog

Jaruslav and a few others arrange a fight between Jaruslav's dog and the goblins (see *Freeing the Goblins*). If the heroes do not interfere, Olko intercedes, to general displeasure. The heroes can try to end the fight with a competitive check using *Fast-Talk* (*Manipulate* or *Flattery*) against Jaruslav's *Willpower* (*Resist Fast-Talk*). A competitive check using *Intimidation* (*Threats*) -2 against *Willpower* (*Resist Intimidation*) might work, too, but might also start a brawl.



Leudara prevents any armed confrontations, but does not mediate or act to free the goblins.

### The Norbard Merchant

The merchant kaleshka of  *Aljeg Ragaschoff* (32; Norbard; stout; eloquent; loves his independence; hates knights; needs traveling companions) stops at the camp. He knows nothing about the Thorwal Drum, but he has pots of honey, dried meat, and some oddities to sell.

If anyone asks about *special goods*, Aljeg shows them some contraband items from the blasphemous demon forges of Yol-Ghurmak. One is a lens enchanted with the spell *Eagle Eye* (5 minutes, 6 SP, 55 batz). The other is a light weight (10 oz.) that houses a lesser demon. By knocking on the weight, it can become either heavier or lighter (owner's choice) by 5 ounces. To maintain its enchantment, it must be rubbed with blood once a month (100 batz).

If someone discovers Aljeg's trade in demonic items and he is arrested, he bribes a mercenary to let him escape.



At the GM's discretion, Aljeg also offers to sell a goblin idol with two faces called *Tobrien Two-Head*. If so, Rudjev is very interested in the piece and buys it for an impressive 20 batz (outbidding Olko, who is interested as well). Even though the heroes won't recognize it as such, this is a clue that the Alliance of Kor's Sign is interested in goblin mysteries.

### The Straggler

#### Optional Scene

A few days after the heroes' arrival, Rudjev of Arauken (see page 21) joins the camp. Rudjev is well liked by the bronnjars and wants to join what he calls their *righteous battle*, but he and Timpski cannot stand each other. He often ingratiates himself with Bornian nobles by flattering them. Use Rudjev as a provocateur who always appears where a situation might escalate.



Rudjev and Leudara know each other from the Alliance of Kor's Sign. Leudara, who prefers secrecy, does not like Rudjev's methods and reins him in more often than is strictly necessary. If desired, let a hero witness a confrontation between the two, but don't reveal anything yet about the Alliance of Kor's Sign. A successful *Empathy* (*Discern Motivation*) -2 check reveals that Rudjev and Leudara know each other better than they let on.



### Stop Howling!

#### Optional Scene



During the night, a pack of wolves (for stats, see page 20) circles the camp. They are not especially hungry and can be driven away fairly easily, but their nocturnal howling spoils the inhabitants' sleep (-1 to all nightly regeneration).

An investigation shows that they always howl beneath a certain elm tree. The stump of a branch pointing east resembles an open wolf's mouth and exhibits wild magic of the element of Humus. It seems as if the beasts are waiting for a reaction from the tree. The wolves can be driven off by felling the trees (inciting a wolf attack in the process) or luring away the alpha wolf for at least 20 miles (for example, with a trail of blood or by using magic).

### Exercise

#### Optional Scene



Rudjev of Arauken (for stats, see page 22) offers to teach a martial hero some tricks involving combat against superior numbers or in sloping surroundings.

During training breaks, Rudjev tries to sound out the hero's attitude towards the Bornland to lure him to his side, but soon loses interest. Rudjev also approaches other inhabitants of the camp, with varying success.

### Rabble-Rousing

#### Optional Scene



Rudjev takes the opportunity during another argument to rant against the current order.

#### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*"Look around! There is no decency, no order, no discipline! Guards fall asleep and endanger us all! Youths drink themselves witless! And today [insert event that led to the argument]! And the enemy is right there! For years, these Norbard scum have been infiltrating our cities. With their money, they make decent folk into slaves of their magic women. These serpent worshipers are all the same! Who knows what they have to do with the magical events that have been happening everywhere of late!"*

*I tell you: When the Order of the Theater Knights—brave, proud, honorable—still reigned, things like this would not have been possible! But instead of being careful, we pat their bald heads and play games of Rahja with goblins in the Tulamyde temple. Don't misunderstand: They are nothing but savages. They are the enemies of our way of life! One day they will rise and steal the land from your families! What's happening in Festum is only the beginning!"*



Rudjev's rant shocks the expedition's leaders. They stare at the ground in embarrassment, and Leudara hesitates a moment before asking Rudjev to end his speech. As it happens, there are no incidents of sleeping guards that anyone can recall, but many ponder what exactly is happening in Festum.



You can make the situation worse by having the Norbard families of Prishkaj and Vrimtov stage some guerrilla attacks—mostly directed against the supplies and equipment of the Festumers. Keep in mind that these acts of desperation could hurt the negotiations even more. On the other hand, by successfully repelling these attacks, the Festumers could strengthen their position in the negotiations.

## Three Dozen Boats

The Norbard families Prishkaj, Vrimtov, and Trebritzki know the Harden Speckles like nobody else. They live in houseboats on the water, and have protected the lakes from goblins, robbers, wild beasts, and the greed of neighboring nobles for generations. If one location becomes too hostile, they retreat to more remote waters until things cool down. This is how they obtained their reputation as responsible keepers of precious, forbidden, and even dangerous goods—which is one of the reasons Umerika Surjeloff had the drum brought to them.

Today, each family owns about a dozen houseboats. Altogether, they house 300 people. Only the oldest Norbards still remember the games of cat and mouse their ancestors played with the surrounding bronnjars, and how they gritted their teeth and agreed to tolerate each other. However, by living in the houseboats, the families circumvent a law imposed by the Theater Knights that forbids the Norbards from owning land.

They eat honey (from hives that sit on small rafts near the shore in summer), berries, mushrooms, game, and

fish—riches that belong to the bronnjars by law. Without access to land, agriculture is hard, and grain must be bought. Because the lakes they inhabit are so remote, they have fewer opportunities to trade than other meshpocha. The usual humidity makes it difficult to store food. A leaky boat, a plague of rats, or a hole in a roof can lead to many weeks of hunger. During colder winters, most of the Lake District freezes over, allowing the boats to be reached on foot.

For many years, nobody had reason to take advantage of this ice to launch an attack. Most bronnjars wouldn't even consider fighting wars in winter. But since the Harden Barracks were built, the families have suffered several attacks by drunken soldiers.

### A Typical Houseboat

Norbard wooden houseboats have up to two levels and are surrounded by wooden platforms that can be stowed when the boat is under way. The houseboats' walls are filled with straw and their exteriors are sometimes sealed with a waxy paste. The hulls extend only about three feet below the water's surface, but most supplies are stored in these lower portions of the boats.

In the center of each boat is a room with a wrought-iron stove. This room holds benches and rocking chairs, and the walls of the room hold alcoves for ten to twenty people, hidden behind curtains. People eat, argue, and celebrate here. Herbs, dried fish, musical instruments, and weapons hang on the wall alongside oddities from all over the world. Hammocks for guests are also hung here. Sometimes this room is on the second level, along with some supplies and trade goods, allowing the boat's occupants to keep goats, chickens, and rabbits on the first level.

Each boat has one or two rafts that can interlock with one another. Some rafts hold beehives, and in the growing season, some rafts carry small gardens. In the winter, the families move the houseboats closer together, like bees clustering together in a bee hive during the winter. During this time, additional platforms and bridges are added between the boats, making visits easier and allowing defenders to move easily between boats in case of attack.





## Rules for Houseboats

### Add-On Rule

Usually, Norbard houseboats are propelled by poling and rowing, and they are too ponderous for fast escapes or chases. They use large wooden shields to fend off missile attacks. Intruders should expect to encounter folding and snapping mechanisms as traps: Each boat has 1D6-2 traps, which are activated on a 1-3 on 1D6, cause 1D6+2 DP., and can be detected with a successful check using *Perception (Spot)* -1 and disarmed with a successful *Mechanics (Disarm Traps)* check +1, which takes 3 CR (a failure causes half damage). The superstructure of the boat has 50 structure points (see *Core Rules*, page 349), the hull has 150, and each shield has 30.

The Norbards outnumber the Festumers and possess greater supplies and knowledge of the area. As long as they aren't attacked with catapults, the houseboats offer a fair amount of protection.

### Among the Norbards

The heroes come to know the Norbards as a mysterious people that are hard to get close to. They are friendly and accommodating, but not always honest to outsiders. They act more naive than they are ("You have a different opinion? But why, your grace?"). Conflicts are not discussed ("Black magic? This must be an incorrect translation."); instead, they are waved aside with a smile ("As well-traveled heroes, you might be able to help here."). On the other hand, their hospitality is real, the food they offer is delicious, and the warm stove is pleasant for the limbs.

All members of each family are connected with magic, which creates a silent accord among them. Give the heroes hints of this by describing family members using nods and winks to communicate wordlessly. All required tasks (bringing new tea, packing of goods being sold, storing silver groats received in payment) are always taken over by new family members, and often questions are answered by people to whom they were not addressed.

A Norbard hero can be very useful in making an encounter more relaxed. For example, a useful revelation would be if the hero received some boxes of cookies as a gift from an aunt—boxes that conceal some pieces of jewelry being smuggled past the amber monopoly held by the Church of Praios.

### Reporting

At least once a day, the heroes must return to camp and report to Timpski, Jaruslav, and Leudara about their activities. The more time they spend on the boats, the greater the Festumers' distrust grows. This might hurt the heroes' influence and incur penalties when they later participate in the negotiation over the drum. Returning drunk after having purchased many items from the boats could lead to sharp questions and envy. Some consequences could be false accusations, a shetz to accompany them on their next visit, a search of their equipment, or even the confiscation of food or purchased goods.

### Standard Norbard

COU 12 SGC 12 INT 12 CHA 14

DEX 12 AGI 13 CON 13 STR 12

LP 33 AE - KP - INI 11+1D6

DO 7 SPI 1 TOU 1 MOV 6

**Unarmed:** AT 13 PA 7 DP 1D6 RE short

**Molokdeshnaja:** AT 13 PA 6 DP 1D6+4 RE medium

**Spear:** AT 13 PA 7 DP 1D6+4 RE long

**Short Bow:** RC 13 RT 1 DP 1D6+4 RA 1/10/100

**PRO/ENC** 3/1 (leather armor) (armor modifiers already included)

**Special Abilities:** Bine Mashores (page 41), Feint I, Grapple, Give Trouble (see page 46), Throw.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Increased Life Points II, Socially Adaptable/Personality Flaw (Vanity, Prejudices against Nobles)

**Skills:** Body Control 7, Commerce 9, Empathy 7, Fast-Talk 8, Feat of Strength 4, Intimidation 3, Perception 6, Self-Control 6, Stealth 4, Swimming 6, Willpower 4

**Combat Behavior:** Only fights with superior numbers or at a distance; prefers to negotiate.

**Escape:** Flees with *pain III*.

**Pain +1 with:** 25 LP, 17 LP, 8 LP, and 5 LP or less.

## Making Contact

The heroes can reach the boats with a raft supplied by the Festumers. While the heroes visit the Norbards, Olko stays in camp to prevent Jääni and Bruutsh from being tortured any further. If the two are already free, he catches a cold and must stay in bed.

The boats of the Trebritzkis moor on the Deepwater. When they arrive, the heroes are greeted by Zibilja Tuminka, who is protected by six armed men and women. Before the heroes are allowed to enter the boat, she insists that they remove their weapons—including mages' staffs and Rondra's crests. Tuminka makes an exception only if she is allowed to tie a green ribbon around the weapon's handle. While doing so, she murmurs some Alhanian verses, but these have no effect. The ribbons act as peace bonds and can be removed in 2 CR.

### Tuminka Trebritzki

**Brief Description:** Skilled zibilja; small and petite; laughter lines around the eyes; hoarse voice with a rough Norbard accent; icy gray hair despite her age; likes to smile; gets cold quickly and wears several layers of clothes; smokes long, hand-rolled cigarillos mixed with herbs from the forest.

**Motivation:** Wants peace and good deals, mostly for the Trebritzkis.

**Agenda:** Serves as the contact between the heroes and the Aunts (the matrons of the Norbard families) to prevent



attacks on her family; uses magic and her knowledge to assist the heroes on their journey to the Red Sickle.

**Function:** Friendly and patient ally of the heroes; skilled diplomat striving for a humane outcome; likable guide through the Norbards' world.

**Background:** Tuminka spent half of her life reading old scrolls and spent the other half tending to the harmony and well-being of her family. She maintains her role as scholar and spiritual leader when dealing with the heroes. She wandered for several years, making her more receptive to strangers than many of her relatives. This time abroad taught her that a positive attitude and some stubbornness are the best tools for dealing with the dangers of life.

**Animosities:** Complaining, cruelty, obstinacy.

**Portrayal Tips:** Roll your Rs and use some Russian or Yiddish terms if you know them. Mime smoking with fingers held straight out. Be patient, smile a lot, always choose your words to sound as friendly as possible, and avoid clear statements: "A bit difficult" means "no," and "Your offer is interesting" means "You are not offering enough."

**Fate:** Tuminka does not appear in future publications.

**Special:** Tuminka does not participate in the Norbards' unfair negotiation tactics. Tuminka's younger brother Alriksej, who married into the Jantareff meshpocha, plays an important role later on during the campaign.

"As you say."

"Forgive me, I was maybe hard to understand."

"I see. You must have an idea how to solve the problem" (as a reply to a "no").

## Special Ability: Tradition (Zibilja)

Add-On Rule

- Zibiljas use only rituals, not spells.
- Casting a ritual on a family member grants a bonus of 1, but to receive the bonus, at least five of their family members must be within 100 yards.
- Zibiljas can learn Norbard rituals and create and use Traditional artifacts of Norbard culture.
- The Tradition's primary attribute is Intuition.

**Prerequisites:** Spellcaster

**AP Value:** 80 AP

### The First Round of Negotiation

Tuminka invites the heroes to enjoy honey cookies, tea, and meskinnes in the warm houseboat and listens to their request. If desired, Aunt Wodnerka Trebritzki (see *Enjoy Your Meall*, page 48) is also present, wrapped in many blankets and furs.

### Tuminka Trebritzki

COU 13 SGC 11 INT 14 CHA 13

DEX 14 AGI 14 CON 12 STR 12

LP 29 AE 29 KP – INI 14+1D6

SPI 1 TOU 1 DO 7 MOV 8

Fate Points 1

Social Standing: Free

Languages: Native Tongue Alaani III, Garethi III

Scripts: Kuslik Signs

Advantages: Range Sense, Spellcaster

Disadvantages: Negative Trait (Vengeance)

Special Abilities: Area Knowledge (Speckles), Bine Mashores, Give Trouble, Precise Shot/Throw I, Tradition (Zibilja)

Combat Techniques: Brawling 10 (10/7), Daggers 9 (10/7)

Unarmed: AT 10 PA 7 DP 1D6 RE short

Heavy Dagger: AT 10 PA 6 DP 1D6+2 RE short

PRO/ENC 0/0

### Skills

Physical: Body Control 8, Climbing 4, Perception 8, Self-Control 7, Stealth 8, Swimming 7

Social: Fast-Talk 7, Intimidation 4, Willpower 12

Nature: Animal Lore 7, Fishing 2, Orientate 5, Plant Lore 8, Survival 7, Tracking 7

Knowledge: Magical Lore 11, Religion 2

Craft: Commerce 10, Leatherworking 4, Prepare Food 2, Treat Poison 2, Woodworking 4

Cantrips: Dry, Siren Call

Rituals: Call the Hive 12

Equipment: Heavy dagger, wilderness package

Combat Behavior: Tuminka avoids fights and will only defend herself before running away.

Escape: Flees with Pain I.

Pain +1 with: 22 LP, 15 LP, 7 LP, and 5 LP or less.

The drum isn't here. It's in a safe place that is unknown to Tuminka. The Trebritzkis are willing to sell the drum to the Festumers, if only to avoid another attack. But because the three families acquired the drum together, one family alone cannot decide to sell it. Before that can happen, the heroes must meet with the Aunts of the other meshpocha, Anka Prishkaj and Zajita Vrimtov. Tuminka accompanies the heroes, who must prove their trustworthiness since the first encounter with the Festumers went so badly.

### Recognizing Tuminka's Strategy

Check using *Empathy* (*Discern Motivation*) at -2 (time required: 2 hours)

QL 1: The journey gives Tuminka the chance to get to know the heroes.

QL 2: If they are trustworthy, the Norbards hope to be able to influence the Festumers through them.

QL 3: The Aunts will probably want to test the heroes' character.



QL 4: The Festumers' attack shocked many members of the family. By introducing the heroes to all meshpocha—and if the heroes don't act contrary to her expectations—Tuminka builds trust in her own judgment and the Aunts' leadership.

QL 5+: It was a coincidence that the first attack hit the Trebritzkis, but while they were being watched by the Festumers these past few days, the other families retreated and made preparations. The idea was that if something went wrong, the Trebritzkis would suffer the brunt of it, but the other families would remain safe. By revealing their locations to the heroes, the risk is now spread among all three families.

Check using *Commerce* -1 (time required: 2 hours)

QL 1+: The Norbards want to sell the drum to avoid more conflicts.

QL 3+: The delay is part of their negotiation tactic; the more difficult it is to get the drum, the higher its price will be.

QL 5: The Surjeloffs sold the drum to the Vrimitovs, who hid it. That is why the Trebritzkis alone cannot sell it.

QL 6+: The Vrimitovs view the drum as their property, but they are in debt to the Prishkajs, so it takes the agreement of all three families to deal with the Festumers.



The heroes might gain more information from the Trebritzkis by purchasing some goods from them. This information might arrive via a Trebritzki family member blurting something out during a sales pitch.



The heroes can buy something from the Norbards on credit if they lack money. If so, use this chance to introduce a new subplot involving financial obligations. Maybe the Norbards use these debts to pressure the heroes during the negotiations, or one of the Festumers learns about the arrangement and stirs up his companions against the heroes.



### Shopping!

During the encounter with Tuminka, the heroes already have a chance to trade with the Norbards. After tasks are finished, the Norbards begin to trust the heroes more and, in addition to food supplies, offer them winter clothes and other travel gear such as snowshoes, basic tools, good fishing rods and bait, tattoo equipment, simple jewelry, and some oddities. If you wish, employ the special ability *Bine Mashores* (see callout box), but only if your players might enjoy it.

### List of Goods

- An amulet found with a body in a bog. It shows a coat of arms with the letters G-Q-S. A check using *Religions* (Kor or Rondra) at -3 reveals that the nine-fingered claw depicted on the amulet is the symbol of a sect of Theater Knights who believed in Kor. A successful check using *History* (Bornland) at -3 reveals that the amulet was made around 250 FB. 20 batz.
- Antique barbarian sword of Alhanian make, in good condition; said to have been carried by the bodyguard of King Amagomer. 50 batz.
- Reversible winter coat, white-gray waxed wool and bright leather. Very warm and perfect for hiding in certain surroundings (+1 INT for checks using *Stealth (Hiding)*). 10 batz.
- A green scarf said to have been used by a recruit of the Order of the Ram to pull herself out of the swamp. 2 batz.
- A burgher's letter for the city of Ouveenmas, made out to one *Hurdo Peddersev* from the village of *Barely-sevencucumbers*. No proof of authenticity. 1 batz.
- The eight-pointed antlers of a white stag, shot by a friend of *Iloinen Swandaughter*. 5 batz.

### Bine Mashores (Special Ability)

#### Add-On Rule

Norbards have a mysterious ability to cause their customers to experience cravings that they didn't know they had. Potential customers that get caught up in the sales pitch find it much harder to resist. The term *Bine Mashores* (Alaani term for *good deal*) could also be translated as *hard sell*.

**Rule:** This special ability grants a new application for the skill *Commerce*. Make a competitive check using *Commerce* (*Bine Mashores*) against the target's *Willpower*. A target that does not successfully resist agrees to buy the goods being offered, even if said goods are useless. A price that is too high can make resisting easier, depending on the GM. This special ability can be used only once per shopping encounter.

**Prerequisites:** *Commerce* 8, member of a meshpocha

**AP Value:** 5 AP



### Departure

You can lengthen or shorten the trip to see the Aunts as you like. Give any fighters the chance to prove themselves against flora and fauna, to help maintain their interest. For inspiration and stats for suitable creatures, see page 53.

**Example Names for Lakes:** Green Man, Whitepond, Gnatwater, Reekbed, Walloper, Bruttler, Breeding, Eastlock, Goosefresh, Duckpuddle, Weedwell, Mudpond.

The Hardeners know the lakes by these names, and most have visited no more than half of them. The Norbards know these lakes by Alaani names whose translations are quite close to the Garethi names.

**Example Names for Boats:** Gorhunkitja (Small Sandcastle), Koshilech (Bee-shell), Hani'unik (Light Castle), Maduhroth (Honey Roll), Shinj'unik (Snake Castle), Dshaleka (Little Barb), Sora'gab (Glib Sister), Zoresnik (Trouble Child).

### Anka Prishkaj's Task: The Poor Carpenter

👤 *Anka Prishkaj* (59; Aunt; long fingernails; bald brow; thick braids artfully draped on her shoulders; loves her loud songbird, Kergaj; hates that she has a trouble with names; Willpower 10 (13/14/14), SPI 2) agrees to the sale of the drum if the heroes solve the following problem:

Recently, more and more often, items have been developing a life of their own on the houseboat named *Gorjunka*. Chairs move as if pushed by a ghost, and pots jump from the shelves. It's especially bad for the carpenter 🧑🏻 *Dunjev Prishkaj* (30; experienced carpenter; dark, passionate eyes; chiseled chin; large hands; good looks; loves alcohol; hates his job; needs a new profession).

### Background

The Prishkajs bought a saw from *Aljeg Ragashoff* (see page 55). Its blade is moved by a bound demon. The *Gorjunka*, where Dunjev stores the saw, is also home to a klabauter named *Balimbi Klimm Kalimberthing* (knee-high; seaweed-like beard; black hair draped with duckweed; likes to suck out snail shells), and he fights bitterly against having the demon in his home. Anyone using the saw is pelted with furniture, which has the effect of destroying other items: bowls spill soup, hammers demolish clay jars, and axes punch through barrels and baskets.



Anka believes that a witch named Norna cursed the ship because the handsome Dunjev didn't want to share her bed. She often flies overhead, shouting her curse. On nights such as these, Dunjev fearfully locks himself inside. Norna's house stands by a forest near Larsach, and Anka can describe how to get there.

### 🧙 Norna, the Witch

Dunjev became the secret lover of Norna (experienced toad witch; 33; slender; moves clumsily; wears pearls woven into her hair; hates Blessed Ones of Praios; needs a motivated student; familiar: the toad Ulfried) some time ago. Her flight over the houseboat is a signal to lock up the boat and sneak over to her place. Dunjev believes that Norna only stages the curse to conceal their affair. She openly admits to this if the heroes visit her and ask politely. If not, she releases an angry *Fighting Stick* 8 (13/12/10) to buy time to escape on her broom.

Norna also knows that Dunjev isn't a good carpenter because he drinks too much. She believes that the Aunt commanded the zibilja *Pernille Prishkaj* (see below) to call a spirit of Humus to the boat, to take revenge for Dunjev's





having *murdered trees*. Norna recommends that the heroes advise Dunjev to be more diligent in his work.

Norna believes this could make all the trouble disappear. The heroes could learn all of this from Dunjev (Fast-Talk 7 (12/12/14); Willpower 3 (12/12/14); SPI 3), but he thinks he might be guilty so he lies quite a lot, hampering their investigation.

### **Pernille, the Zibilja**

*Pernille Prishkaj* (early 30s; skilled zibilja; Tuminka's rival; widow; hair dyed with red henna; loves her son, Sildrojan; hates the fact that Anka commanded her not to solve Dunjev's problem by herself; wants a new husband, but has no time to look for one) told Dunjev to drink less because he mended her boat quite sloppily, and it simply sank in the lake last summer. However, she hasn't cursed him, and has not called up a spirit of Humus. His punishment is to replace Pernille's scrolls, which she lost when the boat sank. As a result, Dunjev finally learned to write. Only Pernille knows how much was lost and how long his new duties really will last.

### **Hints**

In Dunjev's workshop, the heroes can witness the (invisible, except for the consequences) battle between a kobold and a demon. Describe splintering furniture, holes punched in walls, and wooden splinters flying through the air like arrows. Careless heroes might suffer 1D6 DP per attack. Casually mention the toolbox which holds the unholy saw. The heroes should have a chance to find the saw, which, although it is used all the time, looks brand-new and almost suspiciously un-demonic.

### **Magical Analysis of the Saw**

With *Odem Arcanum*, *Analyze Arcane Structure*, or *See Magic*, the heroes might be able to discern the demonic nature of the saw—but it is only tangentially responsible for the haunting.

#### Check using *Magical Lore (Artifacts)*

QL 1: The saw's mechanism is magical and stores more than 10 SP.

QL 2: The magic is weak...

QL 3: ...because the bound demon has little power...

QL 4+: ...and has been residing in the saw a mere 4 months.

### **Information about the Kobold**

The cause of the magical occurrences is the kobold, who won't tolerate a demonic artifact in his home.


#### Check using *Magical Lore (Magical Creatures)* -1.

QL 1: Klabauter are fairy creatures typically found on ships.

QL 2: They are unpredictable, but usually attack humans only when provoked.

QL 3: Klabauter see themselves as keepers of their home ships, and they can be lured with charms and gifts of sweets, tobacco, or alcohol.

QL 4+: Klabauter are enemies of all that is demonic. A klabauter's true name grants great power over him.

**Remorse:** Dunjev suspects that something might be wrong with his saw. He blames himself for the weird happenings, but is too ashamed to admit it. He has told this only to his sister  *Slanka* (27; very long braid; wears billowing woolen skirts; married to faithless Jakjev; loves her brother

### **Vel'Maayeth, the Curse of Steel**

**Size:** 1 yard

**Weight:** No weight

**COU** 12 **SGC** 10 **INT** 13 **CHA** 11

**DEX** 14 **AGI** 14 **CON** 16 **STR** 16

**LP** 25 **AE** - **KP** - **INI** 13+1D6

**DE** 7 **SPI** 3 **TOU** 3 **MOV** 8

**Blow:** AT 12 DP 1D6+4 RE medium

**PRO/ENC** 3/0

**ctions:** 1

**Special Abilities:** Forceful Blow I

**Skills:** *Body Control* 3, *Feat of Strength* 13, *Intimidation* 7, *Self-Control* - (automatic success), *Willpower* - (automatic success)

**Numbers:** 1

**Size Category:** Medium

**Type:** Demon (lesser, Agrimoth), humanoid

**Summoning Difficulty:** -2

**Loot:** None

**Combat Behavior:** Focuses on the weakest opponent and attacks unrelentingly with Forceful Blows

**Escape:** The demon does not flee

**Sphere Lore (Creatures from the Spheres)**

◆ **QL 1:** It is a lesser demon that can possess items.

◆ **QL 2:** Because the creature is a demon, it can probably only be hurt with enchanted weapons or those that have been blessed by a god.

◆ **QL 3+:** The creature's dark lord is most likely Agrimoth, so it is susceptible to Ingerimm's forge fire and weapons blessed by the Lord of Fire.

### **Special Rules**

**Susceptible to Blessed/Consecrated Objects/ Weapons:** The demon is most susceptible to objects or weapons blessed/consecrated by Ingerimm (or by Angrosh, Gravesesh, or other deities of fire or smithing).

**Demon Rules:** The demon uses the general demon rules (see *Core Rules*, page 355).



Dunjev; hates being childless; needs a new husband; Fast-Talk 8 (11/12/14), Willpower 3 (12/12/14), SPI 1) about it and made her promise not to tell anybody.

**Other Clues:** If the heroes watch Dunjev long enough, they might see him secretly speaking to it. His new, shiny tool might also stand out during an inspection of his belongings. Sooner or later, the kobold Balimbi will make an appearance and demand the heroes' help.

#### Possible Solutions

- Magical or karmic exorcism of the demon
- Teaming up with the kobold to fight the demon; Balimbi draws the demon out of the tool, giving the heroes 1D6 CR (5 CR) to fight it
- The heroes negotiate with the kobold and promise to take the saw with them and destroy it within a certain time (1 to 3 months, depending on the success of the negotiation). As collateral, Balimbi demands hair from up to three heroes. If they break their oath, he will find them and punish them.

It is not enough to throw away the saw or take it somewhere else; Balimbi demands that the demon must be destroyed.

#### End

When the heroes defeat the demon, ensuring that the kobold will be peaceful in the future, Anka Prishkaj is satisfied. The Aunt punishes Dunjev; depending on the heroes' involvement, this could be anything from a stern lecture to years of exile.

#### Zajita Vrimitov's Task: The Three Sons

**Zajita Vrimitov** (late 60s; skilled Aunt; nearsighted; wears necklaces of shells, snails, and amber; loves dwarven ale, which she proudly drinks out of a glass tankard; hates whispering; needs someone to mark her playing cards; Willpower 8 (13/13/13), SPI 2) promises to bring the drum to the Vandrashkek clearing if the heroes find and return a box that has been stolen from a crone named Jilara. This box is made of wood, painted red, and closed with a cord tied in a serpent knot and sealed with wax. Zajita says two teenagers, Kaspaj and Sildrojan, are the thieves, while they say it was someone else. This would not be the first time that they blamed others for their deeds.

With this task, Zajita wants to test the heroes' cunning and discern whether they are on the side of tradition or on the side of the old woman. She is okay with either, as long as they show respect and empathy. If they don't, she raises the drum's price by 30 batz, but agrees to the sale.

#### Background

Jilara's life is ending. For months, she has been so confused that she mistakes family members for strangers, forgets to dress, or claims that her sons have not married into other families but rather are trying to play a trick on her by hiding. As is customary, Tuminka is supposed to summon her sons to her side with magic, to allow her mother to say goodbye to them. For the ritual, the zibilja needs a personal connection to the men, which is why the missing box is so important—it contains some old braids of hair from Jilara's sons. But the old woman doesn't want to be seen by her sons in such a miserable state, so she hid the box. She expected that someone would look for it, and in a lucid moment she tasked the girl Banja Vrimitov (see below) to make the box disappear, by destroying it and its contents, if necessary. Banja knows of Jilara's condition and hesitates to perform the final step.

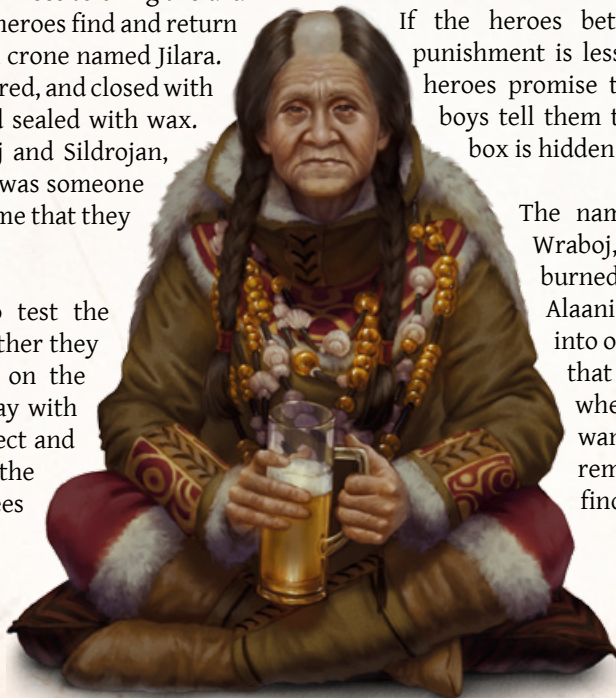


#### Kaspaj and Sildrojan

**Kaspaj Vrimitov** (15; misunderstood poet; four horn rings on each hand; necklace with noisy horn plates; loves his Tamburka; hates Tuminka; needs more sleep) and **Sildrojan Prishkaj** (14; horny teenager; fine features; narrow mustache; wild, matted braids; loves attention; hates taking orders; needs a challenge) have retreated to a clearing in the forest where they wish to enjoy the treasures they purchased from the trader Aljeg Ragashoff (see page 55), namely erotic pictures from Arania and some dried ilm leaves (weak drug; can be recognized with a check using *Plant Lore (Poisonous Plants)*). To get to shore, they stole a raft. Their tracks in the snow are easy to follow.

If the heroes betray the boys' secret, their punishment is less severe than Dunjev's. If the heroes promise to keep their secret, the two boys tell them that they know where Jilara's box is hidden.

The names of Jilara's sons—Dushan, Wraboj, and Watelno—have been burned on the lid of the box in Old Alaani. All three sons have married into other families. The boys believe that Jilara hid the box and forgot where she put it. She does not want to admit this, but she does remember, and the heroes could find out if they shadow her.






After the mention of the names burned into the lid, a successful *Myths & Legends (Bornland)* check reveals an old Norbard tradition: mothers keep the braids of their married sons to allow the zibilja to summon them with magic in an emergency.

Members of or experts in Norbardic culture know that such a ritual exists. Outsiders need a successful *Magical Lore (Rituals)* check at -3 to recall such knowledge.

### Jilara

 *Jilara Vrimtov* (99; senile elder of the family; white hair; gaunt; weak voice; arms, shoulders, and face covered with tattoos of bees; rumors say that she has a beehive in her belly; loves Banja; hates pipe smoke; needs somebody to take her wishes seriously and take care of her in her confused moments; (Fast-Talk 12 (12/11/15); Willpower 6 (12/11/15); SPI 3)) does not believe anything the heroes say at first and thinks they are actually her married sons. After some confusion, she agrees to search for the box with them in various places that Banja often uses as hiding places. A successful *Empathy (Discern Motivation)* check indicates that the crone is hiding something.





Jilara is hiding things because she increasingly mistrusts people—but she mostly hides food, which then begins to rot and stink.

The heroes could notice that young Banja is watching them, even though the girl does not admit to it. Banja's tracks are also easy to follow.

### Banja's Hiding Places

*Banja* (12; smart girl; brown doe eyes; habitually chews her lower lip; loves the elder Jilara; hates lying; needs somebody to help her out of her quandary; Fast-Talk 2 (11/12/12); Stealth 4 (11/12/11); Willpower 0 (11/12/12); SPI 1) is the only person who has Jilara's absolute trust.

Banja is actively hiding the old woman's wooden box. While the heroes are visiting, Banja changes the box's hiding place often, especially if the heroes come close to finding it. If necessary, she hides the box on her person. The heroes can discover her various hiding places (see below) with a successful competitive check using *Tracking* vs. Banja's *Stealth*. The following is a list of her many hiding places and the clues that point to them.

-  Between other containers on a wall shelf (shards of a pot that once stood there).
-  In one of Thesia's beehives, where the bees are patiently waiting out the winter (two stings on Banja's hands; honey on the floor where she wiped her hands clean).
-  In the grain storage area, stuffed between sacks of flour (footprints in the flour dust on the floor).
-  In the chimney, lowered down from above (soot on Banja's fingertips; footprints in the snow on the roof).



If discovery seems inevitable, Banja tries to burn the braids in the stove, a course of action that can only be prevented by physical interference or a *Fast-Talk* check with a penalty determined by the GM. In her desperation, she might try to escape onto the surrounding (thin) ice with the box, where she is in danger of breaking through.

### Solutions

A cumulative check using *Treat Soul* (15 minutes, any number of attempts) can bring about a lucid moment in Jilara, giving the heroes an opportunity to persuade her to tell the truth. If she does, give the heroes the chance to save the hair, so they can decide whether to follow Jilara's wishes and destroy it or else summon her sons according to family tradition. Banja is punished with at most a few days of cleaning the stable, depending on the heroes' intercession, and nothing prevents negotiation over the drum.

## Turf Battle

Once the heroes have fulfilled the Aunts' tasks, the negotiation over the drum can begin in earnest. The goal is to have the Norbards and Festumers agree on a price. The meeting takes place in a small Vandrashkek clearing, where the families have been meeting with trade partners for generations. Timpiski, Jaruslav, Leudara, the zibilja Tuminka, and the three Aunts meet there daily to discuss terms. Both sides insist on a balance of power, so each day they meet, an additional dozen people show up. Leudara wants a third, neutral party to attend to ensure the safety of the negotiations, and she asks the heroes to perform this duty.

### Game Rules for the Negotiation

Each day, both sides make a competitive group check using *Commerce (Haggling)*: Jaruslav (SR 6, 9/11/12) and Timpiski (SR 9, 12/15/12) negotiate for the Festumers. The Norbards are represented by Tuminka (SR 10, 11/14/13) and one of the Aunts (SR 13, 14/15/16) (they rotate this duty daily).

Each QL of difference results in a 30 batz concession to the offer of the party with the lowest offer, which will usually be the Festumers. The Festumers start with an offer of 100 batz, while the Norbards demand 800 batz. The negotiations conclude successfully when both offers differ by no more than 30 batz.



Heroes who manage to present arguments as neutral with successful *Fast-Talk* (*Manipulate*) or *Persuasion* (*Public Speaking*) checks add to the competitive *Commerce* check for the appropriate side (one per hero). Acts of sabotage can also affect the result.

It quickly becomes obvious that the Aunts have a great advantage when negotiating, due to a special feature of Norbard culture: members of the family who are present

(no more than 1D6 per day of negotiation) can use the special ability *Give Trouble* to assist their Aunt. Let the heroes choose their own reactions to this deception.

The Festumers notice the imbalance only if they lose a negotiation by more than 6 QL.

This results in nasty threats, which can only be brought under control with a cumulative group check (*Fast-Talk* (*Manipulate*), 5 minutes, 3 attempts). If successful, reroll the competitive group check. If this new roll is a failure and the heroes cannot reach a concession worth 60 batz or 2 QL, the Festumers quit the negotiation and prepare to attack.



Lower the threshold for a riot to 5 or 4 QL. Replace Jaruslav with Ertzel Underkamp (SR 12, 14/14/14) for the negotiation, if possible via the heroes' actions, to grant more fairness.

## Give Trouble (Special Ability)

Add-On Rule

Norbards like to argue and often address their family members with mocking, sometimes biting words, accompanied by a shrewd wink and clucking of the tongue. This is actually a type of support for various tasks, but few outsiders are aware of this ability.

**Rule:** A person with this special ability can improve the result of a family member's skill attempt. Make a check with the same skill and the same modifiers as the family member's check. If the check is successful, the family member's result is improved by 1 SP. The task must take long enough to permit a comment to be made. No more than six people can assist a skill attempt with Give Trouble. Make an *Empathy* check at -3 (or +3, for those who possess this SA) to notice that someone is using Give Trouble.

**Prerequisites:** *Fast-Talk* 4, being a member of a meshpocha

**AP Value:** 5 AP



Dispense with the check and focus on the sabotage scene. Assume that the Norbards win 3 QL, which means 90 batz, per day.

## Mood Indicator

The progress of the negotiations is reflected in the negotiators' mood reflects the progress of the negotiations. The lower the difference between offers, the closer both sides come to reaching an agreement.

Difference in Offer	Change in Behavior
< 500	The leaders of the negotiation greet each other in a friendly way.
< 400	No weapons are brought to the negotiation.
< 300	The participants toast the continued negotiation.
< 200	Drum and gold chest are brought to the negotiation.
< 100	The parties exchange symbolic gifts (knives; pretty, but worthless, jewelry; food).

## Sabotage

Away from the negotiating table both sides can take *actions* to influence the proceedings. Each action has a *value*, an amount that modifies the *offer* of the party damaged by the action, usually lessening the Norbards' demands, or increasing the Festumers' offers.

Alert heroes can *notice* actions and *interfere* in various ways. This could change the value of the action (*New Value*), and even reduce it to 0. It is also possible to cause an action to backfire (*Turnabout*), which negatively affects the acting party rather than the intended target.

The heroes should be careful, because when interference or a turnabout is noticed, one of the heroes receives the appropriate drawback from the chart below. This isn't always a bad thing, though, as the unveiling of a new opponent could damage the injured party's morale.

## Against the Norbards

### The Food!

Squire Arlin catches some rats in the woods and holds them in a large pot. On a snowy night, he rows to a houseboat, sneaks on board, sets the rats free in the food storage area, and shovels snow inside the room. These actions spoil the supplies. In the worst case, rats enter the living quarters and attack the Norbards' snakes, which are hibernating in their baskets.

**Value:** Norbards -2 QL



## Sabotage and Consequences

Event	Consequence for the Hero Responsible	Disadvantage for the Injured Party (Value)
<b>Interference is Noticed</b>	-1 with negotiation check	1 QL
<b>Turnabout is Noticed</b>	-2 with negotiation check	2 QL
<b>Somebody Got Hurt</b>	Threats, punitive payment (10 batz each). Join the negotiations only with a successful <i>Fast-Talk (Subterfuge)</i> check	1 QL
<b>Somebody Got Killed</b>	Corporal punishment or challenge to a duel, exclusion from the negotiations	2 QL

**Notice:** Finding Arlin's tracks (or traps) in the woods (*Tracking* +1); finding the rats in the pot when they squeak or while they are being fed (*Perception* +0); watching Arlin row way during the night (*Perception* +0); hearing about the incident on the houseboat (*Perception* +0); lucky find in the drifting snow (1-3 on 1D6; *Perception* -3).

**Interfere:** Intimidate Arlin and release the rats in the forest (New Value: 0 QL).

**Turnabout:** Set the rats loose in the camp (New Value: Festumers -2 QL); accuse Arlin with false evidence (Festumers; additional -1 QL).

### The Traitor

**Agnitha Trebritzki** (18; spoiled, buxom beauty; daughter of Wodnerka; subtle lily tattoos on the backs of her hands and thighs; likes to show off her legs; loves sunbathing; hates chicken fricassee; craves diversion; Seduction 10 (10/14/14); Fast-Talk 8 (12/11/12); Willpower 3 (10/12/14); Perception 5 (11/12/12); SPI 1) wants to improve her standing and sell the drum to the Festumers for 40 batz.

If she can convince Timpski to cooperate, she slips a sleeping draught to two of the drum's guards, steals the drum, and delivers it to Timpski. Then she sneaks back, takes the sleeping drug herself, and lies down alongside the guards to create her alibi. The next day, Timpski brings the drum to the negotiation, does not mention Agnitha's involvement, and returns the drum to the Norbards in a grand getsure, because he knows that Leudara does not tolerate theft.

**Value:** Norbards -3 QL

**How It Gets Noticed:** Follow Agnitha when she goes to meet Timpski and listen in on their conversation.

**Interfere:** Stop Agnitha or make Timpski give up on the plan (New Value: 0 QL); capture Agnitha and turn her over to the Norbards as a traitor (New Value: Norbards -5 QL).

**Turnabout:** Return the stolen drum to the Norbards, to embarrass Timpski the next day (New Value: Festumers -3 QL).

### Exhibition of Strength

Soon after the negotiations begin, the lakes begin to freeze over. Every day, shetz Jadwige checks to see whether the ice is thick enough to support an attack. After 1D6 days, the moment arrives. If Jadwige decides to relay the information, the Festumers perform a small military exercise on the ice designed to intimidate the Norbards.

**Value:** Norbards -5 QL

**How It Gets Noticed:** The freezing and measuring are obvious, but there are rumors about a planned exercise...

**Interfere:** Delay Jadwige's news about the carrying capacity of the ice (2 batz per day, or a competitive check using *Fast-Talk (Hard Sell)* versus Willpower 3 (13/11/11), SPI 1; value takes effect later).

**Turnabout:** If the ice is declared safe too soon (6 QL, gathered in at most five competitive *Fast-Talk* checks, 1 per measurement or 20 batz), the soldiers fall through the ice into the water. Some people are injured and Jadwige is questioned. The heroes should assist her (new value: Festumers -5 QL).

### Reinforcements

As soon as the ice gets thick enough, shetz Friedebald (or Rudjev) rides to Harden to summon reinforcements from the barracks. Countess Bilgunde is more than willing to punish the Norbards, but demands plundering rights. This action takes 2 days. After that, the camp of the Festumers grows by an additional twelve fighters. The Norbards also gather more troops.

**Value:** Norbards -5 QL

**Notice:** Friedebald's loud boasting during breakfast clues in everybody in the camp. Plus, it is easy to follow his tracks.





**Interfere:** It's very hard to convince Friedebald to abandon his plan (Willpower 3 (14/12/10), SPI 1; New Value: Norbards +0 QL). The best way would be for a noble to challenge him to a Rondranian duel (use Jaruslav's stats). A kidnapping might lead to unpleasant questions from Leudara (when caught, New Value: Norbards -7 QL). The heroes could make a deadly new enemy if Friedebald dies as a result.

**Turnabout:** Rile up the countess with believable, but false, information about Friedebald (Willpower 6, (13/14/14), SPI 2). The shetz might be chased away, and the Hardeners might even grow so indignant that they move against the Festumers and start a brawl at the lake (New Value: Festumers -5 QL).



If the heroes defeated the troublemaker Rudjev in Harden (see page 21), convincing the countess is easier (+1 to checks).

#### Rudjev's Attack



Just as the negotiations seem to be reaching a successful conclusion, Rudjev convinces the nobles to attack (the annoyed and drunken bronnjars are easy to incite). Rudjev, Friedebald, his squire Arlin, Jaruslav's squire Jeterine, and the rope maker's apprentice Jagotin approach the Norbard houseboats, by crossing over the (not entirely safe to cross) ice, or by taking a boat. They have murder in mind.

**Value:** Success ends the negotiations and results in either the Festumers' retreat or a bloody battle that ends poorly for both sides.


**How It Gets Noticed:** If the heroes keep tabs on Rudjev or Friedebald, they notice that something is brewing. They can end the action before it begins by interfering and calming the mood (competitive check using *Fast-Talk (Manipulate)* vs. Rudjev) or by getting Jaruslav, Timpski, or Leudara to put their foot down. Otherwise, the heroes notice something only as the five are already armed and on their way.

**Interfere:** The five can be only stopped by violence. This might happen on land or on ice (-2 to all checks due to the slippery footing). If Friedebald's LP fall below half their original value, he loses interest, and his squire and Jagotin quit with him. Rudjev fights until he is incapacitated, but he should survive the adventure. Jaruslav likes watching the heroes get beat up. Leudara does not want to interrupt the fight. Timpski interferes on the heroes' behalf, because he understands the consequences of a victory by Rudjev and Friedebald.

**Turnabout:** If the heroes clearly defeat the five, or if Timpski must interfere, the Festumers' morale falls (New Value: Festumers -3 QL).

## Against the Festumers!

### Enjoy Your Meal!

Aunt  *Wodnerka Trebritzki* (73; Aunt; big bones; plaid tabard; names of all family members tattooed on her lower arms in Old Alaani; can't remember the heroes' names and constantly mixes them up; loves beautiful singing; hates elks; needs new knitting gear) hands the Festumers a meskinnes jug at the end of the first day of negotiation, but the jug is painted with

hidden magical symbols that create subconscious disgust. Consequently,

nobody wants to get close to the jug. Because the jug is stored in the kitchen tent with all the food, attendance at meals decreases for a week. Many threatening commands have to be

issued just to get meals cooked. Everyone is hungry, but shortly before mealtime, but without a successful *Willpower (Resist Threats)* -1 check, they change their minds about eating shortly before mealtime. Hunger prevents normal regeneration at night, and the general mood is bad.

**Value:** Festumers -1 QL, each day an additional -1 QL.

**How It Gets Noticed:** Someone sees the magic symbols when the jug is handed over (*Perception* -5), or conducts a *Magical Lore* -1 check or a magical investigation of the food supply, which leads to the right conclusions. Even a hero who suspects what's going needs a successful *Willpower (Resist Threats)* -1 check to enter the tent, and 3 QL to touch the jug.

**Interfere:** Carry the jug out of the camp or destroy it (new value: 0 QL).

**Turnabout:** Hide the jug among the supplies of a houseboat where Tuminka (New Value: Norbards 0 QL) or an Aunt sleeps (New Value: Norbards -3 QL).

Describe the handing over of the jug only in passing, if you don't want the heroes to notice it too early.



### Miserable Seducers

The Norbards *Kaspaj Vrimotov* and *Sildrojan Prishkaj* (see *The Three Sons*, page 44) flirt with Squire Jeterine and the guard named Sulja. Sulja dismisses the flirting with a smile, but Jeterine falls in love with the sensitive Kaspaj. The two meet secretly in the forest over the course of three days, and then Jeterine decides to defect to the Norbards. Aunt Zajita Vrimotov welcomes her to the family against all tradition, but only until the negotiation ends and the drum is sold. From the Festumers' point of view, Jeterine has been taken hostage.

**Value:** Festumers -3 QL

**How It Gets Noticed:** Pointed remarks from Sulja and Sildrojan; *Empathy (Discern Motivation)* about Jeterine and Kaspaj; the lovers' absence; Jeterine's goodbye letter.



**Interfere:** Lock up Jeterine (or recover her); admonish Kaspaj, who tries to free her (new value: 0 QL).

**Turnabout:** Convince Kaspaj to join the Festumers' side by playing up the Norbard marriage tradition in which the man leaves his family to join the woman (Willpower 2 (10/13/12), SPI 1; New Value: Norbards -3 QL). In the best case, Jaruslav agrees to let them wed only if Leudara performs the ceremony—but Leudara must be convinced, as well (New Value: Norbards -5 QL).

### Breaking Ice

When the ice sheet grows just thick enough to support an adult's weight, some young Norbards strap skates to their feet and skate along the shore near the camp, mocking the Festumers. Their provocations draw 1D6 club-wielding squires and guards out onto the ice. Instead of meting out punishment, they slip and slide in an undignified manner, and the only thing they manage to hurt is their own pride. Things turn dangerous when the Norbards use heavy rocks to shatter the ice, sending the Festumers into the freezing water. Rescuing them requires a successful cumulative check using *Body Control*, 1 CR, 5 attempts (after that, the check fails). Roll 1D20 every 10 CR to see whether each rescuer also falls into the water (determine by weight; counting backwards from 20, each point on the die equals 40 pounds, so a person who weighs 140 pounds breaks through on a result of 17 to 20). Spread your weight out with a ladder or similar item (successful *Mechanics* check +3), halves your effective weight for this check.

**Value:** Festumers - 3 QL

**How It Gets Noticed:** The process is obvious.

**Interfere:** Convince the Festumers to ignore the Norbards (cumulative check using *Fast Talk*, 1 minute, any number of attempts, until somebody breaks through): new value: Festumers -1 QL.

**Turnabout:** Make the Norbards fall through the ice before any Festumers fall in (new value: Norbards -4 QL).



### Two-Pronged Attack

Dunjev's sister, the graceful *Slanka Prishkaj* (see page 43) is asked to steal personal items from Timpski and Jaruslav at the camp. It became obvious to the family during the negotiation that Jaruslav often wipes his brow with a stitched handkerchief, while Timpski subconsciously plays with the hilt of his dagger. If the theft is successful, the zibilja uses magic on the items and learns that Jaruslav received the handkerchief from his Norbard lover, Chrenja (see page 28), and that the dagger used to belong to Timpski's predecessor, Urjelke (see page 29). The Aunts take advantage of these weak points—Jaruslav's broken heart and Timpski's remorse—again and again, trying to unsettle the two and turn them against each other.

**Value:** Festumers -3 QL

**Notice:** Catch Slanka red-handed (*Perception (Spot)* vs. *Pickpocket (Steal Item)* 7 (12/13/15)), or question another member of the Prishkaj family (use *Norbard* stats, on page 39).

**Interfere:** Slip Slanka items that belong to somebody else (*Pickpocket (Slip Item)* against *Perception* 6 (11/13/13)) or chase Slanka away (new value: Festumers 0 QL).

**Turnabout:** Take Slanka captive and interrogate her. Try to get her to give away secrets of the families, like the deal with the Ragashoffs, the magical influence on the negotiation, her assignment, or the magical study of the personal items (new value: Norbards -3 QL). • ○ .....

### Bruutsh Must Drum!

Bruutsh and Jääni managed to get away, but they want to take revenge against Jaruslav for their humiliation and torture. From their hiding place, they watch the negotiations and make their move under cover of night before the drum is officially handed over. Jääni removes the skin of Atmaskot Blood-drinker from the drum, paints the underside, casts the ritual *Orvai Kurim's War Drum* (see page 9), and then replaces it on the drum. After that, they both hide and wait for an appropriate moment.

For the next scene to proceed as described, all of the following conditions must apply.

- Both sides must have agreed on a price for the drum.
- The chest and the drum are both present at the negotiation site.
- There are at least 20 humans present.
- All those present are unarmed.
- Jääni and Bruutsh are free and hidden nearby.

• Reward your players if their heroes discover this information in-game. The knowledge of Jaruslav's and Timpski's weaknesses grants a bonus of 1 to social skills used against them.



## The Deal is Made

### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*Before the Norbards hand over the drum, tradition demands a ritual symbolic exchange be made. A pot of honey for a batz. A nod, a shaking of hands. A smile on an Aunt's face. The deal is made. [Give the heroes time to react.]*

*Solemnly, Tuminka removes the blanket that covered the drum for so long and spreads it out on the ground. The dark, wooden instrument covered with human skin sits behind the row of Aunts. Many of those present feel uncomfortable in its presence. Timpski takes the key from his neck and opens a creaking box that holds hundreds of batz. Coin by coin, he counts out the agreed-upon price and tosses it onto the blanket. Faces that were rigid with hatred a short while ago now manage to smile. The tension that dominated the negotiation begins to dissipate. [Give the heroes time to react.]*

*Suddenly, a red-furred creature jumps out of the bushes. Screaming as she runs, Jääni dashes through the clearing. She dodges two or three punches and heads right toward you. [Give the heroes time to react.]*

*Suddenly you hear a throbbing, wild, rhythmic booming—a drum beat. A second goblin—is that Bruutsh?—has jumped onto the Thorwal Drum. He drums madly on the skin of the executed pirate captain. Rage and wild hatred fill your heart with each stroke. The world disappears behind a red haze that fills your vision. Your skin feels like it is made of iron, and it shines in the blood-red fire that springs up around you all. Enemies. Enemies everywhere. Their eyes are empty; their life is your death. The Great Warrior calls for blood!*

The drum ritual (see page 9) seizes the minds of all humans who hear it, turning them into bloodthirsty savages. Members of other races who are present, like dwarves, elves, or half elves, are not affected by the drum. Humans feel the full power of Orvai Kurim's War Drum and begin to attack each other, whether armed or not. You have several options for presenting this scene at this point, as follows.

**Play It Out:** Using the combat rules, run this as a battle between bloodthirsty enemies, soulless creatures who deserve death, creatures that were allies until moments ago. All affected humans gain the state *bloodlust* (+4 AT, +2 TP, no defense, no ranged combat, no maneuvers but Forceful Blow; see *Core Rules*, page 35) for 2D20 CR.

**Narrative:** You can simply describe the effects of the *bloodlust*. Strangely, in this case, Thorwalian and goblin motives seem to blend in the heroes' minds. The sounds of the sea and of wild boars, enemies with lizard scales or lion manes and scorpion tails, faceless warriors without mercy that cannot be stopped except by bloody death.



**Shake It Off:** With a high QL in *Willpower (Resist Threat)*, the heroes can resist the effects. Keep the heroes busy preventing a bloodbath among those remain affected.

### Variants

The goblins' revenge is a pivotal moment in the adventure, the successful trade is overshadowed by the bloody battle, and the heroes receive a new mission that leads them on another winter journey and deeper into the goblins' culture. If the heroes investigate the meeting place before the drum is handed over, they do not find the goblins. Instead, Bruutsh beats the drum on the way back to Festum by dropping from a tree and landing on the instrument. Members of the expedition immediately attack each other. In this case, Leudara and the heroes begin the chase alone.

• Keep the heroes busy in this scene so Jääni and Bruutsh can get away (the goblins need a head start) but not before they steal the honey pot that was symbolically sold to Timpski. Tuminka can use it later to locate the goblins.





You can add to the tragedy by making the heroes the involuntary murderers of innocent or well-liked characters. Their deaths can make an Aunt, a bronnjar, or a rich Festumer into powerful new enemies for the heroes. In this case, all those present should be armed.



If you want to spare the heroes the experience of *bloodlust*, Bruutsh can warn them beforehand. Or Jääni lures them into the forest, so that they only return to the clearing when the worst has already happened.

## Aftermath



The Thorwal Drum is not the Goblin Timbal from legends. But in the course of history, the legend of the ritual of the goblin sorceresses (as experienced here by the heroes) added to its myth. The mystery of these legends will only become plain with time.



All those who have been raging return to their senses, displaying evidence of a wild brawl. All those possessed suffer two levels of *Stupor*. Most who were possessed by the *bloodlust* are disoriented for a while; the others tend the wounded. Before the heroes can set out after the goblins, Leudara (and the rest of the negotiators) demand their presence for a discussion. Despite the general confusion, both sides agree on two things: the trade has been made, and the goblins must be caught and punished. Leudara takes the initiative, and the zibilja Tuminka can find out where the goblins are using *Call the Hive*. The urgency is plain, for she very rarely uses this ritual.

## A New Mission

Because the heroes—or Olko—are responsible for freeing the goblins, it is a matter of honor for them to join the pursuit. If the heroes do not view this as their task, Leudara compels them, or the Norbards and Timpski offer an incentive (a 50 batz bounty for each goblin, payable in Festum). Olko is deeply disappointed with his goblin friends and does not want to see them again. Alternatively, he might be sick or injured, preventing his participation in the chase. Regardless, he hands the heroes a copy of his notes regarding the drum ritual and asks them to bring the goblins to justice.

If the heroes don't know how to proceed, hint that a magical analysis of the Thorwal Drum might provide information about the ritual. The magical images Jääni painted on its underside are already fading after a few days, but they are still clearly visible.

## Jääni's Magic

Freed from the iron collar, Jääni can increase the goblins' movement rate with her magic. After an exhausting drum ritual, she only has enough AE left for some uses of *Elemental Servant*, which allows her to ask elemental spirits for help. The goblins travel for several days. They stick to cover and disguise their tracks, making it hard to follow them.



To give the goblins a bigger head start, make the heroes escort the drum to Salderseed, a trip that takes three days. Even though Leudara is not happy, she allows it if someone mentions safety concerns.

## Leudara



The Blessed One is impressed by the *bloodlust* she experienced here. It is similar to the reported effects of the Goblin Timbal, as described by the Theater Knights. It is also similar to the feelings associated with worship of the demigod Kor. She decides to find out more about the ritual and bring the results to her home temple in Firunen (and thence into the hands of the Alliance of Kor's Sign).

## Call the Hive

### Add-On Rule

This ritual tracks items that the caster (or the caster's family) sold or exchanged.

**Check:** SGC/INT/DEX

**Effect:** Touch a coin or item exchanged for the item being sought to learn the direction in which it lies and its distance in terms of days of travel. The caster receives a bonus of 1 to the check for every year (or fraction thereof) that the zibilja (or her family) owned the item prior to the exchange. Conversely, every year (or fraction thereof) after the exchange incurs a penalty of 1. No modifier may exceed +/-5.

**Ritual Time:** 30 minutes

**AE Cost:** 16 AE

**Range:** SP × 50 miles

**Duration:** Immediate

**Target Category:** Mundane objects

**Property:** Object

**Tradition:** Zibilja

**Improvement Cost:** C





# Through the March



In the next leg of the adventure, the heroes pursue the goblins into the jagged hills of the Red Sickle. They learn much about dragon hunting while staying in the village of Dragonclamp, and also find the tracks of the vile trader Aljeg Ragashoff. In the Red Sickle, they discover the location of the honey pot and thus the ritual cave of the Lungai Theluzi, the area's resident goblin tribe. Jääni and Bruutsh have joined this tribe. To reach the cave, the heroes must deal with difficult mountain paths, grim trolls, and determined goblin fighters.

Another magical drum makes an appearance, and the heroes must decide the fate of Jääni and Bruutsh. By the end of this adventure, the heroes should have achieved the following.

- They pursue Jääni and Bruutsh to the Red Sickle, accompanied by Leudara and Tuminka.
- They find Jääni in the caves of the Lungai Theluzi tribe and acquire a magical drumhead that can be used by a skilled spellcaster to reconstruct the ritual.
- They decide the fate of Jääni and Bruutsh.
-  They receive a prophecy from Tarkampf the troll shaman.
-  Leudara takes the drumhead (or at least the knowledge of the ritual) to Firunen

## The Goblins' Tracks

Jääni and Bruutsh move west off the paths. They think they are being followed and have learned to avoid people outside Festum. With their red fur, night vision, and resistance to cold, they are well prepared for overland travel. Plus, they can rely on Jääni's magical abilities, and the snowfall covers their tracks.

The heroes shouldn't catch up to the goblins before reaching the Red Sickle. Tuminka's use of *Call the Hive* does provide them the goblins' direction, but it only provides their distance in days of travel—very imprecise information considering the weather and the difficult ground.





## The Path

Just as the heroes begin pursuing the goblins, it begins to snow. The journey to the western edge of the Hardener Lake District takes about two days.

The cold weather makes traveling difficult, and any lumberjacks, hunters, and trappers the heroes meet are near their settlements.

The village of **Larsach** (300 inhabitants; excellent water mill; shrine of Firun; shrine of Peraine) lies somewhat south of the western road, so the heroes will probably avoid it. The next, large settlement is the village of Dragonclamp, which is another two days distant.

## Wind and Weather

Stormy weather and constant snowfall mean wet clothes and the possible loss of equipment, making the situation even worse. The journey through the March has a general Cold Level of 2. Roll 1D6 per day to determine the weather conditions, or choose them at will.

1D6	Conditions
1-3	No difficulties
4	Strong wind: hats and loose equipment might blow away; Cold Level +1.
5	Heavy snowfall: Cold Level +1 due to wet clothes; paths are hard to find; a failed <i>Orienteering (Position of the Sun or Night Sky)</i> check at -1 causes the heroes to lose 1D6 hours. Clothes need six hours by the fire to dry.
6	Sudden blizzard. With a successful <i>Survival (Predict Weather)</i> check, the heroes can notice it in time, giving the party 2D6 × 5 minutes to find shelter. In the blizzard, +2 cold levels and checks using <i>Orienteering (Position of the Sun or Night Sky)</i> suffer a penalty of 5. The storm lasts 1D6 hours, followed by 1D6 additional hours of heavy snowfall. Clothes soaked from the blizzard can't protect against the cold in better weather, and in fact increase the Cold Level by 1 (maximum 4).

## Campsites

Off the road, finding an appropriate campsite requires a *Survival (Find Campsite)* check.

In addition to regular shelters and campsites, many tall obelisks stand along the west road to help protect against attack from the dragons of the Dragonstones. These are



often positioned near large rowan trees, which are holy to the Norbards and said to be the homes of protective tree spirits. These protected locations can be found with a *Survival (Find Campsite)* check +2. Sleeping there increases regeneration by +1 LP/AE/KP.

Off the road, finding an appropriate campsite requires a *Survival (Find Campsite)* check.

Building an appropriate camp during this season requires tents with additional layers of furs or pelts, some ground sheets, and warm sleeping bags. Halve regeneration rates for worse equipment. Regeneration is impossible if the heroes have nothing but a blanket and must sit under a tree and shiver through the night (see *Core Rules*, page 339). The kaleshka has room for two or three heroes to sleep, and can save their lives in a storm.

## Wild Animals

The famous Bornian elks are rather rare in the March. The Born bear, also called a grim bear (for stats, see page 24) is common here due to the proximity to the Bornwood, as are boars and wolves (see page 20) and sun lynxes. Deer, badgers, and beavers, as well as silver buck and Bornian wild rabbits, are especially plentiful. All animals are property of the bronnjar of the land, which can result in complications, especially if the heroes are found hunting without a license. Near the Lake District, one can encounter swampreeks, which are more aggressive than usual due to the season and the effects of the awakening of the Bornland.



### Swampreeks

**Size:** 5 to 6 feet

**Weight:** 100 to 140 pounds

**COU** 11 **SGC** 15(a) **INT** 13 **CHA** 13

**DEX** 15 **AGI** 15 **CON** 16 **STR** 14

**LP** 32 **AE** - **KP** - **INI** 14+1D6

**DE** 8 **SPI** -1 **TOU** 0 **MOV** 8

**Bite:** AT 12 DP 1D6+2 RE short

**Claws:** AT 14 DP 1D6+1 RE short

**Thrown Rock:** RC 14 RT 1 DP 1D6 RA 5/10/20

**PRO/ENC** 1/0

**Actions:** 1

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Darksight I.

**Special Abilities:** Grapple (Claws), Precise Shot/Throw (Rock)

**Skills:** Body Control 10, Climbing 7, Feat of Strength 5, Intimidation 6, Perception 7, Self-Control 5, Swimming 7, Stealth 6, Willpower 4

**Numbers:** 1, or 2D6+2 (pack)

**Size Category:** medium

**Type:** Animal, humanoid

**Loot:** 25 rations of meat (inedible)

**Combat Behavior:** A single swampreek rarely attacks human-sized targets. As a group, they are bolder. They start by throwing rocks and making mock assaults. After 1D6+1 CR, they attack in close combat.

**Escape:** Loss of 50% LP or two levels of the condition *Pain*; once half of a pack of swampreeks is killed or runs away, the rest flee.

#### Animal Lore (Monsters)

- QL 1: A lone swampreek is cowardly and can be chased away with a competitive check (Intimidation vs. Willpower). However, a pack of swampreeks is a serious threat to travelers, and no check is permitted if 2 or more swampreeks are present.
- QL 2: Swampreeks make mock attacks to distract their opponents.
- QL 3+: Legends tell of humans who turned into swampreeks. Anyone who gets pricked by a thorn from the morningthorn bush quickly turns into a swampreek.

#### Special Rules

**Pack:** Swampreeks attacking the same opponent receive +1 AT (no more than +4 AT) per swampreek after the first.

**Mock Assault:** The mock assault requires a competitive check of the swampreeks' *Intimidation* vs. the target's *Willpower* (*Resist Intimidation*). If the swampreeks are successful, enemies suffer a level of *Confusion* that lasts 1D6 CR. The GM makes one check for the entire swampreek pack, but heroes must attempt to resist individually.

**+1 Pain with:** 24 LP, 16 LP, 8 LP, and 5 LP or less



## Dragonclamp

**Inhabitants:** 120, including two dozen Tobrien refugees

**Ruler:** After the destruction of the baron's family by the dragon Brakador, the Countess of Irberod appointed the former captain of the Order of the Banishing Ray, **Gerion Karolus** (50; former drinker; thoughtful; Willpower 7 (15/13/13); SPI 2), as steward of the barony and village. He lives in the castle's donjon, since the rest of the castle burned down some time ago.

**Temple:** Rondra (recently renovated and expanded)

**Trade and Commerce:** Mainly agriculture and practical crafts; wooden figurines of dragons and saints

**Inns:** *Knight and Dragon* (Q2/P3/B20)

**Military:** 10 shetzes on horseback, 25 light cavalry

**Special:** Several colloquially-named *dragon towers*, which allow observers to spot dragon attacks in time to sound the alarm.

600 years ago, Count Irjan Hamaril of Iberod defeated a large cave dragon here. A few decades later, the Church of Rondra built a shrine on the spot, which has since been expanded into a temple and now serves as a pilgrimage destination for all who fight against scaled beasts. Scenes of the battle are depicted in murals in the temple. About 20 years ago, traveling adventurers defeated the dragon Brakador nearby. The temple is now run by **Ugdalf Firefall of Irberod** (24; skilled Blessed One of Rondra; tall and gangly; always looks tired; Willpower 8 (15/14/14); SPI 1).

Dragonclamp is one terminus of the *Seven Baronies Path*, the most important trade route to Weiden. This town is the last settlement before the Red Sickle, and as such sells equipment and provisions to those making the hard journey through the mountains.

#### Knight and Dragon

This simple inn (Q2/P3/B20) is owned by **Elmar Gorjensen** (59; stout; likes to mumble about what he's doing; Willpower 4 (12/12/12); Commerce 7 (11/12/12); SPI 0). The well-heated common room is often busy in winter.

If they ask around, the heroes can receive the following information.

- No one has seen the two goblins, but the heroes are advised to stay on the well-built *Seven Baronies Path* as long as possible.
- The heroes may park their *kaleshka* here (for two farthings per day), as the coach and the horses won't be of any use in the mountains.



- Aljeg Ragashoff passed through town earlier, trying to sell his cursed goods to the locals. When the Blessed One of Rondra asked to inspect the goods he was selling, Aljeg quickly packed his stuff and left. The villagers (rightly) think that the Norbard has something to hide, as nobody travels west in this weather without need. They speculate that his goods included stolen items, dark magic, or even poison from Maraskan.

### The Awakening on the Journey



In the inn, on one of those rare occasions in winter when one meets other travelers, the heroes hear more rumors about the awakening. Use this opportunity to give the heroes more insight into Leudara and Tuminka.

- A dead wild sow was found near Karkriwen. Apparently it became trapped in the tangled roots of a tree. The roots looked very strange.
- Various travelers mention seeing wolves, swampreeks, foxes, and even cows that acted unusually aggressively.
- Refugees from Tobrien tell about the horrible destruction of their home in recent years. Demons, undead, crop blight, foul earth—maybe the Bornland is headed for a similar fate.
- Some think the overgrowth or flooding consuming paths and ruins is the work of angry elemental spirits or powerful witch curses.

The Blessed One of Rondra suspects that unusual powers caused all of these events: old goblin magic, dark spellcasters, or demon worshipers who must of course be opposed with great resolve. Tuminka experienced only a few awakening phenomena in the Speckles, and thinks reports about old bones and spirits are creepy.

### The Stag



Shortly after leaving Dragonclump, the heroes cross the Westerbrook. During their first night on the Seven Baronies Path, the heroes are resting in a shelter when they hear a stag belling in the distance—loud at first, then aggressive, then wailing. The darkness makes the search for the animal difficult but not impossible. In any case, the animal's calls echo in the heroes' dreams for days to come. That night, some or all of the heroes have the following dream.

### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*Again, you hear its call, nearer this time. You cannot escape its belling. The forest is moving all around you. The stag's allies are waiting, luring you into a lethal trap. Its call sounds again, nearer, this time. You are running, faster and faster, your gaze searching quickly for thorny vines and skulking beasts. The belling draws ever nearer. You come to a river. This is your salvation. You dive into the river and disappear into the rush of the water. It's dark. The wind howls above you.*

Assuming that the heroes probably won't look for a stag in the middle of the night, they find the dead animal in the morning. It seems to have drowned in a tributary of the Westerbrook. How it came to be in the river and why it couldn't get back to shore is not obvious from the surroundings. It has no visible wounds.

Taking a closer look requires plucking the animal from the icy river (Cold Level IV) and dragging it to shore. Make a cumulative check using *Feat of Strength (Dragging & Pulling)*, 1 minute, 5 attempts (after that, the check fails). A *Treat Wounds* check +2 reveals a broken foreleg. On a result of QL 2 or more, the hero also notices that its neck is broken.



The stag's body is laying near the shore and can be investigated right away.

### Aljeg Ragashoff

The heroes meet this luckless trader after one day's journey along the Seven Baronies Path. Aljeg was carrying a large load of honey purchased with his earnings from the Speckles, but a troll of the Traugatompf tribe smelled the honey and ambushed him. It smashed the shaft of his kaleshka, injuring one horse and making the other one run away. Then the troll toppled the cart. Aljeg could do nothing but wait for help.

### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*A few hundred yards ahead, you see an oddly shaped pile of snow by the path. It's a toppled cart, a kaleshka. Nearby stands a horse with a nasty wound in its flank. Someone hums a sad tune from within the cart.*



## The Cursed Goods

### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Aljeg is huddling inside the cart, covered in blankets and sitting on a modest bedstead, warming himself with a small brazier. Around him lie the chaotic remains of his trade goods and personal belongings. When he notices someone, he reaches for his molokdeshnaja, but sets it down quickly when he gets the impression that there is no immediate danger.

Aljeg does not admit to selling cursed goods. These are only vile prejudices. Among his wares, the heroes can find two mechanical saws (a *Perception (Spot)* check +1) that look like the one from the Lake District—and these also house lesser demons inside them. The trader says that he was cheated in Yol-Ghurmak. He was only interested in a good deal and didn't know that the goods were unholy. A competitive *Empathy (Discern Lies)* check vs. Aljeg's *Fast-Talk (Subterfuge)* shows that he really was only interested in profit. He whines that he has already suffered his punishment and has learned his lesson. The tools did not garner the profit he expected, and now the honey is gone, the horses lost, and the cart damaged. He promises to never deal in goods from Yol-Ghurmak again, and this time, he isn't lying.

### The Right Punishment

The heroes have several options. They could...

- Leave the trader to his fate, which Tuminka would prefer.
- Trust Aljeg when he says he wants to do better, and send him on his way (with or without his cart).
- Round up his horses: cumulative check using *Tracking (Animal Tracks)* +3, 1 hour, 10 attempts (after that, the check has failed).
- Bring the kaleshka back to town on its skates: cumulative group check *Feat of Strength (Lifting)*, 1 minute, 5 attempts).
- Bring Aljeg to the authorities in Dragonclump (2 days' loss).
- Execute him on the spot for dealing with demons, which Leudara thinks is the right course of action.

A successful *Law (Bornland)* check shows that the situation isn't clear. Whoever deals with "evil goods" must be "punished according to his standing and wickedness." Leudara can be convinced with a competitive *Fast-Talk (Manipulate or Flattery)* check against *Willpower (Resist Fast-Talk)* to deal less harshly with Aljeg (which Tuminka prefers) or hand him over to the authorities. The mildest punishment she accepts is branding his brow to mark him as a heretic.

### Aljeg Ragashoff

COU 13 SGC 11 INT 11 CHA 13

DEX 11 AGI 12 CON 15 STR 14

LP 35 AE - KP - INI 12+1D6

DO 6 SPI 1 TOU 2 MOV 7

Unarmed: AT 11 PA 7 DP 1D6 RE short

Molokdeshnaja: AT 11 PA 6 DP 1D6+4 RE medium

PRO/ENC 1/0 (heavy clothing) (armor modifiers already included)

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Personality Flaw (Prejudices against Knights), Socially Adaptable

**Special Abilities:** Forceful Blow I

**Skills:** *Body Control* 7, *Commerce* 9, *Fast-Talk* 9, *Feat of Strength* 7, *Perception* 5, *Survival* 8, *Willpower* 5

**Combat Behavior:** Aljeg does not fight against superior numbers and try to talk his way out of fighting. If the heroes try to convince him, he decides to conduct no more business with Yol-Ghurmak in the future. When his life is threatened, the trader fights with everything he has.

**Pain +1 with:** 26 LP, 18 LP, 9 LP, 5 LP or less.

## Traveling through the Red Sickle

From Dragonclump, the heroes continue for two days along the Seven Baronies Path until it heads north into the Red Sickle. The hilly countryside quickly becomes rocky. There are no paths, but the heroes must climb or circumnavigate rock walls (some of them very steep) and deep gorges. Early winter is not a good time to be traveling in the Red Sickle, just as in the March. Snowfall and strong winds can turn any mountain path into a death trap.

This ground is impassible to a kaleshka. The vehicle and the horses can be left at a nearby mountain farm for 1 batz per animal. The heroes must find a campsite (*Survival (Find Campsite)* check -3) or suffer -1 to regeneration of LP/AE/KP (see *Core Rules*, page 339). Note the heroes' luggage and the resulting encumbrance.

The journey to the ritual cave of *Triinuun Stonetooth* where Jääni stores the honey pot takes 12 days on foot (14 days without snowshoes). Tuminka's ritual leads the way, but the heroes must find the best path using *Orienteering (Position of the Sun or Starry Sky)*, checking once per day. With QL 3 or higher, the trip takes one day less.

Besides deer, game consists mostly of mountain pheasant and rabbits. Checks using *Tracking (Animal Tracks)* receive a bonus of 3 in the snow. It's too cold for nuts and fruits to be growing in the mountains.



## Making Snowshoes

### Add-On Rule

The heroes can try making snowshoes if they didn't think to purchase them earlier (base price 6.5 silverthalers). Finding suitable wood requires a cumulative check using *Woodworking (Felling & Cutting)* (3 hours, any number of attempts, as long as trees are available). Making snowshoes requires a *Woodworking (Carpentry)* check -1, 15 minutes, 7 attempts (after that, the check fails).

### Cliffs and Chasms

If desired, describe some of the climbing in detail and give heroes the opportunity to make smart use of their equipment and support the bad climbers in the group. Some possible challenges include:

- Steep Wall: Checks using Climbing (Mountains) with a penalty of 5; bonus of +1 instead when using pitons, ropes, and grapples.
- Debris Slope: Checks using Climbing (Mountains) -1; +3 instead with grapple and pick.
- Pile of Rocks: Check using Climbing (Mountains) +3.

### Encounters


It is very unlikely but still possible that the characters will meet a human prospector hoping for a find despite the season. Of special danger are wolves (page 20) or Born bears (page 24) that feel the heroes are threatening their territory, or even a greedy ogre (see *Aventuria Almanac*, page 152).

### The Trolls



The Red Sickle is home to a special tribe of Trolls, the Traugatompf, which heroes with Trollish II can loosely translate as *bloodsingers sealing the paths*. The trolls are deeply versed in the mysteries of the Sickle, but very reticent to share their knowledge. Some trolls mutilate themselves during their bloody rites and bear visible decorative scars as a result. Besides Tarkampf (see below), the heroes meet other trolls, who react gruffly or even aggressively, depending on their first encounter.

### Tarkampf

On their first day in the Sickle, the heroes meet a group of Traugatompf trolls led by the dark shaman  Tarkampfson of Luderdotsh. The trolls are searching for a member of their tribe who has been missing for a day. They cannot stand to be around humans, but use the opportunity to look for a clue.

### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

You are skirting around a boulder when you see a group of giant creatures standing about a hundred yards away. Trolls. They wear roughly sewn bear, mountain goat, and wolf pelts. One of them wears special ornaments—several belts threaded with stones that are wrapped around his arms and chest. The others carry three large branches (more like three young trees) in their fists. And behind you, next to the boulder, you spot a fifth troll. He has his ear pressed up to the large rock, as if listening to what is happening inside.

If the heroes decide to turn back instead of facing the trolls, they must find another way around, requiring new checks on *Orienting* for this day. If they approach the trolls, Tarkampf addresses them directly.





### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*As you approach, you see many scars on the trolls' bodies, their rough faces, their muscular forearms, and their tree-trunk like legs. Some of the scars are very regular, like a painful decoration. Two of the trolls are missing fingers on their left hands, while a third one is missing an eye. The troll with the stone belts addresses you again. "Scuttle warriors, speak!" he says, "We look Raugatsh. What know scuttle warriors? Trolls not lose way on Imithridatsh, and stone and beast no danger. Speak!"*

If the heroes mention the troll attack on the trader Aljeg, Tarkampf becomes even more suspicious. At first he suspects the heroes did something to the troll, then his suspicions focus on Aljeg. No matter what the heroes say, he begins an angry rant.

### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*The troll with the stone belts stomps his foot on the ground, and the other trolls snap to attention. They look at you grimly and tighten their grip on their weapons. "Useless smallings!" he bellows, "Scuttle warriors and small-shaggies! Know not of Imithridatsh and not of ancient land. Stupid like sky gods! Small-shaggies run and wallow, much old, little stay. Scuttle warriors run and make noise, but not understand! Wait, scuttle warriors! When One come over large mountain, when One come after thousand years and throw down sky lights, then see! Then ancient land too weak with you, and doom!" He looks at you angrily, then turns around with a snort and walks into the forest. The other trolls follow him.*


### Looking for Raugatsh

Further communication with the trolls is very difficult, especially since Tarkampf is very irascible and the heroes are in danger of being attacked by the huge warriors. If the heroes offer to search for the missing troll and are able to impress Tarkampf—by knowing the trollish language or giving him a special item—he tells them in his rough way to meet him regularly near Borabatsh. At the mention of this name, he points at the boulder his companion has been listening to. He says he will remain near there for 2D6 days.

The missing troll is in fact the honey thief, but he was attacked and killed by goblins lead by Bruutsh shortly after acquiring the honey. The goblins made off with the honey and the troll's fur clothing, which they took home to their cave.

If the heroes capture some goblin guerrillas later (see page 59), the prisoners can lead them to the site of the battle between the troll and the goblins. The trip takes two days. When the heroes arrive, they find four dead goblins and the dead, naked troll.

### Help of the Trolls

If the heroes lead the trolls to the body of their missing comrade, or bring the body to Borabatsh, the trolls mark Raugatsh's death with grim expressions and carry him away. One of the trolls,  Braubamatsh (stone chain around his head; often growls a strange melody; loves rosehips; hates tree dragons) lingers behind and points the heroes to the caves of the Lungai Theluzi goblin tribe. Then he turns and leaves without another word. He is too large to enter the cave, anyway.

There is little reason for the heroes to fight these trolls, so we do not include stats for trolls here. If you wish to stage a confrontation in your game, you can find stats for trolls in the *Aventuria Almanac*, on page 157.



### The Starfall

Optional Scene



One night while traveling through the mountains, the heroes witness the following spectacle in the night sky.

### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*The cloud cover thins and allows you to see Phex' starry sky. The constellation of the Dragon is unusually bright this evening. A light blinks and traces a thin tail, a glowing line, across the night sky. It's a shooting star. There's another. And a third. Dozens of shooting stars illuminate the sky, and their beauty touches your souls.*

Check using *Astronomy (Astrology)* +2

QL 1: It is extremely unusual for so many shooting stars to appear at once. The constellation of the Dragon represents power, victory, and triumph. Shooting stars appearing in this constellation can mean a victory or a looming battle on a cosmic scale.

QL 2: A few months ago, the eye of the dragon closed (another way of saying that the star disappeared). Some scholars and Churches think that such great changes in the starry sky are a result of divine action.

QL 3: In the year 1029 FB, stars fell like rain in the Svellt Valley. This led to an economic boom when a prospector discovered many pounds of the rare and precious star metal in the area.

QL 4+: The heroes have read or heard that Saint Niobara of Anchopal, a famous astrologer and prophetess, predicted such an event, but her book of prophecies was considered lost.



The Starfall is a key event in the living history of Aventuria. It is part of a grand cosmological change that will influence the world of the Dark Eye for many years to come. For more details about the background and nature of this event, see the *Aventuria Almanac* or the short story anthology *Starless Sky*.



## Goblin Guerrillas

Bruutsh, a child of the city, didn't have an easy start with the tribal warriors of the Lungau Theluzi. But what he lacked in toughness and experience, he made up for with courage and cunning, and he became leader of a group of warriors in a short period of time.

Flush from their victory against the trolls, the goblins are bursting with confidence, and when Bruutsh asks them to fight his pursuers, they agree at once. In addition to Bruutsh, there is one goblin per hero.

They attack intelligently and take good advantage of their knowledge of the surrounding area to try to win. The goblins use one of their trusted strategies, described below.

For stats for tribal goblins, see page 61.

**Combat Behavior:** The goblins flee from the heroes. If one goblin is cornered or trapped while fleeing, the others offer no support and continue to flee.

**Escape:** Goblins flee before entering close combat with an enemy of equal or greater strength. Bruutsh's influence, however, might change that.



Some of the goblins have been hurt in the fight against the troll and only have 14 LP.



The goblins poison their arrows with arax (see *Core Rules*, page 341).



## Ambush

The goblins lie in wait at an appropriate place, such as across a gorge or above a steep rock face, attack the heroes with arrows and javelins, and then retreat at once. Pursuing them isn't practical, as the heroes cannot cross the gorge or climb the rock face fast enough. If the heroes succeed in a *Climbing (Mountains)* check -3, they can chase the goblins (see *Core Rules*, page 349; the terrain is Difficult, and the goblins have a head start of 45 feet).

## Traps

The goblins place simple animal traps at places the heroes are likely to traverse. Spotting a trap requires a *Perception (Spot)* check at -1. If no hero succeeds in detecting a trap, a random hero sets it off and suffers 1D6+2 DP. Traps can be disarmed in 3 CR with a successful *Mechanics (Disarm Traps)* +1 check. If the disarm check fails, the hero suffers half damage.

## Misleading Tracks

Goblins attempt to hide their tracks as they move, and following them requires *Tracking (Humanoid Tracks)* vs. *Tracking (Hide Tracks)* checks. If the heroes succeed at this competitive check three times, they find the goblins and can sneak up on them (competitive *Stealth (Sneak)* check vs. *Perception (Search or Spot)* and attack. If the goblins succeed just once, however, the heroes lose their trail and follow a false one. For each false trail they follow, the heroes lose half a day's time.



The goblins also try to confuse the heroes and create false tracks. The heroes must succeed in a competitive check using *Tracking (Humanoid Tracks)* vs. the goblins' *Tracking* or walk into a cave occupied by a Born bear (for stats of the Born bear, see page 24) or into a new ambush (see *Core Rules*, page 237).



If the heroes fail to find the goblins' tracks more than once, the goblins grow overconfident and, their heads filled with Bruutsh's heroic stories, they try to finish off the heroes in a frontal attack that they can only lose.

## Caught!

In the end, the heroes confront and defeat the goblins. The following scene assumes that Bruutsh survives and is captured, thus giving the heroes a better chance to negotiate with Jääni in the finale. If Bruutsh dies in the fight, he threatens them with something called the *troll drum* and dies with a whispered lover's oath to Jääni on his lips.



### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*As you tie up Bruutsh, he struggles without success and rants, "You are no better than Jaruslav! But you won't escape! We took the skin of the troll and Jääni is turning it into a drum! You will be crushed!" He gives an evil laugh.*

If the heroes capture any of the goblins alive, they can try to discover the location of Jääni and the cave. Because revealing the location of their home cave would threaten their entire tribe, they must be thoroughly intimidated (competitive *Intimidation (Threats)* check vs. *Willpower (Resist Intimidation)* +3) before they reveal anything. Even then, they still might lead the heroes to a different cave at first, to confuse them. Bruutsh is of little use, as he cannot find the way by himself.

### The Truth About the Troll

Bruutsh thinks that he is telling the truth about the troll skin. After the goblins defeated Raugatsh, he ordered two goblins to skin the troll. After packing up their loot, they sat down to eat some of the delicious honey and forgot about their task. Instead of the troll skin, they brought back the goat skins their victim had been wearing. Nevertheless, the heroes should be worried, as the Traugatompf trolls are dangerous enough without magic.

If the heroes found Raugatsh's body earlier, they already know that he hasn't been skinned and can ignore Bruutsh's threats. At the end of the adventure, when Jääni beats the drum again, the heroes should remember that they probably won't have to deal with wild, raging trolls.



## Goats and Pigs

For a **Map of the Goblin Cave**, see the back of this book.

### The Legend of Imithridia

*"A long time ago, Imithridia, the daughter of Mailam Rek dai, lived with her sisters in the Great Pile and was strong and powerful. Then Evil came and tried to kill her. It wrapped its thorny tendrils around her and poisoned the air around her, and she was in danger of sinking in the slimy body of evil. Then, Mailam Rek dai dug a lioness from the Great Pile and told her, 'Go and help my daughter.' The lioness rushed to attack the Evil, bit it with her teeth, and hit it with her paws, but she wasn't strong enough to injure it. Imithridia told her, 'Quick, pull me out of the slime and swing me as a weapon against the enemy. That way we will defeat it.' The lioness did as she was told, and with heavy blows, they defeated the Evil. But after their victory, Imithridia was covered by its venomous blood and had to sleep. She has been doing so ever since."*

—the tale of Imithridia's fight against Evil, told among the goblin sorceresses of the Red Sickle.

While Bruutsh is on the warpath, Jääni is with the Lungai Theluzi, the tribe of the goblin sorceress Triinuun Stonetooth (see page 65). This tribe is named after one of the fists of Mithrida, two especially tall mountains near the Red Sickle.

As a goblin sorceress, Jääni enjoys Triinuun's trust and has convinced her to help drive away Jääni's pursuers. In a worst-case scenario, she has already cast *Orvai Kurim's War Drum*, this time on the goat furs worn by the troll that Bruutsh's band defeated. With or without the goblins' help, the heroes find the goblins' cave eventually. When they do, they come to a long rock wall in an area with scattered

trees and shrubs. A large boulder, sitting about 20 yards in front of the rock wall, is an obvious landmark.



If the heroes were quick on the chase, they can encounter the tribe at the same time as the two goblins arrive. Alternatively, Bruutsh left the honey pot somewhere in the Sickle; the heroes track it to an unimportant location and must spend time searching for the cave themselves.

### The Caves of the Lungai Theluzi (B)

Since their arrival, Jääni and Bruutsh have been expecting the goblins and their pursuers. When they give the pre-arranged signal (the call of a jay), the warriors and hunters prepare for combat. Women and children flee back to the **Wallow (C)**, led by Jääni.

### The Secret Gorge (A)

#### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*You move along the ravine, and in front of you is yet another turn. Goblins could appear above you at any time to shoot at you again. Finally, you see a cave entrance at the end of the gorge. An unpleasant, biting smell hits your nose, and near the entrance you see many pale, colored splotches of ocher, green, and blue. Above the entrance, you see a wall painting depicting a jay in black and ocher.*

Triinuun has cast the ritual *Vigilant Guard* and drawn a jay on the cave wall. The goblins in the caves know what to do when they hear the jay give his warning call.



## Vigilant Guard

### Add-On Rule

The caster paints the image of an animal in an appropriate location to watch an area. The image gives an alarm when someone enters the area..

**Check:** INT/CHA/DEX

**Effect:** The animal spirit gives a warning cry when something that it considers a danger comes near. Its Perception is equal to QL × 3, and its attributes are equal to those of a typical member of the species.

**Ritual Time:** 30 minutes

**AE Cost:** 8 AE

**Range:** The animal's line of sight

**Duration:** QL × 3 in hours

**Target Category:** Mundane objects (animal image)

**Property:** Object

**Tradition:** Goblin Sorceress

**Improvement Cost:** B

The biting smell comes from a pile of dragon dung the goblins found and placed in front of the cave entrance to ward off wild animals and other dangers. A successful check using *Animal Lore (Monsters)* or *Magical Lore (Magical Creatures)* -3, lets the heroes identify the substance by its characteristic smell and consistency.

### Hero Tactics

The heroes have several options for attacking the cave.

**Frontal Attack:** The entrance to the cave lies well hidden in a twisting **Gorge (A)**. The entrance to the gorge is disguised by shrubs, and the goblins usually hide any tracks leading to the entrance with *Tracking (Hide Tracks)*. The heroes can find the entrance with a competitive *Tracking (Humanoid Tracks)* check, if they haven't pried any useful information out of the defeated goblins.

**Scout:** By scouting the area, the heroes might find another entrance to the cave with a little hard work (cumulative check using *Perception (Search)* -1, 2 hours, any number of attempts) near the **Wallow (C)**, hidden in a hard to reach rock formation. This entrance possesses the same security measure as the entrance in the gorge, but the goblins are unable to use their detailed defensive strategy here.

**Split Up:** If the heroes want to split up, some can prepare an ambush at one entrance, while the others enter the cave through the other entrance. Heroes that choose to hide and wait near an entrance can confront Jääni when she flees.

### Living Caves (a-i)

The goblins' caves are a mess, by human standards. Beds of straw and furs are everywhere, and materials and tools for leatherworking or basket-weaving are strewn across every surface between small fire pits and baskets with supplies for the coming winter. **Caves a, b, and g** impose visibility level 1; all other caves are at level 2 (see *Core Rules*, page 348). This is less of a problem for the goblins than for the heroes.

### Goblin Tactics

The honey pot Tuminka tracked with her ritual lies carelessly cast aside in **cave c** in a pile of empty containers and buckets.

**Caves a and b** have been cleared for strategic reasons, and the tribe's pigs have been driven to **caves d and i**. The goblins lay out their dead in **cave i**.

In **cave j**, a drop of 45 feet leads to an entrance to the **Ritual Cave (cave l)**.

The tribe's warriors occupy **caves b** (three warriors), **c** (three warriors), **e** (six warriors), and **f** (six warriors). They try to lure intruders to **cave b**, where they can attack from three sides at once. **Cave f** holds many goblins that can all shoot at intruders at once.

### Tribal Goblin

COU 10 SGC 9 INT 12 CHA 10

DEX 14 AGI 15 CON 12 STR 10

LP 24 AE - KP - INI 13+1D6

DO 8 SPI -1 TOU 1 MOV 9

**Cudgel:** AT 10 PA 5 DP 1D6+3

RE medium

**Wooden Spear:** AT 10 PA 7 DP 1D6+2 RE long

**Javelin:** RC 12 RT 2 DP 2D6+2 RA 5/25/40

**Short Bow:** RC 12 RT 1 DP 1D6+4 RA 1/10/100

PRO/ENC 0/0

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Darksight 1, Nimble, Resistant to Cold

**Special Abilities:** Feint 1

**Skills:** *Animal Lore* 6, *Body Control* 8, *Climbing* 8, *Feat of Strength* 2, *Orienteering* 8, *Perception* 8, *Self-Control* 1, *Stealth* 7, *Survival* 7, *Tracking* 9, *Willpower* 2

**Combat Behavior:** The goblins avoid fighting in the narrow passages between the caves, where they cannot take advantage of their superior numbers. Instead, they wait until they can attack from two or more directions at once. If the heroes hesitate, the goblins launch ranged attacks. The heroes can use skilled maneuvers to disrupt the rows of goblins. Entering from the side of the Wallow takes the goblins by surprise. Their tactics won't work there, and they attack with much less coordination.

**Escape:** When reduced to 10 LP; they are interested in protecting the tribe and the holy cave (**cave l**), which is where they retreat in an emergency.

**Pain +1 with:** 18 LP, 12 LP, 6 LP, and 5 LP or less.






**Cave a** is empty, allowing the heroes to retreat there themselves. When the heroes reach **cave b**, there are only three goblins in it. When the heroes enter, the goblins retreat noisily to **cave c**, where three more goblins lie in wait. Their noise is a signal for the warriors in **cave f** to charge through **cave a** and attack the heroes at the same time as the goblins waiting in **cave e**. The six goblins in **cave c** attack from three sides in **cave b**.

#### Fighting with a Map!

To keep track of the confrontation, use a D6 to represent each group of goblins on the map, with the number on the die indicating the number of goblins in the cave. At the beginning, place a D6 in **cave b** showing a three. The number for **cave f** is six, and so on. When the heroes defeat a goblin, turn the die to the new number.



 This is a fight the heroes don't need to win. If you want to improve their chances, reduce the number of goblin warriors. Heroes won't be killed if they surrender or approach unarmed from the start and submit to the judgment of the goblin sorceress Triinuun Stonetooth. Whether the heroes are treated with mercy or cruelty after being disarmed depends on how fiercely they fought and how many goblins they killed. Male heroes in particular are insulted, pelted with garbage, and beaten. In the subsequent negotiation with Triinuun (see page 65) they

suffer a penalty of 2 with *Intimidation*. If the heroes refuse to negotiate, they are abandoned in the Red Sickle without weapons or equipment.



If the heroes are well armed, increase the number of goblins. Also, plant a trap in the cave for each day the heroes wasted with repairs or detours. Traps inflict 1D6+2 DP, can be noticed with *Perception* -1, and can be disarmed in 3 CR with a check using *Mechanics* (*Disarm Traps*) +1; a failure inflicts half damage to the hero.

#### Descent (j)

The room is pitch black (visibility Level 4). If the heroes do not notice the chasm in the floor (*Perception* (*Spot*)), they fall 15 feet onto the rocks below (see *Core Rules*, page 340). If they stick close to the cave wall, they pass safely and come to the ritual cave (I) (visibility Level 2, due to a hole in the ceiling) where they see a stone table in front of a passageway.

#### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*On a stone table, you see the horn tip of an aurochs and three stone bowls filled with dried mineral paints: black, ocher, and green. The wall next to the passage entrance bears a life-sized image of an aurochs painted in black and ocher. You smell a whiff of blood from the cave beyond the passageway.*





The picture of the aurochs has been magically charged with the ritual *Beast from Colors*. A *Magical Lore (Rituals)* -3 check reveals that the aurochs is aware of the party. It attacks if an intruder comes within 10 feet of the passageway entrance.

To avoid endangering members of the tribe on a daily basis, the picture of the aurochs do not attack if the horn tip on the table is coated with green paint. Triinuun often changes which color is used, to keep interlopers on their toes. Finding paint flecks on the horn might give a clue about which color was last used. A *Perception (Search)* check can help here. Given the visibility in the cave, it is rather hard to determine the paint color (-1) just by looking at it; smelling and tasting (+1) are more productive.

### The Ritual Cave/Nitzi Mulla (I)

#### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*The smell of blood grows stronger, more metallic. You enter a cave a bit larger than the living caves above. In the front area, there is a large stone slab of red slate. Four pictures are painted on it. From left to right, they are: an upright boar in ocher and green, a misshapen fungus in white, another, larger upright boar in ocher and red, and a lioness in ocher and black. Some red stones are sitting on the picture of the lioness. Around the stone slab, you see improvised and worn digging tools and simple drums. The floor of the cave is very uneven, as if the tribe has been digging into it randomly. The smell of blood seems to emanate from those holes where red, shiny stone has been exposed.*

One of Triinuun's predecessors chose this cave for the tribe because she felt a special presence here. But it is Triinuun's idea to dig in the cave and turn it into a *little pile* (Goblinish: *nitzi mulla*), just as the goddess Mailam Redkai digs in the *Great Pile* (Goblinish: *puur mulla*) and brings useful and damaging things into the world. Triinuun regularly gathers the whole tribe here to dig and search. She believes the red, shiny rocks are drops of blood from the giantess Imithridia and regards them as a sign that she is digging in the right place.

#### Looking at the Pictures

Check using *Myths & Legends (Bornland)* -3

QL 1: The large boar is Mailam Redkai, the principle goddess of the goblins, a mother goddess of sorts. The smaller boar is probably one of her children, a giantess.

QL 2: The Uumegatan (the white fungus) represents Nacka Rachti (Evil, in other words). Goblins do not worship lionesses.

QL 3+: According to a goblin legend, the giantesses of the Sick Mountain were killed by Nacka Rachti, who was in turn slain by Mailam Redkai and buried under the Iron Edge.

#### Aurochs (*Beast from Colors*)

**Size:** 6.5 feet long (without tail), 6.8 feet long (with tail); 6.5 feet tall at the shoulder.

**Weight:** 2,000 pounds

**COU** 12 **SGC** 9(a) **INT** 12 **CHA** 12

**DEX** 10 **AGI** 12 **CON** 18 **STR** 23

**LP** 70 **AE** - **KP** - **INI** 12+1D6

**DE** 6 **SPI** -4 **TOU** 4 **MOV** 9

**Horn Thrust:** AT 11 DP 1D6+7 RE short

**Trample:** AT 9 DP 2D6+7 RE short

**PRO/ENC** 0/0

**Actions:** 1

**Special Abilities:** Trample (Trample), Takedown (Horn Thrust)

**Skills:** Body Control 4, Climbing 1, Feat of Strength 12, Intimidation 8, Perception 6, Self-Control 6, Swimming 6, Stealth 2, Willpower 10

**Number:** 1

**Size Category:** Large

**Type:** Supernatural creature, non-humanoid

**Loot:** none

**Combat Behavior:** The bull-like creature attacks if somebody approaches within 10 feet of it. It first attacks by trampling (1×), then tries to gore with its horns.

**Escape:** The creature fights until destroyed.

#### Magical Lore (Magical Creatures)

◆ QL 1: This thing looks like a translucent aurochs.

◆ QL 2: Even though it is clearly a magical beast, it behaves just as aggressively as a real aurochs. It may gore intruders with its horns or simply trample them.

◆ QL 3+: Real aurochs hate unicorns. Maybe this one does, too, but how often does one have a unicorn handy?

#### Special Rules

**Dissolve:** The creature dissolves if its LP fall to 0.

**Pain +1 at:** 53 LP, 35 LP, 18 LP, and 5 LP or less



#### Trample (Special Maneuver)

**Rule:** The Trample maneuver is only possible if the attacker has a movement of at least 4 and moves at least 24 feet before attacking. The defender may defend normally against the attack. If the Trample is unsuccessful, the defender can make an attack of opportunity, but with an additional penalty of 4. If the Trample maneuver succeeds, attacks made by the target against the attacker suffer a penalty of 2 for the CR. At the end of the combat round, the creature ends its move up to Movement/2 yards away from the target, whether the trample hit or not. This special maneuver cannot be combined with the basic maneuver Feint.



### Investigating the Red Stones

If the heroes take a closer look at the red stone fragments, they learn that the rock is brittle. The goblins were probably able to remove a large piece only with great care. The heroes can take this piece or even dig out a similar one (check using *Earthencraft* -2, due to the stone's brittleness).

Check using *Earthencraft* +1

QL 1: It's a primitive grinding stone of limestone, shimmering red.

QL 2+: The rock has very strange veins; it's a very unusual blend of hematite, corundum, quartz, and garnet, and is probably found only in the Red Sickle.

Magical analysis reveals nothing, as the stone isn't magical.

The mythology of the Twelvegods could give a clue (check using *Religions (all Churches of the Twelvegods)* -1).

QL 1: The power infusing the stone in this place seems ancient. In mythology, the Red Sickle is linked with the giantess Mithrida.

QL 2: Rondra used the giantess' body as a weapon to fight the Omegatherion, a horrible creature that threatened all of Creation. The deities united to smash the monster's body into pieces, many of which still exist today.

QL 3+: The mountains of the Red Sickle are said to be the giantess' body. Some say she is dead, others say she is only sleeping.

### The Red Stone



Any bladed weapon sharpened with the stone becomes charged with karmic energy. It takes on a reddish hue for 1D6 days and is able to injure demons. If the blade is used against creatures touched by the Nameless God, it receives +1 AT and does +1 DP. Blessed Ones and demons of the Nameless God, as well as all monsters connected to him, are affected this way. However, cultists, rats, or spider creatures of the Nameless God are not affected. The stone can be used on a weapon only once every 7 days.



The red stone (known as red grindstone) appears in future adventures. Try to interest the heroes in taking the stone, but don't force them. Simply holding one gives the heroes a good feeling, and once they understand its use, they won't want to be without it. They will have other opportunities to acquire red grindstone later during the campaign.



### Triinuun Stonetooth

**Brief Description:** 29; skilled goblin sorceress; experienced mystic; bright red eyes; often intoxicated by fly amanita and thus acts quite erratically.

**Motivation:** Researching goblin traditions and mysteries, which she believes are her responsibility to preserve.

**Agenda:** Triinuun desires a peaceful coexistence with humans (and trolls), so she is not fond of Bruutsh's influence on the hunters of the tribe. She thinks Jääni is immature but talented, so she teaches her about the humans and introduces her to the deeper mysteries of Imithridia.

**Function:** Wise tribal leader; Jääni's new teacher; she views intruders in the cave as an existential threat and does everything possible to drive them off.

**Background:** Triinuun has been the tribes' only sorceress for 3 years. She has contacts with Yaaksha Ruuba, the most respected goblin sorceress in the Red Sickle.

**Portrayal Tips:** Push your lower jaw forward, squint, and furrow your brow. Speak crudely and with a rough voice.

**Fate:** Triinuun does not appear in future published adventures.



To make things more difficult, a magical creature is brought to life by the strong magic of the place and joins in the fight against the heroes. Also, Triinuun might summon an elemental spirit or even a djinni. Choose which spirit appears, or roll on the table.

### 1D6 Elemental Manifestation

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1-3 | An annoying minor spirit, such as a mud imp or a fogbold, distracts a hero, whose skill checks and attacks suffer a penalty of 1 as a result.                                                                                            |
| 4   | The confused ghost of a dead human huntress appears and tries to terrify the heroes. All who see the ghost (including the goblins) receive a level of <i>Fear</i> , unless they succeed in a <i>Willpower (Resist Threats)</i> check -1. |
| 5-6 | A fire spirit appears and protects the goblin sorceress, causing chaos (see <i>Core Rules</i> , page 358).                                                                                                                               |



### Defeat of the Heroes

If by some miracle the goblins win, the heroes are disarmed, stripped of their belongings, tied up, and watched by several goblins at all times. Whether the heroes receive mercy or cruelty afterwards depends on how brutally they fought and how many goblins they killed. Male heroes in particular are insulted, pelted with garbage, and beaten.

Surprisingly, despite everything, the goblin sorceress is interested in a peaceful solution. And the heroes still have a chance to negotiate with her, but under aggravated conditions. All heroes' checks suffer a penalty of 1, and checks using *Intimidation* suffer a penalty of 2.

If the heroes refuse to negotiate, the goblins abandon them in the Red Sickle without weapons or equipment. To get to Jääni, they must launch another assault against the cave under difficult conditions.

### Negotiation with Triinuun

Given a chance, Triinuun tells the heroes that the goblins of the Red Sickle have important tasks which humans should not disturb unless they want to provoke a terrible doom. She relates the legend about Imithridia and explains that she believes the lioness isn't Rondra, but rather a strong animal spirit serving Mailam Rekdai. She even shows the heroes the strange red stones, though she has no details about their magical effect.

Now the heroes must present their position to Triinuun. Triinuun wants Jääni to stay in the Red Sickle, but she has little interest in Bruutsh (she doesn't understand their romantic interest in each other).

The heroes can use the following skills to negotiate with Triinuun. Depending on which argument(s) the heroes choose to make, determine the final modifier for the check by adding up the numbers in brackets.

- Fast-Talk (Hard Sell or Manipulate): Bruutsh only means trouble for the tribe [+1], but without him, Jääni will not stay, and Jääni will not let him go [+0]. Jääni can return when they have dealt with the business in Festum [+1].
- Intimidation (Threats): Bruutsh must be punished (+0). If he stays here, other humans will come for him (+2). Leudara holds this position, and thus can be used as "bad cop" by the heroes, making the threat even more pressing (+1). Jääni will accompany him out of love (+0).

### Triinuun

COU 12 SGC 12 INT 15 CHA 15

DEX 15 AGI 15 CON 13 STR 10

LP 26 AE 35 KP - INI 14+1D6

DO 8 SPI 3 TOU 2 MOV 9

Fate Points 3

Social Standing: Free

Languages: Native Tongue Goblinish III, Garethi II

Scripts: None

Advantages: Darksight I, Nimble, Resistant to Cold, Spellcaster

Disadvantages: None

Special Abilities: Tradition (Goblin Sorceress)

Combat Techniques: Brawling 10 (11/7), Impact Weapons 10 (11/5)

Unarmed: AT 11 PA 7 DP 1D6 RE short

Ritual Club: AT 11 PA 4 DP 1D6+3 RE medium

PRO/ENC 0/0

Skills

Physical: Body Control 5, Climbing 8, Stealth 5

Social: Fast-Talk 5, Willpower 8

Nature: Survival 5, Tracking 5

Knowledge: Magical Lore 5, Religion 5, Sphere Lore 5

Craft: Alchemy 7, Prepare Food 5

Cantrips: Handwarmer

Spells: Balsam 14, Call Djinn 5, Elemental Servant 12, Manifesto 12, Odem Arcanum 10

Rituals: Vigilant Guard 10, Beast from Colors 12

Equipment: Ritual Club

Combat Behavior: Depending on Triinuun's preparations, she may not have all of her arcane energy available. Triinuun avoids direct combat and tries to keep the goblins focused on their strategy. If defeat seems likely, she leads an organized retreat to the Nitzi Mulla. She is not swayed by threats to kill goblin prisoners as the tribe is more important than individual members (and she wouldn't really miss Bruutsh, anyway).

Escape: Triinuun does not flee from the cave, and fights to the death, if necessary.

Pain +1 with: 20 LP, 13 LP, 7 LP, and 5 LP or less.

- Seduction (Flirting): Triinuun has little interest in flattery (-3). Apply additional modifiers, as appropriate, for differences in culture and social standing.
- Commerce (Haggling): If the heroes have appropriate goods hidden nearby, they can offer them to Triinuun as compensation. Modify the check based on the goblin sorceress' estimation of the value of said goods (-3 for 30 rations of provisions, +0 for a fat pig, +3 for an old goblin bone club).



Make a group check (with a maximum of up to four heroes participating). The group must acquire 10 QL (up to two attempts per hero) for Triinuun to let them leave with Jääni and Bruutsh. If the attempt fails, but the heroes reach at least a partial success of 6 QL, one of the heroes may try to boost the result by making an additional check with one of the other listed skills, to acquire the final 4 QL. If this last ditch effort fails, the heroes must think of another plan.

## The Wallow (C)

A long ravine leads past the slope to a small, muddy pond that the goblins use as a wallow and source of fresh water. An image of a jay is painted above the exit (see page 61), and it gives the alarm when it spots the heroes.

### Drum Beats

#### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*You leave the goblin cave. In front of you, there is a narrow path, to your left a rock wall, and to your right a steep slope that surely goes up 45 feet. Fifty yards ahead, the path bends to the left and goes out of sight between the rocks. Above you, a jay calls. It's another goblin magic picture.*

With a successful *Perception (Spot)* check +1 the heroes spot some harmless mountain goats on the slope. With QL 2+, they also see small figures cowering far up the hillside. Apparently these are some of the goblin women and children who fled the battle.

#### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*"Stop! I have a new drum! This time you will not get away! Surrender!" Jääni's voice is serious and threatening. She clearly means business.*

The heroes can try to negotiate with Jääni (see page 35), but if they make any aggressive moves or try to approach Jääni and the rest of the tribe, she begins to drum.

#### Read Aloud or Paraphrase

*A muffled sound comes from Jääni's direction. She is beating on the magical drum. Above the wall to your left, you hear stones clacking together, as if something is moving toward you. The mountain goats raise their heads and bleat loudly.*

The heroes might recall Bruutsh's threat and expect to see a horde of angry trolls. Luckily, the stolen skin that Jääni put on the instrument and enchanted was only goat skin, not troll skin.

When she beats on the drum, all of the mountain goats in the area gain the state of *bloodlust*. After 1D6+3 CR, six of the enraged animals charge at the heroes. Further up the slope, more goats (12 all in all) attack each other. The goblin women and children are too far away to become targets.

### Possible Strategies

The area has some distinct features, and the heroes have a line of sight to Jääni, creating several options.

**The Slope:** The mountain goats attack from above. Successful attacks knock targets painfully to the ground, inflicting falling damage (1D3+2 yards, -2 DP due to the sloping drop; see *Core Rules*, page 340).

**Escape Forward:** The heroes can try leaving the path to reach cover by moving 30 feet toward the pond. This requires a *Body Control (Running)* check. Anyone who fails suffers a mountain goat attack that cannot be parried. If the heroes succeed, they can try to reach the goblins from there (*Climbing (Mountains)* check; climbing takes at most four action, and each 2 QL reduces the number of actions by one).

**Escape Back:** Another option is to retreat back into the goblin cave. This works similarly to escaping forward but places the heroes in a worse strategic position. They are once again at risk of attack from goblins in the caves, and there is the chance that Jääni might escape.

**Bruutsh:** If the heroes have their captive with them, they can threaten to kill or torture him (not a very heroic deed, admittedly). Bruutsh claims that he can endure anything they might do to him, but Jääni relents and surrenders. The magical effect of the drum still runs its course.

**The Tribe:** If the heroes succeed in a competitive *Intimidation (Threats)* vs. *Willpower* check, Jääni agrees to surrender, but only to guarantee that the women and children are not harmed.

**Offer:** If the heroes are already badly injured, Jääni is in a good position to negotiate. She suggests the heroes remove a couple of the heads of goblins who died and bring them to Jaruslav to prove they "killed" her and Bruutsh. He won't know the difference.

**We Have a Troll:** If the heroes located Raugatsh's body, Braubamatsh or even Tarkampf might make another appearance and influence things in favor of the heroes. The mountain goats give the troll no trouble, and Jääni surrenders.



## Negotiation with Jääni

Once the heroes finish the battle with the mountain goats and climb the slope, they come face to face Jääni and the goblin tribe's women and children, including toddlers and babies.

After having defeated the warriors of the tribe, the goblin sorceress, and the mountain goats, the heroes must now try to negotiate with Jääni. But it is they who get to decide how the love story of Jääni and Bruutsh will continue:

**Home:** They can return the goblins to Festum, where they face charges for the crime, but Mantka Riiba intervenes on their behalf and they are handed over to their own jurisdiction.

**Hand Over:** If the heroes give the goblins to Jaruslav, he tortures them for a while before killing Bruutsh and delivering Jääni to an agent of the Alliance of Kor's Sign.

**To the Temple:** Leudara wants to take Jääni to Firunen, to learn the secret of her dangerous magic for the temple. If the heroes decide to bring them to Festum instead, she accepts their decision.

**Separate:** The heroes can decide to bring only Bruutsh back to Festum for judgment—because it was he who beat on the drum at the Speckles—and allow Jääni to remain with the tribe. If Triinuun was killed, Jääni would feel it is her duty to support the Lungai Theluzi as their new sorceress. Tuminka supports this idea and agrees to return empty-handed because she is moved by their love story.

**Kill:** In theory, the heroes could simply slay the goblins, but because the goblins are burghers of Festum, this would be murder. Both Leudara and Tuminka would act to prevent such a deed.

• It is important for the campaign that the Alliance of Kor's Sign gain access to Jääni to learn about the drum ritual. Leudara accepts no solution that involves leaving Jääni with the goblins.



### Mountain Goat

(Note: these stats reflect changes caused by the *bloodlust*)

**Size:** 3 to 5 feet; 2 to 3 feet at the shoulder.

**Weight:** 100 to 150 pounds

**COU** 13 **SGC** 9(a) **INT** 13 **CHA** 14

**DEX** 12 **AGI** 16 **CON** 12 **STR** 12

**LP** 22 **AE** - **KP** - **INI** 15+1D6

**DE** 0 **SPI** -3 **TOU** 0 **MOV** 15

**Headbutt:** **AT** 17 **DP** 1D6+4 **RE** short

**PRO/ENC** 0/0

**Actions:** 1

**Special Abilities:** Takedown (Headbutt)

**Skills:** *Body Control* 10, *Climbing* 12, *Feat of Strength* 6, *Intimidation* 4, *Perception* 7, *Self-Control* 4, *Stealth* 7, *Willpower* 4

**Numbers:** 12

**Size Category:** Small

**Type:** Animal, non-humanoid

**Loot:** 10 rations of meat, fur (4 silverthalers), trophy (horns, 6 silverthalers)

**Combat Behavior:** Mountain goats normally aren't very aggressive, but the *bloodlust* makes them attack wildly and brashly. Every other attack is a Takedown attack. Sometimes they stop attacking one target without warning to attack a different one or even another goat. They are not affected by *Pain*.

**Escape:** They don't flee.

### Animal Lore (Wild Animals)

- QL 1: Mountain goats aren't carnivores and usually fight only to defend their territory. They are currently more aggressive than when fighting rutting battles.
- QL 2: The area is particularly dangerous; in these mountains, the goats' attempt to knock their opponents to the ground can result in a lethal fall.
- QL 3+: Mountain goats are unpredictable and sometimes switch opponents without warning. These goats are truly enraged!

**Hunt:** 0



## Epilogue

The return trip to Dragonclamp takes another week, after which the heroes probably travel back to Festum. If the Thorwal Drum has been purchased, the heroes receive their payment for services there, and maybe also a bounty (50 batz) for capturing the goblins. Tuminka insists on her fair share, but Leudara declines.

### The Reward for All the Work

The heroes also receive **20 adventure points** for their mediation at the Speckles, the journey to the Red Sickle, and capturing Jääni and Bruutsh. If the heroes were especially skillful in dealing with their challenges, award another **5 adventure points** per hero.

### Enemies and Allies



During the course of this adventure, the heroes met many people and organizations and argued with them, helped them, or ignored them. Subsequent adventures build on these developments. For ease of reference, here is a brief overview.

**Norbards:** The Norbard families living in the Speckles have connections to many other families. News of the heroes' deeds spreads among the Norbards, especially after Tuminka's report.

**Goblins:** Jääni returns in the third and sixth adventures of the Theater Knights campaign, where her actions depend on Bruutsh's fate in *The White Lake*. Naturally, Mantka Riiba, the leader of the Festum goblins, learns all about the heroes' behavior in the Red Sickle Mountains.

**The Alliance of Kor's Sign:** If the heroes interrupted the Alliance's recruiting attempts in Harden, it might have fewer less supporters in subsequent adventures. Rudjev makes another appearance in a future adventure.

**Olko:** The heroes meet Olko again later in the campaign. His role will depend on the heroes' actions at that time.

**Fairy Creatures:** Future interactions with other fairy creatures depend on whether the heroes managed to banish the demonic forces on the houseboat (with or without the help of the kobold).



### Leudara

Leudara's participation in capturing Jääni and Bruutsh sets the stage for the secret of the magic of the drums ending up in the hands of the Alliance of Kor's Sign. The Blessed One of Rondra asks for the results of any magical analyses the heroes or Olko performed. She also reports to her allies. Members of the Alliance interrogate Jääni directly in Firunen (or in a roundabout way in Festum), and thus gain important information regarding making enchanted drums. Thus, the heroes unwittingly helped the Alliance of Kor's Sign.

Even if the heroes accompany Leudara to Firunen, they should have no reason to suspect that the temple has been infiltrated. That discovery, and the Alliance's use of the drum ritual, must wait for a future adventure.







THE GOBLIN CAVES



### The White Lake

#### Part 1 of the Theater Knights Campaign

by Daniel Heßler and Niklas Forreiter

As the first snowflakes of the season begin to fall in Bornland, an armed group sets out in search of the missing Thorwal Drum, a symbol of pride and patriotism for the citizens of Festum. The Drum was stolen last spring, and to get it back, Guard Captain Timpski and his men are more than willing to use force.

The trail leads them to a laager of Norbard houseboats locked in the ice, and only the heroes are able to delay a brutal assault by Timpski's band. The fragile situation is soon complicated by a blossoming romance between Jääni and Bruutsh, two literature-loving goblins from Festum, and disaster strikes.

This first adventure in the Theater Knights Campaign introduces important characters, races, and power blocks, and sets the stage for new developments in the history of Bornland and the legendary Order of the Theater Knights.

This book includes all necessary supporting information, such as stats, maps, and floor plans. To play, you need *The Dark Eye Core Rules* as well as the *Aventuria Almanac*, which provides a deeper understanding of the setting. *The White Lake* may also be played as a stand-alone adventure.

**Genre:** Adventure Story

**Prerequisites:** Negotiation, weather-resistant heroes (chases in the mountains)

**Location:** Festum, Bornroad, Hardener Lake District, Red Sickle Mountains

**Date:** Late Autumn, 1039 FB

**Complexity (Players/GM):** medium/medium

**Suggested Hero Experience Level:** Experienced

#### Useful Skills

Social Skills



Combat



Nature Skills



#### Living History



To play, you also need *The Dark Eye Core Rules* and the *Aventuria Almanac*. This book contains all other supporting information, such as stats, maps, and handouts.



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