

PARADIGM CONCEPTS

PRESENTS A



ADVENTURE

THE GLEAM OF FIRES, THE THROB OF DRUMS

4 hour Introductory Adventure

Intro #8

War drums pound deep in the jungles of the Kraldjur Morass.
A battle cry, a full throated howl of rage and anger, rises over a terrified scream.
The scream is cut off, the cry fades... but the drums beat on.

An **Introductory** adventure for Tier 1 characters (levels 1 through 3) optimized for **3rd level** characters.

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RUNNING AN ARCANIS ADVENTURE

When you run an Arcanis adventure you are charged with bringing the world to life. We pride ourselves on delivering a deep world where a player's actions are just as, if not more, important than their die rolls.

We ask our GMs to be familiar with the location the adventure is set and the cultures the players may encounter. But we also understand that during convention play some GMs may be forced to run an Arcanis adventure on short notice, as such when cultural details come into play we will do our best to call them out in "Arcanis Cliff Notes" sidebars.

Beyond that, the important job you have as a Game Master is to make the table run as fun as possible, while you engage players and draw them into the story.

Pay close attention to the player's actions (not character's, players), are they on their cell phone or tablet? Do they seem disengaged? Distracted? Don't be afraid to engage them or shift the spotlight to their character a little.

To facilitate this you, as the GM, you are empowered to adjust and modify the adventure in a number of ways:

- You may make on the fly adjustments to the adventure, don't punish groups for "going off mod" if they find a clever way to tackle a problem, As long as the idea is reasonable, run with it! especially when out of combat. When you must say "no" always try and say "no, but," keep the game moving and keep it fun, for everyone,
- Don't be an adversarial GM, while some tables like to be challenged, but there is a difference between being adversarial and offering a challenge. At the same time, don't make an adventure so easy that the players become bored.
- Keep the pace going, it's during lulls in the story that many players start to disengage. Switch the spotlight, have them make some skill rolls, asking them what their character is doing. If the party is stuck nudge them though some skill rolls or improvised details, just keep the game going.
- During conventions and game days be aware if you are running short or long while running an adventure, if running long skip some encounters if necessary but try and tell the entire story, give the players closure, even if you need to fudge the story.
- Read-aloud text may be adjusted as you see fit, but make sure you give the players the appropriate hints and clues, they need to keep the story going.

ADJUSTING ENCOUNTERS

Before you begin play you should determine the average strength of the party and compare that to the base level of the adventure. At each encounter, you will see a box titled “scaling the encounter” guiding you on how to adjust the encounter to the parties power level.

Like box text, these adjustments are suggestions if a party is having an easy or hard time don’t be afraid to adjust the difficulty.

To determine the power level you must first determine your tables Average Party Level.

APL = Add up all the levels of all the characters, divide that number by the number of players. Rounding up fractions to the nearest whole number.

AL = Adventure Level, this is equal to the base level the adventure is balanced too.

Once determined you may utilize the tables APL to set the adventure’s difficulty.

ADVENTURE DIFFICULTY

This adventure has been optimized for a table of 5 players playing 3rd level characters.

#of Players	APL = 1 st level	Ad. Deff.
3-4	Equal to AL	Easy Mode
3-4	Greater to AL	Normal
5	Less/Equal	Normal
5	Greater than	Difficult
6-7	Less/Equal	Difficult
6-7	Greater	Perilous

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

While in a settlement, town, or city, characters may visit a temple or shrine to request spell casting at the cost of a substantial donation. You may only utilize these spell casting services three times per adventure. Any spell casting provided through the story of the adventure, such as an NPC casting a spell for the party, does not count against this limit.

Shrines do not house clergy with which to attend to the needs of the faithful. Instead, one or two itinerant priests tend to the shrine and the needs of the people.

Temples and churches are larger structures attended by full staffs of the faithful, including Templars.

The following services are common to all temples, with additional options available at specific temples as noted in each adventure.

Shrines, regardless of their deity, may only provide players with *cure wounds* and *lesser restoration*.

General Spell Services

Spell	Cost
Cure wounds (1st level)	10 gp
Lesser restoration	40 gp
Prayer of healing (2nd level)	40 gp
Greater restoration	450 gp

Initiate of the Gods Background/Acolyte Background/Divine Casters may receive **one free spell casting** as long as it is a church or temple of the same church (Mother Church for example)

If they worship the same god as a particular temple but are part of another church, they can get a one time 50% discount instead.

ADVENTURE BREAKDOWN

Introduction: RP, Skills. The Heroes approach Semar.

Scene 1: RP. The Heroes explore the city of Semar.

Scene 2: RP. The Heroes are introduced to the current garrison in Semar and drafted for a mission.

Scene 3: Skills, Combat. The Heroes elect to travel down the river and may be attacked by a patrol of Flame Tongue Ss'ressen.

Scene 4: RP, Combat. The Heroes choose to travel by land through the jungle and encounter a village of Ss'ressen under attack.

Scene 5: RP. The Heroes encounter a trap set by a Ssanu biomancer and meet a hylis.

Scene 6: Skills. The Heroes find the ruins they were asked to find, and scout them out, discovering a sizeable cult of Agamassi Ss'ressen who worship the Varn Haulis, along with a large number of underlings.

Scene 7: Combat. The Heroes take out the leaders of the cult and watch the troglodytes scatter.

Scene 8: Combat. The Heroes decide they aren't strong or clever enough to take on the whole group, and run into a patrol on their way back to Semar.

Scene 9: RP. The Heroes return to Semar and report their findings to the Patrol and any other interested parties.

Important GM's Note: Ss'ressen Heroes

Ss'ressen Heroes (particularly Black Talons), while regarded with suspicion by the general population of Altheria due to their proximity to the morass, will not be harassed, nor turned away by the Patrol. The Shining Patrol understands that the Black Talons have long since split from their brethren, and though they obviously cannot be used as scouts under normal circumstances, they can certainly be used as strike forces for select missions like this one. Ss'ressen Heroes should not encounter any particular hostility during this module simply as a result of their race.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

For thousands of years, the Ssethregoran Empire has been a far more divided place than any outside it could have imagined. When Kassegore and Yig were perceived to have abandoned their followers, the Old Empire collapsed, and the Ssethregoran Empire led by the Nagas and their new gods rose in its place.

Worship of Kassegore and Yig is outlawed, but worshippers of both these old gods have gone underground and work against the Nagas and the invader gods. Organizations like the Cult of Hromu and the Daughters of the Hidden Adder undermine the worship of the Varn whenever they can. Without their efforts, the Ssethregoran Empire may well have overwhelmed the nations of man long ago. By no means does this make them friendly; the enemy of my enemy may still be my enemy at the end of the day.

In Altheria, the Shining Patrol is always in need of support. No matter how many scouts and troops they have, the Kraldjur Morass is a vast

and inhospitable place to humanity and its allies, and more are always needed. Since Semar is still being rebuilt after the Altheria/Seremas war, they can't spare nearly as many troops as they would like to patrol the wilderness and deal with pending threats.

To this end, the Heroes are requested to undertake a mission for the Shining Patrol and explore a particular ruin in the Morass, near the confluence where the Sa'kress River flows into the larger Kraldjur. The last scout to be sent has not returned and is presumed captured or dead. This is an opportunity to get into the good graces of the Patrol and lend a hand to the men and women who keep the Ssethregoran Empire from sweeping over the nations of man.

ADVENTURE RELATED INFORMATION

This adventure begins and probably ends in the **city of Semar**, located in the Hinterlands. Few permanent structures exist here as the majority of the inhabitants live in elaborate tents as befits a nomadic people. This is just an illusion for many here, as the Khur Gi tribesman who live here have given up their transient lifestyle to live a more sedentary life.

TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Semar has a Temple to Althares, a circular stone temple constructed of pure white marble.

There is also a Temple of the Pantheon, constructed of plain stone with a small wing with a shrine for each god of the pantheon aside from Althares.

The shrine to the Varn Haulis is being constructed on old ruins of a shrine to Kassegore deep in the Morass. A crude stone altar has been permanently stained red from all the blood that has been spilt upon it.

Organizations

Various contacts for many secret organizations are noted in Scene 1, particularly related to various buildings. They include, but are not limited to, the Sanctorum of the Arcane, the Followers of the Azure Way, and the Order of Althares. See the descriptions for more details.

Portals of Anshar

There are no accessible Portals of Anshar in this adventure. (Semar does have a special red portal in the basement of the Citadel, which is said to lead to another world, but the PCs cannot get access to it during this adventure. See *The Secret of Semar*, SP2-8 under the old campaign.)

INTRODUCTION

Key Concepts: The Heroes are visiting Semar, whatever their reasons. They can explore the city before relaxing in a tavern at the end of the evening. Into this tavern enters a very upset Shining Patrol scout, looking to get furiously drunk.

Battered, bloody, but never truly broken, the city of Semar stands as a testament to the tenacity of the Altherian people. Semar withstood the brunt of both a brutal assault from the Seremasi elorii and were struck savagely by the Ssethregorans to the south. Even now, 15 years after the last of the reptilian hordes were repulsed once again, Semar still maintains its vigilance, knowing that green death from the south might come at any moment.

The evening air is cool, as a breeze from the north blows away the day's heat. Whatever your reasons for traveling to Semar, at least your destination is finally in sight. Your

traveling companions breathe a collective sigh of relief as you see that the city gates have not yet closed. The opportunity to sleep under a proper roof is one many in the caravan would not like to pass up.

The Heroes are currently traveling with a caravan, laden with building materials for Semar. Wood, stone, rope, and tools can all be found in the dozen wagons on the trek.

The heroes have been traveling together from Gafre to the north. They've had at least a week together. Make sure to determine why they're coming to Semar at this point and allow them to introduce themselves to each other if they've never played together before.

If the Heroes can't figure out their own reasons (or have not been provided any by their secret societies) for coming to Semar, a few suggestions include:

- Mercenary work
- Warmer than further north (since it is currently the middle of spring)
- Rumours and gossip (make something up that you think would entice an individual)

GM's Note: Gafre is a city in northern Altheria, near the coast of the Bay of Yarris. By contrast, Semar is to the south of the country, near the boundary with the Kraldjur Morass and the Ssethregoran Empire that dwells within. For a map, see the Codex Arcanis, pg. 67 – The Republic of Altheria.

Give some time for role play, and then continue:

Althares' grace is sadly not with you this day. The rough roads have not been a priority to keep in repair, and an axle of the lead caravan shatters when one of the wheels hits a furrow in the road. Dismayed, the caravan master, one Qamar

Biobaku (Ka-mar Beo-ba-ku) calls together those traveling as escorts, including yourselves.

"I need one or two of you to ride on ahead and convince the guards not to close the gates yet. We've got the tools to fix this quickly, and we should still be able to make it before the sun sets, but the guards here are extremely cautious, and rightly so. If any of you are really strong, we could use the help lifting the wagon to properly do the repairs. The rest of you, keep an eye out. There haven't been any attacks down this road in a while, but that's not to say that there couldn't be one today." (He speaks primarily Low Coryani, since it's a useful trade tongue)

Allow the Heroes to volunteer for any particular jobs to which they feel themselves suited. Once they've decided, continue.

THE RACE TO THE GATES

One of the other escorts, a young Balantican named Lupa val'Dellenov, laughs and wheels about on her horse. "I'll go convince them to keep the gates open. Anyone coming with me better keep up! Anyone interested in a race? I'll pay five Decus (silver) to anyone who can beat me there, and collect five Decus from anyone that races me and loses."

Once anyone accepts, Lupa will shout "Go!" and immediately spur her horse into a gallop.

If on foot, each competing Hero must make three **Strength (Athletics)** opposed skill checks. If riding on a horse, each competing Hero must make three **Wisdom (Animal Handling)** opposed skill checks.

Lupa possess a +5 bonus to **Wisdom (Animal Handling)** skill.

Each time someone wins they gain a +1 bonus to their next skill check, the best 2 out of 3 wins.

Any Hero who attempts the race, whether they beat her or not, will get a hearty slap on the back and a big smile from Lupa. The ride itself takes about 10 minutes total.

As you approach the gate at a brisk pace, the guards tense up, and rifles are leveled at you from the guard towers to either side of the large doors. Curtailing her speed at the last minute, Lupa reins her courser in, and lets out a joyous shout, "Hail, Semar! We're here to help!" before dissolving into a fit of giggles.

An older guard at the gate itself looks askance at her, before turning to you (that is, any of the players who participated in the race, particularly another Altharin if there is one in the party) and asking in Altharin: "What actually brings you here, and why come racing down the road like that? You're like to startle some of the younger bucks. They're still very green, and likely as not to pull a trigger when something's coming fast over that rise. Explain yourselves."

If none of the Heroes who came speaks Altharin, the guard (whose name is Corentine), will switch to Low Coryani. If that doesn't work, he'll call one of the other guards from the tower down, one Yaro val'Abebi, who is proficient in Ssethric, Low and High Coryani, Milandisian, Low and High Khitani, and Kio. He is a younger val, with a fascination for languages. Yaro will translate back and forth as necessary.

The Heroes should use this opportunity to explain that they are part of the caravan that is coming towards the city, and that it has experienced some difficulty, but that it will be arriving shortly.

The guard looks vexed at your explanation. "That's hardly a good reason for coming hellbent down the road. For all we knew, there could have been a flight of Dragonels coming up behind you." He glares at the assembled lot of you. "Next time, exercise a little more decorum and

common sense. We'll keep the gates open until your party arrives."

"Sir, yes sir!" snaps out Lupa with a cheerful grin on her face. "While the rest are waiting, could you provide me directions to the Shining Patrol barracks? I'm here to enlist!"

The old guard raises an eyebrow at that, then shrugs; "You're of age, so far be it for me to question your madness. Head toward the large granite building near the center of town, in the Government Ring. You'll need to pass through two more gates to get there. Are the rest of you here to enlist as well?"

KEEPING WATCH

Nothing is actually going to leap out at them while the wagon is being repaired, but instilling a healthy dose of paranoia is never a bad thing. Have each Hero make a **Wisdom (Perception)** skill check. These may be timed to coincide with the **Strength (Athletics)** skill checks of those lifting the wagon (see below).

If even one of the heroes succeed, mention rustling in the bushes on the sharp cliffs above. If they go investigate, have a small lizard come wandering out of the bushes and look down at them.

REPAIRING THE WAGON

The wagon is quickly unloaded of all its goods to make it lighter, but it is still by no means an easy task to lift it. Working together, the strongest among you strain to lift and hold the wagon high enough for others to crawl underneath, remove the axle, and replace it with a spare.

There will be four people lifting the wagon and two crawling under to fix it. Allow the Heroes to decide amongst themselves who's doing what, and give priority to the Heroes. Generic NPCs will fill out the rest of the jobs.

For the Heroes who are lifting the wagon, they must first perform a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check (Granting **Advantage** to any hero who possesses a Strength of 17 or above.)

Once the wagon has been lifted, each Hero lifting it must perform three consecutive **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** skill checks. If they fail any two, the wagon slips from their grasp and falls on the two individuals working below, who suffer 2d6 hp of damage each, and the entire process must be repeated.

For any Heroes who want to affect the repairs themselves, a successful **DC 13** proficiency skill check using *Carpenter's Tools*, *Smith's Tools*, or *Tinker's Tools*, or a **DC 16 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check will allow the Heroes to repair the wagon sufficiently to get it into the city. Each check must be made three times, timed to coincide with the **Strength (Athletics)** skill checks of those holding up the wagon. A Critical success (roll of 20) on any of these rolls allows the job to be finished immediately.

If the Heroes complete the repairs with no mishaps:

Qamar takes a quick look under the wagon as it's lowered to the ground. "I'm impressed. I figured those repairs would take more time. You're always welcome to travel with me, as useful as you've proven to be. Now, let's get these supplies to Semar."

If the Heroes suffered at least one mishap:

Qamar takes a quick look under the wagon as it's lowered to the ground. "Well, at least that's been dealt with. Now, let's finish this trip and get these supplies to Semar."

Either way, continue:

The rest of the trip is thankfully uneventful, and the repairs hold out through the city gates. Qamar once again thanks you for your efforts,

and mentions that he plans to leave again in two days' time for another load of supplies. "You'd be welcome escorts on the road back to New Althré. I hope your business in Semar is as profitable as mine!" he says, sketching a short bow before each of you.

The city of Semar, slowly being rebuilt, lies before you to explore.

Development: The heroes are now all in Semar, and can explore. Continue to **Scene 1**.

SCENE 1

Key Concepts: The Heroes get the chance to explore the city of Semar, eventually ending up at the garrison of the Shining Patrol.

GM's Note: This is a free-form RP exploration to give a sense of the city as it currently stands. Keep this brief if time is a concern. Notable existing structures, related NPCs, and any particular affiliations are noted. There is no real box text in this scene, though there are descriptions of certain buildings.

Do not simply give them information about the city in an info dump. Make the players explore, use Streetwise, get to know the city organically.

For more information on the city, please refer to the Living Arcanis module: The Serpentine Path. Changes made are primarily to reflect the events of the past 40 years.

The city of Semar is built around a large Citadel in steadily larger concentric circles. Each ring is walled off on either side, making the sections of the city very definitive. The circles are:

1. The Citadel. Off limits to all personnel except Shining Patrol members, and even then only high level ones, unless the city is under attack.
2. The Government Ring. Heavily guarded, and filled with important city buildings. Membership in the Shining Patrol, being

escorted by a Shining Patrol member, noble breeding, or an official pass is required in this ring. Those found not fitting one of the above are escorted to the Guild Ring politely but firmly.

3. The Guild Ring. Moderately guarded, and containing all the Guild Houses. The majority of legal commerce happens in this ring.
4. The Residential Ring. Moderately guarded, except for the outer walls, which are heavily guarded. Stables and general stores may be found here, along with numerous inns and the residences of the common folk.

GM's Note: As with the Introduction, in the interests of time this Scene can be cut short. At any point you wish to continue to the next scene (and the Heroes have not already made their way to the Shining Patrol Headquarters), read the following:

As you make your way through the city, your passage does not go unnoticed. An Altherian approaches you, hands raised in greeting, and hails you (First in Altherian, switching to Low Coryani if no one understands him): "Good gentles, a moment of your time. You look like folk capable of taking care of yourselves. Might you be interested in some work? The Shining Patrol is looking for some volunteers for a short mission. If you're interested, see Colonel Demissie (De-me-see) val'Abebi at the Patrol Headquarters."

Any Altherian will be able to immediately identify the insignia borne by this Altherian as that of the Shining Patrol, which can also be known by any Hero with a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (History)** skill check.

Any Former Altherian Marksman of Former Shining Patrol Soldier will be able to identify him specifically as a Shining Patrol Scout. The insignia bears only a single marking, indicating

he has only been on a single mission into the Morass.

If the Heroes ask, the Scout's name is Kafil. He is human, barely out of his teens, and seems to exude a nervous energy; he shifts from foot to foot as he talks to you.

A passive **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check will be able to determine that he seems to be naturally impatient.

Gathering Information:

DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) or Wisdom (Insight) skill check.

Note: Each check to gain information on the following topics requires 4 hours of time, talking to different people around the city and putting together a decent picture. Gossip takes less time, but you don't necessarily get specifically what you want.

The following are the topics that can specifically have information gathered about them at this time.

Semar: The city is still recovering a decade later from a major assault. Non-essential aspects have been set aside in favor of a strong military presence. The walls and watchtowers were the first to be rebuilt, followed by repairs to the Citadel, and then the rest.

The city itself is divided into four parts. At the heart of Semar is the Citadel itself. Around it are three concentric rings, each walled off from the other. The city can lock down all three walls when attacked, and keep attackers from breaching through into the Citadel itself.

The closest ring to the Citadel is the Government Ring, containing many buildings of note. To be allowed entrance, you must be affiliated with the Shining Patrol (volunteer or active duty), nobility, or have an official pass.

The next ring out is the Guild Ring, containing all the various guilds of the city who drive the business, providing supplies to the Patrol.

Finally, the Residential Ring is the outermost circle, where the majority of the citizens actually live, and travelers may find inns and general stores for day to day commerce.

The Shining Patrol: The Shining Patrol is composed of troops from many different nations of the world. The various powers that be frequently negotiate terms of service for some of their troops in exchange for legal access to Althares' Second Gift, blastpowder.

Of late, the troops have been few and far between. The rebuilding of Grand Coryan and the secession of the val'Tensen family into Almeric have caused many of the legions abroad to be recalled. The elorii no longer have a representative in the aftermath of the Altheria-Seremasi war. The Crusade against the Infernals brought home almost all of the Milandisians serving in the Patrol. These factions are slowly returning their support for much needed blast powder, but it's a slow process.

The Ssethregorans: In the decade since their last major attack, the Ssethregorans have been remarkably quiet. If there have been any troop movements, they've kept them well away from the eyes of our scouts. If there have been any disruptions in their society, we are unaware. We still suffer the occasional raiding party, but even those seem disorganized and desultory. Those who are hopeful are thankful for this time of respite. Those who are cynical simply fear that the next blow may be one that we cannot withstand.

General Gossip: Make a **Charisma (Persuasion)** check and consult below. Provide information from the lowest difficulty reached first, providing more with each successful roll:

DC 10: (From pretty much everyone to whom you speak) *The Shining Patrol is looking for volunteers as usual. Ever since the Crusades drew off a large number of troops from abroad, they've been scrounging for all the help they can get.*

DC 13: (From a baker in the Residential Ring) *Ever since the crystal was damaged at the Tower of Althares, this city has seemed darker, and not just at night. There's been a tension between the active members of patrol and those of us who have already served our time and have no interest in going back. As though we wouldn't still defend our homes and families if it came down to it... I don't like it at all.*

DC 16: (From an off-duty Patrolman) *The Ssethregorans have been really quiet since the last assault almost a decade ago. Sure, we get the occasional raiding party, and they still harass our troops in the Morass, but they haven't mounted any large attacks. Makes me nervous, wondering what they're planning.*

DC 20: (From Leila at the Shining Shield Inn) *Ru val'Abebi was in town last week. He seemed particularly interested in the rubble of the clock tower in the Government Ring. Wouldn't tell anyone why though, to my knowledge.*

The Citadel: Rising high above the rest of the city, the black stone walls of the Citadel cast a long shadow. Demonic figures and ancient Valinor are locked in perpetual battle, carved upon the walls and battlements. Rumours abound about the Citadel and its many secrets. Just looking at it sends a chill down the spine. It appears more a cathedral of evil than a shield against the might of the Ssethregoran Empire. The cannon emplacements in the citadel can be seen amidst the carvings, often protected by the carvings of a Valinoric wing or Infernal smile. The Citadel seems untouched from the recent war, and years of assaults from the Ssethregorans.

The Residential Ring

The Shining Shield Inn: Unlike the rest of the Residential Ring, the Shining Shield Inn appears to be in pristine condition. In fact, it was one of the first buildings rebuilt after the war, with dozens of off-duty Patrol members helping whenever they could. The eponymous crystal shield that hangs in place of a traditional inn's sign is positioned to catch the light from the Tower of Althares and illuminate the entire front of the building. However, when that section of the city is in darkness, the shield glows with a brilliance of its own.

This is the most comfortable inn in the city, favoured by visiting nobles and royalty for the quality of the rooms, food, and the treatment received at the hands of the 9 sisters who run the establishment. The sisters received the inn when their father Jalil was killed defending the walls in the Ssethregoran assault of 1052 I.C. Lamya, Lanelle, Lehanna, Leila, Lena, Lewa, Laleh, Lakia, and Nala, all val'Holryn like their mother, tend to the inn and its patrons with exquisite care. Nala can be found performing in the common room with her exquisite voice every evening, and all the sisters are considered treasures of Semar for their beauty (even as they advance into their old age. The eldest, Lamya, is now 64, and the youngest, Nala, is 55), though none have ever wed.

The Shining Shield is also (secretly) the local Sanctorum of the Arcane. All of the sisters are versed in magical lore and practice, having been taught by their father, and have all proven themselves over the years as dangerous as they are beautiful (though they prefer not to flaunt their skills).

The Patrolman's Rest Inn: While the rich and powerful flock to the Shining Shield, the Patrolman's Rest is a much cheaper, though decent, alternative. Little more than a converted barracks, the rooms are spartan, consisting of a

number of bunk beds with lockable chests and cabinets along the walls. The food in the common room is simple, but hearty, and this inn is favored by the city defenders as a good place to get a hot meal before taking a shift on the walls.

The Watchtowers: The granite watchtowers rise at least 30 feet above the rest of the walls. In each, telescopes are mounted on every outlook, so that threats can be seen approaching from any side, long before any of them arrive. In every tower hangs a heavy bronze bell. When a threat is seen, the bell is rung, loud enough to wake up all but the soundest of sleepers.

The Stables: Built right next to the northern gate, one of two main gates, the stables are designed to fit 50 horses comfortable in corrals and another 20 in individual stables. A small windmill is employed to direct the odor of the horses out of Semar, for two reasons: for the comfort of the citizens, and to prevent the smell from floating south without dispersing and drawing predators from the jungle below.

The Guild Ring

GM's Note: Any of the Guilds have regular deliveries they need made into the Government Ring, and never enough delivery people to do so. If any Hero desires a temporary official pass to get into the Government Ring, any Guild will be happy to provide one in exchange for a quick delivery. Specific delivery locations are noted in the individual guild descriptions.

The Alchemists' Guild: On the surface, this guild appears to be little more than a small stone building with a desk and a few offices. However, a long set of stairs lead down into the bedrock beneath, where a large cavern has been converted into multiple storerooms and laboratories. The Heroes are not allowed into the lower levels at this time, but are welcome to interact with the receptionist who can facilitate

purchase of the any Alchemical item from the base book and Forged in Magic: Reforged at base price. Players may also purchase potions of healing.

Side Mission: The Alchemists' Guild at this time desires a delivery of antitoxins to be made to the Patrol Headquarters. Any Hero willing to do so will be paid 5 gp and be given an official pass to the Government Ring.

The Merchants' Guild: Constructed from a red-hued stone, this building is highly ornamented and decorated in sharp contrast to the drabness of the rest of the buildings around it. Filled with meeting rooms, file rooms, and storage rooms, it also boasts a grand banquet hall and a small temple to Sarish in his aspect of Oath Maker and Binder of Promises.

Heroes who visit the Merchants' Guild may learn from any of the clerks working there that the Merchants' Guild facilitates all legal transactions in the city and takes a cut from every one. In return, the Guild contributes to the efforts of all the other guilds, and supplies large donations to the Shining Patrol that they might better protect the Guild. The Merchants' Guild considers this an investment in their own continued existence.

Side Mission: The Merchants' Guild at this time desires a sheaf of receipts delivered to the Chroniclers' Repository. Any Hero willing to do so will be paid 5 gp and be given an official pass to the Government Ring.

The Masons' Guild: The Masons' Guild is a conglomeration of stones and styles, the building itself showcasing the talents of its members. Every few decades or so, the entire Guild is rebuilt from fresh stone, and the current masons showcase their abilities on part of the new walls. Tragically for them, their Guild was not even damaged in the war with Seremasi, nor the Ssethregoran assault that followed. The masons were obliged to destroy the building themselves the following year and rebuild it.

Any Hero willing to pay 1000 gp (of any nation's currency) can have a stone bust of themselves done up and delivered to anywhere they desire, though the masons make no guarantees for damage that may occur on the journey.

Side Mission: The Masons' Guild at this time desires a small shipment of fine quality marble escorted to the Temple of Althares. Any Hero willing to do so will be paid 5 gp and be given an official pass to the Government Ring.

The Blacksmiths' Guild: Stone reinforced with wrought iron, the Blacksmiths' Guild is one of the sturdiest buildings in Semar, apart from the Citadel itself. The blacksmiths provide the parts for the flintlocks and cannons of the Shining Patrol, alongside the weapons, armor, and tools, and is second only to the Merchants' Guild in terms of power and wealth.

The Guild itself is comprised of an enormous room containing a small foundry and a few dozen forges. The fires are kept burning night and day, and the ring of hammers on anvils is a steady beat as the various smiths rotate in shifts to maintain a constant output of required supplies to rebuild and defend the city.

Heroes can acquire any Altherian weapon or metal armor here at base cost.

Side Mission: The Blacksmiths' Guild at this time desires a set of schematics regarding a potentially better trigger mechanism for flintlocks delivered to the Patrol Headquarters. Any Hero willing to do so will be paid 5 gp and be given an official pass to the Government Ring.

Note: There is nothing new or innovative about this design. It's been tried before, and is part of an ongoing debate as to which is better. No one would really be interested, so there's no motivation for players to steal this.

The Artisans' Guild: Once a fairly prominent guild, the Artisans' Guild has fallen into disrepair. After the Seremasi war, the focus of the city

shifted back to defense, and the artisans were largely folded back into the other guilds or joined the Order of Althares. Only a few still remain, primarily those whose work involves fine intricate detail. They are often hired to put finishing touches on flintlocks being sold to foreign nobility.

Side Mission: The Artisans' Guild at this time desires an ornamented display case delivered to the Museum of Wonders. Any Hero willing to do so will be paid 5 gp and be given an official pass to the Government Ring.

The Government Ring

GM's Note: The only Heroes allowed into the Government Ring are Shining Patrol members, nobility, or those possessing an official pass.

Those who wish to volunteer or enlist with the Shining Patrol will be given a pass at the gate to the Government Ring saying as much.

Those who wish to explore this ring beforehand that are not nobility, Shining Patrol, or volunteers will need to acquire an official pass in another manner. See the notes regarding the Guild Ring.

The Tower of Althares' Light: Next to the Citadel, this is the tallest structure in Semar. In stark contrast to the Citadel, it is constructed of pure white marble. This Tower is primarily a monastery of monks of the Order of Althares, providing housing, training, and a place of worship for those who have devoted themselves to following Althares teachings.

Secondarily, the Tower provides light to almost the entire city. Once, the crystal at the top of the tower glowed every night, lighting up the entire city by means of a network of receiving crystals in lampposts around the city. However, in the war with Seremas, the crystal was cracked. Every night thereafter, part of the city has remained in darkness. The Order of Althares will often use

the darkness as a penance for wayward members of their order, sending them into these dark places bearing small lights and ordering them to help out as they may.

Though the crystal is supposed to be rotated so that all in the city may spend some time in the darkness, more often than not the places which are not illumed are found in the Residential Ring.

The Tower is accessible to all those who worship Althares, particularly if they are of the Order themselves.

The Rubble of the Giant Clock Tower: Considered largely unnecessary by the Shining Patrol, the Clock Tower of Semar has never been rebuilt. The rubble of its destruction has mostly been hauled away and used to build or reinforce more strategic structures. It is one of the few buildings of the Government Ring that was left largely undefended when the elorii attacked, except as a tertiary vantage point for snipers. The elorii targeted it, thinking that bringing it down would adversely affect the morale of the defenders, but for the most part the Patrol had more important things with which to concern themselves.

The City Council Chamber: A sturdy, heavily guarded building, designed similarly to the chamber housing the full Council of Wisdom in New Althré. None of the Heroes will be able to access this building at this time.

The Temple of Althares: The one great loss to the city of Semar during the Seremasi war was the formerly grand Temple of Althares. The Temple's central pillar, shaped like Althares holding his arms out in benediction, was shattered by a brute squad of Marokene elorii. When the pillar was destroyed, the roof caved in, taking with it the beautiful mural of Althares' Valinor standing firm against a horde of Infernal denizens. The Temple has been cleared out, and is slowly being rebuilt, but it will be a long process before it reclaims its former glory. The Heroes are welcome to enter and give reverence to

Althares, and watch the artisans slowly and painstakingly carving a new column in the same shape out of a single block of white marble.

In the Temple, any Heroes may purchase blastpowder if they may legally do so (i.e. val'Abebi, noble born, Altherian citizens, or active Shining Patrol member). Val'Abebi are only charged 10% of the base cost. Shining Patrol members and Altherian citizens are only charged 50% of the base cost. The Temple will not sell more than 20 Shot Packets to any one individual at one time. The exception to this is active Shining Patrol members going on an active mission, who can requisition 40 Shot Packets.

Temple of the Pantheon: Perhaps due in part to its drabness, the Temple dedicated to the rest of the Pantheon was spared much damage in the recent wars. It is constructed of simple grey stone, and does little to draw the eye.

Here, the Heroes may find shrines to all the gods of the human Pantheon, and pay homage. Shrines of particular note include that of Larissa in her hedonistic aspect, where worshippers may partake of the “services” at any hour of the day or night, and that of Anshar, in her aspect as the Far Traveler. Shining Patrol members about to embark into the Kraldjur Morass often pray to her, that she may guard them and guide them home after a successful patrol.

Museum of Wonders: Only open during the day, this small grey stone building houses a few of the exceptional wonders of Althares... though some of them may be taken with a grain of salt.

Of particular note are the following:

- A perfect, small-scale replica of one of the many cannons in place around Semar. Developed in the form of fierce creatures like dragons and chimera, the mouth of the beast is the cannon's barrel, while the eyes are the sights through which the gunner targets. Any

Hero with an *Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) of 14 or higher* will be able to notice that the cannons are developed so that they may be rotated a full 360', and may even fire almost straight up or down if they were on a platform that could allow such.

- A perfect model replica of the entire city of Semar, displaying how the lighting system was designed to work before the crystal was cracked. It clearly has not been updated since the Seremasi war ended.
- A diorama of a city, shown floating above the landscape, with illusionary airships approaching and departing from it. Some few landmarks are still recognizable to those who have visited New Althré. Any Hero making a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (History) (Int)** or a **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana)** skill check will know that this city is the fabled city of Khafraé, supposedly an airborne city that settled to the earth and became New Althré. Whether anyone believes the stories... Well, that's entirely up to them.
- A miniature replica of a clock tower. The plaque beneath it reads “The Clock Tower of Semar,” so it's a fairly good bet that this is what it used to look like. The model, however, has an outer casing of glass instead of stone, so those looking at it can see the intricate workings that once went on inside the clock.

Shining Patrol Headquarters: This huge granite building contains embassies from almost every nation known. The Shining Patrol does not discriminate against those who wish to maintain the light of civilization. There are representatives of Abessios, Coryan, Canceri, Nol Dappa, Encali, Solanos Mor, Censure, the League of Princes, and of course Altheria itself. Any who wish to enlist who are from other nations (notably any

elorii nation) must go through the Altherian representative and be vetted.

This should eventually be the ultimate goal of the Heroes. Any Heroes who are just in town will be encouraged to go and offer their assistance by any local NPC they meet, while Former Shining Patrol members may well be inclined to visit the Headquarters out of habit.

Chroniclers' Repository: A small, simple stone structure, the repository is filled with chroniclers and scribes recording any information or experiences of any individual who cares to share. Once a week, the scrolls are bundled up and very carefully shipped to the Great Library of Althares in New Althré to be catalogued and stored. Chroniclers from all over Onara stop in here to share their stories and record what they've seen on their journeys.

If any Hero would like to have their life story recorded to date, there will be a bored scribe by the name of Themba (Tem-ba) who would love to hear some adventures, and have the pleasure of putting them to the scroll. Allow Heroes to tell any stories they wish; Themba will take it all as gospel truth. He's young and naïve, and fascinated by the wider world though too twitchy and paranoid to go adventure himself.

The Followers of the Azure Way have a long established safe house in the Repository. Those who know the appropriate passwords can gain access to a small storeroom in which to leave any pertinent reports.

Development: Once the players have explored to their heart's content, make sure they are made aware in some manner that the Shining Patrol is looking for both active duty members and occasional volunteers, and that there is a mission starting soon. Continue to **Scene 2**.

SCENE 2

Key Concepts: The Heroes meet the current garrison of the Shining Patrol in Semar, and hopefully offer their services.

The halls of the Patrol Headquarters are strangely silent compared to the bustle around the rest of the town. Off the main foyer, the rooms accorded to Shining Patrol members of the various non-Altherian nations are largely empty. Upon your entrance, an unusually large (both tall and broad) Altherian looks up from a desk at the far end of the foyer.

Lieutenant Djinto Malo (Jin-to Ma-lo) speaks Altharin, High and Low Coryani, Milandisian, Erdukene, Ssethric, Ss'ressen, and Myrantian. He is a highly intelligent, very charming man (despite his size), and very friendly, which is why he's currently the first point of contact for the Patrol when dealing with those outside. He's also a very good soldier, but his social skills were too valuable to waste on the front lines longer than was necessary.

The Altherian gives you a very big smile. In Low Coryani, he booms out "Welcome to Patrol Headquarters. What can we do for you?"

Deliveries can be handed over to him directly from the previous encounter. Once someone mentions generally offering assistance or volunteering:

"We are always looking for brave and bold individuals to help us out. You may or may not have noticed, but we're running a little short at the moment. The majority of our scouts are out in the field; we only have enough men to defend our outposts and keep us apprised of incoming threats. Of course, this means we can't be proactive about dealing with new problems until they're right at our gates. Not that we ever send large forces into the Morass, but a well-placed bullet can end a problem long before it becomes a real threat.

As a matter of fact, we've got one such problem right now that we could use a band of intrepid individuals such as you to give us a hand with. If you're interested in hearing us out, I'll have you report to Colonel Demissie (De-me-see) val'Abebi immediately."

To any Former Shining Patrol Soldiers/Formal Altherian Marksmen:

"You're to report to Colonel Demissie as well. Wish I were going with you." Djinto shakes his head sadly. "They've had me working as a bureaucrat for six months now. A break was nice, but this is ridiculous."

To any Former Shining Patrol Soldiers OR Former Altherian Marksmen:

"Colonel Demissie will be pleased to see some veterans out there with the volunteers. Thanks for coming back and lending a hand. Don't suppose you'd want to re-enlist?"

Once all the players are back together from any going to enlist, continue:

Ushered into a small office further into the building, Colonel Demissie stands to greet you. Just as tall as Lieutenant Djinto, Demissie is slender but well-muscled. His eyes gaze into your own, sharp and cold as he takes your measure.

To any Former Shining Patrol Soldiers OR Former Altherian Marksmen:

"At ease, soldier(s). Briefing will begin shortly."

To everyone else:

"I am Colonel Demissie. You are here to volunteer your services, correct? We appreciate it. I'll tell you what I know, and then you can decide if you're interested in helping out. I hope you are.

Our forces are spread thin. Our scouts and messengers are few and far between, and are having trouble coordinating our efforts in the

morass. We're properly equipped, but poorly supported. One of my scouts, Rekik, recently returned to us with word of a fairly large gathering: Ss'ressen on Mor'let mounts, troglodytes, Cyclura war beasts. No Ssanu at least, as far as we're aware. Worse, our scout reported that they seem to be involved in ritualized behavior, including blood sacrifices.

Her partner, Eyoab (Eh-o-bub), strayed too close to the camp and was captured. He may still be alive, which brings me to your mission: Rescue him. Normally we accept that our scouts know the risks, but this particular scout is one of our best and losing him would be a painful blow. Beyond that, we need information. What are the rituals they're enacting? Is this an offshoot of something already bigger, or is the danger just beginning? We live by these reports, and die by their lack. We don't need the whole camp slaughtered; we just need to know what's going on.

Now the good news: They don't seem to be particularly unified. The Ss'ressen spend a lot of time bullying the troglodytes. They appear to be the driving force, and there aren't that many of them.

Questions?"

To any active or Former Shining Patrol Soldiers OR Former Altherian Marksmen:

"Do not jeopardize yourselves unduly, but bring our brother home if you can. Failing that, gather what information you can so that we can avenge him. Understood?"

Are we going to be paid for this?

Yes, you'll be compensated fairly. I firmly believe in rewarding results.

Do we know what ss'ressen Clutch it is?

We're not absolutely certain which Clutch is in charge. The scout was fairly certain there was

only the one, but she didn't get close enough to get a better look. From the description she gave, it could be either the Horned Jowls or the Barbed Tails.

What can you tell us about the Horned Jowls?

The Horned Jowls are enormous brutes, standing at least nine feet tall, who thrill to battle. A Horned Jowl can smash right through a building's wall if he's determined enough. Enormous, heavily armored, and utterly terrifying, the Horned Jowls are some of the Ssethregoran Empire's greatest weapons. The worst of it though is the singing. The Horned Jowls stride into every battle with one of their own beating great big drums and singing fierce songs. These songs cause them to fight harder and longer, long past when they should have dropped from their wounds. If you hear the beat of drums during the heat of battle, find the drummer and kill him first.

What can you tell us about the Barbed Tails?

Taller than most ss'ressen at about seven feet tall, second only to the Horned Jowls in height, the Barbed Tails are best known for their tails, appropriately. They're stronger than they look, grey-skinned, and their tails are thick and heavily spiked. They'll wrap it around you and pin you with it, gouging the spines into your flesh while they pummel you up close. They like to torment their victims, and are known to be the cruelest of the Ss'ressen clutches. Rumor has it they've destroyed other clutches entirely.

What are Mor'let?

Mor'let are terrifying mounts for some of the ss'ressen clutches. They're reptilian, bipedal, with a long neck and a long tail to balance. Their jaws are strong enough to crunch through bones, their front limbs can rend, and even when they have a rider, don't be fooled: those things can jump and rake at you with the claws on their hind

legs as well. They're very intelligent, and exceedingly vicious when they want to be.

What are Cyclura?

Fearsome reptiles on their own in the wild, Cyclura that are trained for war are some of the Ssethregorans heavy artillery. Long and heavy, their six legs move them swiftly across a battlefield, goring with their nasal horns and sweeping behind them with a brutal tail. Usually heavily armored, these creatures often carry two or three riders, usually Ss'ressen, who help protect its flanks.

Can you provide us any assistance?

To Shining Patrol members only:

You can requisition whatever you need from the Quartermaster, within reason. Standard orders apply. Unused equipment must be returned as well as weapons at the end of your mission, maximum 10 shots of blastpowder per gun, maximum two pistols or one rifle borrowed out at any time.

To non-members:

Take this note to the Quartermaster. He'll provide you each with a potion of healing. He'll also give you rations and camping gear as needed for your trip.

Can you provide us a map/directions?

From our scout's report, the location you're looking for is fairly deep into the jungle, at a small old ruin, little more than a raised dais with an altar.

There are two ways to get close; the first is by the Kraldjur River; just past the first ss'ressen village on the western bank is a trail that leads directly to the ruins. While swift, this path has a much higher chance of being noticed by the Ssethregorans. Should you decide to go this way, the Patrol keeps a number of small boats

available for use where the road meets the river as you descend into the jungle.

The second way is cutting through the jungle alongside the river. There may be times you want to diverge from the river to make the going easier, but you can still use it as a landmark. This route is less likely to draw unwanted attention. Check in with the Quartermaster for our most up to date maps on the region.

Can we talk to the scout who returned?

Absolutely. Rekik is in the surgeon's chambers, recovering. She ran into some difficulty eluding the patrols in the area and took a bit of a beating while escaping.

After the Heroes are done asking questions, they may visit the Quartermaster, who will provide them with any Altherian weapons and armor of the Shining Patrol, on loan for the mission. Only active duty members, Former Shining Patrol members, or Former Altherian Marksmen may borrow out flintlocks and blastpowder. The Quartermaster can also provide them a decent mapping of the area near the Kraldjur Morass.

If the Heroes want to talk to the scout:

The set of rooms assigned to the wounded and recovering Shining Patrol members are austere, simple cots filling a medium size room. Thankfully, there seem to be fairly few here at the moment; only three patients are in the room, tended by an old, grizzled man.

If the Heroes are interested, one of the male patients is having his blood leeches out, to counteract a poison. Another is recovering from having a blastpowder shot pulled from his leg (his pistol backfired). Finally, the scout is there nursing a broken arm.

If any Heroes have a Passive **Perception** of 18+:

Something seems a little... off as you approach the three Altherians. The two men seem normal

enough, but the woman... Though it wasn't immediately apparent from across the room, she is a dark kin, her taint hidden remarkably well. The only thing that sets her apart from a normal Altherian woman is the green tinged blood that seeps into the bandages wrapped around her arm and a spine that creates a ridge down the center of her back, barely visible through her clothes.

Whether they made the passive **Perception** or not:

As you approach the scout looks up at you. "Can I help you?" she asks quizzically.

GM's Note: Roleplaying Rekik

Rekik is a very intelligent, very skilled scout, who appears to be in her 30s. She has been a part of the Shining Patrol from a very young age, after her parents were killed (she believes by the Ssethregorans). In that time she has grown up to be very resourceful, and invaluable to the Patrol for her uncanny ability to survive. She is blunt, direct, and unapologetic.

We would like some information about the mission you were just on.

*Of course. Eyoab (**Eh-o-buh**) and I were tracking a patrol of Ss'ressen on mor'let mounts. We never saw them, but we followed their tracks until we heard the drum beats. Eyoab insisted on approaching, and was caught in a trap surrounding what we think was a war camp. Before I had time to free him, we overheard a large group approaching. Eyoab told me to run, so I did. I presume you're the group Demissie assigned to mount a rescue?*

What else can you tell us about the war camp?

From our best guess, it's a secondary war camp. From what little I saw, it seems to have some sort of religious significance. The main camp is elsewhere, and the patrols head back and forth

between the two, as well as around the entire area.

How did you break your arm?

The first night after I left Eyoab, I took shelter in a tree; it's better to be off the ground in the Morass. I awoke to a large beast tromping through the forest. It passed by the tree I was in, and shook it so firmly that I fell out, breaking my arm on the way down.

As the Heroes leave to head out of the building to their mission, they are confronted by an odd sight:

A young man with a soot-blackened face and slightly smoldering apron comes up to you. "You must be the ones heading into the swamp, Master Lineus would like to talk to you. Please follow me."

If the Heroes aren't interested in seeing Master Lineus, they can politely decline and be on their way. Continue to **Scene 3**.

If the Heroes are willing to find out more, continue:

The young man leads you out of the Government Ring and into the Guild Ring. As you follow, you can see that he is leading you to a large cleared area behind the Alchemist's Guild. The area encompasses a large field. In the middle of the field is a single building. There is a yellow stripe painted on the ground surrounding the entire building. Next to the stripe, at every ten feet are signs stating: "WARNING – No FIRE beyond this point." "WARNING – No MAGIC beyond this point." "Congratulations to team 1 for no major explosions in the last month!"

The building itself is made from closely fitted stone and has six massive chimneys poking out of the roof. The sign above the door reads: Lab 1. Underneath another sign says, "Safety is everyone's priority, even YOURS!"

There are two guards outside of the building. The young man asks you to wait outside while he fetches Master Lineus.

Kelekene, val'Virdan, and val'Emman heroes will be asked to stand 30 feet away from the building.

A few minutes later, a middle-aged, short, dark-skinned man with dark brown eyes emerges from the building. He is dressed in heavily stained work-clothes but wears a holy symbol of Althares around his neck. His heavy leather apron bears the testament to the number of different alchemical compounds that he must work with.

After looking your group over he says, "I take it that Colonel Demissie is sending you into the Morass, do you think that you could help me out?"

"Keep your eyes open out there. It's a dangerous place, but one filled with lots of opportunities as well, if you're interested in making a little extra cash. First, we could always use more shells of Ss'ressen eggs. I would be happy to compensate you for bringing us back some eggs. Next, we are always on the lookout for any Ssanu technomancy or alchemy out there, I'd, I mean we, would dearly love to get our hands on it. And finally, some of the beasts that the Ssethregoran's use have some very interesting properties. If you could get us any of the following: the flame gland from one or more Flaming Tongue Ss'ressen, a poison gland from the Venomous Scale Ss'ressen, or the pancreas of a Cyclura, we would reward you well.

Good luck in the Morass!"

Who are you?

I am Lineus Abebi. I am the priest of Althares here at the powder works.

What do you do?

I am responsible for making sure that the mixture of blastpowder is correct before it is blessed by the Priests of Althares.

What is blastpowder?

Blastpowder is the second gift of Althares, the patron deity of knowledge. It is a powder that allows us to use flintlocks. Without it, flintlocks are just fancy clubs.

What was the first gift?

Althares first gave his people the ability to harness electricity and magnetism. It is how we created our flying ships. Granted, there aren't many of them left, but still.

What do you need eggshells for?

Ss'ressen eggshells provide a certain alchemical ingredient which is essential to the production of blastpowder. Without it, it is little more than inert black dust.

GM Note: Ss'ressen Heroes?

The ss'ressen of the Known Lands are well aware of the role their eggs play in the production of blastpowder. Most ss'ressen find the process abhorrent, but many have accepted it as part of dealing with humans. The Black Talon egg clutch of Milandir is known to sell a number of their eggs to the Altherians every year for a tidy profit.

Would the Heroes have objections to this mission? Possibly, but ss'ressen in general are literally bioengineered to hate other ss'ressen who are not members of their own egg clutch. As such, they would feel no particular loyalty to any of the other egg clutches (especially those in Ssethregore), and likely would not object to those enemy clutches being weakened by the destruction of their eggs.

How do you make blastpowder?

It is a gift of Althares. If you truly seek His knowledge, I suggest you visit his temple. The

priests there are always hungry for more students to follow His teachings.

Why can't you go?

I am just an artificer, not a tough individual like yourselves.

How much will you pay?

It depends on what you bring back.

How do we recognize Ssanu technomancy or alchemy?

If you find any interesting potions or other items you can't identify, then bring those back.

How do we harvest a gland for you?

You need to have some level skill in Medicine or be used to butchering animals.

What is a Cyclura?

It is a huge six-legged beast. It is usually 15-25 feet long and stands five to eight feet tall at the shoulder. It won't be hard to miss.

We helped you before/Do you remember us?

Oh sorry, that was you? Hmmm must have slipped my mind.

Harvesting components: To harvest the requested components, the Hero needs to succeed at an Intelligence (Medicine) or Wisdom (Survival) DC 15 check. A Hero that is proficient with the Poisoner's Kit automatically succeeds. A Hero that is trained in either Medicine or Healer's Kit has advantage on the roll. A failure means that the part is ruined and nothing can be recovered from that creature.

Development: At this point, the Heroes should have a fairly good idea of what they're going in to do, and extra stuff to keep an eye out for. Allow them to discuss which route they want to take. If they decide to go by the river, continue to **Scene 3**. If they prefer to hack their way through the jungle, continue to **Scene 4**.

SCENE 3

Key Concepts: The Heroes decide to travel down the river, and have to avoid or fight a party of Flame Tongue Ss`ressen.

Though the Shining Patrol has hidden its boats, they're not too difficult to locate. Calling them boats is charitable at best, as they are little more than hollowed out logs that float, with a few driftwood paddles beneath them. At least they look like they'll serve their intended purpose on this placid, slow moving water.

Any Heroes with **Survival** get a chance to shine here, and should be given preference in commanding the vessels. Anyone with a Sailor type background, Former Royal Marine background, or any Undir gain *Advantage* on this skill check.

A **Wisdom (Survival)** check will reveal:

- **DC 10:** The river is wide, and calm. Boating down it should be relatively easy. The boats can fit up to 3 people in each with their gear.
- **DC 13:** The river isn't flowing particularly fast. Once you've accomplished your mission, you should be able to make your way back up the river; it will just take a little more muscle to go against the current, rather than letting it carry you.
- **DC 15:** Keeping close to the banks of the river will mean being able to land quicker and deal with any threats that may arise. Fighting in boats such as these would likely not be a good idea.
- **DC 18:** Calm waters can often hide dangers waiting beneath the surface. As easy as this could be, it would still be wise to keep a close eye out.

Each boat fits three people and requires a successful **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** check to pilot. Anyone with proficiency in *Vehicles (Water)* can add their proficiency bonus, as well as direct others in how to properly handle the boats without anyone needing to make an additional check. Otherwise, have each of the Heroes also make a **DC 13 Wisdom (Survival)** skill check. Any failure indicates that Hero capsizes their boat and gets dunked early into the journey, along with anyone in the boat with them.

The trip down the river is almost serene. Brightly colored fish dart in the waters beneath your boats, and the heat from the jungle wafts in visible waves across the wide waterway. Each stroke of your paddles pulls you steadily along, drawing further away from the safety of Altheria with every passing moment. This must be how the Shining Patrol Scouts feel every time they head out into the jungles, and why they feel such relief when they make their way back; out here, in the wild, anything could happen.

Any Hero with a Passive **Perception** of 14+ will start to get a feeling of being watched about 6 hours down the river. If these players make a **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception)** check, read the following:

High in the sky, two birds circle, keeping pace with your vessels. Or are they birds? As you watch them, you could swear you catch a glint of light, shining off a scale.

GM Note: There is nothing that the Heroes can do about the Dragonnels above them at this point. If they fire into the sky with an Altherian flintlock, the Dragonnels will fly off and simply return later. This is simply to make a point: Someone has made note of their presence.

Have the Heroes make either a **DC: 15 Dexterity (Stealth)** or **Wisdom (Survival)** skill check. If at least half the group succeeds at their check, they

have successfully avoided the patrols around Telith. However, if more than half the group fails their check, they are spotted by a patrol of Flame Tongue Ss'ressen who attack immediately:

If successful:

Bypassing Telith is an easy matter. A quick portage on the far side of the river bank is all that is required, out of sight of the docks which the outpost has right on the river. Illir's brilliance sets over the trees, and the raucous creatures of the night begin to stir.

GM's Note: Telith is an outpost of Ssethregorans, the current home of the Flame Tongue Ss'ressen. Often a staging ground for assaults on Semar, Telith is occasionally struck by the Shining Patrol as well to keep the Ssethregorans from attacking more often.

If unsuccessful, roll **Initiative**.

COMBAT

In all this combat consists of

- **Six (6) Flaming Tongue Ss'ressen**
- **One (1) Flaming Tongue Disciple of Sipta**

See Combat Appendix One for Stats

Adventure Difficulty

- **Easy Mode:** Reduce the numbers of Flaming Tongue Ss'ressen to 4
- **Difficult:** Add 2 Flaming Tongue Ss'ressen
- **Perilous:** Add 4 Flaming Tongue Ss'ressen

Tactics: The Disciple will keep to the cover of any nearby trees, casting spells and causing problems for any casters. The other Ss'ressen will open with their flame breaths to sink the boats, or to ignite the skin of their opponents to distract them before closing in to finish them off.

The ss'ressen will not enter the water, but will harass the party from the shore.

Notes: Unless they specify otherwise before the combat begins, the Heroes start in boats on the river, while the Ss'ressen start on the river banks. If the boats flounder, the river is about 15' deep in most places, and about 60' wide along this part.

Ss'ressen Frenzy will be in effect if there are Ss'ressen in the party.

GM's Note: Ss'ressen Frenzy.

Any time you come within 30 feet of another ss'ressen from a different and unrelated egg clutch you must make a successful DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or fly into an uncontrollable Frenzy.

While in a frenzy you will do everything in your power to destroy the members of the egg clutch that triggered your frenzy. You gain advantage on melee weapon attack rolls using Strength, while suffering disadvantage on any attack roll or ability check that is not directed at the ss'ressen who triggered your frenzy. For the duration of your frenzy all attack rolls against you have advantage. At the end of each of your turns, you can attempt a new Wisdom saving throw. If you succeed, your frenzy ends. Your frenzy also ends when there are no ss'ressen of an unrelated egg clutch within 30 feet.

Once combat is concluded, or if the Heroes successfully avoided the Patrol, ask the players whether they're setting up camp for the night or traveling on. If they press on, Heroes who do not sleep at least 6 hours must make a **DC 13 Constitution saving throw** check to avoid suffering a level of exhaustion the next day (disadvantage to all ability checks).

If the Heroes continue on through the night:

The gloom of Cadic's shroud is deeper in the jungle than other places. The stillness in the heat

of the day has given way to a tumult of activity as predators stalk through the forest and prey flee before them, and the raucous cries of countless animals fill your ears; all but the reptiles, which are silent in both killing and dying. A pair of crocodiles watch you as you float past, hungrily devouring the corpse of a jungle cat who strayed too close to the water's edge.

If the Heroes rest until morning, read the following:

Though night in the jungle was much louder than you might have anticipated due to all the rustling and raucous calls, you managed to get enough rest to continue on another day. As you return to your boats, you see a languid eyed pair of crocodiles watching you from the other river bank, resting beside the shredded carcass of a jungle cat who must have strayed too close to the water's edge.

Development: Continue to **Scene 5** as the Heroes reach a landing point near the Temple and have to proceed on foot.

SCENE 4

Key Concepts: The Heroes decide to travel alongside the river and come across a settlement of Ss'ressen under attack.

The heat of the jungle weighs down upon you as you hack your way through the thick foliage. The sweltering heat makes the going tough, and the mosquitos swarm about you, pricking at any inch of exposed skin.

Any Hero with a **Passive Perception** of 14+ will notice the smell of smoke starting to fill the jungle. Those with lower **Passive Perceptions** won't notice the smoke, but after about 30 minutes more they'll see the glow of a very large fire. At about the same time they notice the glow, all Heroes begin to hear the bass tones of a very loud drum beat.

If the Heroes decide to avoid this entirely, they can just work their way around the village, or stay hidden and witness the events that follow. If the Heroes want to investigate they may certainly do so as well. Read the following either way:

Thankfully, the jungle itself is not enflamed; rather, the fire's glow illuminates a village under siege. Torches burn in the hands of monstrous reptilian creatures, and the huts of the small village are being gutted by deliberately set fires. Off beyond the village comes a steady drumming, echoing through your bones ominously. A group of Ss'ressen with vibrant emerald scales, mostly younger with a few very old, has been gathered up in the center by two hulking, brutal looking Ss'ressen. As you watch, the largest of the attackers grabs one of the elderly ones by the throat and lifts her up high, hissing something in Ss'ressen. Throwing the old Ss'ressen to the ground, the aggressor picks up the huge axe at his side and raises it high above his head.

For those who speak Ss'ressen, the Harbinger is saying the following:

"Worship of Kassegore is proscribed. You know this, yet you do so anyway. Our Masters are not pleased. Your defenders are being slaughtered. Your line will be destroyed, until there are none of you left to profane us with your follies. We have seen the evidence. You are guilty. The sentence is death."

At this point, the Heroes can still avoid any conflict. In the ruckus, they have not been noticed. If they do, continue to **Scene 5** after reading the following:

The last you see of the village is the repeated falling of the axe. The reptilian screams of pain and terror linger in your ears, long after the drums have faded in a different direction.

If they choose to intervene or stay to watch after the massacre is done (alter what follows if this is the case), they will be noticed and attacked.

Roll **Initiative**.

COMBAT

In all this combat consists of

- **Two (2) Agamassi (Horned Jowl) Ss'ressen**
- **Eight (8) troglodyte scouts.**

See **Combat Appendix Two for Stats**

Adventure Difficulty

- **Easy Mode:** Reduce the number of troglodyte scouts to 4
- **Difficult:** Add 4 troglodyte scouts
- **Perilous:** Add 8 troglodyte scouts

Enemies: There are more Horned Jowls in the forest (including the drummer) and more troglodytes killing the few defenders of this village, but only bring them in if the fight is proving too easy. Otherwise, they will simply return to their encampment when they can no longer find any Ss'ressen in the jungle near them.

Tactics: The Troglodyte scouts will swarm the nearest Heroes, clubbing at them with torches.

The Agamassi will target Ss'ressen Heroes over any other, followed by Altherians and anyone wielding a flintlock weapon. They will use brute tactics, straightforward pummeling with bearded axes.

Ss'ressen Frenzy: Any time you come within 30 feet of another ss'ressen from a different and unrelated egg clutch you must make a successful DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or fly into an uncontrollable Frenzy.

While in a frenzy you will do everything in your power to destroy the members of the egg clutch

that triggered your frenzy. You gain advantage on melee weapon attack rolls using Strength, while suffering disadvantage on any attack roll or ability check that is not directed at the ss'ressen who triggered your frenzy. For the duration of your frenzy all attack rolls against you have advantage. At the end of each of your turns, you can attempt a new Wisdom saving throw. If you succeed, your frenzy ends. Your frenzy also ends when there are no ss'ressen of an unrelated egg clutch within 30 feet.

Notes: Ss'ressen Frenzy will be in effect if there are Ss'ressen in the party (see mod pg. 21 for Frenzy rules). They will have to make the check twice, once for the Emerald Scale victims and once for the Horned Jowl attackers. If the Horned Jowls are killed, any Ss'ressen Heroes in frenzy will turn upon the Emerald Scales immediately. Treat the Emerald Scale as *Challenge Rating 0* creatures; any hit will drop them, and the next attack will kill them. There are 14 young and elderly total.

Any remaining Troglodytes will immediately flee into the jungle once all the Agamassi fall. They still worship Kassegore themselves, and have absolutely no desire to be part of this, but also have no way of defending themselves against the brutality of their Ss'ressen and Ssanu masters.

When combat is finished, read the following (unless a Ss'ressen Hero entered frenzy and killed them all, OR the Heroes themselves wish to kill the Ss'ressen, in which case adjust as necessary):

The remaining Ss'ressen have drawn together, shying away from you, gathering around their fallen elder. Slowly, the old Ss'ressen seems to be regaining consciousness.

GM's Note: Elorii Heroes and entire elorii tables may present an interesting challenge, having

more reason than most to want to kill the Emerald Scales as well as the Horned Jowls.

Remind them that their victims would be helpless, but otherwise it is their choice. They'll have to live with what they've done.

Any efforts by the Heroes at this point to help will be met with terror and suspicion, especially if the party includes a Black Talon/Ashen Hide/Ghost Scale. (For story purposes, we are presuming the remaining Ss'ressen do not succumb to Frenzy).

If the Heroes think to start putting out the fires and busying themselves with being productive, the Ss'ressen will be far more willing to talk once their leader is awake again. Grant any Heroes who think to assist in this way grant them a point of Inspiration.

If any Heroes speak Ss'ressen, give them Advantage to their social skill checks. The Ss'ressen elder can speak Ss'ressen, Ssethric, Eloran, and Altherian (with a traditional Ss'ressen lisp due to the vocal cords). All the other Ss'ressen can only speak Ss'ressen and Ssethric.

A **Wisdom (Perception)** skill check after the battle will reveal the following:

- **DC 12:** The village cannot be salvaged. It would be easier to rebuild it from the ground up. Most of the huts were little more than wood and vines, and there is not much left.
- **DC 14:** The single stone building is largely undamaged, but everything inside it is utterly destroyed. Inside the building are the remains of a small clutch of Ss'ressen eggs, smashed to pieces.
- **DC 16:** A very young, small Ss'ressen is lying beneath a collapsed hut. Though seriously injured, she is still alive.

If any Heroes wish to do so, they may acquire the Ss'ressen eggshells to bring back to the Shining Patrol. It requires **Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check against the enemy's **Passive Perception** of 13 to stow them away without being noticed by one of the Ss'ressen. The fresh eggshells are worth 10 gp.

If the Heroes don't think to hide the eggshells or are noticed, the Ss'ressen will be extremely displeased with them, treating them with contempt much like humans might treat grave robbers, and refusing to speak to them.

If the Heroes find the young Ss'ressen, it will require a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check (add advantage if an additional hero offers assistance) to lift the wood off her enough to have her dragged to safety. If the Heroes cannot manage it in 3 attempts, the Ss'ressen will have died in the interim.

Once safe, a passive **Wisdom (Medicine)** skill check can determine the following:

- **DC 10:** She's still alive, though barely.
- **DC 14:** A concussion, some serious burns along her left side, and a broken leg comprise the bulk of the physical injuries. Worst of all, she doesn't appear to be breathing.

The Heroes may attempt a **DC 18 Wisdom (Medicine)** skill check in order to resuscitate her. They get a maximum of 2 attempts, after which point the victim will die. The high difficulty is due to the non-human physiology. Any Ss'ressen Heroes need only make the check at **DC 14**. Players with a point of Fate should consider using it here.

GM's Note: If the Heroes attempt and fail to save her, grant those who tried a point of Fate. Only grant this if there was absolutely no prompting to save her whatsoever on your part.

After some RP, continue with the following:

Struggling to regain her feet with the aid of two very young Ss'ressen, the elder looks at you. In heavily accented Altharin, she says, "This is an unexpected surprise, though no less appreciated for it. I am Th'ssess, of the Viridiss, a priestess of Kassegore. I would offer you the hospitality of our village, such as it is, but we will be leaving this place and going to join another clutch of our brethren, hopefully before the Agamassi arrive there as well."

Why were you being attacked?

The Agamassi are fervent supporters of their new "god" Haulis, a Varn who delights in bloodlust and savagery. Under the Varn, our empire tears itself apart. Those who worship Kassegore are slowly losing faith, because the Varn offer immediate responses to their prayers. That is not the way of a god. There should be no easy answers. Still, it is very seductive to many, and so the worship of the Varn continues. The Agamassi are the shock troops of the new empire, clearing away the old guard where they can. It seems they have now turned their attention to the Viridiss. I knew they had set up a war camp not far from here, but I had no idea they would be coming for us.

Who/What are the Varn?

The Varn are gods the likes of which we have never seen; powerfully divine beings that immediately support their followers. We understand that there are those who are stronger and those who are weaker. The Varn are stronger beings than us, but we are many while they are few; and any god that requires the worship of their followers is no god at all. Kassegore does not demand our worship. He accepts what we offer him with good grace, but his divinity is not dependent on us. If every Ss'ressen who worshipped Kassegore died tomorrow, Kassegore would remain. There are four Varn of whom we are aware: Zedok, old

Bringer of Chaos, Sipta, lady of Arcane Mysteries, Haulis of the Bloody Maw, and Caimeth, Lord of Undeath. Spread the word to your people; we must stand against these beings and all they represent, for they would destroy us all if they could.

Who is Kassegore?/Who are the Viridiss?

Kassegore is the Father of the Ssethric people, the first god of this, the first world, or so our ancient tales go. Whether he truly preceded the gods of man, a more knowledgeable one than I still could not say, but we believe it, and so it is for us. Wherever he went, there was life, but it was the Ssethric forms that pleased him most, for they were most like unto him. Kassegore created the Ss'ressen from his own essence, and his mate Yig imbued them with mortal life. And Kassegore named these creatures Viridiss, Ss'ressen of the Emerald Scale, and told us that though we would live and die, our lives were our own, and when we died, he would consume our souls back into himself and make of them the next generation of our children.

Who is Yig?

Yig is the mate of Kassegore, cunning and devious, sinuous and sultry, and eminently desirable when the fire rises within him. Her breath is our mortal life, but our essence, our souls, that is and can only ever belong to Kassegore. While Kassegore is just and noble, Yig delights in playing games which no one can win but her.

How long has this power struggle been going on?

It is older than I, of a surety. I don't know for sure, but the better part of a few millennia, if our traditions and beliefs are accurate.

Where is the war camp of the Agamassi?

The better part of a day's journey to the southwest, traveling through the jungle. You

could probably get there on the river as well in half a day, though the river comes in plain sight of the temple ruins. The Agamassi have set up camp at the ruins of a temple to Kassegore, befouling it with their presence. I suspect that is why you have come, hmmm? Go with our blessing, and know that Kassegore need not be your enemy in the face of this greater threat to us both.

Do you know anything about the rituals of the Agamassi?

Their rituals are slaughters. Blood and death and fire; they round up as many victims as they may, then murder them.

Do you have any information on the layout of the camp?

Unfortunately not; those who are brought there never return, and we had no interest in making a target of ourselves.

Development: The Heroes should be preparing to continue on deeper into the jungle. Continue to **Scene 5**.

SCENE 5

Key Concepts: The Heroes hack their way through the jungle, and encounter a Hylis, preparing for mating season.

The bright flora of the jungle surrounds you on every side, but gives way easily before your blades. The air is a haze as the heat steams around you. The trek has been long and arduous thus far, and you're a couple days in; following the trails in the area would have lead you straight through Telith, and into the cruel hands of the Flaming Tongue Ss'ressen. Wisely, your route has taken you around it, and deep into the jungle heading south.

Any Hero with a **Passive Perception** of 14+ will get a feeling of unease at around this point. Something just doesn't seem right in the area.

The Heroes may then make a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice the following. With any Hero with proficiency in **Survival** or a wilderness based background gaining **Advantage** on this skill check,

If successful, the heroes notice that a hush has fallen over the area. If there are any animals in the area, they're being strangely quiet.

Any Ss'ressen Heroes may make an additional **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** check to detect them will a reptilian scent nearby, though they will not be able to ascertain where.

On the trail ahead is a very cleverly concealed trip wire, though it's not obviously attached to anything in particular.

If the Heroes don't notice the trip wire, choose one at random to accidentally trigger it.

Trip Net

Mechanical trap

This trap is designed to capture large animals alive for a Ssanu biomancer to experiment on. With a single trigger, a net envelops the target from beneath and fires a dart with a paralytic toxin into the netting.

Detect/Disarm: The trip wire is 3 inches off the ground and stretches between two columns or trees. The net is hidden by cobwebs or foliage. The **DC to spot the trip wire and net is 15** A successful **DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools** breaks the trip wire and fires the dart harmlessly. A character without thieves' tools can attempt this check with disadvantage using any edged weapon or edged tool. On a failed check, the trap triggers. If they succeed with an 18 or greater, the Hero may save the poison. Imoya val'Abebi will pay 10gp per dose

recovered. **(NOTE: Before they disarm the trap read below....)**

Effect: The netting engulfs the Hero and hoists them 15 feet into the air. The netting is heavily braided, very thick rope. Anyone trapped within the net is considered Restrained and cannot move until their next turn, at which they must make a successful **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check to act (i.e. not quickly enough to avoid getting shot by the dart). The net has an AC of 10 and 25 hit points.

The dart is laced with *Winged Viper Venom*. Harvested from small winged serpents deep in the steaming jungles of the Kraldjur Morass, Ssethric Biomancers have discovered how to concentrate the venom as a paralytic toxin. It is often used to render their research subjects quiescent.

The Dart is then fired at the trapped creature with a +5 to hit, dealing 2 (1d4) points of piercing damage, the target must then succeed in a Constitution saving throw or becoming Poisoned for 1 hour and taking 11 (2d10) poison damage. Upon a successful save the target only suffers half damage and does not gain the Poisoned condition. If the target creature misses their Constitution save by 5 or more they are also paralyzed for 1 hour.

The poisons effects can be countered with some Bramblekin Root (Requiring a successful DC: 10 Wisdom (Medicine) skill check to remember the root needed followed by a DC: 15 Wisdom (Herbalism Kit) tool proficiency check) If the heroes don't make this roll or possess an Herbalism Kit, the hylis does.

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If the Heroes notice the trap and set to examining it (which they inevitably will), continue with the following:

*"I'd leave that alone if I were you," a raspy voice croaks from above you.*

If the Heroes do end up triggering the trap, give them some time to react, then read the following:

*"Please stop thrashing around," a raspy voice croaks from above you. "I can help retrieve your companion if you're willing to do me a favour in kind. The trap is not meant for such as you in any case."*

#### **Roleplaying Pakwa (Pa-qua):**

Pakwa is a hylis, a species that appears like small humanoid treefrogs. They live high in the trees of the Kraldjur morass and are allied with the Ssethregoran Empire.

Pakwa in particular is small for a hylis, standing just under 3 feet tall. He makes up for it with an incredible singing voice, which he trains regularly throughout the year in preparation for mating season. Pakwa has no interest whatsoever in Ssethregore, and has avoided being drafted into the Ssethric army on a number of occasions. His only concern is having the opportunity to mate as often as possible, which entails having the most time to work on his performance.

Pakwa's assistance of the Heroes is not selfless; the drumming of the Agamassi war camp and patrols are constantly disrupting him, and he is vexed, though nowhere near foolish enough to ask the Agamassi to stop. He hopes that the Heroes will at least be able to disrupt the Agamassi, as the Agamassi have interrupted him time and again, in a form of poetic justice (which Pakwa highly appreciates).

If at any point the Heroes act aggressively towards him, Pakwa will simply flee straight up into the canopy and away as quickly as possible. He's not a fighter by any stretch.

Either way, continue:

*From out of the trees above, a squat figure drops to the ground. At first glance it looks like an oversized frog. Its strange bulbous eyes blink multiple eyelids at you as it watches you carefully. It holds a long reed in its webbed hands, and its feet splay out on the dirt of the path, webbed toes curling as though trying to grasp on to something. A bandolier strung across his chest with several bottles appears to be the only affectation to clothing he has.*

*"It's a good thing I came by before Ssi'ril did. He is a particularly unpleasant individual; these traps are his way of collecting specimens for his experiments, and I suspect you would not enjoy being subjected to that."*

If any Hero is trapped:

*As he speaks, the creature hops to the side of the path and reaches up behind a branch. With a thud, your friend plummets to the ground.*

If the Hero has been poisoned:

*The frog eyes <Hero name> pragmatically, then slowly reaches down into a pouch on the bandolier. "Here. This should reverse the effects of the paralyzing agent, though I warn you the come down will be painful. If you prefer, you can simply wait out the venom... You'll be fine in about half a day." He tosses a pouch to <random Hero>. "He/She will need to ingest it."*

Whether a Hero was trapped or not:

*"Ah, would that I could practice closer to home. Unfortunately those damn Agamassi are making that difficult. I'll make you a deal: I'll lead you through this little hornet's nest of Ssanu traps in exchange for you... causing some problems for the Agamassi drummers. I want their drums destroyed so I can practice in peace. Sound good?"*

**GM's Note:** If the Heroes want to do a **Wisdom (Insight)** skill check on any answers Pakwa gives, it won't be easy. Due to his reptilian nature, his tells are quite different than a warm-blooded creature. Any of these checks will be made at a *Disadvantage* unless otherwise noted. Ss'ressen get do not suffer this penalty due to similar reptilian physiology.

Who are you?

My name is Pakwa. ((True))

What are you?

*He looks at you steadily, and you get the feeling that if he had an eyebrow to raise, it would be raised at you. I am a hylis, <insert race of Hero who asked the question>. ((True))*

What are you practicing?

*In response, the frog creature warbles off a brief tune. Deep in his throat, a bass hum counterpoints his song. It is a simple, elegant performance of obviously great skill that would have taken at least two human performers to do. When he finishes, he grimaces. Ugh. Those drums have been affecting me more than I thought. That was my worst effort in the last two weeks. You have to get rid of those damn drums or I'm not going to be able to mate for the first time in 14 years.*

What does singing have to do with mating?

*What kind of strange rituals do you have among your people? Are your women not serenaded with song? How do you determine whether you are fit to bear offspring? For the hylis, the females choose only the best singers to mate each year. A strong singer, a skilled singer, must be devoted, intelligent, and passionate, all traits the women desire.*

Anything special about the drums?/ Are the drums magical?

*They are indeed. The drums enhance all the Ss'ressen who hear it, inspiring them to great feats of strength and stoking their bloodlust.*

((Half-true. The drums themselves aren't magical, but the spell being cast by the drummers is carried on the rhythm of the drums.))

Do you know anything of the schism in Ssethregore?/ Do you know anything of the Varn?

*No. We hylis prefer to avoid the politics of the Ssanu and the Ss'ressen.*

((Hiding something))

If pressed on it with a successful **DC 16 Charisma (Intimidation)** or **Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check:

*Alright, alright. The schism is a religious one. Some ss'ressen refuse to worship any of the Varn, and worship of Kassegore and Yig is officially proscribed by the Ssanu. It doesn't affect us. We worship Yig, the Life Mother, and leave the others to their petty religious squabbles.*

Who set these traps?

*Ssi'ril, a ssanu biomancer. He ranges far afield with his escorts and collects samples for his experiments on a regular basis. Not a particularly pleasant individual. ((True))*

Do you have any ssanu technomancy or alchemy items?

*Why yes, I do have a few items, I take it you would be interested in a trade? ((True))*

Pakwa will trade some of the items in his bandelier. He will be willing to trade one potion per Hero. He will trade the equivalent of 25 gp per vial/potion. He will take trade goods or things that he can easily sell. He only has 6 items.

If the Heroes elect to attack Pakwa instead of talking to him, or after talking to him, adjudicate accordingly. Combat notations are as follows.

## COMBAT

In all this combat consists of

- **Pakwa**

See Combat Appendix One for Stats

### Adventure Difficulty

- **There are no adjustments for this encounter**

**Tactics:** Escape. Pakwa isn't interested in killing anyone or anything.

Once Pakwa is 10 feet away in the foilage, he is lightly obscured. If he gets 30 feet away, he is heavily obscured.

**Notes:** If the Heroes do attack and defeat Pakwa, they can take his bandelier to return to Lineus.

Also, the jungle in this part is filled with \*lots\* of traps. If the Heroes chase him, or let him go without accepting his offer, have them encounter at least 2 more traps like the one above before leaving this Scene.

**Development:** At this point, the Heroes should have a pretty good idea where they need to go. Continue to **Scene 6**.

## SCENE 6

**Key Concepts:** The Heroes arrive at and scout the exterior of the ruins, discovering the worshippers of Haulis and their plans to march.

*The throb of drums fills the air as you make your way in the direction of the ruins. The low bass beat resonates in your bones, and the air is filled with an ominous tension. Making your way to the edge of a large clearing, you peer out from the safety of the brush. A crumbling ruin of a temple*

*lies in the middle of the clearing, surrounded on three sides by fire pits. The fourth side is a river, smaller than the Kraldjur. Your maps suggest, given the distance traveled, that it's probably the Sa'kress, a smaller river that joins the Kraldjur not too far from these ruins.*

*The camp itself is filled with activity. A dozen Troglodytes suffer under the lash of a scarred and angry ss'ressen, breaking down the ruins and building another temple right beside it. Near the middle of camp an enormous six legged reptile rests, being fed scraps of meat by a hulking ss'ressen. Whenever another creature gets close to the beast, ss'ressen or troglodyte, it snaps at them, pulling at its tether. Only the one feeding it seems to have any rapport with the monstrous creature.*

*From time to time, a small patrol of three Ss'ressen riding sleek, swift looking reptiles will emerge from the trees the unusually large ss'ressen, who barks out orders. The other ss'ressen clearly defer to him.*

*Overlaid over the entire scene are the pounding drums, beaten in a steady rhythm by three smaller ss'ressen females. Two drummers at a time, with the third stepping in when one begins to falter, they cycle through to maintain a constant thrum in the air.*

*Bound to an altar in the middle of the old temple ruins lays an Altherian. From this distance, you can't tell if he's alive or dead, and his clothes are covered in blood.*

A **Wisdom (Insight)** check will reveal:

- **DC 12:** At an estimate, there are probably around 20 individuals in and around the ruins, not counting the patrols out in the jungle.
- **DC 14:** The patrols that are coming in are different each time, coming in at hour long interval, indicating a larger force somewhere else. The ruins themselves

appear to be important, but not a large enough area to stage a full war camp.

- **DC 16:** The remaining structure of the ruins being dismantled would provide an excellent narrow choke point, only allowing one or two attackers abreast from either side while remaining completely covered from the top.
- **DC 18:** The strategic targets are clearly the large ss'ressen and the six legged reptile, but the rest cannot be discounted. Taking them all on would be extremely dangerous.

A **Wisdom (Survival)** check will reveal:

- **DC 12:** The six legged reptile is a cyclura.
- **DC 14:** The biggest dangers of the beast are the long, cruel horn with which it can impale victims, a gaping maw of serrated teeth, and a brutal spiked tail.
- **DC 16:** This particular cyclura appears to be extremely ill-tempered, and to have bonded with only one ss'ressen.

A successful **DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana)** check will reveal magic in the air, brought about by the drumming. It is impossible to tell what it is doing though.

*Detect Magic* will not work, since the players cannot get within 30 feet of the drums without being noticed.

An **Intelligence** check will reveal more information about the structure. A proficiency bonus with **Mason's Tools** may be added to the roll:

- **DC 10:** The old structure is clearly an ancient temple. What are clearly the remnants of an altar, and what you can tell of the layout suggest that it was once a magnificently tall building.
- **DC 13:** The temple did not decay from natural causes. This building was deliberately destroyed, and recently.



- **DC 16:** The remaining structure of the ruins being dismantled would provide an excellent narrow choke point, only allowing one or two attackers abreast from either side while remaining completely covered from the top.

A **Wisdom (Perception)** check will reveal:

- **DC 11:** At an estimate, there are probably around 20 individuals in and around the ruins.
- **DC 14:** The ruins of the temple are clearly Ssethric in nature. The iconography suggests that it used to be a temple to Kassegore, and there are no real symbols of Yig to be seen.
- **DC 16:** Some of the workers are inscribing strange symbols into the stones of the new buildings. Over and over, two motifs are repeated: a large axe and an enormous beast the likes of which you have never seen. The beast has six limbs, four legs on which he rests while grasping an indistinguishable figure between his two front hands, drawing it in to his mouth. In other images, the creature is wielding a pair of axes in his hands.
- Ss'ressen (and only ss'ressen) may attempt a **DC 13 Intelligence (History)** check to recognize the creature as a Varn. Beating the roll by 5 or more will allow such Heroes to identify the Varn in question as Haulis, the Bloody Maw.

Allow the players to come up with whatever plans they wish. The rest of this scene determines whether they are mounting an assault or just gathering information and returning.

**GM's Note:** There are a number of mitigating factors to this scenario that make it easier for the Heroes to effect a rescue.

First, the troglodytes will only be involved until their overseer is dead. When their overseer drops, the troglodytes will scatter into the jungle.

Second, if the Heroes can kill or incapacitate the ss'ressen in charge, the cyclura will go berserk with fury and lash out at everything near it. So long as the Heroes take care to position themselves away from it, they can use its wrath to overcome the other ss'ressen and mor'lets.

Third, the drummers are providing a substantial boost to the entire camp. If the drummers are all killed and/or the drums are destroyed, the entire combat should be much easier.

**Development:** If the Heroes decide to assault the camp in an attempt to rescue the Patrolman, continue to **Scene 7**. If they would rather just gather information and leave, continue to **Scene 8** after they leave.

## SCENE 7

**Key Concepts:** The Heroes attempt to rescue the captive Patrolman.

If the Heroes desire to rescue the Patrolman without engaging in combat, it is possible. He is not being watched and not considered a threat.

Anyone who wishes can make a **DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill checks sneak up to the altar unseen.

Any attempt to cut the ropes with a bladed weapon will be enough to undo the bonds.

The Patrolman is, unfortunately, unconscious. The Heroes will have to carry him. If only one person went, they will have to sneak back out with him, making another **DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check, but this time at a *disadvantage*. However if two or more people went, they can carry him out together more



easily, each person only needing to make check normally, with no disadvantage, to avoid being seen.

If at any point they fail the **Stealth** check, or if they decide to just attack, initiate combat.

## COMBAT

In all this combat consists of

- **One (1) Gamassi Drakhen**
- **One (1) Cyclura War Beast**
- **One (1) Agamassi Overseer**
- **Six (6) troglodyte scouts**

### If Attacked

**Three (3) Agamassi Drummers**

See Combat Appendix One for Stats

#### Adventure Difficulty

- **Easy Mode:** Reduce the troglodyte scouts to 3
- **Difficult:** Add 2 troglodyte scouts
- **Perilous:** Add 6 troglodyte scouts

**Tactics:** The overseer will martial his troglodytes into battle against any invaders. He will not directly enter the fray until their entire group of scouts is defeated. *If the overseer is defeated before his scouts, any of their scouts left standing will immediately flee.*

The leader of the Agamassi, **Gamassi Drakhen**, will mount his cyclura at the first opportunity, then guide it into battle, using his weapons to protect the flanks of his mount. It requires no time for him to guide the mount, since they've been working together for so long that they have a natural understanding.

The cyclura will eagerly lash out with its tail at anything behind it, or bite anything in front. If there's no target immediately nearby, it will charge the nearest enemy it can see, attempting to impale with its horn.

The drummers will not participate in the combat directly. Their drumming is Ssethric ritual magic which enhances their allies. If they are attacked, they will flee into the forest. If more than half the other ss'ressen are defeated, they will flee into the forest. They are under orders to keep themselves alive, regardless of what happens to the war camp, and report back. If the drummers are attacked/killed or the drums are destroyed (AC 5, 10 Hp each, three in total), the ritual magic fades by the end next ss'ressen's Turn. The drummers are all young female Agamassi, and all the others will do everything in their power to protect them. When attacked, the drummers will only use the disengage, dodge, and dash actions to escape into the jungle.

#### GM's Note Power of the ritual:

While the drums are being played all the Agamassi gain the following benefits +5 ft movement speed and gain 5 temporary hit points at the start of their turn.

Once the power of the drums fade they lose all the above benefits and become confused for one turn, during which they suffer disadvantage on all attacks and saves.

#### Combat Notes:

- Killing *Gamassi Drakhen* will cause the Cyclura to go berserk and lash out at the nearest target, friend or foe.
- Attacking the drummers will cause them to flee, removing the ritual magic enhancing the rest of the ss'ressen.
- Killing an overseer will cause any of their group of troglodytes still standing to flee immediately.

**GM's Note:** Ss'ressen Frenzy will be in effect if there are Ss'ressen in the party (see mod pg. 16 for Frenzy rules).

Any remaining Troglydtes will immediately flee into the jungle once the Agamassi overseer falls. They still worship Kassegore themselves, and have absolutely no desire to be part of this, but also have no way of defending themselves against the brutality of their Ss'ressen and Ssanu masters.

If there is a ss'ressen Hero, all the Agamassi are susceptible to the same Frenzy rules except the drummers, who themselves have recently been around a Ssanu.

**Development:** If the Heroes successfully rescued the Patrolman without alerting the camp, continue to **Scene 8**.

If the Heroes successfully mounted an assault on the camp, continue to **Scene 9**.

If the Heroes were defeated in the attempt, continue to **Conclusion X**.

## SCENE 8

**Key Concepts:** The Heroes encounter a raiding party returning to the camp after they leave.

**Note:** This Scene should not be run if they did **Scene 7**. This is an alternative encounter for Heroes who rescued the Patrolman using stealth, or who simply never attempted a rescue.

*Having gathered what information you could, you fade back into the forest and begin your trek home. Hopefully the intelligence you have gained will be sufficient to mobilize a larger force and deal with this before it grows into something even larger.*

*A day into your return journey, you hear a loud rustling headed towards you through the trees.*

Allow the Heroes a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** check. Any who succeed are not surprised when a raiding party stumbles across them. Have the

raiders make **Perception** checks as well with the same DC; they weren't paying any special attention either, and thus have the chance to be just as surprised as the players.

## COMBAT

In all this combat consists of

- **Three (3) Agamassi ss'ressen**
- **Ridding three (3) Mor'let**

See **Combat Appendix One for Stats**

### Adventure Difficulty

- **Easy Mode:** Reduce Riders and Mor'let by 1
- **Difficult:** Add 1 Rider and Mor'let
- **Perilous:** Add 2 Riders and Mor'lets

**Tactics:** The ss'ressen will attack from their mounts but will let their mounts act of their own accord, laying about with their weapons at any target that would attack their mount, or their mount's target if there are no other targets in range.

The mor'lets themselves will go after the nearest targets, leaping at them and raking with the claws on their hind legs. No more than 2 mor'lets will attack any given target at one time.

**Notes:** The forest itself provides a fair amount of opportunity for cover and defensive positioning because of the thick foliage, but any advantage the players can get is also usable by the ss'ressen.

**Development:** If the Heroes successfully defeat the patrol, continue to **Scene 9**.

If the Heroes were themselves defeated, continue to **Conclusion X**.

## SCENE 9

**Key Concepts:** The Heroes return to Semar to report in.

*The journey back to Semar is a quiet one. A chance encounter with a pair of Shining Patrol scouts familiar with the area allows you to skirt around what might otherwise have been some eventful and dangerous encounters. As you reach the base of the mesa upon which Semar sits, night is falling. Looking up, you see the city aglow against the night sky, a beacon in the darkness that shines with a comforting ambiance. From where you stand, it seems the entire city is lit up, though you know there are sections that are darkened.*

*Escorted by the scouts, you are quickly through the gates and brought to the Shining Patrol headquarters where Colonel Demissie awaits in his office, doing paperwork.*

*“So you’ve made it back to us alive. Good. What did you find out there?”*

If the Heroes defeated the Agamassi at the temple:

*Colonel Demissie appraises you with deep respect. “That’s excellent news. One less thing we have to worry about means more time we can put towards rebuilding the city and the Patrol.”*

If the Heroes did not attempt to kill the Agamassi leader, or tried and escaped without succeeding:

*Colonel Demissie frowns and rubs his forehead. “Just one more thing that we have to look forward to. At least we’re forewarned though. I’ll see if I can’t put together a stronger strike force to deal with this threat before it grows out of control. The extra information you’ve been able to provide is invaluable in determining what kind of force we need.”*

If the Heroes share what they learned about the Varn, either from the temple itself or the attack on the ss’ressen village:

*“That’s very interesting... It would also explain why the attacks on us are disorganized. We*

*always thought that it was because they wanted to keep us off balance, but if it’s caused by internal conflict, that’s all to our benefit. Keep your ears open in the future. We know these Varn are a driving force behind a lot of the Ssethric brutality, but we don’t know much more about them. We know from the Black Talon ss’ressen that not all ss’ressen are inherently evil. Perhaps there are more factions we could support within the Ssethregoran Empire, to make our own lives easier.”*

If the Heroes mention leaving any Emerald Scales alive:

*“What were you thinking?! You should have killed them while you had the chance.”*

If the Heroes explain that the Emerald Scales might stand against the current Ssethregoran Empire as it stands:

*“Hmmm... perhaps that is something worth considering. We’ll look into it.”*

If the Heroes mention the traps of the Ssanu biomancer:

*“Ssi’ril again! Bah. He’s responsible for at least a half dozen missing patrol members of which we’re aware. One day soon, we’re going to have to deal with him. His traps are frustratingly clever.”*

If the Heroes mention the Hylis, Pakwa:

*“Those overgrown tree frogs are slippery and far too clever for our good. I hope you killed him.”*

If the Heroes did:

*“Well done. If you recovered anything useful from his corpse, I know that Lineus would love to see it. If you have some with you, I can see that he gets it.”*

If the Heroes did not:

*"I hope you know what you're doing. Do try and remember, they are extremely clever, and allied with the Ssanu. He probably wasn't sure if he could kill all of you, and so appeared helpful. Keep that in mind next time you run across one; a ssethric can't lie to you if they're dead."*

**Development:** Continue to **Conclusion A** if the Heroes defeated the Agamassi leader in **Scene 6**.

Continue to **Conclusion B** if the Heroes did not engage the leader and instead ran into the raiding party in **Scene 7**.

## CONCLUSIONS & ENDINGS

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### CONCLUSION A: A SUCCESSFUL MISSION

*You are given quarters in the Shining Shield Inn for the night, and bought a few rounds of drinks from grateful members of the Patrol who heard of your deeds. Your efforts have forestalled what could have become a major threat. For now, you can look forward to a warm bath and a soft bed.*

### CONCLUSION B: A SUCCESSFUL RECONNAISSANCE

*You are given quarters in the Patrolman's Rest Inn for the night, to continue your journeys in the morning. Perhaps back into the Morass for the Patrol, or onwards to other endeavors. At least your efforts have bought Semar some more time to prepare for whatever it is that is coming. For now, you can look forward to a warm bath and a soft bed.*

### CONCLUSION X: BIT OFF MORE THAN YOU COULD CHEW

*Your investigation of the Agamassi ss'ressen seems to be coming to an abrupt ending. Tied up and regularly beaten, perpetually watched and kept separate from your companions, you are now being dragged to an altar. A slaving, howling ss'ressen stands above you as you are tied down, and the last thing you see is a silver axe, whistling down at your head. A sudden sharp pain, then... who knows what the afterlife brings?*

## ADVENTURE REWARDS

After an adventure make sure players record what experience and treasure they acquire on their adventure chronical, after which check their numbers, mark off any favors, boons, or curses and add any particular game notes before signing the adventure chronical and having it back to the player.

## EXPERIENCE REWARDS

Arcanis Adventures do not necessarily reward experience points for winning combats. Instead Arcanis Adventures reward experience for achieving particular tasks or reaching important story points.

| Task, Achievement         |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Total Experience Possible | 450 |

## FAME

Arcanis is filled with secret societies and powerful organizations that constantly scream and maneuver behind the scenes. Players may be part of these organizations or even attract the attention of organizations they are not part of, for good or ill.

| Task, Achievement                                                    |                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Shining Patrol<br>Conclusion A or B                                  | Anyone<br>1 Fame       |
| Champions of the Silver Chalice<br>Defending the ss'ressen villagers | Members Only<br>1 Fame |

## COIN & TREASURE SUMMARY

Players may keep any basic equipment they find during the adventure (basic equipment as presenting in the core rules) as well as equipment listed in the Arcanis Primer and upcoming Arcanis Players Guide. Reminding anyone playing none-noble, or other than

Altherian players about the dangers of carrying blast powder weapons.

When players keep non-magical equipment the items sale value is removed from the total treasure value per character. If the amount removed is greater than their share of the coin, some or all of the other players must be willing to make up the difference.

### GM Note: Note on looting Armor/Weapons

The heroes are on a scouting mission enforce encumbrance rules.

If you wish a more simplified version, simply tell the heroes they can take 4 items the size of a shield before they start to suffer a 10 feet penalty to movement and suffer disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws that use Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.

### SCENE 3

- Spear(6) – 0.5 gp/each

### SCENE 4

- Large Bearded Axe (2) – 15 gp/each
- Spear (8) – 1gp/each
- Shield (8) – 5 gp/each

### SCENE 5

- Sling (10 shots) – 1sp
- Spear – 0.5 gp

### SCENE 7

- Large Flail (1) – 5gp
- Shield (7) – 5 gp/each
- Large Halberd (1) – 10 gp
- Spears (6) – 0.5 gp/each

### SCENE 8

- Large Bearded Axe (3) – 10 gp/each

### ALCHEMICAL ITEMS

For each gland, set of eggs, or ssanu alchemy item that the Heroes bring back, they receive a



credit towards the purchase of alchemical items, to a maximum of 100 gp per Hero. This credit may be used for any alchemical item in Forged in Magic: Reforged or the SRD, including potions of healing.

Scene 2 – Flame Tongue Glands (7) – 25 gp each

Scene 3 – Ss’ressen Eggs – 150 gp

Scene 5 – 25 per potion or 200 for the entire Bandelier

Scene 7 – Cyclura Pancreas – 200 gp

within sight of common people there is a chance that they had been spotted by a harvester or a harvester informant.

Unless the caster goes out of their way to hide such spell casting, news of their abilities will, eventually, reach the ears of the “wrong” people.

If the hero was open about their spell casting in public or failed two consecutive attempts to disguise it they get 1 point of harvester notice.

### **CONCLUSION A**

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Going above and beyond in their service, the heroes are paid 100gp each.

### **CONCLUSION B**

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They did the job, they should get paid. The heroes are paid 25gp each.

### **CONCLUSION X**

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Well, the heroes are dead... they don’t need coin where they are going.

## **STORY AWARDS**

### **FAVORS, BOONS, CURSES**

**Gratitude of Eyoab:** For rescuing him from a gruesome, drawn out death, Eyoab has spoken well of you to the other Shining Patrol Scouts. Once in the future, the Scouts will assist you on a journey into the Kraldjur Morass. During one combat that takes place in Altheria or the Kraldjur Morass, you may gain Advantage on a single initiative roll. Cross through this when this boon is used.

## **NOTICE OF THE HARVESTERS**

*This only pertains to characters who cast Arcane magic, every time during the adventure an arcane caster casts spells in a public place or*

## COMBAT APPENDIX 1 SCENE 3

In all this combat consists of

- **Six (6) Flaming Tongue Ss'ressen**
- **One (1) Flaming Tongue Disciple of Sipta**

### Adventure Difficulty

- **Easy Mode:** Reduce the numbers of Flaming Tongue Ss'ressen to 4
- **Difficult:** Add 2 Flaming Tongue Ss'ressen
- **Perilous:** Add 4 Flaming Tongue Ss'ressen

### FLAME TONGUE DISCIPLE OF SIPTA

*Medium humanoid (Ss'ressen), Neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 22 (4d8+4)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR  | DEX  | CON  | INT  | WIS  | CHA  |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 12   | 12   | 12   | 16   | 12   | 9    |
| (+1) | (+1) | (+1) | (+3) | (+1) | (-1) |

**Skills** Perception +3, Arcana +5

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Damage Resistances** fire damage

**Languages** Ss'ressen, Ssethric

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The Disciple's spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13; +5 to hit with spell attacks).

- Cantrips (at will): acid splash, poison spray, true strike
- 1st level (3 slots): burning hands, hellish rebuke

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack** – The flame tongue ss'ressen makes two weapon attacks, one of which may be its burning spittle attack.

**Claw** – Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+1) slashing damage.

**Burning Spittle (Recharge 5,6).** The flame tongue can spit a glob of burning spittle at a target – Ranged Weapon Attack: +3, range 30 ft., one target Hit: 6 (1d10+1) fire damage

### FLAME TONGUE SS'RESSEN WARRIOR

*Medium humanoid (Ss'ressen), Neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 13 (2d8+4)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR  | DEX  | CON  | INT  | WIS  | CHA  |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 14   | 12   | 14   | 8    | 12   | 7    |
| (+2) | (+1) | (+2) | (-2) | (+1) | (-2) |

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +3, Survival +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Damage Resistances** fire damage

**Languages** Ss'ressen, Ssethric

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack** – The flame tongue ss'ressen makes two weapon attacks, one of which may be its burning spittle attack.

**Spear** – Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

**Claw** – Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4+2) slashing damage.

**Burning Spittle (Recharge 5,6).** The flame tongue can spit a glob of burning spittle at a target - Ranged Weapon Attack: +3, range 30 ft., one target Hit: 6 (1d10+1) fire damage.



## COMBAT APPENDIX 2 SCENE 4

In all this combat consists of

- **Two (2) Agamassi (Horned Jowl) Ss'ressen**
- **Eight (8) troglodyte scouts.**

### Adventure Difficulty

- **Easy Mode:** Reduce the number of troglodyte scouts to 4
- **Difficult:** Add 4 troglodyte scouts
- **Perilous:** Add 8 troglodyte scouts

### AGAMASSI ("HORNE JOWL")

*Large humanoid (ss'ressen)*

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 37 (5d8+15)

**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR        | DEX        | CON        | INT        | WIS        | CHA       |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| 17<br>(+3) | 11<br>(+0) | 16<br>(+3) | 11<br>(+0) | 12<br>(+1) | 9<br>(-1) |

**Skills** Athletics +5, Intimidation +3, Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Ssethric

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

#### ACTIONS

**Bearded Axe** – Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d12+3) slashing damage.

**Tail Swipe** – *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8+3) bludgeoning damage. On a successful hit, target must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.

### TROGLODYTE SCOUT

*Medium humanoid*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8+2)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR        | DEX        | CON        | INT       | WIS        | CHA       |
|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| 14<br>(+2) | 10<br>(+0) | 13<br>(+1) | 6<br>(-2) | 10<br>(+0) | 6<br>(+2) |

**Skills** Stealth +2, Survival +2

**Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Ssressen, Ssethric

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

#### ACTIONS

**Spear** – Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage or 6 (1d8+2) if used two handed.

**Claw (or Bite)** – Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

## COMBAT APPENDIX 3

### SCENE 5 (OPTIONAL)

#### Adventure Difficulty

- There are no adjustments for this encounter

**Tactics:** Escape. Pakwa isn't interested in killing anyone or anything.

#### PAKWA

*Small humanoid (Hylis) Neutral*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 27 (6d8)

**Speed** 30 ft. (or leap 40ft or 10ft high see below)

| STR        | DEX        | CON        | INT        | WIS        | CHA        |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 10<br>(+0) | 16<br>(+3) | 14<br>(+2) | 11<br>(+0) | 13<br>(+1) | 17<br>(+3) |

**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Deception +5, Insight +4, Perception +4, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +6

**Senses** passive Perception 14

**Languages** Low Coyrani, Ssressen, Sethric, Hylis

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

#### SPECIAL TRAITS

**Leap:** *Hylis are natural jumpers, and use their movement to leap either 40 ft. across or 10 ft. high. They may also to leap while taking the dash action.*

**Cunning Action.** *On each of his turns Pakwa can use a bonus action to or take the Dash (to leap see above), Disengage, or Hide action.*

#### ACTIONS

**Verruc Sling** – *Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1) bludgeoning damage.*

#### REACTION

**Guile and Cunning:** *Pakwa is far more cunning and intelligent than most of his kind, after any attack roll where he rolls a 20 he may use the ensuing confusion hide as a reaction.*



## COMBAT APPENDIX 4 SCENE 7

In all this combat consists of

- **One (1) Gamassi Drakhen**
- **One (1) Cyclura War Beast**
- **One (1) Agamassi Overseer**
- **Six (6) troglodyte scouts**

### If Attacked

**Three (3) Agamassi Drummers**

### **Adventure Difficulty**

- **Easy Mode:** Reduce the troglodyte scouts to 3
- **Difficult:** Add 2 troglodyte scouts
- **Perilous:** Add 6 troglodyte scouts

### AGAMASSI OVERSEER

*Large humanoid (ss'ressen), neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 37 (5d8+15)

**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR        | DEX        | CON        | INT       | WIS        | CHA       |
|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| 17<br>(+3) | 11<br>(+0) | 16<br>(+3) | 12<br>(+) | 12<br>(+1) | 9<br>(-1) |

**Skills** Athletics +5, Intimidation +3, Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Ssethric

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

### SPECIAL TRAITS

**By whip and fang:** Agamassi Overseers quite literally whip their troops into order. As a reaction the Agamassi Overseer can grant any Ss'ressen or a lower challenge rating or reptilian humanoid (such as Kobolds and Troglodytes) within 30 feet a new saving throw, with advantage to shake off the terrified condition.

### ACTIONS

**Flail** – *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+3) slashing damage.

**Tail Swipe** – *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+3) bludgeoning damage. On a successful hit, target must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.

## AGAMASSI DRAKHEN

*Large humanoid (ss'ressen), neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 52 (7d8+21)

**Speed** 40 ft. (60 ft. while mounted)

| STR  | DEX  | CON  | INT  | WIS  | CHA  |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 18   | 13   | 16   | 10   | 12   | 7    |
| (+4) | (+1) | (+3) | (+0) | (+1) | (-2) |

**Skills** Athletics +5, Perception +3, Survival +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Ssethric

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Halberd** – *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 15 (2d10+4) slashing damage

### SPECIAL TRAITS

**Charge Attack** – While mounted if the Drakhen chooses to take a dash action, he may use a bonus action to attack with his weapon dealing an additional +5 damage, but in doing so grants Advantage on any melee attacks against his mount until the beginning of his next turn.

## CYCLURA

*Huge beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 30 (4d10+8)

**Speed** 60 ft.

| STR  | DEX  | CON  | INT  | WIS  | CHA  |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 17   | 15   | 15   | 3    | 12   | 7    |
| (+3) | (+2) | (+2) | (-4) | (+1) | (+2) |

**Skills** Athletics +5, Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Trample** – The cyclura may use its stomp attack on any prone opponent within 5 ft. as a bonus action.

### ACTIONS

**Gore (Nasal Horn)** – *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage.

**Tail Swipe** – *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6+3) bludgeoning damage. On a successful hit, target must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Stomp** – *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d10+3) bludgeoning damage.

## TROGLODYTE SCOUT

*Medium humanoid*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8+2)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR        | DEX        | CON        | INT       | WIS        | CHA        |
|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 14<br>(+2) | 10<br>(+0) | 13<br>(+1) | 6<br>(-2) | 10<br>(+0) | 6<br>(+-2) |

**Skills** Stealth +2, Survival +2

**Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Ssressen, Ssthric

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Spear** – Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage or 6 (1d8+2) if used two handed.

**Claw (or Bite)** – Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

## AGAMASSI DRUMMERS ("HORNED JOWL")

*Large humanoid (ss'ressen)*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8+2)

**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR        | DEX        | CON        | INT        | WIS        | CHA        |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 12<br>(+1) | 12<br>(+1) | 12<br>(+1) | 11<br>(+0) | 12<br>(+1) | 14<br>(+2) |

**Skills** Athletics +3, Performance +4

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Ssthric

**Challenge** 0 (10 XP)

### ACTIONS

**If Attacked will only take the Disengage, Dodge, and Dash actions to run away into the jungle.**

## COMBAT APPENDIX 5 SCENE 8

In all this combat consists of

- **Three (3) Agamassi ss'ressen**
- **Ridding three (3) Mor'let**

### Adventure Difficulty

- **Easy Mode:** Reduce Riders and Mor'let by 1
- **Difficult:** Add 1 Rider and Mor'let
- **Perilous:** Add 2 Riders and Mor'lets

### AGAMASSI ("HORNED JOWL")

*Large humanoid (ss'ressen)*

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 37 (5d8+15)

**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR        | DEX        | CON        | INT        | WIS        | CHA       |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| 17<br>(+3) | 11<br>(+0) | 16<br>(+3) | 11<br>(+0) | 12<br>(+1) | 9<br>(-1) |

**Skills** Athletics +5, Intimidation +3, Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Ssethric

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Bearded Axe** – *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12+3) slashing damage.

**Tail Swipe** – *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+3) bludgeoning damage. On a successful hit, target must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.

### MOR'LET

*Large beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 21 (3d10 + 6)

**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR        | DEX        | CON        | INT       | WIS        | CHA       |
|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| 17<br>(+3) | 15<br>(+2) | 14<br>(+2) | 3<br>(-4) | 12<br>(+1) | 8<br>(-1) |

**Skills:** Perception +3, Stealth +5

**Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Keen Smell:** The mor'let has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

**Pack Tactics:** The mor'let has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the mor'let's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d0 + 3) piercing damage.

**Talons.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage