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To Preserve Knowledge Is To Preserve Our Souls

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...and the Path Shall Be Perilous

by Kenyon Daniel

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #7***

GM Information

This adventure is appropriate for any discipline, circles 3-5. It is vitally important that the entire adventure be read prior to running. All text that should be read to the players is italicized. Most of the creatures have very involved powers, especially the Horror. If the adventure is to be a challenge then the creatures must be played to their potential. Also, since the power levels are so vastly different between 3rd and 5th circle, two encounters have been provided in different sections. One encounter is for lower circles and the higher is for higher circles, obviously. But don't be alarmed, as the GM you may fold, spindle, or mutilate at will. Hey, it's your game! Consider everything in here a suggestion.

Overview

This adventure focuses on the insidious nature of nonphysical Horrors. The entire front half of the module pits the characters against obvious physical opponents. The encounters are designed such that if the party works together they can overcome their adversaries.

This is in direct contrast to the Crystal Entity (***Earthdawn***, pg. 300) in the latter half of the adventure. This Horror insinuates itself into the characters' minds without them realizing it. The enemy is no longer external but is now within the party itself. If the group attempts to deal with the enemy as though it were external it is likely that they will destroy each other. At best the players should realize what is happening just before they tear each other apart. Then they can deal with the Horror as an external physical enemy.

GM Warning:

This adventure relies on you, the GM, to accurately portray the Horror. Given the nature of the other encounters as normal combats, it is vital that you understand the nature and mode

of operation of the Crystal Entity. The insinuations the characters receive should sound reasonable and need to appear as though they come from the character's own mind, not from an external influence. It is important that enough doubt is created about what is happening that the players are kept off balance until the revelation. You should plan the Horrors suggestions in advance.

Additionally, the use of a Horror dramatically increases the chances of character death. Don't be fooled! There is no such thing as a "minor Horror". Though the crystal entity is not worth many legend points it is still quite potent and deadly, if played intelligently, and its powers used correctly. While I do not suggest or condone character death, a good solid pummeling should infuse some respect. Of course this is Earthdawn, and characters do die at the hands of the Horrors.

That out of the way, on to the adventure!

Background

Deep within the Servos Jungle, amid the tribes of humans, a small t'skrang family has set up a trading post. Using the natural resources of the river, they ply their trade to nearby tribes and to a human illusionist that lives at the river's source.

This illusionist, long ago, led an expedition to Kaer Jalendale. In search of the fabled Lorm's Axe, they went searching for clues and legends. They found the Wormskull. The illusionist's party was decimated, three survivors fled the kaer, two of which died soon after from their wounds. Shaken and sick, he returned to his wife and child at the base of the Tylon Mountains. He lived in fear that the Wormskull had marked him and that it would eventually find him. However, his health grew steadily weaker and he was unable to leave the lake.

While tending to his garden, he saw the Crystal Entity drop from astral space. Unaware of what the object was he placed the inch long shard of crystal in a strong box and hid it from his family. Over the next few days, his paranoia increased until he was sure that the Wormskull had taken over his family and was plotting to torture him until he died. What had happened was that the Crystal Entity had insinuated itself into his mind and was feeding him these thoughts and the energy to act on them. A few days later he murdered his family, and then realized what had happened. The anguish fed the Horror as never before. However, the illusionist then decided it would destroy the creature. Unable to further control the illusionist the Horror killed him.

These events occurred about a week prior to the group meeting the t'skrang. The illusionist's wife had been doing business with them for some time. However, on her last trip she spoke of the erratic behavior of her husband. The t'skrang dismissed it as the trait of all magic-users. The wife has not been back since then. At this point the t'skrang are concerned for

their friends and will ask the adventurers to please check on them and make sure everything is alright.

Part 1: Crossing the Hinterlands

Overview

This section demonstrates some of the dangers inherent in traveling across Barsaive's hinterlands. Two encounters are presented and separated for difficulty. While directly dangerous, the espagra do not represent the threat of the unknown that a unicorn does. Since most players will have preconceptions of the unicorn this represents a greater threat.

Themes and Ideas

Read to the players:

The vast plains of Barsaive's hinterlands lay before you. Thick humidity soaks through your clothing and the sun fades and returns as clouds pass over it, casting everything in a dull grey. You begin your trek across the plains in hopes of making some distance before the eventual downpour of Barsaive's wet season begins.

Stress the barrenness of the land and the presence of grazing animals. The rain adds to the atmosphere. Mention the dull rumbling of thunder and the flashes of lightning. Use the weather to provide a sense of urgency. This staging says,"There is a threat that will only grow larger with time."

Crossing the plains can take as little or as much time as you need. Two possible encounters are listed below. The first,"Espagra Take Flight," is designed for lower circles due to the commonality of the creature. The latter, "A New Predator," is designed for higher circle characters not only for the danger of the unicorn; but also for the preconceptions the players may have toward unicorns.

Espagra Take Flight

Read to the players:

As you wade through the tall grass of the plains, now matted and sticking to you because of the rain, you become aware of throaty growls and hisses from high overhead. You look up just in time to see a flock of brilliantly blue lizards swooping down toward the party.

Usually, I do not actually name the creature as that detracts from the suspense. While these look like espagra as far as the characters are concerned they may not be. Four of these creatures attack the group. They use their swooping attacks until characters are knocked down. Then others attack fallen characters.

A New Predator

Read to the players:

The ground rumbles from the thunder of hoof beats. A slash of lightning and an explosion of thunder nearly blind and deafen you. However, through the rain you can just see a herd of antelope racing toward you shouting to the furies.

As they pass, you can just make out their pursuers. Two horses with great horns protruding from their foreheads are racing toward the group. In the flash of lightning you can see their brilliant white manes glistening in the light.

The pursuers are obviously Unicorns (***Creatures of Barsaive***, pg. 94). There are four of them and they are of the evil, man-eating variety. Once they spot the party they will move to attack. They approach carefully, subtly using their calming power until they are close enough to either charge or attack in melee. You should play up their agreeableness, the influences of the power, to those who succumb, to others just describe how they are moving toward the group. If attacked, they will immediately attack with charges if they are some distance away, or they engage in melee. However, usually at least one breaks off from melee so it can charge the group. The unicorns are ferocious but not stupid; if two of them are killed, the others will try to flee.

Those two events are emblematic of the typical encounters in the hinterlands. Feel free to adjust the numbers of creatures or the creatures themselves to suit your party. In fact the espagra encounter does offer a few more legend points than suggested by the book when combined with the Horror and the saurals later. However, four espagra should not be too difficult to deal with. But be sure to balance the encounters as you see fit.

Troubleshooting:

Not much can go wrong in this part. If party members appear to about to be killed then back off a little bit. Neither event is significant enough to kill a party member, unless you don't mind death by mishap.

As noted the Legend Award for the espagra can be high, however, this isn't a real unbalancer as they will be burning karma later and the extra legend points will go to replace them. Also

there is a shortage of treasure worth legend points so this extra can make up for it.

Oh, and if you're feeling particularly vicious you can have both events happen. After all this is Barsaive and the wilds are just that!

Part 2: The Servos Jungle

Overview

This part exposes the party to some of the normal encounters to be found in the Servos Jungle. Again it is the external physicality of these encounters that is important. Later in the adventure the party will not be prepared for the threat the Horror poses. As before, two encounters are presented. The Lightning Lizards are for the lower circles, and the Crojen are for higher circles.

Themes and Ideas

Read to the players:

Finally, after unending stretches of plains you reach the tree line of the Servos Jungle. Entering the jungle light vanishes. The massive canopy overhead obscures almost all traces of sunlight, throwing you into darkness. Sounds drift in from all around as you penetrate the gloom. Some are familiar, birds, insects, others less wholesome and almost unrecognizable.

Play up the darkness and claustrophobic aspects of the jungle. Present vines to be cut through, and other obstacles. Though there is little undergrowth in a jungle such as this, due to the canopy overhead, there should be just enough that the players can almost see shapes ducking in and around them.

Again the encounters provided are designed to get the party thinking in a certain mode: that the enemies are from without, and as a team they can be beaten. Though it may seem to be hack and slash two important facts must be remembered. First, a tone is being set concerning threats. Secondly, these areas of Barsaive are dangerous. Remember these creatures will break off the attack; they are, after all, animals. So the idea is not to kill the party. Merely expose them to the dangers of travel in these areas and to get them responding to threats that will prove futile when faced with the Horror. The point of which is to surprise and shock them with those events later in the module.

Lightning Lizards

Read to the players:

A strange smell fills the air. Your hair (or scales) begin to stand on end as you make your way through the jungle. Looking around nervously you see nothing out of the ordinary.

Have everyone who chooses to look make a perception test against the lizards' initiative result. Those that beat the number are not surprised, spot the lizards, and can roll initiative as well. Others, well, lets just hope for the best since they are surprised with all the penalties that go with it. The lizards are in the trees above the party and launch their attacks with twin-bolts first. If you like assume their crackling armor is already active. If it is, you can make the perception test easier due to the light it gives off. There are three lizards. Any lizard that fails a knockdown test falls to the ground 15 feet and takes step 6 damage. The lizards will fight until one is killed the others flee if they can. They either leap from tree to tree or clamber to the ground and run.

Crojen Attack

As the players walk through the jungle they are viciously set upon by a pack of crojen (***Barsaive Box Set Gamemasters Book***, pg 7; there should be one less crojen than party members). Have every player make a surprise roll. Those that fail suffer all penalties for surprise and are attacked. It is important to note that armor does not protect against crojen attacks in some manner "No armor can withstand a crojen attack". This means that: a) players cannot subtract armor from damage, or b) armor does not subtract from damage and is reduced by one point per hit, or c) armor subtracts from damage but is reduced by one point per hit. However you want to do it, armor is practically ineffectual against crojen attacks.

Troubleshooting

This is not hack and slash. Again characters should not be killed by the encounters. Hurt, armor loss, whatever, is fine, but the events are not significant enough to kill anyone. If it might be going that way then back off or better yet have a will- o-wisp show up that has heat food or some other healing. A pack of storm wolves can arrive and help the characters as well. Use of these creatures shows the party that not all things are evil and want to eat them. The important aspect of this part is more reinforcement of the "typical threat". Remember it's all a set up for the events at the illusionist's house!

Meeting with the T'skrang

Overview

In this part, the adventurers meet with a t'skrang family on a river. They can trade for fresh supplies and the t'skrang will be interested in hearing news and tales. During this scene the house is attacked by several Saural (***Creatures of Barsaive***, pg. 78). After the attack, the t'skrang express their fears concerning their friends up the river. They will ask the adventurers to please take a look; making sure everything is alright. They have nothing to offer except some fresh supplies.

Themes and Ideas

Read to the players

The sound of running water echoes through the jungles. The humidity increases and you see daylight! As you break the tree line, you see a swiftly flowing river. Crystal waters beckon you and hundreds of brightly colored fish swim in them. A shout reaches your ears. Across the river is a fishing hut and you see a pair of t'skrang standing on a wooden dock. They are shouting and waving for you to come over!

Emphasize the friendliness of the t'skrang. When it comes time for the t'skrang to ask the characters for help, they should want to help.

Events

The t'skrang are traders. They trade in fish and spices using the amounts in the ***Barsaive Box Set Gamemaster Book*** as a guide. They will be glad to ferry the party across the river, for a small fee. They have a sturdy rowboat tethered to their dock. Obsidimen and trolls will have to find another way over, unfortunately. However, the water isn't that deep or swift, though it is very, very cold.

The t'skrang will talk with the adventurers for news and stories of their travels. They are simple farmers that trade with some tribes in the jungle. After everyone has said their full and all trading is concluded they adventurers are likely to move on their way. However, soon after they are back in the jungle:

Read to the players:

"With fresh supplies and conversation, you make your way back through the Servos. However, you're barely into the jungle when you hear screams from the shack. Cries of help reach your ears . . .

When the party arrives back at the shanty, they see that one of the t'skrang is on the shore

gripping his face in pain. The other is swinging an oar at several large alligators that have climbed on shore. Clouds of acrid steam radiate from them.

The creatures are saurals, and there are six of them. Though they are not worth many legend points, they are very dangerous! Weapons and armor are likely to suffer damage while fighting the creatures. If the party is of low circles lower the number of saurals to three or four depending on how they have been doing.

When the party dispatches the threat and tend the wounded the t'skrang tells them the following:

We thank you very much, dear friends, for your help. I have not seen these creatures so aggressive before. The passions preserve us. I fear someone else may need your help as well.

The t'skrang will go on to tell the party about the magic-user's wife who visited them weekly. They do not know that the adept was an illusionist. They will explain that the last time she was here she was complaining of her husband's illness. That he seemed "out of sorts". She hasn't been back in over a week. The t'skrang now fear that perhaps the saurals attacked and injured them. They will ask the party to please check on their friends, they live just up the river perhaps a day away. All the t'skrang can offer are more supplies. Their dock and boat were damaged in the fight due to the saural acid.

Troubleshooting

The only thing that can really go wrong is if the players refuse to go check on the magic-user and his wife. If they seem hesitant, since the t'skrang have nothing to offer, then suggest that the magic-user might be able to train one of the party members. The t'skrang do not actually know what discipline the adept is, but if they are in trouble they might be gracious etc.

Secondly, the saurals can be deadly opponents. The blindness is permanent without a questor of Garlen's powers. However, sometimes mangling a character (temporarily of course) is just what is needed to expand on the role-playing. You may also find that the characters are running thin on armor and/or weapons. In this case, the t'skrang may have a few common items they acquired from trading they will be willing to give the party in exchange for their cooperation.

Part 4: the Illusionist's House

Overview

This is where the most significant events of the adventure take place. From the moment they spot the house they will be assaulted by the Crystal Entity. They will be able to explore the small house and grounds and eventually will find the entrance to a small network of caves behind the waterfall. All this time, the Horror will be attempting to force the players to turn on each other. Its suggestions start off low key such as,"You better keep an eye on so and so he has been acting suspicious." Toward the end they become downright violent,"He's about to attack the party you can see it in his eye, better stop him now!" Provide the suggestions as though they themselves were thinking these things. It is also best to work on biases that already exist in the game.

Themes and Images

Read to the players

As you make your way up the river, through the Servos Jungle, you suddenly become aware of the widening of the river. The jungle seems to thin ahead and golden shafts of sparkling sunlight cascade through the foliage and mist bathing everything in a golden glow. Through the trees you spot a glen ahead. A huge lake extends from the base of a crashing waterfall that casts a rainbow across its base. As you clear the Servos you see the massive river snake away to the south and the towering cliffs of the Tylon Mountains rise before you to the west. However, across the lake near the waterfall you see a gleaming building; glistening as though it were carved from glass.

Play up the serenity and beauty of this place. The glass building and the rushing water fall with its rainbows should be wondrous to behold. Anything to instill a sense of awe and quiet appreciation in the players. This is where things get dark and ugly!

At this point you should start giving the suggestions (preferably written down) to the players. Remember the Horror is patient and will take its time to slowly get a character to do what it wants. Eventually, it wants the characters to kill each other and have one survive just long enough to realize what he has done. It will not draw attention to itself by suggesting,"I think you should kill the swordmaster." Rather give the player a note that says,"You notice that the swordmaster is behaving oddly." Don't elaborate just allow it to build. Oh, and be sure to do this to a few characters, the more paranoia the better.

Key to the Illusionist's Dwelling

Approach to the House

Read to the players:

As you approach the modest dwelling you are again awed by the wondrous sight that greets

your gaze. The entire house seems to be composed of, not glass as you had thought, but ice or crystal. The details are perfect, from the windows, the open door, to the individual pieces of straw that make the roof. However, as you approach, you begin to suspect that something is wrong. Near the shore is a waterwheel, which has stopped spinning, and now water simply cascades over it. Also near the wheel, is a garden of sorts that is terribly overgrown. An eerie silence hangs in the air, punctuated by the creak of the wheel and the crash of the waterfall.

Anyone who examines the area can see that the crystal extends for some distance around the house. Again the remarkable detail is present, as each blade of grass appears to be made of crystal. If any crystal is broken a sticky sap oozes out of the break. This is not harmful and does not provoke a reaction from the entity that is too busy playing with the characters.

1. Main Room of the House

Read to the players:

Light cascades crazily inside the structure, throwing rainbows and colors everywhere. The entire interior is also crystal. The fireplace, shelves, floor, everything appears to have been cut directly from the crystal. To your left, tinkling emerges from a crystal curtain hanging in a doorway fluttering in the breeze.

Then to your horror you see the bodies. Two of them, one significantly smaller. They are spun up in crystal thread like spider's silk. Their mouths open in silenced screams.

If examined the bodies are of a woman and a child. If the party attempt to cut them out, their blows shatter the crystal leaving nothing. No bone, not cloth, nothing! This should give them the shivers!

Anyone searching the room can find a crystallized journal it is located on the fireplace and is open to the following passage:

> Under the direction of my wife, I have moved the laboratory to a secret recess I located hidden in the falls. I shall use my magics there to help further my studies of the statuette. I still remember finding the trinket at Jalendale. I still mourn the loss of my friends to the Wormskull there in. The patience of my wife is so great to have listened and stayed after I told her of the horrors I witnessed.
>
> She is correct, though, the bandits from Kratas may be temporarily stopped while my illusions are in place but I need a safe area that is well hidden where I can conduct my research, and to which we can retreat if necessary.

It is important to note, that nethermancy will not work on the bodies as there is nothing there for it to work on. The journal can be read but cannot be taken. Nor can any other pages be

read since the whole thing has been crystallized.

2. The Bedroom

Read to the players:

Carefully, you push past the crystal curtain, a light tinkling filling the air, and into the adjacent room. A crystal straw bed fills this room and a small firepit is dug into the south western corner.

Under the bed hidden by an illusion is the chest that contains the crystal entity. When the party moves to uncover it, the Horror attacks in force using its spells and karma tap in an effort to kill the party. Also in the chest is a Talisman Statue (***Game Mastering Earthdawn***, pg. 43). The name of this statue is "Phantasm" as mentioned in the journal in the caves. It functions with illusionist magic.

It is important that the actions of the Horror be realized before the party uncovers the chest. Dissuade the party from hacking through the straw until they realize why they should do it. If someone starts hacking through it, a person the Horror has been communicating with will get the idea that he should stop the person because it might bring the house down or something.

3. The Farm

Read to the players:

The trellis of the river farm lies half submerged in the lake. The vines of once cultivated vegetables now grow haphazardly around the wooden beams. The creaking of the water wheel washes over you in short snaps.

This area is empty save for some crystal that extends this far.

4. Path to the Falls

Read to the players:

As you walk north you see a fairly well tramped out path in the grass that leads toward the falls.

The way gets a little slippery as one approaches the waterfall, and makes their way across the rocks. A simple dex (4) is required to safely navigate the walkway. Failure and the character falls 20 feet into rocks below, and suffers damage step 10 (d10+d6).

Finding the entrance marks the end of this section.

Troubleshooting

The biggest problem may be in preventing the characters from uncovering the chest. The best way to handle this is as they start hacking through things threaten to bring the house down on them. That should be enough. However, another method is to have any characters that the Horror is communicating with also prevent characters from digging through the straw.

It is vitally important that the suggestions from the Horror remain subtle. If you clue the characters in too quickly, the great shock is lost. When properly executed this scenario leads to excellent role-playing and tension. There is no need to rush things. Slowly divide the party. In all likelihood, at least one person will find the answers in the cave before the party tears themselves apart. Then they can focus on the Horror.

Part 5: The Caves

Overview

The caves need no map. This is not a dungeon crawl. A few simple passages are all that are really necessary. Have the characters wander. The only encounter is a pesky will-o-wisp that has "Monstrous mantle". It pesters the party taking on a myriad of shapes until they finally disbelieve or destroy it. During this excursion the paranoia of those under the Horror's influence should be heightened and pushed to boiling points. Once several party members are ready to kill, and the wisp is dealt with then go ahead and introduce the Laboratory.

Themes and Images

Read to the players:

As you cross the threshold into the damp caverns, numerous lights flare to life casting a dull blue glow down the twisting tunnel that extends north."

Again the caverns should not be too complex. The point is to get the party tunnel crawling together so that suggestions and paranoia can be enhanced.

Will-O-Wisp (***Creatures of Barsaive***, pg. 102)

This Will-O-Wisp has the spell Monstrous Mantle. It can take the form of several creatures

such as Shadowmants, Cadaver men, Cave Trolls. Whatever you like. It does not get any of the special attacks associated with the creature. It harries the party and confuses them, just as the Horror's insinuations become more intense. It flees after taking any damage, then attacks again in a different form later. If some is successful in dispelling the illusion the wisp flees and does not return. Award the points for it then.

1. Laboratory

The door to the lab is locked and has "Impossible lock" cast on the lock. The lock will not open unless the character beats a sensing difficulty of 18 +1d6.

Once inside read to the players:

A swirl of dust flows out from the disturbed air revealing a dimly lit chamber. The ruins of a laboratory are plainly visible in the light of the quartz. Shattered vials lie strewn around the room and an overturned table dominates the center of the room. Curiously, several holes have been cut into the table.

Behind the table is the body of the illusionist. He is quite dead and his clothing also has the same kind of small holes punched through it as are evidenced on the table. His robe is damaged but salvageable. In the room are the following:

- Remains of the illusionist's journal.
- A small vanilla smelling candle engraved with silver glyphs.

This candle is, in fact, a page of the illusionist's grimoire. If lit, it does not actually melt, but releases a powerful incense that can give the secrets of "Wall of Unfire" (5th circle illusion).

The Journal entry:

> As I tended the garden today, I heard a strange plink that caught my attention. Nearby, a small crystal about the size of a walnut was on the ground. It shimmered with all the colors of the rainbow and seemed to hum and vibrate as I picked it up. It came to me that perhaps I should find a safe place for the peculiar object as it might be magical and would warrant further study.
>
> When I came back to the house Natalie asked me what had happened and why I left the garden. It seemed prudent to not tell her the full story in case she should worry or force me to get rid of it. The magic seemed to back me as well for the force of the karma felt stronger.
>
> ...after several months research I have determined that the statue's name could be Phantasm. Later I will try to attach the thread using this name. I must be careful for the wrong attachment could lead to . . .

...My wife has begun acting strangely as has my son. I have reason to believe a Horror has taken residence near the falls or perhaps from the Tylon peaks above. I must watch them more carefully. A little voice inside me is becoming very worried and afraid at what might happen. Perhaps the Wormskull of Jalendale has tracked me here?

...may the passions forgive me, for what I had to do. It became evident that a Horror had possessed my family. So while they slept I killed them with powerful illusions. I don't know why I had to frighten them to death. It seemed prudent and the magic supported the action very strongly. But something is tearing at me. As I watched them die, I felt part of myself go with them. How could I have murdered my family?

...Too late I know what is happening here. The crystal is the Horror and I am the corrupted one. It whispers to me. Offers foul suggestions and feeds off the betrayal that I have committed. I shall never be forgiven. As I write this I intend to go to the chest in which I placed the creature, hidden so long ago carefully by me in the house. My hands are trembling and my heart feels ready to burst, I can't believe this is happening. I can't fail I must unravel the illusions and destroy the creature before . . .

The journal is blood soaked. At this point the party has all the clues to the puzzle. At the same time, the Horror should be sending its strongest influences to the affected characters. With luck they will be able to snap out of it and face the Horror. In order to destroy the Horror they must find the seed hidden in the wooden chest. The chest is hidden under the straw bed and is cloaked with a variant of the False Floor spell, the spell makes it look like there is nothing unusual about the floor. Use that spell for sensing and disbelief values. About half of the Horror's death rating is vested in the house itself. The remaining amount is in the seed.

Remember the point of this adventure is the conflict of party members that fall under the Horror's sway. They are not corrupted or irretrievably damaged. Party members may turn on each other and come to actual blows, much to the Horror's amusement. Those not affected should realize that the seed must be destroyed. The great conflict lies in facing the Horror, and the rogue party members. In this case they will fail. In order to succeed, the party must (through role-playing) bring their comrades back from the brink of insanity. Then as a group they can face the Horror. That alone will be an incredible fight!

Troubleshooting

What can be said? It is important to build up the insinuations until the party members are at each other's throat. Again you cannot force these insinuations. Though they increase in their violent content they must still seem to come from the characters own thoughts.

The fight with the Horror will be tough! It should be tough! Before the party officially engages it, the entity will have cast Counterspell on itself. It will use its deathspikes in an attempt to kill those it can. Characters may die, as this is a significant encounter with a Horror of Earthdawn. If the players work together as a team and get a few lucky rolls, they can probably pull through this. However, as GMs we are remiss in our duties if we make the Horrors easy to beat. Thrash them hard, but try not to kill them. Knock them unconscious, maim them, whatever. Make them realize that they must rely on each other to defeat enemies. That is what this adventure is about. Defeating the Horror is the end of the Adventure each character should earn 300 legend points as an award. As far as other awards go, you're the GM and you know what happened better than I do! Give the other awards as you see fit!

Loose Threads

The statuette can be a decent thread item for any illusionists in the party. Otherwise, it can be sold to an illusionist for a pretty penny!

The Crystal Entity is not destroyed. It is merely blasted back to Astral Space, there it can hound characters it has horror marked. If you're feeling nasty.

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Andelin

by David Caraley

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #6***

Centuries ago, before the Horrors came and changed the fair face of our land forever, there was a beautiful elven settlement named Andelin deep within the woods of Barsaive north of the Aras Sea. Andelin was formed out of the great trees of the forest and shaped from the natural stone of the cliffs and hills. The buildings were graceful and blended naturally with their surroundings. Even members of the court at Wyrm Wood would go and visit, enjoying the beauty of the city and the hospitality of Redlif, the prince of the lands of Andelin.

Prince Redlif was reknown for his weaponcrafting skill. It was said that he could forge a blade that could pierce the heaviest plate armor just by being allowed to fall upon it. He could craft chain mail that would be light as silk and stronger than the sturdiest dwarven crafted plate armor. Many nobles from Wyrm Wood, Shosara, and the City of Spires would visit the court at Andelin in hope of receiving a weapon or armor as a gift from its Prince. It was said that he had no equal in his craft. Even now, centuries later, a weapon or armor forged in Andelin by Prince Redlif is considered to be without equal.

As the time of the Scourge grew near, Queen Alachia gave her decree that none of the elven set§tlements would follow the Theran rituals to ward against the Horrors. As we all know, many of the elven kingdoms defied her decree, and were cast out from the court. But Prince Redlif remained loyal to his Queen. Though he disagreed with her policy, he followed Queen Alachia's decree and refused any Theran aid, relying on the magical wards provided by Wyrm Wood.

Andelin was soon fortified by using the living magic of elemental wood and earth, and its protections were completed before the first of the Horrors managed to enter the forest. Illusionists and elementalists cast various protective spells, enchantments that would confuse and bewilder anyone who entered the woods. Enchantments that would lead the unwary away from the settlement.

Prince Redlif spent the final decades before the Scourge travelling the lands of Barsaive with his lifemate Larkspur, a warrior adept of great skill. The two wielded the magical swords Twin I and Twin II, blades that allowed communication and the sharing of damage between the two wielders. Redlif and Larkspur used these two swords to battle against the few Horrors that originally made their way to Barsaive, helping many communities while learning about the magical invaders.

As the Scourge grew near, the two brave heroes started to make their way back towards Andelin. It was then that disaster struck. They were almost back to the woods when a Horror

known as the Corrupter of Thoughts came upon them. It is said the Horror took control of Larkspur, and used her to fight Redlif. After a long and spectacular battle, Redlif managed to defeat his lifemate, using all of his fighting and magical skills, but he was unable to bring himself to take her life. He took her unconscious body and returned to Andelin.

Once he managed to return to his city, Prince Redlif seemed a different person. He shut himself in the palace and accepted no visitors. He sent for books on magic and nethermancy, convinced that there had to be some way to save his beloved from the Horror's possession. Tales say that he became a powerful nethermancer, and worked many new enchantments into the defenses of Andelin. It is rumored that Redlif created special weapons for the woodsmen, bladedancers, warriors, and scouts that guarded the borders against Horror incursions. Weapons that would kill or banish the invaders. Still, he had no luck in driving the Corruptor of Thoughts from Larkspur's mind. Finally, he decided that the only way to save his lady was to destroy the Horror that possessed her.

To this end Redlif forged a mighty weapon. He destroyed the two twin blades and used their metal to create a sword named Elenorial, taking over a year just to complete the blade. It was rumored to have no equal. He wove into the blade many mighty magics, both elemental and nethermantic. Once he had completed the sword, he forged armor and a shield, making them the most powerful he could, and using his own blood in their making. After another year, he was ready.

In the final year before Andelin was sealed Prince Redlif left his home one last time. He went forth to find and slay the Horror that possessed his beloved Larkspur. He told his court that his armor would allow him to pass through the wards and find Andelin even after it was sealed. He then left the still unconscious form of his lady in a magical sleep deep beneath the palace and went forward on his quest. It is unknown if he ever managed to return.

The Scourge came and many kaers and citadels were breached, regardless of what protections were used. Wyrm Wood eventually fell, much to the dismay of our people, and Queen Alachia enacted the now infamous Ritual of Thorns, corrupting both the woods and the court. Now, we as a people have no true center, no place we can look to for guidance.

The Scourge came to an end little over a century ago. The horror of what happened in Wyrm Wood, now known as the Blood Woods, soon became known by all, much to our people's disgrace. Many other settlements were destroyed or breached. Still, there has been no word from Andelin. It is unknown whether the beautiful settlement survived the Scourge or was destroyed. Three times there have been expeditions sent in search of the lost city, and three times the searchers returned, unable to find any trace of Prince Redlif's people.

Still, hope is alive. Though no trace has been found of the elves of Andelin, there has been no trace of any ruins either. It is hoped that Andelin still exists, unbreached and intact, still protected by the magic and wards that guarded it against the Horrors, unaware that the Scourge is over .

Adventure Ideas

The elves in Barsaive still remember the beautiful city of Andelin, one of the mightiest elven cities within Barsaive before the Scourge (neither Shosara or the City of Spires is located within the lands of Barsaive). Many elven nobles in the Blood Woods and beyond still possess weapons and armor forged by the legendary craftsman Redlif. Many elves still venture into the forest above the Aras Sea in hopes of finding their kinfolk in Andelin.

Characters can become involved with this legend in numerous ways. They may decide to try and find the city of Andelin, either in hopes of locating the missing elves and beautiful city, or in hopes of searching the ruins for armor and weapons crafted by the master weaponsmith. Perhaps the characters have found Prince Redlif's resting place, and can reawaken him. Once he is awake, he can them to Andelin. Imagine the reward for the people who manage to awaken the elven prince and escort him back to the legendary city of Andelin.

This is a quest for characters who are already legendary heroes themselves. It is suggested that characters be of at least eighth circle before interacting with this legend as an adventure, though they may hear the tale years before they become involved.

The Truth Behind The Legends

Prince Redlif never returned to Andelin. By the time he managed to catch up to the Corruptor of Thoughts and defeat it, the Scourge had already started and the Horrors roamed the land freely. When it became clear to him that he could not make it back to Andelin, Prince Redlif sealed himself into a cave in the Thunder Mountains using his elementalism and nethermancy. He then forced himself into a magical slumber, triggered to end when the magic level dropped to the level needed to drive the Horrors from the land.

Of course, the magic level of Barsaive stopped declining, and the trigger conditions were never met. Prince Redlif lies in magical slumber to this day, unable to waken on his own. He is guarded by skeleton warriors and an astral horror, located within a Bone Circle. The characters would need a powerful Dispel Magic to awaken the sleeping prince, even if they find him. Once he is awakened, he can lead the characters to Andelin. If they can not awaken him, his armor can be used to lead them to Andelin where the waiting elves can lift the enchantment that keeps him slumbering.

Andelin was never breached by the Horrors. The additional protections and the magical weapons wielded by its protectors proved to be effective. Once the Corruptor of Thoughts was killed, Larkspur awoke from the magical sleep and took over the leadership of the city. She is blood bound to Prince Redlif and can tell he still lives. She believes that if he has not

returned, the Scourge must still be preventing him. Because of this, she has yet to end the magical protections that guard Andelin from intruders. Once Redlif approaches within a few miles, Larkspur will become aware of his presence and his condition due to their blood bond.

Notes

Prince Redlif is a 15th circle weaponsmith adept and a 10th circle nethermancer. Larkspur is a 14th circle warrior adept. If the characters succeed in reuniting these two lovers, they have added their names to the legend of Prince Redlif and Andelin. They will be rewarded with either armor or weapons. What follows are the statistics for the sword Elenorial, Redlif's armor, and Redlif's shield.

The Sword Elenorial

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 13

The sword Elenorial is crafted from orichalcum and gives off a soft light. The hilt is crafted in gold and carved to resemble leaves and vines. There is a large emerald in the pommel. The word Elenorial is carved down the blade in Sperethial and the elven R rune is stamped on the crossguard. The sword normally does Strength + 10 damage due to being forged to +5. It is a blade of legend and currently tied to Prince Redlif at Rank 6.

Thread Ranks

Rank 1 Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: What is the name of the sword? It is named Elenorial (Sperethial for Bright Night).
Effect: The sword will give off a soft light equal to torch light when its name is spoken. It does +1 additional step of damage when used against Horrors and their minions.

Rank 2 Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: Who crafted the sword? It was crafted by the legendary elven weaponsmith Redlif.
Effect: The sword does +3 additional steps of damage against Horrors and their minions.

Rank 3 Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: Where was the blade forged? It was forged in the elven city of Andelin.
Effect: The sword will score an armor piercing hit on a Good Success, no longer needing an Excellent Success.

Rank 4 Cost: 1300
Key Knowledge: Why was the blade forged? To slay the Horror that possessed Larkspur, Redlif's lifemate.
Effect: Add +2 to the wielder's Melee Weapon step when using the sword.

Rank 5 Cost: 2100
Effect: The sword gives the wielder 1 extra Recovery Test per day. The blade now allows a second attack at the cost of 1 point of Strain.

Rank 6 Cost: 3400
Key Knowledge: Who was the Horror Redlif was hunting with the sword? The Horror was the Corruptor of Thoughts.
Effect: For 2 points of Strain, the blade will become ethereal, ignoring Physical Armor and becoming solid once it has passed the armor and entered a living target.

The Armor of Redlif

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 12

The Armor of Redlif is a combination of light chain mail and plate mail. It is a gleaming silvery color and intricately engraved. The elven R rune is stamped on each piece. It normally provides 12 points of Physical Armor and 4 points of Mystic Armor. It has an Initiative Penalty of -4.

Thread Ranks

Rank 1 Cost: 200
Key Knowledge: What is the name of the armor? It is the Armor of Redlif.
Effect: The Initiative Penalty is reduced to -2.

Rank 2 Cost: 300
Key Knowledge: Where was the armor crafted? It was crafted in Andelin.
Effect: There is no longer any Initiative Penalty. Add +1 to the wearer's Physical Defense.

Rank 3 Cost: 500
Effect: Add +1 to the wearer's Spell Defense.

Rank 4 Cost: 800
Key Knowledge: Who was the Horror being hunted by Redlif? He was hunting the Corruptor of Thoughts.
Effect: The armor can only be defeated by an Extraordinary Success.

Rank 5 Cost: 1300

Effect: The wearer's Spell Defense and Physical Defense are raised by +2.

Rank 6 Cost: 2100

Deed: The armor must be blood bound to the wearer at the cost of 3 Blood Points. This earns the wearer 500 Legend Points.
Effect: The wearer gains 2 additional Recovery Tests per day. The wearer can also pass through the wards surrounding Andelin.

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Bed of Thorns

by Vicki Kirchhoff-Martin

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal*** #3

"No, Imri, I won't do it."

Corinna sat across the table from the warrior, her violet eye flashing angrily while the amber gem in place of the other flickered in the lantern light.

Hallian fluttered down from the rafters. The windling archer was not quite tall enough to be eye to eye with her, even standing on the table. "Come on, Cori, it's not like he's a Horror or anything."

Corinna gritted her teeth. "He might as well be."

They made an unusual trio. Corinna was an elven wizard; tall and slim with long, pale lavender hair. Imri was a human; a few inches shorter with a stockier build. She wore her brown hair bound tight and her weapons openly. Hallian was only knee high to both of them, with bright green wings and matching hair. He sat cross legged on the table with his bow across his knees. "I've never been to the Blood Wood. I think it would be fun to go. Don't you want to see the elven court?"

"No!" Corinna snapped, trying not to lose her temper. "The blood elves have corrupted the Court, the Blood Wood and everything else they've touched."

"Corinna," Imri said laying a hand the mage's shoulder. "At least they survived."

"But they're evil, as bad as the Horrors themselves. They should have died instead of twisting everything. All the beauty and merriment is gone."

Imri sighed. "All right. If you feel that strongly, I'll tell him we won't be able to accept the job."

The elf chewed on her lower lip as Hallian's wingtips drooped. They did need the money and most travellers preferred that their guards look big and menacing which two women and a windling did not. It might be a long time before they got another chance.

She unclenched her jaw. "All right. We'll take the job, but we go no further than the edge of the Blood Wood. Once he's there, he's on his own."

"Done," Imri said.

The blood elf's name was Saevyl. Corinna tried hard to look past the empty grey eyes and thick thorns that pierced his flesh. It made her want to cry out in the pain he didn't seem to notice. "I appreciate this service," he said. "When my companions were slain by the marauders, I was concerned about travelling home alone."

Hallian was watching him with wide eyes. "Don't those things hurt?"

Saevyl gave the windling a tolerant look. "Yes, but my kind embrace pain for the strength it gives us."

"Lets go," Imri said leading three horses over. "I'd like to get some distance before nightfall."

Corinna winced as Saevyl mounted and several of his thorn wounds began to bleed. She looked away, wondering if she should have held her ground and refused the job. The Blood Wood was a nearly a week's travel away and the sight of Saevyl was already making her sick.

Hallian flew ahead to scout as soon as they left the town. They wanted to avoid meeting any of the roving marauders that had killed the rest of Saevyl's party and, as long as the windling had places to rest along the way, he could scout all day.

"What brings you out of the Blood Wood?" Imri asked.

The elf 's eyes kept straight ahead. "I am an emissary from the Queen to the King of Throal."

"The King didn't provide you with an escort home?" Imri asked.

"At the time, we did not feel one was necessary."

The warrior shrugged. "Guess you were wrong."

"I have no doubt my late companions would argue with you even now," Saevyl said.

"They dead don't win many arguments, except maybe with nethermancers," she replied. "Are all your people so stubborn?"

"That very stubbornness is what allowed us to survive," he told her. "Perhaps, if more of our kindred had chosen to stay in the Wood instead of fleeing underground like animals, we'd have fared better."

"You can't blame us for what happened," Corinna said.

The blood elf glanced over at her. "I place no blame, I merely speculate."

He was so calm, so cold and Corinna felt her temper burning. "You have no idea why those who fled to the Kaers chose to do so!"

"And you have no idea why those who did not, stayed."

"Okay, you two," Imri said nudging her horse between theirs. "We're all going to be together for awhile, lets talk about something else."

Corinna rode in silence until they camped.

It came as no surprise when Imri set the watches, that Corinna and Saevyl did not share one. Corinna shared the first half of her watch with Imri, and the second, with Hallian. She was sure that Saevyl was as pleased with the arrangements as she was.

She fed the fire as the others settled down to sleep.

"Can we come to some kind of compromise?" Imri asked. "This trip will drag on forever if you're either silent or arguing."

Corinna sighed. "I don't know how to explain it to you so that you can understand. You have no idea what this is all about."

Imri put a hand on her friend's shoulder. "Cori, after all we've been through, can't you try? I don't think I've ever seen you so irritable.

"Remember the morning Hal stashed your clothes up in a tree? You laughed, took a half-hearted swing at him and that was it. Saevyl opens his mouth and you fly at him like an angry housewife."

"What Hal did was a joke. What Saevyl is, what his people have done is no joke. It's not in the least bit funny."

She sighed. "The blood elves' Court is so different from all the stories. Even after the Scourge, the elves in my village told of the grand and beautiful inhabitants of the Wyrm Wood. I dreamed of the Queen and her Court and of going some day to see what I'd only heard in stories."

She stared into the fire. "When I heard what they'd done... to themselves and the forest, it

was like part of me turned black, shriveled up and died."

"So you're angry at them because they don't live up to your expectations?" Imri asked.

"Yes... no... you just don't understand," Corinna replied. "Look, I'll behave myself. I just really don't want to talk about it."

Imri looked as though she might say something else, but never did. "All right, my friend. Whatever you say."

The next morning dawned grey and miserable and the threat of rain hung in the air as they rode. Corinna thought it a perfect compliment to her mood. Hallian tried several times to cheer her, but even he had to give up.

She kept a few lengths ahead so as not to hear the conversation going on behind her. If she couldn't hear it, it couldn't offend her.

Imri cornered her when they stopped for lunch. "I thought you said you weren't going to do this."

"I said I'd behave. This is the only way I feel I can keep my promise."

Imri sighed and let it drop as Hallian fluttered between them and landed on Imri's shoulder. "I'm thinking we should take a different route."

"Why?" Imri asked.

"Well, I scouted up the path further and there's a bunch of scorchers that seem to be following it. I know there's a less used path through the woods. It might add some time, but we wouldn't have to worry about the orks."

"They aren't necessarily raiders," Corinna said. "They might not bother us at all and I really don't need the delay."

"She's right," Imri said. "But if they are, trying to flee or fight a band of them would take a lot more time than Hallian's suggestion. I'll talk to Saevyl about it, but I'm for the path through the woods."

"He told me he's a wizard, like you," Hallian said as Imri went over to Saevyl.

"He may be a wizard," Corinna said. "But he's nothing like me."

The windling shook his head. "I don't understand you some times. How can what he looks like make that much difference?"

"It's not just the way he looks. It's what the way he looks represents."

"I guess..."

He flew over to where Imri and Saevyl were talking. Corinna wondered if she really was being as unreasonable as her friends claimed. Still, how could they understand the corruption of the elves from the Blood Wood when there was nothing in either of their races for them to relate it to.

The decision was made to take the route through the woods, Hallian flying ahead to keep them on the path which seemed little more than a game trail. They had to ride single-file, Imri in front and Corinna in the rear.

She tried to watch Saevyl from the back where his thorns were hidden by his clothing. He almost seemed normal. Then, she'd catch a glimpse of a hand or the side of his face and see the corruption. How could he not feel it? How could he not realize what his people had done to themselves?

There was a rustling in the bushes up ahead, followed by giggling. Two forms shot from the underbrush and into a tree. Imri pulled her horse to a stop. "What was that?"

A few minutes later, Hallian flitted down from the tree, his hair and clothing disheveled. A female windling followed him, her face flushed under white hair. "Uh, hi," he said.

Corinna watched as Imri tried to keep the smirk off her face with little success. "Is this how you scout ahead for us?"

Hallian shrugged. "Well, actually, Lilly and I were having a pretty heated discussion about the local hazards and what we could expect coming through this area."

Imri laughed, "I'll just bet."

Lilly landed on Imri's horse. "Our village isn't far. Hallian said you'd be looking for a place to sleep soon and we would be glad to have you. We don't have many tall people come through this area."

Corinna nudged her horse up beside Imri's. "I've heard stories of what goes on in isolated windling villages and I'd love the distraction. "

Imri glanced back at Saevyl. "It's your trip," she said. "You have a say in whether or not we go."

Lilly ducked behind Hallian as she noticed the blood elf . "You didn't tell me about him."

"Saevyl's not too bad," Hallian replied. "As long as you don't mind the fact that he has no sense of humor. Imri's right, though, if he doesn't want to stay, we can't stay."

The blood elf shrugged. "It matters not to me. Comfort or discomfort is the same."

Hallian smiled. "Great! Lets go make sure everyone knows we're coming."

He took the other windling by the hand and they raced deeper into the forest. "I guess they'll find us eventually and lead us there." Corinna said.

Imri laughed. "As long as Hallian and his friend remember to let them know we're on our way. I just don't understand how a little one like that..."

Corinna laughed with her for the first time since the trip began. "I don't either."

True to his word, Hallian made sure they had an escort. The air around them was filled with shimmering wings and bell-like laughter. While guardsman on lizards paced them on either side.

Their antics were enough to draw Corinna out of her depression. She watched them, fascinated by their acrobatics. It wasn't that windlings were uncommon, it was just that there were so many of them.

Their escort stopped and then fluttered up into the trees. Corinna followed them with her eyes and saw the tiny dwellings built on sturdy branches.

Smaller windlings descended on them, obviously children. They kept a timid distance at first and then swooped in to touch, as fascinated by the horses as the riders. They left Saevyl and his mount alone. The boldest coming no closer than his horse's nose.

Hallian fluttered down, landing on Corinna's shoulder. "Off your horses, ladies. There's going to be a party you'll never forget."

Stuffed, slightly drunk, and weary from the day's ride, Corinna sat with her back to a tree, watching the fire they'd built. Windlings danced in the air all around the clearing while their minstrels played. Corinna could see Saevyl, just outside the fire's light, watching the display. He'd been visited briefly by only the bravest villagers and now sat alone.

Imri sat down beside her, her eyes also misted with drink. "I'm going to pull Hal's wings off one at a time," she said smiling.

Too full of food and wine to really care, Corinna asked. "Why?"

The windling music stopped suddenly and the dancers scattered to nearby branches. Only Hallian remained, hovering just above the fire. "Now, just as I promised, my very brave and beautiful companions will show you how the tall people dance."

"We'll what?" Corinna gasped as Imri hauled her to her feet.

"Hal said it was the least we could do to repay their hospitality."

The windlings cheered as they stood in the clearing. Imri's eyes sparkled as she stripped off her weapons. "You ready, elf?" she said. "Whoever lasts the longest gets to yank Hal's wings off."

"Not fair," Corinna protested. "You've got a warrior's stamina."

"And you've got a wizard's grace."

"A wizard's grace? What's that supposed to mean?"

"It means you haven't had as much to drink as I have so be quiet and dance."

The music was starting and Corinna could feel the rhythm inviting her. It had been a long time. "All right, human," she said. "You're on."

The dance had started years ago as a challenge when they'd both had their eyes on the same man. It seemed almost silly to do it without a target, but Corrina was drunk enough to not mind being a little silly.

She closed her eyes and tried to imagine a tall, fair haired elf sitting beside the fire, his eyes following her every move. When she opened them, she could see him, slightly out of focus, but there. The fire's light flickered across his face.

Now that her imagination had supplied her with a focus, she altered her steps to bring herself closer to it. Her feet pounded the rhythm and she spun just out of his reach, losing herself in the dance. The music wanted to control her and she let it. It dissolved the tension that had bound her all during the journey.

She smiled down at her faerie prince and beckoned him to join her. When he didn't respond, she beckoned again and held out her hand.

The feel of warm, real fingers snapped her out of the magic of the dance. She could hear Imri's laughter as the musicians stopped. She thought she saw the hint of amusement in Saevyl's grey eyes as they shifted from her face to her hand where it rested in his.

Corinna could feel herself flushing. She was well aware that everyone in the clearing was waiting for her to react and had no idea what to do.

Saevyl stood and bowed to her. "I'm afraid I am not familiar with your style of dance," he said. "However, if you wish, I can teach you how we dance at the Court."

She could see Imri over the blood elf's shoulder, her eyes flashing with mischief and mirth. Corinna knew she'd never hear the end of it from her warrior friend if she refused.

The blood elf's eyes were unreadable. Did he want her to accept or refuse? The clearing was eerily silent. She met Saevyl's eyes and held them for the first time since they'd met. "I'd love to learn."

He took her other hand, but only their fingers touched. "Very well, I will begin slowly."

Had Imri said it, Corinna would have been sure it was meant as a challenge, but the blood elves had no emotion, no sense of humor. In fact she was very afraid that this dance would be a gross mockery of the former beauty of the Court, but she was not going to let him make a fool of her by refusing. Instead, she smiled. "I learn very quickly."

The musicians watched at first, as he walked her through to get a feel for the rhythm. The steps were complex and the movements precise as if it was meant to be danced on some intricately patterned floor. They touched nothing but fingers, but the almost touching was more seductive than close contact. Corinna kept her eyes on her feet, partly to keep up with her partner and partly to keep from meeting his eyes. Once she felt comfortable with where her feet had to be and relaxed, it had a strange, fluid beauty and was not at all like what she had expected.

The dance ended and Saevyl bowed to her again. "You do catch on very quickly. Should you ever find yourself at the Court, you will be at no loss for partners."

He turned away and left her in the middle of the clearing. She could hear the windlings cheering and felt Imri slap her across the back. "Impressive, Cori, very impressive. Wonder if I can get him to teach me."

Hallian fluttered down and landed on Imri's shoulder. "Guess he's not a Horror after all," he said. "Everyone knows Horrors can't dance."

Corinna avoided Saevyl the next morning. It had been much easier to deal with him when

she'd hated everything he'd stood for...or everything she though he'd stood for. Now, she was just confused.

Finally, she pulled abreast of his horse. "Why?" she asked.

"Why what?"

"Why did you dance with me last night?"

"You did ask me to," he said. "Besides, I enjoy dancing."

"You enjoy dancing?"

"As much as I enjoy anything."

"I didn't think you could enjoy things."

"The thorns do not keep us from enjoying, they keep us from enjoying too much."

She didn't reply. His answers raised more questions...questions she wasn't sure she was ready to have answered.

With Imri's help, they managed to keep conversation going. Apparently Saevyl did have a sense of humor, it was just different. Even Hallian had to admit that when he let them catch up to him. As soon as they left the forest, he stayed with them instead of flying ahead.

He landed on Corinna's horse. "So, changing your mind about those evil elves from the Blood Wood?" he asked.

Corinna sighed. "Honestly? I don't know."

The windling grinned. "I think we should take him all the way to the Court."

She shook her head. "I don't think I'm ready for that. I was more than a little drunk last night and I'm not really sure what to think about what happened."

"Want to know what I think?" Hallian asked. "I think you think too much. You said you dreamed of the court. If it's not what you imagined, so what? It's somewhere you've never been and something you've never seen."

He sat backwards on the horse's neck so that he faced her. "Look, Saevyl's not the most fun person I've ever met, but that doesn't mean that I don't want to see what the Blood Wood is like, even if all the elves there are just like him."

He grinned. "Besides, I want to see a whole bunch of them doing that dance. That windling village will be talking about it for years."

His grin broadened. "You did make an interesting pair, though."

He launched himself off the horse just before her hand reached where he'd been sitting. He fluttered lazily above her head, just out of reach. "You two never learn, I'm just too fast."

"Just remember, you're not faster than magic," she reminded him.

He spiraled slowly upwards, the sun sparkling off his wings. Corinna watched him, slightly envious of his ability to fly. Sometimes, she found his sense of humor annoying, but most of the time, he brightened up a journey.

His spiral stopped and he zipped back in the direction they had come. He was not quite out of sight when he came speeding back. "Imri, we've got trouble."

Imri stopped her horse and Corinna and Saevyl moved up beside her. "What kind of trouble?" the warrior asked.

A handful of scorchers," the windling said. "Riding this way fast. If it wasn't so hazy, you could see their dust."

"Could they be following us?" Corinna asked

"We've made no effort to hide our trail," Imri said. "Did you get close enough to see their mounts?"

Hal nodded. "Yup, it's a raiding party on thundra mounts. No way we can outrun them."

He landed on Imri's saddle and opened her saddlebag. "I didn't take time to count them, but I don't think we're outnumbered much more than 2 to 1."

"That's comforting," Imri said, sliding her sword free. "I hate fighting mounted opponents and thundras are as nasty and ill-tempered as their riders."

Corinna scanned the horizon for any sign of their pursuers. "You'll want me to drop the mounts first, then," she said. "That will slow them down and split them up."

"And perhaps, once they realize that they're dealing with higher magic, they'll retreat," Saevyl suggested.

Hallian pulled his bow and quiver from Imri's pack. "Depends on why they're after us. If they're just bandits, they'll probably run, but if somebody sent them..."

Corinna noticed the suspicious look Imri shot at Saevyl. "Was it scorchers that attacked your group?"

"They were orks, yes," he replied. "They ambushed us in the mountains outside Throal. My horse bolted and threw me into a shallow gorge. By the time I regained consciousness, my companions lay dead on the path. Our attackers must have believed my fall had killed me."

"That doesn't sound like bandits," Imri said. "That sounds like someone really doesn't want you to get back home."

She dismounted and pulled her armor out of her saddle bags. "Okay, Cori, you take the mounts, and Hal and I will see what we can do about the riders."

"I can help as well," Saevyl offered. "I will target mounts first and then riders."

Imri nodded. "How far, Hal?"

The windling archer took to the sky. "They've slowed down," he replied. "I think they know we're ready for them, but I can't imagine how they figured it out."

A high screech was followed by the windling's scream as an eagle raked its talons across his back. Corinna sent a bolt of magic after it to keep it from attacking again, but couldn't react in time to stop Hallian's fall. Saevyl flung up one arm and the windling slowed and settled gently on the ground.

"Beastmaster!" Imri spat.

Saevyl grabbed a vial from his pack, just before dismounting. He unstoppered it on the way to where the windling lay and poured its contents down Hallian's throat.

Imri shouted. "Corinna! forget the mounts and find that Beastmaster!"

Corinna closed her one eye so that she saw the world through the amber gem. A magically created smoke had obscured the raiders from normal sight, but with the gem's aid, she could see them clearly. One of them radiated magical power.

She concentrated, gathering the energy she needed for the spell and set it speeding toward her victim.

The beastmaster screamed, but stayed on his mount. He and his companions came closer. Corinna could feel the pounding of the thundra hooves. She attacked again and again until the ork finally slumped in his saddle and then slipped off his mount.

She saw Saevyl tuck the windling in a saddlebag and send the horses away. Then he turned

his attention to the raiders. Together, they felled four mounts before the remaining four closed upon Imri.

Corinna kept her attention on the riders of the fallen mounts. Imri would have enough trouble fending off the four around her without having to deal with more coming up behind. They were easier than the beastmaster had been, but it still seemed to take forever for them to fall. She prayed that Saevyl was helping Imri. As good as the warrior was, she was no match for four mounted orks. Losing the windling archer may well have lost them the battle, but she could spare that only a passing thought as she hurled her deadly magic at their attackers.

Then it was over. Ork scorchers and their mounts lay strewn across the plain, their blood soaking into the ground. She saw Saevyl on his knees with his back to her, but did not see Imri anywhere.

She stumbled over bodies to get to the blood elf's side. He supported Imri's head with one hand and was pouring the contents of another vial into her mouth. He glanced up at Corinna's approach. "I am no expert in these things, but I believe that she will live."

Corinna grabbed her friend's hand. "Thank you," she whispered.

She felt fingers on her shoulder. "Lets bind her wounds so that we can move her. I am hoping Hallian will recover soon and bring the horses back. We can't stay here.

Corinna ripped strips from her clothing and bound Imri's wounds while Saevyl gathered what he could from the dead. She envied him his emotionlessness as her hands began trembling.

He dropped a piece of parchment in front of her. "Can you read this?"

She picked it up. "I recognize it as orkish, but I can't read it. What is it?"

He shook his head. "I was rather hoping it was a clue to who sent these men."

"We can give it to Imri when she wakes. I think she reads it. "

The sound of horse's hooves distracted her. She stood, weak from her earlier exertion and prayed it was not more scorchers. There was no way she and Saevyl could stand another battle like that.

Hallian's green wings reflected in the light and the horses followed him. "Looks like I missed all the fun."

He landed next to Imri. "She going to be okay?"

Saevyl nodded. "I gave her the same thing I gave you, but her wounds are more serious and will take more time to heal."

He gazed back the way they had come. "I suggest we leave here soon. If these were an advanced scouting party..."

Corinna nodded. "Then we'll have to make sure we hide our trail this time."

With Saevyl's help, they bound Imri to Corinna's saddle. Corinna mounted behind her and kept her upright.

Hal led them to a spring the horses had found in a large copse of trees and Saevyl did what he could to obscure their trail.

Corinna rode in silence. The booster potions the blood elf had given her companions were not uncommon, but they were expensive. Again, his actions confused her and his motives puzzled her. She hoped once Imri was awake and could read the document, that some of the mysteries would be solved.

Imri woke as they made camp. She sat up slowly. "Where are we?"

"Not too far out of our way," Corinna replied. "Hal found us a wooded area to hide in. How do you feel?"

The warrior stretched. "Not as bad as I thought I would. Saevyl had more potions, huh?"

Corinna nodded. "Yes."

Imri grinned. "Real shame those blood elves are so corrupt and evil."

"We are his only protection."

"Of course, how silly of me to forget."

Corinna handed her the parchment. "We found this on one of the bodies."

Imri unrolled it and looked it over. "Looks like a contract for Saevyl's death. It doesn't mention him by name, but it does say that a particular blood elf should be sought out and killed. I don't recognize the name of the person who signed it, though. Elgin Firesight? "

She called over to Saevyl. "Does the name Elgin Firesight mean anything to you?"

"He is one of the Queen's advisors," the blood elf replied. "Why do you ask?"

"Because he wants you dead."

Saevyl's expression did not change. "Yes, I suppose that would make sense."

"Why?" Corinna asked.

"Because he has advised our Queen against this journey from the beginning. If I do not return, he will use that as fuel to his arguments that we not deal with the dwarfish king. It is his wish that we be the rulers of Throal."

Imri handed him the scroll. "Well, you'll want to take this to your Queen then."

He took the parchment and tossed it into the fire. "It will avail me nothing to do so. It will only alert Elgin that I'm aware of his treachery. I prefer that he believe me innocent of this and I will find other ways to act against him."

"Don't you think the Queen should know that he tried to sabotage her plans?" Corinna said.

"I'm sure she already does. She is not sure that she wishes an alliance with the dwarfish king. She prefers for the two factions in Court to do as they will and she observes their outcome. She would not interfere."

Corinna's jaw clenched tight. "You mean she probably knew your party was in danger and did nothing to stop it?"

"Most likely."

Anger filled her, but she bit back her acidic replies and walked away. She had no desire to confront him on the subject of his people again. They were not the elves of the Wyrm wood. They were another race entirely, no more related to Corinna and the Throalic elves than they were to the windlings.

She thought she heard Imri calling her name, but paid it no heed. She really needed to get away from Saevyl and the others at the camp. She needed to walk her mad off. Imri didn't need to have to mediate between her and the blood elf.

She ventured further from the fire, although she made sure to keep it in sight. It wouldn't do to have something happen to her while no one was in much shape to help. She considered just going back and trying to get along with Saevyl, but couldn't bring herself to do it.

Something caught her attention. It was an intriguing music, not too unlike what she'd heard in the windling village. She glanced back at the camp and debated whether or not to investigate. The tune seemed to be coming from close by and she was pretty sure she could find it and still not lose sight of the fire.

The music filtered through the trees. Perhaps, if she didn't startle them, they would let her just enjoy their celebration. It would help her get her mind off Saevyl and the corrupt workings of the Court.

She followed and didn't even notice when she lost sight of the camp. It beckoned to her, drawing her deeper into the forest. She ignored the thorns and brambles that scraped at her arms and the low branches that tugged at her hair. The music was the only important thing. It was everything.

Suddenly, her right hand was on fire. Sharp pain shot through her entire arm and snapped her out of her trance. Saevyl stood beside her, her right hand clenched tightly in his, the thorns piercing her flesh. His eyes met hers again. "Perhaps now you understand," he said letting go.

"It is the pain that makes us strong and keeps us from losing our senses, or our way."

He indicated the stagnant pond she had been about to enter. Green slime swirled on top of the water and nothing grew on its banks. Bare bones littered the shore. She shuddered and pulled her hand away.

"We'd better get back."

She walked in front of him, rubbing the spots on her palm where the thorns had drawn blood. Nothing made sense anymore. He was right that the pain had saved her, as it had saved his people from the Horrors, but it had awakened other things. It gave her a sick feeling, like she didn't really know herself any more.

When they returned to camp, Hallian fluttered down to her. "Hey, why'd you run off like that. We don't know what's here."

"I'm sorry," she said. "I was angry and I didn't want to trouble any of you with it."

"You okay, Cori?" Imri asked.

Corinna rubbed her palm again. "Yeah, I just wandered too far away, I guess. It's a good thing you sent Saevyl out to get me."

"We didn't send him," Imri said. "He said he thought you shouldn't be out by yourself and volunteered to go."

Again, the blood elf's eyes were unreadable when Corinna glanced back at him. He sat down beside the fire and did not mention what they had seen at the pond.

Imri stretched. "Well, I'm glad you're back. I sure hope the second half of this journey is less

eventful than the first. I don't think I can deal with much more excitement."

Her expression sobered as she met Corinna's eyes. "Still wishing we hadn't taken this job?"

Corinna sighed. "I honestly don't know."

The next morning dawned with the sun shining brightly above a clear blue sky. Imri's wounds were nearly healed and she insisted they ride at first light. Saevyl's potion had worked its magic and she did not seem to be in any pain as she rode.

Once they were back on the path, Hallian flew forward and returned saying he'd found no indication of other riders. He alighted on Imri's saddle. "I can even see the Blood Wood, the sky's so clear."

Corinna found that to be welcome news. Her sleep had been tortured by nightmares of the stagnant pond and the thing that must have been lurking under the water. Saevyl had been in all of them, sometimes saving her and sometimes pushing her in.

Finally, she edged her horse beside Saevyl's. He glanced over at her, his eyes as cold as always. "Because I need your protection" he said before she could ask him.

"How did you know that was what I was going to ask?" she demanded.

"Your eyes betray your questions," he replied.

She sighed. "I just don't understand you."

He shrugged. "Until you have a better understanding of the ritual of the Thorns, you never will. Until then, you will always see me as either a cruel monster or a poor tortured soul who would give all I have to be without my deformity. Neither observation is correct. I am what I am, Corinna. I have taken the ritual and I would not reverse that decision even if I could."

She shuddered. "But what about the pain?"

"We do what we must to survive and every bit of power we take has a price. We are not as different as you would like to believe. Take your amber eye for example. You willingly deformed yourself to gain the power of astral sight, didn't you?"

"It's not the same."

"Isn't it? The ritual of Thorns was created by a people desperate to survive. I would say that is a much more noble cause than something you can do just as easily with a spell."

She felt her temper flaring again. "You don't understand me any more than I understand you!"

"True, to a point. Your emotions are so strong and so obvious, that through them, I can almost read your thoughts. That is a dangerous weakness."

Corinna pulled her mount back, not wanting to get into yet another screaming match, since she was the only one who ended up screaming. She rode again in silence, Saevyl's words gnawing at her. It was bad enough that he was changing the way she thought about his people, but he was making her question herself.

They reached the edge of the Blood Wood that night and camped in the fringes. Saevyl assured them that they'd be safe as long as he was with them. "What about Elgin Firesight?" Imri asked him.

"He does not dare show a hand of treachery inside the Wood," he assured her. "We will be safe her tonight and I will be on my way back to the Court tomorrow."

"Are we going?" Hallian asked.

Imri looked over at Corinna. "Well, Cori, I promised you that we'd stop here, do you still want to?"

Corinna searched their faces. Hallian really wanted to go, but Imri looked concerned. The Court had shown them treachery already, she had no desire to see any more. "Yes."

She thought Imri looked relieved. Saevyl bowed and handed Imri a sack filled with coin. "This is the second half of the price I promised. Tomorrow, I will be on my way."

He held out a hand to Corinna. "If you choose some time to return to the Court, I will see that you are welcomed. You are strong, Corinna, it is a shame you are too old to take part in the Ritual."

"I appreciate the kindness, Saevyl, but I don't think I'm willing to pay that kind of price."

"As you wish," he said.

At dawn, they bid him farewell and the blood elf made his way through the forest. They watched him until he was obscured by the trees. "Well, Cori, what do you think?"

Corinna shuddered. "I think I'm glad I'm not one of them."

Imri squeezed her shoulders. "I think I am too."

"I wish I'd gotten a chance to see the Court," Hallian said.

"Yeah, I'll bet," Imri said. "I've heard that part of the ritual of Thorns is to roast a windling over a camp fire."

For a moment, it looked as though he thought she might be serious, then he laughed. "Saevyl wasn't too bad, but he's just no fun at parties."

He zipped into the sky and they followed him, leaving Blood Wood and blood elf behind them.

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The Complete Works of Kree Pela' Zai

Volume 1: 1505 TH

It has been several years since I first uncovered Kree Pela' Zai's journal in a back room of the Library of Throal. For seventy years, it had been kept by a colleague of mine, Allegra Zai' Shea, also the late ancestress of Kree.

As far back as I can put together, Kree left her kaer early in 1505 TH to begin her adventuring. Early on, she met Grexloric of House Tyreseuss, who she would travel with many times in the course of her life. There are many versions of the story of their first meeting. Most often told is that Kree was being plagued by a troop of Trolls that included Timeor (later refered to as Troll) and his brother Uklah. They were harassing her by calling her 'Kindling' and threatening to start a fire with her when Grexloric came along to defend her honor. Thus was the beginning of their fast friendship. How they came to travel with Timeor is still a puzzle.

Though she never kept a true journal, one may piece together her story and the story of Akarem's Mistbane through her letters to her family and friends. Such is the task I have undertaken.

-- Merth, Scholar, Librarian, 1579 TH

Dear Mama and Papa,

Hello again :) Well, it looks like we'll finally be on our way. Grex has finished (I hope) going back to his brother with last minute reminders on how to do his share of running the Grexloric Clan. What *that* entails (hee hee), I'll never know. But while all the others were collecting mountains of things to take with them (you should see how much stuff they think they need!), T'ron, the town elder, asked me to transport a message for him to the next town over. Well, I figured it was *something* to do while the others got themselves ready...

So, anyway, there I was in Deops. An' I figured that since I was there I might as well take a look around. But it was dark and most people were getting ready to sleep(boring), so I went for a night fly back to the others instead. (Don't worry, Mama, I can take care of myself! sigh)

Well, a little ways out I saw a fire and decided to see who it was. And it was a good thing that I stopped to look before I flew right in (Grex is always giving me lectures about my

'enthusiasm') because as it turns out, they were Therans! Honest, Mama, real live Therans. An' no, they don't have two heads like cousin Pkinf said. They looked just like any of the other name-giver races. These were an ol' man an' a boy an' I think the boy was a slave `cause the man kept beatin' at `im an' yellin' an' stuff.

Anyways, they worked mosta the night through, taking what I later found out to be Theran badges off all their stuff an' putting Throalic ones on instead. An' I saw that they had a horse. It was real sad looking - like it was beat up with a whip or somethin'. An' I felt bad for it an' thought about how much better I would be at takin' care of it an' that I could give it to Grex as a present. So, I - well, I took it. Now, don't be mad Mama. They probably woulda killed the poor thing an' now they can't.

So, anyway, I flew back to the town an' told the guards all about them. You'd have thought that they had never seen a windling before, the way they stared at me and they kept telling me to slow down, `cause they couldn't understand me, I swear, I never saw such dumb guards! I was tryin' to tell them that the Therans were mixed in with a bunch of Ork mercs an' they were going to attack the town. The Therans would be coming tomorrow to spread rumors about a Troll Sky raiding party that was attackin' the region. An' then as the town was preparing for an aerial attack, the mercs would attack from the hills. When everyone was dead or captured by the Therans to use as slaves, they would leave behind Troll moot stones and clan symbols to implicate the Trolls. But we got that all straightened out in the morning. T'ron even asked us to take a letter to King Varulus right now to explain things to him.

Oh! But I haven't told you about my friends...Let's see, there's Grex, the T'skrang Swordmaster (my hero); an' Troll, the Skyraider, and an Obsidiman (yes, they are as big as they say and no, they're not entirely made of rock) named Georrard. He has been *very* nice to me. He's a nethermancer - all quiet and kinda peaceful. He called me sister and told me funny stories about a group of Windlings near his birth rock. As far as I can tell we aren't related to them. But then a veiled windling came in an' he whispered in Georrard's ear an' then Georrard said, 'good-bye' and left! As theWindling turned his veil fluttered an' I caught a glimpse of his face. It was Raven! Do you 'member him? He's Pfieif's old roommate. First thing he asked me was what relation that made us. I told him none, o' course, `cause we aren't even though Pfeif's my third cousin an' all. An' then he tackled me, Mama! Head over wings we went tumbling across the bar! He's been fun and I like him a lot, but I sure hope he looses that veil soon, it's spooky.

Let's see, there's also a dwarf Weaponsmith named Hazad. Boy, is he ornery! He doesn't pick on me as much as Troll does, but mostly that's `cause he's always muttering about elves.

And (oh!), I have to tell you about T'stray! Wow! I never knew T'skrang women were so - well - flirting isn't quite the word I was looking for, but there really is no *one* word to describe her. She was puttin' her tail all over Grex! An' he was fallin' for it too! I've never seen him so unsettled. I hate to admit it, but I was a little jealous until he noticed how well Savior (that's the name he gave the horse I got for him) was doing. He thanked and thanked me for him. (grin)

And lastly we met Lord Nebal. He's a dwarf and an Elementalist to boot. An' you can't just call him Nebal, either. I tried and he corrected me right away. And I haven't made that mistake since! After all, I remember what happened to Uncle Hepple when *he* got an Elementalist mad! He's not as ornery as Hazad though. Maybe in time he'll loosen up.

So, anyway, I barely got any sleep last night. An' in the morning the Therans arrived and the people were so mad they stoned them to death. I could scarcely believe it. The townspeople had refused to ask Grex and the others for any help, 'cause they think all Adepts are bad. They only asked me to help `cause I can fly.

Well, everyone wanted to make tracks as soon as they saw the stoning - but T'ron stopped us and asked us to carry that letter to Throal that I told you about. So, we did - we're carrying it now... And now that we're on the road and things have gotten ordinary again, I can sleep. I'll just make myself comfortable on Grex's shoulder.

Wind's Blessing to you All,

Kree

Transcribed and translated from the original windling by Merth of the Library of Throal, 1578 TH

Dear Mama and Papa,

Greetings! It's only been a few days since I wrote you last, but being an Adept out in the world so many things happen so fast! So, let me catch you up on what's been happening...

Not too far from Deops, is a town called Tureen. We arrived around noon to a hero's welcome. None of us quite knew what was going on, so following Grex's lead, we waved to the cheering crowd as they gathered on both sides of the street. Grex was in his element, the crowd loved him!

Amidst all the pomp and circumstance, the town elder gave a speech welcoming us to the town. We listened and waited, hoped for a clue as to what was going on. As far as we could put together, he thought that we were the Adepts he had hired. For what, we still didn't know. We were, of course, no such thing and Grex set him straight once we could talk to him in private. The elder was very distraught because the other group was two weeks late. They probably weren't going to come at all. Troll called a group meeting and we huddled just out of hearing range of the man. We decide to offer to go in their place.

We found out that the others were hired to find out what was keeping travelers from coming from the west and why when people go out to the west they never come back. Also, if

possible, they were supposed to get rid of the problem. An' now it's our job. We all decided that it must be a Beastie that was doing it - an' an awfully big one at that.

Before we set out, we arranged for our letter to Throal to go on without us. You know, the one about the Trolls and the Therans from Deops. It does after all haf' to get there as quickly as possible, but T'ron never said we had to take it ourselves. (grin)

The next morning, one of the town kids led us toward the west and the direction that they thought the Beast was living and hunting in. The crowd cheered us on as we made our way through the streets. We were flattered, naturally, but after the way we were scared out of Deops, well, I'll just say it was awfully nice.

A short distance as the Windlings fly, but a long distance for those who always walk, we found two giant spider like things like no wild animal I've ever seen. We fought them; Raven and I from the air, Grex, Troll and Hazad on the ground and T'stray and Nebal casting spells. Grex fell (but he was ok). So did Troll - twice, but they both got up to fight even more determinedly. The Jehuthra, as we were later told was what it is called, fought with icy magical claws similar to my own.

After what seemed forever, we defeated it. All of us were worn to the bone. The Troll was down and it didn't look like we would be able to revive him anytime soon. We searched the area to see if we could find any evidence of more of them or where they came from. Raven searched the cave there and found a beautiful silver amulet with a star burst pattern and crimson stain across it. Why those spider-things had it I don't know. Someone (I don't remember exactly who) suggested that we cut the thorax plates off the monsters. There's a very pretty starburst pattern on them - almost spider web-like.

We went back to Tureen to tell the people about the Jehuthra. That's where we found out they're really constructs (that means that they're made by Horrors). I hope we don't meet any of those again any time soon, but I think I'm the only one who feels that way. Raven is all excited about meeting more of 'em. Grex thinks it's his 'honor and duty' to rid Barsaive of their threat. Troll keeps talking about it like it's a game to play. Men! You'd think that just for a second they'd realize that where there are constructs there generally are Horrors. I guess here's where you'd remind me, Mama, that men often strut like peacocks before the storm hits. Stupid bravado!

If possible, our reception back in Tureen was even more excited than our leave-taking. They even held a feast in our honor! Nobody's ever done that before. Grex says that the more famous we get the more that'll happen. I hope so, it's awful nice.

Well, we've decided that we're going to go to Haven. That's the town in the middle of the ruins in Parlainth. The elder says that a lot of adventurers go there. And we could probably find a wizard or sage there who could tell us about the necklace that we found. He recommended someone named Heirmon. I'll tell you about that in my next letter...

Wind's Freedom! Love you All,

Kree

Transcribed and translated from the original windling by Merth of the Library of Throal, 1578 TH

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Days of Vengeance

by David Caraley

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #5***

Listnar the Mighty was furious. He had been doing so well. In the few years since he had settled in Kratas he had managed to obtain a small tower, decorate it to his tastes, gather together a little wealth, and take control over one of the local band of thugs that seemed to gather in the city of thieves. He had even fallen in love with a woman he felt sure that Astendar had meant for him.

But it had all come collapsing down around him. He had managed to get the woman delivered to his tower, and had been in the process of binding her to him, heart and soul, when a group of interfering adventurers breached his tower and engaged him in battle.

At first Listnar had thought that he would be triumphant, but they had managed to defeat him, causing him to flee. They took the girl, a fair amount of his gold, his Dwarven Winternight Cloak, and his spell book.

Listnar had spent the next few days watching his tower to see if they would return, but after a week, he decided that the so called heroes were not going to return. Now, seated once more at his desk in his tower, Listnar was still furious. How could he have allowed a young, inexperienced band of adventurers drive him from his own tower, and loot his belongings? He could not let this insult go unpunished. And he could not let his spell book be taken by another. He would lose face in Kratas. And to lose face in Kratas was to take the first step towards doom.

It was time to call in on a few favors that were owed to him. It was not difficult to find where the adventurers were staying. And it was easy enough to have someone observe them. Now, it was a simple matter of time before he would strike, retrieving his possessions and avenging his honor. But first, he would require the proper bait. Something that would entice a band of heroes.

Plot Synopsis

The story begins after the characters gave completed Night of Desire. They have angered the illusionist Listnar the Mighty and he is seeking vengeance. He has taken an old treasure map to an abandoned kaer that he had explored several years back, and arranged for a friend of his, a thief adept named Dooley, to play the part of a down and out adventurer with a map to a forgotten kaer, and the rumors of a magical pendant called the Sorcerer's Eye, an item reputed to greatly enhance the spellcasting abilities of any mage who possesses it.

Dooley is to join the heroes, help them arrive at the old kaer, lead them inside, and take them to where Listnar and his rouges would be waiting.

Down and Out in Kratas

Overview

This encounter starts at the Raven, a seedy inn in the city of Kratas. The characters are busy eating dinner when an out of luck adventurer named Dooley approaches them with a tale of woe, a map to an abandoned kaer, and the legend of the Sorcerer's Eye. He will do his best to convince the characters to launch an expedition into the forests south of Kratas.

Setting the Stage

It is early evening and you are seated at a table in the Raven eating a light meal before deciding what to do next. The barmaid brings another round of drinks and you continue relaxing in the smoky room.

A dark haired man dressed in slightly tattered and stained padded armor, a shortsword in a torn scabbard hanging from his belt, and scuffed, dirty boots wanders over to your table and looks you all over. His face seems worn and unshaven, and he seems to be working up the courage to speak to you.

"Excuse me. Are you the heroes who helped Norina at the House of Veils?"

Behind the Scenes

The stranger is Dooley, the thief adept who is working for Listnar the Mighty. He is attempting to infiltrate the characters and convince them to go into the forests to the abandoned kaer that Listnar and Dooley had adventured into years before. Once there, they will be led into an ambush.

Once introductions have been made, read the following:

> *"I am no beggar, I am Dooley, an adept who has fallen upon hard times. My companions and I adventured into the forests south of here, in search of an abandoned kaer. Legends and rumors hinted that the mystical Sorcerer's Eye rests inside."*

A Legends and Heroes test, target of 6, will tell the characters that the Sorcerer's Eye is a powerful magical item able to augment any spellcaster's power immensely, rumored to have been lost during the Scourge.

> *"Five of us went forth, but we were unprepared for what awaited us. We lost*

Branwyn on the journey through the woods, a manticore killed her before we even made it to the kaer. After a week of traveling, we arrived at the huge stone structure.

Between Lorinar, a dwarven wizard, and myself, we managed to open the doors and went inside. The kaer seemed long abandoned, and we explored deeper. I knew the Passions had abandoned us when Lorinar was killed by a swarm of krillworms, sucked dry of his life fluids.

Still, we did not turn back. Koric, an elven swordmaster, Brogwa Eye-Gouger, an ork warrior, and myself. Koric fell to a shadowmant, the poison killed him before we could give him aid. At that point Brogwa decided to turn back, and I went with him, unable to continue alone.

On the way out, Brogwa was killed by a spear trap we had bypassed on the way in. I was forced to continue back through the forests on my own. I was lucky to survive.

I managed to return to Kratas a few days ago, broke, injured, and alone. I am looking for a band of brave heroes who would return with me to the kaer. I do not care who keeps the Sorcerer's Eye. I just wish to avenge my fallen companions. To give meaning to their deaths. Otherwise they have perished for nothing."

Most of what Dooley is saying is true. He has left out the part about Listnar being one of the companions, and the fact that it was several years ago. He has also neglected the fact that they searched the entire kaer and never found the Sorcerer's Eye.

Dooley will do his best to seem like a brave adventurer who is down on his luck. He should clear his throat upon occasion, needing an ale to continue with his story. He wishes for the characters to feel sorry for him, and wish to help him out of both sympathy and greed.

Once the characters have agreed to help, let them buy supplies and make plans for the expedition.

Troubleshooting

If the characters do not volunteer to help Dooley, he will comment on how their reputations had made him think that they were brave heroes, the type that would help a fellow adept when they could. Apparently their reputations were undeserved. He will comment that there must be other heroes, brave ones, that would be willing to make the journey if it is too dangerous for the characters.

At this point, Listnar will have to resort to a simple ambush with a bunch of ruffians before the characters leave Kratas. During this ambush, Dooley will arrive and help the characters drive off the attackers.

He will explain that he heard the sounds of the struggle, and only did what any hero would do, leapt in to help out his fellow adepts. This should inspire the characters to return the favor.

Into the Woods

Overview

The characters are now outfitted, and make their way into the woods south of Kratas. They will have to deal with the wild animals and creatures of the forest, while making their way to the abandoned kaer.

Setting the Stage

> *It has been several days since you left Kratas and headed into the forest. Several days of eating trail rations, sleeping under the trees, and keeping an ever watchful eye on the underbrush for any creature or monster that might try to make you into a meal. Dooley has been a pleasant traveling companion, telling tall tales of places he's been and things he's seen.*
>
> *Suddenly, there is a large crashing sound as several branches and leaves fall from above you. A loud roar gets your attention as a lion-like creature wings down from above.*

Behind the Scenes

The characters are about to be attacked by a manticore. Roll randomly who the creature will attack first (though do not allow it to be Dooley). It will take two attacks at the same target, and the following rounds it will attack whoev§er seems to be the biggest threat. Dooley will do his best to disappear from sight. He will be setting himself up to use his Surprise Strike towards the end of the combat so that he can appear to have saved the characters.

Manticore

DEX: 9/D8+D6 **STR:** 13/D12+D10 **TOU:** 10/D10+D6
PER: 11/D10+D8 **WIL:** 9/D8+D6 **CHA:** 7/D12

Initiative: 9/D8+D6
Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: 12/2D10
Damage: Claws: 15/D20+D6; Tail: 20/D20+D8+D6
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 11/D10+D8
Effect: See Comments
Death Rating: 60
Wound Threshold: 15
Unconsciousness Rating: 54

Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 12
Social Defense: 9
Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 3
Knockdown: 10/D10+D6
Recovery Tests: 5
Combat Movement: 30/60
Full Movement: 60/120
Legend Points: 425

Equipment: None

Loot: Spiked tail worth 5D6 x 10 silver pieces. Counts as treasure worth Legend Points.

Commentary: A manticore will attack with a claw and tail attack. If the tail attack hits, the victim must make a successful Toughness Test against the Damage Test of the tail attack or be knocked unconscious for 4 rounds. All manticores can cast spells from any of the four spellcasting Disciplines. A manticore will only have three or four spells, none of which can require Thread Weaving. This manticore knows Mind Dagger (Will + 2: 11/D10+D8, 40 yards), Ice Mace and Chain (Will + 5: 14/D20+D4, 40 yards), and Resist Fire (+3 armor against fire based attacks, Touch).

The manticore will have already cast Resist Fire on itself. Remember that Dooley is waiting for his Surprise Strike, but he is willing to let the manticore do the most damage possible before he acts.

Dooley - Fourth Circle Thief Adept

DEX: 16: 7/D12 **STR:** 13: 6/D10 **TOU:** 11: 5/D8
PER: 16: 7/D12 **WIL:** 11: 5/D8 **CHA:** 11: 5/D8

Initiative: 6/D10
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 11/D10+D8
Damage: Shortsword 11/D10+D8; Surprise: 18/D20+D12
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 52
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 40
Karma Pool: 15

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 1
Knockdown: 6/D10
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 38
Full Movement: 75
Legend Points: 200
Karma Dice: D8

Equipment: Short sword, club, dagger, padded cloth armor

Loot: 1D6 x 10 silvers

Karma: Can spend Karma on actions using Perception only.

Talents: Avoid Blow 4: 11/D10+D8*, Climbing 4: 11/D10+D8, Durability 4 (5/4), Fence 3: 8/2D6*, Karma Ritual 2, Lock Pick 5: 12/2D10*, Lock Sense 3: 10/D10+D6*, Melee Weapons 4: 11/D10+D8, Picking Pockets 3: 10/D10+D6*, Silent Walk 5: 12/2D10*, Surprise Strike 4: 11/D10+D8**, Thread Weaving 3: 10/D10+D6*, Trap Initiative 3: 10/D10+D6*

** Can spend Karma **Must spend Karma and can spend Karma*

Skills: Acting 4: 9/D8+D6, Legends and Heroes 1: 8/2D6

Dooley is a thorough scoundrel working for Listnar the Mighty. He will attempt to ingratiate himself to the characters, but will always let them get as injured as possible before helping out.

Troubleshooting

If it looks as if the manticore is going to kill the characters, use Dooley's Surprise Strike. This will get the manticore's attention if it does not put it down. Hopefully, this will give the characters a chance to finish off the creature.

The Forgotten Kaer

Overview

The characters arrive at the kaer, actually a citadel standing in the midst of the forest. They will enter the citadel in search of the Sorcerer's Eye, make their way to the heart of the citadel, and into Listnar the Mighty's ambush.

Setting the Stage

> *It has been three days since the manticore attack. Three days of hiking through the brush, waiting for whatever else may decide to attack. Dooley has been sure that you are near the kaer for the past several hours, though there has been no sign of it. You have begun to doubt his story when you enter a small clearing and see the crumbling stone steps that lead up to the vast stone doors of an ancient citadel. The walls are overgrown with vines obscuring the magical runes of protection carved into the stones, runes designed to keep the Horrors at bay. The late afternoon sun reflects off the stones, giving the whole structure a mystical appearance.*

Behind the Scenes

The citadel of Tar' Maktor was built by the combined efforts of the elves from the forest and humans from a large town nearby. They combined their resources and magical might to try and ensure their survival.

The citadel was breached two hundred years after it was sealed, and the populace was slaughtered entirely. It was discovered many years ago by Listnar, Dooley, and the rest of their party. Listnar and Dooley were the only survivors, and they never succeeded in finding the treasure vault. They believe it was looted before they discovered it.

Room#	Description

1	**Front Doors** - *You see steps forty feet wide leading up to massive stone doors. The doors are old and cracked. The runes are worn and faded, but you know that the physical condition does not mean that they are any less powerful than when they were carved. One of the doors stands half open and you can see the dark hallway leading inside.* *The runes on the door were protective runes designed to keep the Horrors out. There are other writings, in human tongue on one door, and in elven on the other. They tell the story of the human settlement of Mak and the elven settlement of Tor. It tells of the spirit of cooperation between the two peoples and how they managed to build the citadel to protect themselves from the Horrors.* Dooley will tell of a magical trap that was on the doors, but that it had been dispelled by Lorinar, the dwarven wizard that had accompanied them. In fact, Dooley is telling the truth and the doors are quite safe.
2	**Entrance Hall** - *You look inside to see a hall leading deep into the citadel. The hall must be twenty feet wide, and you can see arrow slits along both walls. The hall ends in another large set of double doors.* Again, one is pushed halfway open. There is a pit trap half way down the corridor. **Pit Trap** This is the typical pit trap found in kaer entrances throughout Barsaive. It is twenty feet deep and ends in a six inch pool of acid. **Detection Difficulty:** 7 **Disarm Difficulty:** 7 **Trigger Condition:** Pressure plate **Trap Initiative:** 8 **Trap Effect:** Damage Step of 10 for the fall, and a Damage Step of 4 for each turn spent in the acid. Armor protects completely, but it will damage the armor at the rate of 1 point of Physical Armor per turn. Magical armor will not be damaged in this way. Dooley will neglect to mention this trap, and if questioned later will say that it never sprung while his party passed by, but maybe it was stuck and so many people traveling over it had unjammed it. On the bottom of the trap is a large skeleton of some sort, though it doesn't look humanoid.
3	**Defensive Halls** - *Once past the double doors, you realize the passage splits to the left and right, doubling back on itself. You can see the original hall through the arrow slits on one side, but there are more arrow slits on the other side. Apparent he designers made the entire entrance way into a death trap where various fields of fire could cover the halls as the invaders were forced to go back and forth, up and down the halls. Lying on the floor, halfway down the hall towards a single door, is another huge skeleton. There are old and rotted shafts still protruding from its rib cage.* *Opening the door, you can see the corridor doubling back once more, with more arrow slits covering the passage you were just in. As you continue you eventually come to another set of dou§ble doors. One is pushed partially open.*

4	**Spear Trap** This is the trap that killed Dooley's ork companion. He will warn the characters of this one, allowing it to be bypassed. He hopes that this warning will confirm his story, and make the characters trust him more. He will say that he buried the ork out in the forest rather than let him rot in here where Horrors had breached.
5	**The Market Square** - *You enter a vast chamber littered with debris. Pieces of wood, barrels, carts, and awnings lie all about. From the other three entrances and the ruins about the huge chamber, you can guess that this must have been the market square for the citadel. Your eyes catch a glimpse of movement coming from the darkness above.* The characters will be attacked by three shadowmants who hatched when Listnar and his ruffians made their way inside. ## Shadowmants (3) **DEX:** 5/D8 **STR:** 5/D8 **TOU:** 6/D10 **PER:** 4/D6 **WIL:** 5/D8 **CHA:** 4/D6 **Initiative:** 7/D12 **Physical Defense:** 7 **Number of Attacks:** 1 **Spell Defense:** 6 **Attack:** 7/D12 **Social Defense:** 7 **Damage:** 7/D12 **Armor:** 4 **Number of Spells:** 1 (poison) **Mystic Armor:** 0 **Spellcasting:** 6 **Knockdown:** 6/D10 **Effect:** 9/D8+D6 **Recovery Tests:** 2 **Death Rating:** 35 **Combat Movement:** 45 **Wound Threshold:** 9 **Full Movement:** 90 (flight) **Unconsciousness Rating:** 27 **Legend Points:** 100 **Equipment:** None **Loot:** Stingers worth 1D10 x 10 silvers. The stingers count as Legend Points. Eight feet wide with a five foot tail, Shadowmants resemble large flying stingrays. Nocturnal creatures, they roam at night, spending the daylight hours underground. The tail has a poison sting that resists healing with a Spell Defense of 8. The Shadowmant must sting its victim. It then makes a Spellcasting Test against the Toughness Step of the target. If Successful, it will do Step 9 damage every round until a Toughness Test can be made with a target of 8. Once the characters have defeated the shadowmants, they can search the room. This will take 30 minutes and will allow each character a Perception Test or an Evidence Analysis Test, target of 7. If successful, roll on the following table to see what is discovered: 1. A small bag containing 45 sp (pre-Scourge) 2. A wooden box with 4 vials (3 are broken, 1 is a Booster Potion)

	3. A dagger (forged to +2) 4. A metal box (engraving tools and a 150 sp emerald)
6	**Hall of Stairs** - *You pass under a vast arch to find yourself in a huge hall. There are many doors leading from the hall, and two huge marble stairways leading to the level above you. All around you are piles of splintered wood and scraps of old, torn cloth and tapestries. The wood seemed to have once been furniture, tables, benches, and cabinets, but all of it has been smashed and destroyed. Upon occasion you spot the skeletal remains of one of the kaer's former residents, its ribcage smashed or spine broken. The darkness and feeling of death seems all around you.* The Horrors destroyed everything in their path when they breached the citadel.
7	**Barracks** - *The door to this chamber lies in ruins on the floor. Inside you can see what remains of many cots, and the smashed ruins of what used to be soldiers' trunks. Several skeletal bodies litter the floor, still clad in tattered leather armor or rusted and torn chainmail. Chipped and broken swords and broken shields are scattered throughout the room. There is a door on the other side of the room, broken and hanging from one hinge.* There is little of value in this room. An Evidence Analysis Test with a target of 6 will show that there was a major battle in this room. The creature must have been large and immensely strong. It tore apart the defenders and left them dead or dying. It will take a half hour to search the room, and no matter what the characters roll, they will find nothing of value.
8	**Commander's Office** - *This room is as devastated as the previous rooms. The remains of a desk lies in broken pieces on the floor, the matching chair lying in splinters next to it. Half of a large wooden table rests near the door, while the other half is across the room by another broken door. Moldy papers and rotted maps litter the room and a single skeleton, still wearing a steel breast plate and torn chain seems to have been the only defender here.* A search will take 15 minutes, needing a Perception test with a target of 9. If successful a single spear will be found, in which case read the following: *After searching the room thoroughly, you find a single item of interest. A broken spear was lying under the rubble. The spear point seems made of gold, gleaming softly in the dim light. There are runes down the blade, written in Sperethial. It reads "Impaler". The shaft was shattered two feet below the spear head.* The spear is magical, with a Spell Defense of 12. It was forged to +3.

9	**Captain's Room** - *This small room has been destroyed. A single bed lies in ruins, claw marks deep into the wood. A wardrobe lies shattered on the floor, and faded, rotting clothes cover everything.* It will take 10 minutes to search the room. On a Perception Test of 8 the party will find a dented iron box, still locked (needing a 7 to open). It contains two broken ceramic vials and two unbroken vials. Each contains a Booster Potion.
10	**Weapon Practice Room** - *The door to this chamber is missing entirely. There are three skeletal bodies lying across the threshold, their leather armor rotting away. Inside you see what you first believed to be more bodies, but at second glance you can tell they were practice dummies. Even the walls in this room are scarred by claw marks. The remains of archery targets lie against the wall to the right, and broken bows and shattered arrows litter the floor.* Searching the room will take 15 minutes. There is nothing of value to be found.
11	**Forge** - *This small chamber houses the broken remains of the citadel's forge. An anvil lies on its side, and tools of various types are scattered on the floor.* Searching the room will take 15 minutes. On a Perception Test, target of 9, the following will be found: *You have found a section of the stone around the forge that slides open. Inside the small niche something gleams. Drawing out you realize it is a sword blade. It gleams silver in the dim light. There is no pommel or crossguard.* This sword was forged to +3, but has never been completed.
12	**Armorer's Room** - *This small room was obvious§ly some sort of living chamber. A broken bed and smashed cabinet are all that remain. A single skele§ton is some sort of rotted leather tunic lies clutching a large hammer.* There is nothing of value here.
13	**Plant Growth Area** - *Looking into this vast chamber, you almost swear that you are back outside. Plants of all shapes and sizes still grow under the artificial light of the light quartz fixtures.* Again, there is little of value. The plants have grown wild after years of neglect. Resourceful characters can find edible food here.
14	**Living Quarters** - *The remains of this chamber is littered with broken furniture and smashed wooden walls. Apparently these were the living quarters of some of the citadel's inhabitants, though they now lie in ruins. You can see the bones of the residents peeking out from under the rubble.* These chambers are more or less the same. It would take 15 minutes to search a single chamber, and a Perception Test with a target of 10 to find anything of value. With a success, the item will be worth a D6 x 10 silvers (a small figurine, a rotted pouch with some silver, a small gem...)

Upper Level

15	**Upper Hall** - *You find more bodies at the top of the stairs. Skeletal bodies still wearing torn and broken armor.* There is nothing of value here.
16	**Great Hall** - *The doors to this room are splintered and lying in pieces on the floor. Inside you see a sight that takes your breath away.* *Lying amid the broken tables and shattered benches of the great hall are the remains of the citadel's inhabitants. The skeletons of over a hundred people must litter the floor and you realize that this is where the populace fled when the Horrors breached the outer defenses. Another large skeleton lies over a collapsed table, spears and rusted swords embedded through its rib cage. Judging by the size of the rib cage, you guess that the creature must have been over fifteen feet tall.* Searching the room will reveal broken plates, dented goblets, and everything else one would expect in a great hall. There is nothing of value.
17	**Healer's Quarters** - *The broken door hangs loosely on its hinges. Swinging it open reveals a room containing several broken cots, and many splintered cabinets. The remains of a single individ§u§al, dressed in dirty, blood stained white robes bearing the symbol of Garlen lies torn in two on the floor. A broken sword lies by its side.* This room was the citadel's healing chamber. It is also where the citadel's questor to Garlen made his last stand. Searching the room will take 20 minutes. A Perception Test of 9 will find the following: *In one of the smashed cabinets tou find one intact vial (containing a Healing Potion).*
18	**Upper Storeroom** - *The door to this room is missing entirely. Inside are numerous smashed crates and broken barrels.* This room held food stuffs, wine and ale. The food has long since gone bad, and the barrels are all broken.
19	**Upper Kitchen** - *This door is hanging from one lone hinge. Inside you can see several large fireplaces, huge pots, and other cooking equipment. Most of it is scattered across the floor, along with three more skeletons.* There is nothing of value left in this room.
20	**The Brewery** - *Inside this room you see more smashed barrels, bent copper tubes, and huge copper tubs.* There is nothing left of value here. The brewing equipment has been destroyed.

21	**Library** - *This room looks as if a small fire had burned out of control. The broken tables are covered with old, torn books. The few shelving units that still cling to the walls contain even more books, but the library is only a shadow of its former glory.* The library is still semi-intact. It can be used for research at a -2 step penalty. None of the tomes are magical.
22	**Chambers of Lord Xandis** - *This huge chamber is a mess. You can tell that it used to be divided into smaller chambers by the remains of the wooden walls that have been ripped down. The furniture is smashed, and the stone walls have deep scratches in the stone.* This was the living suite of the human lord who shared rulership of the citadel. A search will take an hour, and requires an 8 or better to find anything. If successful, read the following: *After searching through the rubble, you have come upon a single broken chest. Inside is a canvas bag (containing 200 sp and 50 gp), a ceramic vial (containing a Kelia's Antidote), and a small felt bag (with two sapphires worth 200 silvers each).*
23	**Chambers of Lord Lyndolyn** - *This vast chamber was once divided into many smaller chambers. The wooden partitions are splintered and lying on the floor, covering the smashed and shattered furniture.* These chambers belonged to the elven lord who co-ruled the citadel. It will take 30 minutes to search the chamber, and a Perception Test, target of 7. If successful, read the following: *Buried under the pieces of one of the partitions are two skeletons. One is obviously one of the Horrors that breached the citadel. The other is humanoid, still wearing gleaming chainmail made of small, intricate rings. A broken sword is still clutched in the skeletal fingers, the other half of the blade embedded into the skull of the long dead Horror. Sparkling gems still adorn the hilt of the sword (3 emeralds worth 100 sp each).* The chainmail is Faerie Chainmail.
24	**Temple to the Passions** - *The huge doors are lying on the floor, torn from the stonework of the portal. Inside you can see a vast room containing broken marble statues of the Passions. A large marble alter stands on a raised platform at the far end of the room. There seems to be an odd chill in the air, and suddenly a monstrous creature emerges from behind the altar.* This is where Listnar the Mighty has made his stand. He had an Improved Alarm placed on the entrance to the citadel to warn him when the characters arrived, and a second in the upper halls. Listnar has a Nobody Here spell cast upon himself, needing an 18 to be sensed and a 9 to be disbelieved. He has cast a Monstrous Mantle on Gerrik the Strong, an ork warrior friend. The illusion is one of a terrible Horror adding +3 steps to the ork's Attack Tests, Damage tests, and Physical Defense. It also gives Gerrik 12 extra Damage Points. Once the characters have entered the room Listnar will cast a Mind Fog (T:1, TW: 8, R: 60y, D: Rank Rounds, E: 16/D20+D8, CD: Spell Defense) on one of the

spellcasters. He will then start casting True Ephemeral Bolts (T: 0, TW: NA, R: 60y, D: 1 round, E: 13/D12+D10, CD: Spell Defense).

Listnar the Mighty - Fifth Circle Illusionist

DEX: 14: 6/D10 **STR:** 8: 4/D6 **TOU:** 11: 5/D8
PER: 16: 7/D12 **WIL:** 16: 7/D12 **CHA:** 14: 6/D10

Initiative: 6/D10
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 6/D10
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 12/2D10
Effect: by spell
Death Rating: 52
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 39

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2
Knockdown: 4/D6
Recovery Tests: 2@D8
Combat Movement: 33
Full Movement: 65
Legend Points: 250

Equipment: None

Loot: What is in the room.

Talents: Anticipate Blow 3:10/D10+D6, Dead Fall 5: 12/2D10*, Disguise Self 3: 10/D10+D6, Durability 5, False Sight 5:12/2D10*, Karma Ritual 3, Read/Write Languages 3: 10/D10+D6, Read/Write Magic 5: 12/2D10*, Speak Languages 3: 10/D10+D6, Spellcasting 5: 12/2D10*, Spell Matrix 5, Spell Matrix 4, Spell Matrix 3, Spell Matrix 2, Thread Weaving 5: 12/2D10*, Willforce 3

Listnar is an overly proud, self-important spellcaster who believes that he is destined for greatness. He is now seeking vengeance on those who ruined his plans in Kratas and stole his spell book. If it looks like he is loosing, he will try to escape under the Notice Not spell, using a Flying Carpet once he gets outside. If captured, he will use Dead Fall to make the characters think he is dead and escape later.

Gerrik the Strong - Third Circle Warrior

DEX: 14: 6/D10 **STR:** 16: 7/D12 **TOU:** 16: 7/D12
PER: 11: 5/D8 **WIL:** 11: 5/D8 **CHA:** 11: 5/D8

Initiative: 3/D4 (6/D10)
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 10/D10+D6 (13/D12+D10)
Damage: Broad Sword 12/2D10 (15/D20+D6)
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 66/63 (75)

Physical Defense: 11 (14)
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 6 (9)
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 7/D12
Recovery Tests: 3 (2)
Combat Movement: 38

Wound Threshold: 11 **Full Movement:** 75

Unconsciousness Rating: 57/54 (66) **Legend Points:** 150

Equipment: Broad sword, ringmail, shield, Death Cheat Charm

Loot: 1D6 x 10 silvers

Talents: Acrobatic Strike 3: 9/D8+D6, Air Dance 3: 9/D8+D6, Anticipate Blow 2: 7/D12*, Avoid Blow 3: 9/D8+D6*, Durability 3, Karma Ritual 2, Melee Weapon 4: 11/D10+D8*, Throwing Weapons 2: 8/2D6, Tiger Spring 3, Unarmed Combat 2: 10/D10+D6*, Wood Skin 3: 10/D10+D6*

Gerrik owes Listnar his life, and considers this repayment of the debt. He considers it a matter of honor, and Listnar has held it over his head for years. Because of this, Gerrik will fight to the best of his abilities, until he falls unconscious. Still, he doesn't trust Listnar completely, and has a Death Cheat Charm bound to him just in case.

Dooley *(see **Into the Woods** for stats)*

Dooley is a thorough scoundrel working for Listnar the Mighty. He will attempt to ingratiate himself to the characters, but will always let them get as injured as possible before helping out. Once the final battle has been engaged, he will attempt to Surprise Strike one of the characters, and then he will fight on the side of Listnar. If the Monstrous Mantle spell holds out, the characters may believe that Dooley was Horror Marked during his first expedition.

This battle should be one of surprises and betrayal. Listnar will abandon his companions in order to escape with his life.

Once the battle is over, the characters can search the room. A Perception Test of 12 is needed to find the hidden chamber built into the ceiling, twenty feet up. Of course, the characters will have to find a way to get there. Once opened, the characters can see a small chamber above the temple. This is where the citadel's treasure was stored. Do not be surprised if the characters do not find it. It was designed to remain hidden. If they do find it, and manage to get to it, read the following:

As you peer into the dark chamber above, you can make out four chests, made of wood and bound in iron.

All the chests are locked, needing an 8 to open.

Chest 1 - 1000 silvers

Chest 2 - 200 gold pieces

Chest 3 - A golden crown adorned with emeralds (worth 1500 silvers), a silver crown adorned with sapphires (worth 100 silvers)

Chest 4 - A small leather bag (containing a single orichalcum piece), a piece of parchment (a map to the City of Spires), and a tent (folded with instructions inside, made of fernweave, elemental air, and elemental fire, giving it Physical Armor of 4, Mystic

Armor of 5, and self heating and cooling. It sleeps 10 and only weighs 20 pounds).

Troubleshooting

The only thing that can go wrong is if the characters are defeated by Listnar. Listnar will want to kill the characters, but if Gerrik is still alive he will be unwilling to let Listnar put them to death. He will help in looting the characters, however. Of course, this would lead to the characters trying to catch up to Listnar for their own vengeance.

Legend Point Award

Creatures and Opponents

Manticore	425 points
3 Shadowmants	300 points
Dooley	200 points
Gerrik	150 points
Listnar	250 points

Treasure

Manticore's tail	5D6 x 10 points
Shadowmants' stingers	1D10 x 10 points each
The spear Impaler	400 points

Creative Roleplaying

Praying to the Passions in the shrine to lay the dead to rest	150 points

Adventure Goal

Surviving Listnar's trap	150 points

Treasure

The Spear Impaler

Location: In the room of the commander of the Citadel of Tar' Maktor. The spear was forged to +3 sharpness and is made of orichalcum, gleaming a soft gold color. Elven runes decorate the blade, spelling out the name "Impaler".
Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 12

Thread Ranks

Rank 1 Cost: 100
Key Knowledge: What is the spear's name? It is named Impaler.
Effect: The spear adds +2 to the attack test when thrown.

Rank 2 Cost: 200
Key Knowledge: What was the name of the citadel that Impaler was supposed to defend? The citadel was Tar' Maktor.
Effect: The spear adds +2 to all attack tests.

Rank 3 Cost: 300
Key Knowledge: Who forged the spear? The spear was forged by the elven weaponsmith Relanin, his sigil is on the blade.
Effect: The spear adds +2 damage steps.

Rank 4 Cost: 500
Key Knowledge: How was the spear first broken? Thrusting into a Horror that breached Tar' Maktor.
Effect: The spear pierces armor on a Good Success instead of an Excellent Success on the attack roll.

Faerie Chainmail

Faerie chainmail is very high-quality armor made of fine links. Because the links are one-half the sizeof normal chainmail, suits of faerie chainmail fit better. The chainmail gleams a silvery grey.

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

Thread Ranks

Rank 1 Cost: 200
Key Knowledge: The character must learn the name of the suit of armor. The armor is named Resiliant, it is etched in Sperethial on the links in the collar.
Effect: Armor Rating increases to 8.

Rank 2 Cost: 300
Effect: Remove the armor penalty to the Initiative Step.

Rank 3 Cost: 500
Key Knowledge: The character must find out what type of faerie creature or enchanted beast gave its blood for the armor. The blood came from the elven hero Anarian, a prince of Shosara.
Effect: An opponent must make an Extraordinary success on an Attack Test to make an armor defeating hit against this armor.

Rank 4 Cost: 800

Effect: Armor Rating goes to 9. Add +1 to the wearer's Mystic Armor.

Rank 5 Cost: 1300
Key Knowledge: The character must learn the name of the person who created the armor. It was created by the elven weaponsmith Evendar in Shosara. His forge mark is on some of the links on the lower hem.
Effect: The Armor Rating increases to 10. Magic from the armor adds +1 step to the wearer's Initiative step.

Rank 6 Cost: 2100
Effect: The armor adds +3 to the Mystic Armor of the wearer.

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Dying Words

Dying Words is a brief encounter, or mini-adventure, that gamemasters can use in the middle of another adventure, or as break from their normal campaign. Dying Words confronts the characters with a new form of Horror, called Deceivers. These Horrors appear in ***Parlainth: The Forgotten City***®, published by FASA Corporation. This encounter is presented in the same manner as are encounters in the Earthdawn® adventures ***Mists of Betrayal***® and ***Terror in the Skies***®, published by FASA Corporation.

Overview

This encounter can take place while the characters are traveling across the vast open plains and hinterlands of Barsaive.

The characters come across a ruined village, fires still smoldering after a raid by parties unknown. If they rush to help the last few anguished survivors, they discover that they've fallen prey to a trick by Deceivers, a vicious type of minor Horror.

Setting the Stage

Read the following to the players when they arrive at the Deceiver-plagued village:
Up ahead, you can see that the trail you're currently following winds past yet another tiny village. Before you can decide whether you want to skirt it or check it out, you realize that something's wrong. A thick cloud of oily smoke rises from the village, throwing a menacing black shroud over the savanna. A terrible wail rises into the air along with the smoke - long and sobbing, it takes you a moment to decide that it's made by a Name-Giver and not some wounded animal.

Then you can hear the words in the wail; again and again, the distraught villager is repeating

the word "Help!" in the dwarf tongue.

Themes and Images

In this mini-adventure, the adventurers are reminded that many corners in Barsaive, especially in this neck of the woods, do indeed have Horrors lurking behind them, and that even the most seemingly innocent situations can mask the stink of Corruption.

Behind the Scenes

The ruined village is a trap laid by Deceivers, Horrors that compensate for a lack of sheer power with the cunning use of mind-reading and illusion abilities.

Deceivers

DEX: 13 **STR:** 6 **TOU:** 8
PER: 14 **WIL:** 11 **CHA:** 15

Initiative: 15
Number of Attacks: (2)
Attack: 10
Damage: 12
Number of Spells: 6
Spellcasting: 22
Effect: See below
Death Rating: 28
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune
Karma Points: 20

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 9
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 10
Knockdown: 3
Recovery Tests: 4
Combat Movement: 50
Full Movement: 100
Legend Points: 1,000
Karma Step: 8

Powers: Animate Dead 12, Corrupt Karma 12, Cursed Luck 12, Damage Shift 12, Empathy Net 20, False Form 20, Thought Mirror 20 (see below), Circle 1 Wizard spells

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Few people know what deceivers really look like, for they almost always appear cloaked in illusion. Even in death they assume a false form. According to a few reports from powerful illusionists who have beheld deceivers with True Sight, they appear humanoid in shape, no more than four feet tall, covered from head to toe in gray, lumpy skin that resembles writhing brain matter. These illusionists saw no sensory organs or other visible features.

Deceivers usually roam in packs of 6 to 8. They delight in using trickery to lure victims to their destruction, either physical or mental. Deceivers use their Empathy Net power (see below) to mentally scan an unsuspecting victim from a distance and determine his or her most noble instincts. Then the deceivers use the Thought Mirror power (see below) to create

a large-scale illusion meant to appeal to those instincts. Finally, they use their False Form power (see below) to fit themselves seamlessly into the illusion. When the victim comes to investigate, the deceivers reveal themselves and attack. This element of surprise makes for an effective ambush, but the deceivers seem to enjoy the victim's feelings of shock and betrayal as much as any physical damage they might inflict. Deceivers get their thrills from punishing those who act unselfishly. Given a choice, they prefer to leave their victims barely alive rather than killing them, most likely in hopes that the victim will refuse the next opportunity to act heroically once he or she recovers. Deceivers revel in the knowledge of having stained a shining soul with fear and self-doubt.

In combat, deceivers combine their Empathy Net and False Form powers to identify and mimic the appearance of their opponent's loved ones. This nasty trick unsettles the opponent by forcing him or her to hack away at those he or she cares for most in the world. If its opponent succeeds in killing a deceiver, the Horror plays one final trick: it shapeshifts into a precise copy of its slayer as a child between the ages of six and ten. More than one hero has been attacked in the act of disposing of a deceiver corpse by righteous assailants who believe they have caught a child-murderer.

Of all the Horrors, deceivers are among the easiest to kill despite the ferocity with which they defend themselves. They rarely flee from fights, and many scholars believe that they care more about inflicting mental trauma on others than for their own survival. To a deceiver, death at the hands of a Name-giver simply affords the Horror another opportunity to cause its killer harm.

Deceiver Powers

Empathy Net:
Once a deceiver selects a spot it believes will attract the right kind of victim, it spends a Karma Point and performs a brief ritual during which it dashes out the brain of a living creature against a rock. After this gruesome rite, the deceiver waits until a Name-giver approaches to within 500 yards of it, at which point the power of the ritual mentally alerts the deceiver to its victim's presence. The deceiver then makes a Spellcasting Test against the highest Spell Defense of any Name-givers within the 500-yard range. If the test is successful, the Empathy Net power fills the deceiver's mind with images from the Name-givers' minds. From this telepathic flow, the deceiver can determine what situations would most likely trigger a self-sacrificing response from the targets, what their past and present loved ones look like, and what they looked like as young children.

False Form:
The False Form power allows the deceiver to mimic anything it sees in an Empathy Net scan. This power works in three ways, depending on which of the victim's thoughts the deceiver is using to inspire the false form. The deceiver can, for example, become part of a complex illusion created by its Thought Mirror power (see below). As part of the thought mirror, the deceiver's false form shares the thought mirror's Sensing Difficulty (40) and Disbelief Difficulty (26).

The deceiver can also assume the form of an opponent's loved one by making a False Form Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If the test is successful, the victim suffers a reduction of 2 steps to all actions for a number of rounds equal to the difference between the test result and the victim's Spell Defense. When the effect wears off, the deceiver can attempt to adopt the form of yet another loved one. Because the deceiver changes its shape while its opponent watches, the victim knows he or she is fighting an illusion. In this case, however, disbelief does not negate the 2-step reduction. Even though a victim knows he is not really chopping up his mother, he still finds the act emotionally difficult to perform.

If mortally wounded in combat, the deceiver makes a final False Form Test against its killer's Spell Defense. On a successful result, the deceiver transforms into a replica of its opponent as a child. Oddly enough, this change is not an illusion. The deceiver actually becomes a dead child of the relevant Name-giver race, matching its opponent at that age down to the last freckle.

Thought Mirror:
The Thought Mirror power allows the deceiver to use images gleaned from an Empathy Net scan (see above) to create a complex illusion that appeals to the victim's sense of heroism. Examples include a mother and baby trapped in a burning building, a drowning child being swept down a river, or a kitten being stalked by a rabid dog. The illusion covers 5 square yards for every 1 of the deceiver's Spellcasting steps. The Step Number for most thought mirrors is 20, giving the illusion a Sensing Difficulty of 40 and Disbelief Difficulty of 26.

Approaching the Village

As the adventurers approach the village, they see a grim sight indeed - it looks like an entire settlement has been slaughtered, their huts put to the torch. Horribly mangled corpses lie everywhere - outside the village perimeter, in the fire pit and corral, lying out of doorways of huts. Some seem to have been killed in the midst of a fight, their weapons still clutched in their lifeless hands. Others - including young children and the elderly - lie face down, as if killed summarily. About a hundred people seem to have died here, and recently.

If they pay careful attention to the slain, the party members might note that something is slightly awry here. For one thing, the dead include windlings, t'skrang, trolls, and obsidimen, who aren't typically found in these mixed farming communities. Secondly, the corpses show a surprising range of injury - some have clearly been killed with conventional melee or missile weapons, while others show the marks of having been mangled by vicious animals and creatures. Others have literally been torn apart in a most gruesome fashion, with no way of telling how they were killed.

These inconsistencies are the result of the Deceivers having pulled these images from the minds of the player characters - since the party is used to dealing with all of the races back in the civilized areas, the Deceivers have included them all amongst the dead. They've also taken various images of death from different adventures and experiences, which explains

why the illusionary corpses seem to have been killed in so many different ways.

As the heroes come closer to the village, they see someone is still moving - an ork woman lying outside a hut at the village's south end. She's making the wailing noises they heard earlier. She lies on her back, pierced by several arrows. This is actually a Deceiver in False Form (see above), as are all of the "villagers" still "left alive."

If they approach the woman, she chokes as a trickle of blood runs from the side of her mouth, and then speaks: "Please, please, in Garlen's name, please be here to help us. Don't be more of them here to finish us off."

Assuming the adventurers make reassuring noises to her, she responds: "Oh! My prayers are answered! You've come to save us! You are sent by Garlen, you are - " Here she pauses to dramatically gasp for air. "You are heroes."

If the adventurers roll the "ork woman" over onto her back, the Deceiver makes a great show of crying out in pain as they move her. If asked who the "us" she's talking about is, the other three Deceivers, on cue, begin to stir and cry out. Two lie outside of huts, the other one in the midst of the corral. According to the illusion, the corral fencing is blazing away. Some illusionary slaughtered horses lie inside the fencing; one of them is lying on top of the Deceiver, whose False Form is that of a female obsidiman. The Deceiver to the west looks like a male troll; the one to the north is a male windling. The obsidiman lies several feet from her left arm, which seems slightly melted. The troll lies face up in a puddle of blood, his chest torn open by some unknown force. The windling is bleeding profusely from the head, as if bludgeoned repeatedly.

Should the adventurers offer them any healing aids, the Deceivers will be only too grateful to gulp them down, laughing inside at how completely they've fooled these pathetic Name-givers. They want to keep the adventurers fooled for as long as possible; the more completely they trust them, the more twisted pleasure the Deceivers get.

If anyone asks any of the "wounded" the name of their settlement, each gives the same answer, a small nearby village. This village should one of the gamemaster's choosing, preferably one known to the characters.

The Deceivers are waiting for the adventurers to figure out that something fishy is going on, at which time they'll commence their attack. It's possible, though, that the adventurers won't suspect the "dying villagers" even after hearing the four different accounts of the raid - they may chalk this up to some kind of magical mind-clouding on the part of the nonexistent raiders, or simply believe the first one they hear without asking for the others. If the adventurers don't seem like they're going to figure things out, the Deceivers get bored and start the fight.

Each of the Deceivers has a Cadaver Man stashed nearby, hiding in a hut, and orders it to attack when the combat begins. Another way the fight might break out is if the adventurers

search the huts for some reason and come across the animated corpses. If there are four or fewer characters, the Deceivers withdraw, watching the fights with glee. If there are more party members to take care of, the Deceivers nearest to unengaged player characters take them on. Unoccupied Deceivers would still rather watch than dive right into the fight.

In case it matters, the Deceivers found these corpses in this abandoned village when they first came across it a couple of days ago. They were the remains of lost travelers who died of heatstroke just before the Deceivers came on the scene.

Cadaver Men (4)

DEX: 4 **STR:** 6 **TOU:** 7
PER: 3 **WIL:** 6 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 5
Number of Attacks: 1 (4)
Attack: 7
Damage: 9
Number of Spells: N/A
Spellcasting: N/A
Effect: N/A
Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 30
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 11
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 9
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 25
Full Movement: 50
Legend Points: 110

Cadaver Men go into a rage if wounded, getting four attacks per round until the character who wounded them is dead or 10 rounds have passed, whichever comes first. These particular Cadaver Men have been driven so insane by constant proximity to Horrors that they're incapable of social interaction of any kind - they're just mindless automatons of destruction.

When Cadaver Men go down, unengaged Deceivers replace them, activating the False Form power so as to appear as various loved ones of the adventurers. The Deceivers prefer to stay out of hand-to-hand range and fling Crushing Will and Mind Dagger spells for as long as possible before closing. They're not well-equipped to take damage, so they'll use Cursed Luck on opponents trying to hit them and Damage Shift when they do get hit.

When party members fall unconscious, the Deceivers stop attacking them, or command their Cadaver Men to stop. They want the party members to live to rue the day they stopped to aid some helpless people in trouble - and to report their experiences to others, spreading mistrust throughout the countryside. If a Deceiver knocks a combatant out, it steps back to enjoy the spectacle unless there's another unengaged opponent to fight.

These particular Deceivers have more of an instinct for self-preservation than most; if any of them take 25 or more points of accumulated damage, they run away, on foot. When one Deceiver flees, the rest follow. This counts as a defeat, entitling the group to Legend Points for the Deceivers. Still, the party may wish to pursue them to rid the countryside of this menace.

When the Deceivers die (turning into child replicas of the characters who strike the final blows) or leave the immediate area, the air shimmers and the scene changes. The corpses vanish - except for the Cadaver Men - and the fires and smoke disappear with them. The huts turn out to be old and crumbled - the village has obviously been abandoned for years, and the characters are able to discover moldering documents in one of the huts that identify the place as Verybright. They find a diary entry that explains that Verybright was abandoned when its well ran dry.

If captured, the Deceivers refuse to talk - being taken prisoner is an indignity they won't tolerate, and they'll use all of their magic and persuasive abilities to attempt an escape. It is unlikely that seasoned adventurers will let them live anyway.

Troubleshooting

It is unlikely that the characters will get themselves killed in this encounter, because their enemies consider it more deliciously evil to let them live. Don't fudge a killing blow, though - Horrors are not to be trifled with. Barsaive since the Scourge is a dangerous place.

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The Floating Kaer

by Andrew W. Ragland

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From the journal of Azeat Paurre, Wizard of the Fifth Circle:

Recently, in my research, I have come upon evidence that the Floating Kaer of V'Derinzorn is not merely a story, but an actuality. A merchant, whose drakkar was blown off course in a gale, has actually seen what he believed to be the kaer. He described it to me in sufficient detail that I believe his tale. Now, if only I can locate it.

The trail of V'Derinzorn has been a difficult one to follow. While he left his stamp upon the land, in stories that are told from one end of Barsaive to the other to this very day, his final fate remains uncertain. He consorted with dragons, faced down great Horrors as the kaers were being constructed, and mastered not only his own Discipline but that of the elementalist as well. It is this last that leads me on my search now.

Before the Scourge rose and the kaers were sealed, the tales have it that he made his own preparations. Using his powers over Earth, he hollowed out a mountain. With his control over Water, he caused a spring to rise in its center. Fire gave light and warmth to the great cavern. Finally, he wrapped the entire mountain in True Air, setting it afloat like a Theran kila.

Within the kaer would be a wealth of knowledge nearly beyond imagining. The complete works of a wizard of the Thirteenth Circle and elementalist of the Twelfth, including his grimoires and his journals, would be in the kaer's library. All of the experiments he pursued during the Scourge, all of the artifacts he made for those who would come after him -- I am nearly beside myself with anticipation.

Finding the right drakkar captain and the right Name-Givers to accompany me will be difficult. I must be certain that none of them will come between me and the library for which I have searched half my life. There will no doubt be great perils involved in boarding the kaer. Traps will wait within for the unwary and the undeserving. But a lifetime of research in one place -- !

GM Text:

Azeat Paurre may himself contact the group, or they could come into possession of his journal by any number of means. An inheritance to a distant relative, an estate sale, or the somewhat overused device of finding it on his body in a back alley all are viable options.

V'Derinzorn's kaer is not actually a mountain. It's a massive sphere of carved stone, surrounded by a thin mantle of True Air. Originally, it floated well above the mountains, but with the ebbing of magic, the sphere has come to rest between two peaks. Obviously, it has drifted a good distance from its origin.

The kaer is balanced precariously. Name-Givers moving inside should not dislodge it as long as they move carefully, but in a fight, people aren't so careful about their movements. Too much violent rocking and the kaer will go crashing down the mountain, shattering into millions of tiny shards, and taking with it to destruction everything (and everyone) inside. Unless the characters can find a way out within the first few rounds after the kaer begins to slide, or a way to survive the plunge, they're done for.

As to what's actually in the kaer, well, that's up to the GM. If V'Derinzorn's library and workshop are really there and intact, however, surely that much of a concentration of magical knowledge and equipment will have attracted at least a minor Horror. This might explain why the kaer was never opened from within...

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For Such is the Truth

by Stephen Kenson

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal*** #5

The Order of the Silver Twilight

Long ago, in the time before the Scourge, the discipline of the Nethermancer was not as misunderstood as it is today in the land of Barsaive. Nethermancers dealt with the paths of the spirit world even then, but they had not yet come to be so associated with the Horrors and the forces of Death as they are now.

The time before the Scourge was one of learning - and many scholars traveled to the Eternal Library at Thera to study. One such student was the nethermancer Eolim Belial, who worked as an apprentice for many years at the Library, becoming a student of the works of Jaron the Everliving.

When he returned to his home in the province of Barsaive, Eolim wished to emulate the works of the ancient scholars of Thera. He established a monastery in the Twilight Peaks that drew magicians and scholars from all over Barsaive to study there. Eolim called the community that grew up around the monastery "The Order of the Silver Twilight" - a Name to echo the peaks themselves and the myriad paths of astral space.

The study of the astral world and the deep secrets of the Netherworlds were the Order's greatest area of study. Under Eolim Belial's direction, the Order's scholars learned many secrets of the spirit worlds and wielded mighty magics. They also discovered a terrible truth that would govern the fate of the world: the coming of the Scourge.

When Eolim learned of the coming Horrors, the Order turned all of its efforts towards learning more about the Horrors; how to protect against them and perhaps even how to master them. Eolim Belial became especially obsessed with the study of Horrors and is said to have become a master of summoning and binding lesser Horrors in order to study them.

The Order became increasingly more remote and cloistered, closed off from the outside world and absorbed in their studies. The humble monastery became like a fortress as new defenses and fortifications were built. Master Eolim Belial was seen on several occasions speaking with Theran emissaries. Some say he was exchanging information while others speculate that Eolim came to distrust the Therans and refused to share his knowledge with them. It is known that he refused the Therans' Rite of Protection.

What the Order learned of the Horrors is unknown because the few communities that had commerce with them lost contact just before the Scourge when the members of the Order sealed themselves within their citadel with mighty magical wards. After the centuries-long Scourge had passed, the Order and their researches were all but forgotten by most.

Ten years ago, a party of explorers followed a map into the Twilight Peaks to find the lost citadel of the Order. When they returned, they claimed to have discovered the place, still sealed by strange and powerful wards. Unable to break the wards, and beset by the monsters that inhabit the peaks, they were forced to abandon their search.

The Legacy of the Order

The Order of the Silver Twilight is not entirely forgotten in modern Barsaive. There exists a small organization based out of a town near the foothills of the Twilight Peaks. Known as the "Order of the Silver Dawning," the group is a kind of Living Legend Cult that claims to be the inheritors of the Silver Twilight's legacy of magic and wisdom. Their leader, an Ork nethermancer named Joachim Kole, claims to have been trained by a secret line of students instructed by Eolim Belial himself.

Kole claims that the Order's citadel in the Twilight Peaks was breached by a Horror during the Scourge, but that a small group of magicians were able to use the Order's great knowledge of the netherworld to send out their spirits into astral space even as their bodies perished. These spirits choose to secretly instruct certain name-givers with the secrets of the Order, so that their work could be carried on. Joachim says that he was trained by the spirits of the Order and founded the Order of the Silver Dawning to complete the work that the original Order began. He claims rights to the accumulated knowledge and magic gathered in the Order's citadel in the Twilight Peaks and is planning an expedition to recover it.

The Truth

Joachim Kole is a fraud, but his story is partially true. The Order's Citadel was breached during the Scourge by a Horror known as Thess'a'il. The horror destroyed most of the members of the Order, but Eolim Belial was not so easily defeated. He used a blood magic ritual to place himself in a "shadow state" between the realms of Life and Death, bound to the astral space within the citadel, then strengthened the place's wards with his own life force, pushing the horror out and denying Thess'a'il its prize of knowledge and magic.

The horror was not yet willing to surrender its prize, so it began seeking out nethermancers that it could corrupt, offering them training in exchange for the possibility of using them as

tools to break the wards of the Citadel. Joachim Kole is the horror's current and most promising protege. He has concocted his story about being the legitimate heir to the Order of the Silver Twilight to allow him to attract skilled adepts that might be able to penetrate the Citadel's many defenses and aid him in wresting free the secrets of the Order. He might well contact the player characters claiming to be the rightful heir and desiring their help in overcoming the ancient defenses of the citadel, only to turn on them once they have outlived their usefulness.

The Twilight Staff

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 15

A six-foot long staff carved from an unknown type of wood, worn silvery-gray with age and use. The staff itself is smooth and featureless, bound and shod in dark iron bands that have silver inlays of magical symbols upon them. The staff glows with a faint silvery radiance when bathed in moonlight.

The staff was created centuries ago, and has passed through the hands of many magicians, who have in turn passed it on to their students and successors. Eolim Belial was the last magician known to wield the Twilight Staff and it has been believed lost since shortly before the beginning of the Scourge.

Thread Ranks

Rank 1 Cost: 300
Key Knowledge: The character must know the Name of the staff.
Effect: The staff does Strength +4 steps of damage. It will also shed a silvery light equal to bright moonlight at the wielder's command (enough to see by, but not bright enough to use offensively).

Rank 2 Cost: 500
Key Knowledge: The character must learn the Names of all of the magicians who have wielded the staff and whose sigils are engraved upon it. The gamemaster may decide how many different magicians have wielded the staff and their names, but there should be at least six.
Effect: The damage of the staff increases to Strength +5 steps, Strength +6 steps against Horrors and Undead only.

Rank 3 Cost: 800
Key Knowledge: The character must learn the Name of the forest where the wood for the staff was cut.

Deed: The character must travel to the wood where the staff was cut and there, by the light of the full moon, carve his or her own sigil into the staff.
Effect: At the cost of 2 Strain, the wielder of the staff can make the astral aura of any subject in line-of-sight visible to normal sight for one minute by making a successful Spellcasting Test vs. the target's Spell Defense.

Rank 4 Cost: 1,300
Key Knowledge: The character must learn the fate of Eolim Belial, the last wielder of the staff.
Effect: The wielder can cast the Circle 6 Nethermancer spell Blessed Light. The casting test uses the wielder's Spellcasting Step.

Rank 5 Cost: 2,100
Deed: The wielder must seek out Eolim Belial's ghost and seek his blessing on the staff, permitting him to perform the ritual of passing it on to a worthy wielder.
Effect: The staff's magic can temporarily block a Horror's access to astral space. Upon striking a Horror, the wielder expends 4 Strain and makes a Spellcasting Test against the Horror's Spell Defense. If successful, the Horror is forced into the physical world and is unable to move into astral space for a number of Combat Turns equal to the wielder's Spellcasting Rank. The staff does Strength +8 Steps Damage to Horrors, Horror Constructs and Undead.

Thess'a'il

The horror Thess'a'il appears in the physical world in one of two forms. The first is a stick-thin humanoid figure draped in tattered, hooded robes of dark fabric. A pair of burning eyes glowing within the black depths of the figure's hood. When the horror enters combat, it generally assumes its other form, a huge, skeletal dragon with the same burning light in the black pits of its eye sockets.

Thess'a'il has been in the physical world for centuries, and it has become obsessed for some reason with the Order of the Silver Twilight. The horror hungers for the collection of magical knowledge and lore that the order protected for decades in its mountain fortress and which now lies behind the powerful wards held strong by Eolim Belial's final blood magic ritual. It will go to any lengths to devour that cache of accumulated knowledge and wisdom.

Unable to breach the wards of the citadel by itself, the horror has cultivated acolytes over the years in hopes of finding a Name-Giver capable of breaking Belial's wards and giving the horror a way to reach its prize. Most of these "students" have been nethermancers who have made foolish bargains with the Horror for power or knowledge. The followers of the horror have been unable to reach the Twilight Citadel and have been destroyed by adventuring adepts or by Thess'a'il itself for their failure. Over the centuries, Thess'a'il's power in the

physical world has waned, but the horror remains terribly powerful and possessed of great astral influence. Joachim Kole is the horror's current and most promising student and it hopes that it will not be disappointed by another unfortunate failure.

Use the statistics for a Bloatform (Earthdawn, p.299) for Thess'a'il with the following changes:

- Powers: Animate Dead 12, Corrupt Karma 12, Cursed Luck 10, Disrupt Magic 15, Horror Mark 12
- Spellcasting: as a Circle 7 Nethermancer

The Bone Bell of Kaer Talloria

Aye, of course I've a tale for you, traveler, that is what we troubadours do, is it not? And since you are so interested in my music, I will tell you a story about a most strange musical instrument indeed.

Near the beginning of the Scourge, many name-givers throughout the land of Barsaive were retreating into their kaers and sealing them behind them to wait out the long centuries of the Scourge. Save for some of the Elves and the long-lived Obsidimen, those who entered the kaers knew that they would never see the outside world again. They could only hope that their great-grandchildren would be able to emerge safely from shelter into a world free of the horrors. This brought many people to despair and the sealing of the kaers was a time of great loss for all of the name-givers.

One such kaer was Named Kaer Talloria, after the magician who helped to build it. Talloria worked unceasingly to excavate the shelter for her people and create the orichalcum runes and wards that would hold the horrors at bay for the centuries of the Scourge. She was tireless in her efforts, working long into the night only to be up the next morning before anyone else to begin work again. She was driven to protect her people.

As the first horrors infested the land, Talloria studied them carefully, gathering all of the information that she could about these creatures. She began to grow increasingly concerned as all of the reports of the horrors indicated that they were terrible in strength and power and that the worst was yet to come, for the first horrors to appear were weak for their kind according to the Therans. Talloria began to fear that the defenses provided by the Therans would not be enough to protect the people.

She began researching the horrors, and carefully examining the remains of the horrors that could be recovered, to formulate another means of defense against them. She also delved deeply into the arts of nethermancy, studying the ways of the netherworlds in hopes of learning more about the nature of the horrors and how they could be defeated and kept at bay

from the feast of name-giver flesh and souls they desired. Talloria worked even harder than ever, locked away in her laboratory, consumed with a fierce passion to discover a way. Many people of the village grew concerned for her welfare but they respected their magician and feared the horrors, so they said nothing and waited.

In time, Talloria began work on something in the central meeting area of the newly constructed kaer. Her work was concealed behind a misty curtain of elemental air, so none of the people knew what it was that she was building. But they all trusted Talloria and so they waited and watched until the time came for them to seal the kaer.

The horrors had grown too numerous on the surface for the people to remain there any longer. Word had come that even mighty Thera had sealed themselves behind their dome of True Air and Fire to wait out the long night of the Scourge. Attacks from ravening horrors were coming almost daily and the people of the village retreated into their kaer and Talloria enacted the rituals to seal the portals of the shelter and activate the magical wards given to them by the Therans to keep out the horrors.

Not long after Kaer Talloria was sealed, the sorceress revealed to the people the artifact that she had so carefully constructed to keep the forces of the horrors at bay, should the protections of the kaer fail them. It was a great bell of bronze woven with True Earth and Air. The frame, structure and clapper of the great bell were carved from bone -- the bones of the victims of the first horrors, bones that still resonated with the terror of the coming Scourge. At first the people of the kaer were wary of such a gift, touched as it was with the power of blood magic. Some feared that the bell might be tainted with the power of the horrors, but Talloria was steadfast in her insistence that the bell's enchantments would help to keep the horrors away.

It was only a short time after the sealing of the kaer that the bell was first used. Some kind of powerful horror attacked that kaer, so mighty that it shook the whole of the mountain where Kaer Talloria was dug. It was as if the horror intended to uproot the entire kaer. While the people huddled in fear of what might be outside their shelter, Talloria rang the great bell she had created and it sent forth a peal that was like the crying of tortured souls, the screams of those victims of the horrors. The peal of the bell echoed all throughout the kaer. In a matter of moments, the terrible sounds of the creature outside stopped and all was still once again. The people hailed Talloria as a hero and gave many thanks to her for saving them with her creation.

Many years passed, and Talloria passed the guardianship of the Bone Bell down to her successors. The magics of the bell were carefully maintained, for the people considered it their last line of defense against the horrors. The bones of many of their kaer's dead went into repairing, maintaining and strengthening the bell's enchantments to make it a lasting weapon against the horrors. The magicians who maintained the bell became an Order whom the people of the kaer knew and respected for their great power, but also feared for their dabblings in nethermancy and blood magic needed to maintain the artifact. The bell was used several times over the centuries to drive off horrors that threatened to breach the kaer and

threaten its inhabitants.

After generations had passed, the end of the Scourge predicted by the scholars of Thera failed to come about. The sphere of true earth had stopped its descent towards the bowl of true water and had held steady there for years. The people of the kaer were greatly concerned. Was the Scourge over? Was it safe for them to emerge into the sunlight once again?

The magicians of the Order of the Bone Bell thought not. It was a trick, they said, a foul deception of the horrors intended to make the people believe that they were safe while, in fact, the horrors lay in wait for them outside of the safety of their sheltering kaer. The magicians declared that the people would have to wait and be patient while they ferreted out the meaning of this omen.

More time passed and with each passing day, the people grew more and more restless. Dark rumors circulated and resentment against the magician-priests grew. Many said that the magicians sought only to maintain their power over the people, that they knew that the Scourge was over and they had stopped the progress of the sphere of true earth themselves so that they could rule over the closed kaer forever. The time had come and surely the horrors were long since gone. Open talk of rebellion began and the ruling magicians were forced to take harsh measures with those who spoke treason against them, but this only stoked the fires of rebellion higher.

Eventually, the people of Kaer Talloria rose up against the Order of the Bone Bell and killed them all in the center courtyard of the kaer where the bell stood. They then threw open the gates of the kaer to emerge into the outside world. It was only then that they discovered that Talloria's artifact did not work quite as she had planned. The horrors that were supposed to have been driven away by the bell over the years were in fact a single horror trapped in astral space near the kaer by the power of the bell. With the doors of the kaer open and the magicians slain, the horror took its vengeance on the people of Talloria and left the kaer a haunted monument to their folly.

I heard the tale from one of the few survivors of the kaer and she told me that the Bone Bell of Talloria still remains in the ruins of their kaer. I'm sure the horrors would not want such an item to fall into the hands of other Name-Givers, but who knows if they were able to destroy it?

That is the tale, for such is the truth.

Adventure Ideas

The gamemaster can decide if the Bone Bell of Kaer Talloria still exists and, if so, whether

or not it can still be found in the ruins of the ancient kaer. Perhaps the bell was removed from the kaer by horrors (or their agents), robbers, or explorers such as the player characters. If so, it might have traveled the length and breadth of Barsaive to come to rest in some hidden lair or some scholar's collection of artifacts. If the bell has remained hidden in the ruins of the kaer, it will no doubt be guarded, perhaps by traps laid by various horrors to keep name-givers away from the power of the bell or by a horror-cult devoted to protecting it from outsiders.

If the characters do discover the bone bell, they will need to decide what to do with the artifact and if its power is worth the high price that it carries with it. The Bone Bell is an item that would be of great interest to those involved in studying or hunting the horrors (such as followers of the Horror Stalker discipline and the Lightbearers).

The Bone Bell

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 18
The Bone Bell of Talloria is a large bronze bell of about half a human's height, growing greenish with age. The outside of the bell is decorated with a complex web of delicately carved bones and the clapper on the inside is made up of many bones strung on a fine copper chain. A heavy metal ring is attached to the top of the bell, allowing it to be hung from a support frame or the like. When sounded, the bell gives off a deep shrieking and moaning sound that echoes for a great distance.

Thread Ranks

Rank 1 Cost: 300
Key Knowledge: The character must know that this the Bone Bell of Kaer Talloria.
Effect: The ringing of the bone bell provides +1 Spell Defense for all Name-Givers within hearing range against the powers of Horrors and Horror constructs.

Rank 2 Cost: 500
Key Knowledge: The character must learn who created the bell and what discipline she followed. Talloria was a human elementalist who also practiced the arts of nethermancy.
Effect: The sound of the bell provides +2 Spell Defense against Horrors and Horror constructs.

Rank 3 Cost: 800
Key Knowledge: The character must learn the location of Kaer Talloria and the fate of its people.
Deed: The character must travel to the location of Kaer Talloria and ensure that all of its people are given a proper burial, after which the kaer must be sealed and the true fate of its

people carved upon its entryway. If accomplished, this deed is worth 1,200 Legend Points.
Effect: All horrors and horror constructs within earshot of the bell are considered Harried for as long as it is rung. All name-givers within earshot gain +1 to their Social Defense against the attacks of Horrors and Horror constructs.

Rank 4 Cost: 1,300
Key Knowledge: The character must learn the names of those Name-Givers whose bones cover the bell.
Effect: The ringing of the bell can ward off horrors. The ringer can make a Willpower or Willforce test while ringing the bell. This becomes the difficulty for a Willpower test required by the horror to come within sound of the bell. This effect lasts for as long as the bell is rung. At this rank and higher. the sound of the bell also affects name-givers who hear it like the Arcane Mutterings talent (Earthdawn, p.97) at Step 15. This effect occurs automatically when any of the bell's powers above Rank 3 are used, despite the wishes of the bell ringer. All characters within hearing range are affected.

Rank 5 Cost: 2,100
Key Knowledge: The character must learn the Name of the Horror that destroyed Kaer Talloria.
Effect: At the cost of 3 points of Strain, the character sounding the bell can force any horror that can hear the ringing of the bell into astral space by making a successful opposed Willforce test against the Horror's Willpower or Willforce. If the character is successful, the horror is forced back into astral space for a number of days equal to the level of success.

Rank 6 Cost: 3,200
Deed: The character must learn the fate and whereabouts of the horror that slew Kaer Talloria. This deed is worth 4,000 Legend Points.
Effect: At the cost of 6 points of permanent damage and a successful Willforce test against the horror's Spell Defense, the bell-ringer can trap a horror in the vicinity of the bell. The horror is trapped in its present form (physical or astral) and cannot leave earshot of the bell for a year and a day. The character who sacrificed the blood magic may then renew it at then end of that time to continue the effect. The horror can escape only by the death of the sustaining character or the destruction of the bell. The horror's powers are not reduced or limited in any way.

The Thief Who Stole from Death

Hmmm, a tale, you say. We nethermancers are not as prone to tale-telling as other adepts and Name-Givers, we prefer the value of silence. However, I do have a tale that I believe will interest and enlighten you. It was given to me by a spirit I spoke with some time ago. As you might expect, it is a tale about death, but more importantly it is about an adept -- a thief -- that followed the path of her discipline into the depths of Death's Domain.

Once, long ago, before the Scourge, there lived a thief adept named Josara, who lived in the human kingdom of Landis with her people. Josara was a hero who performed many daring deeds and who advanced far in the ways of her discipline. She was a thief to her very core, and it was said that she could steal the sun and the moon from out of the sky if she chose to.

Of all of the many treasures that she stole in her long career, the one that Josara always said she was the proudest of was when she stole the heart of her husband, the air sailor Orlan Windrunner, himself a figure of daring and adventure. The couple loved each other deeply and they traveled the land of Barsaive in search of excitement and adventure. And what adventures they had! Plundering the ice caves of the gray ogres in the Tylon Mountains, unraveling the riddle of the tomb of the troll wizard Golthek'Nor and capturing a ransom in orichalcum in a daring raid on a Theran vessel during the Orichalcum Wars. Tales of the adventurous couple spread across the land and their names became part of legend.

The legends seemed to be at an end when Josara and Orlan undertook their most daring adventure: an exploration of the Spider Dens of the Liaj Jungle, wherein spiders the size of ponies spun their webs in the eternal darkness of the jungle overgrowth, forming a vast cave-like network of silken tunnels where many unwary travelers and would-be adventurers. Stories told of many years of lost and accumulated treasures within the dens of the jungle spiders and Josara and Orlan sought to discover the truth of those tales and come away with a handsome collections of trophies for the effort.

But the dangers of those silken halls proved too great for even skilled adepts such as they. Orlan was bitten and fatally poisoned by a shadow spider, one of the deadliest spiders of the lair. He and Josara managed to escape from the dens, but the master air sailor died from the deadly poison not long after, for there was no cure for the shadow spider's venom. Josara used the bulk of the treasures that she and Orlan had earned throughout their career to commission for her husband a fantastic tomb that floated high above the mountains and could only be reached by air ship or through the cooperation of a bound wind spirit that protected the tomb from would-be looters.

Gathering what few possessions she had, Josara set off on a quest that led her far and wide across the land of Barsaive. She spoke with many sages and scholar and magicians and always her questions were the same. The thief adept seemed to have become obsessed about Death and she sought to learn all that she could about that mysterious force of the universe. She even sought out some of the most vile and corrupt of individuals, like the legendary Keys of Death, those who proclaim to be Death's Questors, to learn from them or wrest their secrets from their dying hands.

Rumors grew that Josara was mad with grief at the loss of her beloved, that she had become obsessed with revenge and that her studies followed some dark and unknown purpose that threatened danger to others, but that was not so. Josara did not desire revenge against unthinking creatures following the dictates of their natures, nor did she want knowledge for the sake of power. Josara was a wise woman and like the nethermancers she began to see Death like a clear pane of crystal -- not a barrier -- but a window into another side, another

phase of existence. She saw Death as a force that hoarded lives like a miser hordes gold, and as a master thief Josara knew nothing so well as how to relieve a collector of their valuable baubles. During her studies Josara decided that she would take the ultimate challenge: she would steal Orlan back from Death.

After gathering a vast and diverse store of knowledge, Josara made her way to the shores of the Death's Sea, where she prepared a special ritual magic. Her human versatility served her well as she made use of the many arcane secrets she had unearthed in her travels. For nine days and nights she worked and prepared in the rocky badlands along the shores of the fiery sea.

Finally she was ready and by the darkling light of the new moon, Josara drank a vial of a special poison concocted from some of the most toxic creatures and plants of Barsaive, including some of the venom of the shadow spider that killed Orlan. She lay upon a blanket embroidered with magical runes and symbols as she felt a terrible cold overtake her limbs despite the fierce heat of the Death's Sea. A lethargy crept over her, but Josara fought to keep control of her wits, for she would need them in her journey if she was to be successful.

Josara passed into the realm of Death. She felt herself pulled below the raging fires of the Death's Sea into an endless maze of underground passages, tunnels and caves. They were all lit by the flickering reddish light of the burning sea of lava above and, most amazingly, were filled with all manner of treasures and valuables, scattered all about as far as the eye could see. There was gold and silver, gems and fine weapons, even orichalcum coins and valuables enough to ransom a kingdom. Josara's thief nature quivered at the sight of such wealth, she could feel the fingers of greed brush across her soul.

But her will held fast. She had not come into the realm of Death to seek treasures, only the life of her beloved Orlan. Josara moved through the dim tunnels like a silent shadow, looking for her love, but she saw no one. There was no living thing, not a Name-giver, nor even the smallest mouse or insect in those tunnels and they stretched on and on like they might go forever. Josara began to despair in her heart that she would never find Orlan and that she might be trapped forever in those forlorn tunnels with untold wealth as her only companion.

"Passions!" she cried out in frustration, "I would give all of this wealth, all the wealth in the world, if only to be with Orlan once again."

Just then a man appeared before Josara in the tunnel. He was a human, broad and fat and dressed in the clothing of a wealthy merchant. He wore all manner of expensive jewelry and the purse at his belt bulged with coin. He was well-groomed and everything about his appearance and manner said that this was a man of great wealth, just the kind of person who cried out to Josara to be given the gift of theft.

"Would you indeed, Josara?" The man said and reached into the folds of his rich cloak. He withdrew a ruby the size of a child's fist, the deep color of blood, which gleamed seductively in the dim light of the tunnel. Josara felt her heart leap, for she had never seen so fine a gem.

"Would you surrender all of this wealth that could be yours?"

Josara's thief magic called out to her, she knew that she could take all that this merchant had and much of the wealth all around her, she could be the richest thief in all of the world and live in luxury for the rest of her life. She grappled with the way of her discipline in her heart, her eyes fixed on the beauty of the gem before her. But Josara's love for her husband was greater than her faith in her path. She turned to the strange man and said, "Yes, I would give up any wealth for my love." The merchant nodded and smiled and in an instant Josara found herself on the shores of the Death's Sea with Orlan in her arms, reunited once again.

Because she had rejected the way of her discipline, Josara was no longer a Thief. She believed that the stranger she encountered in Death's domain was Death himself, who bargained her magic for Orlan's life, which Josara considered a fair trade. In the later years of her life Josara was content with a quiet home life with her beloved and she became a Questor of Garlen, still stealing from Death at every opportunity she had.

Adventure Ideas

The following elements of the legend of Josara and Orlan could be used by gamemasters in their Earthdawn campaigns. As always, gamemasters should feel free to tailor the details of these adventure hooks to suit their own campaigns.

Josara's Ritual

The magical ritual Josara used to enter the realm of death might be something that player characters could go in quest of in order to follow a fallen comrade there and attempt to rescue them. The ritual would be known only to a few wise sages or nethermancers (and perhaps a Horror or two) and there would of course be no guarantee that the characters would be able to return to the land of the living after using it.

Josara's Healing Balm

In her later years as a healer, Josara developed a healing ointment of special herbs and other secret ingredients. This balm had the effects of a healing potion (Earthdawn, p.258) with the additional effect of eliminating diseases and poisons in the system, but the formula for it was lost many years ago. Perhaps the player characters might discover the recipe again among some of Josara's lost papers or journal or perhaps they might set off to find the lost formula in order to use it to cure some malady.

The Spider Dens

The mysterious Spider Dens of the Liaj Jungle still exist and their silk shrouded tunnels hold many treasures and secrets that brave adventurers might go in search of. The tunnels are inhabited by numerous dangerous arachnids, including the mysterious shadow spider. Rumors also say that a spider-like horror may well have taken up residence in the dens since the Scourge and may have transformed many of the

spiders living there into dangerous constructs such as Jehuthra (Earthdawn, p.305).

Orlan's Empty Tomb

Josara and Orlan lived a simple life following their return to the land of the living and Orlan's floating tomb over the mountains was all but forgotten. The tomb still holds many treasures that Orlan won during his career as a daring air pirate, including a wealth of plundered orichalcum and one or more magical treasures. The location of the floating tomb is lost and characters might discover some clue to it among ancient legends or documents telling the tale of Orlan and Josara. The tomb is guarded by a bound air spirit of great power that attempts to keep all potential tomb robbers away. It is also possible that the tomb might have been breached during the Scourge and become the lair of a Horror or even the base of skyraiders, air pirates or aerial monsters.

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The Grey Wolves

by Bill Hincks

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal*** #3

"I'm afraid I have some bad news for you." rasped the hunched up man in the alley. "Your friend's been taken into the Smalls by the Wolves; you'll not be seeing him again."

"The Wolves," she asked. "And who are they, that you think we cannot rescue our friend from their grasp. We've faced many a group of bandits before, many even adept at their trade. Of what nature are these Wolves that we should fear them?"

"The Grey Wolves are not men, my friend, not anymore. Men possess souls and hearts. The Grey Wolves have neither. They are nothing more than a black sheet of death awaiting their calling!"

"What nonsense is this you talk, old man, speak clearly!"

"Ahhh ahhh ah. Don't lose your temper with me, girl, you'll not be clearing my head with threats. I simply wish to see to it that I am taken care of in my old age."

"All right, old man, here's another 15 silver. There, you've emptied my purse, I've no more to give you, so speak now and tell me what you know of these Grey Wolves."

"Yes, lass, I'll tell you what I know. I'd hate to see such a lucrative deal end so abruptly, so perhaps you can call it an investment on my part.

"They came from the south about two years ago, Dinganni, a score of them, traveling on foot. Their furs bore the dust of many roads and they had the smell of a hunted animal upon them. They equipped themselves at Torgak's and then without even a backward glance they entered the ruins, headed for the Smalls. No one ever questioned that they were running from something. But like all fools who enter the ruins so hastily, they were soon forgotten.

"It wasn't until three weeks later that a war party of Dinganni entered the city. They had but one purpose; they were on a Blood Hunt. They were looking for a renegade Dinganni Shaman called the Grey Wolf. They spoke with Torgak and he assured them that the only Dinganni that had been through here had entered the ruins and not come out for weeks. It was assumed that they had died somewhere within the ruins. The war party made a short venture into the ruins, but were driven back by a swarm of undead in the Smalls. Realizing the lethality of Parlainth, the war party returned to their homeland to resume their peaceful ways. The hunt had been completed to their satisfaction.

"No one gave the renegades a second thought until a year ago, when five of them emerged from the ruins and walked right into the center of Haven. They were no longer the scared and hunted men that had fled into certain death. They were the renegade Dinganni warriors that had returned puffed up with pride from having lived and survived for so long in Parlainth. They purchased many items from Torgak, furs, steel, bloodcharms, healing, and food. Then, without so much as a second thought, they returned to the ruins unmolested.

"After a few months, more Dinganni began to walk the streets of Haven. They came from both the ruins and from the southern plains. Renegades, all of them. Many of them even had brands on their arms marking them as exiles of the Dinganni nation. Soon they began causing trouble within the city. Bar fights and the like. Torgak imprisoned three of them, but that very night the jail was broken into, the men freed, and the jail torn to the ground. Torgak lost five of his men in that fight, all of them trained fighters. After that, he hasn't had much of a heart for imprisoning them. He's not concerned for his own safety, but he doesn't want innocent townspeople and guardsmen dying at the hands of these renegades.

"Ahhh, but the real story is just beginning. Three months ago, one of the Dinganni came from the ruins. He was a magnificent looking man. He stood about six foot four, and he was built like a draft horse. On his right arm, he wore three shafts of steel attached to his forearm and wrist, like some kind of weapon. Only they were real fancy. They had a glittering edge, looked like glass or crystal to me. He wore about him the pelt of a giant grey wolf, and his eyes...his eyes were different colors, one was blue like a crystal and the other one was golden. He made his way directly to Agramen's Import/Export. I don't know what went on there, but whatever it was, when he left he carried with him a big sack of coins. Then he made some more purchases from Torgak, smiling all the while, and returned to the ruins.

"So, you see, they've been sort of a fixture here for the past few years. We don't like 'em. No one does. But there's not much we can do about them either. So, we go on. You see, if they do have your friend, and my sources say that they do, you can forget about him. If you do, it will be a lot easier on him and you."

"That's it? That's all you know? Can't you tell me anything more about them -- perhaps why they came here, or what they did to become exiles?"

"Well, there is a bit more I could tell you but.....say, that's a lovely ring you got on your finger there. Silver?"

"All right, all right old man, take the damn ring, but tell me what else there is to know."

"Well, then, to continue my tale. About a month ago, another Dinganni entered Haven. Walked past me on his way to Torgak's, so I took the liberty of following and listening in. This one looked different from the rest of them and he caught my interest.

"He introduced himself as Magus Ursus, a Dinganni Shaman, who sought to hunt down and kill the renegade known as the Grey Wolf. He was unlike any Dinganni I had ever seen. He

was proud and strong, like they all are, but he carried himself with a air of pride and honor that even the leaders of the war party did not possess. For he was not hunting the Grey Wolves for blood or revenge. He was dealing their retribution. He requested that Torgak give him permission to kill any Grey Wolves found within the walls of Haven. When Torgak inquired as to just what their crimes among the Dinganni people were, Magus explained.

"Grey Wolf was once the Shaman of the largest of the Dinganni tribes. He held a position of honor and power among the people. He practiced both the arts of wizardry and elementalism, and was regarded as a seer. One night, for an unknown reason, he turned on the tribal chieftain and slew her in her sleep. He then stole the Talon of Kro'arn'lesh, a magnificent weapon edged with crystal and forged as a badge of rank, passed from chieftain to chieftain for generations. He then fled and in his flight killed many of what were once his people. He traveled as a hunted man from town to town and city to city, meeting with other exiled Dinganni along the way. Most were rabble unable to resist the temptation of theft, others were cold blooded murderers. All were exiles. Eventually Grey Wolf named his band after himself, and with a Dinganni war party on their heels, they fled here. The Grey Wolves have come to be called the shame of the Dinganni nation, and Magus had come to purge all Dinganni of their shame and to reclaim the Talon of Kro'arn'lesh.

"Torgak, wishing to see Haven free of the Wolves, granted Magus free right to hunt the Grey Wolves within the very walls of Haven. A few days later, a battle broke out near a candle maker's in the New City. Magus and five Dinganni warriors fought a fearsome battle in the city streets, and in the end The Grey Wolves numbered five less and Magus was severely wounded. He left the city, fearing a repercussive strike against him while he was wounded. He hasn't been seen since, but he'll be back. Witnesses to the battle said that he's more than simply a man, that he's a plague called down on all renegade Dinganni to purify the nation. It's even reported that, while they were fighting, his face changed and turned into a visage of death as he cut their throats and dealt them their retribution.

"So, you see, if even an avenger of death cannot take on five of the Grey Wolves, how do you and your rag-tag bunch ever plan on freeing your friend from them? That is, assuming that your friend is even still alive."

"Thank you, old man," she said. "I hope your new found wealth serves you well. And don't fret, for we shall return, and with our friend intact as well. For if one man can survive a fight with five of these outlaws, my band will fare just fine. It will just take a little planning, that's all."

With that, the girl stood, and, looking down at the old beggar, she took her leave.

The beggar stood and straightened out his long frame. "By the Passions, I'm getting tired of the poor old man bit, " he swore to himself. "But, I got a full purse and a nice little silver ring to show for it." Ah well, he thought to himself as he wiped the makeup from his face and turned into the alley, I guess it's off to the Troll to get a bit of ale and some good roast mutt ... What?...Ugh!

Slowly, the rogue's body slumped to the ground, as three gleaming silver and crystal blades covered with blood withdrew from his shattered sternum. A moment later, a figure peered out from the mouth of the alley, his one golden eye twinkling in the moonlight.

"Yes, little girl, come looking for your friend. We'll be waiting." He smirked. "After all, you're the one we wanted in the first place."

The Grey Wolves have been designed as a game master's aid for adventures set within Parlainth and Haven. The Grey Wolves are a well organized band of renegade Dinganni, numbering nearly thirty. All have broken laws which the Dinganni nation consider sacred (for more information on the Dinganni people, see *Denizens of Earthdawn Vol. 1*). As a result of their crimes, they have been exiled from the Dinganni people. Over time they collected in small groups, a few here and there. It was not until Grey Wolf found these small bands that they began to join together and form a people of their own.

All members of the Grey Wolves are loyal to Grey Wolf and would gladly lay down their lives for him. The Grey Wolves have abandoned all Dinganni codes and laws and no longer consider themselves a part of the Dinganni people.

They have established a base of operations in Parlainth. They get much of what they need to survive by ambushing well equipped adventuring parties and groups of adventurers returning from the ruins with treasure in hand. What they cannot find or steal, they will buy from Torgak, who will grudgingly sell to them since they are glad to pay his prices and since he really doesn't want any more trouble then necessary within his city. Torgak also does not act against the attacks made on adventurers exiting and entering the ruins, because as far as he's concerned they should be able to take care of themselves.

The Grey Wolves make their homes in the ruins of the Smalls. (If you have the *Parlainth - The Forgotten City* boxed set, Vardeghul's Trove of Lore contains a map of the Smalls that indicates the area in which the Grey Wolves may be found, or you may place them yourself.) They have cleared out enough of the area to make them feel safe, and to give them a buffer against the rest of the city. The Grey Wolves have also studied many of the traps common to the Smalls and have criss-crossed most of the entrances to their domain with traps of many different varieties, all lethal. They are fierce fighters and have trained their skills so that they can fight very effectively in small skirmish settings.

The Grey Wolves

DEX: (16):7/d12 **STR:** (19):8/2d6 **TOU:** (19):8/2d6
PER: (14):6/d10 **WIL:** (12):5/d8 **CHA:** (12):5/d8

Initiative: 6/d10
Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: 13
Damage: 10
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 10
Effect: 10 (poison)
Death Rating: 43
Wound Threshold: 12
Unconsciousness Rating: 35

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 2
Knockdown: 8
Recovery Tests: 3 (2d6)
Combat Movement: 38
Full Movement: 75
Legend Points: 200

Equipment:
Hide Armor (wolf hide)
Buckler
Talon (3):11/d10+d8
Medium Crossbow (4):12/2d10 (10 bolts)
2d10 silver
miscellaneous odds and ends (whetstone, flint, etc....)

Loot: None

Skills:
Avoid Blow (2):9/d8+d6 --1 strain
Melee Weapons (3):10/d10+d6
Riposte (2):12/2d10 --4 strain
Tracking (3):9/d8+d6 --1 strain

Notes: The Grey Wolves prefer to fight in hand to hand combat and will only use their crossbows when closing with an opponent or when facing an opponent they cannot reach easily. When engaged in hand to hand combat they make full use of the combat options, particularly, going inside a shield, defensive stance and aggressive attack (If they outnumber an opponent they will nearly always go aggressive, taking the strain gladly.)

Grey Wolf -- 5th Circle Wizard

DEX: (14):6/d10 **STR:** (18):7/d12 **TOU:** (16):7/d12
PER: (18):7/d12 **WIL:** (17): 7/d12 **CHA:** (14): 6/d10

Initiative: 5/d8
Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: 13
Damage: 10
Number of Spells: 1

Physical Defense: 11* (boots)
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 4

Spellcasting: 10
Effect: 10 (poison)
Death Rating: 44
Wound Threshold: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 31
Karma:
Current: 40 Max: 40 Cost: 6 Die: d6

Knockdown: 8
Recovery Tests: 3 (d12)
Combat Movement: 33
Full Movement: 68
Legend Points: 200

Equipment:
horror fend, death cheat, desperate spell, desperate spell, absorb blow, absorb blow, grimoire (etched in hide), hide armor (Made from a large grey wolf), 106 gold, 200 silver, 1 elemental earth coin.

Special Equipment:
Kree'lyn's Boots (Magic Boots, See ED Companion) Rank 4 thread, +3 physical defense, +1 step to all climbing tests
Talon of Kro'arn'lesh. Steel and Crystal Talon improved 4 times to rank 7
Shield Candle (5) -- A candle infused with elemental air and orichalcum flakes. When burned it will create an astral haze with a spell defense of 20. Anyone attempting to locate or direction arrow anyone within the haze must beat a 20 to penetrate the haze. The haze is invisible, but has a light cinnamon odor. It extends to a radius of 100 yards from the candle. 1 candle will burn for up to 24 hours.

Loot: None

Talents *(*Denotes Discipline Talent)*
Karma Ritual (4)
*R&W Languages (3):10/d10+d6) Dwarven, Elven, Ork
*R&W Magic (5):12/2d10
*Spell Casting (5):12/2d10
Spell Matrix (5)
Spell Matrix (5)
Spell Matrix (5)
*Wizardry (5):12/2d10
Durability (5)
*Evidence Analysis (5):12/2d10
*Book Memory (4):11/d10+d8
*Book Recall (4):11/d10+d8
*Arcane Mutterings (4):11/d10+d8
*Astral Sight (5):12/2d10 --1 Strain
Lip Reading (1):7/d12 --1 Strain, requires Karma
Will Force (2)
Versatility (3)
Melee Weapons (3):9/d8+d6
Elementalism (2):9/d8+d6
Avoid Blow (3):9/d8+d6 --1 Strain

Skills:
R&W&S Dinganni (1):8/2d6
Speak Human(1):8/2d6
Creature Lore (1):8/2d6
Horror Lore(1):8/2d6
Tactics (2):9/d8+d6
Wilderness Survival (2):9/d8+d6
Tatooing (3):9/d8+d6

Grimoire:
1st Circle
Astral Sense, Crushing Will, Dispel Magic, Flame Flash, Iron Hand, Mind Dagger, Earth Blend, Earth Darts, Boil Water.
2nd Circle
Astral Shield, Dodge Boost, Vines, Puddle Deep
3rd Circle
Combat Fury, Levitate, Shatter Lock
4th Circle
Dust Devil, Inventory, Relax, Thorny Retreat
5th Circle
Counter Spell, Invigorate, Mage Armor, Makeshift Missile, Solo Flight

Notes:
Karma on any Charisma only test
Has a fondness for blood magic, and will use it freely.
Wears his charms like ornamentation (forehead, neck, back of hand)
GM should place spells in matrix before party first encounters Grey Wolf
Grey Wolf will not hesitate to flee and fight another day should things go bad.

Reasons for Treachery

It is not known why Grey Wolf broke the Dinganni laws and became what he did, but these are a number of possible reasons.

- He was casting raw magic and a horror infested his mind and corrupted him. He has since beaten the horror back, but now he cannot return to his people because they will not believe that he was not in control of himself.
- He never beat the horror and is still possessed.
- He went mad.
- He decided that the Dinganni Nation was weak and decided to create his own nation and needed the Talon of Kro'arn'lesh as a symbol. With it he has been gathering people to his way of thought and building up power and when he is ready he plans to take over the Dinganni tribal lands.

Grey Wolves Options

- The game master may find these to be a little boring or under powered for their game. You are encouraged to make some of the common warriors adepts. The most common disciplines would be Beastmasters, Warriors, and Elementalists. They would not commonly be over the 2nd circle though a few may be 3rd.
- It is possible that the Grey Wolves have developed a group pattern and some of the adept Grey Wolves and Grey Wolf himself have woven to it and enhanced some of their abilities.
- If the game master wishes Grey Wolf may have made a pact with a Gharmek (Parlainth -- The Forgotten City). He will supply the Gharmek with victims and in turn the Gharmek will offer protection for the Grey Wolves. If you decide to use this option become familiar with the Gharmek's strength's and weaknesses before players encounter it. The Grey Wolves keep this pact a closely guarded secret so that people will not anticipate meeting a horror when they go after the Wolves.
- When Grey Wolf visited Agramen they made a deal. Grey Wolf would search the ruins for Agramen and turn over and Theran artifacts. It has been learned that they Grey Wolves are in possession of an important Throalic artifact and the party had been hired to recover it before it is turned over to Theran hands.
- The Grey Wolves have been performing a service for Agramen. He kidnaps someone close to the party (or politically important) for a variety of possible reasons (They know something about an important Theran artifact, they have learned of Agramen's treachery, he wants to use the person as a bargaining ship, etc....) Agramen transported the victim to the Grey Wolves (by way of the eastern catacombs, in a hay cart going into the ruins, over the wall at night) and they have been holding the victim captive awaiting Agramen's orders. The party must free the victim before it is too late. Grey Wolf has been using his Shield Candles to prevent magical detection of the victim.
- The Grey Wolves are forming their own Nation (see ***Reasons for Treachery***)

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Icebringer

by Dan Allard

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #6***

This tale was recorded by the dwarven scholar Velhus while he was in residence in Haven. The speaker, an ork warrior named Gargah, left Haven soon afterward for more civilized regions to the south. What follows is Velhus' transcription, though some Orkish slang has been translated into the closest Throalic equivalent.

"How we found it, I don't know, though I admit Lurg had the eyes of an eagle. Somehow he picked out the entrance to Kaer Allaig out of miles of snow, trees and rock; we could've searched for it for months without finding it.

"The three of us made our way... yes, just the three of us. Just me and a pair of trolls; Drekken and Lurg Kelhelm, may Garlen watch over their spirits. Lurg led the way to the Kaer, but it was Drekken, the elder, who gave the orders. What I was doing mucking around with a sky raider I'll never know, and as you'll see, I would soon regret it.

"We were already far up into the Caucavic mountains, higher than I'd yet climbed. The Kaer was up even higher than us, but that was nothing a few good hours of hiking couldn't fix. As soon as we reached the entrance, we knew something was wrong, but it wasn't until we went inside that we figured it out.

"At first, we thought that the door to the Kaer was just gone, ripped off its hinges. We looked around for a bit and found it - in pieces, under a thin layer of snow. Frozen bits of wood were all over the place. We could only guess that the door was frozen and hit with something really, really hard.

"Drekken went in first. We let him. He fell on his face ten feet down the hallway. Under the layer of snow, the floor of the Kaer was a thick sheet of ice. It was hard to tell, but the ice was at least a couple inches deep. Not only that, but the ice ran up the walls and even covered the ceiling.

"After that, Drekken kept his balance pretty well, using his axe to help steady himself when he stumbled. Lurg just walked along like he was on plain rock. Me, I slipped so many times I gave up and just used a pair of daggers to drag myself along on my knees. Drekken wasn't happy about all the noise I was making, but it was better than me landing on my rear every other minute.

"Finally we got down to one of the main chambers. A couple of light quartz crystals were still working, hidden above a sheet of ice. Under the ice on the floor, you could just make out

the figures of a dozen or so trolls, frozen stiff.

"Now I'm no thin-skinned elf, but that's when I started to get really cold. `Drekken', I said, `What's wrong with this place? It shouldn't be this cold!'

"`You knew what this would be like, Gargah,' he replied. I looked over at Lurg, who just shrugged. I knew this was too cold for him, but he wasn't about to say anything.

"Drekken checked out the hallways as Lurg and I checked around the frozen trolls. Some still had their eyes open, some looked like they were still moving. None of them even had a mark on 'em. Spooked me out.

"I called over to Drekken and said, `Watch yourself Drekken. These trolls died real fast. This one's sword never even hit the ground.' Drekken just gave me a dirty look.

"Lurg and I kept along behind him; I almost started to learn to walk on that damned ice. We came to another room of frozen figures; looked like it might have been a garden once. A few hallways joined here, and Drekken went off to check 'em out. Lurg went off to dig up something in the ice, and I just stood there looking at one of the standing, frozen trolls.

"He was old, with a long beard and wrinkled skin. Still had his sword in his hand too, though I'm not even sure if he knew what hit him. I just kept looking at him, wonderin' how it might feel to live in a shell of ice like that.

"Then something happened that I'll never forget. I'm no coward, but there's some things a sane Ork should never see. The fear that hit me was worse than any Gahad I've ever felt; it was like something just came up and took me by the throat. `Lurg,' I said, `over here.' He came over and stopped dead in his tracks.

"The troll had blinked. And he did it again when Lurg showed up. Dammit, that thing's been standing there for years, maybe decades, alive...

"I couldn't even think enough to try to free him. I managed a loud whisper to Drekken, but he just looked over and frowned. `Drekken,' I said more loudly, `we've got to get out of here...'

"Then the real cold hit. A wave of ice blew out into the room, covering everything. Drekken shrieked as it covered his body. But worse than the ice, it was like the heat was being sucked out of us. Lurg was already running and I followed, but I couldn't keep my feet. I couldn't feel my right hand, so I just dragged myself along with a dagger. Lurg came back and dragged me to my feet; I looked around to see Drekken for the last time, losing his struggle to the ice. Lurg pulled me out of there and the two of us stumbled back through the kaer.

"I kept slipping and falling, but Lurg kept dragging me along. I cursed my dead hand a hundred times before we got to the kaer entrance. We felt a last blast of cold on our backs

when we got there, and Lurg dropped me in the snow and started running. Jumped right off the cliff at the edge of the path. I got to my feet, muttered a prayer to Thystonius, and hurled myself off of the cliff. As I went over, I only had one thought in my mind: Lurg had better know what the hell he is doing.

"Well, he did. We landed on a bank of snow and slid down a few yards; I shook my head and wondered that all my bones weren't broken. We got out of there quick, cause we didn't know if that thing might try and make the leap, too. Lurg led the way down and out of the mountains; I just stumbled along blindly until we reached the plains. After a few more days of travel we made our way back to Haven. Oh yes, there were dangers along the way, but a few crazy ogres and an espagra or two were nothing compared to that Horror.

"My hand? That blackened and died; I had a healer cut it off and add this handy hook. Lurg said it wasn't from Horror magic, he'd seen that happen to fingers and limbs of people who spent too much time exposed in the higher reaches of the mountains. Still, I wasn't about to take any chances.

"Lurg and I parted ways when we got back to Haven. I knew he'd return to that kaer, cause I had the same nightmares; that image of Drekken, trapped in the ice, screaming without a sound. He managed to put together a good pack of trolls to join him after boasting about piles of treasure and the like. He knew I wouldn't go and I didn't even bother trying to convince him to stay. He did, however, take the one gift I gave him; a Tlani suicide dagger I'd carried all the way from Kratas.

"It's been three weeks since Lurg left; I don't expect to see him again in this world. I just hope he got to Drekken before the end."

Game Information

Though dangerous, Icebringer was responsible for the destruction of only three kaers during the Scourge. Now that the Scourge is over, he may still lair in one of these kaers, or he may have invaded some remote village. While Icebringer is quite intelligent, his motives and methods are simple. He tends to use a straightforward approach in his invasions, attacking directly and attempting to catch as many people using Cold Wave and Terror as possible.

Icebringer has a base of 20 karma points; he can increase this value to a maximum of 40 using his Karma Drain power, but he cannot maintain this amount of karma for over a day. After twenty-four hours, Icebringer loses any karma he has gained over his base of 20 points.

Icebringer feeds off of the continual pain of victims encased in the ice, keeping them alive with Sustain Life and turning their pain into karma. He keeps no more than twenty victims under his thrall at one time; normally, he only drains one point of karma from each victim

per day, until he has reached his maximum karma of 40. The use of Sustain Life requires that Icebringer take a point of permanent damage for each victim under his thrall; thus, Icebringer's death rating ranges from 150 down to 130 depending upon the number of Name-givers trapped in his lair.

Icebringer has been known to keep his victims alive and entrapped for years, continually thriving off of their misery. Though his victims still feel pain, Icebringer's Sustain Life power removes their need for heat and stops them from accruing continual damage from ice entrapment. Despite his best efforts, his victims eventually die; when all in an area are dead, he moves on to a new location. Certainly, all of his victims go completely insane after years of entrapment. Any Name-giver who has lived past his or her natural lifespan will die within minutes of being freed from Icebringer's sustaining powers.

Icebringer's deadly Cold Wave power comes directly from his enslavement of a series of elemental water spirits, summoned using his Elementalist abilities. Only one water spirit is summoned at a time; Icebringer drains its powers until the spirit is destroyed. Icebringer will lose his Cold Wave power after the spirit dies and before a new one is summoned. The water spirit can be found trapped in a cage of elemental earth somewhere in Icebringer's lair.

Physically, Icebringer resembles a large bluish-white bloatform. Hundreds of puckered mouths sprout from all over his body, some only inches wide, some well over a foot. His cold wave attack emanates from these mouths. He attacks physically by thrashing with a pair of large pseudopods, though he normally prefers to use his Cold Wave attack whenever possible.

Icebringer's greatest weakness is his lack of speed; it is possible to flee his slow moving bulk, though he will still attempt to Horror Mark fleeing Name-givers. Because of his physical form, Icebringer cannot be knocked down.

Icebringer's true name is unknown; he was given the name "Icebringer" by the survivors of his attacks.

Game Mechanics:

DEX: 20 **STR:** 16 **TOU:** 20
PER: 16 **WIL:** 18 **CHA:** 12

Initiative: 26
Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: 20
Damage: 25
Number of Spells: 2
Spellcasting: 25
Effect: 26

Physical Defense: 25
Spell Defense: 20
Social Defense: 18
Armor: 17
Mystic Armor: 21
Knockdown: N/A
Recovery Tests: 10

Death Rating: 130-150 (see text)
Wound Threshold: 30
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune
Karma Points: 20-40 (see text)
Equipment: None
Combat Movement: 20
Full Movement: 40
Legend Points: 98,000
Karma Step: 15
Loot: None (Icebringer does not carry any sort of treasure with him, although some might be found in his lair)
Powers: Circle 10 elementalist (no fire spells), Terror 15, Horror Mark 16, Karma Drain 16, Cold Wave 16, Sustain Life 15

New Powers

Cold Wave

This power combines a physical blast of ice particles with a drain of heat from the region surrounding the Horror. The power requires one point of Karma, and is effective out to a range equaling twice the Cold Wave step in feet. The Horror makes two spellcasting tests against the victim, one against the victim's spell defense, one against the victim's physical defense. If the Horror makes a successful test against its opponent's spell defense, the victim takes damage according to the Horror's Cold Wave step; this damage is reduced by the victim's Mystic Armor value. A wound caused by this damage may take the form of permanent frostbite to some area of the victim's body (up to the GM's discretion). If the Horror makes a successful test against the victim's physical defense, the victim becomes encased in a layer of clear ice. The trapped victim may attempt to break free by making a strength test against the Horror's Cold Wave step; this may be attempted once per combat round for a number of times equal to the Toughness step of the victim. A Name-giver will suffer step 1 damage from the cold for each minute spent encased in the ice; armor does not reduce this damage. A trapped Name-giver may be freed by outside help by breaking the encasing ice; this may be accomplished with any sort of heavy, blunt object.

Sustain Life

Unlike Unnatural Life, this ability does not require the recipient to be dead; however, a victim must already be horror-marked by the Horror. The Sustain Life power allows a Name-giver to live for a year without requiring air intake, food, or anything else that might normally be needed to continue life. However, the power only functions while the Name-giver is within 1 mile of the Horror; if the Horror or the Name-giver moves out of this range, the Name-giver will lose any possible benefits of the power. The power costs the Horror 1 point of damage per use, and lasts for a year and a day; at this time, the damage point may be

regained or else the Sustain Life power may be restored. The Sustain Life test is made against the victim's spell defense; the test must be made each time the Horror attempts to renew its effects on a victim. Victims of Sustain Life age 5 times more slowly than normal for their race.

Karma Drain

The Karma Drain power allows a Horror to drain the lifeforce of a Name-giver and convert it directly to Karma. The Horror must first horror-mark a victim before the power can be used, and the victim must be within the Horror's line of sight. The Karma Drain test is made against the victim's spell defense. Each use of this ability gives one point of karma to the Horror and causes 2 points of damage to the victim; this damage cannot be reduced by physical or mystic armor.

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Kaer Dol'gar

by David Caraley

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Togareth stirred from his sleep. He extended his senses, searching for what had disturbed his rest. After a few seconds he located the disturbance. There were intruders in his domain. Living people were crossing through the section of the Wastes that Togareth claimed as his own.

Rising, he gathered his magical energy and started to awaken his servants. Soon, the first of the shambling cadaver men entered the chamber.

"There are intruders in our lands. Gather a patrol and investigate. Bring them here to me."

The long dead corpse nodded its agreement and headed out of the ornate throne chamber. Togareth smiled. Soon, he would have company again.

Plot Synopsis

Kaer Dol'gar was a small settlement led by the nethermancer Togareth. When the Scourge came Togareth gathered his people into the kaer and sealed the door. He then activated the wards and other magical protections and prepared for life underground.

All went well for the first several years. The wards and magical protection were easily strong enough to prevent the kaer from being breached, and soon life settled down into a routine.

Whether the kaer's magical defenses would have held up against the centuries long Scourge will never be known. It was Togareth himself who caused the kaer's downfall.

During Togareth's nethermantic studies he opened a small gate to astral space. A malevolent spirit managed to enter through the gate and possess the surprised nethermancer. From that point on, the Horrors had their own agent inside of Kaer Dol'gar.

The kaer fell in a few short years. Togareth became a Demiwraith, and used his nethermancy and Horror powers to slowly turn his own people into Cadaver Men and Skeletons. He opened his own kaer to the Horrors and was rewarded by having it left in his care, though he still had to answer to High Lord Guul'pexiir, a Wormskull who is overlord to several of the breached kaers in this area of the Waste.

The Scourge is now over, and many of the powerful Horrors have been forced to return to the netherspace that spawned them. Togareth still rules Kaer Dol'gar, and he still answers to High Lord Guul'pexiir. Because the Wastes are so deserted there has been little for the few surviving Horrors to feed upon. Because of this, most of the Horrors spend their time sleeping. They sleep until they sense fresh sentient life in their domains.

At the start of this adventure the characters are crossing through the Wastes, following an ancient treasure map to a crashed drakkar class airship that was known to have been carrying pillaged Elemental Air. They have unwittingly crossed into the domain of the demiwraith nethermancer Togareth. He has awakened, and sends out a patrol of cadaver men to intercept the characters.

The cadaver men are under orders to bring the characters back alive. They will attempt an ambush. If they are successful, they will take the captured characters to Kaer Dol'gar. Once at Dol'gar, the characters will be locked away in the dungeon.

The real adventure begins with the characters figuring out how to escape their cells. Once out, they will have to get re-outfitted. They will then have to make the decision whether to flee back across the Wastes, knowing that Togareth will send out patrols to hunt them down, or to try to find Togareth within Kaer Dol'gar and kill him.

Wasted Days And Wasted Nights

Overview

The characters are crossing the Wastes, following a treasure map of whatever type fits your campaign. One night, when the characters have made camp, they will be ambushed by a group of Cadaver Men. The Cadaver Men will use "stun damage." Half of this damage is temporary, and will be recovered at the end of an hour.

There should be enough Cadaver Men to capture the characters. Some quick or stealthy characters may elude capture, but some of the characters should be captured.

Setting The Stage

It has been three days since you entered the Wastes. Three days of ash grey sky, ash tasting food, and ash covered clothes. Very few signs of life. An occasional scrub tree. A few small animals. Just miles and miles of ash. Ash covered plains, ash covered mountains, ash covered gullies.

You have made camp for the night, and have enjoyed your ash tasting rations. It is a dark night, with the clouds of ash blocking any view of the stars. You have told tales and listened to the stories of the others, and now have bedded down for the night.

Behind The Scenes

Find out if the characters plan on posting watch. Once it is decided who is asleep and who is on watch, let the characters on watch roll Perception tests with a target of 4. Failure means that the character was surprised. A success means that the characters on watch have been attacked, but can roll initiative and have their full actions. A Good Success means that the character had enough warning to yell out to the sleeping characters, giving them their full Physical Defenses, though no actions. An Excellent Success means that the character had enough warning to awaken his companions and have them ready, with weapon in hand.

Read out loud to the characters: *You feel a cold chill run up your spine as you see human shapes come out of the darkness. Their flesh is rotted and decayed, and their clothes are tattered and stained. Each is wearing rotting armor and swinging a large club.*

Cadaver Men (2 per party member)

DEX: 4 **STR:** 6 **TOU:** 7
PER: 3 **WIL:** 6 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 5
Number of Attacks: 1 (4)
Attack: 7
Damage: 9
Number of Spells: N/A
Spellcasting: N/A
Effect: N/A
Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 30
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 11
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 9
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 25
Full Movement: 50
Legend Points: 110

Commentary: Cadaver Men are undead beings capable of feeling only pain. If they experience significant pain, such as suffering a Wound, they will fly into a berserk rage, attacking 4 times per round until it has killed the character that caused it the pain, or until the end of ten rounds. If the Cadaver Man can not determine who caused its pain, it will attack any character who happens to be within range.

The Cadaver Men are under orders to take the characters alive and are attacking using the optional stun rules mentioned earlier. They will pick up any unconscious character and start to carry him off.

Togareth has become aware of the trespassers in his domain and has sent out a patrol to capture them. He needs them alive to supply them to High Lord Guul'pexiir, since the Horrors can only feed upon living victims. He will have them brought to his dungeon and will then contact the High Lord.

Troubleshooting

Very little can go wrong at this point. The characters might succeed in defeating all of the Cadaver

Men. If this happens, they can either decide to track the Cadaver Men back to where they came from, or they can continue following the treasure map. If they follow the treasure map, do this to them again on the following night. Sooner or later Togareth will have them captured.

If some of the characters are captured, but not all of them, the free characters can follow the Cadaver Men to Kaer Dol'gar.

Into Captivity

Overview

The captured characters wake up in the dungeon of Kaer Dol'gar. They will have to figure out how to escape. Any uncaptured characters will have to make their way inside to find their companions.

Setting the Stage

Read this to the uncaptured characters, if there are any:

The slow moving Cadaver Men have been walking for a few miles, carrying your companions over their shoulders. They have headed into the cliffs, and up a ravine.

Up ahead you can make out a set of huge, stone double doors. They stand wide open, and the Cadaver Men are making their way inside. Scanning around, you can make out no other entrance or exit in the cliff face. You realize that if the doors shut, you will loose your friends, perhaps forever.

Read this to the characters who have been captured:

Slowly, your eyes begin to focus. The fuzziness sharpens into being small stone room with a straw covered floor. Light is coming from some sort of fire pit on the other side of the iron bars. You realize you are in a cell, surrounded by the bodies of your companions.

Behind the Scenes

The uncaptured characters will have to make Dexterity tests with a target of 3 to get into the kaer without being noticed. They will then have to make a Perception test, target of 4, to keep track of where the Cadaver Men are heading.

They will get to see the unconscious characters stripped of their possessions, and thrown into the holding cell. The possessions will be carried off to the Captain's Room.

There will be one Cadaver Man left in the cell area to guard the prisoners. Once the prisoners have been locked up, he will ignore them, keeping his attention on the door to the cell area. Because of this, he will be hard to surprise by anyone sneaking into the room, but he can be surprised by

someone who quietly escapes from the cell area.

The entire time the characters are in the kaer, there will be two wandering patrols of 4 Cadaver Men each. For every half an hour that passes, roll a D6. If the result is a 6, the patrol comes. Roll for surprise as normal. Once both patrols have been killed, there will be no more random encounters.

Cadaver Men (4)

DEX: 4 **STR:** 6 **TOU:** 7
PER: 3 **WIL:** 6 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 5
Number of Attacks: 1 (4)
Attack: 7
Damage: 9
Number of Spells: N/A
Spellcasting: N/A
Effect: N/A
Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 30

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 11
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 9
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 25
Full Movement: 50
Legend Points: 110

Equipment: None
Loot: None
Commentary: Cadaver Men are undead beings capable of feeling only pain. If they experience significant pain, such as suffering a Wound, they will fly into a berserk rage, attacking 4 times per round until it has killed the character that caused it the pain, or until the end of ten rounds. If the Cadaver Man can not determine who caused its pain, it will attack any character who happens to be within range.

Room#	Commentary
1	*The cell floor is covered in old, moldy straw, and the walls look as if they were carved out of solid rock. The iron bars that take up an entire wall are rusty and pitted, but still seem quite secure. The barred door has a built in lock.* The cell is indeed carved out of solid rock. The only way in or out is through the door, which is locked (the keys are on a peg in area 3, and the lock needs an 8 or better to open).
2	*This cell is identical to the one opposite it.* If the captured characters exceed 6, the remaining members will be locked in this cell. It is identical to the first cell.

3

You can make out the form of one of the undead Cadaver Men seated on a bench facing the large iron bound door on the far wall. The room is lit by the glow of braziers placed in each corner of the room, and you can see torture tables and devices whose purposes you can only guess at placed throughout the room.

The Cadaver Man is on guard, but he is guarding the way in, not the way out. The door is barred from this side, so anyone trying to open the door from the outside will be noticed immediately, but someone who has quietly escaped from the cells can try to sneak up on him and take him by surprise.

Cadaver Man

DEX: 4 **STR:** 6 **TOU:** 7
PER: 3 **WIL:** 6 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 5	**Physical Defense:** 5
Number of Attacks: 1 (4)	**Spell Defense:** 6
Attack: 7	**Social Defense:** 11
Damage: 9	**Armor:** 0
Number of Spells: N/A	**Mystic Armor:** 0
Spellcasting: N/A	**Knockdown:** 9
Effect: N/A	**Recovery Tests:** 2
Death Rating: 36	**Combat Movement:** 25
Wound Threshold: 9	**Full Movement:** 50
Unconsciousness Rating: 30	**Legend Points:** 110

Equipment: Rotted padded leather armor, broadsword

Loot: None

4

You look down a long hall that ends in another large, iron bound door. The hall is dimly lit by a single light quartz mounted in the wall halfway down the corridor.

There are no surprises here.

5

The large door can be pushed open. You can make out voices coming from the inside the room. Glancing about, the room seems to contain numerous bunks, and a couple of tables with benches. Seated at the tables are two more of the rotting corpse-like Cadaver Men. Though they are not wearing armor, you can see their swords lying on the table in front of them. They seem to be tossing dice and betting on the outcome.

The two Cadaver Men are shooting dice and complaining about the endless boredom their lives have become. They are not very attentive, and can be surprised by anyone making a Silent Walk or Dex test with a target of 4.

Cadaver Men (2)

DEX: 4 **STR:** 6 **TOU:** 7
PER: 3 **WIL:** 6 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 5
Number of Attacks: 1 (4)
Attack: 7
Damage: 9
Number of Spells: N/A
Spellcasting: N/A
Effect: N/A
Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 30
Equipment: Broadswords
Loot: 36 silvers scattered on the table

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 11
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 9
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 25
Full Movement: 50
Legend Points: 110

This room is the old barracks room. There are enough cots here for 16 soldiers. At the side of each cot is a small trunk containing rotted tabards, tunics, and other items of clothes. There is little of value in any of the trunks.

6

This door opens easily. Peering around, you see a small office with a living area near the back. The room looks dark.

This room used to be the office and quarters of the sergeant of the guards. The sergeant is long dead, and his skeleton now serves Togareth upstairs. The desk has old, rotted records showing guard shifts. Inside the desk is a simple dagger used as a letter opener. The rear of the room has a cot, a small trunk, a table with four chairs, and a wardrobe. There is little of value in the room except a Booster Potion in one corner of the trunk, needing a 6 on a Perception test to find.

7

The door to this room is locked.

The door needs an 8 or better to open. The door has a Physical Armor of 8 and a Damage Rating of 25.

This room has an office section, and a living quarters. You are facing the desk as you come in, and the living area is off to your left. Suddenly, movement catches your eye.

A Skeleton has been left to guard this room. He will become active as soon as someone opens the door.

Skeleton

DEX: 5/D8 **STR:** 5/D8 **TOU:** 4/D6
PER: 5/D8 **WIL:** 7/D12 **CHA:** 5/D8

Initiative: 4/D6

Physical Defense: 9

Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 10/D10+D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 22
Wound Threshold: 5
Unconsciousness Rating: NA
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 11
Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 4
Knockdown: 5/D8
Recovery Tests: 1
Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60
Legend Points: 20
Equipment: None
Loot: None
Commentary: This is a typical skeleton animated by Nethermancy.

Once the Skeleton has been defeated, the room can be searched. The desk has the current figures on how many Cadaver Men guards are currently active, and where they are posted, though it is of little help since there is no map of the kaer. There are currently over thirty Cadaver Men listed. Reports show that the owner of the room is named Captain Kerrig, and the reports are addressed to someone named Togareth.

The living area has a bed, a table and chairs, a trunk, and a large wardrobe. Piled on the table is whatever armor has been taken from the characters. Lying on the trunk are the character's weapons.

The wardrobe contains rotting uniforms of what used to be good quality. The trunk contains a Healing Potion, and a bag with 3 matching emeralds (worth 50 silvers each).

8

This large area seems to have been some sort of gathering place. The faint light quartz show various tables and benches rotting away, and a large well. You can see stone stairs leading to what must be an upper level. There are several corridors leading off in different directions. There are two doors on one section of the wall.

This chamber used to be a tavern area. There are still broken bowls and plates littering sections of the floor, along with old pewter mugs. 8A is a kitchen area where meals used to be made, though it looks like it hasn't seen use in centuries. All of the food is long rotted. 8B was the living quarters for the tavernkeeper and his family. There are several beds, and other pieces of furniture, but it is all warped and rotted.

9

The dim light coming from one of the few still working light quartz fixtures shows a small stage area surrounded by old wooden benches. There is a large well near some stone stairs leading up. There are two doors on one section of the wall.

This chamber used to be the entertainment hall. This is where entertainment was provided for the kaer's residents. 9A is where the entertainers would change and where some of the props were kept, though there is little of value left there now except a complete makeup kit that can be used by anyone with the Disguise skill or talent. 9B is filled with barrels and assorted brewing material. It was here that the kaer's beer and ale was brewed. Though most of the barrels are old and cracked, there is still a sealed cask of fine ale (needing a Perception test, target of 8 to find).

10

The door opens to reveal a darkened storeroom. It has piles of crates, sacks, and barrels.

This room was used to store food stuffs. The food is now old and moldy, but a Perception test, target of 6, will show that this room has seen recent use.

11

This huge chamber stretches as far as the eye can see. It is overgrown with various plants and vines. You guess that this area was a food growth chamber.

This room still has good, fresh fruits and vegetables. There are three Skeletons that are still farming and tending the plants. They will ignore the characters unless they are attacked, though Togareth or Captain Kerrig can order them into battle.

Skeletons (3)

DEX: 5/D8 **STR:** 5/D8 **TOU:** 4/D6
PER: 5/D8 **WIL:** 7/D12 **CHA:** 5/D8

Initiative: 4/D6
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 10/D10+D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 22
Wound Threshold: 5
Unconsciousness Rating: NA
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 11
Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 4
Knockdown: 5/D8
Recovery Tests: 1
Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60
Legend Points: 20

Commentary: This is a typical skeleton animated by Nethermancy.

This area is so overgrown that it is easy to hide in. Raise the difficulty of any Perception tests made trying to spot someone in this room by +2.

11A has various animal pens, and farming implements. All of the animals have long since died or been killed.

12

This large chamber is entirely overgrown with plants and vines. It is obviously an old food growth chamber that has been allowed to grow wild.

This chamber is no longer in use. The plants have grown wild and have blocked off the chamber. To get to 12A would require cutting a path through the plants.

12A was the animal pens and toll storage area for this food growth chamber. It has nothing of value.

13

You see what was obviously a living area for a family. It is dirty and the furniture is collapsing, but it must have been home to five or six people.

These chambers were the living areas for the farm families that took care of the fields and animals. Searching them will reveal very little. A Perception test of 8 or better will find something from the following table:

Roll 1D10

1. Nothing of interest
2. A small bag with 20 silvers
3. Nothing of interest
4. A small box with a D4 x10 sp gem
5. A small bag with 3D6 silvers
6. Nothing of interest
7. A small vial containing a Booster Potion
8. Nothing of interest
9. A piece of jewelry worth 1D10 x 10 silvers
10. A dagger - forged +1

14

This large area is still lit by several old light quartz fixtures. There are many old stalls and booths, and a large fountain in the middle of the chamber. You see several figures turning towards you.

The figures are Cadaver Men guards who are patrolling the area. There are four of them. Roll their Perception tests, with the target being the lowest Dex Step among the characters. If they fail, they can be surprised.

Cadaver Men (4)

DEX: 4 **STR:** 6 **TOU:** 7
PER: 3 **WIL:** 6 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 5
Number of Attacks: 1 (4)
Attack: 7
Damage: 9

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 11
Armor: 0

	Number of Spells: N/A **Spellcasting:** N/A **Effect:** N/A **Death Rating:** 36 **Wound Threshold:** 9 **Unconsciousness Rating:** 30 **Mystic Armor:** 0 **Knockdown:** 9 **Recovery Tests:** 2 **Combat Movement:** 25 **Full Movement:** 50 **Legend Points:** 110 **Equipment:** Rotted leather armor, broadswords **Loot:** None The market square is filled with the old stalls and booths of the craftsmen and merchants of the kaer. Each booth is set up in front of a door.
15	*This door opens to reveal a pottery workshop. There are broken bowls and pots scattered on the floor, and three pottery wheels on tables. The rear of the room has several cots, and a large chest.* The chest contains various pottery tools, several sets of faded and stained clothes, and various pigments and enamels used for decorating the pots.
16	*As you slowly open the door you spot a figure in the darkness. As your eyes get accustomed to the lack of light, you realize the figure is a statue of a young maiden. The statue is nearly complete, but by the amount of dust that covers the room you figure that it must have been here for centuries.* This room is a sculptor's workshop. It has various hammers, chisels, and several large chunks of marble. The rear of the room is what used to be living space for the sculptor and his family. A Perception test, target of 7, can find a small marble cat, maybe three inches tall. It is very beautiful (and worth 75 silvers).
17	*The door to this room is beautifully carved, and still in decent shape. Upon opening, you can see a room littered with wood chips and saw dust. By the wood carving tools and the various pieces of half completed furniture, you realize that this room belonged to the carpenter.* The front of the room is the shop, while the rear is the living quarters for the family. There is nothing of value here.
18	*The sign of a boot gives away the fact that this was the cobbler's shop before you even get the door opened. Inside you see various sized wooden feet, and many sets of shoes and boots. Behind the shop area you can see the living quarters.* The only thing of value here is a set of Quiet Boots that are in a small box (needing a Perception test of 7 to find). These boots add +1 step to all Silent Walk or similar stealth rolls.

19	*The door has a old, dried out cow hide stretched across it. Opening the door, you spot assorted rolls of hide, and all the leatherworking tools needed to fashion just about anything from them.* This room was the leatherworker's shop. Any leather item needed by the kaer was made here. As usual, the rear of the room was set up as a living section. In a trunk (needing a Perception test of 6 to find) is a complete set of hard leather armor in perfect condition.
20	*A sign of a hammer and anvil hang above this door. Upon entering, you can see the forge and anvil that mark this as being the smithy.* The forge has been cold for centuries. There are a few metal items scattered on the floor, and some half completed items lying on work tables. The rear of the room is set up as living quarters. There is nothing of value in this room.
21	*A sign of a sword and shield hang over this door. As you look in, the dim light shows a forge and anvil, with several figures standing around the central worktable.* The figures are armor dummies. Though most of the armor is in pieces and incomplete, there is a complete set of rusted chainmail on one of the dummies. The chainmail is perfectly usable, and can be cleaned up. It fits humans, elves, or t'skrang. Tucked in a barrel with other half completed blades is a finished broadsword (needing a Perception test with a target of 6 to find) with the word "Liberator" engraved down the blade in human. It is forged to +2 sharpness.
22	*A sign of a large loom marks this door. Inside stands several weaving looms, though they are falling apart and the material is rotted. You can see bolts of finished cloth on various shelves throughout the room. At the far end you can see what was the living area for the weaver and his family.* There is nothing of value in this room.
23	*The door has no sign of any type hanging above it. Upon opening, you can see a large loom holding a half completed tapestry.* This was the tapestry weaver's shop. There is little of value, but the half completed tapestry shows a busy market square filled with people, while a robed figure watches over them, almost as if protecting them. The robe the figure is wearing is covered with intricate embroidery. A spellcaster can recognize the embroidery as nethermancy symbols.
24	*The door opens to reveal a seamstress shop. There are racks of tunics, dresses, and robes, all faded, though some may be usable. The back of the room is set up as a living quarters for the family of the seamstress.* There is little of value here, though there are many types and colors of thread, and sets of needles. Anything that can be used in an embroidery kit. If someone searches and makes a Perception test of 7 or better, he will find a small wooden box containing both silver and gold thread (worth about 80 silvers).

25	*The sign hanging above this door shows a quill pen and rolled piece of parchment. Opening the door, you can see an odd room filled with shelves and tables in the front, and a living area in the back.* The room belongs to the kaer's scribe. The scribe doubles as a paper and ink maker, supplying both products for the rest of the kaer. There is little of value here except various colored inks, and some salvageable paper. If a Perception test with a target of 6 is made, a map of the kaer can be found.
26	*The door to this room is lying in pieces on the ground. There is no sign above the open portal. As you glance inside, you can see rows of benches and tables. There is some sort of slate board on the far wall, and you realize that this was the kaer's school room.* There is nothing of value here.
27	*The door opens easily and reveals a comfortable living area. There is a large table with chairs, various cabinets with old books, a large desk, and several beds.* This living area belonged to the scholar who served as the kaer's teacher and historian. In the desk is the journal of Edric Tamar, historian and teacher. It documents the sealing of the kaer, the day to day life within, and the slow changes as Edric began to believe that Togareth was going insane. It expresses worry about whether a Horror was trapped in the kaer when it was sealed.
28	*The shattered door lies in several pieces inside the room. Even with the dim light you can see various stills, and other brewing apparatus. As you look around, you realize that this was the alchemist's shop.* The room has been ransacked fairly well. Anything of value has been taken. A Perception test, target of 10, can find a loose floor stone that hides a metal box. The box is locked, difficulty of 8 to open, and contains 2 completed Booster Potions, and a completed Healing Potion.
29	*The door is locked (needing a 7 to open). Once opened, you can see a room filled with shelves, barrels, crates, piles of lumber, and other supplies needed by a kaer.* There is all of the raw material needed by a kaer for survival. Most of the material has gone bad, or is rotted, but some of it is still usable. Here are extra lanterns, oil, candles, rope, and other items.
30	*This large set of double doors is beautifully carved with scenes of the outdoors. You can see where a large bar could be placed to seal the door shut, but it is currently unbarred.* The door is partially opened, and a long hall can be seen leading to another set of double doors. There is a trap half way down the corridor. It is a pit trap dropping the victim 30 feet onto orchilium spikes. The trap is currently disarmed. It can be rearmed by sliding a section of the door carving. **Pit Trap** • **Detection Difficulty:** 8 • **Disarm/Arming Difficulty:** 7*

- **Trigger Condition:** Pressure Plate
- **Trap Initiative:** 8
- **Trap Damage:** Step 20 (falling and spikes)

31

As you open the door to this room, you see a large table with benches. Seated at the table are four figures who slowly start to get up.

The four figures are more Cadaver Men guards. They will attack anyone living who are trying to get out past them.

Cadaver Men (4)

DEX: 4 **STR:** 6 **TOU:** 7
PER: 3 **WIL:** 6 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 5
Number of Attacks: 1 (4)
Attack: 7
Damage: 9
Number of Spells: N/A
Spellcasting: N/A
Effect: N/A
Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 30
Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 11
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 9
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 25
Full Movement: 50
Legend Points: 110
Equipment: Rotted leather armor, broadswords
Loot: None

These Cadaver Men are on guard, but have seen so little action that they have gotten lazy. The characters have the normal chances of surprising them.

32

As you take a quick look through the door you see an almost empty chamber. Standing in the chamber are two skeletons armed with crossbows. They seem to be looking through arrow slits along one of the walls.

The skeletons are covering hallway 33. If the door to their room is opened, they will turn towards the door. If it is someone living, they will open fire.

Skeletons

DEX: 5/D8 **STR:** 5/D8 **TOU:** 4/D6
PER: 5/D8 **WIL:** 7/D12 **CHA:** 5/D8

Initiative: 4/D6
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 11

Damage: 10/D10+D6 **Armor:** 4
Number of Spells: 0 **Mystic Armor:** 4
Spellcasting: 0 **Knockdown:** 5/D8
Effect: 0 **Recovery Tests:** 1
Death Rating: 22 **Combat Movement:** 30
Wound Threshold: 5 **Full Movement:** 60
Unconsciousness Rating: NA **Legend Points:** 20
Equipment: None
Loot: None
Commentary: These are the typical skeletons animated by Nethermancy.

These skeletons will fight until destroyed.

33

The hall before you has what appears to be arrow slits along both walls. It ends in a large double door barred from the inside.

If the characters enter here without disposing of the skeletons in both room 32s, the skeletons will open fire with the crossbows. Otherwise, it is a simple matter of unbarring the door and leaving the kaer.

34

The stairs winds its way up. As you turn the corner, you spot two figures on the upper landing. They slowly start to move.

Two skeletons are standing watch at the top of the stairs. They will fight anyone who is not undead who try to get up the stairs, but they will not follow anyone down the stairs.

Skeletons (2)

DEX: 5/D8 **STR:** 5/D8 **TOU:** 4/D6
PER: 5/D8 **WIL:** 7/D12 **CHA:** 5/D8
Initiative: 4/D6 **Physical Defense:** 9
Number of Attacks: 1 **Spell Defense:** 5
Attack: 6/D10 **Social Defense:** 11
Damage: 10/D10+D6 **Armor:** 4
Number of Spells: 0 **Mystic Armor:** 4
Spellcasting: 0 **Knockdown:** 5/D8
Effect: 0 **Recovery Tests:** 1
Death Rating: 22 **Combat Movement:** 30
Wound Threshold: 5 **Full Movement:** 60
Unconsciousness Rating: NA **Legend Points:** 20
Equipment: None
Loot: None
Commentary: These are the typical skeletons animated by Nethermancy.

35 This area is the same as 34.

36 *You see a magnificent hall, hung with rich tapestries, and decorated with various works of art. There are three other doors besides the one you entered by, one on each wall. As you take in the beauty of this chamber, an armor clad figure starts to move towards you.*

The figure is Captain Kerrig, the Cadaver Man in charge of the guards. He will instantly attack anyone who has breached this upper level.

Captain Kerrig - Cadaver Man

DEX: 4/D6 **STR:** 6/D10 **TOU:** 7/D12
PER: 3/D4 **WIL:** 6/D10 **CHA:** 4/D6

Initiative: 4/D6
Number of Attacks: 1 (4)
Attack: 9/D8+D6
Damage: 12/2D10
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: N/A
Equipment: Chain mail, +1 forged broadsword
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 11
Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 7/D12
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 25
Full Movement: 50
Legend Points: 110

The works of art in this chamber include the tapestries, several vases, and some small paintings. Though it is all worth quite a bit of silver, none of it is easily transportable.

37 The large door to this chamber is locked (needing a 10 to open). It is magically sealed by the will of Garlen so that no Horror or any Horror minion can enter. This is why it is still in unspoiled condition.

As the door opens, you are bathed in a golden light. Before you is a massive chamber housing a huge statue of the Passion Garlen. There is a large alter completely covered in flowers, and the golden light seems to emanate from the statue itself, reflecting off of the polished marble walls and floor. You feel as if you have entered a peaceful, loving home.

The room is the kaer's temple to Garlen. It was sealed with protective wards by the questor to Garlen when he realized Togareth had become possessed. No one has entered this room in over five hundred years.

Just by entering this room, all characters gain back one of their Recovery Tests. If the room is searched, a Perception test with a target of 9 will find that the statue's arms can be swung down, causing a secret panel to slide open. This will reveal chamber 38.

38

As you shine your lights into this chamber, you gasp in astonishment. The room is filled with chests, barrels, and crates. The walls are beautiful mosaic showing scenes of a lush countryside with happy people and comfortable buildings. In the center of the room is a glass case holding a gnarled wooden staff topped with some sort of crystal.

This room holds all of the items needed to rebuild the town of Dol'gar at the end of the Scourge. The chests hold both silver and gold ingots (each silver ingot weighs 5 pounds and is worth 50 silvers, each gold ingot weighs 10 pounds and is worth 500 silvers). There are 50 silver ingots and 25 gold ingots.

One of the crates holds 6 Booster Potions. Another holds 2 Healing Potions. The last holds a single Last Chance Potion.

The case holding the staff has a small brass plate engraved in human with the words "Staff of Kintok". The case is trapped:

Gas Trap

- This trap is set off by anyone opening the case without first deactivating the trap. The glass case is filled with a colorless poisonous gas. It can be disarmed by twisting one of the corner rivets. Doing so will cause the gas to be pumped into a storage tank under the display case.
- **Detection Difficulty:** 9
- **Disarm Difficulty:** 7
- **Trigger Condition:** Breaking the seal
- **Trap Initiative:** 10
- **Trap Effect:** Step 20 poison damage to anyone within 5 feet of the cabinet when it is opened.

The staff is the Staff of Kintok, see magical items at the end of this adventure.

39

The door to this room is locked (needing a 9 or better to open).

Now that the door is opened, you can see a large room lined with bookshelves. Two armed figures move rapidly to block the entrance.

This is the kaer's library. There are two Cadaver Men who rapidly go to block the way in.

Cadaver Men (2)

DEX: 4 **STR:** 6 **TOU:** 7
PER: 3 **WIL:** 6 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 5
Number of Attacks: 1 (4)
Attack: 7

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 11

Damage: 9 **Armor:** 0
Number of Spells: N/A **Mystic Armor:** 0
Spellcasting: N/A **Knockdown:** 9
Effect: N/A **Recovery Tests:** 2
Death Rating: 36 **Combat Movement:** 25
Wound Threshold: 9 **Full Movement:** 50
Unconsciousness Rating: 30 **Legend Points:** 110
Equipment: Rotted leather armor, broadswords
Loot: None

The Cadaver Men will fight to hold the characters at the door. After three turns, Togareth will arrive and start to use his magic.

Togareth - Demiwraith Nethermancer

DEX: 7/D12 **STR:** 6/D10 **TOU:** 6/D10
PER: 6/D10 **WIL:** 8/2D6 **CHA:** 5/D8
Initiative: 9/D8+D6 **Physical Defense:** 7
Number of Attacks: 1 **Spell Defense:** 9 (14)
Attack: 9/D8+D6 **Social Defense:** 13
Damage: 9/D8+D6 **Armor:** 6
Number of Spells: 1 **Mystic Armor:** 4
Spellcasting: 12/2D10 **Knockdown:** 7/D12
Effect: Chilling Touch **Recovery Tests:** 1
Death Rating: 38 **Combat Movement:** 60
Wound Threshold: 10 **Full Movement:** 120
Unconsciousness Rating: N/A **Legend Points:** 300
Equipment: None
Loot: 1D4 small gems worth 1D12 x 10 silvers each, or a total of 5D6 x 10 silvers.
Commentary: Demiwraiths are an unusual form of animated dead. Not true undead, they resist spells designed to affect undead with an additional +5 on their Spell Defenses.

Demiwraiths use a magical effect called Chilling Touch. The Demiwraith must touch the target and make a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If it is successful, the character takes 1 point of damage per Combat Round until the effect is dispelled or the character makes a successful Willpower Test, needing a 9 or better. While under the effect of Chilling Touch, the victim can take no action other than to make the Willpower Tests.

Togareth has an added advantage in the fact that he has managed to regain the use of his first three Circles of Nethermancy. He will use his spells as long as the Cadaver men are still up and fighting. Once he is forced into physical combat, Togareth will rely on his

Chilling Touch.

Upon arriving, Togareth will activate his Shield Mist giving him an Avoid Blow of 14 for 6 rounds. After that, he will attempt to Pain anyone who appears to be the greatest threat. He casts at step 10, and there is no thread. He will then Spirit Grip his next target, doing step 14 damage.

Once Togareth is defeated, the characters can search the library. It is a mundane library containing knowledge on all types of crafts, preScourge history, and anything else that would be needed for restarting a town after the Scourge.

40

The door to this hallway is wide open, though the door on the other end is shut.

The door is protected by a Pass Ward placed before Togareth became a Demiwraith.

Pass Ward

- **Detection Difficulty:** Automatic
- **Spell Defense:** 13
- **Disarm Difficulty:** Must be dispelled
- **Trigger Condition:** The Pass Ward detects intruders. It then tells them to turn back, and places a glowing white rune on their chest. If it is disobeyed, it triggers the spell effect.
- **Trap Initiative:** 15
- **Trap Effect:** Step 22 mystic damage

41

This room looks like a cross between a mortuary and a magical laboratory. There are shelves of books, tables filled with beakers, vials, and bubbling cauldrons, and several body parts suspended in various colored liquids.

This is Togareth's magical laboratory. There is little of interest here except his Spell Book. The spell book contains the following spells:

Circle 1

Bone Dance, Chilling Circle, Command Nightflyer, Detect Undead, Experience Death, Spirit Grip, Undead Struggle

Circle 2

Bone Circle, Life Circle of One, Shield Mist

Circle 3

Fog of Fear, Grave Message, Pain

Circle 4

Animate Skeleton, Evil Eye, Visions of Death

Circle 5

Astral Horror, Pass Ward

42	This door is locked (with a magical lock needing a 2 to open). Once opened, continue reading: *You see a bedroom that is fit for a king. There is a plush carpet on the floor, a decoratively carved desk with matching chair, and an ornate wooden bed.* There is little of interest here. The desk has correspondence with someone by the name of High Lord Guul'pexiir, though none of the letters tell where they came from or where they are going. All of it is written in human. The letters detail how Togareth is supposed to be building an army for the service of the High Lord, an that eventually the army will be used to sweep out of the Wastes and towards Jerris. Some of the letters date back for over a hundred years so apparently this is some long ranged plan. In a small stone box by the side of the bed is an intricate ivory brooch. (This brooch is the Brooch of Might detailed in the magical treasure section at the end of the adventure).

Troubleshooting

The only thing that can go wrong is if everybody dies. Try not to let this happen. Remember, there are plenty of places to hide in the kaer. Characters can try to rest up for the night to get more recovery tests.

Going Home

Overview

The characters have survived the Kaer of Dol'gar and now head back through the Wastes to Jerris. The three day trip through the Wastes should keep the characters on edge, but there should be no real danger.

On the fifth day they should reach the city of Jerris and relative safety. There they should be able to rest up and convert some of their hard earned treasure into spendable coin.

Setting the Stage

The three days it took to get back out of the Wastes kept you constantly on edge. After another day you reached the ash laden city of Jerris where you have managed to settle in at a comfortable inn and relax. Now all that is left is to sit back, count the money, and tell the tales.

Behind the Scenes

The adventure is done. Over. Let the characters tell their tale and relax. Give out Legend Points.

Troubleshooting

The only thing that can go wrong is if the characters decide to continue following the original map to where they were going. If they are in good enough shape, let them. Run it as the next adventure.

Treasures

The Staff of Kintok

Location: The Staff of Kintok is located in the treasure room (room 38) of the Kaer of Dol'gar. It is a gnarled wooden staff topped with a three inch quartz crystal.
Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 10

Rank 1

- **Cost:** 100
- **Key Knowledge:** The name of the staff. It is the staff of Kintok.
- **Effect:** The staff adds +1 step to the wielder's Willforce.

Rank 2

- **Cost:** 200
- **Key Knowledge:** Who was Kintok. Kintok was the wizard of Dol'gar and brother to Togareth.
- **Effect:** The staff adds +2 steps to the wielder's Willforce.

Rank 3

- **Cost:** 300
- **Deed:** The staff must be used to kill a Horror construct, like a Jehuthra. The wielder will gain 250 extra Legend Points for the act.
- **Effect:** The staff adds +1 to the wielder's Spell Defense, and adds +1 to the wielder's Spell Casting step.

Rank 4

- **Cost:** 500
- **Key Knowledge:** Where did the wood of the staff originate from. It came from the Liaj Jungle.
- **Effect:** The crystal on the top can act as a Light Quartz. The wielder gains +2 Physical Armor, and the Spell Defense bonus goes to +2.

Rank 5

- **Cost:** 800
- **Effect:** The light from the crystal causes all Horrors, Horror constructs, and Horror minions to make a Will test resisted by the Willforce of the wielder in order to approach within ten feet of the staff. This causes 1 point of strain to the wielder. The wielder's Spellcasting Step is now increased by +2.

Brooch of Might

Location: The Brooch of Might is in Togareth's bed chamber in the Kaer of Dol'gar (room 42). It is an intricately carved ivory brooch.
Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 10

Rank 1

- **Cost:** 200
- **Key Knowledge:** What is the name of the brooch. It is the Brooch of Might.
- **Effect:** The wearer adds +2 Physical Armor.

Rank 2

- **Cost:** 300
- **Key Knowledge:** Who was the artist who carved the brooch. It was carved by the dwarven craftsman Holgar Sharpeye.
- **Effect:** The wearer gains +1 to all damage tests involving strength.

Rank 3

- **Cost:** 500
- **Key Knowledge:** Who was the brooch crafted for. It was crafted for the hero Kailin Sureaxe.
- **Effect:** The wielder gains +2 to all damage tests involving strength, and adds +2 to Mystic Armor.

Rank 4

- **Cost** 800
- **Deed:** The wearer must Blood Bind the brooch, using 3 points of Blood Magic.
- **Effect:** The wearer gains an additional Recovery Test every day.

Rank 5

- **Cost:** 1300
- **Effect:** The wearer recovers one point of damage for every living creature he kills while wearing the brooch. This will not work on undead. The wearer now gains +3 to all strength

related damage rolls. At this point, the curse is activated. Should the wearer loose the brooch, he will loose one point of Blood Magic damage per day until he recovers it or he dies.

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The Kiss

by Greg Gorden

originally published in *Earthdawn Journal* #3

Playtest Credits: Becky O'Brien and all the enthusiastic gamers at CoastCon 17 and WolfCon.

Game Master Information

This adventure is written for 4 - 6 characters of circles 2 - 4. The central problem or puzzle of the adventure centers around the undying love of two characters, a love which has been perverted by the Horror Whisper Pain. The intervening centuries have compounded the problem, leading to the death of a desperate wizard, the corruption of a trusted advisor, and a threat upon the life of the Prince of Throal.

Your players must unravel the puzzle through action as much as cogitation, for once the story starts it gathers momentum toward the conclusion. Once the adventure begins the gamemaster should put gentle pressure to keep the adventure moving, not allowing the players much more time than enough to catch their breaths. The adventure is designed to throw the players a curve or two; you can enhance the effect by keeping time tight in order to keep the players a little off balance.

At a theme level you can play the adventure as a classic fairy tale with a twist: True love is eternal, and such a love twisted can cause eternal pain. The external problems (Whisper Pain's presence in Barsaive, Sir Gutarag's betrayal of Throal, the attempt on the live of Prince Neden) can all be solved by restoring the natural course of the love between Herita and Tansion. That one of the lover's is dead and the other undead is tricky... but these things are never easy, are they?

If any of your player-characters have romantic connections or difficulties, you might want to think a moment about integrating that romance into this story line. The troubles your PC has with his romance can mirror on a smaller scale the problems between Tanison and Herita. As a true sub-plot these difficulties should wrap up before the climax of the main plot, and the resolution of the sub-plot should reflect the resolution of the main plot. Perhaps one of the PC lovers is cursed in Kaxilreth's tower. Maybe the wasting disease whcih killed the wizard is spiritual and requires the magic of strong love (and a blood oath swearing fealty) to cure. Use your imagination to adapt the story to better involve your group.

Props: The gamemaster needs four identical earrings for this adventure. Also included are the 'death handouts' for the entrance to Kaxilreth's Tower scene.

Adventure Background

As the Scourge began to roll across Barsaive, people scrambled for ways to defend themselves against the Horrors who boiled across the surface of the world. The City of Idis was one of the many city states consumed by the Horrors before Theran thaumaturgies could be employed to construct a protective Kaer. During the last days of glory in Idis, a troubadour named Tanison fell in love with Crown Princess Herita. The attraction was mutual. Not realizing the full dangers of the Scourge, Tanison had earring fashioned from elemental materials and enchanted to provide protection from otherworldly dangers. The earrings were scant help when Whisper Pain emerged from Astral Space into the middle of the garden tryst between Herita and Tanison. The lovers were separted, never to see each other again as Whisper Pain grabbed Tanison and made him its servant. While searching for a way to rescue her lover, Herita was overwhelmed by the hordes of mindless, voracious Horrors which first scoured the land of life.

Whisper Pain drifted across Barsaive during the Scourge, causing small exquisite miseries rather than wholesale slaughter. As the magic of world began to ebb, the Horror began to formulate a plan which would let him stay in this world forever. It allied with Kaxilreth, a desperate magician seeking a cure for the disease which consumed him. Outwardly comforting the mage while secretly revelling in the taste of his agony, Whisper Pain engaged Kaxilreth in a plan to possess a being who was securely attached to this world through the threads of bloodlines, magic and responsibility. Noble houses offered the best range of choices. Sir Gutarag's misfortune landed him on Kaxilreth's island. Whisper Pain seized upon the opportunity, choosing Prince Neden as its target. The plan has moved inexorably forward, and nears completion.

Introduction

I recommend that you give the players the introduction *after* they go through Setup: Landing on the Island. This starts the adventure with a slight adrenalin rush, drops them straight into the middle of the situation and then lets them know what it is all about. This is a sleazy storytelling trick called *in media res*, starting in the middle of the action rather than at the beginning of the story. Feel free to keep them in the dark until one of the characters hauls himself up from the charred surface of the island, spits pumice and asks, "What the heck are we doing here?"

The players were sitting in a finely appointed chamber in Bartertown, resting in overstuffed leather chairs placed beneath the painted gaze of long-dead dwarven merchants. The proffered wine is excellent and plentiful, and those little finger sandwiches are delicious if not filling. They are sitting here at the request of Lord Malban, a human who advises King Varulus III. As they are getting nervous over the quality of the service and the luxury of the

surroundings (those dwarves know how to stage a last meal, that's for sure), Lord Malban enters the chambers, a tall man dressed in earth tones, a rich, red shirt over brown riding-breeches. His polished black boots match the slick, black hair capping his hawk-like feature. His gestures are deliberate, indicative of the depth of thought always going on behind those piercing eyes.

With him is Sir Gutarag, a dwarven champion who has served King Varulus for years. His body runs a little bit too much to fat these days, but a warrior would note with approval that Gutarag's cryustal chain armor is not ceremonial, and the off-color links use to expand the armor to its more generous size were chosen for their strength, not their appearance. Gutarag is brusque toward the party, but never to the point of being rude. The old soldier does not like the idea of involving non-dwarves into such an important matter so early in the situation. But Malban has convinced him.

Lord Malban tells them a danger to the throne exists, a danger to Crown Prince Neden. For 300 silver apiece (plus royal license for anything they happen to acquire) they are to go Kaxilreth Island to investigate the background to the threat, information about the mage Kaxilreth. The mage founded his island to live where death's grip was weak, and where few could invade his privacy. He hopes to permanently ward off a fatal disease. Kaxilreth succeeded only in dying an agonizing death, a death which took 18 years to claim him. Sir Gutarag knows this but he is not telling.

If your players have played Rescue! from ***Earthdawn Journal*** #2, Malban tells them they were chosen partly for their reputed expertise in travelling the Death's Sea.

Before they leave Lord Malban will take them aside and ask that they report directly back to him. He suspects that Kaxilreth may have allies in the palace. Whether or not the players trust the man is up to them.

SETUP: Landing on the Islands

Start with wingboats navigating the treacherous winds near Kaxilreth's Island, in the northern portions of Death's Sea. Windboats are life-boat sized made of bronze-bound wood, able to hold 20 people for a few days, a dozen or so for more extended expeditions such as this one. They have silver-and-brass wings which fold out from the boat. These seven-foot wings do not provide any lift, but folding them out activates the magic of the boats.

During the night the air elementals rebel against the constant torment of the day and cause furious and unpredictable currents. Luckily they are landing during the day, when the updrafts are regular. After twisting and turning in the winds, the characters approach the island for a landing. Air sailing tests of 3 from everyone skids the boat down onto the rocks. Don't have air sailing? Bit tougher then: willpower test of 5 will do it. Remember that

number of successes must equal the number of passengers to keep the boat on course. See page 96 of the basic rulebook. If one-half of the passengers succeed, the boat can land roughly. Fewer successes gets them caught in the vicious air currents and plunges them toward the lava. One-half success is needed for the boat to climb. Three-quarters or better success will allow the boat to climb up to the island and land during the same round. Landing conditions are tricky; any thing less than full success is a jarring landing. Players make a Strength test against (10 - air sailing successes). Failure throws the the character from the boat, taking 8 steps of damage on the volcanic rock. Physical armor reduces the damage taken.

The wings retract themselves when the characters land. The heat is stifling, the air clings to their lungs as if it were afraid to leave their bodies. The oblong rocky island has cliffs, 20 to 30 feet tall, but the fiery spray sometimes crashes over the lip of the cliff. The characters find themselves at the tunnel leading to Kaxilreth's tower.

Up to the Gate

All but one of the traps leading to the entrance has been sprung by Tanison, the keeper of the house and the male lover in the survivor's vision (see below). The entranceway is a trench hewn from the cooled lava that forms the island. The trench is covered with huge basalt slabs weighing over 50 tons apiece. The gate to the tower is at the end of the trench. The only physical way to the gate is through the trench; a character cannot fly over the trench at reach the gate as it is blocked from above by the slabs. The tunnel is divided into four distinct sections, each of which was trapped.

Each trap can be avoided by speaking a phase of the moon, one per room, in this order: new moon, quarter moon, half moon, gibbous moon, full moon. Kaxilreth had an obsession with lunar phenomena, and he gave his real guests the passwords so they could enter his tower without being attacked. The players have almost no way of obtaining this information before they reach Tanison, but the tower was built to be used.

The Graves

Their are four graves up-slope from the entrance to the tunnel. While there are four separate mounds, only one marker commemorates the dead. It reads:

Cynthia Fine Sailors
Vulman Each and All
Orbitus
Leruth

These are the remains of the sailors who reached the island with Sir Gutarag.

Pit Traps

Password[New Moon]

Characters can still see the weight-sensitive gears and cogs which moved the earthen covers of each of the three pits. Each pit is 10 feet across and spans the full 10 feet of the trench. The gears have been spiked with the pit covers partially open. Characters can see the preternaturally sharp spikes (Always hit if a character falls, but attack test with 9 steps for the purposes of determining an armor defeating hit; damage test 13.) Makeshift bridges span the pits, built from no-longer needed furniture from the tower: slats and side pieces from a bed frame, drawers and back pieces from an armoire, and the extra sections from an expandable dining table. Wooden pegs join the pieces. The bridges are rickety, but will hold up to 400 pounds. Obsidimen will have a problem.

Wall Bows

Password [Quarter Moon]

Magically aimed, armed and fired crossbows were hidden in niches in the walls. Now all six crossbows lie in a neat pile in the corner near the door, their bowstrings cut. The aiming ward is still active, the equivalent of *mystic aim* (rank four, step nine, not that it really matters). The circles appear on the characters but no missile is fired, although three of the bows release and re-cock with each triggering of the ward . Play the effect for as much creepiness as you can get away with.

The crossbows are fashioned from polished maple inlaid with onyx. The stones have been meticulously cracked by Tanison, and so are not worth much. The whole lot is worth perhaps 30 silver pieces. The bows are thread items attuned to the pattern of the island (which in turn was woven with Kaxilreth's pattern.) They are worth perhaps 250 silver to a mage interested in theoretical magic, but they have no practical value. For the theoretical mages among the players, the problem for using them is as follows: The island has threads connected to the weapons. The enchantment on the island powers the crossbows. Attaching a character's thread to the weapon severs the threads to the island; the weapon then has no power.

Flaming Section

Password [Half Moon]

Detection runes line the door frame to this section, the ebony still polished and gleaming. The runes detect the passage of the namegiver races, and there is a rune for each of the main eight races. One round after passage fire runes flare in the our corners of the room. Ceiling nozzles hiss from the pressure of elemental air, but Tanison has removed the lamp oil which would otherwise fill the room with a flammable mist.

Moving Door

Password [Gibbous Moon]

This oblong room is 15 yard long and a scant 5 yards wide. Tanison has been unable to affect the magic in this room. The entrance and exits start directly across from one another. However the exit moves (the dirt and stone and tunnel shift to reform the entrance in a new location. The door has initiative step 7. If the door wins initiative a DEX test of 8 or better is needed to get through the door. If a character wins a DEX test of 6 gets you through. In either case, a WIL test of 6 will allow a character to overcome the magic of the door and stagger through. Failure to move through the door results in a magical push which acts as a difficulty 10 knockdown test. A character who fails the knockdown test is pushed back into the room.

The rest of the room has six moving sections of stone, three on each side of the wall. The stone sections are five yards wide fitting together at seams less than a knife blade thick. The sections move asynchronously, making their patterns impossible to follow. DEX tests of 5 or more cross the room without being hit by a section. Failure indicates being hit by a block for 8 steps of damage (armor applies); a botch means the blocks slammed the character between them for 16 steps of damage.

Main Gate

Password[Full Moon]

There are 13 entrance slots in the cupola surrounding the main gate. There are hand marker for the left hand beside each slot. There are runes above each marker. Each rune is scarred and scraped. Tanison defiled the runes the best he could, but they retain most of their magic. The hand markers will slide, shrink or stretch to match the size of the character. Each time a character touches a hand marker, they make a *spellcasting* test (PER default). On a nine or better, nothing happens; the door doesn't open either. The door will not open until the password is spoken while touching the hand marker or the spell is unleashed. Opening when the spell is unleashed is an effect of Tanison's tampering, not part of Kaxilreth's original design.

Once unleashed all characters make WIL tests. All but highest total dies to the spell (The spell opens portals to Death's domain, which conducts a battle similar to undead struggle, only the domain of Death can never die. Bummer.) Their spirits continue play, using skills and abilities on astral objects, but limited to PER, WIL, and CHA against physical objects or creatures. The dead spirits can recreate physical items they owned by making WIL tests. The target number is the step of the item, three if the item did not have a step number. So a broadsword could be created with a WIL test of 5. The objects only work in astral space, where their spirits currently linger. Normally the spirits are whisked away to the afterworld or Death's domain, but the spell has been disrupted by Tanison, and Death's grip is weak here on Death's Sea.

A spirit has the same death and unconsciousness rating, wound threshold and recovery stats

as the physical character. If a spirit Ôdies', he or she loses her grip on astral space and takes the long fall to Death's domain.

Opening The Door: The door is disk-shaped, rolling in its slot to resemble a waning moon as it opens.

The Tower

Tower is a misnomer, part of the lie Kaxilreth lived throughout his life. He used elemental powers to sculpt a huge stone edifice over 150 feet high, all shiny obsidian, smooth basalt and rough pumice. Many-limbed, bat-winged humanoids are carved into the upper half of the tower, as if they were trapped in molten rock which cooled around them. Inside, the tower only has a few rooms, all on the first two stories. The rest is just a front to impress the occasional off-course airship who would return with reports of the mysterious tower. Kaxilreth had grand plans for completing the tower, but spent most of his magic fighting the disease which killed him.

Walls: The wall are elementally worked volcanic rock. They are impervious to physical attack for the purposes of this scenario. Given tools and a couple of hours you could dig through one of the inner walls. Unless noted walls resist astral passage (of the spirits) with a difficulty of 4. A WIL test of four or better is needed to pass through the walls. This difficulty applies to the astral lampreys as well as the player characters.

Windows: Made from heat-resistant crystal thicker than an ork's forearm. They are nearly as tough as the walls, having an armor value of 15, death rating of 25. An attack test of 20 or better is an armor defeating hit. Any attack test other than a botch hits the window.

Ventilation: Each room has an intake vent and an exhaust vent. These are magic portals which transport air, and only air, to the filtration room.

The rooms below have a listing for Physical Entrance and Astral Entrance. These list the difficulties and hazards for entering the rooms in body or spirit.

1) Anteroom

Physical Entrance: No problem
Astral Entrance: No problem

The anteroom has a portrait of Kaxilreth. He is a tall human, sallow skin, vague expression. He stands inside a gigantic brass contraption, an artist's brave attempt at rendering the planetarium mechanism without seeing it. Kaxilreth is wearing crisp orange robes with complicated loops in gold thread.

Across from the painting are a pair of brass cape racks. The floor is a orange and gold diamond-shaped tile mosaic. There are no windows in this room.

2) Tanison's Room

Physical Entrance: Locked 7, Break STR test of 12. One strain for the STR test.
Astral Entrance: 4

Neatly kept bedroom with a simple oak bed, night stand and an armoire that has been warped from the heat. Once the best a courtier could buy, Tanison's clothes are all thread-bare. The night stand lamp has a fire spell upon it, drawing energy from Death's Sea. The lamp ignites and brightens with the turn of a simple screw. The lamp is a magical curiosity worth 150 silver, counting as treasure. It is only useful in areas rich in elemental fire. There are no windows in this room.

3) Kitchen

Physical Entrance: No Problem
Astral Entrance: Warded against those darn lampreys which would nibble at the edge of the preservation magics. WIL test of 9 to avoid. The ward does 12 steps damage.

Five storage bins cluster along the west wall, preparation counters abut the southwest, while a 60-gallon water tank stands in the southeast. A sink stands next to the water tank, a tap running from the tank to the sink. The drain leads out the east wall. Next to the sink is the oven. Two eastside-windows and four light crystal illuminate the kitchen. The northern end of the kitchen is a water-summoning circle centered around a five-gallon pot. Only Kaxilreth knew how to use the circle.

China, cutlery, cooking ware and serving dishes are stored in the cupboards along the east wall. The storage bins preserve food through cold and air magics. The bins still hold food, enough meat, fruit and flour to feed the party for weeks.

4) Dining Room

Physical Entrance: No Problem
Astral Entrance: No Problem

Polished gray-granite tile reflects the bright light from the eight crystals which illuminate this room. The dining room is the most cheerful room in the house, with potted palms in the northern corners standing sentry on either side of a terrarium. The dining table is a slab of marble held aloft by a sky lattice spell. Eight slender chairs with gold-silk cushions sit neatly under the table. The cushions are worth 25 silver apiece, but do NOT count as treasure.

5) Reading Room

Physical Entrance: No Problem
Astral Entrance: No Problem

One large stuffed chair with cracked leather uphostelry sits in the NW corner. Suspended on a brass chain above the chair is a light crystal. The bookshelves on the eastern wall hold nothing of great value. The books are common folk tales, collected works from obscure troubadours, and dozens of volumes of bad poetry written by Kaxilreth. Not all of the poetry deals with the moon -- just most of it.

Stairs in the southwest lead to the upper floor.

6) Parlor

Physical Entrance: No Problem
Astral Entrance: No Problem

The mood of this room is set by the large curved window which caps the western end of the parlor. The red glow from the death's sea washes the colors from the room. Two low set couches abut to form an ÒLÓ shape near the center of the room. A bar and liquor cabinet occupy the northeast. Brandy and port are what Kaxilreth had left. The parlor floor was sunk about four feet lower than the rest of this level, short stairs connecting the parlor to the reading room. The windows start about 12 feet above the floor. An accordion-like curtain, similar to the top of a roll-top desk, may be pulled by a rod to cover the window. The windows of the parlor are not quite as strong as the other windows, having been stretch and molded to form the curve. They have a death rating of 20, armor rating 15, and require an attack test of 15 for an armor defeating hit.

7) Filtration Room

Physical Entrance: Locked and Barred (13). One strain for the STR test, no strain for lock picking. Kaxilreth used a command phrase ['Dance of the New Moon'] to open the door. Tanison does not know the phrase.
Astral Entrance: Warded against those pesky lampreys who would foul up the magical works. WIL test of 9 to avoid. The ward does 12 steps damage.

Brass tubes and runes fill the room. The tubes model in miniature the way air circulates throughout the tower. Adjusting the flow in the model can increase or decrease the flow of air to any room.

Upper Level

8) Moonscape room

Physical Entrance: No Problem
Astral Entrance: Warded against astral presences. Kaxilreth was certain that others coveted his collection of paintings, and warded the room against even so much as an astral sensing. As far as anyone knows, the threat to his artwork existed only in Kaxilreth's raving imaginings. WIL test of 13 to avoid. Spell affect holds the astral presence until Kaxilreth comes to investigate, or a WIL test of 13 is made. Better hope for the WIL test, huh? Lampreys will come to nibble upon any stuck adventures.

Thirteen paintings crowd the walls, each a different painting of a night landscape featuring a full moon. The only identifiable landscapes are Sky Point and Travar. In each painting it is the moon that is the most vibrant, the most realistic. The rest of the painting exists to give the moon a context, something to shine upon. The paintings are well done, but averaging four feet high by six feet wide they are not particularly portable -- particularly as they are painted on wood rather than canvas. But if some thief ... er, art lover happens to make off with them they are worth (d12+d10) x 10 silver pennies apiece. That's an average of 130 silver apiece.

9) Master Bedroom

Physical Entrance: Locked and Barred (difficulty 13). Lock picking is free, but STR test requires one strain.
Astral Entrance: WIL of 4.

Canopied brass bed large enough for an ogre, let alone a human. Built in closets with brass rods (What is with this guy, anyway? Hasn't he heard of, oh, iron or gold or platinum or tin for Chorrolis sake?) Kaxilreth has a variety of clothes; courtiers would envy his selection of vests, hose, shirts and shoes. Kaxilreth seems to have been the sort of magician who only wore robes for work. On the wall over the onyx night stand is an illusion -glass, a work of art which reflects an imaginary forest pool at which storm wolves stop to refresh themselves. In contrast with the other works of art in the tower, the pool is dappled with sunlight.

10) Baths

Physical Entrance: From the hallway locked and barred (difficulty 13). Lock picking is free, but STR test requires one strain. Hope your characters can hold it.
Astral Entrance: No problem from master bedroom as the inner door is ajar. WIL test of 4 from the hallway.

The privy squats in the northwest corner, white porcelain with brass fixtures. A curtain may be pulled for privacy. Three metal bath-basins suspend from rails in walls, additional support being given by rods hanging from the ceiling. The basins are porcelain lined with drains in the bottom, the pipes from which disappear into the floor. A single water tank with a flexible metal hose hangs along the south wall. Each basin has metal stair (yes, brass) and handrails to aid bathers getting in and out. One of the baths is copper, one silver, and one white gold. If the characters really want to go about disassembling a bath for the metal, the recover

approximately 70 silver pieces worth of copper, 600 silver pieces of silver and 1,500 silver pieces worth of white gold. The metal is bonded to the porcelain, making removal difficult.

This would be a tedious process, claiming about 10% of a bath's worth each hour of work.

Kaxilreth and His Notebook

His body lies in the white gold bath, mired in a partially-evaporated herbal muck. His orange and gold robes is neatly hung over a hand rail. Ink is splattered over the sides of the basin, a shattered ink bottle lying at on the bath floor. Stuck in the muck is Kaxilreth's notebook and a very soggy quill pen. From the notebook (*read and write magic* test of 5) the characters can discover that Kaxilreth was working on a means to possess Prince Neden. The magic was moon based, and required 7 years of casting over better than 90 full moons. Kaxilreth was working from hints given to him by a Horror. He has been working since 1499 (assuming the current year is 1506.) Spell is complete, and possession is to occur when the Horror's agent touches Prince Neden during the next night of the new moon.

The researcher also discovers that a planetarium setting was very important to a related bit of research Kaxilreth was doing.

On a Good success (9+) the researcher also discovers that Kaxilreth had been modifying a life-magic spell to extend his own life. The modifications assume the spell is being cast in the Death's Sea, drawing upon the elemental power present in the sea, and Death's relative impotence in the area. Based on a spirit summoning spell, it could resurrect the player characters. Now all they need is thread weaving or PER tests and the following ingredients: elemental fire, elemental water, brass incense burners, myrrh, and a summoning circle formed from moonbeams. Piece of cake, right?

On an Excellent success (11+) the researcher also discovers oblique references to the Yrithsar, suggesting that the ritual be performed only when the characters are ready for a hasty exit from the tower.

A researcher who spends another 4 to 5 hours with the book and makes a PER test 5 could also discover the information of a Good success, but Yrithsar information still requires an excellent success.

11) Observatory

Physical Entrance: No Problem
Astral Entrance: No Problem

The planetarium dominates the room, a collection of spanning bars, gears, models, circles, tracks, lenses and mirrors, loops, handles and chains. The planetarium is a working model of the solar system, although only six planets are present: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. The model is geocentric, centered around the Earth in Ptolemaic fashion. The

Moon is prominently display in its orbit around the earth. The Sun lies between the moon and the planets, while the constellations lie beyond the planets. Each planet, the moon and sun have two controls for motion (up-down, in a circle around the earth.)

Moving the planetarium is a tricky task for one person (DEX and PER tests of 11 each), less so for two are more (one makes a DEX test of 5, the other a PER test of 5). Tanison can provide the perception, but is a bit jerky in his undead form for the dexterity test. Spirits can provide perception if they can find a way to communicate with the physical world.

If the planetarium is set in accordance with Kaxilreth's notebook (see baths above), the walls will gradually lose tint, from black to smoky gray to clear. The lenses hum as light from the stars and planets strike them, and the gears move of their own accord as the enchantment adjusts itself. When all the lenses are in correct position all notes are in pitch. Moonlight reflects and then flares from the lenses, a flame which cools rather than warms. The lenses, mirrors and magic focus the moonlight upon the floor of the observatory, where it rises from the ground to form a summoning circle of pure moonlight.

12) Horror Guest Room

Physical Entrance: Locked, lock pick test 5 to open. STR test 8 also opens the door, but requires one strain.
Astral Entrance: Heh. More fun than running across pits of red-hot coals carrying buckets of lamp oil, that's what ***we*** *say about getting in astrally. Any astral presence can see that the room is surrounded by corrupted energy. The room contracts, expands, seems to dip and dance and twist to unseen forces. The whole things looks less stable than a soap bubble sitting on a razor. WIL test of 7 to enter. On an excellent success (15 +) the character enters without a problem.*

A good success alerts Whisper Pain that something more interesting than astral lampreys is entering the room. It comes to investigate, arriving in a minute or so. Whisper Pain observes the characters in the hopes one will provide additional nourishing pain. This observation may include mental conversation to find out who these adventurers are, with perhaps a bit of taunting. Whisper Pain will not reveal who it is. It wants to annoy, not severely damage, taste the stress of the adventurers, not kill them. He stays far enough away in astral space to never appear as more than a ill-defined presence in the polluted murk.

Normal success tangles the character in the astral structure of the room. Step 6 damage before the character works himself free. Failure tangles the character in the room. Step 9 damage each round until she frees herself with a WIL test of 7 or better.

The room has a single bed with yellow sheet and blankets, and a simple pine dresser-drawer. They are scarcely noticeable for the scrawl on the walls, ceiling and floor. The scrawl is in different languages, different styles and sizes, and chaotic jumble of words etched in orange ink on black walls. The words are ranting doggerel such as, 'soft glowing tumescence of pain rises and breaks upon the soul, ragged breath hissing as waves, jagged gleaming edges of

consciousness cuts the night, the time of dreams, slices so thin you read the wishes right through them, vain wishes, prayerful wishes, with no one to hear them except me.'

A PER test of 5 will find several references to 'Whisper Pain.'

A second PER test of 5 will find the phrase ' tried to sleep Sir, tried to sleep poor Gutarag, steaming sweat Sir, screaming sweat poor Gutarag, matted hair, sticky beard champion, ship's hull breached, crews' bones bleached, fallen softly, crying softly, with no one to hear him except me.' The phrase has been overwritten a number of times, indicating that it was an early scrawl.

The room feels as foul as it looks. No matter how hard your lungs work you can never seem to get enough air. The walls seem too close, the floor tickles. The only safe spot seems to be the bed. A place to sleep. A time for Whisper Pain.

13) Laboratory

Physical Entrance: Secret Door. PER test of 15 to sense. Lock Pick test of 9 to open. STR test of 12, requiring one strain. The secret door to the laboratory can be easily seen by characters in spirit form.
Astral Entrance: Warded just enough to keep all but the hardiest lampreys from poking their luminescent worm-essence where they were not welcome. WIL test of 9 to avoid. The ward does step 12 damage.

The walls are scarred from some of Kaxilreth's more interesting experiments. The lab table in the northeast has a hole burned through it, and large divots were blown from the thick rock in the corner wall. The north end has the tables, with parchments diagrams hanging haphazardly from hooks in the wall. The eastern end is a scroll case containing the record of all of Kaxilreth's experiments (most of which failed.) Not the most exciting reading in the world.

Also against the south wall is a set of shelves with tools: metal tubes, glass beakers, brass incense burners, filters, corks, and the like.

Against the south wall stands two supply cabinets. One holds the more mundane supplies, charcoal, iron dust, sulfur (15 sp), mercury (50 sp), silver (25 sp), white gold (25 sp), foxglove (30 sp), cinnamon (15 sp), saffron (150 sp) and myrrh (75 sp).

The other is enchanted to safely hold more magical supplies. The cabinet is in need of replenishing, but there are still two Kelix's poultice (25 sp resale), one healing potion (175 resale), one jar elemental earth (300 sp, counts as treasure), one small sealed container elemental fire (500 sp, counts as treasure), one flask elemental water (300 sp, counts as treasure). The cabinets contain enough supplies to perform the life magic mentioned in Kaxilreth's notebook, and return the spirits of the player characters to their bodies.

Events

The events described below can occur any time after the adventurers reach the tower. They are given in the order they are most likely to occur, but then you know how adventurers are.

Talking to Tanison

Tanison needs help, and so wants to trust the player characters. He has felt the influence of Whisper Pain for years, and is reluctant to drag others into his nightmare. These two conflicting emotions can lead him to be an erratic conversationalist, sometimes warm, at times cool, still other times catching himself in mid-sentence rather than say too much. His desire to help Herita will win out, and so he finally opens up to patient adventurers. See Tanison's entry for more on the ex-troubadour.

Performing the Ritual

1) Setting the Moon Summoning Circle

Mentioned in the observatory section, repeated here for convenience:

Moving the planetarium is a tricky task for one person (DEX and PER tests of 11 each), less so for two are more (one makes a DEX test of 5, the other a PER test of 5). Tanison can provide the perception, but is a bit jerky in his undead form for the dexterity test. Spirits can provide perception if they can find a way to communicate with the physical world.

When set in accordance with Kaxilreth's notebook (see baths above) the walls will gradually lose tint, from black to smoky gray to clear. The lenses hum as light from the stars and planets strike them, and the gears move of their own accord as the enchantment adjusts itself. When all the lenses are in correct position all notes are in pitch. Moonlight reflects and then flares from the lenses, a flame which cools rather than warms. The lenses, mirrors and magic focus the moonlight upon the floor of the observatory, where it rises from the ground to form a summoning circle of pure moonlight.

2) Igniting the Myrrh

The Myrrh must be placed in the incense burners and ignited to form a triangle inscribed in the summoning circle. There is only enough incense for five (or perhaps a couple more) rounds. During the time the incense is lit, the invoker must make a *thread weaving* or PER test of 8 to form the incense smoke into the lines of the triangle. Once the lines are formed

the temperature in the room takes a noticeable drop. Shadows flit on the walls, the first sign of the approach of the Yrithsar.

3) Applying the elemental fire and water

This dangerous procedure must be performed inside the summoning circle, but outside the triangle. First apply the fire to the top of the moonbeam circle; DEX test of 5. Invoker has five rounds (and five chances) to apply the fire, needing three successes to apply an even layer of fire to the whole circle. A good success counts as two success, and excellent or better success counts as three successes.

The shrieks of the Yrithsar can be heard in the distance as soon as the fire is applied. They are getting closer.

The water is applied to the bottom of the summoning circle. A PER or thread weaving test of 5 and the water flows around the circle, contrary to the pull of gravity. As above invoker has five rounds (and five chances) to apply the fire, needing three successes to apply water around the whole circle. A good success counts as two success, and excellent or better success counts as three successes.

Once the water is applied pieces of the planetarium begin to pop and explode off the structure; mercury whizzes by the right ear of the invoker. The lenses vibrate and the chains rattle. The voices of the Yrithsar can be heard inside the metal of the planetarium itself.

4) Invoking the moon

The bodies of the player character must be inside the triangle in order to be infused with life. The invoker makes a PER or spellcasting test of ... oh, heck if the poor player character has gone through all that effort to put the spell together it should work, right? So let it work. If you need a difficulty, say its 7. Give him a couple of chances; if he comes close let it go. Maybe you make him spend a karma. Don't get hung up on the dice rolls at this point. Make him pay strain by the amount he missed, whatever, but let the spell work.

The summoning circle fills with the image of a full moon. The triangle breaks apart into tendrils of smoke, one for each character given life. The smoke pours into the chests of the deceased. Each deceased must make a TOU test; on a four or better the character immediately regains consciousness. Otherwise they can make another TOU test in 3 rounds (or less if you are a really kind GM.) Right now however, the Yrithsar are breaking through.

On the first round after the ritual the planetarium begins to bend and the observatory wall begins to crack. Time to leave.

On the second round talons puncture one of the brass rails from the inside, and the walls bend and distort as though made from a thin rubber sheet. Now it's **really** time to leave.

On the third round...oops, too late. The Yrithsar break into the physical world with a howl like an angry storm.

Wingboat Event Stack

Presumably the adventurers are running. Your job is to make their lives a living he... er, you could make their escape memorable if you want. Use as many or as few events as you want from the stack below. Make up your own if you want to...come on, you **are** the GM.

Elemental Firestorm Erupts

As the adventurers beat feet downstairs, remind them that flying a wingboat is somewhat tough, but they ought to be able to get away as long as the weather is good. Uh-oh. Apparently the invocation messed with Mother Nature (or maybe its just that time of day?) An elemental firestorm is roiling over the horizon toward the island.

Beating Yrithsar to the boats

This one should be no problem as long as the adventurers went straight from the observatory to the boats, not stopping to pass Go, not collecting 200 silver pieces of loot et. cetera. Boy, sure hope they talked Tanison into giving them the password (Gibbous Moon) to the moving door room. Could get sticky otherwise. Failing that they could try to break out of the parlor, but that could take some time.

Launch of boats and failure to catch updraft

All aboard that's going aboard. As the last set of boots crunch off the pumice to launch the boat, a splintering crash resounds behind them as the Yrithsar crash out of the parlor window. Fly time. Air sailing tests of 4 keep the boat up, or WIL tests of 6. Tanison's WIL is d10... d12 if you are feeling helpful. Hey it's a sleazy GM trick, so what? The air is rougher this time, you know. Unfortunately there is no significant updraft, so the boat goes into a...

Wild spiral over death sea, lava touch

If the group made enough air sailing successes to completely lift the boat, void this step. If they missed, the boat plunges toward the lava sea, pulling up just in time -- oops, not quite in time. For each missing success, the ship takes 3 steps of damage as it touches the lava. You don't have to roll now, just let the players know that the hull is smoking a bit.

Yrithsar give shrieking pursuit

Oh yeah, those guys. They fly at the same speed as the wingboat (150 yards full move). That assumes that the wingboat is moving full speed. Remember it hovers in the air at 1/4 success; I say it only goes speed 75 at half success, full speed at 3/4 success, and can maneuver like the dickens at full success. So at 3/4 or better the Yrithsar who are not already on the boat can only chase the boat, as the boat is traveling faster than their combat speed.

Ship catches fire

Now roll the damage from the lava touch. The result is the difficulty to put each fire out (DEX test with blanket, bucket, whatever, made while hanging on somehow). If the players are really unattentive, roll again to increase the size of one of the fires. If all the fires aren't out after three rounds its time for the...

Damaged wing

This event can also happen if an Yrithsar and an adventurer are locked in combat on the vessel. First of all a damaged wing looks ugly, holes where wing ought to be and wires flopping loose where control cables used to be. But wait, there's more: the air sailing test is now 5 and the WIL test is 7. And the ship lurches into a flat spin, causing ....

Man overboard

Everyone makes a DEX test. Characters rolling tests of 1 or 2 are thrown from their seats, to grab frantically at a strut or wing or tail. DEX tests or 7 get them back inside; DEX tests of 4+ add a step to their next DEX test to climb into the boat. This is cumulative, so they should make it back into the boat. Except that when they botch, the slide all the way back down to where they started. If they botch where they started, they make an immediate DEX test as they claw air. On a 3 or better they hang on. Otherwise ..... deep fry time in the Death's Sea.

Flying through elemental firestorm

Yrithsar behind them, storm in front of them. Eventually they have to go through the storm. The Yrithsar are not so foolish ... er, so courageous that they are willing follow the adventurers through the storm. They pull up as the wingboat dives toward the roaring sheets of fire.

Passing through the elemental firestorm requires fast and accurate flying. Air sailing tests of 6 or WIL test of 8 are needed. The ship must be able to climb and maneuver toward a calm spot in the storm, which requires 3/4 success. Kindly GM's are advised to allow players to spend Karma, as long as they come up with a dramatic reason for how their characters are tapping their inner power. Yeah, sometimes I play fast and loose with the Karma rules, but anything that keeps the characters alive AND makes them spend legend points to do so is just fine with me.

Each round they spend in the firestorm subjects each character, and the ship, to possible damage. The firestorm 'attacks' with a spellcasting of 12 steps, and does 6 steps damage. Allow characters who are using shields or other forms of cover to add the cover to their mystic armor rating. The spell defense of the wingboat is 8; if the firestorm scores an armor defeating hit then fire burns through the hull. The size of the hole is proportional to the damage done, each point of damage burning out roughly one square foot. Seven points of damage is enough for a hole about three feet in diameter, just the right size to fall through. Fun, huh?

Once they make it through the storm, they have a nice 10 - 14 day voyage back to Throal. If the ship is undamaged its 10 days, if it is a battered hulk, make it 14. Choose a value in between if the ship is only partially damaged.

Now it's time to deal with the plans of that pesky Whisper Pain.

Back At Throal

Seeing Sir Gutarag

If they try to talk to Sir Gutarag his social secretary, a puffy dwarf named Beekro, acts under orders to wine, dine, flatter and stall them. Beekro will apologize for his master's tardiness, offering to run any errands or to take any messages to anyone with whom the adventurers need to talk. Beekro will put them up in luxurious quarters for the night, offer to get them properly outfitted for the Dance of the New Moon, anything to keep them under his watchful eye. He reports any and all character actions to Sir Gutarag. If the adventurers are about to revolt, Beekro will make one last plea and informs Sir Gutarag he can do nothing more. The knight meets with them in this case, bending the adventurer's story toward a successful conclusion, declaring the threat to Neden ended. If the adventurers insist, Sir Gutarag will allow them to attend the Dance of the New Moon. Sir Gutarag's goal in this scene is to mollify and delay the adventurers from taking effective action.

Seeing Prince Neden or King Varulus III

Yeah, yeah, like their Royal Highnesses have nothing better to do than talk to a bunch of singed adventurers. Prince Neden knows nothing of their mission, and the King has turned the matter over to his trusted advisor Sir Gutarag. That is the whole purpose of underlings after all.

Meeting Lord Malban

If the players remember Lord Malban's advice to their characters, they will seek him out first. His social secretary (a hard, lean human named Peliv -- he looks more assassin than secretary) will be skeptical until they mention their mission at which time they will be rushed to see him. They interrupt a solitary meal, Malban eating while considering the written reports of his intelligence sources. Gallantly offering to share his meal, Malban discretely obscures the sensitive documents while listening to the adventurers.

If Tanison is present or if they mention the enchantment and the earrings, Malban will wave them silent while considering things. Unless the players rudely interrupt his thought, Lord Malban decides to give the earrings to the player characters. He warns them that Sir Gutarag has shown a strong interest in this sort of jewelry. Lord Malban wants the business cleared up before the dance. Tanison suggests they try to save Herita right now. All they need to find is a setting like the one in which Tanison first made his promise.

The Garden and the Kiss

The hanging gardens of Throal are the nearest thing to the Gardens of Idis for several hundred miles and a few hundred years. Lord Malban can suggest the gardens if he is available for advice.

Just like in the fairy tales (which are nothing more than distorted legends from the time of Earthdawn) all that Herita and Tanison need to break the curse on them is to kiss. Unfortunately Herita does not have a body... she needs one of the adventurers to loan her theirs. Herita can possess a body if the owner allows it (i.e. reduces her or his spell defense, p. 152 of the basic rulebook.) Herita can only possess a body which is wearing the earrings which house her spirit. The heroes have four earrings ... time to try them on.

But first .... Sir Gutarag (actually Whisper Pain) can sense the earrings once they leave Sir Malban's protected apartments. You bet he is interested in checking them out. He will meet them in the gardens in time for the big finale.

Whisper Pain will attack the characters trying on the earrings, trying to get them or at least knock them over into the city below. The characters' job is to handle Whisper Pain long enough for the Kiss to happen.

Once the right earrings are on a character, the Kiss starts. What, you think over five centuries of romantic frustration could be dissolved in a little one-round peck? Au contraire, mes amis... this is a kiss for the ages, a kiss of legend, a kiss of which ordinary lovers can only dream. No rules for the Kiss, but a couple of suggested special effects:

- On the first round energy sparks and flies from the earrings around the head of the lovers. The host character feels an intoxicating rush of vitality; fatigue and pain are washed away.
- On another round wind starts to rustle the leaves in the garden. The wind is especially

intense near the lovers. The host character sees a vision of the city of Idis, hears banners snapping in the breeze, tingles from a long ago kiss on a parapet , smells the coming rain, feels the certainty of the love between them.

- On the final round ethereal fire rises from the heads of the lovers, flames consuming a blackened coil which is the thread binding Whisper Pain to this world. Tension on the coil increases. With a groan like a foundering ship, the coil snaps. If he is still conscious, Sir Gutarag screams as the pulpy, syrupy corruption of Whisper Pain is pulled from his spirit back to the astral land of the Horrors.

The Dance of the New Moon

The bad news is that if the adventurers make it to this scene they have probably lost the adventure. Their invitations place them in the lower level of the ballroom, with the other wannabes and have-to-invites. The upper level has the nobles and ambassadors, including Neden, Malban, and Sir Gutarag. The middle level has plenty of functionaries and guards (including trained griffins to handle crowds and pesky fliers) to prevent the lessers from bothering their betters without express permission. Once Gutarag touches Neden, the Prince is possessed. Gutarag begins the dance at the side of the King, and the Prince pays his respect to his father near the beginning of the dance. The players have very little time to get to Gutarag. A kind GM could rule that if the players rushed to the garden RIGHT NOW, they might be able to panic Gutarag in reacting to them. But only if you are a kind GM.

Wrap Up

Defeating Whisper Pain moves the heroes up in the eyes of Lord Malban, who will certainly use them for future mission. They promptly receive the 300 silver piece a person fee, plus a 150 silver per person bonus. If they defeat Whisper Pain and do not kill Sir Gutarag (which is killing the incarnation in Sir Gutarag) the King Varulus will look favorably upon the group. They are entitled to a large favor from the King (see p. 239 of the basic rulebook.) which they may collect any time.

Adventure Awards

1. Defeating Whisper Pain -- 125 points per character, or 1,300 legend points for the group if they defeat Whisper Pain's incarnation before the Kiss is complete.
2. Reuniting Tanison and Herita -- 125 points per character.
3. Points for defeating the Yrithsar and the Eels, as long as it does not exceed 125 points per character.
4. Points for treasure gathered from Kaxilreth's tower. No limit for the treasure.
5. Additional 125 points for the host of the Kiss. Other role-playing and heroics bonus as the GM sees fit.

Characters

Herita

Tanison's beloved. Now nothing more than a spirit trapped in the earrings, she was Crown Princess of Idis, a human city that vanished during the Scourge. Her love for Tanison is still strong, and the misery she feels is part of the force which anchors Whisper Pain to this physical world.

In life Herita was an expert rider and athlete, competing for her city in the royal festivals held throughout Barsaive. She was renown for her iron will and her fierce desire to compete. She had dark hair, flashing eyes, and troubadours crumpled pages of parchment in frustration at their inability to adequately describe her brilliant smile. Her noble position, joy of life and her love for Tanison made her a target for Whisper Pain, one of the intelligent Horrors who early in the Scourge managed to slip through to the physical world.

She and Tanison were separated during the appearance of the Horror. She persisted in her search for him, but heard rumors that Whisper Pain had killed and animated her lover. She instructed her sorcerers to find a way to free Tanison from the Horror's grasp, then embarked on a quest to discover a way to destroy Whisper Pain. Herita was consumed in the conflagration of the early Scourge, when the hordes of mindless Horrors first ravaged the land. Her spirit and life-force were protected and held by the earrings. She continued to exist, trapped in a prison. Her powers did not completely desert her, for her spirit managed to attract people to carry her and convey her to her eventual goal, Throal and the court magicians of the Dwarfen Kingdom. The earrings emanate a faint aura of power, but the wearer has strong feelings of confidence and well-being as long as his or her actions conform with Herita's wishes.

Goal: Escape her prison, reunite with Tanison, learn of the fate of her people.

Kaxilreth

Human elementalist who dabbled in nethermancy on the side. An occult disease lay claim to him in early middle age, and he spent his remaining years trying to cure it. His unremitting magical pain attracted Whisper Pain, who seduced the tormented mage into accepting his help. Kaxilreth died just a few days ago, while stewing in yet another useless herbal bath.

Goals: Rid himself of his disease, to prove his love to the vital force of the moon and to wed

her ... so he was a basket case with big dreams. Now that he is singing the worm sonata it doesn't matter quite so much.

Lord Malban

Human advisor to King Varulus III. He is diplomatic, engaging, and certainly knows his politics. He resembles Basil Rathbone from the old Sherlock Holmes movies, dark hair, sharp features and sharp wit. He dresses well in fashions notably tailored to human form, a bit audacious in the heart of the Dwarfen court. He wears jewelry of silver and white gold, with gemstones to match his clothes. He is the advisor to the King on matters concerning the ÒotherracesÓ a position he takes seriously with a healthy does of humorous cynicism .... ÒYou know I was feeling particularly trollish this morning. Let's talk about the sky raidersÓ

Lord Malban's sources told him that Sir Gutarag was searching for a set of earrings. Using his contracts with adventurers he obtained them first... two sets in fact. He has little chance of determining which set is genuine Ñ at least not without using Dwarfen specialists who might have ties to Sir Gutarag. Both seem magical, and both are thread items. Lord Malban decided to hang onto to both sets until he could at least determine what Sir Gutarag wanted with a set of ancient human earrings.

Goal: Prevent harm from coming to Prince Neden. Keep relations between the Dwarfen Kingdom of Throal and the other races on an even keel.

Sir Gutarag

A former champion of Throal, Sir Gutarag went into politics reluctantly. He eschewed power that did not come from his own arms, a fact that made him a bit of a liability at court. King Varulus responded by making him an 'ambassador without portfolio', a roving one man intelligence agency. Sir Gutarag took the job with blustering bravado, proving useful more than once. His downfall came when he was surveying the area around Death's Sea. A elemental storm embroiled his airship, tossing many of the crew and Sir Gutarag overboard. Four sailors and Sir Gutarag landed on Kaxilreth's Island. The sailors did not make it through the traps, and are now buried on the island.

At Whisper Pain's urging, Kaxilreth healed Sir Gutarag, making sure the healing took some time. After several attempts Whisper Pain managed to take possession of Sir Gutarag. The plan for possession of Prince Neden began then. Whisper Pain continued to hold possession on the hapless knight, but at a very deep and subconscious level. He molded Gutarag's desires and altered his memories. When the old dwarfen champion was deemed safe, Kaxilreth had elementals transport him to the edge of the death's sea, complete with a fabricated tale of an elemental kingdom in which Gutarag had spent the last few months. Gutarag wholeheartedly believes this version of events.

His experiences on the Death Sea expedition supposedly cured him of his adventuring appetite. In reality, Whisper Pain needed him to stay in Throal. Sir Gutarag eventually developed a keen interest in pre-scourge human jewelry, a quirky hobby no one begrudged him. But his obsessive interest in earrings from the vicinity of the lost city of Idis piqued at least one courtier's curiosity: Lord Malban.

Sir Gutarag appears the model of a retired dwarfen soldier, breast coat buttons still polished and boots that could blind you in the sun. Only his eyebrows, wild bushy unkempt tufts of hair on an otherwise perfectly groom face, indicate that he has loosened up at all. His manner is gruff by civil, and the mean-nothing diplomatic chit-chat which fills court conversations still sends a shiver up his stiff spine. He is completely unaware that he is a pawn of a Horror. Consciously he is still a loyal servant of King Varulus III.

Goal: Save Prince Neden from danger. Too bad Whisper Pain has another idea.

Prince Neden

See Page 29 of the Barsaive Gamemaster Book. In short he is a skilled warrior, overconfident, a good guy who believes he should accomplish the impossible.

Goal: Make it out of the Dance of the New Moon with a few conversations with dull courtiers as possible.

Tanison

A man who died nearly five hundred years ago, yet remembers none of the intervening centuries so vividly as he recalls his few short months with Herita. They met at the Royal games sponsored by Landis, where he was a troubadour and scribe hired to right glowing poetry on the feats of Landis champions. Instead he was awed by the prowess and grace of Herita, princess of rival Idis. His stirring paean to the princess got him the boot from Landis, but gained him popular acclaim and an invitation to the court of Idis. Tanison's romance with Herita was filled with the promise of new love, made more delicious and unbearable by the fact their differing social positions doomed their love from the start.

The first stirrings of the Scourge sent tremors through Idis. Tanison sensed that Herita was imperiled and sought out a blood sorcerer. Tanison sacrificed a third of his life in order to provide the blood magic which pulses through the earrings.

Dreams haunt Tanison, convincing him the Whisper Pain never found Herita or her earrings. As long as Whisper Pain does not possess the earrings, it is possible the Herita may be

released. With the emotional anchor to this world weakened, Whisper Pain would be forced back into the astral plane.

Tanison was gifted to Kaxilreth by Whisper Pain. Now that Kaxilreth is dead, Tanison is free for the first time in two dozen generations. Tanison wears well-preserved linens and silks of his troubadour past. The yellows and blues had faded, leaving them as faint counterpoint the browns of his jerkin. Tanison no longer has any of his Troubadour talents, although his songs are still strong and he has his knowledge. His pattern has been warped through all the years of Whisper Pain's manipulations. Perhaps time could restore the pattern. Perhaps not.

Tanison only knows that Whisper Pain's plan involve Prince Neden. He also suspects that the pain he (and he presumes) Herita feel over their lost love is an important part of the magic connecting Whisper Pain to this world. Should they be reunited, perhaps Whisper Pain would be forced back into his astral hole.

Goals: Learn if the player characters are trustworthy. If the players seem at all trustworthy he will try to recruit them to aid him in finding the earrings. He wants to reunite with his love, and release Herita's spirit.

Whisper Pain

Whisper Pain enjoys the quiet, durable emotional pain over the crude physical distress cause by the sadist or torturer. Love frustrated for an eternity is a delicacy Whisper Pain had only tasted in its imagination before it slipped through the boundaries between astral space and this world. The strength, the legendary possibility of Tanison and Herita's love drew it like a bee to a blossom. The pain of their love could sustain Whisper Pain long after the Scourge ended.

Whisper Pain is a Horror who planned to wreak most of its havoc after its less-imaginative brethren were forced from the world by the decline of magic. For Whisper Pain's favored form of suffering is best served in a peaceable and optimistic setting. Whisper Pain most enjoys the isolated, individual pain, the lone sufferer adrift amid a sea of contented neighbors.

The pain which lets you see the edge of madness without succumbing to its comforting psychoses.

But Whisper Pain's tethers to the world shall soon be insufficient to hold it to this world. The love of Tanison and Herita is still strong, but even it cannot withstand the full shift in magical energies which has occurred. The Horror must have more pain. It has chosen Prince Neden, another strong will target capable of much suffering, capable of becoming an empty soul presiding over a court over brimming with emotion. Kaxilreth was the first means to an end. Sir Gutarag is the next. With the ritual of possession in readiness, Whisper pain is

waiting only for the new moon to take possession of the prince.

Goal: Possess Prince Neden. Secure the earrings to insure its link to the world until the ritual of possession can be performed.

Attributes in form of Sir Gutarag

DEX: 7 **STR:** 4 **TOU:** 9
PER: 13 **WIL:** 13 **CHA:** 10

Initiative: 8
Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: 12
Damage: 11 (ax)
Number of Spells: (2)
Spellcasting: 15
Effect: See Below
Death Rating: 90
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 78
Karma Points: 15

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 12
Armor: 9
Mystic Armor: 6
Knockdown: 5
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 32
Full Movement: 65
Legend Points: 1,300
Karma Steps: 7

Powers: Damage Shift 10, Horror Mark 15
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Whisper Pain's Horror Mark power is a special version of the power. It can temporarily remove the mark from a victim, for a period of up to 24 hours. This is done to thwart magical means of identifying a victim as Horror touched. During that 24 hours Whisper Pain may reattach the mark at will by making a Horror Mark test. Whisper Pain may only make one test an hour to reaffix the mark. If more than 24 hours pass, the Horror Mark permanently fades away.

Whisper Pain uses two combat spells in his current form:

Forked Lightning

Casting Difficulty: Target's Spell Defense
Weaving Difficulty: 10/na
Threads: 1
Range: 60 yards
Effect: Willforce+3
Duration: 1 round
Forked lightning strikes two separate characters. The target characters may not be more than 20 yards apart. Roll only one spellcasting test comparing it to the spell defense of each

target.

Pervert Armor

Casting Difficulty: Target's Spell Defense
Weaving Difficulty: 10/na
Threads: 2
Range: 60 yards
Effect: Willforce +2
Duration: 10 rounds
Pervert armor reverses the armor rating of armor, increasing the amount of damage from a blow. For example a successful pervert armor on ring mail (armor rating 6) would increase by six points the amount of damage done by a blow. Once the spell is successfully cast, make an effect test against the armor rating of the target armor. Success means the armor is perverted

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Creatures

Astral Lamprey

DEX: 5 **STR:** 4 **TOU:** 4
PER: 7 **WIL:** 7 **CHA:** 2

Initiative: 6
Number of Attacks: NA
Attack: NA
Damage: NA
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 10
Effect: See Below
Death Rating: 25
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 20
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 10
Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 3
Knockdown: 4
Recovery Tests: 1
Combat Movement: 32
Full Movement: 65
Legend Points: 50

Commentary
Astral lampreys look like translucent versions of their normal cousins. Their clear skin is filled with the soft yellow and orange glow from the light forms which take the place of their organs. Near the head is circle Astral lampreys can only feed on beings or constructs in astral space. They pose no threat to beings who are wholly in the physical plane. A few more daring of the creatures have tried to drain life force from astral constructs such as spell

matrices. Scholars have noted that this sometimes results in the loss of a spell, requiring reattuning the matrix. The astral discharge almost always sends the lamprey elsewhere.

Astral lampreys are more often nuisances rather than mortal dangers unless nests are threatened. The lampreys mouth can slowly suck life from a person, but they usually detach after eating their fill. Roll spellcasting to attach. Armor defeating hit attaches the lamprey. They can bore through astral defenses, a glowing diamond collar whirling as a drill bit; armor-defeating hit represents successful drilling by the lamprey. Their hunger is d10; roll for hunger upon attachment. Damage when attached is d4-1; no damage is done otherwise. When damage total equals or exceeds hunger, the lamprey stops eating. Astral lampreys will circle the spirits of the dead characters, feeding upon those which do not move on to the afterworld.

If their young or their nests are threatened they will continue to drain life from their targets until the threat has been defeated, or they themselves are defeated. Astral lampreys usually travel in small schools of 4 to 10 lampreys.

Their legend points are low for their stats because they rarely fight to the death, willing to look for other food if a meal becomes too feisty to handle.

Yrithsar

DEX: 7 **STR:** 6 **TOU:** 11
PER: 6 **WIL:** 8 **CHA:** 9

Initiative: 7
Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: 9
Damage: 12
Number of Spells: (1)
Spellcasting: 8
Effect: 10
Death Rating: 50
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 42
Karma Points: 4
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 11
Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 4
Knockdown: 7
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 75
Full Movement: 150
Legend Points: 250
Karma Steps: 7

Commentary:
Yrithsar means "Death's Sky" in the old language. They are winged creatures whose dimensions seem to shift and shimmer, from the size of a gargoyle to a thinner, more

demonic looking form. The word 'form' is inaccurate; a Death's Sky appears as a wavery silhouette of shape filled with the stars or clouds of an alien sky. Their bodies are three-dimensional portals to another world, Death's world. The stars are more numerous, brighter. The sky is greener or redder than Earth's sky, the clouds thin and roiling. Their talons and wing tips gleam coppery, the only portion of their form which seems solid. They will gate victims once they lock their gaze upon the victim. The victim need not be looking to fall prey. A spellcasting success locks the victim in an Yrithsar's gaze. The victim must make a WIL or Willforce test against 10, the effect of the gaze. The Yrithsar must concentrate to maintain the gaze. If knocked down, the concentration is broken. If the gaze is unbroken for three rounds, the Yrithsar makes another spellcasting test against the victim. If successful, the victim is transported to Death's domain. If the spellcast fails, the process continues until one of three things happens: concentration is broken, the victim make a WIL test, or the Yrithsar spell casts successfully.

Yrithsar prey upon those whom Death feels has cheated her. Death's exile has weakened her grasp upon the upper world. Yrithsar have been created to help Death reclaim her rightful role in the world. Resurrected characters are prime targets for Yrithsar, as they represent obscene rejection of Death's authority. They are often found around Death's Sea, for Death's grip is even weaker here than in other places of the world.

The legend points are high because of their gaze power and their high movement rate.

One yrithsar appears for each character who has been resurrected in this adventure, fewer if the Gamemaster is feeling lenient or the characters have really had a hard time of it so far.

Player Handouts

Character Death

Please remain silent while reading this. You have died, but you are still in the game as a spirit. Most of you will be spirits and there are definitely things for spirits to do in the adventure. If the survivor can find a means to resurrect you, then you may return to your body. Now lets make your exit from this mortal coil a dramatic one. I will raise my hand. When I drop it, give me your best death scream. Make the survivor **really** nervous about being the only one left alive. Thanks for your role-playing.

The Vision

You feel a buzz on your fingertips. Your spine itches half a heartbeat before a searing pain slowly rolls up your back, as if every hair were transformed into a red-hot nail then pounded in at impossible speed by a demonic blacksmith. Tears blur your vision as you stagger from the wall. You blink. The wall wavers. You stand in a flowering garden colored in the washed

grays of the light before dawn. Bows of rose bushes are bent into the shape of gazebo. A breath gives you the wet must of humus and the cleanliness of air after a light rain. The fragrance of the flowers hovers as a suggestion, a hint of beauty added to fresh air.

In the gazebo stands a young couple, he a tall angular human of nearly elfin appearance, she shorter and more athletically proportioned. He whispers to her, hands her two small points of light. She shakes her head in objection, he insists. She turns her head, placing one point of light upon right ear; her hand trembles as she places the second point on her left ear. He hugs her gently, she sniffles and snuggles closer. They kiss softly, holding the kiss as their passion grows. An image of a white rose floats over the vision of the lovers. The flower brightens as drops of red run from the stem, streaking the flower. The petals are a deep red when the kiss ends.

The vision wavers, the garden disappears as the lovers are thrown apart like flotsam on a storm-wracked sea. The rose trembles, twists, and you feel a sympathetic cracking from your wrists as the flower snaps free from the stem. Both the flower and the stem vanish, leaving you staring at the wall and the hand slot glowing above you.

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Neeza's Pipes

by David Caraley

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #6***

Sit closer, my friends, and a tale you will hear. A tale of courage and sacrifice. A tale of bravery and skill. Long, long ago, before the world sealed itself away from the bright blue sky and the joy of the open air, there was a small community known as Glendale. This town may have been small in size, but it housed members of all the Namegiver races. They all lived in peace and harmony, enjoying life and letting each person do what he could to contribute to the community.

As the Scourge grew nearer and the first of the Horrors started to roam the lands, the town began to prepare a kaer for the time when the barriers collapsed and the creatures of darkness walked the world unchecked. The dwarves drew up the plan, mapping the corridors and rooms needed to support the people of Glendale. The elves drew upon the power of magic to create the wards needed to keep the kaer safe. The orks and trolls worked mightily, carving the kaer out of a nearby mountain. The humans helped create the interior furniture and equipment needed for the centuries beneath the earth, and the t'skrang travelled far and wide, bringing books, and other items from other communities so that the kaer would have the knowledge needed to emerge into a new world once the Horrors were gone.

As for the windlings, well, they put off doing any work, keeping themselves entertained by flying through the sky and doing other things that would be lost to them once the Scourge began. And the other races looked at the windlings playing at their games and began to wonder what the small folk could do to contribute to the community's safety. Many grumbled that while they worked, the windlings wasted time playing foolish games.

Eventually, the kaer was finished and the folk of Glendale began the long process of moving their lives underground. Still the windlings continued playing, and the others started to grow irate, wondering if they should even allow the small folk to take shelter in a kaer they had not helped construct.

It was then that the first of the Horrors called the Twister of Souls fell upon the town. When this happened, Jegar Twinlance, an ork cavalryman, charged towards the Horror, certain he could destroy it before it could reach the still unsealed kaer. The Horror snapped Jegar's lance in one mighty blow, and snapped poor Jegar's back with the second.

It was then that the dwarven warrior Thorvald the Strong attacked the creature, swinging his mighty axe with all of his strength. But despite his great strength, the axe bounced harmlessly off the Horror's thick hide. The Twister of Souls then turned and devoured the brave dwarf.

Next, the elven nethermancer Narivar cast his powerful spells at the Horror, sending forth great blasts of magic. But even these magics had no effect on the powerful monster. The Horror cast magic of its own, causing Narivar's skin to rip from his body, killing him almost instantly.

Quickly, L'tavik, a t'skrang swordmaster, leapt into the fray. His blades moved with the speed of light and he was soon in the thick of battle. But each blow bounced from the Horror's skin, never even drawing blood. The mighty creature turned and bit poor L'tavik's head off.

Once the t'skrang fell, the human wizard Hemdale struck the Horror with a powerful blast of arcane might. Hemdale struck at the creature again and again, but to no avail. The Twister of Souls grabbed the wizard and tore him limb from limb.

It was then that the townsfolk knew despair. The Horror had killed all of Glendale's bravest defenders and now there was no one to stop the monster from destroying the kaer. But much to the people's amazement, a single windling, a troubadour adept named Neeza flew up to the Horror and started to play her pipes. She played a beautiful song, a song so intricate that all who were present stood open mouthed with awe. Even the mighty Horror stopped its advance to listen to the enchanting music played by the diminutive troubadour.

It was while the Twister of Souls stood listening to Neeza's music that the other windlings flew to the townsfolk and stuffed the people's ears with mud. The windlings had heard the song before when they would spend the time playing and were no longer influenced by it. Once the people could no longer hear the music coming from the pipes, the windlings led them to safety in the kaer.

Once the people were safely in the stronghold, they realized they would have to seal it before the Horror broke loose from Neeza's song. There was no way to bring Neeza into the kaer, for if she stopped playing, the Horror would attack. The folk of Glendale had to seal the kaer with the brave windling still outside.

The Scourge lasted many centuries, and never once did the people of Glendale have complaints about the windlings love of games. The windlings provided amusement for the kaer for all the years of the Scourge, reminding people to keep a light heart and to never fall to despair.

No one knows what happened to Neeza. Some folk say that Neeza died that day when the Horror finally broke free of the song. But my folk have a different belief. We believe that the Passion Astendar heard the beauty of Neeza's song, and was so moved by her skill and bravery, her willingness to sacrifice herself so that her community could survive, that Astendar herself rescued the troubadour, and that she played for the Passions during the long years of the Scourge.

Adventure Ideas

The characters can hear about a set of windling pipes that holds all who hear its music enthralled. A set of pipes that can hold even a Horror with its music could be very useful to adventurers. Of course, to use the pipes, one would have to learn of Neeza and the town of Glendale.

Of course, the pipes could already be in the hands of someone else. Imagine a bandit gang that could subdue caravan guards by playing enchanting music from Neeza's Pipes. Maybe the characters were hired to hunt down these mysterious bandits and bring them to justice.

The Truth Behind the Legends

Neeza's Pipes are indeed magical. They have been blessed by Astendar herself and have many useful powers.

Neeza's Pipes

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 12
Neeza's Pipes are small, silver pan pipes covered with fine engraving. Neeza's name is worked into the engraving, written in windling.

Thread Ranks

Rank 1 Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: What is the name of the pipes? It is named Neeza's Pipes.
Effect: The pipes give a +1 bonus to the player's Emotion Song, or allows an Emotion Song test at the player's Charisma Step +1.

Rank 2 Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: Who was Neeza? She was a windling troubadour who saved Kaer Glendale.
Effect: The pipes now give a +2 bonus to Emotion Song. They can also be used to play a Song of Sleep, needing to get a Good Success against the target's Spell Defense on an Emotion Song test to put the target to sleep.

Rank 3 Cost: 500

Effect: The pipes can now be used to play a Song of Healing. The person makes an Emotion Song test against the Spell Defense of the person being healed. If successful, the character being healed makes a Recovery Test, adding the pipe player's Emotion Song Rank to his Recovery Step. Include any bonus the pipes give to the Emotion Song.

Rank 4 Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: Who was Neeza a Questor to? She was a Questor to Astendar.
Effect: The song of healing no longer uses a Recovery Test, though a person can only benefit from one Song of Healing a day without using a Recovery Test.

Rank 5 Cost: 1300

Effect: The pipes now add +3 to the player's Emotion Song.

Rank 6 Cost: 2100

Key Knowledge: Who was the Horror Neeza captured with the pipe's song? The Horror was the Twister of Souls.
Effect: The pipes can now play the Song of Holding. This powerful song costs one point of strain to play and per turn. The player makes an Emotion Song test, needing to beat the target's Spell Defense. If it does, the target is held immobile as long as the song can be heard. The song can be used against many targets at the same time, in fact, it works on anyone who's Spell Defense is less than the Emotion Song test result. The only way to avoid the effect is to stuff one's ears with something, or to be deaf.

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Nights of Desire

by David Caraley

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Listnar wiped the perspiration from his brow. Usually, a person of Listnar's importance would not be found in an establishment such as Norina's House of Veils. He was an illusionist of great reknown and status, and the House of Veils was hardly the type of place one of his stature would frequent.

Still, Listnar could not help himself. He had come, as had most of the patrons, to see the new dancing sensation, a young lass named Philana. It was getting near the time for her next performance. Listnar could tell.

The crowd grew quiet as the musicians began to play. The light quartz lanterns began to dim as a beautiful raven haired maiden made her way out onto the stage. Listnar felt his heart start to pound as the lithe dancer moved with the music. The crowd gasped as the first of the silken veils fell to the floor.

Hours later found Listnar sitting in the tower he had managed to claim in the western district of Kratas. Thoughts of Philana filled his every waking moment, and he knew he would have to have her. No matter what it took.

Plot Synopsis

Lately a new dancing sensation has appeared in Kratas. A beautiful young woman by the name of Philana has been dancing at a tavern known as Norina's House of Veils. Her skill at dancing, coupled with her exotic appearance, has won her many admirers, and attendance at the House of Veils has skyrocketed.

Unfortunately for Philana, she has attracted the attention of an illusionist named Listnar. Though Philana dances for everyone in the audience, Listnar always believed that she was dancing for him. He has fallen madly in love with her, and believes that she must be equally in love with him, though maybe she hasn't realize it yet.

Recently Listnar has decided that he doesn't wish to wait for Philana to come to her senses. He has decided to have her abducted and brought to his tower so that he can help her realize how deep she cares for him.

Of course Norina, owner of the House of Veils, is upset. Philana was her star performer, bringing in the crowds that spent money on the drinks and dancers that kept the House of Veils going. The loss of Philana has crippled her business and Norina wants her back.

At this point, Norina hires the characters to find out what became of Philana, and to bring her back. She promises the characters 100 silvers each if they can find the missing dancer and return her to the tavern.

A Night on the Town

Overview

This encounter starts at Norina's House of Veils. The characters are out for a night of drinking and relaxing when they get to see Philana, the newest dancing sensation in Kratas.

This whole encounter should be used to set the stage for things to come. Allow the characters time to socialize, drink, and interact with the locals. Once they are relaxed, have one or more of them drawn into a good, old-fashioned bar fight. Every good set of heroes should get into at least one bar fight while adventuring.

During the bar fight Listnar will have his ruffians abduct Philana. This will not be noticed until it is time for her next performance and she is no where to be found.

Setting the Stage

It has been quite some time since all of you have managed to get together and enjoy a night on the town. Kratas may not be the best of cities, but it certainly has more to offer than the small towns and villages you have been travelling through for the past few weeks.

After wandering through the streets and enjoying drinks at several taverns, you find yourself outside a two story building with a sign that reads House of Veils over a picture of a maiden's face smiling from behind a veil. By the sound of laughter and raucous music, and the amount of people crowding to get in, you decide that this must be a place to visit.

After managing to get inside, you find yourself in a comfortable tavern crowded with Namegivers of all shapes and sizes. Three musicians are busy providing a beat for the two attractive dancers who are slowly removing various articles of clothes while moving seductively to the music. The crowd is cheering and whistling while barmaids move through distributing drinks.

The crowd applauds as the two dancers finish their routine and head offstage. The lights dim slightly as the music changes to a more romantic tone. The crowd grows quiet as a lone dancer takes the stage. She is a dark haired beauty with exotic eyes whose appearance takes your breath away. She is layered in the finest silks and moves more seductively than you thought possible.

As you look around the crowd, you realize that the effect she is generating is universal. The men are staring, unable to take their eyes from her, as are some of the women. She continues dancing, removing pieces of silk, one at a time.

She finishes to thunderous applause, and coins are flung from the crowd. Not copper with the occasional silver, but silver with the occasional gold. The girl disappears from the stage, leaving the barmaids to gather the tips.

Behind the Scenes

Philana retires to the dressing room to await her next performance. The characters can ask people in the crowd about her. Make anyone asking about the dancer roll a Charisma test, target of 5. A Poor success will insult the person being questioned, and the bar fight will start. A failure will get the response that the girl is a new dancer at the club. An Average success will get the answer that the dancer is named Philana, and she has been dancing at the tavern for the past month. An Excellent success gets the previous information and a drink bought out of fellowship.

During this time, a group of ruffians will start a bar fight to distract people from the kidnapping going on back stage. Read the following once the characters are relaxed and enjoying themselves:

A man in a torn leather tunic staggers into your table, spilling his drink on (fill in the character most likely to be annoyed). He looks at you and says, "You clumsy oaf! You made me spill my ale." With that, he takes a swing at you.

Make the character roll a Perception test with a target of 6 to avoid being taken by surprise. Once the fight starts, more ruffians will join in and the brawl will spread throughout the tavern. Let the brawl go for six rounds before the bouncers and what passes as the town watch in Kratas break up the fight.

Ruffians (three for every two characters)

DEX: 13: 6/D10 **STR:** 13: 6/D10 **TOU:** 13: 6/D10
PER: 9: 4/D6 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 10: 5/D8

Initiative: 6/D10
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 9/D8+D6; Fist: 8/2D6
Damage: Fist 6/D10; Club 9/D8+D6; Short Sword 10/D10+D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 35
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 27

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 6/D10
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60
Legend Points: 60

Equipment: Short sword, club, dagger, leather armor
Loot: 1D6 x 10 silvers
Skills: Melee Weapons 3: 9/D8+D6, Streetwise 2: 6/D10, Unarmed Combat 2: 8/2D6

By the end of the fight Philana will have been kidnapped and taken to Listnar's tower. When it is time for her next performance Norina, the owner of the House of Veils, will take the stage. When that happens, read the following:

The crowd grows quiet once more as everyone gets ready for Philana's next performance. A sandy haired woman takes the stage, clears her throat, and begins to speak.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I'm afraid I have bad news. Philana seems to be missing. I think she has been abducted."

The crowd boos and moans at the news. Many of the patrons start to leave. The lady on stage looks upset. "Aren't there any heroes in the crowd? Heroes who would help a maiden in distress?"

Allow the characters to interact with Norina. If they wish to help, Norina will invite them backstage.

Troubleshooting

If the characters do not volunteer to help Norina, she will offer free drink passes for anyone willing to help. If the characters still refuse, they are out of the adventure.

Behind the Veils

Overview

The characters get taken backstage at the House of Veils. They will get to examine Philana's dressing room for clues. They should be able to figure out that she was taken by force, and will hopefully be able to find clues as to who did the kidnapping.

Setting the Stage

You follow the maiden through the door leading to backstage. You pass a couple of the dancers in various states of undress. They smile and look you over as you go by. You get led to a small room that serves as an office. The maiden turns to you and says, "I am Norina, the owner of the House of Veils. I hope you can help me. The dancer who was abducted is named Philana. She is currently my main attraction, and I suspect foul play. Do you think you can help me?"

Behind the Scenes

Norina is upset. Philana has been bringing in almost twice the normal amount of customers. She is willing to pay the characters with free passes to the tavern, and free drinks. If pressed, she is willing to pay 500 silvers. Once the bargaining is done, read the following:

"I am glad you are going to help me. It is difficult for a woman to run a successful business in Kratas. Many people want to control my tavern, and even me. Whoever took Philana may be trying to put me out of business. Let me take you to her dressing room, maybe you can find something that will help you. Then I will have to go back out and soothe the remaining customers."

With that, Norina stands up and takes you to Philana's dressing room. "I wish you the blessings of the Passions, my friends. For both Philana's and my sake." She then turns and heads back out to the tavern. The dressing room is small and crowded with a table set before a mirror, a chair, several trunks, and a few costumes hanging on pegs. The chair is lying on its side, and some of the costumes are scattered across the floor.

Characters can make Perception tests or Evidence Analysis tests against a target of 6. Success will allow the characters to recognize the fact that there was a struggle, and that Philana did not go willingly. A Good success will allow the characters to find traces of blood, and a piece of torn cloth with a symbol of a jagged edged dagger embroidered onto it.

A second Perception test, target of 6, will allow the character to remember that the ruffians in the bar fight had similar symbols on their tunics. A successful Streetwise test, target of 8, will remember that the symbol is worn by the Jagged Blades, a minor streetgang in Kratas.

Once the characters have examined the dressing room, they will have to decide what to do next. If they were unable to identify the symbol, they will have to ask around at the seedier bars in Kratas. This will require a Streetwise test or a Charisma test with a target of 8 every hour. For every 20 silvers spent while searching, add +1 step to the tests. Only one test is allowed per group of characters searching. If the characters split up, they will get to make more tests, but will be weaker if they get into trouble. Once successful, read the following:

The bartender at the Dead Crow looks you over. "Yeah, I know who the Jagged Blades are. They hang out in a rundown tavern a few blocks from here called the Sealed Tomb. They're a rotten bunch, willing to do just about anything for a few silvers."

Allow the characters to gather and discuss the next course of action.

Troubleshooting

If the characters do not find the clues left in the dressing room, allow one of the other dancers to find the scrap of cloth, and let her bring it to the characters, asking if it is anything of importance. If the characters do not find out anything by dawn, let them catch a glimpse of a ruffian wearing the same symbol heading for the Sealed Tomb. The characters can follow him there.

The Sealed Tomb

Overview

The characters track the ruffians to the Sealed Tomb, a tavern controlled by the Jagged Blades. Once there, they confront the gang and find out who hired them to abduct Philana and where she was taken. Once the characters have this information, they can head for Listnar's tower.

Setting The Stage

After traveling down a side street and through a couple of alleys, you found it. A crumbling one story stone structure with the words The Sealed Tomb scrawled across the front wall in black paint. There is light coming from the broken windows and you can hear the sounds of talking and laughter coming from inside.

Once the characters go inside, read the following:

You see a dark room lit by sputtering torches. Several people look up from their drinks as you come in. They are in torn leather, and you can see the embroidered dagger on each of them. The bartender standing behind a rough wooden table holding a couple of casks and several dented pewter tankards look at you, frowns, and says, "I think you are in the wrong place."

Behind the Scenes

There are eight ruffians sitting at the assorted tables. They are all armed with various blades, and regard this tavern as theirs. If the characters can make a Charisma test with a target of 6, an Excellent success will get them to admit to taking Philana from the House of Veils and bringing her to an old stone tower owned by a spellcaster named Listnar. They will even tell the characters where the tower is. If the characters are unable to get an Excellent success, the ruffians will tell them nothing. A poor success will cause an immediate fight.

The only other way to get the information is to defeat the ruffians in combat. Once they are defeated, a Charisma test with a target of 6 will get the characters the information on a normal success.

Once the characters know the location of Listnar's tower, they can head there to recover Philana.

Troubleshooting

The only thing that can go wrong is if the characters are defeated by the ruffians. If it looks as if this is likely to happen, have some of the famous Kratas town watch (working for Garlthik One-Eye, of course) come by to break things up. Of course, the people being rescued will have to pay 10 silvers each to the town watch in order to compensate them for their services.

The Tower of Desire

Overview

The characters arrive at Listnar's tower, make their way inside, confront Listnar, and rescue Philana. Once they have her, they can return to the House of Veils and collect their rewards.

Setting the Stage

It has been a hectic night. There is still a little amount of time before dawn, and you are standing before a crumbling stone tower where you believe Philana was taken. You see no windows, but the upper floors and walls of the tower have long since collapsed. If it wasn't in Kratas, you wouldn't believe anyone lived there. Every now and then some sort of mysterious green light comes from the top of the tower. Rough stone steps lead up to the single wooden door at the base of the tower.

Behind the Scenes

Listnar is trying to use his magic to bind Philana to him. The ritual will be completed at dawn, in which case Philana will be his, heart and soul.

Room#	Description
1	**Front Door** - *Rough stone steps lead up to an iron bound wooden door covered with runic writing of some sort scratched into it.* The door is locked, needing an 8 to open. The runes are written in magic, needing a 7 to read. They say, "The tower of Listnar the mighty". The door has a rating of 8/25.
2	**Lower Floor** - *You see a room decorated with a beautiful rug, a nicely carved wooden table with four matching chairs, a large fireplace with embers still glowing, several cabinets, and shelves containing small carvings of animals. A stone staircase leads up to the floor above. A spark of light comes from under the table.* Underneath the table is Listnar's pet lightning lizard. He raised it from the egg and uses it as a guard dog. Once the characters have entered, it will cover itself in the Crackling Armor (the spark of light under the table) and attack. **Lightning Lizard** **DEX:** 6/D10 **STR:** 5/D8 **TOU:** 5/D8 **PER:** 9/D8+D6 **WIL:** 12/2D10 **CHA:** 5/D8 **Initiative:** 7/D12 — **Physical Defense:** 6 **Number of Attacks:** 1 — **Spell Defense:** 9 **Attack:** 6/D10 — **Social Defense:** 7 **Damage:** 7/D12 — **Armor:** 3 (6) **Number of Spells:** (1) — **Mystic Armor:** 4 **Spellcasting:** 12/2D10 — **Knockdown:** 6/D10 **Effect:** See below — **Recovery Tests:** 2 **Death Rating:** 38 — **Combat Movement:** 65

Wound Threshold: 10 **Full Movement:** 130

Unconsciousness Rating: 30 **Legend Points:** 150

Equipment: None

Loot: Eyes worth 150 silvers each. The eyes count as Legend Points.

Lightning Lizards are 4 feet long and weigh roughly 200 pounds. Their yellow and green skin glistens as though oiled. Lightning Lizards have two magical effects: Crackling Armor and Twinbolts. Crackling Armor takes one round to cast, needing a 2 or better. If successful the Lightning Lizard is surrounded by bolts of lightning about an inch from its skin. Crackling Armor increases the Physical Armor Rating to 6. Anytime a character physically strikes a Lightning Lizards under the influence of Crackling Armor, the lizard makes a Spellcasting Test against the character's Spell Defense. A success causes lightning to bolt into the character, doing Step 8 damage, and only nonmetal armor will reduce this damage. Twinbolts sends two streaks of lightning towards a target from the lizard's eyes. The lizard makes a Spellcasting Test against the Spell Defense of the target. If the test is successful, the Twinbolts hit the target, doing Step 22 damage at a range of up to 120 yards.

Once the characters have defeated the lightning lizard, they can continue. The cabinets have food stuff, plates, tankards, and several bottles of wine. The small animal statues were carved by Listnar and have little value (maybe 5 silvers each). Of course, things may be on fire if the lightning lizard has missed anyone with the Twinbolts. If this happens, make things seem rushed as the characters try to complete the rescue before the old tower burns down and collapses.

2 **The Stairs** - *You can see the old stone stairs leading up to the floor above. You can hear some sort of chanting coming from above.*

Listnar has placed an Alarm spell on the stairs, the Effect number is 12. Anyone going up the stairs with a Spell Defense equal to or less than 12 will trigger the alarm. It will start shouting "Begone, intruders, begone. This is the tower of Listnar the Mighty." This will prevent Listnar from being surprised. (As if he didn't notice the characters fighting the Lightning Lizard...)

3 **Second Floor** - *As you reach the second floor you see a chamber fit for a king. The ornate king-sized bed is covered with satin, and tied to the four posts is the almost naked form of Philana. Glaring at you from behind the bed is a black haired man wearing robes covered with arcane embroidery. His eyes look wild as he releases a bolt of greenish magical energy at you.*

The man behind the bed is the illusionist Listnar. He is almost finished binding Philana to himself, and is very annoyed that the characters are disturbing his plans. He has already cast Displaced Image on himself and will Ephemeral Bolt the first person up the stairs. To sense the Displaced Image a character has to make a Willpower test with a target of 15. Any successful attack on the image gives the attacker an immediate Disbelief test with a target of 7. Success will reveal Listnar's true location in the corner of the room. Once he is discovered, Listnar will plead for his life. He is more concerned with living than he is with keeping Philana.

Listnar the Mighty *5th Circle Illusionist*

DEX: 14: 6/D10 **STR:** 8: 4/D6 **TOU:** 11: 5/D8
PER: 16: 7/D12 **WIL:** 16: 7/D12 **CHA:** 14: 6/D10

Initiative: 6/D10
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 6/D10
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 12/2D10
Effect: By Spell
Death Rating: 52
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 39
Karma Pool: 12

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2
Knockdown: 4/D6
Recovery Tests: 2@D8
Combat Movement: 33
Full Movement: 65
Legend Points: 250
Karma Dice: D8

Equipment: None

Loot: What is in the room

Talents: Anticipate Blow 3:10/D10+D6, Dead Fall 5: 12/2D10*, Disguise Self 3: 10/D10+D6, Durability 5, False Sight 5:12/2D10*, Karma Ritual 3, Read/Write Languages 3: 10/D10+D6, Read/Write Magic 5: 12/2D10*, Speak Languages 3: 10/D10+D6, Spellcasting 5: 12/2D10*, Spell Matrix 5, Spell Matrix 4, Spell Matrix 3, Spell Matrix 2, Thread Weaving 5: 12/2D10*, Willforce 3

Listnar is an overly proud, self-important spellcaster who believes that he is destined for greatness. However, his main interest is in keeping alive and he will always surrender before being put to death. If he believes that his opponents will not spare him, he will use his Dead Fall talent against the highest Spell Defense of any character who sees him. Of course, he will try for vengeance at a later date. He will then use his Nobody Here spell.

Once Listnar is defeated, the characters can rescue Philana. If they believe Listnar is dead, they can search the tower.

In the room there is the bed, a desk, bookshelves, a trunk, and a wardrobe. The desk has writing supplies, paper, and an ivory letter opener (worth 25 silvers). The bookshelves have various books on art, romance, and adventure. The trunk is locked (needing a 7 to open). Inside is Listnar's Spell Book, 2 Healing Potions, a bag with 25 gold pieces, and a small box with a single diamond (worth 500 silvers). The wardrobe has extra robes, boots, clothes, and a Dwarven Winternight Cloak.

There is little of value in the tower, and most of the furniture is old and worn, covered by Glamour to appear beautiful and exotic. Listnar is usually too afraid to adventure and has nothing in the way of magical items.

Philana will be grateful for being rescued. Let each male character make a Charisma test against her Social Defense of 9. The character with the best result will be the one she feels most grateful to. On a Good result or better a character may start a romantic liaison

	with her.

Troubleshooting

The only thing that can go wrong is if they are defeated by Listnar. If that happens, Listnar will marry the beautiful Philana, and the characters' legends will be over. Such is the peril of being heroes.

If at all possible, let Listnar escape with his life. He will Dead Fall using his Karma, thus projecting an illusion of his own death. He is the major antagonist in the upcoming Days of Vengeance.

Back to the House of Veils

Overview

The characters return to the House of Veils after having rescued Philana. Norina will be grateful and pay whatever was agreed upon, along with a 50 silver piece bonus to each character. There will be a large party thrown at the tavern, with the characters treated to everything for free.

Setting the Stage

The sun is finally on the rise, and the city of Kratas is starting to close down for the day. You make your way back to the House of Veils and knock on the door. It swings open to reveal Norina dressed in silk bedclothes. She lets out a shriek and hugs Philana to her. "Come in, come in. Let me get you something to eat. Tell me how you managed to rescue her?"

Behind the Scenes

As the characters tell their tale the other dancers and employees will gather around, dressed in their bed clothes. Upon hearing the characters' tale, Norina will pay whatever was agreed upon, plus a 50 silver piece bonus to each of them. She will let the characters stay in the common room and rest for the day, promising a tremendous party for the coming evening. The characters will be asked to retell their tale, and drinks will flow. The dancers will dance and a good time will be had by all.

Legend Point Award

Creatures and Opponents	
Ruffians at the House of Veils	60 points each
Ruffians at the Sealed Tomb	60 points each

Lightning Lizard	150 points
Listnar the Mighty	250 points
Treasure	
Lightning Lizard eyes	300 points
Creative Roleplaying	
Rescuing Philana with no thought of reward	75 points
Other actions at the Game Master's discretion	75 points
Adventure Goal	
Rescuing Philana	150 points

Treasure

Listnar the Mighty's Spell Book

Circle 1 Spells
Best Face, Displace Image, Light, Unseen Voices

Circle 2 Spells
Epheneral Bolt, Monstrous Mantle, True Ephemeral Bolt, Weather Cloak

Circle 3 Spells
Alarm, Mind Fog, Nobody Here

Circle 4 Spells
Improved Alarm, Stop Right There

Circle 5 Spells
Flying Carpet, Pleasant Visions, Wall of Unfire

Circle 6 Spells
Bouncing Blaster

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The Opening of Kaer Kalin

by Michael A. Swiernik

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #6***

Gamemastering Notes

"The Opening of Kalin" is an adventure which allows the gamemaster to easily introduce a party of characters into the world of Earthdawn. This adventure is designed for four to eight characters, ranging in power from First to Third Circle. The adventure will make logical sense if most of the characters are First Circle, since most of them will have had little chance to gain substantial experience.

Working under the assumption that the Scourge has ended, the leaders of the character's kaer, Kaer Kalin, have decided that the time has come to open their doors to the outside world. In fact, the Scourge has indeed been finished for several years now, but the townspeople are in general not aware of this. In their minds, the characters are fodder being sacrificed on the slight chance that the Scourge is over sooner than expected.

Kaer Kalin

Before the Scourge, Kalin was a moderately sized, but rather wealthy trading town, with roughly 1500 inhabitants representing all of the Name-giving races. The GM should feel free to place Kalin anywhere in Barsaive, although it fits best in an hilly plains area, with few or no trees nearby. A suggestion for its placement, using Shantaya's Sextant is:

Center Sextant On: Throal
Align: [xi] with: Kratas
Sight Along Point: [phi]
Follow: Floranuus at sunrise
Days Travel: 26 days walking (16 days riding)

The layout of the kaer is shown in the map of Kaer Kalin. The kaer was placed well beneath the ground, and the surrounding rock was strengthened with elemental earth to prevent entry attempts by digging, as well as to support the dome over the town. A great deal of time and

energy went into the creation of the kaer, partially due to the inhabitants' eagerness to build a kaer that would survive the Scourge, and partially due to the Questors of Upandal that lived in the town during construction. There are rumors that Upandal himself was present during the construction, and helped the kaer to be created in a fraction of the time expected.

The kaer has a highly defensive layout, which allowed it to survive without lethal penetration during the Scourge. The first line of defense is called the Gate, which is an extremely well-camouflaged door that opens to the surface.

This door was made to resemble the rough, hilly landscape as much as possible, including real grass growing from its surface.

Within the Gate, the Entry Hall was intended to be the main deterrent for any Horrors attempting to enter the kaer. This room was outfitted with many elaborate and deadly traps. At the inner end of the Entry Hall stood the Entry Door, a heavily protected gateway through which anything intending to enter the kaer would be required to pass. The door was lined on both sides with orichalcum, and covered from top to bottom with magical wards and other runes.

Through the Entry Door lies the Stair, which consists of a series of circular stairways connected by rooms. Both the stairs and the rooms were filled with traps. There are a total of two rooms and three flights of stairs.

At the bottom of the Stair stands the Guard Door, which leads into the kaer itself. The Guard Door is a small door, barely eight feet in height, and was intended as the last line of defense against any invader. Like the Entry Door, it is heavily guarded with both orichalcum and runes.

The kaer itself is a stone dome filled with cramped dwellings for approximately 2500 inhabitants that spread radially outward from the central Great Hall. The Great Hall houses the administrative headquarters of the kaer, as well as the meeting hall, a shrine to Garlen, and the library. The living conditions in the kaer are more cramped than planned, due to the great influx of refugees before the kaer closed (see ***History of Kalin***).

Time is kept within the kaer by a glowing crystal that moves across the dome in the same fashion that the sun moves in the outside world. This provides some peace of mind to the residents, as well as light.

History of Kaer Kalin

The history of Kaer Kalin is relatively calm, especially when compared to what some of the other kaers in Barsaive experienced during the Scourge. The major events of Kaer Kalin's

history are detailed below.

The construction of the kaer took a relatively short time, and was paid for by the profits that the trading town of Kalin had saved up. Theran protections were also used, paid for from the deep coffers of the well-run town. The kaer itself was completed in TH 1013, at which time most of the town's permanent inhabitants moved in. The kaer remained open for many years after, however, allowing refugees from the surrounding countryside to crowd through its doors. During this time, the number of minor Horrors that were encountered increased, and one Horror was able to infiltrate the kaer unnoticed.

Late in the year 1025, a party of adventurers arrived at the Gate, claiming to be followed by a great Horror, intent on their destruction. Kalin's administrators needed little prompting to make the decision they had been planning on for some time now, and decided to close the doors to Kaer Kalin.

Two of the four adventurers later died from their wounds. Ri'Shayd, a powerful obsidiman, remained in the kaer until sacrificing himself many years later while trying to fend off a Horror. The other hero died of extreme old age.

The refugee Horror (TH 1140) spent many years hiding among the people of the kaer, living off their psychic energy. As one of its evil machinations, the Horror destroyed all records of the kaer's creation. Although this was unimportant to the kaer at the time, it would become important when they would need to rejoin the surface world, and required information concerning the traps that had been placed to guard the kaer. This information was also destroyed.

Although its treachery would not be discovered for many, many years, the activities of the Horror at this time resulted in its discovery and destruction.

In TH 1400, the kaer's lead elementalist noticed a drop in the magical integrity of the kaer. This drop did not result from the dome itself, but from out in the Stair area. In order to prevent widespread panic and to determine the cause of the drop, four adventurers were sent up the Stair to investigate. They never returned, and most of the kaer is still unaware of the circumstances of their disappearance. The group contained Tor'al, an elf who had been a youth during the construction of the kaer many years ago, and would therefore be able to lead the group through any traps they might encounter, the hero Ri'Shayd, and two other Adepts. After a protracted battle, the party succeeded in destroying the Horror that had broken into the Stair, but perished while doing so. They never returned to the kaer and nobody to this day knows of their heroic, but tragic, end.

Within several weeks of their disappearance, people started to wonder what happened to the missing adventurers. The leaders of the kaer at the time thought it would be best to blame their disappearance on an outside force. They explained that they believed something was living in the Stair and had caused the Heroes' disappearances, and that this terror needed to be destroyed. Dartin, a troll Warrior, and Jal'al, a human Archer, were sent up the Stair, this

time with great fanfare, to destroy a Horror the kaerfolk assumed to be present. These two Adepts met with the Patient One, a Horror that had moved into the Stair following the death of the stronger Horror at Ri'Shayd's hands. They never returned, and the kaer prepared for the worst. The worst never came, however, and nobody, not even the town's leaders, are clear about what happened.

The Announcement

Setup

Several years before the time of this adventure, the kaer's lead elementalist, a t'skrang named Torcher, noticed that the Theran magic indicator ceased to drop. Throughout the next few years, he convinced both himself and the leaders of the kaer that this was fact and not merely wishful thinking on their part, and together they decided that the kaer could be opened. This is where the characters come in. After losing some of the kaer's most able Adepts 25 years ago in a series of ventures up the Stair, the kaer's leaders do not wish to repeat the mistake. Instead, they decide to send some relatively inexperienced Adepts to verify the end of the Scourge, namely, the characters.

The kaer is called to a town meeting, where the town leader, Morael, informs everyone of the freeze in magic, as well as their decision to open the kaer in order to determine if the end of the Scourge is indeed here. He then asks the characters if they wish to be involved. If the characters agree, Morael informs everyone that preparations for rebuilding the town will begin after the characters return safely, which they will hopefully do within the next few days. Otherwise, the characters get to watch as a group of their peers receive the honor, and open the kaer without them. The meeting is adjourned among mixed feelings from the townspeople.

Gamemaster Information

There is little going on in this scenario that isn't obvious to the characters. Torcher and Morael sincerely believe that the time to open Kaer Kalin has come, otherwise they wouldn't risk the lives of the characters. The rest of the townspeople have mixed feelings. Many of them still fear what lies beyond the perceived strength of their doors, and do not want to be exposed to it.

Others are eager to rejoin the world, but are uncertain of what life on the surface will be like. Many more experienced Adepts are jealous of the characters and their opportunity to be the first group to go to the surface. Many of the town, though, trust Torcher and Morael, and are excited about what they see as the dawning of a new age for their town. They assist in any way they know how.

This section is where the GM can make the adventure fit into the unique campaign. Many things can be done to make the characters excited to go, as well as to provide additional problems that the players can role-play through. For instance, if the characters have a nemesis, force their enemy to go along with them. If they have family, make their parents weep with the joy and apprehension of what's to come. Flesh this section out to make the characters both motivated and part of their own unique world.

Suiting Up

Setup

After the excitement of the announcement, Morael approaches the characters with more practical matters. Morael offers the characters access to the main armory of the kaer, which supposedly has been sealed since the Scourge began. Assuming the characters will accept the offer, he leads them to the armory, a low stone building with a single, heavily locked door. Morael unlocks the door to the armory, and the characters go in with him and pick out what they require. Morael reminds the characters that they will very possibly be facing a Horror and to equip appropriately.

Gamemaster Information

The equipment available to the characters is meant to supplement what they acquired during character creation. The room contains weapons and other equipment of all types except the following: obsidiman skin, any form of crystal armor or shield, and any distinctive clothing items or blood charms.

Healing salves of any sort are also unavailable, and the characters will have to obtain them from the residents of the kaer, if any are for sale. The presence of magical equipment is left up to the GM, but should be limited to one, or at most two, items, and in most cases simply don't exist. The party should feel comfortable, not invincible.

The characters might also notice the apparent lack of some equipment in the room. Certain areas of the armory show signs of disturbance, including the existence of dust shadows suggesting where weapons might have once been. These dust shadows represent weapons that were taken by the secret party of adventurers that ascended the Stair 25 years ago. The Perception Test Difficulty Number for noticing the missing weapons is a 10. Morael doesn't mention the missing equipment, and will try to deflect any queries on its disappearance, using his formidable Social Defense of 12 if he needs to. Morael does not wish to send fear into the hearts of the young adventurers too early.

Missing Records

Setup

After leaving the armory, Torcher meets the group and escorts them to the library in order to obtain the records for the kaer's construction. These records, Torcher explains, are required if the character's wish to open up the traps in the Stair and beyond safely and successfully.

Upon arriving at the library in the center of town, the characters are met by a very nervous dwarf librarian. The librarian, named Dorak, attempts to deflect the topic at hand for much more mundane discussion, and needs to be reminded by Torcher as to what the group is there for. Then Dorak proceeds to show the group everything in the library except what they are looking for, the records of the kaer's construction.

At this time, Torcher proceeds to outline as much as he knows about the layout of the kaer beyond the Guard Door. The GM should decide how much Torcher knows and conveys, but he would most likely know the most general information, but nothing specific (or really helpful). For example, he might know the Stair consists of three circular stairs connected by rooms, all infested with traps, but not the precise location of any of the traps. Torcher also describes the trap in the Entry Hall, basically saying it's dangerous and hard to shut off, and warns them that they will need his assistance to pass through this trap. They will need to return and get Torcher to help them, and shouldn't go into the room alone.

Throughout the characters remaining time in the kaer, place little reminders of the importance of the characters' contribution that they are about to perform. The opening of the kaer is very important to the town's residents, for obvious reasons. As the characters move through town, have the townsfolk prepare for the opening according to their perceptions as to what the opening will bring. Some will be trying to board up windows with what little wood they have. Others will be packing their goods in sacks for the move outside. Others will come up and congratulate the characters, promising them dinners and other services if they succeed. A business-minded individual might even offer them a large sum of silver, or something else that appeals to them, for saving him prime real estate on the surface. The GM should work at making the town come alive with activity, all in response to what the characters are directly involved with.

Gamemaster Information

Dorak is very nervous, and this is because he discovered just this morning that the records the characters are after are missing. In their place sits a note left by the refugee Horror, which states the cruel reason for destroying the records. In order to discover this, the characters will have to convince Dorak that they need to see the records. Dorak tries his best

to convince them to do otherwise, but in the end he concedes to their wishes and produces the note, steeling himself for whatever punishment the party thinks is necessary. Dorak believes the problem to be totally his fault, even though he wasn't even born when the refugee Horror was destroyed. It is his library, and therefore his fault.

After finding out about the missing records, there is little that the party can do. After letting them talk it over for a short period of time, Torcher tries to encourage them, stating that most of the traps are probably destroyed anyway, and the ones that are not are probably easily avoided. He reminds them of the two adventurers who went up the Stair 25 years ago and, although they never returned, must have dismantled some of the traps. The characters have little they can do except prepare to go up the Stair.

The Stair

Setup

When the characters are ready and assemble at the Guard Door, the rest of the townspeople are waiting for them, arrayed in a rough semicircle around the door. Many of them brandish weapons and are prepared to protect the kaer from whatever lays beyond. Others are just waiting to see what happens, and are praying for something beneficial. A ring of powerful Adepts, the characters trainers and teachers, form a semicircle around the door in front of the townspeople, ready to defend them.

In front of the door stands Torcher and the rest of the mages. Upon the characters' arrival, Torcher begins the gestures that remove the wards from the Guard Door. After several minutes, all but one ward remains. Torcher turns to the party and tells them to prepare, then turns back to the door and removes the final ward. There is a soft sound of air releasing as the door pops open slightly, and the kaer is open.

A hush falls over the tense crowd as the characters advance through the Guard Door into the room beyond. Torcher reminds the characters to return before attempting to venture into the Entry Hall, and wishes them luck as he closes the door behind them and begins to replace the wards. The characters are in a room devoid of any light except their own torches.

Gamemaster Information

The Stair was built in tiers, as described in the section Kaer Kalin. Each circular stairwell is 20 feet wide, and turns upwards to the left. The two rooms are 40 feet wide by 80 feet long, with the openings to the stairs centered on opposite ends.

In TH 1400, a greater Horror penetrated the Stair, resulting in the drop in magical energy that was noticed at the time. Ri'Shayd's party met this Horror in the second stairwell, and fought a retreating battle until Ri'Shayd slew the beast in the first room. Ri'Shayd, who had been kept alive by the power of his abilities, died soon after. With the Gate and Entry Door no longer functioning, another Horror, known as the Patient One, took up residence within the Stair.

Dartin and Jal'al, while attempting to discover the fate of Ri'Shayd's party, attempted to destroy the Patient One. Jal'al was petrified in a sneak attack by the creature, and Dartin, outclassed one-on-one with the Horror, was killed soon after in the battle that ensued. The Patient One has remained in the Stair, waiting for the day when the kaer would try to open its doors. Since most of the defenses of the kaer are missing, the Stair is exposed to further inhabitation by more mundane creatures as well.

Most of the traps in the Stair have been shut off or tripped, rendering them harmless. The only exceptions to this are the traps detailed below. There are five complete turns in each set of circular stairs. The Stair's description will be done in terms of turn number, as measured from the bottom of the Stair, with 15 turns total.

Turn/Room	Description
Turn Two	The remains of the great obsidiman Hero, Ri'Shayd, are propped up against a wall, and the gaping wounds can still be seen on his body. Next to him lies his magical sword, Named Ri'Shayd's Blade (see Creatures and Treasures).
Turn Four	One of the steps here is a magical trigger for a ramp trap. The first person to touch this step will cause all of the steps from five steps above the trigger to the bottom of the Stair to flatten into a slide. A piece of stone at the bottom juts upward, creating a sudden, painful brake for the tumble downward. The characters need to make a successful Dexterity Test against a Difficulty Number of 8 in order to keep from falling. They can try again at every turn of the Stair, with a cumulative +2 penalty to the Difficulty Number until they reach the bottom, where they suffer Step 10 damage from the wall. The Difficulty Number for the Perception Test to notice this trap is 9. The Disarm Difficulty for this trap is 10.
Room One	At the top of the first circular stair lies the body of the Horror. What remains are rotting and sagging lumps of flesh clinging to thick bones, some of which have been shattered by blows. The Horror had a long quadrupedal body with short, clawed limbs. Its head was human-like with an extended snout filled with protruding, razor-sharp teeth. What, if anything, this corpse is useful for should be determined by the GM.

Turn Six	The Archer in Ri'Shayd's party fell here. Most of his body was cleaved in two, and next to his remains lies his long bow. The GM should determine if this weapon is special in any way, and to flesh out this weapon to fit the needs of the group.
Turn Seven	Both the Thief and the ancient elven Elementalist from Ri'Shayd's party fell at this turn. One appears to have been thrown on top of the other against the outer wall, and beside them lies their shattered equipment. The only useful thing that is left is a Potion of Healing.
Turn Eight	A spear trap on the outer wall is located at this turn. This trap has not been triggered because it only extends halfway into the stair from the outside, so unless someone is on the outer half of the stair, it will not be triggered. The statistics for this trap are: Detection Difficulty: 9; Disarm Difficulty: 7; Trigger Condition: pressure plate; Trap Initiative: 6; Trap Effect: Damage of Step 8.
Room Two	The body of a dead gargoyle lies into this room. It appears to have been charred when it died, and was actually mortally wounded by the trap in the Entry Hall and managed to crawl down here before dying. The gargoyle's horns are not worth Legend Points. Also, this room contains a small flight (10) of krilworms that fly out to the surface to hunt at night. This room is also the site of the battle between the Patient One and Dartin and Jal'al. The remains of Dartin, once a powerful troll, are crushed against a wall, his equipment shattered. Jal'al is still alive, but petrified (see Creatures and Treasures), and is lying on the ground facing a wall where the Patient One set him.
Turn Fifteen	The top of the Stair opens up into a room, with the Entry Door at the opposite end. A pair of shadowmants has braved the lightning trap to take up residence in this room. They will defend their home against the characters, assuming that they intend to harm them. From this room, the destruction of the Entry Door is evident. It has burst inward, and pieces of it litter the room. Fortunes in rare orichalcum collect dust in heaps on the floor. The Entry Hall can be seen through the opening.

Once the characters have ventured this far, they might need to rest and recuperate. Also, Torcher needs to help them turn off the trap in the Entry Hall. If the characters proceed, let them, but they will be reminded quickly of Torcher's words. The Patient One is wandering around the surface of Barsaive when the characters first venture up the Stair, and so they don't encounter the Horror. The GM should not let them know about the creature's presence, but they might be able to guess that it exists from the ambiguous clues left below. Namely, the heroes that disappeared strangely long ago were actually sent up the Stair and perished

fighting a great Horror, which was found dead. Two more Adepts who followed are found helpless, one dead and the other petrified, even though the great Horror had been dead for weeks. Perceptive characters might notice this discrepancy and become suitably paranoid.

When the characters return to the kaer, allow them enough time to prepare for the fight with the Horror without clueing them in as to the Horror's presence. They should be able to guess something is awry, and if not, allow Torcher to put in his input after hearing the story (e.g. "I wonder why the Horror petrified the Archer, and nobody from the original group?" or "What could have petrified Jal'al, when you claim that the Horror was dead?"). Try to let the characters figure out something strange is up and to take precautions, but don't just hand the information to them.

The characters' next step is to ferret out the Patient One and destroy it. After the characters return to the kaer, the next time they venture forth, the Patient One will be waiting for them. The GM should pick a suitable place for the fight, preferably to provide maximum excitement for the players. If they were disgusted by the body of the dead Horror, fight the battle near its remains. If the Stair frightened them, have the battle take place on the treacherous footing of a flight of stairs. Make the battle exciting. The characters need to fight the Patient One before proceeding onto the next scenario. See Creatures and Treasures for a description of the Patient One and its tactics.

The Surface

Setup

After the characters have defeated the Patient One, they need to shut off the final trap in the kaer, the lightning trap in the Entry Hall. Torcher accompanies them on this journey, although he will stay out of any fighting that the group gets involved in. Torcher explains that the Entry Hall has four runes that are still magically active, and these four runes empower the trap.

Gamemaster Information

The Entry Hall is a long hall, with two rows of four pillars running down each side of the hall. The hall is 150 feet long and 50 feet wide, and the stairs leading up to the Gate appear at the opposite end of the hall.

There are two difficulties associated with shutting off the lightning trap. The first is the lightning trap itself. All of the runes must be traced simultaneously for the trap to be disengaged. The runes take at least three rounds to trace, assuming no difficulties are encountered. Also, two of the runes are located next to the Entry Door, and the other two are

located on the walls 80 feet down the hall. The trap fires randomly, with a 10% chance of firing in any given round. Every creature present in the room at this time suffers Step 10 damage.

The other problem associated with the trap is the presence of two lightning lizards that live in the Entry Hall. These lightning lizards are unaffected by the trap's effects. The lizards will not reveal themselves until the characters have moved into the room, hiding behind pillars until they have at least one character cut off from the Entry Door before attacking.

After the characters have successfully traced the runes, which only requires a character tracing each rune simultaneously, the trap ceases to function and the runes go dim. The characters can then proceed through the Gate and see the surface of Barsaive for the first time in their lives.

When Torcher and the characters step onto the surface, they notice a land completely unlike that described in the legends. The land is gray and devoid of life, and the sky is covered with clouds. Fit the description of the terrain to the placement of the kaer in Barsaive. As the characters stare in wonder at all of the space around them and Torcher weeps, grass can be spotted growing outward from the edges of the kaer's steps. By the time the characters have left the kaer for good, weeks in the future, the grass will have covered everything within miles. It is a sign of the end of the Scourge.

Aftermath

Setup

The characters return as Heroes, bearing their new scars and experiences. The town rejoices at the news, and begins to make preparations for leaving the kaer. People weep openly in the streets, clutching their families to their sides. The town leaders make plans to clear the Stair of any remaining traps and of the bodies of the dead. Kaer Kalin is open.

Gamemaster Information

By the end of the next month, the bulk of Kalin's people will be working, if not living, outside the kaer. After the town of Kalin is rebuilt, the people will move out into their new homes. At this point, the characters have a chance to decide what they will be doing in the future. The characters have many possibilities available to them, and if they don't wish to leave home, Torcher might have other tasks to offer them.

Legend Points

Legend Points should be awarded according to the Earthdawn Rulebook (p.241).

Clearing the Stair counts as a session goal, and clearing the kaer all the way to the surface counts as the adventure goal for the purpose of determining Legend Awards.

This adventure is divided up into two sessions for determining the distribution of Legend Points. The first session ends when the characters clean up the Stair, all the way up to, but not including, the Entry Hall. The Session Award for completing the first session is 75 Legend Points for each character. The second session involves clearing the Entry Hall and destroying the Patient One. This session award counts as the Adventure Award for the adventure, and is worth 200 Legend Points for each character.

The following chart shows the Legend Point Awards for defeating creatures during the adventure. This chart assumes that the characters defeated all of the opponents set up in the adventure. The GM should feel free to adjust these awards to fit the specific campaign.

Creature/Opponent Awards					
	Number of Players				
Opponent	4	5	6	7	8
Shadowmants	200	200	200	200	200
Lightning Lizards	300	300	300	300	300
Patient One	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
Total	3500	3500	3500	3500	3500
Award per Character	875	700	580	500	435

The following magical treasures were found during the adventure, and are worth Legend Points for the characters. The long bow that belonged to Ri'Shayd's companion is left for the GM to flesh out, and isn't included in this analysis.

Ri'Shayd's Blade	150 for each character
Potion of Healing	75 for each character

The final Legend Point Awards are for exceptional role-playing and heroics. The following are suggestions for awards that fit into this category.

Finding out about previous excursions by members of the kaer up the Stair before the characters proceed up the Stair themselves	75 Legend Points
Piecing together the history of the excursions up the Stair from clues discovered as the characters travel up the Stair	75 Legend Points
Disabling the lightning trap in the Entry Hall without waiting for Torcher's help	75 Legend Points
Volunteering to go to the far end of the Entry Hall to shut off the lightning trap	75 Legend Points

The GM should feel free to make up role-playing/heroics Legend Awards for situations that come up during play, such as good role-playing of a character or other heroic exploits.

Creatures and Treasures

Ri'Shayd's Blade

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 11

Rank 1 Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The obsidiman Ri'Shayd used this sword from the time he was a young warrior. It was a gift from his father, and was forged from the Liferock itself. The wielder must discover the location of the Liferock.
Effects: Ri'Shayd's blade is effectively a troll sword. It adds +7 steps to the character's Strength step for Damage tests.

Rank 2 Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The blade is very light, even though it is constructed of stone, with hints of rubies running through its structure. Both an earth elemental and an air elemental were necessary to make this blade both strong and light. The wielder must discover the Name of one of the two elementals that were involved.
Effect: Add +2 steps to the wielder's Initiative Step when wielding the Blade.

Rank 3 Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: Ri'Shayd was a great warrior, often leading his adventuring group into dangerous areas. The wielder must find out the Name of the adventuring group Ri'Shayd traveled with before the Scourge.
Effect: Touching the hilt of the Blade gives the wielder an uncanny sense of when

something is about to occur. As such, the wielder can not be surprised when touching the hilt of the sword. This ability does not give the wielder enough time to warn companions, however, so they can be surprised as usual.

Rank 4 Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: Ri'Shayd gave his life to protect Kaer Kalin during the Scourge, defeating a Horror in a protracted battle. The wielder must find out the Name of the Horror that killed Ri'Shayd.
Effect: Add +9 to the wielder's Strength step for Damage tests. Also, add +2 to the wielder's Physical Defense. When fighting a Horror or Horror constuct, these bonuses become +12 for Damage tests and +4 to Physical Defense.

Rank 5 Cost: 1,300

Deed: The wielder must return to Ri'Shayd's Liferock, bearing his remains if someone has not yet returned them. The wielder must then offer to return the sword to Ri'Shayd's Brotherhood, who will only accept the offer if they deem the wielder unworthy. This judgement is based on the wielder's need for and use of the Blade. If the Brotherhood refuses to accept the return of the Blade, deeming the character worthy of wielding it, the wielder is awarded 2,000 Legend Points.
Effect: The wielder of the Blade can call on its power to use an ability similar to the Earth Skin Talent (Earthdawn Companion p. 39) once per day. The Effect dice for the use is Toughness + Rank of Thread woven to the Blade. The result is added to both the Death and Unconsciousness Rating of the character for 24 hours. This ability also adds +3 to the character's Physical Armor Rating. It is not necessary to use a Recovery Test for this ability. This ability can be used in addition to both Wood Skin and the normal Earth Skin Talents. The stone-like appearance the character takes on is similar to that of the Blade, and is much more pronounced than seen in the normal use of the Earth Skin Talent. Most obsidimen will understand this once they see the Blade, but it might cause confusion and possibly discomfort among other Name-Givers.

The Patient One

DEX: 7 **STR:** 18 **TOU:** 14
PER: 12 **WIL:** 13 **CHA:** 13

Initiative: 7
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 10
Damage: 22
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 10
Effect: see below

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 16
Armor: 18
Mystic Armor: 6
Knockdown: Immune
Recovery Tests: 5

Death Rating: 70
Wound Threshold: 18
Unconsciousness Rating: 60
Karma Points: 20
Combat Movement: 27
Full Movement: 54
Legend Points: 3000
Karma Step: 10
Powers: Petrify 10 (see below), Spells, Terror 10
Spells: Earth Blend, Slow Metal Weapon
Equipment: None
Loot: The glowing red eyes of the Horror are actually rubies, cut into long slits. Each of the two rubies are worth 200 silver pieces worth Legend Points.

The Patient One is a large (10 feet tall) humanoid shaped creature with a body the consistency and appearance of stone. The Horror uses Earth Blend to hide against a stone wall and ambush the party. It then walks slowly into battle, attempting to crush anything in its path. The only exception to this destructive tendency is the Horror's Petrify Power. If the Horror decides to petrify an opponent, usually someone who has damaged it but the Horror has been unable to harm, and makes a successful grappling attack against that opponent, the Horror has grabbed the opponent and can then attempt to petrify the victim, making a Petrify Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If this succeeds, the victim is petrified and can take no actions until freed by the death of the Patient One. The Horror crumbles to dust when it is destroyed, and petrified characters return to life.

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Outcasts

by Aaron Porter

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #7***

From the journal of Chandler McKullah, human swordmaster:

It wasn't the first time a fight had been started in the bar, but I had a feeling that the dwarf who was drawn into this engagement was very different from the other drunken brawlers I'd seen in their before. His cold eyes tried to hide something, but I could tell the bulky dwarf was intent on fighting as though it was his purpose that night. I cannot say, though, that he came in looking for a fight, because he didn't start anything that evening. It was more as if he knew what was to come. As though the fight were part of some unstoppable routine.

I remember the most frightful fact about the brute dwarf was his total lack of emotion. He showed no signs of hatred, fear, or even anger towards the ridicules he received from the antagonists around him. He looked as though his basic ability to feel had been washed away by some great unknown currents. I also remember his eyes were far away, as a dreaming man's eyes would appear as he thought of far away places. Not that he wasn't aware of his surroundings, because he was, but his gaze fell on all of us in that bar as though he were a ghost watching us from dark corners.

Another strange dwarf was also there, only a few bar stools down from me. I had noticed the dwarf because of his robes. I recognized the garments as those often worn by members of the great library in Throal. I remember seeing him scan the bar as an artist would scan their subject for a painting. This dwarf was served a stout beer, and a bowl of steaming stew, but the beer grew flat and the stew was cold because all of the dwarf's attention was concentrated on the book he had. The book was a massive volume, and he constantly scribbled in it at a frantic pace. He appeared weak, and undernourished for a dwarf, and the book looked to be a great burden to his small frame.

Hallard, the kind but overworked barkeep, was not going to permit a fight to destroy his place again that night, so with his persuasion, and the persuasion of the other patrons, the fight moved out into the street. Now I use the word fight here as though I were not an actual witness to the event, because all those present would agree with me in that it was not really a fight at all, only a short fury of fists and muscle. The bulky dwarf beat down his adversaries in a few heartbeats. Two healthy humans, and two brute orks were overcome in the batting of an eye. I had never been, nor will I ever be witness to such skill and savagery mixed in one man.

The entire event was inspiring to me, and yet I do not actually recall any of the exact maneuvers. Nor, do I remember who exactly hit who, but I do remember the dwarf, who upon entering the fight, instinctively removed his shirt revealing hundreds of scars that covered his body. I remember the scars much more clearly than the fight itself, and have actually had a hard time forgetting them. The torment the dwarf must have had been through was incredible to me. I was immediately drawn to him and ached to know more about him.

Unfortunately, I never did have the chance to even shake the dwarf's hand, or even give him a reassuring look, because as soon as he had overpowered those men, he tossed Hallard a gold crown, offered his apologies, and left. Quickly the lean dwarf followed him, but I was unable to keep up through traffic. I have not seen either of them since.

Is it strange for one man to wish another well even if they're strangers? I wish you all the best, scarred traveler.

Doomchaser & Loreteller

Years ago this dwarven duo was part of the dwarven court in Throal. Doomchaser was a royal guard in charge of King Varulus III's safety, and Loreteller was a library administrator and advisor to the king. However, back then their names were not Doomchaser and Loreteller. In a unique display of Throalic law the two dwarves were found guilty of treason, and in a strange secret judgment they were thrown in prison. The two dwarves were given new names, and banished from Throal. They could only return on completing strange quests placed on them by the high court.

The dwarf renamed as Doomchaser was whipped hundreds of times for his crimes. He was brought back to health, but the whip left scars over his entire body. Then he was banished, and told he could only return if he did a honorable or courageous deed for every scar he had received. Doomchaser can only receive redemption by accomplishing this strange task.

The story of the dwarf renamed Loreteller is the story of Doomchaser, for Loreteller's punishment was to follow Doomchaser and record his every action. As well as giving him a new name, the court gave the renamed Loreteller a book in which to write nothing but truth. The dwarf must recognize and record these truths in Doomchaser's life, and he must keep track of all the honorable and courageous deeds accomplished by Doomchaser. Only when Doomchaser has reached redemption will Loreteller be able to reveal his writings to the court, and be forgiven himself.

Adventure Hooks

Several adventure ideas are given below. Choose one best suiting your campaign and interpretation of the two dwarves.

1. Doomchaser, in an effort to show his courage, wishes to travel with the characters in their next dangerous quest. Loreteller approaches the characters and offers their services, even saying they'll work for no pay. If the characters agree the two dwarves follow and help the characters on their quest. If the characters disagree, the dwarves, by chance will show up to save the characters from some ill fate in their next adventure.
2. The ill fated dwarves have found out that the accusations against them from the dwarven court are fake. A dwarf named Khalak Nodor framed them both. The dwarves need the characters help to shed light on the vile Khalak, and to change the ruling of the court.
3. Doomchaser and Loreteller are desperate, and they will fall to any means to end their curse. They believe their tortured state can be lifted if they destroy all those who passed judgment upon them. The two have gathered wealth, and made a strong base from which they hire assassins and informants so they can carry out their plot to kill the remaining four council members, including

King Varulus III. The characters slowly learn of the plot as several members of the court die in mysterious circumstances.

Statistics

Doomchaser

Seventh Circle Dwarf Warrior

DEX: (17):7/d12 **STR:** (18):7/d12 **TOU:** (17):7/d12
PER: (11):5/d8 **WIL:** (9):4/d6 **CHA:** (7):4/d6

Initiative: 4/1d6
Number of Attacks: see below
Attack: 14/D20+d4
Damage: (two-hand axe) 13/ d12+d10
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 103
Wound Threshold: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 81
Karma Points: 12

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 5
Armor: (chain) 7
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 11
Recovery Tests: 4/d12
Combat Movement: 40
Full Movement: 80
Legend Points: ??
Karma Dice: d6

Equipment: Battle axe, crossbow with 10 bolts, dwarf sword, coins worth 150 silver, adventurers pack, heavy boots, light clothes

Loot: None

Talents:
I-Acrobatic Strike 7(14/d20+d4); Air Dance 6(13/d12+d10); Karma Ritual 7; Melee Weapon 7(14/d20+d4); Unarmed Combat 7(14/d20+d4); Wood skin 6(13/d12+d10)
II-Anticipate Blow 7(12/2d10); Durability 7(63/49); Throwing Weapons 6 (13/d12+d10)
III-Avoid Blow 7(14/d20+d4); Tiger Spring 5
IV-Down Strike 5(15/d20+d6); Thread Weaving 7(12/2d10)
V-Gliding Stride 5(12/2d10); Swift Kick 7(14/d20+d4)
VI-Life Check 7(14/d20+d4); Missile Weapons 4(11/d10+d8)
VII-Earth Skin 3; Second Attack 4(11/d10+d8)

Special: Heat sight(250 yards), can spend karma on any action using willpower

Doomchaser's scarred body reflects his tough countenance. He reveals very little in any conversation, and never brags or boasts. He does listen well, however, and usually turns his stony gaze attentively on anyone telling stories of brave deeds or honorable actions.

Loreteller

Fifth Circle Dwarf Traveled Scholar

DEX: (12):5/d8 **STR:** (7):4/d6 **TOU:** (8):4/d6
PER: (18):7/d12 **WIL:** (14):6/d10 **CHA:** (12):5/d8

Initiative: 5/1d8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 10/d10+d6
Damage: (dwarf sword) 7/d12
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 52
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 39
Karma Points: 20

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 7
Armor: (cloth) 2
Mystic Armor: 2
Knockdown: 7
Recovery Tests: 2/d6
Combat Movement: 29
Full Movement: 57
Legend Points: ??
Karma Dice: d6

Equipment: dwarf sword, robes, gems worth total of 200 silver, book, quills and ink wells, spectacles
Loot: None
Talents:
I -Karma Ritual 5;Melee Weapons 5(10/d10+d6);Read/Write Languages 5 (12/2d10) Elvish,Human,Ork,Troll,T'skrang;Read/Write Magic 5 (12/2d10);Steel Thought 4(10/d10+d6); Weapon History 5(12/2d10)
II -Durability 4(24/20);Item History 4(11/d10+d8);Speak Language 5 (12/2d10) Elvish,Human,Ork,Troll,T'skrang
III-Astral Sight 3(10/d10+d6);Book Memory 5(11/d10+d8)
IV -Book Recall 5(12/2d10);Thread Weaving 4(11/d10+d8)
V -Empathic Sense 4(9/d8+d6) attuned to Doomchaser; Evidence Analysis 3(10/d10+d6)
Special: Heat Sight (250 yards), can use karma on tests involving perception

It's difficult to get his attention, but when you finally get Loreteller away from his writing you find him to be friendly, and warm. He speaks in a constant rhythm without hesitations. His voice is rich and seems inappropriate for his slender physique. Loreteller will always be found following Doomchaser.

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Rescue

by Bill Hincks

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal*** #2

Game Master Information

This adventure is written and designed for 4-6 characters of circles 2-3. It would be helpful for there to be a scout or a thief in the party but it is not necessary to complete this adventure. It is not designed as a hack-and-slash adventure. It will run better with a party that prefers to approach problems with thought rather than steel. However, it will also run well as a combat session. The hope is that the players will learn to see that the Chinta people, while they may be barbaric, are not evil. And while they are certainly not Name-Givers, they are intelligent and have reacted the only way they knew how to a terrible situation. They too are victims of the Theran Empire, and it is desired that the party will learn to see this and that it will serve to remind the players of the true evils in the world.

The dates used in this adventure are entirely arbitrary and should be replaced by the appropriate dates in your game world. I have merely filled them in to give a temporal reference. The section of the adventure that deals with exploring the cave complex is meant to be run loosely. I have not given a figure on the number of Chinta remaining in the tribe for this reason. You should stock the cave with Chinta according to your style of game mastering and your players desires. If your players like infiltrating a heavily guarded camp then fill it up. If they want a rolling battle put twenty or twenty-five Chinta in the whole camp, that should be more than enough to keep even the roughest swordmaster busy. If they wish to role-play more and communicate to help the Chinta put less in the camp so that things get less muddled and the party feels less threatened and more like communicating. And if things get out of hand and the party gets involved in a roaring fight and begins to lose remember -- the Chinta would rather have more slaves. Corpses don't make anyone happy! Perhaps mounting an escape from within the prison would make for a challenging adventure.

Adventure Background

Before the Scourge, a group of people known at the Chinta roamed the lands near the Death's Sea. They were a peaceful people but, though intelligent, they were not Name-Givers. Not being Name-Givers they were shunned from many of the smaller kaers in their area. Not knowing what else to do, they dug their own kaers out of the mountains near the Death's Sea. Lacking magical protection many of the Chinta died and the rest became a race of survivors.

After the Scourge, toughened and hardened by the magic within their blood they began roaming the shores of the Sea as nomads, raiding and taking what they needed to survive. When the Therans learned of the massive size and strength of the Chinta, they began hunting them; desiring to use their awesome strength and endurance to power their massive kilas. The Chinta, having no recollection of Name-Givers ever being kind, assumed all Name-Givers to be like the Therans, and so they hate. They hate because it is all that they have been taught to do and all that they have been shown.

What does that have to do with this adventure? Well, a struggling scholar from the Great Library of Throal found an obscure reference in an ancient pre-scourge text that implied that the Chinta people might indeed be Name-Givers and that all the tales that told otherwise of them were incorrect. Pulling some strings, he received permission to take a sky ship and crew to the Death's Sea to search for these possible Name- Givers for a period of one month.

His reputation on the line Ternyth, the librarian, was a little hasty in his command of the vessel, and, when on the last day of the expedition there was sighting, he ordered the ship to land. As it turns out his decision was poor and when the Chinta came forth from their cave to see what looked like to them a Theran slaving ship, they attacked. The Cloud Skimmer, badly damaged and the crew weakened, soon crashed. Those in good physical condition left to find help, the rest remained behind and were captured by the Chinta. Not being able to communicate with the Chinta they were not able to convey their intentions and were soon locked up and placed in a cave so that they could mine and make the cave system larger.

One of the survivors has managed to find help (either through an evening encounter or the messenger reaching the library). The party must free the slaves and hopefully learn of the plight of the Chinta people and possibly even teach them that not all Name-Givers are like the Therans. Obviously the Chinta will not be all that easy to convince. And unless something miraculous happens Ternyth's reputation is indeed shot (Which is actually ok because he a little tired of book work anyway).

Introduction

There are actually two possible introductions to this adventure. You should pick the one that most suits your current campaign, or design your own based on these ideas. If the party is traveling anywhere near the Death's Sea it is probably best to have them encounter the wandering survivor:

1. if they are further away perhaps it is best to give them a reason to be at the library when the survivor stumbles in
2. or wait until they travel to Throal for this to happen.

Intro 1: The Wandering Survivor

(2 months after the crash)

Read the following during watch as the party is camping one night:

The cool night air surrounds you as you look about the sky in wonder. No longer can you make out the brilliant stars usually seen so clearly whilst on the trail. Instead the sky above you seems to pulse with a deep red color. It looks almost evil, an involuntary shudder crawls up your spine until you remind yourself once again that all you are seeing is the light of the Death's sea reflecting off of the clouds above. You feel a sense of awe that the light from a single source can be seen even this far away. Still many miles from the sea there is enough light so that a fire or torch is not necessary for watch.

Suddenly a shout breaks the stillness of the night. Looking about you see a figure walking towards you out of the night, it is a man. He holds his arms up over his head in an obvious gesture of surrender. Looking closer you are able to see that the man is a middle-aged elf. He wears tattered brown robes and carries no visible equipment. He staggers forward again but after a few paces he faints and falls to the ground.

If the party looks at him closer before he is awake read the following:

The elf appears to be well into his middle ages, though it is hard to judge how many years that might be. His beard is ragged and unkempt. You see no markings on his body of any sort other than some small wounds that appear to be merely from a good bit of travel over rough land.

If awakened he will begin to speak at once (Note: He's a little unstable due to his experiences and a head injury sustained in the crash).

"You must help me, help them! They might still be alive! If they are you must go save them. You are the first group of adventurers I've found. I've been wandering for quite a while, quite a long while. I tried to help them you know, I did. But what could I do, one man against giants. I would have perished, but you.....you are adventurers -- worthy of the task, I knew it as soon as I laid my eyes upon you. You will be the ones."

With that he falls into a fever dream for about 24 hours. If he is given water he will rest peacefully for the entire time, if not he will continue to writhe and blurt out odd phrases occasionally grabbing people who go to check on him, but not consciously. After 24 hours he snaps out it and awakes clear headed and aware -- he does not remember his earlier conversation with the party.

The elf's name is Oueber Lighthand. He is a survivor of the crew of the Cloud Skimmer, one of the few who managed to escape on foot (And incidentally the only one left alive). He has been looking for aid and wandering towards Throal for the past two months. However, he has not made it very far due to the fact that he is completely lost and has less skill in the

outdoors than your average signpost.

When he comes to, he will attempt to begin a conversation with the party in earnest. He is very weak and must rest often but he will not sleep or give up until the party either leaves him in the dirt, or agrees to help him. He knows he will not find another party for quite a while out here in the middle of nowhere, and he is quite aware that time is growing short. He will offer payment, glory, reward from the Library of Throal, anything so long as he feels that it will get the party to go look for the rest of the crew. After Oueber left the crash site he remained in the area long enough to see the Chintas capture the remaining crew and carry them away. He is not aware of the fate of the crew and he is far too weak to make another passage into the Death's Sea. With food, water, and a few pointers about the outdoors he feels that he will be able to make it back to Throal. He can give the party a general directions to the area where the ship crashed, but beyond that it is up to the party to find the lost crew.

Intro 2: The Entrance

(3 months after the crash)

Read the following if any members of the party visit the Great Library of Throal just before they plan on leaving (you may need to adjust this is the character is a windling):

Just as you are preparing to leave the door to the Library slams open with a crash. Wondering who could possibly be so rude you look up to see two guards supporting a semi-conscious middle aged elf. The guards dump the man on the floor inside the main doors of the library. Looking to the librarian on duty one of the guards speaks.

"This beggar says that someone here can vouch for him is this true?" The librarian's face pales as he slowly nods.

"Very well then, he's your business. But keep him out of the city gutters." With that the guards close the door and leave the elf lolling on the floor.

As soon as the doors slam, the librarian snaps out of his stunned condition. Rushing over to the man he calls for your help as he tries to help the elf to a standing position. Quickly you move to help support the other arm while the librarian begins calling for his page boy to ready a room for the elf.

Bringing the elf to the room you gently set him down on the bed, as you do so he grabs you by the collar pulls his head close opens his eyes and begins to speak.

"You must help me, help them! They might still be alive, if they are you must go save them. I'm here, how did I get back here? I've been wandering for quite a while, quite a long while, no one will help. I tried to help them you know, I did. But what could I do, one man against giants. I would have perished, but you.....you are an adventurer --worthy of the task, I knew it as soon as I laid my eyes upon you. You will be the ones."

With that the elf falls back into a troubled sleep. The librarian looking concerned asks you if you would not mind waiting in the library for a short while. He will have a scribe send for your friends if desired and he will have food brought in.

The elf's name is Oueber Lighthand. He is a survivor of the crew of the Cloud Skimmer, he was one of the few who managed to escape on foot (And incidentally the only one left alive). He has been looking for aid and wandering towards Throal for the past three months. Oueber unfortunately has lost quite a bit of his memory from a head injury sustained in the crash.

In a few hours the librarian returns to the party with a grim look on his face. He has questioned Oueber and found out all he can from the elf. The dwarf explains the situation to the party and asks them for their aid. He explains that he would try to find a more experienced party if he had more time, but enough time has passed already that haste is of the essence. He also explains that he does not wish to search about town attempting to hire other adventurers because it would draw too much attention to the library and he does not want talk until he is fully brought up to date on the current situation. The ship is long overdue as far as the rest of the library is concerned and there is a lot of anxiety, but he doesn't want word of the crash getting back to the investors who sponsored this expedition until they are sure of the fate of the vessel and crew. He promises the sum of 500 silver per person as well as free research at the Library of Throal for a year and a day following their return to Throal.

He also offers to arrange passage on a sky ship to the area of the Death's sea. Though the ship will not be able to sail them to their destination, it will place them within a weeks travel of it.

If the party wishes to speak with Oueber, he will tell them all he knows of the Chinta and their cave including the location as well as he remembers it.

Getting There is Half the Fun

Travel near the Death's Sea is close to impossible. Anywhere within three miles of the sea, the heat is unbearable. It never gets dark at night, instead, the landscape is bathed in the red of the sea as it is reflected by the nighttime sky. Visibility is never less than 200 yards even at night (except in storm). No natural water is found aside from small sulfur rich springs that flow from boiling springs within the blasted rock. And when it rains the water is heated as it falls through the air, mixing with the gasses of the sea and becoming an acid rain. All those not in shelter when it rains suffer step 6 damage/10 minutes (no armor protects). When the rain falls there are often brief but powerful flash floods through some of the larger gullies and canyons (don't get caught in these...just don't) after which the water will evaporate within the hour. There is no vegetation except for the hardiest of lichen's and the occasional

small scrub hidden in the cool shelter of only the largest rocks. Scalding winds constantly blow over the landscape creating turbulent conditions that only the best of ship captains would attempt to navigate through. Jagged spires of black rock jut into the sky many as much as two hundred feet high. The ground consists of irregularly scattered shards of broken stone. The edges, sharp as glass, make the footing quite treacherous.

Within a mile of the sea, water dropped on the rock sputters and evaporates in moments. Any bare skin touching the rock is burned on contact (step 2 damage/round). A decent night's rest becomes impossible (no wound recovery or recovery tests regained) without some type of comforting (evercool cloak, heat protection, etc.).

Within one half mile of the sea the heat in the air is enough to cause step 4 damage/ hour (no armor protects) and -1 step to all tests. Those wearing light armor (3-15 pounds base weight) take step 5 damage/hour and suffer -2 steps to all tests. Moderate armor (16-50 pounds base weight) take step 6/hour and have a penalty of -3 steps to all tests. Heavy armor (51+ pounds base weight) take step 7/hour and have a penalty of -4 steps to all tests. Any bare skin touching the rock will be burned for step 4/round. Flight becomes impossible unless a strength(10) test is made every ten minutes failure results in a knockdown. Anyone wearing skin protection must make a dexterity(7) if knocked down to avoid skin contact with the rock. Anyone without skin protection, dexterity(14). Additionally care must be taken where you step for some of the black rock is deceiving and is merely a thin crust formed over a river of live magma (don't step in these). There is a 20% chance per hour spent this close to the sea of a party member stepping on thin crust. If this occurs have the player make a dexterity test (5+1 per every 50 pounds of weight) to avoid their foot slipping into the magma. If this occurs all footwear is destroyed instantly. And the limb takes step 30 damage (footwear will help protect versus this source of damage, but the footwear will be almost certainly destroyed) if the foot takes more than 5 wounds it is damaged beyond repair other than magical means and the wounds will not heal until the foot is seen to (1 healing potion applied to the foot for every wound on it). Other wounds will continue to heal as normal, but the foot wounds will render the foot useless, reduce movement by 1/2 and requiring a crutch to walk giving a penalty of -4 steps to all tests requiring use of the damaged foot or leg. This damage cannot kill a character, however, if the amount of damage taken is beyond the characters death rating, then the character will fall into a coma until the damage is recovered (don't fall...the GM should give the party hints to the thin crust seen in places so that they might think to check the ground ahead of them...thin crust can be detected on a perception(6) test).

In general travel along the Death's Sea on foot will be approximately 12 miles/day. If more is attempted then the footwear of the party will suffer, perception(10) at end of day to avoid damage to footwear (to many sharp rocks not noticed and avoided). Good boots can fail twice before being destroyed. For travel without foot protection the GM may damage the party as he or she sees fit.

Travel along the Death's sea should wear on the party; if this is too rough on the party, lessen it a bit. What is desired is that they get the image of the perils of travel in the area, but remember they should still be in good enough condition to function by the time they reach

the giants cave. It would be rather inglorious to show up there in such poor condition that a sneeze would knock them all out!

If you would like to challenge the party a little more, or give them a even rougher view of the Death's Sea feel free to throw in some creature encounters, possibly with Fire Eagles, Fire Wraiths, or Viraas (ED Gamemaster pack pg. 59-61).

Finding the Cloud Skimmer

Finding the wreck of the Cloud Skimmer should be fairly difficult. Let the party wander in the area of the Sea for a few days giving them a feeling for how terrible of a place it is. Be sure, however, that you do not let this go on too long; they are hero's and want to be adventuring, not wasting away on a blasted plain of rock.

In order to find the wreck of the Cloud Skimmer they will have to travel down towards the edge of the Sea where the vessel crashed. The ship lies only a few hundred yards from the edge of the Sea and the party should be hasty about exploring it.

Read the following to the party upon nearing the wreck of the Cloud Skimmer:

Sweat dripping from your brow you finally pull yourselves up over the lip of a rocky crag. Looking at your surroundings you sigh in frustration. For days you have pulled yourself across miles and miles of this unforgiving terrain with no end in sight. Pulling yourself together you look down the rocky slope trying to pick out a route that might offer an easy descent from this treacherous rise. Seeing none you shrug and begin your descent.

Suddenly a flicker of movement catches your eye. Crouching down on the trail you look ahead to see if you can locate the source of movement. After a few moments you see it again. A brief little flicker of white. Squinting through the waves of heat rising from the rock below you are able to make out what looks like a large pile of jagged rock with some type of fabric hung up on it and flapping in the breeze. No! Not rock...wood! And sail. This can only be the wreck of the Cloud Skimmer.

Read the following only when the party approaches the wreck:

Jagged boards and tattered sails are all that remain of the once proud Cloud Skimmer. Great holes show in the sides of the vessel where rocks have pierced it's sides, and the entire vessel sits rotting into ruin. Scattered about the crash site bits of gnawed bone and shredded scraps of cloth tell all these is to know of the fate of those crewmen who perished in the crash or were too injured to be moved. You only hope that the survivors of the crash did not met the same fate as these brave souls here.

If the party searches the vessel for any hints or clues to the location of the survivors they find only two things. The nameplate of the vessel wedged into a rock about 50 feet from the site

of the crash, and beneath it Ternyth's journal. Ternyth hid the journal beneath the nameplate of the vessel before the Chintas arrived and took them prisoner.

Read the following if the characters read the journal, this is the last and most important entry.

Borrum 14, 1506 Th.

I am Ternyth, scholar and researcher from the Great Library of Throal. I fear that I have been lax in the keeping of my journal so I will attempt to now recap the events of the past few days. We had been on a researching mission following up on some pre-scourge references I found in one of the library's record rooms while I was researching the Death's Sea. This document made references to a mysterious race of Name-givers that lived on the shores of the Death's Sea known only as the Chinta people.

Obviously, the possibility of the existence of an unknown race of Name-givers had to be explored and thus I found myself leading a researching expedition into the Death's Sea via airship.

For twenty days we sailed the skies over the shores of the Death's Sea, never finding a hint as to the existence of this fabled race of Name-Givers. Finally our time was up, the ship was needed back in Throal and my expedition set sails for home. We had just passed over an inlet on the north-western edge of the sea when one of the crew let out a hail. He had spotted movement on one of the black-rock sheets on the edge of the sea. With the aid of a spyglass I was able to discern a figure walking along the shore of the sea, seemingly ignorant of the scalding surface over which he strode. As we drew closer for a second pass, I was able to estimate the size of the being as nearly that of an obsidiman, though the figures build was more slender than that of our rocky friends. Finally, I managed to get a glimpse of it's face. I do not know what I expected, but none- the-less I was startled to see a human face. I suppose it is misleading to describe the face as human, for the creatures are certainly not human in nature, but the smooth pink skin and the deeply chiseled face lacking any sort of facial hair or tusks was more human in appearance than any other Name-giver race I know of. It could only be a member of the Chinta people.

Following the figure from our vantage point we eventually located a cave complex in which it appeared that a community of these beings made their homes. Curiosity and excitement, I fear, got the best of me and despite warnings from the crew I ordered the ship to be set down. I could not wait another moment to make contact with these beings I had sought for so long. We landed the ship on a flat rock a few hundred yards from the mouth of their cave.

After the ship had been stabilized, I prepared to take a greeting party with me to go and speak to these Name-givers. We were surprised when a score or more of these massive creatures emerged from their cave wearing only loincloths and wielding great clubs of stout wood tipped with shards of jagged obsidian. Fearing that our intentions might be misunderstood I held forth my hands, palm up in the universal gesture of peace.

Either these beings did not recognize the sign I was giving them or they did not care, for their next action was to break into a dead run toward our party and vessel. Scrambling over the side of the ship we had barely made it onboard before the ship was off the ground and headed for the skies. Still charging they scooped up rocks the size of my head as they ran, and bracing themselves on the jagged ground they hurled their projectiles toward our vessel. Our captain attempted to lift our vessel out of range of their bombardment, but the strange winds sweeping off of the Death's Sea hampered our lift-off and the winds buffeted us about. By the time the ship was raised clear of their range, a good 75 yards I might add, nearly one-third of the crew was injured or dead. The hail of boulders had damaged the ships hull and sails badly and slowly our ship began to fall back to the earth.

As we slowly fell, I could see the Chinta tracking our descent over the uneven ground; apparently they were not content with driving us off, they wished to finish the job. The captain attempted to put as much distance between us as possible, but the crippled ship responded poorly and best he could do was little more than drift with the wind as the ship drew closer to the ground.

Thank the Passions for our skilled captain who managed to land our crippled vessel with only a minimum of damage to it's crew. Nearly all of us sustained some sort of injury in the attack and the crash, but thankfully we did not land in the boiling magma of the sea. Unfortunately as I sit here writing this last entry in my journal my legs are being lashed together and bound to a plank from the ship, for when we crashed I was thrown to the bow and one of the masts fell across my knees as it toppled to the ground. I fear I will not walk again, though I don't know how long I will have to worry about it.

The Chinta still hunt us and though most of us are too injured to flee, some have fled into the wasteland with the promise of fetching help. I have no choice but to await the arrival of our hunters. My only hope is that I will be able to make contact with them and establish some type of communication. Though from the howls and grunts I hear coming our way I doubt if communication will ever be possible with these beings. I now close this journal and I shall hide it with the remains of our vessel in the hopes that it will someday be read and this tale will be told. I am prepared to die, but I do not wish to die in vain.

Ternyth,
Scholar and Researcher at the Great Library of Throal

Searching the area around the vessel a successful perception (6) test will reveal the tracks of the Chinta war party. Once found their trail is easy to follow. It weaves about quite a bit and crosses a large variety of terrain, but the route is easy and in about two hours the party should be approaching the cave dwellings of the Chinta people. The party gets their first view of the Chinta encampment from the crest of a ridge that the trail passes over.

Read the following when the party reaches the top of the ridge:

Looking out to the west the trail drops sharply into a large ravine. The dark jagged cliffs of

the ravine drop steeply in a "V" to the narrow bottom. The trail you are following passes through the very bottom of the "V" and then passes under what looks to be a large cut taken out of the cliff a few hundred yards ahead to your right. From here it looks as though there are only two routes of travel available to you -- through the ravine or it looks as though it may be possible to scramble up the slope to the cliff top.

The crest of the ridge is located on the trail at the far eastern side of the Chinta Encampment map. From this location it is possible to either descend into the ravine or to climb up and travel along the top of the ravine. The party will get a better view of the Chinta camp from the top of the cliff, but they will have a difficult time at best getting down the 200 yard cliff that separates them from the floor of the camp. The camp itself is about 100 yards above the trail passing through the ravine.

The steep slope along the side of the ravine is very difficult to traverse as it is comprised entirely of skree fallen from the cliff face to the ravine floor. To cross it a dexterity(6) test is needed for every 50 yards traveled. failure results in a rock shifting beneath the feet of those crossing it resulting in step 3 damage (no armor) as well as a loud grating noise that echo's off of the walls in the ravine (50% chance of alerting the Chinta guards).

The Chinta Encampment (Outer)

The Chinta encampment is guarded at all times. Two guards maintain watch from the base of the boulder piles on the south side of camp. They are alert at all times though sometimes they seem to get distracted by activity in the mouth of the cave and frequently they will abandon their posts for a few moments to get some water or food to refresh themselves. There does not, however, appear to be a regular watch pattern. Many of the Chinta guards seem to come and go as they please so long as the post is covered. The boulder piles serve three functions to the guards. They provide cover from the ravine below, they serve as ammunition (as most of the rocks are fist sized to them), and the stones also happen to make wonderful seats.

If the encampment is watched for a period of time greater than a few hours observers will note that very rarely do any of the Chinta come out of the cave for other than watch purposes. Although sometimes one or two will come out with a rough crafted wagon full of stone chippings and dump them down the slope.

The guards, thinking that all Name-Givers are slavers, will attack any who approach the camp. If their assailants come within melee range the Chinta will attack to stun (See Ed pg. 200) as long as none of their number have fallen. Should a Chinta die in battle all the Chinta who are aware of this will immediately aggressively attack the next round, then continue attacking to kill. To attempt to convince the Chinta to do other than attack could be very difficult as the Chinta only speak in a guttural language of grunts known only to them (For information on the Chinta people refer to the creatures section at the end of this adventure.)

Read the following to the players when they get a chance to view the cave opening from the Encampment:

Looking to the north-eastern wall of the encampment you see the entrance to the Chinta camp. Jagged piles of boulders are stacked on both sides of the cave mouth. Closer inspection reveals that the boulders are fresh stone recently removed by some type of work tool. The cave looms wide before you, almost beckoning you to enter.

The Chinta Camp (Inner)

If a fight should break out anywhere within the encampment or the inner camp there is a base 25% chance that another Chinta will hear and come to the aid of his tribesmen. The Chinta are a passionate people even in battle and will often forget to call for help or alert others to fight if they get caught up in the glory of battle and their desire to impress and please Thystonius. The Chinta will attempt to not kill anyone they fight, rather, they will fight as the guards previously described. It is important to remember that the Chinta will not aggressively attack unless they see or know a member of their tribe has died (For information on the Chinta people see the creatures section at the end of this adventure.)

Read the following upon entering the mouth of the cave:

Peering down the wide mouth of the cave you notice that the walls appear to be softly glowing as if there is a light source of some type within the walls. Looking close you see that thin bands of crystal run back and forth within the walls, and that they are glowing softly as a light quartz would. Looking back to the tunnel you note that it is about twelve feet high and eight feet wide. The sides of the tunnel are roughly hewn, obviously of a hastily crafted nature.

The passage runs to the north-west for approximately fifty yards where it passes out of sight behind a wide "S" curve. About 20 yards ahead along the south-east wall a passage is cut into the stone and white mist rolls out across the floor.

Natural Spring

A hot spring fills a pool in this room through a crack in the far wall.

Read the following to the players upon entering this room:

The smell of sulfur nearly overcomes you when you step into the room. Mist hangs heavy in the air and the humidity makes your skin feel as though it is dragging at your bones. Peering through the haze you can just make out a pool of some type on the far side of the room. Dimly you hear the sound of trickling water from across the room.

If anyone approaches the pool read the following:

Looking closer at the pool you see that it is indeed a natural spring. Water trickles out from a crack on the far wall filling the pool. The pool appears to be about four feet deep, though currently it is only about half full. From the mineral rings on the sides of the pool you would judge that it has seen better days. Examining the pool yet again you see what looks like glittering crystal scattered across the entire bottom of the pool.

The water in the spring is mineral heavy, but other than that it is safe to drink. A willpower test (5) is needed in order to overcome the natural aversion to drinking anything that reeks of sulfur and other impurities. A failed test will result in vomiting.

The water is very hot. In fact it is just a few degrees shy of boiling. Anyone sticking any part of their body in the pool will take step 10 damage per round exposed to the water. When they are free of the water they will continue to take damage as the scalding water slowly cools. Each subsequent round the victim will take two less steps of damage until the damage reaches zero. If cool water is poured over the scalded appendage the damage will be three less steps per round.

The crystal on the bottom of the pool is quartz grown from the minerals in the water. The crystals are indeed perfect, however they are also grown onto the bottom of the pool and very difficult to remove while the water is still in the pool. There are 500 silvers worth of crystal in the pool; however, removing it may cause damage to some of the crystals if it is not approached in a delicate manner.

Common and Play Area

This is a communal gathering area that doubles as a play area for the tribes four children.

Read the following when the party first views this area:

Gaping in awe you marvel at the vast cavernous area before you. Running north- west to south-east this chamber must be at least eighty yards in length and twenty yards wide. Large benches line the walls and a few mats of some strange animal pelt lie haphazardly about the room. Piles of small stones are scattered about the floor, many cut into strange rectangular and cubic shapes. There are exits from this room leading in all directions.

The stone blocks are just that, blocks for the children to play with. At this time there are no children in the room, though if the party spends more than ten minutes exploring this room and there has been no known combat yet there is a 20% chance that a young Chinta will come along and see the party in the room. If this occurs the child will run to the nearest group of elders (great hall.) and they will go to investigate.

The pelts are all of poor quality and though they are from rare animals they are so well used that they will be of no particular value to anyone.

Storage Area

This area is dedicated to the storage of all the tribes goods. There are many barrels here made mostly of carved stone slats, though there are also some baskets woven from some of the rough vines that can grow in certain areas of the Death's Sea. Read the following when the party enters this area:

The passageway widens here to a width of nearly fifteen yards. Many stone barrels and baskets fill up the space along the northern wall some stacked two or three deep. In a pile to the left of the barrels is a collection of well used mining tools including picks, shovels, and pry bars.

There is not much of value in storage here. Mostly dried foods, fruits and nuts collected by different groups of Chinta when they have gone out exploring. The tools are all in decent condition and may be used by the party if they choose to take them.

Gathering Hall

This room is designed for the Chinta elders to rest and enjoy each others company. Curtains divide part of the room while the Great Hall adjoins to the north-east.

Read the following when the party enters this room:

This large room measures roughly twenty by thirty yards. A bench rests in an alcove on the north-western wall, while to the north-east a wide opening leads to a vast chamber. To the north and south passages lead from this room while heavy fur curtains block your view to the south-east and south-west. Fur rugs adorn the floor, while padded leather pillows are propped against the walls.

Two Chinta were or may still be resting on the bench along the north-western wall. If there has been an alarm anywhere in the complex they will likely have heard of it and traveled to investigate. If not, they are engaged in some type of conversation apparently bordering on an argument of some type. If a fight breaks out in this room the Chinta in the sleeping chambers and great hall will certainly hear it and rush to engage. If this occurs there are the normal chances for other Chinta to hear the fight and also come to join the battle. Obviously it is in the party's best interest to use stealth while in this complex. Good scouting can mean the difference between life and death.

Sleeping Chambers

These rooms are all pretty much the same. All contain one, two or three Chinta (depending on how desperate or powerful the party is, and whether any have responded to earlier alarms). Rugs cover the floors and curtains conceal small alcoves along the walls. There are

few other items in these rooms except for stone basins for drinking water, and unrecognizable scraps of food.

Great Hall

This vast chamber acts as the central gathering area for the Chinta people. More time is spent in this area than any other location in the community. Thus, at least four Chinta are present in this room at all times. (Unless they have been called away by an attack).

Read the following when the party enters this area:

With amazement you gaze upon this cavernous chamber, easily thirty yards wide and nearly twice as long. This massive room dwarfs even the four great stone tables that stand in the room. Carved from the very stone of the cliff itself, these tables stand at least five feet high, though some are taller than others. Scattered across the tops of the tables are the bones of various animals, all picked clean. Beside the bones great stone basins hold sulfur rich drinking water. The rugs around the base of the tables are in shambles. Bits of meat and blood have been ground into the hairs of the rug and flies swarm about these dark oily blotches feeding and laying eggs. A few benches sit haphazardly placed about the room. On the north-western wall a mural carved into the wall depicts a line of Chintas bound in chains being led off toward a massive stone sky ship, much larger than any Barsaivian vessel you've ever seen. The next mural shows the sky ship sailing away while a lone child watches with tears in his eyes. The next and final mural shows a small tribe of Chinta people, mostly women and children trekking off into the wastes of the sea while watching the skies with obvious anxiety.

The tables are where the Chinta gather for their meals. It is obvious that they are quite sloppy eaters.

The murals serve to remind the Chinta of why it is that they hate all Name-Givers. They are afraid that their people will one day forget the crimes that have been and are still being done to them, and they have carved these murals so that their people will never forget their anger.

Waste Pits

Pushing aside the heavy curtain you are overcome with the stench of waste. A few yards away in the back of the room you see a hole in the floor leading down. Next to it lies a pile of shredded animal fur of some type. Gasping for air you push the curtain back into place and take a deep breath wiping the tears from your eyes.

The Chinta have taken advantage of an old lava pipe that leads down somewhere into the depths of the cliff. The smell doesn't really seem to bother the Chinta, but then again, not much does.

Storage Area

This area is used by the Chinta as extra storage for furs and other items.

Read the following when the party enters this room:

The thick smell of not quite cured hide assaults your senses as you draw back the curtain enclosing this area. Piles of furs lie scattered across the room. On the far side of the room bundles of reed are tied together in small clumps, probably gathered from an inland journey by a member of the tribe, for you have seen no such plants growing in this area. Aside from these few items, the rest of the room is barren.

If the party searches through the furs there are four espagra hides mixed in with the pile. They are not well cured and worth only half of their base value. (Roughly 25 silvers each).

Mine Storage

This area is used for the storage of metals and crystals brought out from the mines.

Read the following when the party looks into this area:

This "U" shaped cavern is apparently used for the collecting and sorting of minerals. Large buckets of crushed rock sit on the floor next to a large table apparently used for sorting. On the other side of the table are large stone bins that look as though they might be used for collecting and holding the sorted items. Small piles of rubble are scattered about the rest of this area. A second curtain leads out of the room on the other side of the "U".

Should anyone look into the collecting bins read the following:

Looking into the bins you are amazed by the sparkling collection of colors and lights gleaming back up at you. Bins of gemstones glitter brightly in the light given off by ribbons of phosphorescent crystal scattered throughout the piles of crystal.

The light crystals will give off a soft glow as long as they are in the vicinity of elemental earth. Once brought outside of the cave they will begin to fade and soon they will resemble dull weathered quartz. If brought back to civilization however they can be sold for quite a sum of money (as long as the party can prove what they do) since they work quite effectively as detectors for elemental earth. There are twenty crystal ribbons mixed into the bins and they would sell in Bartertown for about 150 silvers each. Getting them there however will be tough as they are very fragile and any fall or knockdown has a 20% chance of breaking any crystals being carried, this is assuming that the crystals are wrapped and padded, if not don't even bother rolling...they break.

Scattered throughout the bins are many types of crystals, emeralds, rubies, diamonds, topaz,

and sapphires are among the most common. However, not all crystals are of gem quality. Due to the constantly shifting rock of the region many of the crystals are heavily fractured and of poor color. There are 200 pounds of crystal between all the bins. Sorting through them will take a vast amount of time (on the order of days). If a quick check is made to try to grab only those of value make a perception(8) test (+2 steps for thieves or anyone who has more than a passing interest in gems). The current value of the gems is 15 silvers per pound. On a successful test the sorter is able to throw out the gems of little or no value reducing the weight of the good gems by 10 pounds per point of success beyond 8 and increasing the value per pound of the reaming gems considerably (total gem value should equal 3000 silvers). Every point of success below 8 not only removes 10 pounds of weight per point below, but it also reduces the value of the stones by 1 silver per pound (throwing out the good ones by mistake).

In the very bottom of one of the bins are three nuggets of elemental earth and two shards of living crystal. These can be found on a successful perception test of (6). The nuggets of elemental earth have the same value and properties as coins of elemental earth, and while the shards of living crystal are far to small to be of use in a weapon, any jeweler would be happy to pay up to 100 silver for each of the beautiful shards.

Guard Room

This room houses three Chinta who have appointed themselves to guard the captured slaves. They seldom check on the slaves. However, they will respond to any noise coming from rooms 12, 14, and 15. The rest of this room appears as the other sleeping chambers.

Outside of Slave Pens

Read the following to the party when they enter this area:

The first thing you notice when you enter this chamber are the bars. A passage to the south-west has been barred off with stout iron bars. Clinging to the bars, a worn and beaten looking dwarf looks out into the room. A hopeless look on his face he leans his head against the bars and closes his eyes. In the chamber beyond him, you think you see more figures slumped against the far wall of the prison.

To the north, a table is set against the wall. On it are hammers, picks, and other mining tools. Still on the north wall but farther to the east a heavy curtain closes off another section of the complex. To the east, two more curtains hang from the ceiling.

If the party makes themselves known to the ragged old dwarf read the following:

Slowly the dwarf pulls his head up from the bars and looks up. Just as he breaks into a hopeful smile his face darkens and his eyes flash to the curtain behind you. Slowly he places his fingers to his lips indicating that you should be quiet and points again at the curtain.

"Guards," he whispers.

The slave speaking to the party is Nathan Bellowsmith. A weaponsmith, who took passage on the Cloud Skimmer with hopes of finding a decent source of living crystal, which he hoped to mine. This was not quite what he had in mind, however, and his aspirations have changed quite a bit in the few months he has been here. As far as he is concerned the cursed crystal can stay in the mountain. Steel's better anyway.

Nathan will try to make sure that the guards are taken care of before he spends any length of time talking with the party. He fears that if an escape is attempted they will be caught and killed.

Slave Pens and Mine

This area is where the slaves have been kept since they were brought here a few months ago. They have been confined to the pens and have not been outside of their work area since. The bars that enclose the area are close together and cemented into place. A quick examination will reveal that the bars are strong and very well cemented. Food and water is passed into the slaves as well as tools which are collected and counted at the end of every day. The slaves have been put to work expanding the cave system for the Chinta. A few of the slaves have died at work, but many are in quite descent condition. The Chinta treat them well and see to it that the slaves are not worked too hard.

Freeing the Slaves

Freeing the slaves may prove to be rather difficult. The bars are cast iron -- strong but brittle. A solid hit with a hammer or other weapon may be enough to shatter a bar; however, it will create a lot of noise. Prying the bars will be very difficult as cast iron is extremely resistant to pressure being applied slowly. Nathan will volunteer this information if the party attempts to pry the bars. Nathan has a secret though. When they were first captured it was learned that he was a smith. The Chinta forced him to cast the bars for the cave. Always thinking about escape Nathan cast the strongest, most convincing bars he could with the resources available. The Chinta were so pleased with the solid bars that they did not test them all before cementing them into place. Thus it was that they missed the bar that Nathan crafted just for this moment. The third bar in from the right he deliberately crafted with a flaw. The bar is much more brittle than any of the others. A solid strike on the weak bar (physical defense 5, Armor 10) which defeats the armor rating of the bar will shatter the bar completely (Note: there are no armor defeating hits against objects). The rest of the bars are much stronger (physical defense 5, armor 16), but may still be shattered as above.

The noise of the shattering bar will be enough to alert any Chinta in rooms 4, 4a, 5 6, and 7. The first alerted Chinta (if there are any) will arrive in 5 rounds with 1 more arriving at the end of every subsequent round until all alerted Chinta have arrived.

The slaves are in poor physical condition and will not attempt to fight unless they are attacked. They will pick up all the weapons they can find or are given however, including their picks and shovels.

Wrapping It Up

Of the fifteen men who were brought here and imprisoned twelve are still alive, Ternyth among them. He is quite ill however, and has been in a feverish state for the past few weeks. He will need to be carried back to Throal and given close medical attention and plenty of rest before he will pull out of it. The party will need to escort the slaves back to Throal after they have been freed. It should be a long and difficult trip, and there is the possibility that they are followed by some of the surviving Chinta. If you choose to use this as an addition to the adventure the Chinta will follow the group for as long as they are in the area of the Death's Sea, taking advantage of the familiar terrain. They likely will plan an ambush and strike at the party since the slaves are in poor condition and cannot get away on their own.

When the party reaches Throal they will be greeted with respect and admiration. The library, in it's gratitude, will pay each party member the sum of 500 silvers and they will grant the party free access to the library for the period of a year and a day. The slaves who were rescued thank the party graciously and offer their services freely, giving help whenever the party enters Throal. If you're looking for an NPC opportunity one of the rescued may even offer to travel with the party.

Loose Ends

The party may have made contact with the Chinta in a peaceful manner. If so the Chinta will slowly come to the realization (if helped) that all Name-Givers are not like the Therans. The Chinta will want to integrate into society somewhat and will need help from somewhere, possibly the party. They will attempt to enter the trading community using their vast mineral and crystal resources for their assets. They will likely encounter some prejudice and the party may become involved in aiding relations, working as go-betweens or escorts.

Legend Point Awards	(for each party member)
Bringing the nameplate of the ship to the library of Throal	50
Burning the remains of the ship and crew	50
Finding the journal	50
Freeing the slaves	100
Freeing the slaves without combat	200
Communicating with the Chinta	50
Convincing the Chinta to let the slaves go	300

Successfully returning the scholars to Throal	500
Legend points for gems and jewels	whatever fits your game

The Chinta People

DEX: 6 **STR:** 14 **TOU:** 10
PER: 5 **WIL:** 7 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 6
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 12
Damage: 22
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 6
Effect: 10
Death Rating: 54
Wound Threshold: 18
Unconsciousness Rating: 47

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 5
Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 5
Knockdown: 10
Recovery Tests: 4
Combat Movement: 35
Full Movement: 70
Legend Points: 500

Abilities: Resist Heat

Equipment: Tunic, Chinta war club

Loot: Little -- though often the Chinta collect bits of elemental earth, living crystal and gemstones from the walls of the cave systems in which the frequently dwell (any of these found count as treasure worth Legend Points)

Description

The Chinta people are an ancient race of people who have made their homes by the shore of the Death's Sea for hundreds of generations. Living in seclusion as they do, they are not a well known or understood people. For the many years since the Scourge the Theran military has been hunting the Chinta people, taking them as slaves for use in their great flying fortresses. The Therans consider the Chinta to be among the best slave stock available, since their great strength and endurance allows them to outlast even the heartiest of trolls. Constant existence as a hunted people has dropped the population of the Chinta people down into the low hundreds, and only twenty or so tribes remain today. They have taken to living in cave systems for cover and attacking all those who approach the tribe, particularly those who approach by air. Those who the Chinta fight are then captured and taken as slaves, feeling that it is just and that all people are like the Therans.

In combat the Chinta can throw rocks weighing up to twenty pounds with ease. They use their same attack step and the rocks have a range of 25/50/75 yards doing step 20 damage. In melee combat the Chinta are fierce opponents. Their weapons alone are enough to strike fear

into the hearts of most. They wield four foot long clubs, the last six inches of which have been dipped in tar and rolled in crushed obsidian giving the head of the club a thousand glass sharp edges. Often the glass will fall off in a wound as well causing extreme pain and requiring much time to clean properly. The Chinta know of passion Thystonius and they believe that he was once the king of the Chinta people. When they battle they seek only to please him.

With their seclusion during the Scourge the Chinta people lost much -- communication, culture and freedom -- all were taken from them, and in it's place they have gained little but solitude. The only other gift the Chinta people received during the Scourge was one of magic. While they do not wield magic freely it has become an innate part of their existence. During the scourge the Chinta lived in an underground cave surrounded by living crystal and elemental earth. This constant exposure to the magical energies of these elements enhanced the Chinta people and gave them the great strength and endurance that they possess today. Since the Scourge, they have lived in a type of harmony with the Death's Sea. That, and their inherent magical nature has also made the Chinta people resistant to the great temperatures of the Death's Sea. Indeed, the bravest of the Chinta have been known to walk the very edge of the coast of the sea, where even the transition between solid and liquid stone is unclear. The Resist Heat magic of the Chinta is similar to the Endure Cold talent. A successful spell casting test (2) allows the Chinta to make an effect test to resist that amount of heat or flame based damage. The Chinta often engage in tests of endurance to see who can stand on the shores of the sea the longest. Often these tests will go on for hours. Any Name-Giver who can stand with a Chinta on the shores of the Death's Sea earns the entire tribes respect and admiration instantly.

In appearance the Chinta are quite shocking to look at. They stand roughly eight and a half feet tall, broad of shoulder and narrow of features. The Chinta people resemble humans, though their facial features are much more chiseled giving them a fierce look. Hair and eyes are usually black, though on the younger children brownish-blonde hair is common, darkening as the child ages. The Chinta live approximately one hundred years, reaching physical maturity at age fifteen.

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Located in the footholds of the Twilight Mountains near the former troll kingdom of Ustrect, the tomb of King Runvir was built around the Oracle Font of Garlen.

The Oracle Fountain would allow a person to approach, throw in a coin, and ask one question. It would then answer the question as best it could, though sometimes the answers would be a little vague. It was tended by a priest to Garlen and six assistants.

Slightly over six hundred years ago Runvir, the King of Ustrect, used the Oracle, and a magical item known as the Stone of Wisdom, to help run the Kingdom. He followed the Oracle's advise and relied on the Oracle's prophecies. In addition, the Stone of Wisdom allowed him to see who he could trust, and prevented him from taking bad advise. With the aid of these two items, he led his kingdom to a

peace and prosperity they had never achieved before. The army was powerful enough to protect the borders, and small enough not to drain the country's resources. The arts flourished, and craftsmen became valued not only for the necessities, but for the artistic value of their crafts.

Before the King died, he started construction on his tomb. He decided the tomb should be built into the hillside with the Oracle Fountain, where he had received his best insights in running his kingdom. During the construction of his tomb, assassins from a neighboring kingdom tried to kill him. The king's guards were taken by surprise, and only the six servants in the room managed to slow down the assailants long enough for the guards to act. The servants died in their attempt, and the king rewarded their loyal servants by burying them in his unfinished tomb. He sealed them in with six slaves so that those that served him in life would have others to serve them in death.

As the King grew old, more of his loyal followers died, and he had a burial vault built into his tomb for his four most loyal warriors He buried them with their trusted warhorses, their weapons and armor, various works of art that depicted them, fragrances and oils, and items of material wealth so that they would want for nothing in the afterlife.

The King started to have his loyal palace guards interred in catacombs as they passed away. Finally, when the King passed away, he was mummified along with his two oldest, most trusted advisors. He has sealed in with everything he could possibly need in the afterlife, and knew he would have loyal servants, guardsmen, knights, and advisors waiting for him.

One hundred years later the Scourge began. The servants of Garlen sealed the tomb and oracle font, hoping that it could survive the Scourge and be reopened when the world was safe.

Though the tomb was sealed, a Horror named Skarvik the Deceiver managed to break his way in through the mountainside. He was unaware that the sealed tomb and oracle font was not a populated kaer. He started a destructive search for signs of life within the complex, and eventually made his way into the great hall. It was then that the Passion Garlen took notice of this Horror that had made his way into one of her holy shrines. She worried that he would corrupt the oracle font itself and used her power to seal all of the exits from the great hall. Sharvik the Deceiver pounded at the exits, using all of the karma he had at his disposal, but to no avail. He managed to weaken the magic that held him in the room, but could not break free. The Horror has sat there ever since.

When the Scourge ended, a questor of Garlen and his retinue returned to reopen the Oracle Fountain. They came upon Sharvik, and a mighty battle was fought. The questor's minions fell to the Horror one by one, feeding Sharvik new karma, for Sharvik feeds on death. The wounded questor retreated from the great hall with a few survivors, and found that Sharvik was unable to follow. But the magic sealing the great hall had been weakened, and Sharvik managed to animate the bodies of the fallen guards and send them after the fleeing questor. In the final battle, the last of the questor's minions fell, and the questor was trapped in the complex, unable to work the elevator by himself and escape.

When they were never heard of again, the church of Garlen presumed that the Fountain had been destroyed during the Scourge, and that the questor and his party had died while trying to find it. The church turned its efforts in other directions.

A year ago, Jorgin Tovar, an Eighth Circle Wizard Adept and advisor to Garthik One-Eye in Kratas, noticed that Garthik's once sharp mind had started to grow dull. Jorgin worried that if Garthik's enemies were to find out, they would try to overthow him. Jorgin saw that Garthik had begun to doubt his own judgement. Jorgin then began to research ways to restore Garthik to his former self. After

nearly a year of researching, he believes he has found the answer. A magical item named the Stone of Wisdom was said to have vast power in aiding its wielder to see the truth and to think more clearly. The Stone of Wisdom was last reported being in the possession of King Runvir, the troll king of ancient Ustrect. There were no records of anyone having possessed the Stone since then.

More research turned up the fact that Runvir was entombed at the Oracle Font of Garlen in the foothills of the Twilight Peaks by Death's Sea. Figuring that the Stone was entombed with him, Jorgin set about hiring heroes he thought were capable of entering the tomb and returning with the Stone.

What Jorgin was unaware of was the fact that Vistosh, the leader of a rival faction in Kratas, had already begun to suspect that something was wrong with Garthik. Vistosh was unable to get close enough to Garthik to find out what, so he started to have Garthik's advisors and associates watched. When Jorgin hires the heroes, Vistosh is informed. Though he doesn't know what they were hired for originally, he plans to have them captured in order to find out.

When this fails, and the heroes leave the city, Vistosh relies on his spies to find out what is going on. All they can find out is that Jorgin hired a band of heroes to retrieve some lost magical item. Vistosh figures that the item must be important, so he places spies at the city gates to await the heroes' return. Once they return, his spies will try to trick them out of the item. If this fails, he has ruffians who will take a more physical approach.

Location

The Tomb is located in the footholds of the Twilight Mountains, on the slopes overlooking Death's Sea. From Bartertown, center the Sextant on Kratas.Align q with Jerris. Sight along point d and follow Dis at sundown. The Tomb lies 16 days walking, 10 days riding from Throal.

Plot Synopsis

Lately, in the city of Kratas, the famed ork thief Garthik One-Eye has been falling to the ravages of age. He is the ruler of the city, and his advisors are worried that his mental facilities are beginning to slip. They fear that rival gangs, especially Brocher's Brood led by Vistosh, a corrupted elf and former Blood Warder to the Elven Queen Alachia, will soon make a move to take over control of the city.

One of Garthik's advisors, a Wizard Adept named Jorgin Tovar, has stumbled upon information about a magical pendent called the Stone of Wisdom. He believes that this pendent can offset the effects of age on Garthik's once brilliant mind. Jorgin has spent the past few months researching the item, and now believes that he has found its location.

Jorgin believes that the Stone of Wisdom was entombed in a lost shrine to Garlen with a troll king named Runvir who ruled over the ancient land of Ustrect . Now that Jorgin has discovered what he believes to be the location of the shrine, he needs to recover the pendent. However, Jorgin knows that Vistosh has spies keeping an eye on Garthik's people so Jorgin has decided to hire outsiders to send after the item.

Jorgin will meet with the characters at a small inn called The Raven. He will act the part of a wealthy

mage in need of adventurers to recover an ancient item of interest to him. He will offer the adventurers 500 silvers each, and the promise of powerful patronage, if they recover the item.

Once the players have agreed to go on this mission, he will supply the location, and the approximate amount of time it will take. He will pay half of the money up front, and make one of the party members take a Blood Promise (Gamemaster Book page 48) to return the Stone of Wisdom to Jorgin at The Raven within one month. Once that is done, the players will outfit themselves and head off to the Twilight Peaks.

Unkown to the players, Vistosh has had Jorgin followed, and now knows that the players are involved with something to do with Garthik. He doesn't know what they are up to, and will send a group of thugs to try and capture them and bring them in for questioning. The thugs will fight to subdue, and should be driven off.

The players then head off towards the Twilight Peaks, where they will fight off a group of troll skyraiders, a few fire eagles, and finally find the entrance to the Tomb of Runvir. After battling their way through the tomb, rediscovering the Oracle Font, and recovering the Stone of Wisdom, the players will head back.

Once back at the gates of Kratas, agents of Brocher's Brood will intercept them and try to gain whatever it is that they recovered, first by trickery, and then by force. Once the tagents of Vistosh have been dealt with, the players can return to the Raven, meet with Jorgin, and complete their mission. Once this is done, Jorgin will use the Stone of Wisdom to help Garthik regain his senses. Finally, the now recovered Garthik will meet with the characters and congatulate them. The party that aids Garthik One-Eye will certainly be heroes, and will have earned the gratitude of a very powerful individual.

The Mystery Mage

Overview

This encounter starts after the heroes have arranged for rooms at The Raven, an odd inn that used to be a guard post in the city. The party now sits in the common room, enjoying a cool drink, when a mage stops by. looking for heroes to aid him in recovering a magical item.

Setting the Stage

You are finally relaxing in a small tavern after locking most of your gear in your rooms. The ale is cool and refreshing, and the barmaids are friendly and attractive, fliting merrily with the various customers.

The heavy wooden table bears the scars of past customers carving names and sayings into its surface. The crowd is quiet, sitting in groups, playing cards or dice, talking in hushed tones, and drinking ale or wine.

You notice a man enter and approach the bar. He is wearing dark robes embroidered in odd geometric

patterns. He talks quietly with the bartender who then points in your direction. The man turns, looks you all over, and approaches.

"Greetings, travelers. I am in need of a brave band of heroes, and my friend Klevis, the innkeeper, has advised me to speak with you."

You look the man over. He seems to be past middle-age, possibly in his late fifties, early sixties. His eyes still look clear and lively, and his hands are steady.

"I am Jorgin, a mage here in Kratas. I have been conducting research into a magical item for some time and I believe I have finally learned the location of the item. Now I need to hire a group of heroes to go and recover it. This should take a few weeks, but no longer than a month. For this, I will supply a map to where the item is, and 500 silvers each, half in advance, half upon completion, to anyone willing to undertake this dangerous journey. Are you interested?"

If the heroes agree, he will continue. "The item is The Stone of Wisdom, a large pearl over two inches in diameter, on a beautiful chain. It is located in the tomb of King Runvir, a troll who ruled the ancient lands of Ustrect. He was entombed with countless amounts of other treasure, of which I care nothing for. It is yours for the taking. The Stone of Wisdom must be returned to me. If you agree to this, I will swear a Blood Promise with one of you, the promise will be that you will return the Stone of Wisdom to me, here at the Raven, within six weeks. I will promise to pay you the remainder of the silver owed to you, and to help you research two thread ranks of magical items that you may possess. Is it a deal?"

Once the heroes agree to these terms, the Blood Promise will be sworn. This will reguire 4 points of Blood Magic from both Jorgin and one of the heroes. Each must describe what talent or skill they will use to accomplish the deed. Jorgin will swear to use his Item History talent for the month after the heroes return with the Stone of Wisdom. Whatever skill or talent the player picks will be increased by 1 step until the Stone of Wisdom is returned to Jorgin. Jorgin's Item History will be increased by 1 step until he completes his two weeks of research into whatever magic item the heroes wish him to research.

Once this is done, Jorgin will get out a map to the tomb and hand it to the hero who made the promise with him. He will then get up to leave. He will turn to the heroes and say, "I wish you good travelling, my friends. When you return and meet with me here, I will be the first to buy you all drinks." The mage turns, and heads out the door into the darkness.

Behind the Scenes

Vistosh has spies following Jorgin. They will not know what was discussed, but they will report the meeting to him. This will cause Vistosh to become curious, and he will order a band of his ruffians to capture the heroes in order to find out what the meeting was about.

The Raven charges 5 coppers to stay in the common room, and 1 silver to have a private room. The private rooms have one large bed that can sleep up to three people, and a large trunk. The door can be barred from the inside, and the windows still have bars on them from when this was a town watch building.

As for food and drink, average ale goes for 5 coppers, and good ale for 1 silver. A bottle of wine goes for 2 silvers. A simple meal of cheeses, breads, and fruits goes for 3 coppers, and a meal of pork,

bread, cheeses, fruit and an average ale goes for 1 silver. The tavern closes as two in the morning when Klevis, the owner leaves with the day's profits, and Harris, the evening bartender, bars the door, and spreads his bedroll out behind the bar.

Troubleshooting

This encounter should end with the characters accepting Jorgin's offer. Even if they do not, Jorgin will beg them to reconsider, and tell them he will return the next night to see if they have changes their minds. The conversation with him will still be reported to Vistosh, and he will have them attacked, not knowing that they refused Jorgin's offer. This should enrage the characters enough that the next meeting they should take the offer.

Heading Out

Overview

After outfitting themselves, the heroes start to head out of Kratas and on their way. As they head through the streets of Kratas, they are ambushed by ruffians working for Brocher's Brood. These ruffians are trying to capture them alive to bring them to Vistosh, so they will fight to subdue.

Setting the Stage

You have paid the inflated prices charged by the merchants in Kratas for the supplies needed to make the journey to the Twilight Peaks, and are now heading out of the city of thieves. You make your way through the twisting, rubble strewn streets in the direction of the city gates, contemplating the adventure you are about to undertake. Suddenly, there is some movement in the shadows.

Behind the Scenes

A group of ruffians will attempt to ambush the heroes and take them in for Vistosh to questions. The will attack quickly and quietly. The heroes will have to make PER Tests with a target of 6 to avoid being taken by surprise for the first round. There are two ruffians for each hero.

Ruffians

DEX: 13: 6/D10 **STR:** 13: 6/D10 **TOU:** 13: 6/D10
PER: 9: 4/D6 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 10: 5/D8

Initiative: 6/D10
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 9/D8+D6
Damage: Fist 6/D10, Club 9/D8+D6, Short Sword 10/D10+D6
Number of Spells: N/A
Spellcasting: N/A

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 6/D10

Effect: N/A

Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 35

Combat Movement: 30

Wound Threshold: 9

Full Movement: 60

Unconsciousness Rating: 27

Legend Points: 60 each

Equipment: Short sword, club, dagger, leather armor

Loot: 1D6 x 10 silvers

Skills: Melee Weapons 3: 9/D8+D6, Streetwise 2: 6/D10, Unarmed Combat 3: 9/D8+D6

Commentary: These thugs are working for Vistosh and will attack to subdue, using the Attacking To Stun rules (Earthdawn page 200). Each ruffian will retreat if he takes two wounds. If caught and questioned, it will take an Good Success against their Social Defense to make them talk since they have a huge fear of what Vistosh can do to them. All they know is that Vistosh hired them to capture the heroes alive, and hold them in an abandoned building in the eastern section of town.

Checking up on Vistosh

A successful Streetwise Test with a Target of 5 will uncover the fact that Vistosh heads the Brocher's Brood, the second most powerful gang in the city. A Good Success will also find out that Vistosh is an elf from the Blood Woods. An Excellent Success will find out all of the above and the fact that Vistosh used to be a Blood Warder for Queen Alachia before being banished. He now intends to replace Garthik One-Eye as ruler of Kratas.

Checking up on Jorgin

A successful Streetwise Test with a target of 5 will uncover the fact that Jorgin is a powerful Wizard Adept who is well respected for his honest dealings with others. A Good Success will uncover that Jorgin works for Garthik One-Eye. An Excellent Success uncovers the fact that Jorgin is one of Garthik's most trusted advisors.

Troubleshooting

If the characters are losing to the ruffians, have some of Jorgin's ruffians come to their aid, holding off the attackes while giving the characters time to escape. If the characters capture a ruffian, question him, and decide to check up on the meeting site, remind them of the Blood Promise, and the speed necessary to complete their mission. If they insist on checking out the meeting, it will not take place since Vistosh will be warned that the heroes defeated his band of ruffians.

Trolls of the Peaks

Overview

The heroes reach the foothills of the Twilight Peaks and are attacked by Troll Crystal Raiders who are patrolling through the area. These trolls intend to take the heroes and make them into Newots (the troll

equivalent of slaves).

Setting the Stage

You have been journying for almost two weeks. You have travelled through forests and plains. Now, the magestic mountains that make up the Twighlight Peaks are before you. You can't be more than a few days from your destination. As you cross through the foothills and head towards the southern slopes, there is the sound of crashing coming through the trees that line the trail. Suddenly, a half-a-dozen trolls emerges from the woods before you. One of them strides forward and speaks, using the rough Dwarven tongue used across Barsaive.

"Hold, trespassers. I am Thoris Rockthrower of the Bloodlores. Surrender yourselves and be prepared to be taken to the Trollmoot as Newots."

Behind the Scenes

A character who makes successful Troll Lore Test with a target of 5 will realize that a Newot is about the same as being a slave. A Good Success will let the character know that the Bloodlores are one of the more brutal Trollmoots. If the characters do not surrender, the trolls will attack, only they will attack to kill, not to capture.

Thoris Rockthrower

DEX: 13: 6/D10 **STR:** 17: 7/D12 **TOU:** 15: 6/D10
PER: 12: 5/D8 **WIL:** 14: 6/D10 **CHA:** 13: 6/D10

Initiative: 4/D6
Number of Attacks: 1 (2)
Attack: 11/D10+D8
Second Attack: 9/D8+D6
Damage: 12/2D10
Number of Spells: N/A
Spellcasting: N/A
Effect: N/A
Death Rating: 38
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 29

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 2
Knockdown: 7/D12
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60
Legend Points: 100

Equipment: Ring mail, broadsword
Loot: 2D4 x 10 silvers
Skills: Air Sailing 3: 9/D8+D6, Melee 5: 11/D10+D8, Second Attack 3: 9/D8+D6, Streetwise 3: 8/2D6, Tactics 3: 8/2D6, Wilderness Survival 3: 8/2D6
Racial Abilities: Heat Sight (to 250 yards)

Troll Warriors (5)

DEX: 13: 6/D10 **STR:** 17: 7/D12 **TOU:** 15: 6/D10
PER: 12: 5/D8 **WIL:** 14: 6/D10 **CHA:** 13: 6/D10

Initiative: 4/D6
Number of Attacks: 1

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7

Attack: 9/D8+D6
Damage: 12/2D10
Number of Spells: N/A
Spellcasting: N/A
Effect: N/A
Death Rating: 38
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 29
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 1
Knockdown: 7/D12
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60
Legend Points: 95 each
Equipment: Hardened leather armor, footman's shield, broadsword
Loot: 2D4 x 10 silvers
Skills: Air Sailing 2: 8/2D6, Melee 3: 9/D8+D6, Streetwise 1: 6/D10, Tactics 1: 6/D10, Wilderness Survival 1: 6/D10
Racial Abilities: Heat Sight (to 250 yards)

Commentary: These trolls will fight to the death or until Thoris Rockthrower falls, in which case, they will retreat.

Once the trolls have been defeated, the heroes can continue of their quest, though the encounter should serve to remind them that the Twilight Peaks are the homes to numerous Trollmoots, and that the trolls may not take trespassing and tomb robbing lightly.

Troubleshooting

The only possible trouble is if the trolls actually defeat the characters. If this looks likely, have a drakkar from a rival clan show up in the sky overhead, and Thoris will order a retreat, promising to come back for the characters another time.

The Tomb of King Runvir

Overview

The characters reach the tomb of King Runvir, explore the long forgotten crypt, and discover the Horror waiting within. Discoveries within the tomb will remind the heroes that before the Scourge slavery once flourished in Barsaive.

Setting the Stage

After spending the past few weeks travelling and fighting your way past the trolls that call this mountain range their home, you are moving around the southern slopes of the Twilight Peaks. Death's Sea blazes away, glowing a hellish orangish red to your left. You are following what remains of a cobblestone road, though there are only traces of the road left, most of it has been covered with rubble or overgrown with dried, windblown weeds. It is hot. Even though it is not yet summer, it is uncomfortably hot. You wipe the sweat away, and peer through the haze. The road seems to have been

climbing for the past hour, and now, up ahead, you can make out the mouth of a cave. You make your way up, and enter the deep cave. It is cooler inside, and the vast cave must be easily 100' by 70'. There seems to be places to tie up horses, and places to build fires and set up camp.

Themes and Images

The characters should feel relief when they leave the heat and find the still sealed tomb. The relief should slowly turn to suspense and fear as they get deeper into the tomb and realize that the tomb was breached after all. Images should include the darkness, the character's lights reflecting off of the walls and floors, casting eerie shadows all about them. The discovery of scenes of beauty, and excellent craftsmenship, offset by the appearance of Horror constructs and the final Horror.

Behind the Scenes

The large cave is where visitors used to make camp and stay while waiting to see the oracle. It is here that the heroes can make camp and ready themselves for the exploration about to come.

Locations

1. Before you is a very plain wooden door bound in iron. There is a large keyhole in the center. The area in front of the door is trapped. In a small alcove there is a hidden lever that disarms the pit.
   Pit Trap
   Detection Difficulty: 7

   Disarm Difficulty: 7
   Trigger Condition: Pressure Plate
   Trap Initiative: 8
   Trap Effect: 25 foot fall for Step 15/D20+D6 damage.
   Once the character hits the bottom, he triggers the second part:
   Spear Trap
   Detection Difficulty: 9

   Disarm Difficulty: 7 on the same lever as the pit disarm.
   Trigger Condition: Pressure Plate
   Trap Initiative: 10
   Trap Effect: Spears launch from the walls and do Step 15/D20+D6 damage

   The door is locked with a expertly crafted mundane lock, target of 10. Once opened, a plainly carved hall extends for 30' and ends in a door with another door on the right wall.

2. Another pit trap is located at the end of the hall by the two doors. Use the Pit Trap above without the spear trap. One door leads to a room filled with gears and mechanisms. The scene is dominated by a large crank. This is used to raise and lower the elevator that the other door leads to (A). Neither is locked.
3. Fake Door. This door leads nowhere and is bolted to the wall.
4. Lying on the floor is another ornately carved wooden door, this time depicting horsemen charging across the plains.

5. You see four stone caskets, and lying by the sides of these caskets are the remains of four horses. By each casket is a work of art, one is a small statue of a horseman in armor, mounted on a charging horse (worth 65 sp), one is a painting showing a female warrior in armor (worth 55 sp), one is a tapestry showing an armored Dwarf on a war-pony, and the last is a painting of an Ork cavalryman on a rearing warhorse. Against the far wall is a chest (magically locked with a target of 12 needed to open). Inside is a bag containing 100 sp. The chest also contains 2 booster potions, a Desperate Blow amulet, riding tack trimmed in silver worth 250 sp, a saddle trimmed in silver, with matching saddlebags worth 500 sp, and a small bag with 30 gp. This vault has been corrupted and each of the former heroes is now a Cadaver Man wearing 4 points of armor, and carrying rusted, pitted swords. These Cadaver Men have an additional +2 on their attack tests (included in the stats below).

Cadaver Men (4)

DEX: 4/D6 **STR:** 6/D10 **TOU:** 7/D12
PER: 3/D4 **WIL:** 6/D10 **CHA:** 4/D6

Initiative: 4/D6
Number of Attacks: 1 (4)
Attack: 8/2D6
Damage: 10/D10+D6
Number of Spells: N/A
Spellcasting: N/A
Effect: N/A
Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune
Equipment: Rusted swords, rotting armor
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 11
Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 7/D12
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 25
Full Movement: 50
Legend Points: 125 each

Commentary: They will frenzy after taking a Wound, attacking four times per round until they have killed whoever wounded them, or until 10 rounds have passed. They are the remains of King Runvir's elite warriors.

1. This door is beautifully carved in abstract designs.
2. You enter a plain guardroom with a rotting table and benches, and a barrel that doesn't look water tight.
3. This room contains branding irons, manacles, whips, clubs, and other instruments of torture. As you look over the scene you notice something gathering shape from the blackness. A Demiwraith will attack, it has an additional +2 on its attack tests.

Demiwraith

DEX: 7/D12 **STR:** 6/D10 **TOU:** 6/D10
PER: 6/D10 **WIL:** 8/2D6 **CHA:** 5/D8

Initiative: 9/D8+D6
Number of Attacks: 1

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 9 (14)

Attack: 9/D8+D6
Damage: 9/D8+D6
Number of Spells: (1)
Spellcasting: 12/2D10
Effect: Chilling Touch
Death Rating: 38
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune
Equipment: None
Loot: See below

Social Defense: 13
Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 4
Knockdown: 7/D12
Recovery Tests: 1
Combat Movement: 60
Full Movement: 120
Legend Points: 275

Commentary: A Demiwraith is not a true undead so its Spell Defense is raised to a 14 against spells designed to effect undead. When a Demiwraith hits an opponent, it must roll a Spellcasting Test against the Spell Defense of the target. If successful, the target will take 1 point of damage per round and be frozen in his tracks until he makes a WIL roll of 9 or better or until the effect is dispelled with a 9 or better.

This Demiwaith is the remains of the last questor of Garlen who tried to explore the tomb decades ago. There was no one left to work the elevator, and he was stuck down here where he eventually became possessed. The brooch has symbols of Garlen carved into it.

You watch as the fallen body regains a peaceful appearance, lying on the floor in torn robes that identify him as a questor to Garlen. Hanging from his belt is a broadsword (it is the sword Razorclaw, see Treasures), and pinned to his chest is a beautiful golden brooch (worth 250 silvers).

4. You open the door and see a spectacular sight. Display cases line the walls showing small trinkets and items from the days of King Runvir. They serve to preserve the culture that prospered under his leadership. Most of the cases are smashed, and most of the items are broken or rotted. (A successful PER TEST with a target of 7 will find a small piece of lava carved to resemble a castle tower worth 45 silvers that is still intact). Standing up from near one of the cases is a rotting body holding a sword. As it begins to move towards you, you can see another lurching forward. Two more step out into the open.

   There are four Cadaver Men in the room. They have nothing of value, and are the remains of some of guards that the questors to Garlen brought with him. They were animated by the Horror trapped in room 19.

Cadaver Men (4)

DEX: 4/D6 **STR:** 6/D10 **TOU:** 7/D12
PER: 3/D4 **WIL:** 6/D10 **CHA:** 4/D6
Initiative: 4/D6
Number of Attacks: 1 (4)
Attack: 7/D12
Damage: 10/D10+D6
Number of Spells: N/A
Spellcasting: N/A

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 11
Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 7/D12

Effect: N/A

Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune
Equipment: Rusted swords, rotting armor
Loot: None

Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 25
Full Movement: 50
Legend Points: 125 each

There are five other doors in the room, though one of them has been knocked from its hinges (leading to area 13.

5. Another stuck door, this one leads to a small storeroom containing candles, rotting furs, decaying cloth, stoneworking tools, torches, and a keg of oil.
6. The door to this room is stuck and will have to be broken down, though it is old and rotting, so it should not be much trouble. As you enter the room, a soft light glows from a fountain of water. A female voice softly says, "Enter in peace, my children". The fountain has two engraved silver bowls, one on each side. (Each is worth 25 silvers). There are coins in the fountain, mostly silver, but there is some gold (63 silvers and 8 gold pieces).

   A coin thrown into the fountain will activate the Oracle, and the female voice will be heard, "What information do you seek, my child?" The Oracle will only answer one question per person per year. The water can be used as a healing potion, or a Kelia's Antidote, but only if drunk from the silver bowl. The font can only be used this way ten times per day before the magic becomes inert. It can also act as a Last Chance Potion, but doing so will render the font's magic inert for a month.

   There is a door to one side of the fountain, and a passageway leading to a bunch of doors on the other.

   The doors (in hall A) all lead to small chambers containing a rotting cot, and a decaying chest. The chests are all empty. The other door leads to a more ornate bedroom. The bedroom has a carved wooden bed with molding covers, a desk collapsing from dry rot, and a rotting rug. There is also two more rotting corpses who were more guards of the questor. The corpses turn and attack any intruders. On the desk is an ornate writing kit worth 40 sp.

Cadaver Men (2)

DEX: 4/D6 **STR:** 6/D10 **TOU:** 7/D12
PER: 3/D4 **WIL:** 6/D10 **CHA:** 4/D6
Initiative: 4/D6
Number of Attacks: 1 (4)
Attack: 7/D12
Damage: 10/D10+D6
Number of Spells: N/A
Spellcasting: N/A
Effect: N/A

Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 11
Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 7/D12
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 25
Full Movement: 50
Legend Points: 125 each

Equipment: Rusted swords, rotting armor

Loot: None

7. The door to this room is locked with a magical lock, target number of 11. As the door opens and the light penetrates into the darkness a grisly sight greets your eyes. There are six skeletal figures huddled by the door, wearing rags and rotted clothes. A huge stone slab rests in the center of the floor. The stone is carved with the following words in trollish:

   Here rests Thom Hendriks, Garl Kelling, Jarvin Keyes, Igan Tuffer, Logar Jant, and Brak Trevin. They were the most loyal servants a King could ever have, and gave their lives so that their King would live. They rest here in a place of honor for all times. With them are entombed six slaves so that they may enjoy in the afterlife the same service they provided in life.

   Beneath the stone slab, that needs a STR test with a target of 10 to move, there is ten feet of packed earth covering the caskets of the servants. They are buried in the clothes they died in, and one has a 40 sp carved silver ring.

8. Lying sprawled on the floor are three bodies. One is in rusting and torn metal armor, and a broken sword is still in his grasp. The other two are in rotted robes of priests of Garlen. There is nothing of value.
9. You step into these corridors and realize that you have entered catacombs. There are burial niches in both walls holding skeletal figures in rotted armor clutching rusted and pitted weapons. Seven of these bodies have items of jewelry: a 15 sp carved brass ring, a 65 sp amber pendant, a 25 sp amethyst ring, a 40 sp silver pendant shaped like a lion, a 15 sp plain silver ring, a 55 sp ivory bracelet, and a 65 sp plain gold ring.

   If disturbed - you can hear the bones beginning to move, the grating of metal and bone, as the skeletal remains lurch forward. There are 12 Skeletons that are animated by the Horror's evil. They are all over seven feet tall, being the remains of troll warriors.

Skeletons (12)

DEX: 5/D8 **STR:** 5/D8 **TOU:** 4/D6
PER: 5/D8 **WIL:** 7/D12 **CHA:** 5/D8

Initiative: 4/D6
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 8/2D6
Number of Spells: N/A
Spellcasting: N/A
Effect: N/A
Death Rating: 22
Wound Threshold: 5
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune
Equipment: Rusty Sword
Loot: As above

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 11
Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 4
Knockdown: 5/D8
Recovery Tests: 1
Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60
Legend Points: 20 each

10. Before you the corridor is packed with stone, dirt, and other rubble. Obviously, the ceiling collapsed and this passage was buried.
    Iron Bars Trap

    This trap drops heavy iron gates, blocking the passage on either side of the number 7, and hopefully trapping any intruder.
    Detection Difficulty: 7

    Disarm Difficulty: 8 (a switch hidden behind a false stone)
    Trigger Condition: Pressure plate
    Trap Initiative: 7
    Trap Effect: The person will be trapped until rescued. If they make a poor success in initiative, they will be hit by the bars for step 12/2D10 damage. A STR Test of 20 is needed to lift the cage, up to two people can try on each side of the cage, for a total of 4 people trying at a time. Add the combines STR Steps together and make one roll.

11. You open the door, and shine a light inside. You can see a rack, several manacles mounted to the walls, an iron maiden, a brazier, and a pit filled with some type of bubbling liquid. The bubbling liquid is a powerful acid that will do step 10 damage for 3 rounds after contact. This room was used to enforce discipline and execute criminals that were found guilty by subjecting them to a question to the oracle font. It was rarely used, and it was highly frowned upon by the priets to Garlen who manned the font.
12. As you enter this vast chamber, easily over 100' long by 80' wide, you look around in wonderment. The room is still lit by several light quartzes mounted in the four huge pillars that support the ceiling. There are seven display cases located around the walls, and each has a tapestry hanging behind it.

    The tapestries depict the reign of King Runvir, showing him as a babe, a youth, a young troll warrior leading troops into battle, being crowned king, being married, standing in front of the beginning of the tomb's construction, and the funeral procession into the tomb. Each of the display cases hold actual items from those times. The royal rattle, his first toys, his first sword and shield, the wedding coronets, the tools used to start construction, and the flag that covered the body during the procession. A PER roll of 6 is needed to notice that in the last three depictions of the King, he is wearing a huge pearl on a silver chain. The pearl must be two inches in diameter.

13. The door before you is beautifully carved, and forged of brass (they will rediate an astral presence on a Astral Sight Test of 6 or better, showing a web of astal force reinforcing the door, it is the will of Garlen that has sealed the doors so that the Horror inside can not escape). This discription applies to all doors into this room. None are locked, however.

    Before you is another spectacular sight. A vast throne room with huge stone pillars that reach to the ceiling, and steps leading up to a huge black marble throne veined in silver. There is a closed door on the raised dais (stuck shut), and seated on the throne is a large, hulking figure with scaley skin. He has leathery wings, and a sword leaning against the throne. He stretches, and you can hear a voice coming from inside your heads. "Grettings, my little toys. It has been so long since I had someone to play with."

Skarvik the Deceiver

DEX: 10/D10+D6 **STR:** 12/2D10 **TOU:** 12/2D10
PER: 9/D8+D6 **WIL:** 9/D8+D6 **CHA:** 10/D10+D6

Initiative: 10/D10+D6
Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: 13/D12+D10
Damage: 18/D20+D12
Number of Spells: 2
Spellcasting: 12/2D10
Effect: 12/2D10 mystic damage
Death Rating: 60
Wound Threshold: 18
Unconsciousness Rating: 52
Karma Points: 10

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 12
Social Defense: 13
Armor: 9
Mystic Armor: 5
Knockdown: 12/2D10
Recovery Tests: 8
Combat Movement: 75 (90)
Full Movement: 150 (180)
Legend Points: 1500
Karma Step: 8/2D6

Powers: Animate Dead 13/D12+d10, Horror Mark 12/2D10, Mystic Blast (under spell effect)
Equipment: Great Sword
Loot: The great sword is worth 1000 silvers and counts as legend points.

Commentary: Sharvik broke into the tomb several centuries ago, but was trapped by the powerful magical wards placed in the great hall. Since then he has animated some undead, and had a good time when the questors of Garlen arrived, but is still bored silly. He will attack to kill as many as possible, needing to feed on their deaths in order to accumulate karma. For every person he kills, Sharvik gains one Karma Point. Sharvik gains an additional point for every circle an adept has attained.

Sharvik cannot escape this room yet. He needs to accumulate 30 Karma Points to break free. Because of this, he tends to avoid using karma. Of course, he is intelligent, and if it looks like he is losing, he will start to use what few karma points he has left to try and survive.

If the heroes are starting to lose, all they have to do is run from the room and the Horror will be unable to catch them. They can then use the Oracle Font at 11 to heal themselves, and attack again.

14. As your light illuminates the walls of the corridor, you can see strange writings engraved into the stone. The writing is in trollish and reads "You are entering the Burial Vault of King Runvir the Beneficent. Pay Respects to a Great Troll and a Great King."
15. You enter the burial vault of the King. The chamber is huge, with eight pillars reaching to the ceiling with skeletal remains chained to them. There are three stone caskets, and though all are ornately carved, there is no doubt as to which holds the remains of the King. By each casket is a tapestry depicting the a man in the prime of life. Two are dressed in the embroidered robes of mages, but the center one is that of a troll in armor, mounted on a rearing warhorse. It must be the King.

    By the King's casket is an armor rack holding troll sized chain mail, and a trollsword (+2 extra steps of damage since it was forged by a Weaponsmith). Both seem to be in perfect condition.

    In one corner of the room are ceramic jars sealed with wax (food and seeds, all of which have

gone bad centuries ago). There are bones of horses still laid out in the center of the vault. Furniture is set up, along with games of chance, and books. There is a small box at the foot of the king's casket that holds 5 sticks of incense (if the incense is used to help meditate during a Karma Ritual, the adept will be able to recieve twice as many Karma Points, though he will still have to pay the full cost in Legend Points).

There are a few statues and paintings, but the statues look too heavy to move, and the paintings are all old and peeling. There is a chest in front of the casket of the King that holds a gold bracelet worth 150 silvers, a gold ring shaped like a lion's head worth 130 silvers, and a gold neckchain worth 100 silvers.

Lastly, a locked chest (target of 8 to open) in the south-west corner of the room holds 1500 sp, 300 gp, a golden ring with a sapphire worth 500 sp, a small bag with 2 700 sp emeralds, and a ruby pendent worth 1000 sp.

You open the casket of the king, and shine your light inside. You hold your breath in wonder when you see the mummified body of the troll king. Around its neck, suspended on a silvery chain, is a two inch pearl that you realize must be the Stone of Wisdom.

Troubleshooting

There are two things that can go wrong. The heroes could get killed by the Horror or his minions, or they could retreat without the Stone of Wisdom. If it looks like the Horror is going to kill them all, Garlen can speak to them in their heads, telling them to retreat from the chamber and find the Oracle Font which can be used to heal them. She will tell them that she has the Horror trapped within the throne room and that he can not escape.

If they decide to leave without the Stone of Wisdom, remind them of the Blood Promise, and how unhealthy it would be to have a powerful wizard angry at them.

Firebirds, Very Pretty

Overview

This encounter takes place after the heroes leave the tomb and head back down the Twilight Peaks to return to Kratas. As they head down the slopes near Death's Sea, a trio of Fire Eagles.

Setting the Stage

As you make the slow trip down the lower reaches of Twilight Peaks, you feel the stifling heat rising of off Death's Sea. Your quest is half over, now all that remains is to return to Kratas and complete your deal.

You wipe the sweat from your brows when you catch a bit of movement from the corner of your eye.

Suddenly, an ear-piercing scream breaks the silence.

Behind the Scenes

The heroes have attracted the attention of a flock of six fire eagles that have been roosting in the mountains nearby. They dive down out of the sky to attack the characters using swooping attacks. Once four have been rendered unconscious or dead, the rest will flee. This encounter serves to remind the heroes of the dangers involved with travelling this close to Death's Sea.

Fire Eagles (6)

DEX: 11/D10+D8 **STR:** 5/D8 **TOU:** 4/D6
PER: 5/D8 **WIL:** 5/D8 **CHA:** 6/D10

Initiative: 11/D10+D8
Number of Attacks: 3
Attack: 8/2D6
Damage: Claws (x2): 6/D10
Beak: 5/D8
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 6/D10
Effect: 8/2D6 (fire tail)
Death Rating: 30
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 21
Equipment: None
Loot: Fire eagle eggs, fire eagle feathers

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 8
Armor: N/A
Mystic Armor: 2
Knockdown: 7/D12
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 110 / 50
Full Movement: 220
Legend Points: 85 each

Commentary: Fire eagles are predatory birds that nest atop the bizaar rock formations that form along the shores of Death's Sea. their twelve-foot wingspan makes these birds resemble large eagles with continually flaming feathers, the flames fueled by the elemental fire in their blood. The razor-sharp claws of the fire eagles area shiny black and usually more than four inches long. These birds fiercely territorial; only oneperson has ever claimed to have tamed one, and that was the great beastmaster Nil Tasio of the Dragon Mountains.

The fire eagles make swooping attacks but do not take the -2 penalty to their Physical Defense. They attack primarily with their claws. A deadly side effect of the swooping attack is the trail of fire that follows a fire eagle. After it attacks, the fire eagle makes a Spellcasting Test. If the result is greater than the target's Spell Defense, the target takes damage from the fire. Mystic Armor and various magical forms of protection from fire are effective against this damage.

If encountered on the ground, a fire eagle will attack with beak and claws. The fire eagle generates fire equal to a large campfire.

Fire eagle feathers do not remain on fire if taken from its body; the fire is a side-effect of the elemental fire that courses through its blood. The feathers possess certain other qualities that alchemists, elementalists, and sages find valuable, however, and can be sold for considerable profit. Fire eagle eggs throb with elemental fire. They are extremely rare and extremely valuable, mostly because many magic items based on elemental fire contains pieces of fire eagle egg.

Once the fire eagles have been driven off, the heroes can continue to Kratas.

Troubleshooting

The only thing that can go wrong is if the fire eagles wipe out the characters. This is highly unlikely unless the heroes are in terrible shape when they leave the tomb. If this is the case, reduce the number of fire eagles, or skip this encounter altogether.

Home Again, Home Again

Overview

In this encounter, the heroes make their way through the gates of Kratas. Once through the gates, they will be detained by agents of Bocher's Brood claiming to be agents of Jorgin the Mage. They will claim that Jorgin has been detained with other business, and has sent them for the item.

Setting the Stage

It has been a long couple of weeks, trekking through the plains and woodlands of Barsaive, sleeping in the great outdoors, and bathing in whatever streams you could find.

Now, your muscles ache, your clothes are dirty and torn, and you woud kill, well maybe not kill, but certainly maim, for a nice, cool ale. Finally, you approach the gates to Kratas and the end of your long quest.

As you pass through the gates, the few guards there are, if you can call them that, look you all over. One steps forwards with a smile on his face and says, "Welcome to Kratas. The entry fee is five silvers each."

You look them over, but decide against forcing your way though. All it would do is invite retaliation later during your stay in the city of thieves. You reluctantly pay the toll and continue past the gates.

Suddenly, a dwarf comes hurrying your way. He stops about ten feet away and looks you all over. A smile breaks out across his face and he steps towards you, sticking out his right hand.

"Greetings, my friends. I am Thygold Doriksin, secretary to Jorgin the Mage. I am glad to see that you have returned safely to Kratas. I hope your mission went well?"

Thygold will listen to whatever the heroes have to say and then continue talking, "Jorgin has been called away on urgent business and I have been watching the southern gate for about a week now, hoping to catch you upon entering. I was instructed to take charge of the item, and see to your payment. May I see it please?"

Behind the Scenes

Thygold is working for the blood elf Vistosh and Brocher's Brood. He has been watching the gates for about a week, that much of his story is true, but the rest is total fiction. He is not sure what he is supposed to intercept, but he is an excellent actor, besides being a Fourth Circle Thief Adept. He will do his best to try and talk the heroes out of the item, claiming that he will meet them with the rest of their reward at The Raven.

Thygold will need a Good Success on his Acting Test, with the target being the highest Social Defense of the characters. If successful, explain to the players that the dwarf is trustworthy, and his offer is valid. If it is an Average Success, explain that his story sounds good, but it is a little suspicious. If he fails his Acting Test, the heroes will see through his plan.

If the heroes seem unwilling to hand over the Stone of Wisdom, Thygold will motion for his ruffians to attack, backing away from the conflict. On the second round, he will use his Silent Walk to get behind someone and use his Surprise Strike.

Thygold

Fourth Circle Dwarf Thief

DEX: 16: 7/D12 **STR:** 13: 6/D10 **TOU:** 13: 6/D10
PER: 14: 6/D10 **WIL:** 11: 5/D8 **CHA:** 16: 7/D12

Initiative: 7/D12

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 11/D10+D8

Damage: 10/D10+D6
Surprise: 17/D20+D10

Number of Spells: N/A

Spellcasting: N/A

Effect: N/A

Death Rating: 55

Wound Threshold: 9

Unconsciousness Rating: 43

Karma Pool: 12

Physical Defense: 9

Spell Defense: 8

Social Defense: 9

Armor: 2

Mystic Armor: 2

Knockdown: 6/D10

Recovery Tests: 2

Combat Movement: 33

Full Movement: 65

Legend Points: 140

Karma Dice: D6

Equipment: Padded cloth armor, shortsword, 2 daggers

Loot: 250 silvers, a gold ring (worth 45 silvers)

Racial Abilities: Heat Sight (up to 250 yards)

Talents: Avoid Blow 3: 10/D10+D6*, Climbing 4: 11/D10+D8, Durability 4, Fence 4: 11/D10+D8*, Karma Ritual 2, Lock Pick 3: 10/D10+D6*, Lock Sense 3: 9/D8+D6*, Melee Weapons 4: 11/D10+D8, Picking Pockets 5: 12/2D10, Silent Walk 4: 11/D10+D8*, Surprise Strike 4: 11/D10+D8**, Thread Weaving 2: 8/2D6, Trap Initiative 2: 9/D8+D6*
*Can spend Karma **Karma requires and can spend additional Karma

Skills: Acting 4: 11/D10+D8, Legends and Heroes 2: 8/2D6, Streetwise 3: 9/D8+D6

Ruffians (5)

DEX: 13: 6/D10 **STR:** 13: 6/D10 **TOU:** 13: 6/D10
PER: 9: 4/D6 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 10: 5/D8

Initiative: 6/D10
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 9/D8+D6
Damage: Fist 6/D10, Club 9/D8+D6, Short Sword 10/D10+D6
Number of Spells: N/A
Spellcasting: N/A
Effect: N/A
Death Rating: 35
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 27
Karma Pool: 12
Equipment: Short sword, club, dagger, leather armor
Loot: 1D6 x 10 silvers
Skills: Melee Weapons 3: 9/D8+D6, Streetwise 2: 6/D10, Unarmed Combat 3: 9/D8+D6

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 6/D10
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60
Legend Points: 60 each
Karma Dice: D6

The ruffians will retreat as soon as they take two wounds. Thygold will retreat if he takes a single wound. He is a con man, not a fighter. Once the ruffians have been run off, the heroes can continue to The Raven.

Troubleshooting

If Thygold ends up with the Stone of Wisdom, things have gone wrong. If it looks like this will happen, the heroes will be in trouble. They should have a week or so before the Blood Promise is broken, and they will have to recover the Stone before the time runs out. This will be an adventure all to itself.

If the situation developes into a fight, and the heroes look like they are about to loose, some of Garthik's gang can intercede and run them off.

Back at the Raven

Overview

This is where the heroes will find Jorgin, give him the Stone of Wisdom, and receive the last of their pay. He will agree to take whatever magic item they want researchewill get in touch with them in two weeks.

Setting the Stage

You finally manage to make it to The Raven. As you step through the door, you are still tense, waiting for some last minute ambush. Looking around the common room, you spot the familiar faces of Harris, the bartender, and Klevis, the innkeeper. Finally, you spot Jorgin sitting at a corner table, watching the door. He sees you, and waves you over. As you near the table, you see he has a pitcher of ale waiting.

Behind the Scenes

Jorgin will ask if the mission was successful. He will then ask to examine the Stone of Wisdom. He will examine it astrally, and nod his head that all is well. He will then look up to the heroes and say, "You have completed your end of the bargain. I hope that all went well. I have the remainder of your payment." With that, he eaches into his robes and takes out a large pouch. He shoves it across the table. "If you have an item you would like to have researched, I will take it now. I will meet you here one last time, two weeks from tonight to complete my end of the deal. As for now, relax and enjoy yourselves. Your reputations are well deserved."

Jorgin will pay and additional 100 silvers for each bird's worth of fire eagle feathers. It will seem as though now that he has the Stone of Wisdom, that he is in a hurry to be going, but he is still bound by the Blood Promise, do the heroes should be fairly sure he will return with whatever they give him to be researched. The heroes will find that he has payed for their meals that evening, and for three rooms for the next two weeks.

About now, the heroes should start to relax and enjoy the satisfaction of a job well done.

Troubleshooting

The only thing that can go wrong here is if the characters decide not to give Jorgin the Stone of Wisdom. This would be a mistake. The character who made the Blood Promise will be breaking his oath, and will take the damage and the runic scars. And Jorgin is not a wizard to be trifled with. He is an Eighth Circle Adept, and will be very angry. He will remind the heroes of the Blood Promise, and will remind them of the fact that he is an Eighth Circle Wizard. If they still refuse to turn over the Stone of Wisdom, Jorgin will get up and leave. Klevis will not allow them to stay at The Raven, since he doesn't want Jorgin upset with him, and word will quickly spread through Kratas of the heroes' treachery.

Jorgin will get even at a later date, when the heroes are off guard. Lastly, you will get to skip the final encounter.

Meeting the Rich and Famous

Overview

This is when Jorgin returns with the magical item he has researched. It is also when personal thanks are given by Garthik One-Eye, ruler of Kratas.

Setting the Stage

You sit relaxing at The Raven. It has been a good two weeks. Two weeks of peace and quiet. Of

drinking the best ale and enjoying good food and good company. The barmaid smiles as she brings you another round of ales. Tales of your exploits have made their way around town, and you are enjoying the small amount of fame you have earned.

Tonight, you meet with Jorgin one last time. He will return your magical item, and tell you what he was able to learn. Finally, your quest will come to a close.

The door opens and you spot Jorgin entering, his embroidered robes flowing in the breeze. He spots you and heads over to your table. Pulling up a chair, he sits down and smiles.

"Greetings, my friends. Let us first take care of business."

Behind the Scenes

Jorgin will first return the magic item, and tell of two thread ranks. He will include the Key Knowledges. Once this is done, he will have completed his promise, and the damage from the Blood Promise can now be healed.

He will then tell the heroes that there is one other person who would like to give his personal thanks. With that, an ancient ork will step from the shadows. The ork only has one eye, the other is covered by an beautifully embroidered patch. A female windling with dark hair and black wings hovers by his shoulder. The ancient ork looks the heroes over with his one good eye, and then speaks.

"Well met, brave heroes. I am Garthik One-Eye, magistrate of this city. I came here to meet the bold adventurers that have served me and my city so well. You may never know what a great deed you have accomplished, but you have my gratitude. If you are ever in trouble and in need of aid, remember that you are welcome here in Kratas, and I will do my best to give you what aid I can." With that, before any of you can utter a single word, the old ork steps back into the shadows and disappears. When you look around, Jorgin has vanished, too.

Troubleshooting

The only thing that can spoil this final encounter is if the heroes actually try to attack Garthik One-Eye. This would be a major mistake. Garthik One-Eye will disappear into the shadows, using the tenth circle thief ability of Shadowcloak. The windling hovering near his shoulder is Terricia, a female windling assassin. She will leave with Garthik, but may return at a later date to take vengence.

The heroes' biggest worry will be Jorgin. He will attack the characters with the best of his abilities, retreatingings look especially grim. Do not feel bad if Jorgin kills of a character or two, so be it. If they were crazy enough to attack a legendary hero, they deserve what they get.

Cast of Characters

Jorgin Torvin

DEX: 14: 6/D10 **STR:** 10: 5/D8 **TOU:** 11: 5/D8
PER: 19: 8/2D6 **WIL:** 19: 8/2D6 **CHA:** 14: 6/D10

Initiative: 6/D10
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 11/D10+D8
Damage: 9/D8+D6
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 17 (19/D20+2D6)
Effect: As per spell
Death Rating: 64
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 48

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 2 (5)
Mystic Armor: 3 (6)
Knockdown: 5/D8
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 33
Full Movement: 65
Legend Points: 1900

Racial Abilities: Versatility
Equipment: Staff of Agrikal
Loot: 2D10 x 10 silvers, a gold ring worth 250 silvers
Talents: Arcane Mutterings 5: 11/D10+D8***, Astral Sight 8: 16/D20+D8**, Book Memory 8: 16/D20+D8**, Book Recall 5: 13/D12+D10*, Durability 8, Enhanced Matrix 8, Enhanced Matrix 4, Evidence Analysis 7: 15/D20+D6*, Hold Thread 8: 16/D20+D8*, Item History 7: 15/D20+D6, Karma Ritual 6, Lip Reading 4: 12/2D10**, Melee Weapons 5: 11/D10+D8, Read/Write Lang 7: 15/D20+D6*, Read/Write Magic 8: 16/D20+D8*, Resist Taunt 4: 12/2D10, Speak Language 5: 13/D12+D10**, Spell Casting 9: 17/D20+D10*, Spell Matrix 8, Spell Matrix 8, Spell Matrix 5, Thread Weaving (Wizardry) 8: 16/D20+D8*, Versatility 3, Willforce 8
**Can use Karma **Must use Karma ***Must use Karma and can use additional Karma*
Skills: Alchemy and Potions 5: 13/D12+D10, Barsaive History 4: 12/2D10, History of the Scourge 4: 12/2D10, Legends and Heroes 4: 12/2D10, Research 5: 13/D12+D10, Streetwise 3: 11/D10+D8

Spells In Matrices: Mage Armor, Mind Dagger, Razor Orb
Spells in Enhanced Matrices: Crushing Will, Dispel Magic

Commentary: Jorgin has served as one of Garthik One-Eye's advisors for over 2 decades. He admires what Garthik has managed to do for Kratas, and is fiercely loyal to his friend. Jorgin is a brilliant researcher and has access to a complete library of tomes gathered from the ruins of Kratas and years of adventuring. Though he normally has more peaceful spells in his matrices, he is a cautious man who makes sure that he is well prepared for dangerous meets.

Treasures

Stone of Wisdom

The Stone of Wisdom was used by the troll king Runvir of Ustrect to build and rule his kingdom wisely. It was entombed with him when he died. The Stone of Wisdom is located around the neck of the mummified remains of King Runvir in room 21 of the tomb. It is a beautiful pearl about 2" in diameter suspended on a silvery chain.
Maimum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 12

Rank 1
Cost: 200
Key Knowledge: The name of the pearl, it is the Stone of Wisdom.
Effect: The stone grants +1 on all PER Tests.

Rank 2
Cost: 300
Key Knowledge: Who was the last wielder of the stone. The last wielder was King Runvir.
Effect: Add +1 to the wielder's Social Defense.

Rank 3
Cost: 500
Key Knowledge: Who gave the stone to Runvir. It was a wedding present from his wife Ariana.
Effect: The stone increases the wielder's Spell Defense by +1, and the Social Defense by +2.

Rank 4
Cost: 800
Key Knowledge: Where did the pearl come from. It came from the Aras Sea near Urupa.
Effect: The stone adds +2 to PER Tests, and any attempt to manipulate the wielder now needs a greater success level. Instead of needing an Average Success, a Good Success is needed. If the level of success normally needed is a Good Success, now and Excellent Success is needed.

Rank 5
Cost: 1300
Effect: By spending a point of strain, the wielder can make a PER Test +5 against a target's Spell Defense. If successful, the wielder will be able to tell if the target is Horror Marked, Horror controlled, or even a Horror in disguise.

Rank 6
Cost: 2100
Key Knowledge: Who was the stone originally enchanted by. It was enchanted by the obsidiman wizard Ulthir.
Effect: The wielder's Social Defense is now increased by +3, and the Spell Defense is increased by +2.

The Staff of Agrikal

Location: The staff is wielded by Jorgin Tovar, advisor to Garthik One-Eye. It is a natural wooden staff that twists around itself.
Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 11

Rank 1
Costs: 200
Key Knowledge: One must learn that this is the Staff of Agrikal.
Effect: The staff now does +4 damage steps.

Rank 2
Cost: 300
Key Knowledge: One must learn what type of adept Agrikal was. Agrikal was a Nethermancer Adept.
Effect: The staff adds +2 Physical Armor.

Rank 3
Cost: 500
Effect: The staff adds +2 Mystic Armor

Rank 4
Cost: 800
Key Knowledge: Where was the wood of the staff taken from. It was taken from the Servos Jungle.
Effect: Physical Armor and Mystic Armor increases to +3.

Rank 5
Cost: 1300
Effect: The staff adds +2 to the wielder's Spellcasting Step.

Razorclaw

Location: The sword is located inside the Tomb of Runvir (room 8). Razorclaw is a beautifully crafted broadsword with an exceptionally keen edge. The crossguards on the hilt are shaped like eagle talons, and there is writing etched down the blade (the writing is in elven and says, "Razorclaw"). The mark of an abstract G rune is stamped into the pommel. The broadsword was forged by a Weaponsmith Adept and normally does +8 steps of damage.
Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 12

Rank 1
Cost: 100
Key Knowledge: What is the name of the blade. It is written in elven down the length of the blade.
Effect: The sword adds +1 to the wielder's Physical Defense.

Rank 2
Cost: 200
Key Knowledge: Who crafted the blade. The blade was crafted by the elven Weaponsmith G'Thir of Evesgird.
Effect: The sword does an additional +2 damage steps, raising its damage step to +10.

Rank 3
Cost: 300
Key Knowledge: Who was the blade last wielded by. It was wielded by Dorthial, questor to Garlen.
Effect: The sword now gives the wielder +2 to his Physical Armor.

Rank 4

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: Where did Dorthial die, and what caused his death. He died in the Tomb of Runvir, his death was caused by the Horror Sharvik the Deceiver.

Effect: The sword now does an additional +2 damage steps to Horror constructs, Horror minions, and Horrors. This means the sword now does +10 steps of damage normally, and +12 steps of damage to Horrors and their creations. It will glow with a soft blue light while being used against these enemies.

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Shelter from the Storm

by David Caraley

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal*** #4

Gothgak was tired. Hunting had gone poorly all week, and there was little for the cave troll to eat. He looked at his two companions, huddled around the campfire they had built in the cave mouth, trying to keep out of the rain. The other two cave trolls were as wet, miserable, and hungry as he was. Life in the Tylon Mountains was difficult, but Gothgak knew that he and his brethren were a tough lot, able to survive almost any hardship.

Suddenly, the troll looked up from the fire. He could have sworn he had heard something. Something was out wandering through the mountains in the rain. Something was close. He turned to his companions.

"Something comes this way. Perhaps it is good to eat." Gothgak picked up his rough stone axe and headed out into the darkness. The two trolls by the fire shrugged their shoulders, got to their feet, and headed out after their leader.

Plot Synopsis

Over six hundred years ago the Orichalcum Wars were raging. A mighty army of ork scorchers were making their way towards the city of Kratas where they hoped to breach the defenses and loot the orichalcum stores.

The scorchers were spotted by a patrol of soldiers led by the dwarven warrior hero Drugar. Though his patrol was outnumbered nearly five to one, Drugar fought a holding battle, trying to hold the scorchers in the pass through the Tylon Mountains that led to Kratas.

The battle lasted for three days, during which the patrol fought bravely. On the third day the patrol was finally overrun and slaughtered. Drugar fell before the ork horde, but not before his patrol had succeeded in killing over half of the invading army.

The remaining orks made camp, and prepared to continue their march towards Kratas the following day. What they did not realize was the fact that Drugar had managed to get a message to the ruler of Kratas, and Kratas had already sent an army to reinforce the patrol.

The army arrived too late to save the patrol, but they turned back the remains of the ork army. When they found Drugar's body, along with the bodies of his heroic patrol, the journal of what had transpired was recovered.

The leaders of Kratas were so impressed with Drugar's sacrifice that they built him a tomb in the mountain pass, burying him with honor. The fallen members of his patrol were entombed with him.

The Scourge came a century later. The tomb had never been designed to withstand the powers of the Horrors and was breached during the first century of their arrival. Finding no living souls to feed upon, the Horrors soon left, but not before they had polluted the astral space throughout the tomb.

What remains is the result of the corrupted magic of the area. The inhabitants of the tomb are the remains of the patrol, and what is left of Drugar. Their bodies have been animated by the magic of the Horrors and now haunt the long forgotten tomb.

The adventure begins with the characters making their way through the Tylon Mountains on the way to Kratas. A storm is brewing and nightfall is fast approaching. The characters are busy searching for someplace to ride out the storm at the same time a group of cave trolls are searching for something for dinner.

The cave trolls have already made a camp inside the cave mouth that leads to the tomb, and have heard the characters coming through the pass. The cave trolls will try to ambush the characters in hopes of finding something to eat, even if that means eating the characters. Once the trolls are defeated, the characters will notice the light of the fire coming from the cave mouth.

Stormy Weather

Overview

The characters are crossing through the Tylon Mountains on their way to Kratas. A storm is coming, and it is getting dark outside. The characters are attacked by a group of hungry cave trolls who spotted them coming through the pass. Once the trolls are defeated, the characters will notice the campfire burning in the cave mouth and will probably head there for shelter.

Setting the Stage

It has been a rough trip through the Tylon Mountains, and it isn't getting any easier. You can see a storm front making its way up the pass, and have been looking for someplace to take shelter. You can feel a couple of raindrops come from the darkening sky and know it is only a matter of time before the deluge starts. You squint your eyes a little and can make out something coming through the darkness.

Behind the Scenes

Three cave trolls will attack the characters as they make their way through the pass. They are hungry and looking for food. Any loot they gain from the encounter is of secondary importance to them.

Cave Trolls (3)
Same as ED p288 save Armor is 4.
Legend Points: 270 ea
Equipment: Cave axe, padded leather armor
Loot: 1D4 silver per Troll

Once the cave trolls have been defeated, read the following:
The rain has started falling with greater intensity. It is dark, and starting to get cold. You catch a glimpse of some sort of light coming from the side of the pass. As you get closer, you can make out some sort of stone structure with a campfire burning inside of it.

Troubleshooting

The only thing that can go wrong is if the cave trolls kill the characters. Try to split the trolls' attacks evenly among the characters so no single character takes the brunt of the damage.

Into the Mountainside

Overview

The characters make their way to the campfire, and discover the hidden tomb of the dwarven hero Drugar. They get to explore the tomb, and if they are lucky they can put the spirits of the dead back to rest, and acquire Drugar's armor and magical shortsword.

The Outer Entrance	*As you get closer to the fire, you can make out the old stone structure that houses it. Stone steps lead up to a crumbling stone porch. The roof above is held in place by four cracked marble pillars. You can see that the fire was built in the center of the floor. There are three piles of furs and skins that look as if they were spread out for sleeping. There is a natural cave mouth at the rear of the porch.* This is where the trolls had been camping when they heard the characters coming. There is no food, but there are three large waterskins. The room is fairly dry, and the fire makes it decently warm. The trolls went in as far as the bridge but were chased out by the krilworms. Buried beneath one of the piles of skins is a single Booster Potion that belonged to the cave troll leader. It can be found with a Perception test of 5 or better.
The Stone Bridge	*As you shine your light into the rough stone cave, you can see it is actually a passage leading deeper into the mountain. As you get in deeper, you see a sight that takes your breath away. A forty foot long stone bridge crosses over a deep chasm. From the darkness down below you can hear the sound of rushing water. On the far side of the bridge you can barely make out a large set of stone doors.* Once the characters start across the bridge, they will be attacked by a swarm of krilworms out looking for something to eat. *Even as you cross the ancient stone bridge, you can not see the bottom of the canyon where you can hear the water rushing below. You catch motion out of the corner of your eye. You turn to see several small shapes winging down from the darkness.*

Krilworms (10)	Same as ED p306. Krilworms are nocturnal flyers, traveling in packs from 8-80 members, feeding off of large insects and small mammals. There needle sharp teeth drip a foul smelling substance that some believe to be toxic. They have segmented 18" bodies with bat-like wings near the front. Eyeless, they "see" through divination magic. They make a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test is successful, the Krilworm can locate the target. It will also work on invisible and hidden targets. It is easy to drive off a swarm of Krilworms. For every Krilworm that dies, the swarm must make a Willpower Test of 4 or better, otherwise they leave to find easier pickings. Once the krilworms have been driven off, the characters can continue towards the stone doors.
The Main Doors	*Before you stands a massive set of stone double doors. The doors are covered with decorative stonework showing a dwarf leading a small force of humans and dwarves against an overwhelming amount of armored orks. The dwarf is holding forth a gleaming sword and there is a pile of dead foes at his feet. Carved into the door are a large amount of runes.* The runes are ancient human and say the following: *Here lies the remains of the dwarven hero Drugar the Brave, wielder of Valor and savior of Kratas who perished in the year 923 TH while bravely defending the Tylon Pass against overwhelming odds. Though there were no survivors, the brave sacrifices made by Drugar and his men were instrumental in saving the city. May the Passions keep them in peace.* The door isn't locked, but will require a Strength test with a target of 12 to open. Each door can be tried by two people at a time.
Entrance Hall	*After forcing open the door you see a carved hallway leading deeper into the mountain. Off in the distance you can see a dim light.* Halfway down the hall is an arrow trap. **Arrow Trap** Detection Difficulty: 6 Disarm Difficulty: 8* Trigger Condition: Pressure Plates Trap Initiative: 7 Trap Effect: High powered crossbow bolts fire from holes in the walls doing Step 15/D20+D6 damage. *The disarming mechanism is located on the outside of the stone doors. The sword held by the dwarf in the carvings can be moved to a down position, deactivating the trap.

Shrine to the Passions

Before you is a large room, its vaulted ceiling held in place by four large stone pillars. At the far end you can see a marble alter and the rear wall is decorated with base relief carvings of the twelve Passions. A passage leads off from the center of the left wall. Light comes from two still functioning light quartz crystals mounted high up on the pillars.

This 30' by 50' room is a shrine to the Passions. Anyone who makes an earnest plea to Thystonius, Passion of Physical Conflict and Valor, can make a Charisma test, target of 8. If successful, the character will receive a +1 step modifier to all combat talents and damage steps for the next 24 hours.

Sealed into the alter needing a Perception test of 6 to find are two golden candleholders (worth 50 silvers each).

Guard Room

Upon opening the door, you can see a small room with a table, benches, and a few barrels. Three armed and armored figures start towards you. Their bare bones are easily visible underneath their rotted armor, and their drawn swords are pitted with rust. Their lifeless eyes lock onto you as they advance.

These skeletons were left by the original builders of the tomb to protect against robbers. The Horror that breached the tomb was able to control them with ease, and they were left intact.

Skeletons (3)

DEX: 5/D8 **STR:** 7/D12 **TOU:** 5/D8
PER: 5/D8 **WIL:** 7/D12 **CHA:** 5/D8

Initiative: 4/D6
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 12/2D10
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: NA

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 11
Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 4
Knockdown: 7/D12
Recovery Tests: 1
Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60
Legend Points: 45

Equipment: None
Loot: None
Commentary: These are the typical skeletons animated by Nethermancy. Their strength was augmented by the Horror that breached the tomb centuries ago.

Once the skeletons have been defeated, the characters can look around the room. There is nothing of value. The barrels are old and cracked, as are the benches and table. There is another door leading out of the room.

Throne Room	*Upon opening the door you see a large chamber lit by dim light quartz fixtures mounted on marble pillars. A faded carpet leads to the other side of the room where a throne rests on a raised dais. Four armed guards shamble towards you, their decayed flesh peeling from their bones, their armor rotted and moldy.* The four figures are cadaver men animated by the Horror who breached the tomb five centuries ago. They are the remains of the soldiers entombed in area 8. **Cadaver Men (4)** See ED, p.288, save Damage: 11/D10+D8 and Armor: 3 Legend Points: 115 Equipment: pitted broadsword, rotting armor The throne has four aquamarines (worth 50 silvers each) set into the back, above where a person's head would be when seated on the throne.
Catacombs	*You enter a dark room. You shine your light around and see that the walls of this large chamber are filled with burial niches. There must be over fifty bodies, all in rotted tabards and armor, with rusted and pitted weapons clenched in their boney hands.* There are fifty soldiers entombed here. They are the soldiers of the patrol that saved Kratas and have been entombed here in honor of their noble sacrifice. Searching the room allows the characters to make Perception tests with a target of 7 once every ten minutes. A successful test will find a small item or piece of jewelry worth 1D4 x 10 silvers on one of the bodies. For every 10 minutes spent in the chamber roll a D10. On a 7 one of the bodies will animate, becoming a cadaver man. On an 9 two of their bodies will animate. On a 10 three bodies will animate. **Cadaver Men (50)** Attributes: Same as previous.
Pit Trap	*You continue down the corridor, and make a turn to the left. There before you, twenty feet further, is a large stone door.* The 5' by 5' section in front of the door is trapped. **Pit Trap** Detection Difficulty: 7 Disarm Difficulty: 6 Trigger Condition: Pressure Plate Trap Initiative: 7 Trap Effect: Falling 25 feet for Step 15 damage.

Burial Chamber of Lord Drugar

A pair of vast stone doors stands before you, carved with decorative designs. One of the doors is partially open. Peering through, you can see a large stone chamber lit by dim, cracked light quartz crystals. The light reflects from the polished marble floor and is swallowed up by the large tapestries on the left and right walls. At the far end of the chamber you can see a raised area three steps up from the rest of the floor. On the raised area is an ornately carved stone sarcophagus. You realize this must be the final resting place of Drugar the hero.

Once the characters enter the room, read the following:

As you proceed deeper into the room, a swirling grey fog starts to form, and you can hear a terrible scraping sound. The stone casket bursts open and a single figure emerges. He is covered in white bandages from head to toes, but is still strapped into his gleaming crystal ringlet armor. A still bright short sword is clutched in his hand. An eery red light glows from where his eyes used to be.

Lord Drugar: An Astral Horror

DEX: 7/D12 **STR:** 8/2D6 **TOU:** 10/D10+D6
PER: 7/D12 **WIL:** 9/D8+D6 **CHA:** 6/D10

Initiative: 9/D8+D6
Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: 10/D10+D6
Damage: 15/D20+D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 40
Wound Threshold: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 32

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 12
Social Defense: 14
Armor: 4*
Mystic Armor: 10*
Knockdown: 6/D10
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 60
Full Movement: 120
Legend Points: 300

Equipment: Crystal ringlet armor, the sword Valor

Loot: A golden armband set with rubies (worth 500 sp), a silver filigree brooch set with a sapphire (worth 125 silvers). The armband is worth 500 legend points since it is easily identifiable as Lord Drugar's.

Commentary: Lord Drugar's spirit was summoned to his body by the Horror that breached the tomb. The Horror bound him and turned him into an Astral Horror, leaving him inside the tomb so that he can destroy any living intruders. Lord Drugar is quite insane in this form and will attack with no hesitation.

Once Lord Drugar has been defeated, read the following:

The body of the dwarf collapses onto the floor with a crash. It lies there, unmoving. Again a swirling grey mist starts to form. Slowly it takes dwarven shape until before you is the translucent form of Lord Drugar, standing in full dwarven finery and resembling the figure prominent in the tapestries. His hands are empty and he stands in a nonthreatening manner. He begins to speak.

"My thanks, and the thanks of my men, brave heroes. It has been centuries since the Horror drew our souls back to this place, tortured them, and trapped us here. Now we may return to the Passions and spend our afterlife in peace. I grant you leave to take my sword Valor and use it to continue in battling darkness. I must go now, may the passions of Thystonius fill you at times of need." With that, the ghostly apparition disappears.

The characters are now free to search the chamber. There is a statue of Lord Drugar, carved of marble, standing on the raised dais with the stone casket (worth 200 silvers but weighing 100 pounds), and a single small chest. The chest is locked (needing a 7 to open), and contains a chess board with beautifully carved marble pieces (worth 50 silvers).

Troubleshooting

Again, the only problem is if the characters are all killed. This is unlikely, but if you are feeling generous, a prayer to the Passion Thystonius could allow an extra Recovery Test, or even intervention in whatever combat is threatening to kill them all, after all, the Passions take an active roll in Barsaive. Still, tomb exploration is a dangerous business and if a single character dies, that too is the will of the Passions.

At this point, the adventure is over and the characters can continue on their way. The storm will disperse (since it was caused by Thystonius in order to drive the characters into the cave and lay to rest the troubled souls that had served him so well) and the characters can leave the next morning to sunny skies and the singing of birds.

Legend Point Awards

Creatures and Opponents

Cave Trolls	270 points each
Krilworms	75 points each
Skeletons	45 points each
Cadaver Men	115 points each
Lord Drugar	300 points

Treasure

The sword Valor	500 points
Armband of Drugar	500 points

Creative Roleplaying

Praying to the Passions	50 points
Leaving the dead undisturbed	50 points

Adventure Goal

Laying to rest the noble spirits of the dead	150 points

The Sword Valor

Location: On the body of Drugar in his tomb. The sword is a shortsword forged by a weaponsmith adept to +3. It has a gleaming brass hilt and crossguard carved in fancy design. Written in Throalic down the blade is the word *Valor*.

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 12

Rank 1 Cost: 200
Key Knowledge: What is the name of the blade? It is named Valor.
Effect: The sword adds +1 step to the wielder's attack step.

Rank 2 Cost: 300
Key Knowledge: Who was the hero who wielded the blade before the Scourge? The hero was Lord Drugar.
Effect: The sword adds +1 Physical Defense and +1 Spell Defense.

Rank 3 Cost: 500
Key Knowledge: What was Lord Drugar famous for? He was known for having saved the city of Kratas before the Scourge.
Effect: The sword adds +5 steps to any Will test needed to throw off a spell effect that hinders the wielder in combat. It costs 1 point of Strain to call upon this power.

Rank 4 Cost: 800
Key Knowledge: Where was Lord Drugar laid to rest? In the Tylon Mountain pass where he and his men sacrificed themselves.
Effect: The sword gains +2 steps of damage, and the Physical Defense bonus is raised to +2.

Rank 5 Cost: 1300
Key Knowledge: Who was Drugar a questor for? Drugar was a questor to Thystonius. The wielder must swear a Blood Oath to serve Thystonius, spending 2 Blood Points. This gains the wielder 200 legend points.
Effect: The wielder's Spell Defense is raised to +2, and the wielder is immune to Wound penalties for a number of rounds equal to the Thread Rank at the cost of 1 point of Strain.

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The Stolen Sword

by Andrew W. Ragland

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #6***

Journal Text

From the Journal of Broost Oserolam, Cavalryman of the Sixth Circle and commander of the Broken Bone Lancers:

Looks like we got out of Iopos just in time. Those lousy Yellow Talons can't have been more than a half day's ride from the city when we took to the hills. Another day of hard riding and we'll meet up with the main body of the cavalry. That'll give us the numbers to mount a nasty surprise for those illegitimate sons of spoogras.

Laying in supplies for the ride turned out to be tougher than we expected. Stupid herb-seller tried to short us on the feverbark, and set off Ioroz's gahad. Should of known better than to put his thumb on the scales. Then the watch got all over us, and made us pay to get the thief's thumb put back on. Lousy city.

Hard to get mounts. Ours were spent, couldn't carry us any further. Needed fresh horses to ride so our regular mounts could rest a bit. Lots of questions asked, who we were, where we'd been, where we were going, like it was any of their business. All the time these Holders of Trust, big ujnort in fancy silver armor, keep coming around, butting in where they're not wanted. And a real shortage of remounts. Had to take what we could get. Couple of these nags aren't going to survive the ride, Passions forgive us. Got to get to the pass before the Talons though, warn the tribe and get an ambush set up.

Big stink just as we left. Named blade got swiped from one of the kids of some councilman or somesuch. Word from the stablehands was it got taken a couple days earlier but they kept it quiet so they could try and find it quick. Didn't do them any good. Didn't find it doing it quiet. Offered a big reward, had it cried all over the city, big threats of what they'd do to anybody trying to leave with the sword. Would have been tough to do. Guards at the gate went through everything we had, looked at all our blades, made us unroll our packs. Acted like they didn't see us giving them the buunda, just went right through our stuff, through anything big enough to hide a knife in, much less a sword.

Couple hours after we left, bunch of ujnort went by us, riding like there was a dragon behind them. Two elves, a couple of dwarves and a troll, all in white with a gold bird on their shields and cloaks, looked like some sort of eagle or something coming up out of a fire. Damn if they weren't riding some horses we'd been told weren't for sale. About brought up

my gahad, it did. Lucky for her that lying sorry excuse for a horsetrader wasn't there right then. Hadn't seen them before in the city. Must have been hiding. Outfits like that would have been hard to miss. Not more than an hour after that, dwarf came along on a carpet, swooped down and wanted to know if we'd seen these Name-Givers. Sent him off on their trail. Hope they get what they're running from. Probably them what stole the sword. If we weren't in such a hurry, I'd ride after them myself. Caused us a lot of trouble, they did, and got a big price on their heads. Not that I feel sorry for that young snot got his sword stolen, mind you. Nasty people, running Iopos. Nasty city. Glad to be quit of it.

Got to get some sleep. Only a couple of hours before we have to ride out again. Raggok-worshipping Yellow Talons. Like to see the last of them too. Any luck, they'll get hung up in the city like we did.

GM Text

Pathfinder, a Named sword, has been stolen from Favim, a younger scion of the Denairastas clan. The blade has been in the family since before the Scourge, and is traditionally held by the person second in line to the leadership of the clan. As such, Pathfinder acts as a badge of office. Favim's position is shaky without the sword. The populace may not accept him as heir when his older brother accedes to rule, unless he can pass the sword on to his successor. While the Holders of Trust could force acceptance of Favim as heir, the Denairastas clan would rather not have to put forth that much effort. They're willing to pay a large sum for the return of the blade. Of course, anybody bringing it in is likely to be thought in league with the original thieves, and be put to the question...

Pathfinder is a hand-and-a-half sword of high quality, with a plain wire-wrapped hilt. A single blue gem has been set between the quillons as a nod to aesthetics.

Pathfinder

Maximum Threads: 6
Spell Defense: 25

Thread Ranks

1	**Cost:** 200 **Key Knowledge:** Name of sword **Effect:** Like a Ring of Accuracy, Pathfinder increases the Damage and Attack steps. At this Thread rank, add +1 to the Damage step.

2	**Cost:** 300 **Key Knowledge:** None **Effect:** +2 to damage step
3	**Cost:** 500 **Key Knowledge:** Name of first wielder **Effect:** +2 to damage step, +1 to attack step
4	**Cost:** 800 **Deed:** The wielder must invest 2 points of blood magic in bonding the sword to himself. The ritual for this is very specific, and must be done properly for the deed to work. The deed is worth 400 Legend Points. **Effect:** +3 to damage step, +2 to attack step. Sword can lead its wielder through normal terrain to any place that the wielder has previously been, within two days' ride. The wielder will feel the rightness of the path when holding the sword.
5	**Cost:** 1300 **Key Knowledge:** Name of the weaponsmith who created the blade **Effect:** +4 to damage step, +3 to attack step. Pathfinder can lead its wielder out of magically confusing terrain, such as kaers devised by Artificer. No warning of traps will be given. The shortest and most direct route will always be indicated. Pathfinder can also locate any possession or former possession of its wielder, within four days' ride.
6	**Cost:** 2100 **Key Knowledge:** Before the Scourge, Pathfinder was involved in saving the city of Iopos from a Horror. The popular legend of how this happened is false. The true story must be uncovered. **Deed:** The wielder must find and enact an ancient ritual, at a prescribed site, forswearing all other blades. If the wielder uses any weapon other than Pathfinder, all threads and connections to Pathfinder are lost. While the lower ranks can be regained, the oath cannot be renewed. The ritual costs 5 points of Blood Magic, and is worth 1000 Legend Points. **Effect:** +5 to damage step, +4 to attack step. Wielder may fly at a speed of DEX+8 for up to ten hours, at a cost of 2 Strain per hour. This ability may not be used more than once per week.

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Streets of Darkness

by David Caraley

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal*** #4

This adventure is designed for three to five adepts of first through third circle.

Introduction

For the past few months the townsfolk of Jerris have been locking their doors and staying inside once it becomes dark. People have been disappearing. Not in large amounts, but in steady numbers.

So far, no large group has disappeared. Only small groups or single travelers. The town watch has been unable to stop the disappearances, or even find any clues. Rumors are beginning to spread that there might be a Horror lurking somewhere in the city.

The truth of the matter is a little different. A fifth circle Thief Adept named Mylic Urbin has started a slaving operation. He has hired some disreputable thugs, and uses them to abduct people wandering the streets in the middle of the night. He and his men only attack groups of one or two, and will retreat if things are going badly. Of course, any failed attempt looks like a typical mugging that went bad.

Once Mylic's gang have subdued their targets, they load the victims into barrels, and cart them off to a warehouse. Once there, they are unloaded into an underground holding area. Once a dozen or so people are collected, they are drugged, reloaded into barrels, and carted off to Vivane. They are then sold on the open market for a decent price.

What even Mylic's gang doesn't understand is the fact that Mylic is possessed by a Horror named Drathig'nar. Drathig'nar feeds on the suffering and fear of others, and is busy feeding on both the people who have been enslaved, and the fear spreading throughout Jerris.

Drathig'nar's physical form is in a hidden chamber connected to the underground holding area. It is in a very weakened condition, barely able to remain in Barsaive since the decline of the magic level during the Scourge. He is barely a shadow of his former self, and is unable to leave his current lair. He now lives vicariously through the possession of others.

The adventure starts with the heroes arriving in Jerris (after the end of another adventure, or to resupply, or for whatever reason currently works for your campaign) and getting rooms at the Grounded Drakkar, a small inn. Once night falls, people will start leaving the tavern section of the inn, heading for home. Within an hour after sunset all that will be left in the

inn are those who have rented rooms, and the staff. The heroes will then start to hear the assorted tales of things that are lurking in the night-shrouded streets of Jerris. It should be obvious that the people are nervous, even a little scared.

During this time, the heroes should get to know Carina Ridley, one of the barmaids. She will be a flirt, and will listen to whatever tales of adventure the heroes are willing to tell. She should be played as a curious, flirtatious lass with a streak of wildness.

At midnight cleanup will begin, and then the various barmaids will head home. They will leave in a group, believing that there will be safety in numbers. Carina will go with them, feeling that she can protect them from whatever danger is lurking out on the street. She will promise to return in an hour, since she sleeps in the common room. She will never make it back. Instead, she will be the next victim of Mylic's slaver crew.

The next morning Borig Mastmender, the owner of the Grounded Drakkar, will be furious. Carina never returned and he suspects the worst. He will try to hire anyone who will promise to try and find out what happened to his barmaid. He considers his staff to be his "crew" and feels responsible for them. He can afford a week's free room and board to anyone willing to help, and a bonus 200 silvers when they find out what is going on and put an end to it.

At this point, the heroes will have to come up with a plan. Since it is well known that anyone travelling in a group seems safe from attack, the heroes may have to split up, using some of their members as bait. They can then witness Mylic and his thugs at work. Of course, if they are attacked, they will retreat and try to escape through the alleys and back streets. If the heroes allow the abduction to continue uninterrupted, they will see a cart be brought out, the victims loaded into barrels, and taken away.

If the cart is followed, it will be taken to a warehouse, and the heroes will know where to start investigating. It will eventually lead to a raid on the warehouse, the discovery of the underground holding area, and the rescue of the imprisoned townsfolk.

It should also lead to a confrontation with the Horror Drathig'nar and his defeat, freeing Jerris from the fear and despair he was causing. And it should leave the heroes with a feeling of accomplishment.

The Sooty City

Overview

This encounter lets the heroes get the feeling of the city, and taste the fear and despair that is spreading through the local populace. It lets the heroes find a place to stay, and introduces them to some of the local people.

Setting The Stage

After spending the past week on the road, making camp under the trees, washing in cold streams, living in sweaty, stained clothes, and eating travel rations, you see the city of Jerris standing before you. A cloud of black-grey smoke seems to hang suspended above the walled city, but even that does not discourage you as images of warm food and cool ale make their way through your thoughts.

Half an hour later finds you passing through the city gates. The town guards in their hardened leather armor look you over as you go by, but offer no resistance to your entry into the city. They look worn down. You make your way through the sooty streets, looking for a place to wash the dust from your throats when you come upon a faded, two story wooden building with a single mast and rotted rigging on the roof. A faded and peeling sign shows a small airship embedded into the ground. Written underneath are the words "The Grounded Drakkar". You push the door open and head inside.

Your eyes get accustomed to the dim light of the old light-quartz lanterns that used to hang on various airships from long ago. You see a wooden, brass trimmed bar behind which stands a large troll. The other patrons of the inn sit in small groups, talking quietly, while various serving girls dressed in tight pants and loose shirts tied at their midriffs move about the tables carrying food and drinks. In a corner a single dwarven musician plays a lute while whistling sailing tunes.

There are rope ladders and netting hanging on the walls, while old brass bells and other brass ship fixtures make up the rest of the decorations. As you catch your breath and take in the sights, a beautiful dark-haired girl in a barmaid outfit strides up, looks you over, and says, "Need a table, mates?"

Allow the heroes time to get settled and arrange for rooms. They will have to deal with Borig Mastmender, the owner, to arrange for rooms. Borig is a former troll skyraider who enjoys a well told tale and a good drink. Play him as large, loud, and friendly. The heroes can get food and drink, and get settled. Once the details have been handled, continue with the narration.

It is late in the day, and you all feel more rested. The ale was cool, though not particularly noteworthy, and the food was warm and plentiful, if a little plain. There have been some games of chance, and the dwarf in the corner has continued his medley of sea shanties and air sailing tunes. Occasionally, patrons have gotten up and told stories of their exploits.

The sun went down a little while ago, but instead of getting more raucous, the inn has grown quieter. Many of the patrons have left, and it seems that the only people left are a few people who have rooms, and the inn's staff.

The barmaid who met you at the door, a beautiful lass named Carina brings your table another round of drinks. She smiles.

If anyone asks why there seems to be no one around, or where everyone went, Carina will get the dwarf musician Brooz to tell the following tale:

The common room grows quiet as Brooz pulls himself into the crow's nest, a small area used by those wishing to tell tales.

"Gather around, me hearties, and a tale you will hear. Some folk say the city of Jerris is cursed. This may be true. But lately, the curse has gotten more active."

"Many months ago, people traveling the streets at night started to disappear. At first, no one noticed. It was only the occasional straggler, or some beggar no one would miss. But as time passed, more and more people turned up missing. Tradesmen, craftsmen, even the occasional town watchman. And there was never a trace."

"Now, most of the city is afraid to go out after dark. It seems that travelers are only safe if they move about in numbers. Some folk claim that there is a terrible monster, able to swallow people whole. That this monster can not stand the light of the sun, and can only come out at night. They even say that it is growing stronger and more powerful, and more and more people are disappearing. So be good, and pray to the Passions, or the monster might just get you!"

Some of the patrons laugh nervously, but you can tell that there is a hint of fear in the air. Carina smiles at you and says, "Of course, those of good heart and strong will aren't frightened by these tales used to frighten children into going to bed early. It is a pity that there are so few of them in Jerris."

Time goes by, and eventually the tavern starts to shut down. When the cleanup is complete, the barmaids get ready to head home. Carina looks at Borig and says, "Be back in an hour, you ugly troll. I'm going to walk Livia and Siri home."

The troll waves and watches them head into the night. Eventually he shuts and bars the door. "Get a good sleep everyone, and see you in the morning."

Behind The Scenes

The heroes should understand the feelings of fear felt by most of the local populace. They should be curious, but they should not be personally involved yet.

The Grounded Drakkar serves simple meals of cheese, bread, and fruit for 3 cp, and average meals of fatty meats, bread, cheese, fruit, and a mug of average ale for 1 sp. Drinks consist of

average ale for 5 cp, and bottles of wine for 5 cp. The only oddity it serves is Yarg, a powerful liquor favored by air sailers and crystal raiders, for 1 sp a glass.

Lodging consists of hammocks in the common room for 5 cp a night, and small, private rooms with a rope bed that can fit two people, a trunk, and little else, for 1 sp.

The inn opens an hour after sunrise when Borig manages to stagger down from his room, rouse some of his "crew," and unbar the door. It closes at midnight when the last tavern patrons are kicked out, the hammocks are strung up, and people retire to their private rooms.

Troubleshooting

There is little that can go wrong at this point. The heroes could try to stay at another inn, but you could have them booked up due to the people's fear of being out at night.

The only other thing that could go wrong is if someone wants to walk the barmaids home. If this happens, have Carina act insulted, as if the heroes don't think she can handle herself. She has walked Livia and Siri home every night and nothing has ever happened to her.

The Morning After

Overview

This scene takes place the following morning. Carina never returned to the Grounded Drakkar. Livia and Siri will arrive safely, and will be able to tell that Carina walked them home safely. Borig Mastmender will be both furious and concerned. Carina is part of his "crew" and he will feel responsible. He will attempt to hire the heroes, hoping that they will be able to find his missing barmaid.

Setting The Stage

Though the Grounded Drakkar would never be mistaken for a high-class inn, you wake up refreshed. You were able to sleep inside, eat warm food, drink cool ale, and even got to hear music and tales.

You seat yourselves at one of the huge tables in the common room, and wait for the bread and cheese to be served. You see Siri and Livia wiping off the tables and bringing in some of the food and drink, but Carina is no where to be seen. Every one seems a little preoccupied.

Suddenly, a shadow looms over the table. You look up and see Borig Mastmender. He puts down the platter of bread and cheese, and looks you over.

"You are heroes, yes? Looking to make names for yourselves, and perhaps make a little silver in the process? I have a problem and was hoping that you could help me. Are you interested?"

If the heroes show interest, Borig will sit down and continue.

"Carina never returned last night. Now, I know she's a big girl and can take care of herself, but I'm a little worried. There have been a lot of people who have disappeared at night, and I don't want part of my crew being one of them."

"The town watch have been little help. They patrol the streets at night, but have yet to see any sign of whatever is happening to these people. I want to hire you to find Carina, or at least find out what happened to her. Business has been bad lately, people do not want to come drinking at night when they think there is a monster lurking about, eating travelers, but I can offer a week's food and lodging and 100 silvers if you're willing to help."

Let the heroes talk over the offer. They can try to bargain with Borig, but the best he can offer is 200 silvers. The only information he has is that the monster only takes people who are travelling alone or in pairs. It only happens when it is the dark of night. No one has seen it. It apparently avoids any large group. Borig will pay half of the money up front.

Once the negotiations are finished, Borig will have to return to work, especially since he is short handed. The heroes can go into the city to buy supplies and see if they can find anything out, but there is little known. The people who are missing were of different races and sexes, though they were all healthy. Rumors tell of a strange, tentacled monster that has been grabbing people, or a strange, winged creature that grabs people and flies off with them, or any other wild tale you care to give them. There will be no real action until midnight.

Behind The Scenes

Prices in Jerris are average. It is a merchant city so almost all goods and services are available.

Borig is worried, and has three Booster Potions that he will let the heroes use if they get injured while working for him.

Troubleshooting

The only problem that can arise is if the heroes don't take Borig up on his offer. If this looks like it is going to happen, Borig will inquire into why they won't help. Are they too afraid? If they refuse even the 200 silvers offer, Borig will get mad and kick them out of his inn. He will also tell his fellow innkeepers of the heroes' cowardice and unwillingness to lend a hand. They will be overcharged by 20% in any other inn or tavern in Jerris for the next week or so.

If they do take the offer, Borig will point out that the only time anyone is taken is if they are single or only a pair. As a former crystal raider who has had to survive in the wilds, Borig knows that to be successful when hunting something, you need the right bait.

A Hunting We Shall Go

Overview

After preparing themselves and buying whatever equipment they needed during the day, the heroes should be ready to spend the night hunting whatever monster has been taking the townsfolk.

They will spend many fruitless hours looking for a monster that doesn't exist unless they decide to use some of their members as bait, allowing them to wander singly or in pairs. If they do this, one of the single members or one of the pairs will be attacked a little past midnight. There will be six ruffians armed with clubs who will attack to stun. Mylic Urbin will remain hidden, only coming out if it looks like he needs to Surprise Strike a difficult opponent.

Once the victims are subdued, the thugs will pull a cart filled with barrels out of an alley, load the victims into the barrels, and head for the warehouse. If they are attacked during the ambush or any time after it, they will retreat into the alleys and back streets of Jerris.

The heroes' best option is to follow the cart and see where it goes. If the heroes refuse to split into small groups, nothing will happen to them the entire night.

Setting The Stage

Read this to the single hero or the pair of heroes being used as bait.

It has been several hours since the sun went down. The streets seem deserted as you make your way through the smoky fog. The shops are all closed, with the shutters drawn tight. Every alley and every side street seems filled with ominous shadows. Suddenly, movement catches your eye as a dark clad figure leaps from an alley mouth. Another leaps from a low

roof, and you can hear another behind you. They all have large clubs in their hands and quickly advance towards you.

Themes and Images

The streets should be dark and spooky. There should be the occasional noise coming from an alley or the screech of an owl. Let the heroes see odd shadows every now and then before describing the shadow as a stray dog. Remember, they should be expecting some sort of monster.

Behind The Scenes

This is the slaver party that has been causing the disappearances. There are 3 Human Ruffians and 3 Ork Ruffians. They will only attack the heroes if there is a group of one or two, and will attempt to attack with surprise. If they are interrupted, they will attempt to flee, letting it look like they were typical muggers. Mylic will observe, while remaining hidden behind some old crates. He will attempt to Surprise Strike the person putting up the most resistance. Remember, they are trying to take victims alive, so they will be using the Stun rules.

Mylic will remain hidden as long as possible. He will only attack if necessary, and he will attempt to do so by surprise. He wants his victims alive, so he will attack to stun unless his group is under attack. In that case, he will do normal damage. Mylic will escape if things are going badly.

The outcome of this encounter should provide the heroes with a place to investigate, either from following the cart with the barrels to the warehouse, or by capturing one of the ruffians and forcing him to talk.

Troubleshooting

If things have gone wrong, and the heroes have either been captured or defeated, there are still ways to make this work out.

If it looks like the entire party of heroes are about to be defeated, have a town watch patrol show up, forcing the ruffians to flee.

If one or two heroes are captured and the rest of the party does not observe the ruffians loading the victims into the barrels and carting them off, things become more difficult. The captured heroes will be taken to the holding cells under the warehouse. From there, they can try to organize an escape, but that is left to the storyteller.

If it looks like Mylic is going to be captured by the heroes, let a few more ruffians show up, giving Mylic a chance to escape. Remember, Mylic will not risk being captured, preferring to flee.

The Warehouse of Doom

Overview

After locating the warehouse where the ruffians have been holding the missing townsfolk, the heroes should be ready to try and free them. This will involve entering the warehouse, getting past the ruffians on guard, finding the secret way to the basement, freeing the slaves, and confronting Mylic. Once all this has been done, the heroes should encounter the Horror Drathig'nar and hopefully defeat him.

Setting The Stage

Read this if the heroes managed to follow the cart with the barrels:

The cart has turned down numerous side streets, past closed shops, and through dark alleys. Finally, they come to an old warehouse in the merchant section of the city. The paint is old and peeling, but you can still make out the faded sign above the double doors that read "Livestock". The doors slide open and the assorted ruffians push the cart inside. They take a quick look around, and then shut the doors. You realize that there are still several hours until sunrise.

Read this if the heroes have found out the location of the warehouse from one of the captured ruffians:

It seems as if the ruffian was telling the truth. The warehouse took a while to find, but you are now standing at a street corner, looking it over. The warehouse is old and peeling, but you can still make out the faded sign that reads "Livestock". You realize there are still a few hours until sunrise.

Themes And Images

At this point the heroes should believe that the mysterious monster is really a bunch of ruffians busy kidnapping townsfolk. During the first part of this scene, let everything seem

normal and mundane. This will make the appearance of the Horror more frightening and unexpected.

Behind The Scenes

The warehouse used to be set up for holding cattle, horses, and sheep. The interior is in as bad a shape as the outside. Beams have fallen, and the old stall walls are collapsing. There are three ruffians seated at an old table playing cards.

If the heroes followed the cart here, the ruffians are relaxing and not expecting any trouble. This will give the heroes a good chance of surprise. If the heroes found out the location by questioning a captured ruffian, the ruffians here will be more alert.

There are several ways into the warehouse. There are the large double doors that the cart was brought in through, there are two single doors, and numerous upper windows about twenty feet above the ground (with a climbing difficulty of 9). The windows are small, no more than one foot wide by two feet tall, and there are no windows on the side with the hidden stairs.

1. *The large double doors are old and rotted, with paint peeling down to the bare wood. They seem to be mounted on tracks and are designed to slide into the walls.* These doors are locked with a simple hook and eye latch on the inside. However, it is impossible to access from the outside. The Lock Pick talent can still be used.
2. *The door seems in no better repair than the rest of the building. The wood seems worn and faded, but the door resists opening. You can see the tarnished brass lockplate surrounding the keyhole.* The door is locked, difficulty of 7 to open.
3. *This wooden door is old but sturdy. There is a small window near the top of the door, and the glass is cracked. Looking in, you can make out what used to be an old office. The door resists your attempts to open it, and you realize it is locked.* The door is locked, difficulty of 7 to open.
4. *The room is musty and dark. An old desk lies half-collapsed in one corner, and the warped wooden shelves mounted on the wall seem filled with rotting papers. There is another door partially opened at the far end of the room. Suddenly, you hear a low growling.* This room is what used to be the warehouse office, though it is falling apart with neglect. The papers are rotted and the ink has run, but what is left seems to be records dating back to when the warehouse was in use. The low growling is coming from an attack dog that the slavers keep as a pet. This dog will attack any intruders, barking loudly as it does so. The loud barking will attract the ruffians in area 5 after 3 rounds.
5. Read this if the dog in area 4 has not alerted the ruffians:

   There is light coming from the main hall of the warehouse. You can make out the sounds of voices, and can see three human men seated around an old table playing cards. They have swords lying on the table next to their coins.

Read this if the ruffians were alerted by the dog in area 4:
There is light coming from the main hall of the warehouse. You see an old table covered with assorted coins and a deck of playing cards.

The three men are more ruffians working for Mylic. They are on watch, but usually not very attentive since there has never been any trouble. If the heroes ambushed the slaver party earlier in the evening, these guards will be very alert, otherwise they are automatically surprised for one turn if the heroes have been quiet. Of course, should the dog in room 4 have been disturbed, the guards will have gone to area 4. There are 48 silvers and 24 coppers on the table.

6. *The corner of this section of the warehouse is filled with the same sort of barrels as are on the cart.* Hidden behind the barrels is a secret door, needing a 9 to find on a Perception test. *Some of the barrels swing away on a sturdy hinge, and you can make out the faint outline of a door. You see no locking mechanism, and it opens to a simple push.*
7. *You can make out stairs leading down into the darkness. An old lamp holder at the top of the stairs probably held a lantern to light the way, but it is empty now. The only light is coming from the bottom of the stairs almost forty feet below and is very faint.* There is a trap halfway down the stairs. It can be disarmed by twisting the lamp holder at the top or the bottom of the stairs.

Pit Trap
This trap has three steps that give way and dump any intruder into a ten foot pit with spikes covering the floor.

Detection Difficulty: 7
Disarm Difficulty: 7
Trigger Condition: Pressure plate
Trap Initiative: 8
Trap Effect: Damage Step 10

8. *You reach the bottom of the stairs, and can see the light coming from the lanterns hanging from the walls. As you start forward, you can make out the sound of voices.* This section of the underground has several cots, a large table with benches, and a cooking fire. There are also four more ruffians, 2 human and 2 ork. These men will be easy to surprise if the heroes have been stealthy, but they will be ready and waiting if the heroes have tripped the trap at 7. Hanging on the wall near the door to 10 are the keys for the cells in area 9. If a fight breaks out here, Mylic will use Silent Walk to emerge from 10 and Surprise Strike whoever is the easiest target. The ruffians are aware of this, and will fight a retreating battle into area 9 to give Mylic a chance of approaching the heroes from behind. The heroes should think that this is the big, final battle so they should be all the more surprised by the Horror's upcoming attack. Mylic will attempt to Surprise Strike his first opponent, and then enter combat. He will fight to the best of his abilities, with no thought of escape. At this point, the Horror finds

him expendable, and wishes to stop the heroes at all cost.

9. *You can see numerous holding cells, and most are holding one or two dirty looking people. They look out of the bars at you, hoping and praying that you are here to save them. A voice calls out, "Hey, it's about time." You turn and see Carina, looking ravishing in her slightly torn barmaid outfit, staring out from one of the cells.* The cells are locked, needing an 8 to open, but the keys are hanging on the wall by the door to 10. The people are assorted humans, dwarves, and a single t'skrang. They will all be grateful for their release and will help spread the heroes' tale. Carina will accompany the heroes until she is returned to the Grounded Drakkar. She will pick up one of the ruffians' swords.
10. *The door is half open, and you can easily see into the room. The furniture and plush rug leaves you little doubt that it belongs to whoever was in charge. The bed is large and looks comfortable, and there is a beautifully carved wardrobe against one wall. A matching desk and carved trunk make up the rest of the furnishings.* The bed is comfortable, and there is a hidden dagger (+4 damage steps due to being forged by a weaponsmith adept) under the pillow. The desk has writing paper, inks, and pens. In the top drawer is the record book showing the sales of people to a slave merchant in Vivane. Underneath it is a small pouch with 2 rubies (worth 75 sp each). The trunk has several changes of clothes, and a simple wooden box (containing one Healing potion). The wardrobe contains extra boots, and several cloaks of different colors (one of which is a Dwarf Winternight Cloak in deep blue, needing a Perception test, target of 6 to notice). Once the heroes start searching the room, there will be a horrendous crashing noise as part of a wall falls in. Striding out through the rubble will be the Horror Drathig'nar.

    When it seems that the heroes are relaxed, read the following:

    You hear the sound of stone cracking and rubble falling. A cloud of dust sweeps through the room and your ears are deafened by a shriek of hatred. You turn to see a grossly formed, worm-like body on which sits a disgusting, horned head. Its mouth is filled with small, razor sharp teeth, and its five eyes are oozing a pinkish goo. It reaches forward with a clawed hand.

    The Horror Drathig'nar is angry. Mylic was one of its favorite servants, and it is enraged over Mylic's demise. Normally, the heroes would stand little chance of defeating a Horror of Drathig'nar's power, but since the decline of the magic level Drathig'nar is barely a shadow of his former self. It is only a matter of time before he would cease to be able to hold a physical form. Because of all of these factors, Drathig'nar will attack with blind rage, fighting until either the heroes or his own form are destroyed.

11. This rough, natural cave glitters with a light of its own. Scattered on the floor are coins and other items. The air reeks of decay, and every now and then a low rumbling can be heard. This room is where Mylic threw all of the profits from the slaving

operation. He worshipped the Horror and considered all of his wealth as offerings for his "Passion". There is 240 assorted coppers, 452 silvers, 36 gold, an unused Absorb Blow charm, and one dose of Kelia's Antidote.

Troubleshooting

The only thing that can go wrong is that the heroes can all die. This would be a bad ending of the story, so there are a few precautions that can be taken. Give the players time to use their Recovery Tests. Let them find the Healing Potion before the Horror attacks. Lastly, remember that the Horror is enraged and will not attack logically. Split its attacks up among the players so that no single character takes too much damage.

Also, remember that being a hero is a dangerous occupation. Heroes die. If a character is going to die, let it die a heroic death. Let the hero make a Willpower roll with a target of 6 to get one last attack off after he has been killed.

On the other hand, if the heroes look like they are going to trounce the Horror too easily, use one of its actions to make a recovery test, using a Karma point to augment its Recovery Die. The final fight should give the heroes no time to catch their breath. The should feel a little afraid, and their hearts should be pounding.

Back Onboard

Overview

The heroes return to the Grounded Drakkar, returning Carina to her friends. The heroes will be toasted, and Borig Mastmender will throw a huge party. Tales of the heroes' exploits will circulate through the town as the newly freed prisoners tell their family and friends about the rescue. People will come to see the new heroes, and drinks will flow. Borig Mastmender will pay the reward he promised.

Setting The Stage

You make it back to the Grounded Drakkar, Carina by your side. As you enter, Livia and Siri gasp, and call for Borig. The troll comes out from behind the bar, a grin so wide it looks like he could swallow a windling whole. Borig calls out, "Drinks on the house!" and a cheer goes up from the patrons. He gathers Carina up in his arms and almost crushes her. He then

turns towards you.

"Greetings and well met, my friends. You have done me a great service. Please, sit and have some ale to quench your thirsts. And then you must tell us the tale of how you managed this rescue."

Behind The Scenes

Borig will throw a huge party. Many people will come and gawk at the heroes as Brooz, the dwarf musician retells the tale over and over again. Borig will give the heroes free rooms (two to a room) and free food and drink for a week. He will make up this money by the amount of people who will come in to hear the tale and see the heroes. Carina will be grateful, and may be open to advances from charismatic hero types.

Troubleshooting

There is little that can go wrong here. The heroes should be able to relax, heal up, and enjoy the attention that comes with doing heroic things. And once they are rested, they should be ready to continue building their legends.

Legend Points

Award Legend Points at the end of the adventure. The following is a general guideline:

Completing Adventure Goal

Ending the slaver operation 150 points per hero
Freeing the townsfolk 75 points per hero

Defeating Opponents

Ruffians 60 points each
Attack Dog 50 points
Mylic Urbin 160 points
Drathig'nar (Horror) 400 points

Acquiring Loot

Drathig'nar's horns 200 points

Creative Roleplaying

Use your own judgement, but the average award should be 75 points per hero who roleplayed well.

Total

A well played character in a party of five should earn approximately 600 legend points.

Cast of Characters

Human Ruffians

DEX: 13: 6/D10 **STR:** 13: 6/D10 **TOU:** 13: 6/D10
PER: 9: 4/D6 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 10: 5/D8

Initiative: 6/D10
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 9/D8+D6
Damage: Fist 6/D10, Club 9/D8+D6, Short Sword 10/D10+D6
Number of Spells: N/A
Spellcasting: N/A
Effect: N/A
Death Rating: 35
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 27

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 6/D10
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60
Legend Points: 60

Skills: Melee Weapons 3: 9/D8+D6, Streetwise 2: 6/D10, Unarmed Combat 3: 9/D8+D6
Equipment: Short sword, club, dagger, leather armor
Loot: 1D6 x 10 silvers
Notes: None

Ork Ruffians

DEX: 12: 5/D8 **STR:** 16: 7/D12 **TOU:** 14: 6/D10
PER: 9: 4/D6 **WIL:** 8: 4/D6 **CHA:** 9: 4/D6

Initiative: 5/D8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 8/2D6
Damage: Fist 7/D12, Club 10/D10+D6, Short Sword 11/D10+D8
Number of Spells: N/A
Spellcasting: N/A
Effect: N/A
Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 28

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 7/D12
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 33
Full Movement: 65
Legend Points: 60

Skills: Melee Weapons 3: 8/2D6, Streetwise 2: 6/D10, Unarmed Combat 3: 8/2D6
Equipment: Short sword, club, dagger, leather armor
Loot: 1D6 x 10 silvers
Notes: None

Mylic Urbin

5th Circle Thief Adept

DEX: 16: 7/D12 **STR:** 10: 5/D8 **TOU:** 10: 5/D8
PER: 13: 6/D10 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 13: 6/D10

Initiative: 7/D12
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 12/2D10
Damage: 9/D8+D6; Surprise Strike: 16/D20+D8
Number of Spells: N/A
Spellcasting: N/A
Effect: N/A
Death Rating: 56
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 42
Karma Pool: 10

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 5/D8
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 38
Full Movement: 75
Legend Points: 160
Karma Die: D8

Equipment: Short sword, leather armor, 2 daggers

Loot: None

Talents: Avoid Blow 3: 10/D10+D6*, Climbing 3: 10/D10+D6, Detect Trap 3: 9/D8+D6, Disarm Mechanical Trap 3: 10/D10+D8*, Durabiliºty 5, Fence 5: 11/D10+D8*, Karma Ritual 5, Lock Pick 5: 12/2D10*, Lock Sense 3: 9/D8+D6, Melee Weapons 5: 12/2D10, Picking Pockets 3: 10/D10+D8*, Silent Walk 5: 12/2D10*, Surprise Strike 5: 12/2D10*, Thread Weaving 4*, Trap Initiative 5: 12/2D10*
* Can use Karma

Notes: Can spend Karma on Perception rolls

Attack Dog

DEX: 5/D8 **STR:** 5/D8 **TOU:** 5/D8
PER: 6/D10 **WIL:** 3/D4 **CHA:** 3/D4

Initiative: 4/D6
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 8/2D6
Damage: 7/D12
Number of Spells: N/A
Spellcasting: N/A
Effect: N/A
Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 4
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 5/D8
Recovery Tests: 1
Combat Movement: 22
Full Movement: 43
Legend Points: 50

Carina Ridley - Human Barmaid?

DEX: 16: 7/D12 **STR:** 10: 5/D8 **TOU:** 10: 5/D8
PER: 13: 6/D10 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 16: 7/D12

Initiative: 7/D12
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 10/D10+D6
Damage: Fist 4/D6, Shortsword 9/D8+D6
Number of Spells: NA
Spellcasting: NA
Effect: NA

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 9
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 4/D6
Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22
Combat Movement: 38
Full Movement: 75
Legend Points: 60

Equipment: Clothes, smile, shortsword (hidden in the common room of the Grounded Drakkar)

Skills: Acting 4: 10/D10+D6, Avoid Blow 3: 10/D10+D6, Bartending 2: 7/D12, Flirting 3: 10/D10+D6, Lock Picking 2: 9/D8+D6, Melee Weapon 3: 10/D10+D6, Silent Walk 2: 9/D8+D6, Singing 1: 8/2D6, Streetwise 3: 8/2D6, Unarmed Combat 3: 10/D10+D6

Loot: 2D6 silvers

Notes: Carina is hardly the typical barmaid found in taverns and inns throughout Barsaive. She is a complete scoundrel who is convinced that Borig has a fortune hidden away somewhere in the inn. She searches whenever she gets a chance, and is biding her time, waiting for Borig or Cyrus to slip up and mention where they have the treasure hidden. Carina is a beautiful dark-haired young woman in her early twenties. She is dressed identically to the other barmaids, in tight pants, and a loose shirt, and cuts quite a dashing figure. She sleeps in a hammock in the common room at night. She is a flirt who is always looking for an angle to riches. She actually has become quite fond of the inn, and will fight to defend it, though she will only use her short sword as a last resort. Her shortsword is hidden behind a loose board in the common room.

Drathig'Nar - A Horror

DEX: 9/D8+D6 **STR:** 9/D8+D6 **TOU:** 8/2D6
PER: 8/2D6 **WIL:** 8/2D6 **CHA:** 8/2D6

Initiative: 9/D8+D6
Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: 11/D10+D8
Damage: 12/2D10
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 10/D10+D8
Effect: Special
Death Rating: 60
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: NA
Karma Pool: 8
Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 10
Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 3
Knockdown: 9/D8+D6
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 60
Full Movement: 120
Legend Points: 400
Karma Die: D12

Equipment: None

Loot: 2 horns worth 100 silvers each. This loot counts as legend points.

Notes: Drathig'nar was once much more powerful than he is now. The decline of the magic level has seriously weakened the once mighty Horror. It is only a matter of time before he would be forced to retreat back across the planes, but until that time, he has been causing as much fear and despair as he possibly can. In his prime, all of his Step Numbers would be increased by 5. Drathig'nar is an odd creature with the body of a worm, two arms with clawed hands, and an almost human head crowned with two horns. He is a disgusting shade of pinkish flesh, with five eyes of pitch black. His one spell attack is the ability to cause despair. If his Spellcasting test is successful, the target will be at -3 steps to all his actions due to the feelings of despair. The effect lasts 10 rounds or until the target can make a Willpower roll of 9 or better as his action for the round.

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Test of Courage

by David Caraley

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #6***

Torrig Swordbreaker, chief of clan Bloodspear, looked around at his campsite. The tents were all set according to tradition, with the more important warriors' dwellings closer to Torrig's central tent.

Torrig turned to the grizzled old ork seer next to him. Speaking in the low, harsh tongue native to the ork scorcher tribes, the chief inquired, "So this is where the Passions have foretold, old one?"

"Yes, my chief, this is the place," answered Urik Farteller. Urik had been the advisor to the past three chiefs. He was respected for his visions of the future, and the communications he had with the Passions.

Now would come the time of waiting. Torrig knew this would be the toughest time for his people. Orks were not a patient race, and Torrig had no idea how long it would be before the heroes described in Urik's prophecy would arrive. Heroes who would free his clan from the evil oppression of Nazrig Tog.

Of course Torrig knew that his clan would not be easy to convince. They would have a hard time believing that outsiders could help them with their problems. They would demand a test. A test that would prove the coming strangers were indeed the heroes foretold in the prophecy. Torrig did not look forward to what might happen if the heroes fail the test.

Plot Synopsis

This adventure is designed for characters of roughly 3rd Circle.

The ork clan Bloodspear has been living under the oppression of Nazrig Tog, an ork nethermancer who has been serving the Horrors since the clan emerged from their kaer seventy years ago, kept alive through his foul bargain with these same Horrors.

Nazrig Tog has managed to bring several ork scorcher clans under his control, and is going to use them to sweep across Barsaive, causing as much destruction and anguish as possible, thereby feeding his Horror masters.

So far, Nazrig Tog has prevented any interaction between his clans and the normal population of Barsaive. The only language spoken or written by any of the clans is Orkish. He has made most of his followers paranoid and distrustful of outsiders.

Unknown to Nazrig Tog, an elder ork of clan Bloodspear named Urik Farteller has managed to

discover that Nazrig is controlled by the Horrors and has managed to convince his clan chief Torrig Swordbreaker of this fact.

Urik has also had visions from Thystonius showing the arrival of heroes, strangers from strange lands. Thystonius has told the old ork seer that these heroes would come to a certain place at a certain time, and that they would be the ones who would free clan Bloodspear from Nazrig's control.

When Urik shared these visions with Torrig Swordbreaker, the chief had his clan move their encampment to the place foretold in Urik's prophecy. He is now waiting for the time when the heroes will arrive.

When the characters arrive at the place foretold by Urik, at the time of the prophecy, they will be hailed as the heroes foretold by Thystonius. The original problem will be the difficulty of communicating, since the orks only speak their native tongue. The next problem will be convincing the ork scorchers that these are indeed the heroes who will free the clan from Nazrig's oppression.

Both Urik and Torrig will believe that the characters are the heroes foretold by the prophecy, but the average ork scorcher will have a hard time believing that a group of heroes from different races are the ones who will save their ork clan. The orks are proud, and will have a hard time accepting help from outsiders, not to mention non-ork outsiders. They will call for some sort of test to prove that the characters are the heroes they have been waiting for.

Torrig and Urik know that their clan will need this type of convincing. They know of a place in the mountains used as a lair by a gargoyle. The orks will take the characters up the mountain, give them directions to the lair, and send them on their way.

The characters will be expected to find the gargoyle, kill it, and bring back its horns. If they can do this, the clan will accept them as heroes. There will be a feast and party to celebrate the arrival of the heroes who will free them from Nazrig's oppression.

The day after the celebration, the orks will break camp and start moving south towards the mountains above the Mist Swamps. It will take three days to get to the mountains. On the third day the orks will be attacked by a flock of griffins looking for fresh horse flesh. The characters will have a chance to show their skill to the orks by helping drive away the creatures.

Once at the mountains, the orks will bring the characters through a hidden pass and into a protected valley where they usually live. Once there, they will set up camp, and rest for the night.

The following day Torrig and Urik will take the characters up into the mountains. The two orks will give the characters a map to the caves where Nazrig resides. They will tell the characters that the time of their destiny is at hand, explaining that it was prophesied that they would free clan Bloodspear from Nazrig Tog's domination.

It will then be up to the characters to find the caves and either defeat or drive off Nazrig Tog. Once they have done this, they can return to clan Bloodspear where they can offer aid against the remaining forces of Nazrig Tog, who are unaware of his downfall. Once that is done, they will receive a heroes welcome.

The Meeting Foretold

Overview

The characters are traveling from Kratas to Bartertown (or the other way if it fits your campaign) when they find themselves surrounded by ork scorchers. They will have little time to decide what to do before two orks ride forward, empty hands outstretched. They only speak Orkish, but will attempt to communicate the idea that the characters should accompany them.

The characters will be brought to the camp of clan Bloodspear where the orks will regard them with suspicion. There will be challenges, games of strength and wits, and the characters will be expected to join in.

Setting the Stage

It has been a couple of days since you left the city. At first you passed a few outlying farms, but now it is simple plains grass. You have reached the banks of a tributary river that eventually makes its way to the Serpent, and have stopped to rest and enjoy a simple meal.

You see motion coming from around a hillside, and spot a group of mounted riders making their way towards you. You can hear the horses charging across the grassy plains, making a sound like thunder. Turning, you can see another group of riders coming from down river charging up towards you.

Behind the Scenes

Give the characters time to react, but let them know that there is no place for them to go before the two groups of riders converge on them.

The two groups of riders combine, surrounding you completely. You can tell that they are orks, wearing leathers and animal skins, carrying spears, swords, and other weapons. You figure there are close to thirty of them. Some of them continue to circle around you, yelling war cries and waving their weapons, but most sit quietly on their horses watching you.

Two of them ride up towards you, talking to each other as they come. They ride forward, arms outstretched, hands empty. One of them is tall and broad shouldered. He has his face painted in reds and whites, and a large axe hangs by his side. The other is old and grey, his face wrinkled with age. His leathers are painted with odd symbols and you see he has no weapons.

They stop around twenty feet away and seem to be waiting to see what you are going to do.

Let the characters decide what to do. Eventually one of them will probably decide to talk with the orks. Once they do, read the following:

The two orks seem confused. They answer back in a harsh, guttural language (Orkish). When you don't respond, they continue talking to you, using hand signals to point to you, then them, then the other riders, and then to the south.

At this point, anyone who has the Speak Languages talent with an empty slot still available can make a test with a target of 6. If successful, he will then understand and be able to speak Orkish. Once this happens, or is someone in the party already speaks Orkish, read the following:

You can now make out what the ork is saying. He is looking all of you over and saying, "You have come, just as Urik Farteller has prophesied. I am Torrig Swordbreaker, chief of clan Bloodspear. You will come with us to our camp now."

It is obvious that he expects you will accompany him to where their campsite is. You do not think he will just let you continue on your way.

They give the characters time to get ready, and will then take them to the ork campsite.

The orks take up positions to either side of your group and start to ride south. Upon occasion a scorcher will ride up closer, let out a war whoop and ride back to his friends. After about two hours of traveling, you see a campsite ahead of you. It almost seems to be a small town, with over twenty tents set up like spokes coming from a central hub where a group of three large tents are set. Ork women and children come out to see the returning warriors, looking at all of you with curiosity. Some seem excited, while others seem resentful.

The tents are made of animal skins, decorated with paint, bones, and feathers. Groups of riders break away and head for various areas of the camp and you are eventually led to the central area.

Younger orks come forward to take the horses to a central pen while the warriors dismount. Torrig Swordbreaker strides towards you, and you can see four guards following him at a respectful distance. A group of ork warriors are gathering, waiting to hear what their chief has to say.

"Welcome to clan Bloodspear. A tent will be set for you to stay. Tonight we will rest and discuss how you will accomplish the deeds that have been foretold."

Voices come from the crowd: "How do you know these are the heroes Urik spoke of?"

"They are not even orks, how can you expect them to help us?"

"They do not look capable of giving us aid."

Torrig waves his hand and the crowd grows quiet. "My people, I understand your fears and doubts. Nazrig is strong and powerful, and these people seem small. Still, they were in the place of prophecy at the time Thystonius spoke of. If they are the heroes foretold by Urik, we will be free of Nazrig forever. Can we afford to doubt the words of the Passions?"

"We need proof, great Torrig. Proof of their skill and talent. Proof that they are heroes," comes the crowd's reply.

"Then tomorrow you will have proof. Urik has seen the lair of a winged stone monster. We will send these heroes forth, and they will slay this creature. If they are strong enough to defeat the winged stone creature and bring back its horns, they will have proved themselves heroes."

The crowd murmurs amongst themselves, and seem to agree with Torrig. The ork chief then turns towards you. "Make yourselves comfortable. Food will be prepared and there is ale to drink. Tomorrow you will be put to the test to see if you are the heroes we were expecting. Until then, enjoy the hospitality of my clan."

The characters will be taken by Urik to the tent where they can stay. Once there, they can question the old ork as to what is going on.

He will tell them of Nazrig Tog, an ork nethermancer who now controls several ork clans through fear and magic. He has controlled these clans for over fifty years, keeping them separated from the rest of Barsaive. Soon, Nazrig will lead the clans on a raid across Barsaive, burning towns and slaughtering people, all in the name of Guul'pexiir, a powerful mage - warrior who no one has seen.

Torrig Swordbreaker wishes to live in peace with his people. He does not wish to follow Nazrig on this plan of war. Still, Nazrig is strong, and has many supporters. If Torrig tries to make a break from Nazrig, it will mean a war with the other ork clans.

At first it seemed that no matter what was done, clan Bloodspear would be at war. But Thystonius came to Urik and foretold the coming of heroes. These heroes would come from afar, and free clan Bloodspear from Nazrig's oppression. He told when and where the heroes would be, and Torrig took a raiding party to that spot. Once there, they found the characters.

Tomorrow, Urik warns, the characters will be taken to the mountainside where they will be given a map to the lair of the winged stone beast. They will be expected to return with the creature's horns to prove to the clan that they are the heroes Thystonius promised them. The winged stone creature is very strong and very tough to kill. Only true heroes could hope to return alive.

Once Urik has given these warnings, Torrig will enter.

"Greetings, heroes. Tomorrow comes a test to see if you are the heroes we were expecting. Tonight we will feast and drink. Come with me and enjoy our hospitality."

He leads you to the huge central tent where many of the clan's warriors are already seated on mats enjoying bowls of stew and drinking ale. Two orks are in the middle of the tent doing a sword dance to the beat of several large drums, and once they finish, two more take the floor and start to wrestle. Another group is downing mugs of ale, apparently engaged in some sort of drinking contest.

You are shown to a section of floor covered with furs near the raised area where Torrig goes to sit.

The characters can watch the ork entertainment. They can even get involved with the festivities. If someone chooses to join in the fun, use the following rules:

- For wrestling, roll initiative as normal. To grapple, a character needs a Good success on an Unarmed Combat test against their opponent's Physical Defense. Once a contestant gets a hold, he has to keep it for three full rounds. The contestant in the hold can try to break the hold by making a Unarmed Combat or Strength test against the result of the Grapple attack that initiated the hold. If the contestant manages to equal or exceed the original Grapple result, he breaks free and it starts over again.
- For drinking, after each drink, the character makes a Toughness (or Will) test with a target of 5. After four failures, the character falls over, too drunk to continue.
- For storytelling, a character must be able to speak Orkish. The target number is a 5. The better the success level, the better the story. Failing means the character told a boring story that did little to capture the attention of the ork audience.

For the contests, use the following stats for the ork scorchers.

Ork Scorcher

DEX: 13: 6/D10 **STR:** 15: 6/D10 **TOU:** 12: 5/D8
PER: 10: 5/D8 **WIL:** 9: 4/D6 **CHA:** 6: 3/D4

Initiative: 6/D10
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 11/D10+D8
Damage: 11/D10+D8
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 34
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 26

Physical Defense: 7 (10)
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 4
Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 6/D10
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60
Legend Points: 100

Equipment: Hard leather armor, weapon, shield, second weapon
Loot: 3D6 silvers

The characters have a chance to make friends or enemies during the course of the evening. Any character who does well can make a Charisma test against the Social Defense of the character likely to be impressed. A Good success means the ork will become friendly with the character, and will consider the character someone of worth. Give any ork who the characters make friends with a name. It may be useful at a later date to know who one's friends are. Assign a name or roll from the following list:

D10	Name
1	Lorg
2	Kargan

3	Mogoth
4	Brakor
5	Jortan
6	Drunog
7	Borgan
8	Norrak
9	Oknar
10	Xurgan

Troubleshooting

The characters could elect to fight the scorchers when they arrive. As they are highly outnumbered, this would probably result in their deaths, or at least the death of a couple of them. If it looks likely that the characters are going to fight, let the orks pull back a little and again send Torrig and Urik forward to speak with the characters.

If it looks as if the characters will not go with the orks, have the Torrig look confused and ask again if they are heroes. If they still refuse to go with the orks, Torrig and Urik will ride off, convinced that they were mistaken and these were not the heroes they were waiting for. The remaining orks will argue, and some of them will ride off after their two leaders while 10 will remain to attack the characters. As the orks are mounted, the only way to hit them is to win initiative and wait for the orks to attack. The orks will attack and ride by, turning their mounts to attack again the following round.

A Wing and a Prayer

Overview

Torrig, Urik, and some of the other orks take the characters to a mountain where they know that a gargoyle has made its lair. The characters are shown the trail that leads up towards the mountain peak and are told they must return with the gargoyle's horns if they are to prove to the clan that they are the heroes of the prophecy.

The characters will then make their way up the mountain, confront the gargoyle, hopefully defeat it, and return with the horns. Once they return, a feast will be held in their honor.

Setting the Stage

It is early in the morning when you are wakened by Urik, the old ork seer.

"Wake up, my friends. The time has come for you to prove yourselves to the clan. To prove you are indeed the heroes Thystonius foretold."

The old ork gives you time to dress and prepare for the day. He leads you to the central tent where various ork women are serving a light meal to the gathered warriors. Torrig is seated on a fur covered stone watching everything intently. He sees you enter and waves you over.

"Be seated, my friends. Eat something. Today will be a difficult day for you. You will be brought to the mountain and sent to find the winged stone creature. You must defeat it and return with its horns to prove yourself to the clan".

You are brought food and ale, and even manage to enjoy the odd cheeses, and coarse breads you are served. After a half an hour, Torrig rises, claps his hands once, and orders the horses to be prepared.

Two hours later finds you at the foothills of a lone mountain rising from the plains. Torrig, Urik, and ten ork scorchers bring their mounts to a stop.

"Up in the mountain there is the lair of the creature. Beware, it is fast and dangerous. Its skin is as hard as stone and its claws can cut through metal with ease. When you defeat it, cut its horns from its head and return to here. We will wait for you for two days. If after two days you do not return, we will presume you are with the Passions and will return to our camp. I wish you luck."

When Torrig stops speaking, Urik steps forward. "Brave heroes, there is little I can say or do for you. Be brave and look to Thystonius, for he will be watching over you."

The orks stay seated on their horses while they watch you make your way up the mountain trail.

Behind the Scenes

The characters will have to make there way up the treacherous mountain pass, find the gargoyles' lair, and defeat them. Give the characters time to discuss any plan they wish, they have several hours before they will get to the lair. Once they are ready, read the following:

It has been difficult going. The trail is worn and covered in loose rock. The air has gotten slightly thinner and you are beginning to get winded. Twice you have been forced from the trail, having to get past several fallen boulders.

You make your way around a bend in the trail and find a half devoured mountain goat covered with filth. The rocks and cliff face around the corpse have deep gouges, almost as if a strong creature left claw markings in the stone.

At this point the characters can start searching for the lair. Give them a Perception Test, target of 8, every half hour to spot the lair. The characters only get one test per half hour unless they split up. If they split up, give each group searching a Perception Test every half hour.

During this time, roll a Perception Test for the gargoyle every half hour with the target being the lowest Dex Step among the characters. If the gargoyle spots the characters before the characters find the lair, the gargoyle will swoop in to attack. If the characters find the lair before the gargoyle finds them, the characters can try to ambush the returning gargoyle in the early evening when they return.

Read the following if the gargoyle finds the characters before the characters find the lair:

A piercing cry splits the air as a large, grey creature dives out of the sky at your group.

Once the characters have defeat the gargoyle, they can remove the horns and make their way back down the mountain.

If the characters find the lair before the gargoyle finds them, read the following:

After searching for quite some time, you have found a cave mouth leading into the mountainside. Looking in, you can see the mouth opens into a vast cave. Your light catches the bleached white bones littering the floor. The cave must be fifty feet by sixty feet, with boulders and rocks scattered on the floor and deep claw marks on the walls and floor. Taking a quick look around, you realize it is empty.

The gargoyle will return at sundown. Until then, the characters have time to plan any surprise they wish. After they have made their plans, read the following:

With a flurry of wings, a large stone creature makes its way into the cave. It is carrying a mountain goat slung over his shoulder.

Give the characters a chance to surprise the gargoyle, and then start the fight.

Gargoyle

DEX: 8/2D6 **STR:** 18/D20+D12 **TOU:** 12/2D10
PER: 4/D6 **WIL:** 5/D8 **CHA:** 4/D6

Initiative: 6/D10
Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: 11/D10+D8
Damage: 22/D20+D12+D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 55
Wound Threshold: 13

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 11
Armor: 13
Mystic Armor: 6
Knockdown: 18
Recovery Tests: 4
Combat Movement: 25 (45)
Full Movement: 50 (90)

Unconsciousness Rating: 48 **Legend Points:** 500

Equipment: None

Loot: Horns worth 5D6 x 10 silvers. They count as Legend Points.

Enchanted creatures made of elemental earth and stone, standing about 5 feet 6 inches tall and weighing an impressive 900 pounds. Despite their nasty dispositions, they usually only attack to defend their territory or other elemental earth. Sometimes Gargoyles will leave their prides and search for new territory. These Gargoyles are more aggressive and will sometimes look for a fight.

Once the characters have defeated the gargoyle, they can cut off the horns and either make their way back down the mountain in the fading light (not a good idea) or make camp in the cave, eat roast goat, and make their way back down in the morning.

Once the characters have made their way back to the orks, read the following:

You finally manage to return to the bottom of the mountain where the orks are waiting. One of the orks on watch lets out a cry as he sees you coming, and the others start to gather. Torrig and Urik walk out to greet you.

"Good to see you, brave ones. I hope you were successful," inquires Torrig?

Give the characters time to give the horns to Torrig and tell their tale. The orks will be impressed, and will start to believe that the characters are indeed the heroes they have been waiting for. If it is late in the day, they will make camp for the night, enjoying food and drink while listening to the story again and again. If it is early in the day, the camp will be packed up and the characters will be brought back to the main encampment.

Once back at the encampment, the orks will hail the characters as the heroes they were waiting for. A large feast will be held, and the celebration will last into the night. Allow the characters to participate in the festivities once more.

Troubleshooting

The only thing that can go wrong is if the gargoyle kills the characters. This might happen, if the characters are careless. There is little that can be done to help them, but a generous storyteller might allow a character to take an extra Recovery Test while engaged in combat as a result of Thystonius keeping an eye on them.

Heading South

Overview

The orks and characters will head south for the hidden mountain pass that leads to their home. As they near the mountain, a flock of griffins will swoop down and attack, hoping to kill a few horses for dinner. At this point the characters will get a chance to show their skills in front of the orks if they decide to aid the orks in driving off the griffins.

Setting the Stage

It has been three days since the orks broke camp and you headed south. A magnificent mountain now looms up ahead of you. The orks seem to travel with a purpose, rarely taking breaks, and constantly moving ever southward.

At night the tents have been set up, but there has been none of the festivities of the first few evenings. The orks have eaten, socialized for a little while, and gone to sleep. Everyone seems interested in returning back to their homeland.

You know you must be getting close. Torrig has told you that they live in a valley somewhere in the mountain up ahead.

Suddenly, an ear piercing cry splits the air. You look up to see a flock of odd looking birds circling overhead. As they get closer, you realize that these birds must be the size of a horse. In fact, they aren't birds at all. They have the body of a lion, and the head, wings, and talons of a huge eagle. Two of the creatures start to dive towards your group, followed by a third and a fourth.

Behind the Scenes

The flock of griffins will attempt to kill a few horses for dinner. The orks will do their best to drive them off. Two of the griffins will make an attempt at the characters' mounts. Each can be driven off if they take a wound.

Griffins (2)

DEX: 5/D8 **STR:** 7/D12 **TOU:** 9/D8+D6
PER: 6/D10 **WIL:** 4/D6 **CHA:** 5/D8

Initiative: 7
Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: 8/2D6
Damage: 12/2D10
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 50

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 1
Knockdown: 8/2D6
Recovery Tests: 4
Combat Movement: 29/60

Wound Threshold: 14 **Full Movement:** 57/120

Unconsciousness Rating: 43 **Legend Points:** 200

Equipment: None

Loot: Beak and feathers, 3D6 x 10 silver pieces, These items count as treasure worth Legend Points.

An attacking griffin swoops down on an opponent and strikes with its talons. Such a swooping attack does +3 steps of Damage, but limits the griffin to a single attack. After the swooping attack, the griffin lands and attacks with both talons.

Humanoids of average human size or smaller can use griffins as aerial mounts. Though difficult to train, tame griffins make excellent steeds.

Once the griffins are driven off, the orks will continue into the mountain pass.

It has been several hours since you entered the mountain pass. It was long and winding, but now a pleasant sight greets your eyes. A beautiful valley filled with lush green grass and tall leafy trees lies below you. You can make out campfires in the fading light, and with cries of joy, the ork horsemen charge towards the settlement below.

Soon you are in the thick of the tent city that houses clan Bloodspear. Women and children have lined the trail, all hoping to catch a glimpse of the heroes they have been waiting for.

Youths not ready for their first hunt come forward to take charge of the horses, and Torrig Swordbreaker waves for all of you to join him. He turns to the gathered clan and starts to speak.

"We have returned, my people. And with us are the heroes who were prophesied would free us from the evil of Nazrig. Behold the heroes, slayers of the winged stone monster and friends of our clan." With that he raises the horns of the gargoyle and the gathered orks cheer.

The orks will throw another huge celebration. There will be dancing, tale telling, wrestling, drinking, and a general good time held by all.

Troubleshooting

The only problem that can occur is if the griffins kill someone. If this looks likely, have the griffin attack a different character.

Things That Go Bump in the Night

Overview

The characters will be sleeping after the night's festivities. A group of orks loyal to Nazrig will break into the characters' tent and attempt to kill them. During this time, another group of orks loyal to Nazrig Tog will have left the clan to go and warn their liege.

Setting the Stage

It has been quite an evening. The ale and wine flowed freely, and there was dancing, wrestling, and games of skill and chance. You retired to your tent sometime past midnight to get some much needed rest.

Behind the Scenes

See if the characters set a watch. If they do, allow the character on watch to make a Perception Test with a target of 6 to avoid being surprised. Any sleeping character would need a Good success or better. There are six orks who will make their way in and attempt to kill the characters.

Ork Scorchers

DEX: 13: 6/D10 **STR:** 15: 6/D10 **TOU:** 12: 5/D8
PER: 10: 5/D8 **WIL:** 9: 4/D6 **CHA:** 6: 3/D4

Initiative: 6/D10
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 11/D10+D8
Damage: 11/D10+D8
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 34
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 26

Physical Defense: 7 (10)
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 4
Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 6/D10
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60
Legend Points: 100

Equipment: Hard leather armor, weapon, shield, second weapon
Loot:3D6 silvers

These orks are loyal to Nazrig and believe that they will be well rewarded if they manage to kill the heroes.

Any character who is asleep will be attacked by surprise while on the ground, effectively lowering their Physical Defense by -6. Once the fight has started, orks loyal to Torrig will arrive in the fifth round of combat.

After the fight ends, Torrig will be brought to the characters. He will look over the bodies of the fallen and say:

"Nazrig has spies everywhere. He now will be aware that you have come and will try to stop you. He will send messages to the other clans and mobilize them against us."

"We have little time. You must gather your supplies and head out before Nazrig can strike again. I will send for Urik, and he will lead you into the mountains where you can find the caves Nazrig is using as his base. I will mobilize my riders and advance deeper into the valley. Hopefully this will draw Nazrig's attention away from you. He may think you are with my forces advancing towards him from the lower trail as you and Urik make your way through the mountains."

"I wish you the blessings of the Passions, may they smile on your efforts."

With that, the orks start to mobilize, breaking down the tents, getting the horses ready, and packing supplies. Urik comes to you, dressed for traveling.

"We will be supplied mounts to reach the mountain trail. Once there, we will have to turn them loose as there is no way for them to travel through the mountains. If we leave now, we should reach Nazrig's stronghold in two days."

With that, the characters can gather their supplies and head out. They will be supplied with the following items:

- 25 feet of rope
- 4 Healing Poultices (add +4 steps to Recovery tests)
- 1 Light Quartz Crystal
- 1 Week's trail rations per person

Trouobleshooting

The only problem that can arise is if the orks succeed in assassinating the characters. If it looks as if this is about to happen, have the ork guards loyal to Torrig arrive early.

The Heart of Evil

Overview

The characters make their way through the mountains to the stronghold of Nazrig Tog. Once they arrive, Urik will lead them to one of the rear entrances and the characters will make their way inside. Once inside, they will have to make their way past the guards and traps to confront Nazrig Tog. During the final battle, Nazrig will be exposed as being in league with the Horrors. When he is slain, his black spirit will leave his body, threaten the characters that he will meet them again, and flee.

Setting the Stage

The trail through the mountain has been rough traveling, but Urik has proved to be a capable guide. At night you have set watches, afraid that the power of Nazrig Tog would find you even on this remote trail.

Urik Farteller has told you of his visions. He has seen the orks of the mountains sweep across the plains of Barsaive, killing and burning as they go. He has seen the dark cloud that follows them, the blackness of evil. There would be many deaths, and in the end, the evil did not care who died, ork or villager, farmer or townspeople. All the darkness wished for was the pain and suffering of the people. And in Urik's vision, he saw the combined ork horde pulling down the gates of Throal and all of the cities were on fire.

Now, you are all crouched down by some boulders as Urik points out the small side entrance to Nazrig Tog's stronghold. A single large guard stands by the entrance, keeping watch. You can tell by its bulk and size that it is an ogre.

Room#	Description
1	**Side Entrance** - *As you watch, a second ogre comes out of the cave mouth and slaps the first on the back. They have a hearty laugh at some shared joke.* The ogres aren't expecting any trouble and will have to make a Perception Test against the lowest Dex Step among the characters or be surprised. **Ogres (2)** **DEX:** 7/D12 **STR:** 11/D10+D8 **TOU:** 9/D8+D6 **PER:** 4/D6 **WIL:** 5/D8 **CHA:** 3/D4 **Initiative:** 4/D6 — **Physical Defense:** 7 **Number of Attacks:** 1 — **Spell Defense:** 8 **Attack:** 12/2D10 — **Social Defense:** 6 **Damage:** 16/D20+D8 — **Armor:** 7 **Number of Spells:** 0 — **Mystic Armor:** 1 **Spellcasting:** 0 — **Knockdown:** 9/D8+D6 **Effect:** 0 — **Recovery Tests:** 3 **Death Rating:** 50 — **Combat Movement:** 35 **Wound Threshold:** 12 — **Full Movement:** 70 **Unconsciousness Rating:** 45 — **Legend Points:** 110 **Equipment:** Ogre club, chain mail **Loot:** 1D6 x 10 silver pieces per ogre

	Ogres stand 7 feet 6 inches tall and weigh 400 pounds. They can smell silver and other precious metals, and often dig makeshift mines to locate the ore. Ogres wield magical clubs that add +5 steps to the user's Strength step. An ogre club not touched by an ogre for more than 25 hours becomes an ordinary hunk of wood. Once the ogres have been defeated, the characters can continue inside.
2	**Ogre Lair** - *A large cave lit by a sputtering fire is off to your left. You can see the piles of furs and skins that must be used as sleeping areas. The floor is littered with leaves and bones.* This is where the ogres from area 1 live. There is little of value, though if it is searched, a Perception Test, target of 6, will find a small canvas bag containing 54 silvers, 6 gold pieces, and a three inch piece of raw amber with a butterfly trapped inside worth 75 silvers.
3	**Iron Gate** - *You see a large iron gate blocking off the entrance to a huge chamber filled with tables and benches. A large rusty lock and chain secures the gate against intruders. Apparently even Nazrig Tog did not completely trust the ogres.* The gate is securely locked, needing an 8 to open. It hasn't been unlocked in years and is quite rusty. The iron is quite strong, able to resist the ogres' attempts to get in.
4	**Common Room** - *This vast chamber is lit by several torches mounted into the walls. The room is filled with large tables and benches, and a huge cooking fire smolders in the center of the room. It looks as if the place could seat over a hundred. There are several exits, one to the right and two on the far wall. Looking around, you realize that there is no one here.* Usually this room is brimming with orks, but Nazrig Tog has them mustered out in front of the cave network, ready for the advancing forces of clan Bloodspear.
5	**Storeroom** - *This cave is filled with sacks, crates and barrels. It is obviously a storeroom, and looks as if it could feed the complex for weeks.* This is where the food is stored. There are enough supplies for the complex to survive a siege for two months. A well takes up the center of the floor.
6	**Ork Captain's Room** - *A hanging piece of canvas blocks off the entrance to this cave. Looking past the curtain you see some sort of living quarters. A large bed is against the far wall, and the floor is covered with animal skins. A large armor rack stands empty in the corner and a rough wooden table and benches is against the left wall. There are pewter goblets and a huge wineskin strewn across the table.* There is a shortsword tucked under the pillows of the bed, and the trunk is locked (needing a 6 to open). The trunk contains extra clothes, a vial (Healing Potion), and a small iron box containing 60 silvers, and 10 gold.

7 **Living Caves** - *This room is filled with sleeping pallets made from animal skins, all arranged around a central fire pit.*

This chamber houses almost half of the orks that serve Nazrig Tog. At the moment they are either gathered out front near 17 or they are on the march towards the advancing forces of clan Bloodspear. There is nothing here of any value.

8 **Living Caves** - See room 7.

9 **Central Chamber** - *This huge chamber is lit by a large central fire pit. But that is not the most impressive feature. What takes your breath away is the carved stone steps leading to a vaulted temple. The roof is held in place by six stone pillars Gathered at the steps are six orks in armor, carrying shields and swords. They seem to be escorting a tall ork dressed in embroidered robes and carrying a skull topped staff. One of the guards turns towards you and cries out something in Orkish.*

The six guards are Nazrig Tog's personal guards, and the robed figure is Nazrig Tog himself. He will order his guards to defend the temple as he rushes back inside.

Ork Guards (6)

DEX: 14: 6/D10 **STR:** 15: 6/D10 **TOU:** 12: 5/D8
PER: 12: 5/D8 **WIL:** 9: 4/D6 **CHA:** 12: 5/D8

Initiative: 5/D8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 11/D10+D8
Damage: 11/D10+D8
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 34
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 26

Physical Defense: 8 (11)
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 6/D10
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 32
Full Movement: 65
Legend Points: 120

Equipment: Hard leather armor, weapon, shield, second weapon
Loot: 3D6 silvers each

These guards are fanatically loyal to Nazrig Tog and will fight to the death, giving no quarter and expecting none.

Once the characters have defeated the guards, they can pursue Nazrig Tog into the temple.

11	**Outer Storeroom** - *Behind the hide curtain, you find another cave filled with barrels, casks, and weapons racks. Most of the racks are empty, but there are a few spears and swords still there.* The barrels contain oil, the casks contain ale, and the reason most of the weapons are missing because Nazrig Tog's forces are already gathered, with over half already on the march, and the other half gathered outside.
12	**Outer Temple** - *The huge outer temple is carved out of the native rock. The pillars reach forty feet into the air, supporting the vaulted ceiling. A pair of iron bound wooden double doors is at the far end. They stand shut.* There is nothing of value here. The area is lit by light quartzes mounted into the pillars. The door is guarded by a Pass Ward spell, set by Nazrig Tog to guard his private domain. Pass Ward This ward is designed to ensure that no one would disturb Nazrig Tog's privacy. The trap will trigger once the characters have come within 10 feet. A voice will boom out, saying, "This is the private domain of Lord Nazrig Tog. Come no further or face his wrath." If the characters advance farther, a bolt of blackish magical energy will strike the characters. • **Detection Difficulty:** Automatic • **Spell Defense:** 13 • **Disarm Difficulty:** 13 • **Trigger Condition:** Approaching within ten feet. The ward then makes a Spellcasting test at step 12/2D10. • **Trap Initiative:** 24 • **Trap Effect:** Step 24 damage
13	**Library** - *This door is locked* (needing an 8 to open). *Once you open the door, you see a large table surrounded by chairs, and shelves of books, though most of them are empty.* Most of the library was destroyed by Nazrig Tog who prefers that his people live in ignorance.

14 **Magical Workshop** - *You see a room filled with tables containing bubbling pots and scraps of skin covered with various magical notes. A greyish fog starts to coalesce in the center of the room.*

The greyish fog is forming into an Astral Horror, cast by Nazrig Tog. He is watching from room 15 and controlling the creature's actions from there.

Astral Horror

DEX: 7/D12 **STR:** 8/2D6 **TOU:** 10/D10+D6
PER: 7/D12 **WIL:** 9/D8+D6 **CHA:** 6/D10

Initiative: 9/D8+D6
Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: 9/D8+D6
Damage: 11/D10+D8
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 40
Wound Threshold: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 32
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 12
Social Defense: 14
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 6
Knockdown: 6/D10
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 60
Full Movement: 120
Legend Points: 200

This is an Astral Horror summoned by Nethermancy.

Once the creature has been defeated, the characters can continue. Inside the lab are his notes for sweeping across the lands of Barsaive. There are also 2 Booster Potions and a virulent poison that will do step 5 damage every round for 10 rounds if ingested. The person is allowed a Toughness Test, target of 8, to fight the effects of the poison. The test can be made once per round, until it is successful or the poison runs its course.

15 **Nazrig Tog's Bedroom** - *The door to this room seems securely bolted from the other side.*

The bolt is in place and only the Lockpick Talent, Shatterlock spell, or breaking down the door. The door has a barrier rating of 9/30, and will take 12 points of Shatterlock damage to break the bolt. Lockpick Talent needs a 9 to open the bolt.

Once you managed to get past the door, you can see a large bedroom. It is the last thing you see as everything goes black.

This is where Nazrig Tog will make his stand. He will cast an Ethereal Darkness as soon as the door gives way. It will give the characters a -5 step modifier to any action requiring sight. It will last for 10 rounds or until it is Dispelled (needing a Spellcasting

Test of 12 and Dispel target of 9.

He has already activated a Circle of Astral Protection and a Chilling Circle, raising his Mystic Armor to a 20 and causing a D6 mystic damage to anyone entering the room.

As soon as the room is dark, Nazrig will target the first fighter through the door with a Pain spell, immobilizing the target with pain and doing a D6 mystic damage per round for 8 rounds or until the target makes a Willpower Test with a target of 13. He will then continue to cast Pain spells until he has downed his opponents or he is defeated.

Nazrig Tog (Ork, Fifth Circle Nethermancer)

DEX: 14: 6/D10 **STR:** 13: 6/D10 **TOU:** 13: 6/D10
PER: 16: 7/12 **WIL:** 16: 7/D12 **CHA:** 16: 7/D12

Initiative: 6/D10
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 8/2D6
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 13/D12+D10
Effect: Willforce 12
Death Rating: 55
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 42

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 9
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 2 (20)
Knockdown: 6/D10
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 38
Full Movement: 75
Legend Points: 250

Equipment: Padded cloth armor, dagger
Loot: Golden amulet with personal symbol worth 300 silvers and worth Legend Points.

Nazrig Tog will fight to the death, knowing that his Horror mentor will bring him back as a Shadow.

Once Nazrig Tog has been defeated, or once the darkness has been dispelled, the room can be described. Read the following if Nazrig has been killed:

The crumpled form of Nazrig Tog lies in a bloody pool on the ground. A blackish smoke rises from the body, and a terrible laughing echoes in your ears. Eventually, the smoke disperses.

The room is magnificently furnished, with a large, plush bed, a wardrobe, desk, table with chairs, and trunk. There are furs being used as rugs, and odd symbols painted on the walls.

There is nothing special about the bed. The wardrobe has extra robes and boots. On an upper shelf (needing a Perception Test of 7 to see) is a small box containing an ebony handled sacrificial dagger (that does +2 extra steps of damage). The desk has papers written in magic (research for the sixth circle spell Bone Shatter) and letters of

correspondence between Nazrig and someone named Guul'pexiir. The trunk is locked, needing an 8 to open. It contains 2 canvas bags (one with 500 silvers another with 100 gold), a small ivory box (worth 50 sp) containing 3 rubies (worth 150 sp each), and two vials (Healing Potions). Underneath it all is Nazrig Tog's Book of Nethermancy containing the following spells:

Circle 1:
Bone Dance, Chilling Circle, Command Nightflyer, Detect Undead, Spirit Grip, Undead Struggle
Circle 2:
Bone Circle, Ethereal Darkness, Life Circle of One, Shield Mist
Circle 3:
Fog of Fear, Grave Messages, Pain
Circle 4:
Animate Skeleton, Spirit Servant, Viewpoint
Circle 5:
Astral Horror, Circle of Astral Protection, Pass Ward

16 **Outer Guard Room** - *This cave has two tables with benches, and two large barrels.*

This is the outer guardroom. It is currently vacant, as the orks have gathered outside of 17. On the bottom of one of the water barrels is a small oil sack containing 35 sp, and a single sapphire worth 100 sp.

17 **Outer Main Entrance** - *You can see the daylight streaming in through the large entranceway. A single large ork wearing chain mail has his back turned towards you as he addresses the numerous orks gathered at the bottom of the steps in front of him. You can hear the murmur spread through the assembled orks as they see you emerge from the entrance. The ork in chain mail turns towards you, his hand dropping to his sword hilt. He steps back, looking you over.*

At this point, Urik Farteller strides forward and starts to speak.

"Listen, my friends, listen well. Nazrig Tog is dead. Killed by my brave companions, the heroes foretold by Thystonius. Nazrig Tog was in league with the Horrors, and was doing their bidding. And through him, you too were serving the Horrors. Now you are free. Free to tell right from wrong."

The orks look on with hushed silence. Urik looks towards all of you and whispers, "Its time for one of you heroes to speak."

Allow the characters to elect a spokesman. He can either use Urik as a translator, or he can address the crowd directly if he can speak Orkish. Let the character roll a Charisma Test with a target of 5. Allow +2 steps for the following visual aids: showing the head of Nazrig Tog, showing Nazrig Tog's golden necklace, and showing the papers communicating with the Horror.

A Success will cause the orks to disperse peacefully. A Good Success will cause the crowd to cheer, and the characters can convince half of the crowd to come to the aid of

clan Bloodspear. An Excellent Success will convince the whole crowd.

Troubleshooting

The characters can all die. If it looks as if this is about to happen, and the characters are putting up a good fight, let Thystonius intervene. Let him allow the characters to feel no Pain from the spell, or let them see through the Darkness, or whatever other small aid may be appropriate. Urik is actually a questor to Thystonius and the Passion can act through him.

The Endgame

Overview

The characters will arrive to aid clan Bloodspear with whatever ork force they have managed to convince to accompany them. There will be a final battle where the remains of Nazrig Tog's forces will be killed or driven off. Once this is done, the characters will be hailed as heroes and the feasting will begin.

Setting the Stage

Your horses are tired and covered with sweat and your muscles ache. You have ridden hard for over six hours with little rest, but now you can see the battle before you. A mass of ork horsemen fighting out on the fields below. You can see the banner of clan Bloodspear still flying and can recognize Torrig Swordbreaker, his axe cleaving though his opponents.

Still, Torrig's forces are outnumbered, and it looks as if it is only a matter of time before clan Bloodspear is no more. Urik charges his horse forward, yelling the clan's battle cry as he goes.

Behind the Scenes

Let the characters decide what to do. If they have brought any of the remaining ork army with them, they can lead them into battle.

During the battle, each character will have to decide whether to attack normally with no modifiers, to be aggressive, adding +3 steps to their Attack Step but adding +3 steps to their opponent's Attack Step, or to attack defensively, losing -3 to their Attack Step but causing their opponent to lose -3 to their Attack Test also.

Let the characters make an Attack Test or Spellcasting Test against a target of 7. A poor success

means the character fought badly and gained no honor. An Average success means the character fought well, but did nothing of note. A Good success means the character fought well and many of the orks around him will remember him, gain 50 Legend Points. An Excellent success means the character fought with great courage and effect, and will be remembered by many as a hero of the battle, gain 100 Legend Points. An Extraordinary success means the character was a telling force in the battle, and will be remembered by all for his bravery and heroism, gain 200 Legend Points.

Then discover how well they survived. Roll an Ork Attack Test at step 11, with the character's Physical Defense as the target number. An Average success will have caused 1 wound and one wound's worth of damage. A Good success causes 2 wounds and the damage, an Excellent success causes 3 wounds and the damage, and an Extraordinary success will cause 4 wounds and the damage.

Once the characters have made their rolls, describe the battle:

The battle has raged for hours. Dead bodies of both orks and horses litter the field and there are pools of blood dotting the landscape. You are tired and sore, but the remaining survivors of Nazrig Tog's army have fled. Clan Bloodspear has survived, though a great many of the clan's warriors have met their end this day. A blood covered Torrig Swordbreaker has ridden up to all of you, Urik Farteller by his side.

"Well met, brave heroes. We have done well this day."

Have Torrig compliment those who fought well, describing the character's deeds.

"Today is a day that will become part of the legends spoken around the campfires, and your names will be remembered. Let us ride for our encampment where we can clean ourselves up and give a feast for the living. Come, my friends, this is a good day to be alive."

The orks will ride for the camp, and that night a feast will be held that makes the others seem like small picnics. Clan Bloodspear will allow the characters to stay with them as long as they like, after all, the characters have freed them from Nazrig Tog's oppression. Torrig will offer them clan tattoos, allowing other ork clans to recognize the characters as people who have done a great favor for an ork clan and have been adopted into it.

Troubleshooting

There is little to adjust here. If a character dies during the final battles, that is the risk of participating in a war.

Legend Point Awards

Creatures and Opponents	
Gargoyle	500 points
2 Griffins	200 points each
6 Ork Scorchers	100 points each
2 Ogres	110 points each
6 Elite Ork Guards	120 points each
Astral Horror	200 points
Nazrig Tog	250 points
Good Success in the battle	50 points
Excellent Success	100 points
Extraordinary Success	200 points
Treasure	
Gargoyle Horns	5D6 x 10 points
Griffin Beaks and Feathers	3D6 x 10 points each
Nazrig's Necklace	300 points
Creative Roleplaying	
Participating in the Feast Games	100 points
Winning a Feast Game	150 points
Adventure Goal	
Destroying Nazrig's power	300 points

A final award is having been made members of Clan Bloodspear and earning the friendship of Torrig Swordbreaker and Urik Farteller. They will also have been noticed by the Passion Thystonius, and it will be easier for a character to become a questor to that Passion at a later date.

Cast of Characters

Torrig Swordbreaker

5th Circle Ork Cavalryman

DEX: 16: 7/D12 **STR:** 16: 7/D12 **TOU:** 13: 6/D10
PER: 14: 6/D10 **WIL:** 11: 5/D8 **CHA:** 14: 6/D10

Initiative: 5/D8 **Physical Defense:** 10 (13)

Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 13/D12+D10
Damage: 15/D20+D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 70
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 57
Karma Pool: 16
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 1
Knockdown: 7/D12
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 42
Full Movement: 85
Legend Points: 250
Karma Dice: D8

Karma: On any action taken by his mount except Damage Tests

Talents: Animal Bond 5: 11/D10+D8, Avoid Blow 4: 11/D10+D8, Blood Share 4: 10/D10+D6*, Charge 5: 12/2D10*, Durability 5, Empathic Command 4: 9/D8+D6*, Karma Ritual 3, Melee Weapons 6: 13/D12+D10, Resist Taunt 5: 10/D10+D6, Spirit Mount 4: 10/D10+D6*, Sure Mount 3: 10/D10+D6*, Thread Weaving 4: 10/D110+D6*, Trick Riding 5: 10/D10+D6*, Wheeling Attack 5: 12/2D10, Wheeling Defense 3: 10/D10+D6*
* Can use Karma

Skills: Animal Lore 2: 8/2D6, Creature Lore 2: 8/2D6, Read/Write 1: 7/D12 (Orkish), Speak Lang 1: 7/D12 (Orkish), Rune Carving 2: 8/2D6

Equipment: Ring mail armor, battle axe +2, dagger

Loot: 3D6 x 10 silvers

Torrig Swordbeaker is the leader of Clan Bloodspear. He is a tough but open minded ork who's main concern is the welfare of his clan. He is brave but not foolish, and willing to die to save his clan and the lives of the other orks in the mountain valley they call home.

Urik Farteller

3rd Circle Ork Cavalryman - Questor to Thystonius

DEX: 13: 6/D10 **STR:** 13: 6/D10 **TOU:** 13: 6/D10
PER: 16: 7/D12 **WIL:** 13: 6/D10 **CHA:** 14: 6/D10

Initiative: 6/D10
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 10/D10+D6
Damage: 11/D10+D8
Number of Spells: Special
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 56
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 1
Knockdown: 6/D10
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 35

Wound Threshold: 9 **Full Movement:** 70

Unconsciousness Rating: 45 **Legend Points:** 200

Karma Pool: 10 **Karma Dice:** D8

Talents: Animal Bond 3: 9/D8+D6, Avoid Blow 3: 9/D8+D6, Blood Share 3: 9/D8+D6*, Charge 3: 9/D8+D6*, Durability 3, Empathic Command 2: 8/2D6*, Karma Ritual 2, Melee Weapons 3: 9/D8+D6, Spirit Mount 2: 8/2D6*, Trick Riding 3: 9/D8+D6*, Wheeling Attack 2: 8/2D6

Skills: Ork Lore 3: 9/D8+D6, Horror Lore 2: 8/2D6, Read/Write 1: 7/D12 (Orkish), Speak Lang 2: 8/2D6 (Orkish, Dwarven), Wood Carving 2: 8/2D6

Questor Powers: Absorb Damage 3: 9/D8+D6*, Inflict Extra Damage 3: 9/D8+D6*, Increase Strength 3: 9/D8+D6*

* Can use Karma

Equipment: Padded leather armor, broadsword,dagger

Loot: 3D6 silvers

Urik Farteller is getting on in years. His body shows the ravages of age, but it has not stopped him yet.

He is a loyal follower of Thystonius and has been granted the power of prophecy. He was the first to realize that Nazrig Tog was in league with the Horrors and leading the orks down a path of destruction. A vision from Thystonius showed him the arrival of heroes from outside the clans, heroes who would save the orks from Nazrig Tog's domination. He convinced Torrig Swordbreaker of this, and the two of them have gone in quest of the heroes who would save the clans.

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Thicker Than Water

by Vicki Kirchhoff-Martin

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #4***

I am Malthus, underscribe for the library of Throal. This tale was passed on to me by an ork beastmaster who gave her name only as Varda. She said she did not want any of the other things she has been called written down.

These are her words as she gave them to me...

"Okay, scribe, pay attention. This really isn't my tale, but the others say I tell it best. So be it. Life's too short to argue over stories.

I was the one that found the Kaer while Sanjia Quickfeather and I were hunting. She's an elven archer and the one whose tale this really is, but she can't tell a story to save her life and doesn't remember most of it anyway.

So, like I said, we were hunting and a hare I chased under a thicket led me to a flash of orange. The tiny orichalcum coin was no bigger that the nail on my little finger and was covered in writing neither of us recognized. Nobody mints orichalcum anymore which meant it had to be really old and, of course, really valuable.

Sanjia went to get the rest of our group while I cleared out the underbrush. I have no idea why she made so much fuss over one little coin but, by the time she returned with the others, I'd uncovered what looked like part of an entrance to a Kaer.

It wasn't much more than a hole; barely big enough for an elf to squeeze through or maybe a human. There was no way we were going to get our troll or obsidiman through it and I wasn't too sure about myself.

Some folks might think the heroic thing would have been to immediately widen that hole in the hopes of freeing the poor people who didn't yet realize that the Scourge had been over for a hundred years or looting the treasures of a lost civilization. To be honest, sometimes, there's really not much difference between heroism and stupidity. A lot of your really heroic deeds were stupid ideas that worked. Of course, that's just the way I see things.

Unopened Kaers are a dangerous business. There's no telling what you might find and it's usually not a village full of people ready to shower gifts on you for helping them into the

sunlight or a tomb with its jewels laid out for the taking. More often than not, its only occupant is the Horror that decimated the population and is looking for its next meal and you and your group look really tasty.

So we sat and we talked. We never want to deal with Horrors we don't know anything about if we don't have to. Anything powerful enough to lay waste entire cities isn't something you wake up one morning and decide to kill. Any adventurer who disagrees might as well tattoo 'Horror food' on their forehead.

It's not like the five of us haven't dealt with Horrors before. All of us are Adepts. The troll, Druhl, is a skyraider and as big and strong as they come. He's got a knack for turning stupidity into heroism. The obsidiman, Onaruun is an elementalist. There's an odd race for you. He or she or whatever spends most of his time asking questions about why we do what we do, most of which have to do with what he calls courtship and mating rituals. The human, Nathan is a nethermancer and as creepy as are all I've met who follow that art. Don't travel with a nethermancer if you don't have a strong stomach. Then there's Sanjia, who is just too much of an optimist, and me.

Nathan spoke first and said that he'd be interested in seeing the aftermath of a Horror's work. Sanjia insisted there might still be people there and they might all still be fine and would need to know that the Scourge was over. Onaruun was interested in the knowledge we could gain and Druhl was all for complete plunder. Me? Well, I usually wait until they've said all the important stuff and have started arguing over details and then I stop them and lay out my plan which we usually follow. Guess that makes me the leader.

I was about to do that when I noticed something I hadn't seen before. Someone had squirmed through that little opening to the Kaer recently and hadn't come back out. That meant there was another way out or that someone was still there somewhere. So, I pointed that out and told them we'd better get going if we were going to get anything done before sunset.

After we cleared out a troll and obsidiman sized opening, Nathan looked down and told us that there was some type of magic still active. If that meant that the seal was still intact, Sanjia just might be right about there being people there. Of course it could be one of any number of deadly magical defenses that had outlived its creators.

Sanjia and I went first. The dirt was loose which made the footing treacherous. We ended up tumbling and then sliding out of control. Sanjia reached out to me. I know she was trying for some security but I shoved her away. The last thing I wanted was to land on her.

Suddenly, we stopped, but instead of hitting solid ground, we were floating in the air with nothing but darkness underneath us. Magic lowered us gently until our feet touched the ground and then released us. Our only light was from the entrance which seemed like it was miles above us.

Sanjia lit a torch and I hollered our position up to the others. They made one try at sending

down a rope, but it floated above us, way out of our reach. Whatever the magic was, it looked like a one way trip. Magic can be really annoying that way.

Sanjia ran her hands over the huge Kaer door. The orichalcum plug was still in place and the runes, though worn with age, still stood out clearly. Those are both pretty good signs. Just as she was wondering out loud if Nathan could read them, he landed behind her looking really unhappy. I figured him being next hadn't really been his idea. He stood in the light of Sanjia's torch and traced the carvings with his fingers. He said it looked like some type of magic to keep the Kaer safe from Horrors.

Onaruun and Druhl followed, the magic making even their landings soft. The troll tested the orichalcum plug while the obsidiman also examined the runes and said that they were designed to ward off Horrors. Of course, I could have figured that out for myself. What else would you put outside a Kaer?

Druhl was still pulling on the plug which showed no sign of moving. Of course, if it was that easy, fewer Kaers would have survived. The others were still concentrating on the runes.

I didn't forget that someone had been there before us, someone whose footsteps were being obscured as we wandered around kicking up the dust. Luckily for me, it only takes one clear print and I found one off on the side. I was just about to use my tracking magic when I noticed the crack.

More than a crack, really. It was a fissure wide enough for Onaruun to fit through and high enough for Druhl. By the looks of it, it had happened many years ago.

Onaruun examined it over my shoulder and said that these cracks happen naturally when the rock shifts and that there was nothing evil or even magical about it.

Maybe not, but it's just like inviting a Horror for dinner.

By flickering torchlight, we entered the crack. The smell hit us first. It was the musty smell of age mixed with something else. Something familiar and horrible and you aren't sure what and you really don't want to find out. It seeps in through your nose and soon is all you can smell.

I kept waiting for the bodies. Every time the torchlight flickered, I expected to see something vile slide out from the shadows or to hear a scream from one of those behind me and see nothing. It was a creepy, horrible feeling that turns your fingers to ice, while the rest of your body shakes. Any adventurer who tells you they've never been scared is either lying or has never been on an adventure. That place was just plain bad.

We finally reached the inside of the Kaer and nothing happened. I wondered about the source of the smell. The rubbish heap where we climbed out had its own brand of stench, but it was nothing like what we'd experienced on our way there.

I could see people moving in the village. They seemed to be going about daily tasks just as normally as anywhere else. Perhaps some poor soul had gone exploring and died down there. Maybe no Horror had found this place after all.

Yeah, and maybe I'll win an elven beauty contest.

We stayed out of sight. There was no sense in spooking the villagers. We figured living penned up for your entire life is bound to make you pretty paranoid.

We made our way toward the sealed opening, hoping that showing up there would be less threatening. It was a good plan, I suppose, except for the child whose ball bounced right at my feet. His scream echoed through the entire Kaer.

With arms and hands clear of our weapons, we walked openly toward the center of town. I usually prefer the direct approach anyway. Villagers fled, locking themselves in their houses, barring doors and windows. You'd have thought we were all Horrors, the way they behaved.

Nathan chuckled under his breath as if he, alone had been responsible for their terror. When he does that kind of thing, I really feel the urge to put my fist into his face, but I get over it.

Then the militia arrived. They were like a half trained band of children. Ten of them surrounded us, brandishing long, poles with blades in trembling hands. The terror in their eyes showed even under full helmets.

Still, we kept our hands out, showed no resistance and made no threatening gestures while Sanjia tried to tell them we meant them no harm.

Someone said, 'Clever words, Horrors, but we have seen your kind before.'

Ever hear a voice that is so arrogant, so self important, that all you want to do is just slice that person into little bitty pieces? Maybe it's just me.

The voice belonged to a human who looked just barely old enough to be called man instead of boy. Beside him stood an elven woman with a warbow carved with runes. Everything about her branded her Adept and she had that look of one of the ancient elves, like before they went off and got that stupid thorn idea.

Sanjia said, 'We aren't Horrors. We've come to tell you that the Scourge is over.'

The human scowled and glared at Onaruun and Druhl and said, 'You bring these abominations with you and claim you're not Horrors?'

Then he waved at the elf and said, 'Ratania, tell me, are these who stand before us what they

claim or Horrors?'

The elf refused to look at us, but what I saw in her eyes made me sure that she knew she was lying when she told him yes.

'Take them,' the boy said.

Sanjia made one last attempt. Or at least I think she did. She shouted something off in that fruity elven language. The elf's reply was one word and then she left as the militia fell upon us with a strength born of utter terror and, since we weren't resisting, it was over pretty quickly and more than a little painfully.

Our cell was a cave with bars over the entrance. Four guards stood nervously outside it. I wondered what they'd done to earn Horror duty.

We were also not alone in our cell. There was human man who looked as though he'd gotten a worse case of the treatment we'd gotten. Like us, he had no weapons, and was pretty badly beaten up. I figured he had to be the unlucky one that had arrived before us.

Our biggest concern now was getting out without injuring the guards. They didn't want to be down here any more than we did. Besides, it wasn't their fault that their leader was a... uh, never mind. Don't want you writing that down.

Where was I? Oh yeah, we needed to get rid of the guards. Nathan volunteered, giving us his best creepy look. He went over to the bars and just stared at them.

One by one, they fled in terror of Nathan's favorite spell until we were alone and the nethermancer stood by the door looking way too pleased with himself.

The man in the corner perked up. After taking a quick look to make sure the guards were gone, he pushed his way to the door, muttering apologies and popped the lock open in seconds.

Now, I'm not in the habit of traveling with thieves, but they sure can come in handy.

There were no guards at the top of the stairs. The halls were empty. In fact, we didn't see anyone until Ratania herself came walking toward us. She said, 'It took you less time than I thought to escape. I was just coming to help you.'

I wanted to tell her that we wouldn't have had to escape if she hadn't had us captured in the first place, but something in the way Sanjia looked at her made me keep my mouth shut. I figured I'd let her do the talking as long as it stayed in a language I understood.

'Why didn't you tell the truth?' she asked.

The elf sighed. 'I couldn't, not then, not to him. I couldn't let him think that I knew you were any different than the others.'

She kept her eyes on Sanjia. 'My sister, Arelia had eyes like yours.'

Sanjia's voice was quiet. 'My great, great grandmother's name was Arelia.'

Ratania looked as if she wanted to cry but just gasped. 'Passions help me.'

Maybe it's just me, but I didn't really think it was the time or the place to be having a tearful family reunion and told them so.

Then, Ratania told us what was going on.

Seems that about 200 years ago, a Horror found that crack. Ratania called it Dread Thought. She and the few other Kaer adepts went to kill it. Each time they thought it was dead, usually at the cost of one or more of their number, it would return as strong as before.

It took over the minds of the ruling family and convinced them that the magic protecting the Kaer was fading and could only be made stronger by blood magic requiring a ritual sacrifice once every several days.

Of course, the remaining Adepts were the first to be killed. They were accused of being Horror spawned and their own people gladly put them to death. Anyone showing sign of any magical ability was immediately branded Horror marked and led up to the sacrificial tower. Dread Thought fed on the despair of the people as much as it feasted on their blood.

Once the Scourge was over, adventurers, brigands and thieves who discovered the fissure and came, as we did to explore the Kaer and set its folk free, were proclaimed Horrors. Their claims that the Scourge was over was used as an argument against them, that the Horror who controlled them was trying to trick the village into leaving the safety of the Kaer. Their blood joined that of the villagers that had fed Dread Thought for so long.

I was just starting to wonder what her part in all this was when she said she aided Dread Thought. She helped the ruling family as she helps Ranok, the boy lord destroy the people's hopes and murder strangers as well as her own people. She said it was the only way she could survive and someone had to. Someone who could learn.

For two hundred years, she had stood by and hoped that a group like us would come and do what she couldn't do alone.

Her eyes filled with tears. 'I had to live. I had to learn what I could about Dread Thought so I could help...'

Lucky for her, she'd convinced Sanjia because I was running out of sympathy.

Then, Onaruun says, 'I fail to understand. You allowed these atrocities to go on and did not fight it?'

I'd been about to ask the same question.

Ratania's eyes burned when she told him, 'I am fighting the Horror. I have been for 200 years. I'm fighting it right now. If it knew what I'm doing...'

She shook her head and stood tall, saying, 'What I've done is not what matters now. What matters now is what we can do to free my people. I know now that part of Dread Thought's powers come from a red crystal. I don't know where it is exactly, but I'm sure that if you destroy that crystal, you'll be able to do what I and my companions could not: destroy Dread Thought.'

Now, I don't know what it's like to watch your own people killed for 200 years. I don't know what it's like to watch them live every day in terror. All I do know is that life is too short to stand around arguing over who did what when there's a Horror to be killed and a village full of people who have never seen the sun.

'Come on,' I told them. 'Lets get our stuff and go.'

Ratania met my eyes for the first time. There was something like hope in them. 'Be careful,' she told me, 'Dread Thought has powers that warp the mind. Things may not be as they seem.'

Then, quietly, she led us to where our weapons and supplies lay in the store room of the boy-lord's house.

Back we went into the fissure that had let the Horror into the Kaer. Now, there was a name to that fear that had gripped us as we'd entered: Dread Thought.

We nearly missed the entrance. Ratania had been correct about its powers of deception. That entrance looked to me as much a part of the walls as any other, but, once Nathan walked through it, how could I doubt? Still, I had to close my eyes to follow.

The smell was much worse on the other side of the illusion. It was the unmistakable smell of blood.

The passage was rough hewn and damp. Moisture hung in the air and clung to the walls like a hot day in the jungle. It's as if the water hangs in the air, waiting for something to cling to. It took no time for my hair, skin, and clothing to be covered in tiny wet droplets.

Up ahead, we heard a steady, slow dripping sound. As we went on, it grew louder and louder until the passage opened up to a cavern lit only by a brownish glow coming from what looked like an upside down glass dome. It didn't take long to realize that the glow was brown because the bowl was full of blood, and we were standing beneath the sacrificial tower.

There was hole in the bowl that let one drop at a time through. The blood ran down a heavy iron chain to drip into a huge pool beneath it. The pool had to be ten trolls wide and was surrounded by the bones of two hundred years worth of victims.

I can't describe the feeling when I realized just what we were looking at. It certainly wasn't a burning desire to meet whatever it was that had created this cave of carnage. I steadied myself against a wall and when I pulled my hand away, it came back red. Those droplets that were clinging to my clothing and my hair were blood and it was everywhere. It was in the air and so even in our lungs.

If ever there was a Horror's lair, this was one. It reeked of blood, fear and death. A Horror's paradise.

Onaruun stepped forward, his face in one of those contemplative looks he gets every once in awhile. 'I want to try something,' he said. He reached a hand toward the pool of blood and then touched the vile substance to his lips. Either Onaruun is more brave that I ever would have believed, or he has an unrealistic view of his own mortality.

Anyway, he touched the blood again, muttering under his breath and, for a moment, a small area turned pink, swirled, and then was gone. 'What did you do?' I had to ask.

'I wanted to see what would happen if I purified the blood. The magic is very strong so I wasn't able to affect much, but it was interesting.'

Deep inside the Horror's lair, the obsidiman wants to see what happens when he messes with its stuff. Remember that mortality part?

Now, this is what happens when you anger a Horror.

The bones around the pool began to rattle and then were pulled in. They were drawn to the center of the pool and then formed into a moving mass of bone and blood.

There, in the center of the pool it stood, twice as tall as Druhl and twice as wide as Onaruun. Bones formed eyes, nose and mouth and made up a frame filled with oozing, half jellied blood.

Now, standing on the shore five troll lengths away, there wasn't much I could do. I am, after all, a close fighter. I prefer to look my enemy in the eyes and feel their dying breath on my face. Druhl, however, in one of the most brave or most foolish things I have ever seen, leapt across the center of the pool and through the Horror; polearm first. Yes, I said through. He

jumped in one side and came out the other, covered in Horror fouled blood.

Sanjia fired her bow, Nathan and Onaruun cast spells and I even tried a crossbow shot but I was more concerned with what Ratania had told us about the Horror's crystal and spent most of my energy looking around for some sign of it but it was nowhere to be seen.

The thief apparently decided that it must be in the blood pool because he had Druhl toss him in and dove to the bottom. Now, that isn't a job you could have forced me into at swordpoint, let alone have me volunteer. Anyway, he came to the surface covered in blood and holding a large crystal in his hand. He tossed it to Onaruun who smashed it on the rocks.

The Horror screamed and fell apart.

Then it was quiet. The entire room was still except for the steady drip of the blood from the chain. I don't know if any of us really believed it could be over that quickly. Onaruun got that expression on his face again and said, 'Something about this is not right.'

And then we hear, 'Dread Thought is not dead. I am still his captive.'

Ratania stood in the entrance to the cave, looking truly like the Adept she was. 'Show yourself, demon!' she cried. 'I am through being your prisoner.'

The bones gathered again as the Horror reformed and said, 'I no longer need you, Elf. I have plenty here who would serve me just as well.'

Now, I'm sure you've heard all the stories about heroes and how they wait for the Horror to make its final threats before they do anything. Well, I'm more practical than that. Whether or not Ratania was around, she hadn't been able to kill the thing in two hundred years and we still didn't know where the crystal was. So, while the Horror was going on about its servant, I had Druhl toss me out to the chain. I caught myself just above the Horror's head and started to climb.

That doesn't mean I wasn't paying attention.

Ratania fired one bright shot out of that bow of hers and the Horror screamed. 'Foolish elf! If you no longer wish to serve me, then I will take back what I gave to you.'

It was Ratania's turn to scream. Apparently, her gift had been long life because she aged before our eyes and was nothing more than a pile of dust under armor and bow in less time than it takes to tell it. The Horror laughed and gave us a choice. We could have her gift or her fate.

Personally, I'd rather have my skin peeled of layer by layer than submit to any kind of slavery. It doesn't matter if it's a Horror or Therans. (S'cuse me while I spit) So there was no doubt in my mind what my choice would be.

Sanjia ran to where Ratania had been, shouting at Dread Thought in elvish which is too bad since cursing in elvish still sounds like love poetry.

As Sanjia picked up the bow, a silvery form that vaguely resembled the fallen archer arose from the dust . It hovered over the remains and said, 'Yes, I see it so much more clearly now.'

It drifted over Sanjia. Silvery arms embraced her arms and a halo of silvery hair framed her face. She stood up, much taller than normal. With an unearthly grace, she drew back the bowstring and took aim with an arrow that was pure light which was something I'd never seen her do before.

For the first time, Dread Thought looked worried. I was a little worried too because it looked for all the world like she was aiming at me.

The Horror laughed as the first shot went wide, but the second struck the end of the chain, you know, the one I was hanging from, and there was a shattering sound. Shards of something I would swear had never been there dropped into the pool.

I never did see what shattered but it wasn't hard to figure out because this time, the Horror's scream was genuine. It's body became more solid and there was muscle and some decaying flesh on the bones.

It howled at Sanjia, 'You fools! I will destroy you all!'

Those are the words which tell you a Horror is in trouble, is done playing with its food and is coming for the kill.

Having something solid to concentrate on within my reach was a benefit, although it is not easy to attack while trying to hold on to a slippery chain. It didn't stop me from doing it, it just made it harder. No one said this kind of life is easy.

The Horror's arms grew long enough to reach any corner of the room. It reached for Sanjia first and she ducked away. Druhl waded into the blood pool and tried slashing at the body . Onaruun cast darts of earth at it and Nathan ducked and concentrated hard. He brought his head up in triumph as the Horror began to gyrate wildly.

Now, I've seen Nathan do this to people and animals, but I never thought he had the power to make a Horror dance.

That was signal enough and just the break we needed. Onaruun abandoned his magic and picked up a staff, I slashed at its head with one hand and clung to the chain with the other, Druhl stood up to his waist in the blood pool hacking away, and Sanjia shot arrow after gleaming arrow into the mess.

And though troubadours like to make it sound like one final blow from the great hero fells the foul fiend, if truth be told, it was all of us, working together, that finally destroyed Dread Thought.

Unfortunately for me, when the Horror died, I discovered that it was magic and not glass holding the blood pool above us and, with the Horror gone, so was the magic and the red waterfall cascaded down on me. There are few things I have experienced as disgusting as that flood of Horror tainted blood.

But it was over. Druhl lay near death. Sanjia had sunk to her knees, Ratania's bow still clenched in her hands and all evidence of that ghostly presence gone. Nathan stood with his back pressed close against the wall. Onaruun surveyed the mess in the lair and the thief and I did what we could to clean off the worst of the blood.

Then, slowly, we picked ourselves up and dragged Druhl back into town.

Tired, injured and covered with blood, I was in no mood for an unpleasant reception. The residents fled from us again and this time, so did the militia. Of course, we must have looked a pretty vile sight, plodding along the street dragging Druhl and covered in blood, especially since the last they'd heard, we were Horrors. Guess we looked the part, right then.

The leader child, Ranok showed up with two very unhappy looking guards. 'Stop those Horrors!' he cried.

His men exchanged glances. Now, if I'd been a half trained militiaman facing five angry, battle-bloodied Adepts, I'd have done the same thing they did. One of them put down his weapon and ran. The other one followed on his heels.

That was when Sanjia said it was over. The Horror was dead and the people were free. She made sure to add that Ratania had given her life for their freedom.

Sometimes, Sanjia is just too nice. Guess she'd figured he's been under the Horror's control and would be happy that we'd ended his little tyranny.

The boy smiled and said, 'Good enough. With Dread Thought dead, that makes me undisputed leader.'

The kid moved up from needing a good spanking to needing a good beating. 'Look,' I told him. 'We're in no mood to argue about this. You've lied to these people long enough. You can stay here if you want, but we're leading the others out.'

He smiled again. A look that I'd have sworn was Horror influenced except that I knew the Horror was dead. 'Anger me and you will never leave.'

I opened my mouth to say something and then closed it. We could easily go back out the way we came in, but we already knew there was no way back up to the surface.

The kid's smile got bigger. 'You were saying...'

I could see the anger in my companions' faces. Sanjia's knuckles were white around Ratania's bow, Nathan was muttering to himself and even Onaruun's fists were clenched. The thief was missing, but that was no big surprise.

'Wait,' Onaruun said. 'I fail to understand why you still wish to keep your people prisoner. The Scourge is over. They should be free to live upon the rock instead of within it.'

Yup, Onaruun just failed to understand that kid was clinging to his last little bit of power. If he let his people free, they'd know what he'd done and likely tear him apart... something I'd pay money to see.

So I told him, 'It's only a matter of time. Sooner or later, they'll figure it out.'

'But no one leaves unless I say so,' he cried.

The thief was suddenly with us again, almost as if he'd never left. He tugged on Sanjia's sleeve and said, 'Excuse me, lovely lady, but I think this might come in handy.'

As the orichalcum key dropped into her palm, the kid's mouth dropped to the floor. It even took him a little while to gain his composure enough to demand to know where he'd gotten that key.

The thief shrugged and said, 'Divine inspiration.'

Like I said, I don't make it a habit to travel with them, but once in awhile...

It took several booster potions before Druhl was feeling better... well enough, in fact, to climb up to the top of the sacrificial tower and drop the kid down into the Horror's blood pool.

The villagers were starting to gather around. Rumors of what had happened were already spreading and you could almost feel the fear fading.

A crowd followed us to the gate. Sanjia's trembling hands fitted the key into a slot on this side of the orichalcum plug and the door swung open. A ramp extended up to the surface and the setting sun cast orange light for the first time on the villagers.

What? You look like you've never seen ork tears before. Listen, scribe, When you've been there, when you've watched people see things we take as natural for the first time and have

helped them and their children out into a world that is as strange to them as it is familiar to us, you can't look at things the same way. It's something you never forget.

Life's too short to hold back your tears."

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Introduction

This adventure takes place in a small town called Red Dirt, located about 11 days walking (6 days riding) in a straight line from Kratas to Jerris at the foot of the Tylon Mountains. It is designed for 4 to 6 characters of 2nd to 4th circle. It is strongly suggested that one of the characters be a nethermancer, but it is not essential to the completion of the adventure. The adventure begins with the characters already in the town of Red Dirt. It is likely that they have taken rooms at the 'Drunken Fieldhand', as it is the only inn in town and the price is always right. The 'Drunken Fieldhand' is run by Ma and Pa Cherteck, an elderly human couple (They insist on being called Ma and Pa by everyone -- see **Personalities** at the end of this adventure) While staying at the inn, the party has a chance of hearing some of the rumors found in the

Rumors section at the end of this adventure.

Prices at the *Drunken Fieldhand*

room:	5cp/night includes a drink before bed (ale/wine/other)
dinner:	2cp will buy breakfast and a dinner with another drink
drink:	only common ale/wine/other 1cp per/pint
house special:	a Crimson Bonnie (small amount of clay mixed with a clear liqueur), 1sp (tastes excellent, quite a kick)

The Town of Red Dirt

Before the party begins making preparations to continue on their way, a young page boy will approach a member of the party and hand them a note. The note is from Devin Tillney, the mayor of Red Dirt. He wishes to meet with the party and stresses that it is very important. He has a problem that he believes the party may be able to help him with. Read the text below when you feel it is appropriate, or as the party is going to see the mayor.

In the time you have been here, you have certainly learned how the town came about its rather appropriate name. Red dust from the clay-like soil blows through the air constantly. Your clothes and packs are saturated with a fine coating of the crimson dust. Red Dirt is a small town, not much at all to look at, and the people are all quite simple. The only adepts you have seen in town besides yourself are Tetslo, the crippled weaponsmith, and Erdigal, the town troubadour. Like many of the other small towns that have sprung up since the Scourge, Red Dirt is a farming community. The people work in cooperation with each other so as to better the whole community's chances for survival.

Beyond and below the clay brick walls of Red Dirt lie the ruins of a larger city that once went by the name of Dravarth. The marvelous city once sprawled across the surrounding land and in fact even below it. Dravarth was known for its extensive undercity, a complex system of corridors and rooms that lay below the surface of the earth and functioned as an unassailable fortress. Sadly, the city was abandoned during the Scourge, and little remains except the rubble of old buildings now converted into stone walls used for separating plots of land with soil rich enough to be used for agriculture.

What now troubles this town so much that they would ask you for help? The people here seem so independent and strong that it is difficult to guess what their problem might be. A Horror? Scorchers? Sky raiders? Therans? Only Devin has the answers right now.

When the party meets Devin, he tells the party that the town of Red Dirt does indeed have a problem. In the past few months, a number of graves have been robbed of all valuables and even the bodies have been taken. No clues have been found except for a few shuffled footprints leading out of the graveyard. To make matters worse, some of the villagers have been reported missing, and all those who have gone to investigate have not returned. The last time any of them were seen was heading toward the graveyard. It is not known what happened to them. Devin would like the party to watch the graveyard at night, find out who or what is digging up the bodies and if it's related to the missing villagers, and put a stop to it. He will offer the party 400sp from the town treasury, and will be more than willing to help equip the party with the resources he has available.

The truth of the trouble is that a nethermancer has come to town. Derek Soultaker has been stealing bodies from the graveyard for use in his own private army. He has enlisted the aid of Deridious Quay, a blood elf adept. Together they found a way into the dark undercity where Derek found a Spirit Wind, a legendary undead creature of immense power. Derek has been feeding the spirit wind with the souls of the townspeople who get a little too curious and begin poking around the graveyard. He hopes to befriend the wind and have it serve him in his army.

The Graveyard

If the party goes out to the graveyard, nothing happens during the first night. It is dark and cloudy, moonlight filters in here and there but not enough to see by without low light vision. Someone in the party may try to use the Tracking Talent against a Difficulty of 12 to find the trail leading up to the mausoleum. Once on the rubble, another test with a Difficulty of 15 (see the graveyard map for trail) must be made in order to follow the trail into the ruined mausoleum (see **The Mausoleum**). If the party searches the robbed graves, they might notice (PER (8) Test) that all of the graves that have been robbed are more than a year old.

The second night, however, just past midnight, four **zombies** will come shuffling out of the ruined mausoleum and into the graveyard. They head toward the grave of the mayor's son. With the zombies, but about 50 yards back, follows Deridious Quay. He uses Silent Walk and is very difficult to pick up while he slinks around in the dark. Those studying the zombies with heat sight will note that the zombies' bodies are cool. Those with low-light vision will notice the tattered clothing and torn cracked skin (this should be enough to clue them into the fact that the zombies are undead).

The zombies have been ordered to dig up the body of the mayor's son, so that Derek may animate it and add it to his troops. They will not fight unless they are assaulted first. They will not even acknowledge the presence of the party until the first zombie is struck. The zombies will fight together, and have been ordered to listen to Deridious. If a battle does occur, Deridious will watch the battle and attempt to size up the party before returning to warn Derek. He will try not to get involved in this battle, preferring to wait until he can set up an ambush and strike from behind.

The Mausoleum

Before you stands the ruins of an ancient mausoleum. Two other buildings, still intact, stand off to the side. The doors of these buildings are sealed with large stone blocks carved with murals depicting various burial ceremonies and rites for the dead. All of these buildings were apparently built just after the Scourge ended. They appear to have weathered much since then. You guess that some of it must be due to the fact that this whole area lies above the ruins of another city and thus some of the ground is unstable.

Looking at the building ahead, you see that one corner of it has crumbled into rubble and now lies sprawled out in a precarious heap. The broken section of the building reveals access to three rooms on the eastern side of the building. The rubble field looks as though it might be difficult to traverse, but nothing that should be too dangerous as long as caution is applied.

The rubble is in fact quite treacherous. The traversable look of the rubble was deliberately designed by Deridious to take care of nosey townspeople. In addition to discouraging visitors, the noise of the falling rocks serves as an alarm. If the party has found the trail leading into the third

room of the mausoleum then the traps may be avoided. They are only set to catch those who don't know the proper way in. If a character wishes to examine the rubble pile before stepping onto it, a Perception test against a Difficulty of 10 will reveal that things are not exactly as they seem. The traps are set to trigger if anyone walks through the trapped area and steps on a loose rock. To check for triggering, have all who pass over the area make a Dexterity test with a Difficulty of 1 for each 50 pounds of weight being applied to the area (e.g., 400 lbs = Difficulty of 8). If the trap is triggered, a slide will start, and all those on the rubble pile are subject to the trap.
(Rubble Mound: Initiative: 10, Effect: 15, Disarm Difficulty: 15)

Inside the Mausoleum: Upper Level

The interior of the mausoleum is dark except for the light that trickles in from the missing section of wall. The floor is a stone slab, covered with dried leaves and bits of sticks, as well as a few small bones that look as though they have been gnawed on by rats or other small mammals. The whole place is cold, and your skin tingles a little at the sudden change in temperature. It almost feels like this place is drawing the heat from your body through your skin. Your can hear footsteps echoing off of the smooth stone walls. Dark openings line the main corridor, most likely more rooms for the dead, more violated rooms. At the end of the corridor, a wide set of stone steps lead down into darkness.

The stone sarcophagi are all empty, except for those in the the two rooms at the end of the corridor. Zombies have been placed in the coffins there with the command to attack if anyone enters either of the two rooms or goes down the stairs. All of the rooms have old tapestries and wall hangings and altars along one wall or another for the purpose of prayer and communicating with the spirits of the dead. Due to the defiled nature of this place, none of these altars function anymore. They have lost their special powers, and no longer give the gift of communication with the netherworld.

Inside the Mausoleum: Lower Level

As you descend the flat stone steps of the mausoleum staircase, you begin to feel as though you are to forever be entombed. The smooth stone walls lining the stair are wet with moisture, and small patches of moss and algae cling to the wall in places, carving out small nooks

and holds in which to live. From below, you hear the echo of water dripping into a shallow puddle, each drop seeming more and more ominous until you reach the bottom of the stair and you feel the crunch of your boot on gravel as it scrapes along the smooth stone floor. Looking about, you see a corridor extending to your left and right. Before you, the wall has been peeled back to expose a wide tunnel dug into the bare earth. At your feet, sections of the wall lie in jagged-edged blocks, as if they were shattered by the force of a mighty blow. A cool draft flows down the stairs past you and into the tunnel.

A faint rasping sound alerts you, just as you see a figure at the

end of the corridor launch into motion. A walking corpse charges at you, fearless of its own destruction. Soiled rags and small bits of yellowed cracked flesh hang from its withered drawn body. Long black hair whips around its dried face madly as the thing charges closer.	

The party is being attacked by two zombies, one from each side. The zombies have been given the command to kill anyone who steps into the corridor.

1-4.) Defiled Crypts

These crypts were cleaned out and defiled by Derek when he was organizing his own chambers in the undercity. The coffins have all been opened and cleaned out. Some of the corpses are missing or scattered about the floor, while others have been placed in grotesque positions depicting horrible tortures and other obscene acts.

5.) Questor's Crypt

The door to this room is a fine, solid oak door. The symbol of Galen graces all four corners and the handle is made of finely feathered bronze.

Against the far wall of the room lies a coffin of pure white marble. Garlen's symbol decorates the coffin. In the corner of the room stands an altar shaped to represent a hearth. On top of the altar are many gifts and offerings of fine goblets, gold coins, open bags of jewels and many other fineries.

The gifts on the altar were given to Garlen while people still visited this mausoleum. If anyone but a questor of Garlen tries to take anything from the altar, or attempts to defile the coffin in any way, they will be afflicted by a major curse.
(Karma Curse, Step:15, Effect: victim suffers step 8 damage every time karma is used. This curse may be removed magically or by doing a deed that proves sorrow and repentance. The damage is magical in nature and natural (but not worn) mystic armor will protect.)

The treasures on the altar are 100gp, 50sp, 2 silver wine goblets (100sp ea.), 2 diamonds (50sp ea), 2 rubies (100sp ea.), and a gold necklace with a emblem depicting a common likeness of Garlen (200sp).

The coffin is sealed and cannot be opened without a Dispel Magic (20). Inside the coffin lies the body of a questor of Garlen. Those who have a Knowledge Skill similar to The Passions or Legends and Heroes may make a test with a Difficulty of 12 to recognize the body of Nathan Ellsdragon, a legendary questor of Garlen as well as an 8th circle Swordmaster adept. His body is laid out in ceremonial robes with his armor (crystal ringlet) folded at his feet, and his sword and shield flat across his chest.

It is for obvious reasons that Derek has left this crypt undefiled.

6.) Storage Room
This room once stored a number of different embalming goods and other common items. Since Derek moved in, he has had the goods moved to his working area. The room is now empty.

7.) Burial Rack
A number of the dead who were not important enough to get their own family crypts have been placed here. The are preserved and placed on great stone slabs in a rack to hold them while their spirits passed from the world of the living to the world of the dead. The bodies have now all been torn to shreds by roving zombies, rats, krilworms, and other friendly crypt critters.

Tunnel

As you step into the soil walled tunnel, a sudden chill comes over you. Lying on the floor before you is the corpse of an old human. While similar to the zombies in appearance, the body does not appear to contain any dangerous presences or spirits. In fact, a large portion of the body is destroyed. The right arm and part of the ribcage have been gnawed open by rats, and some parts are even missing completely.

The tunnel winds on for about 20 yards before the party reaches the first trap. It is triggered by anyone stepping on a small pressure plate located in the center of the corridor. Those walking through the corridor have a 25% chance of stepping on the triggering mechanism. If the trap is triggered, a 6'x6' sheet of steel reinforced wood with spikes driven through it pushes out from the wall and pins anyone in its way to the far wall of the tunnel. The trap is mechanically driven by a counterweight in the wall and will continue to apply pressure against the far wall, doing damage every round to any unfortunates caught between the two. In order to pull the plank back, a combined Strength Test against a Difficulty of 40 must be made (sum steps for those helping, then roll final result).
Plank Trap: Detection Difficulty: 15, Initiative: 20, Effect: 20 +step 6 per round, Disarm difficulty: 15

This is the trap that resulted in the death of Stephan Ablefoot. Such a painful death without honor has kept his spirit from passing on, and it now lurks further down the corridor in the form of a **shadowman**.

Tunnel: Alcoves

This seemingly normal section of tunnel has been designed by Derek and Deridious to put a final fright into anyone trying to make their way into the tunnel system. Hidden behind the wall in a series of alcoves on either side of the corridor are 8 zombies. They have the command to attack intruders once the intruders have passed by the alcoves completely. Derek's hope is to drive the party into the pool and finish them off. The zombies will strike at the last person in the party to pass through the area, if the party is in a single group. If not, the zombies will strike at the last member of the first group to pass. The zombies

make their first round of attacks with surprise, and follow up by trying to drive the intruders down the corridor to the pool trap.

Tunnel: Pool

Up ahead, you catch the smells of rancid meat and stagnant water. Looking ahead, you find that the tunnel opens up into a wide area about 6 yards across. Nearly completely filling the room is a sinkhole. Apparently, the floor of this room gave out and collapsed into a pool of water nearly 20' below. The sides of the hole look very unstable and occasional clumps of dirt roll down and splash into the putrid water. Floating on top of the water are four pale bloated human corpses. A narrow walkway continues around the edge of the pool and into the tunnel on the opposite side.

Deridious and Derek have worked on this trap together as well. Deridious was aware of the danger of the sinkhole, so he reinforced the walkway to hold only 200 pounds of weight. Any more than that and the walkway will pull away from the wall and tumble into the pool. Make a Perception Test against a Difficulty of 10 to notice the trap. A Dexterity test against a Difficulty of 8 allows anyone on the walkway to jump free before falling into the pool. The walls of the pool are loose soil and very difficult to climb (Dexterity Test against a Difficulty of 12).

The corpses in the pool are zombies waiting for people to enter the pool before they attack. The pool is five feet deep, so anyone fighting in the pool suffers a penalty to all steps requiring action (including initiative) according to the amount of their body submerged in the water.

Waist	-2
Chest	-3
Shoulders	-4
Head	-6, cannot fight

The zombies are unaffected moving through the water due to the nature of the magic that animates them. This is where Tarsk Bloodluster lost his life. He too became a shadowman and lurks in the corridor ahead.

8.) Drowned Room

This room is the location of the two **shadowmen**. They remain here until they sense a life moving about in the tunnel system. They will then slip out, travel down the dark corridor, attempt to Shadow Double the lead characters and then strike from behind in the ensuing confusion. The Names of the shadowmen were Tarsk Bloodluster and Stephen Ablefoot. Both died in Derek's traps nearly six months ago. Neither one of the shadowmen dares to attack Derek or his allies because they believe that he has the power to free their souls if only they can please him. (He never will, though he will try to enslave them in his army.)

The room is eight feet high and filled with six feet of water. If the party explores the room, they will find nothing, as the room filled with water before Derek could move things into it.

9.) Welcome room

You emerge from the tunnel into a partially destroyed rectangular room. The ceiling and walls around you collapsed some time ago, and apparently this tunnel was dug right through the old walls of the room. The walls are covered with phosphorescent moss that gives off a soft yellow light. A door still stands on its hinges across the room from you. There is little else in the room except for rubble, and a few tattered old wall hangings so rotted with moisture that they fall apart at the touch.

10.) Ancient Corridor

As you move through the door, the first thing you notice is that this hallway is well lit by light quartzes mounted near the arched roof of the hallway. A wooden door stands across from you, and to your left more doors line the hall. Almost immediately to your right, the hallway has collapsed and tons of soil and rubble block the way. You dimly hear moaning from one of the rooms to your left.

11, 15, 16.) Abandoned Rooms

This room doesn't appear to have survived the collapse well at all. No furnishings of any type remain in the room, and the collapsed walls have reduced the area of the room to a tight squeeze.

12.) Pass Warded Door and Derek's room

See the *Pass Ward* spell, p. 180 **ED**. This door has been warded by Derek so that only he or someone in his company may pass through this door. The same type of ward is on the door to the prison room, as well as the door leading into the hall with the sewer grate. The ward is quite strong strong. The ward places a white skull on the chest of the target, and the ward message is "Children shouldn't play where they're not invited!"

(Detection Difficulty: 13, Spell Defense: 12, Disarm Difficulty: 12, Trigger Condition: Ward makes a spell casting test against the spell defense of anyone within 10 feet, Spellcasting: 13, Effect: 23, Duration 5 1/2 years)

Derek's Room

A musty odor fills the air around you as the door swings open with a hollow creak. Candlelight flickers off the walls of the room and the smell of incense pervades your senses. An ornate black rug lies in the center of the room, a pattern of a griffon stitched into it with bright blue thread. In the corner, a small bed lies next to a table with two chairs and a wooden chest. Opposite the bed stands a bureau.

Derek is not in the room. He and Deridious have left, Deridious for the sewers and Derek to visit the krillworms that live in the kitchen (room 17b). The chest is locked (13) and trapped to trigger when the chest is opened.

(Dart Trap, Detection Difficulty (8), Initiative: 25, Attack: 15 (average success=2 darts, good=4, excellent=6, extraordinary=8, Effect: 8 per dart, Disarm Difficulty: 12)

The chest contains a number of nethermantic goods, such as bits of folded skin and bone fragments, a vial of fine ink (20sp), 15 gold rings (from corpses 15sp ea.), 10 silver rings (10sp ea.), 1 silver necklace (15sp), and 1 gold necklace (25sp). Aside from these items, the room is quite barren. The bureau has mundane clothing, and the table is clear. Derek believes in spartan living, due to the fact that he has to relocate quite frequently, especially as of late.

13.) Deridious Quay's Chambers

The door opens into a plain looking room. The far wall has collapsed so far as to have nearly filled the entire room. A commonplace rug lies on the floor, and a bed is set against the far wall next to a wooden chest. The room is empty. Deridious is currently exploring the sewer system beneath the city level. He spends much of his time there, hoping to find other sections of the city that were not cleared out or looted before the collapse.

The chest is locked (15) and trapped with a poisoned needle in the lock. If the lockpicking test fails, a needle darts out to prick the invading hand with poison. The chest is empty.

(Needle Trap, Detection Difficulty: 12, Disarm Difficulty: 12, Initiative: 30, Attack: 20, Effect: 4. Needle must cause damage beyond hand protection worn in order for poison to work. Needle poison: Debilitative poison, Step: 6, Spell Defense: 6, Onset time: 1 hour, Duration 24 hours, poison causes sweating, shakes, and hallucinations)

Deridious has hidden his goods in a small hollow carved out beneath a loose rock in the rubble pile. If the party searches the rubble pile, a Perception Test against a Difficulty of 15 will locate the loose rock and the treasure beneath -- a large leather sack with 45 gold, 200 silver, 4 rubies (50sp ea.), 2 glass daggers, 1 vial of poison (same as on trap, 3 doses remaining). There is also a small silver brooch (20sp), which has been enchanted for Deridious, so that he may pass through Derek's wards and by his guards without fear. Deridious carries another brooch on him at all times.

14.) Prison Room

It seems odd to you that this door of all others should be the only one with a sliding bolt on the outside. The door looks as though it has been reconstructed since the original door was hung on these hinges some hundreds of years before. Bits of the copper binding on the door still glisten in places where the sickly green tarnish has not yet spread. Even as you are contemplating the door, a low, pained moan echoes forth from within.

The ward on this door is similar to the ward on the door outside of Derek's room, but the message is different. The ward repeats: "NONE SHALL PASS! (insert wicked evil GM laugh)."

Once the party gets past the ward, read the following:

You slide the bolt back on the door, and it slowly begins to swing towards you. From inside, you hear a shriek of terror, and a woman begins screaming "NO! NO! Not my boy ... don't take my boy! Please ... not my boy ..." The screaming drops into helpless sobbing. As more light filters in, you see a partially collapsed room filled with straw mats. In the far corner, the mats have been heaped together to make a semblance of a bed. Small bowls containing food and water lie near the open doorway. In the far corner of the room a human woman is huddled in the corner hugging a small child to her breast. She scrabbles back against the wall as your shadow falls on the floor. Softly you can hear her murmuring, "not my boy, not my boy, not my boy...", over and over again.

The woman is a prisoner being kept to feed the spirit wind. Her name is Sara and her child's name is Jon. She is hysterical and delirious, and will remain so until she sees the light of day. She has been penned up in this room for over a week now and has hardly slept or eaten. She is in very poor shape. She remembers little except going to visit her husband's grave one evening with Jon. She was snatched up from behind by a tall man. She never saw his face, but she remembers the feeling of knives stabbing into her stomach and side, as if his arms were covered with shards of broken glass or something wickedly sharp. She also knows that Derek is killing people somewhere down in the sewers, because after he takes somebody out of the room she can hear their shrieks echoing through the halls.

17.) Common Rooms

These rooms are all fairly simple. Some have beds, some have tables and chairs. The only unusual rooms are noted below. All rooms were cleaned out of anything valuable when the city was abandoned.

17a.) The only thing special about this room is the Pass Ward on the door. If anyone approaches within 10 feet of the door not accompanied by either Derek or Deridious, or carrying a key brooch, the ward will activate and a skull will appear on the chest of the offending characters. The ward functions as the one on the door to Derek's room, though the message is a shrieking alarm meant to alert Derek to intruders. Derek is in room 17b, and will hear the alarm and begin making his preparations while the party deals with the door. If possible, he will wait until the party is investigating somewhere else before he moves out to make his stand.

17b.) Kitchen. Derek is here with his new companions, a flock of 20 krillworms which he has impressed.

They are loyal to Derek, and with his Command Nightflyer spell, he has given them orders to protect him. He also travels with a personal bodyguard of four zombies.

Krilworms (20)

DEX: 5 **STR:** 5 **TOU:** 5
PER: 6 **WIL:** 7 **CHA:** 1

Initiative: 4 (d6)
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 5 (d8)
Damage: 6 (d10)
Number of Spells: None
Spellcasting: 8 (2d6)
Effect: Locate Target
Death Rating: 30
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 25
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2
Knockdown: 5
Recovery Tests: 1
Combat Movement: 75
Full Movement: 150
Legend Points: 75 each

Notes: No eyes, make a Spellcasting test for swarm to locate target. Krilworms have an affection for nethermancers. When one of the swarm dies, make a Willpower test against a Difficulty number of 4 for the swarm to stay.

18.) Bone Circle and Sewer Grate

Before you lies an ominous sight. A sewer grate lies on the stone floor, next to an open hole leading down into darkness. Surrounding the hole about 3 yards distant is a circle of bone. Small shards of what looks like rat bones form the circle. Inside the circle, you can dimly see a humanoid shape darting about from side to side.

The circle is a result of the nethermantic spell Bone Circle (pg XX, **ED**). The spirit inside is a bone spirit (pg. 176, **ED**) with an Effect step of 16. The spirit will let none except those designated by Derek to pass.

Once past the bone spirit, the party will find a ten-yard-long iron-runged ladder set into the wall of the shaft, leading down into the sewer system below the city.

Sewer System

As you step onto the soft squishy mud below the drainshaft, your foot sinks a few inches with a sickening squishing sound. The corridor is not lit, but you can just make out an intersection to either side of you. Tentatively you place a foot out in front of you and set it down carefully, expecting to slip in soft mud, but your foot falls firmly despite the treacherous appearance of the footing.

The party's goal in the sewers is to make it to the pool where the spirit wind has taken up residence. There are many different routes that the party may use to find the wind, but eventually they should end up at the spirit wind. If they begin to travel too far in the wrong direction have them come up against a collapsed section of tunnel.

The spirit wind used to roam the sewers looking for prey, but since Derek has been bringing it souls, it has remained near the pool where it can wait for some of the other sewer creatures to come for a drink.

Deridious also walks the sewers, and there is a chance that he might hear the party moving about and come to investigate. For every minute that the party is in the sewers, give Deridious a 10% chance to hear them. If they are fighting, make it a 20% chance. If Deridious becomes aware of the party's presence, he will make an effort to assassinate a party member, or find some other way to throw a hitch into their plans. If he feels that he is in danger of dying, he will flee into the sewers. Better to live to fight another day.

The Pool

Read this when the party first encounters the pool and the spirit wind.

You look out on a large pool. A section of the sewer system has collapsed into the ground below, leaving a large cavern into which water has collected over the years. Squinting your eyes, you think you see a dim blue light below the surface of the pool. Then, to your surprise, you see it growing larger and larger. Eventually, it reaches the surface and water sprays in all directions. Through the haze, you are able to make out a spectral blue form hovering over the water. Small bits of bone and flesh fall into the water as it swirls about. In a vortex of motion, it moves towards you, a swirling cloud of faces, long stretched faces, contorted in anguish and misery, each face different, each face screaming with a banshee's wail.

The Spirit Wind the party faces is weak. It contains only 8 spirits right now, placing it at a step 4 spirit wind.

When the party finally manages to defeat the wind read the following.

In a cacophony of screams, the wind dissipates. Fragments of souls scatter about in a thousand different directions, eventually reforming into the shapes of people. As the blue light fades, you think you see winged creatures of light moving toward the souls, helping them move on, taking them to the world beyond. Faintly, you hear a cry of thanks in your mind. Taking one last look before the light fades, you see a small human girl looking back at you. Perhaps only 5 years old, she smiles at you, then looks down at her feet shyly as she is led away by the takers of the dead.

Loose Ends

Legend Point Awards

Accepting adventure without securing payment first or turning down payment	30
Making it through the tunnel without triggering any traps	50
Freeing the woman and her child	50
Charming the souls free of the Spirit Wind	30/soul
Derek	500

Deridious	400
Krilworms	75 each (1500 for all 20)
Zombies	50 each (1250 for all 25)
Shadowmen	450 each
Spirit Wind	2959
Total	7509 (to be divided among party)

Continuing Adventure

Deridious may leave the ruins after Derek is killed. He may try for revenge, or alternately, if he knows that the party has gotten their hands on a thread item for him, he will certainly try to recover it.

If for some reason Derek manages to escape, he will move to another town and continue to raise his army. Eventually, he will try for revenge, or the party may hear of his growing power and choose to face him again.

Dravarth can be an excellent place to continue adventuring. With Derek and Deridious gone, the sewers are open to be explored. Perhaps they can find their way into another new area that is largely undamaged by the collapse. There may be a Horror there, or lots of treasure. In any case, it is certain that there will be adventure.

Erdigal may finally realize that there is a Horror in his head, and beg the party to help free him. He wants to travel with the party and help them fight the creature so that he might truly be free.

Rumors

1. A few months ago, two adventurers went into the undercity to try to set things right, a troll warrior (Tarsk Bloodluster) and a human swordmaster (Stephan Ablefoot). They never came back (true).
2. Erdigal used to be a court performer in Throal (true).
3. Last Veltom, someone saw a large Horror flying over the graveyard (false).
4. Ma and Pa Cherteck are Theran spies (false).
5. Erdigal met with a Horror while traveling once, and could never perform again (true).
6. Erdigal says he saw a dead man walking one night while he was out drinking in the graveyard (sort of true -- see Erdigal Flynn).
7. Tetslo got himself crippled when he killed a Horror in single combat (false).
8. Devin puts special magical ingredients into his bricks that make them so beautiful. He has a hoard of elemental earth hidden somewhere (false).

Personalities

Ma and Pa Cherteck

A elderly human couple, Ma and Pa (as they insist on being called) are the proprietors of the 'Drunken Fieldhand'. They run a clean inn with a good kitchen and clean sheets. Their rooms are nice for the price, and though a little bit stuffy and small, they do the job. Pa has even had a few additions put on the inn over the past few years to house those races that have special requirements. Ma and Pa know little of what goes on in the graveyard, though they will not hesitate to volunteer what they hear. They are adamant about how evil the place has been feeling lately, and they claim that they have heard strange sounds coming from below their root cellar like someone screaming and wailing in terror.

Ma and Pa remember Tarsk Bloodluster and Stephan Ablefoot. They know that Tarsk and Stephan left during the night a few months ago, headed for the graveyard, and they were never heard from again. Ma still has their old clothes in a sack, all clean and folded, hoping they will come back.

Elsa Cherteck

Elsa Cherteck works as a serving lass for her grandmother and grandfather. She is young and highly flirtatious, especially to those of noble grace who will try to woo her. She probably won't get involved with an adventurer, but will flirt the night with them until it's time to close up.

Devin and Dalla Tillney

Devin and his wife Dalla were born and raised in Red Dirt. Devin, 55, is now the proud mayor of this town whose walls have encompassed him his entire life. He has a very successful trading business, centered mostly on ceramics and clay bricks. Some of the crimson bricks he makes even line the walkways of some of the richest houses in Throal. Devin is very concerned about what has been happening to the graveyard, and will do all he can to help the party accomplish their goals. He doesn't have much to offer, but he is willing to give 400sp from the town treasury to the party if they will help to stop the grave robbing. He has little else to give, but would gladly give more if he had it.

Devin is eager for the party to begin immediately, and may seem a little anxious. What he does not want to tell the party is that all the graves seem to be robbed after a year of burial, and that his son was killed in a farming accident a year ago tomorrow. He is desperately afraid that something will happen to his son's body. If he feels the party is hesitant to help, either he or Dalla will break down and reveal to the party their true fears.

Erdigal Flynn

Sixth Circle Human Troubadour
STR: 4 **DEX:** 6 **TOU:** 5
PER: 7 **WIL:** 4 **CHA:** 4 (8) (Horror effect)
Erdigal Flynn has been down on his luck for quite some time. He is not aware of it, but he was Marked during the course of his first adventure, and the Horror in his head has a wonderful time making Erdigal forget a story completely right at the climax of the tale. It often makes Erdigal tone deaf as well, or forces him to make horrible mistakes while playing. For this reason, Erdigal has turned to drinking and gambling for money. He has become addicted to gambling and will seldom do anything if there is not a bet involved in it somewhere. He is terrified of conflict, and will flee at the first sign of anger and curl up in a ball under the nearest staircase. He does, however, have some knowledge that might help the party. One night while he was out drinking, he fell asleep in the bottom of a freshly dug grave. When he tried to crawl out, he saw men digging up another grave with their hands. He cowered in fear, and fell back into the grave to hide. When he came out again, they were gone. He remembers a tall thin man giving orders in Sperethiel (elven).

Tetslo Shieldbreaker

Fourth Circle Ork Weaponsmith
STR: 7 **DEX:** 6 **TOU:** 7
PER: 6 **WIL:** 5 **CHA:** 4
Tetslo lives alone on a small cot in the back of his shop. He is an excellent weaponsmith (Rank 4 in all Talents). He is willing to do work for the party at the fair market price. He no longer adventures due to a permanent limp he suffered at the hands of a construct. He doesn't like to talk about what happened, and will become very defensive if anybody asks about it. He came here to get away from his old life, but at the same time, he sympathizes with adventurers trying to get by in the world. He has little knowledge of the graveyard problem except that the bodies are being taken at night, and that the last time he was out there he found a wicked looking thorn about 2 inches long lying next to one of the open graves. The thorn was covered in blood. He still has the thorn and will offer it to the party if he thinks it will help. The thorn is one of Deridious's and is a minor pattern item. Tetslo still has some of his old adventuring equipment. If the party seems interested, he will offer to sell them a last chance potion (500sp) and his crystal viking shield (150sp). He will even power up the shield as part of the selling price.

Derek Soultaker

Fifth Circle Dwarf Nethermancer

Attributes

Dex:	(15): 6/d10
Str:	(15): 6/d10
Tou:	(16): 7/d12
Per:	(18): 7/d12
Wil:	(16): 7/d12
Cha:	(10) : 5/d8

Talents

Karma Ritual	(5)
R/W Language	(5): 12 / 2d10
*R/W Magic	(5): 12 / 2d10
*Spellcasting	(6): 13 / d12+d10
Spell Matrix	(5)
Spell Matrix	(5)
Spell Matrix	(5)
Spell Matrix	(5)
*Nethermancy	(6): 13 / d12+d10
*Astral Sight	(5): 12 / 2d10
Durability (4/3)	(6)
Frighten	(5): 12 / 2d10
Taunt	(5): 10 / d10+d6
Willforce	(4): 11 / d10+d8
*Spirit Hold	(6): 18 / d20+d12

Movement

Combat	30
Full:	60

Skills

Artisan/Embroidery	(1): 6 / d10
Knowledge/Undead Lore	(2): 9 / d8+d6
Knowledge/Horrors	(1): 8 / 2d6

Initiative

Dice: d10

Karma

Dice: d6

Points: 15

Combat

Physical Defense:	8
Spell Defense:	11
Social Defense:	6
Armor	4
Mystic Armor:	???

Damage

Death Rating:	63 (30)
Wound Threshold:	11
Unc. Rating:	49 (16)
Recovery Die:	d12
Recovery Tests/Day:	3

Spells

1st Circle:	bone dance, chilling circle, detect undead, command nightflyer, experience death, spirit grip, undead struggle
2nd Circle:	bone circle, ethereal darkness, fog ghost, life circle of one, shield mist
3rd Circle:	death's head, fog of fear, grave message, pain, spirit double
4th Circle:	animate skeleton, visions of death
5th Circle:	pass ward, animate zombie

Equipment

adventurer's kit, booster potion, 2 healing potions, mace, embroidered robe, embroidery kit, grimoire, knife, leather armor, desperate spell charm, death cheat charm, absorb blow charm, traveler's garb, 20 cp, 60 sp, 3 gp, 1 elemental earth coin

Notes:

Racial ability of heat sight

May spend a karma point on any action using Perception only

Spell defense increased by 1 at 5th circle (change reflected above)

Derek has been living in the ruins of Dravarth for nearly eight months. He and Deridious have established quite a stronghold in the catacombs below the graveyard. Derek seeks to raise an army of undead to support him on his obessive quest for power, and has been searching the ruins of Dravarth for a tome he believes lies here that details the ritual for raising an entire army of the dead. In the course of his exploration, he encountered a Spirit Wind that roams the ancient sewer system beneath the city. He has been using his spells and Deridious to steal away the people of Red Dirt, throwing them into the sewer system with hopes of buying the loyalty of the Spirit Wind (if such a thing is possible).

He has animated 25 zombies from the graveyard and has used blood magic with all of them. Derek has a peculiar fascination with blood magic. He thrives on the power of the magic and he frequently has a number of blood charms on his person to add to this effect.

Deridious Quay

Fourth Circle Blood Elf Thief Adept

Attributes

Dex: (20): 8 / 2d6

Str: (14): 6 / d10

Tou: (13): 6 / d10

Per: (16): 7 / d12

Wil: (14): 6 / d10

Cha: (12): 5 / d8

Talents

Climbing	(4): 12 / 2d10
Karma Ritual	(4)
*Lock Pick	(5): 12 / 2d10
Melee Weapons	(5): 13 / d12+d10
*Picking Pockets	(4): 12 / 2d10
*Silent Walk	(4): 12 / 2d10
*Surprise Strike	(4): 12 / 2d10
Durability	(5)
*Lock Sense	(4): 11 / d10+d8
*Avoid Blow	(5): 13 / d12+d10
*Fence	(6)
*Thief Weaving	(3): 8 / 2d6
Taunt	(1): 8 / 2d6
*Trap Initiative	(3): 11 / d10+d8

Movement

Combat 55

Full: 110

Skills

Artisan / Wood sculpture	(1): 6 / d10
Knowledge / Gem appraising	(1): 8 / 2d6
Knowledge / Creature lore	(1): 8 / 2d6

Initiative

Dice: d12

Karma

Dice: d6

Points: 12

Combat

Physical Defense:	10
Spell Defense:	9
Social Defense:	7
Armor	6
Mystic Armor:	6

Damage

Death Rating:	60 (55)
Wound Threshold:	9
Unc. Rating:	47 (42)
Recovery Die:	d10
Recovery Tests/Day:	2

Equipment

Adventurer's kit, healing potion, last chance salve, thieves' picks and tools, Kelix's poultice, blood pebble armor, astral sensitive eye, 2 daggers, broadsword, buckler, espagra cloak, flight dagger, hawk hatchet, traveler's garb, sculpting tools, 35 sp, 10 gp, gold ring (50sp value), small pouch containing 5 cut topaz (25sp ea.), silver brooch (20 sp, enchanted to let Deridious pass Derek's wards and guards)

Notes:

Racial ability of low light vision

May spend a karma point on any action using Perception only

Deridious left the Blood Wood four years ago after he was exposed as a member of a secret organization devoted to opening the Wood to outsiders. He believed that it was an honorable goal, but when he was brought before Queen Alachia and exiled from the wood for the murder of a Warder, he began to question himself why the Wood should be opened. After travelling about Barsaive under cover of darkness for two years, he realized that the rest of the land had nothing to offer the elves of the Wood and that he had been a fool to pursue the opening. He has become bitter, hating the world outside because he now sees them for what they are and the grief they have caused him. He also despises the Blood Wood for exiling him, though he does possess a secret desire to be a part of the wood again. Deridious met Derek for the first time in combat a year ago. Since then, they have become fast friends, neither wanting anything to do with the world as it is. Deridious trusts Derek and aids him in his rituals and sacrifices, though he is wary of the dwarf's obsession with blood magic. Deridious worries that one day Derek will accidently take his own life through the use of too much blood magic.

Deridious now spends much of his free time in the sewer system below the ruined city. He tends to shy away from the spirit wind. Even though Derek assures him it is safe, it still makes him uncomfortable. He has been looking for more rooms in the underground city that have not been destroyed. So far he has found two, only one with any money in it. The sewers have become his second home, and he can disappear in them without a trace if he so chooses.

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T'skrang Trouble

By Devon Schiller

originally appearing in ***Earthdawn Journal*** #3

"Never be trustin' a thief Adept. They'll bring ye trouble every time. If it's a t'skrang as well, I say run 'em through on sight. Believe me, I should know. I married one."
-- Varina, Human Swordmaster, Doddul, 1506 TH

T'skrang Trouble is a brief mini-adventure, a set of two encounters which Game Masters may interject into any campaign or other module. This can add a touch of interest or a different flavor to increase the pleasure in any such game. This side track may also be used to start up a campaign or adventure. Enough background material is provided for this purpose. T'skrang Trouble is presented in the same fashion as Mists of Betrayal, Terror in the Skies, and Infected published by Fasa Corporation. These encounters are best suited to a group of six characters from 3rd to 5th Circles.

Overview

These encounters may take place while the PCs are traveling across Barsaive; preferably an uninhabited region with sparse vegetation.

The first encounter occurs right after the PCs have set camp for the night. A strange t'skrang appears, attempting to steal the PCs' weapons and money. He is interrupted, however, by a band of ork scorchers from whom he relieved certain valuables. This is the second encounter.

Encounter 1, Travelling Thief

Setting the Stage

Read the following once the PCs have set camp but before they enter the realm of sleep. Adjust this as necessary for the PCs' position in Barsaive.

You hear it before you see it. It is not your imagination's conjuring this time. Now, as the stars are beginning to speckle the night sky, you are sure that the darkness of Barsaive has spawned some foul beast.

A glow glimmers to life not five feet from you. The green foliage gleams with color in the

sparse light. And there, draped in the shadows of night, you see it. Its eyes sparkle with mischief and humor; those dark orbs shifting from person to person within your party. Its body is still hidden by the trees but you can hear the tinkling of gold. It is a t'skrang.

He pushes his way through the greenery to stand in your small clearing. His voice rings loudly in your ears: "Ho, there, fellow Name-Givers! It's about time I found some form of companionship in this cursed land."

Themes and Images

In this encounter the PCs should be haunted by the dark and forbidding wilderness, only to find boisterous fellowship in the manner of a t'skrang. Their senses should be picking up subliminal indications that something is wrong but little of this should be manifest. Vivacity and mirth can often obscure darker motives. The PCs should be caught up in the magnetic personality of the t'skrang.

Behind the Scenes

This t'skrang, by the name T'retia, is running from a band of ork scorchers from whom he stole a sizable sum of elemental coins. By trade he is a thief of both great skill and great ego (not to mention his fair share of panache). He wishes to bed down with the PCs for the night so as to conclude a deal he made with his traveling companion, Argh Belarh. This ork is a leader in the ranks of the scorchers. This twosome planned to evade the orks and gather a touch more useful loot. Just before dawn T'retia intends to steal all of the PCs' valuables then run east towards Parlainth. Argh's job is to arrive just at the right moment and allow both of them to escape with enough of the coins to last ten lifetimes. This will also throw the orks from their trail. T'retia will eagerly provide his name and any other information about which the PCs inquire. However, he will not, under any conditions, reveal that he is a thief. He will tantalize them with a story of glory in which he destroys a ravaging Horror some leagues away. The rest of his party was killed so he requires assistance and companionship for the evening. This should dazzle the PCs with untruths and bluster. This tale is told in the truly t'skrang manner, exaggerated (even though it is false) to the point of ridiculousness. T'retia will also inquire as to the PCs' business, trying to be as friendly as possible. This should provide an interesting role-playing opportunity. If there are any female t'skrang in the party then he will, of course, do everything in his capabilities to seduce one.

Read the following melodramatic story when you feel it is appropriate for T'retia to relate it. Adjust it as need be and add flavor to personalize it for the group of PCs.

"Well, I do lead a dangerous life of glory and passion, as any intelligent Name-giver would desire to do. I fight to destroy the wretched evils that plague this desolate land. In my time I have battled Therans, dealt cold death to beasts, and shed the blood of more Horrors than I can possibly recall. My name is infamous across the land as are those of my poor companions who were maimed cruelly in our last encounter. We sought a Horror by the

name of Falsathith. Oh, did he taste the harsh power of my blade! It was a mighty, wondrous battle of triumphant good. You would have cherished the sight of it. My sword caught the moonlight, hurling it outward to pierce the dark night. Blood stained my clothing and scales. Oh, yes! It was a great battle. I hope that the Library of Throal is gifted with a tale of it some day. Aye, that is what brought me here. And now I travel towards the epic ruins of Parlainth to seek my budding fortune. There I hear tale that the Horrors are as numerous as t'skrang on the Serpent River! That city will shake with the power of my deeds. Well, enough of me. What brings you to this desolate region?!"

The t'skrang will engage in a meaningful dialogue with the PCs until it is time to retire for the evening. Near dawn, T'retia will execute his plan. He will wait until approximately one hour before dawn for this attempt. If the PCs have stationed a watch, he will appear to sleep and then strike the guard (Silent Strike, attempting merely to knock him or her unconscious). He will grab up all that he wishes to steal and begin to leave camp. This is when Encounter 2 begins. If the PCs use him for one of their guards during the night he will take the opportunity at that time. The GM will have to move Encounter 2 forward slightly so that it still interrupts his activities. T'retia will silently apologize at length to any female t'skrang in the party for his thievery. T'retia will only take things of extreme value, i.e. magical items, gold or gems, or unique pieces. The requisites for T'retia follow to be used when combat with the ork scorchers begins (or if otherwise needed). Some background is also included so that the GM may provide detailed and challenging role-playing for the PCs.

T'retia

Male T'skrang

5th Circle Thief

This flamboyant t'skrang is bedecked from head to toe in flowing silks of radically vibrant hues which stun the eye. His snout is thin and elegant, and his body lithe and toned with fine muscle. T'retia's scales are of a light blue hue. Flames of pink run up his crest and down his prehensile tail. The dark orbs of his eyes sparkle constantly with mischief and appear to find all humorous in the world . T'retia cherishes life and pleasures himself at every invigorating moment. In his own twisted circle of thieving friends he is known as "The Risk Taker." He never backs down from bet, dare, or commission. Resembling many such Adepts, his word is his bond. T'retia is honorable, however, he also understands the occasional necessity of lies and masks. This t'skrang grew up in a small apropagoi in the souther regions of the Serpent River. He was a constant menace to his family, searching at a young age for freedom and revelling in thievery. At age ten he vanished from home, heading out on a small merchant vessel. It was upon this ship that he found a thief Adept who trained him. In the next five years, he sailed as a pirate, learning many things and experiencing many wonders. His name became quite well known. An important dwarf from Throal found him and offered a commission when he was fifteen. That man's name was never known to T'retia. But he accepted, thinking it an invigorating challenge. He traveled to Vivane where he attempted to infiltrate a Theran house and steal certain documents concerning their government. However, he was caught and imprisoned. It was in that prison cell, where T'retia rotted for nearly a decade, that he met the ork Argh Belarh. Argh had traveled to Vivane in the attempt of finding his lost parents. But when it was discovered that he was a scorcher (adopted due to

his warrior prowess) he was also thrown into the dungeon. Both men hungrily sought freedom. It became the most important thing in their lives. And one day they managed to escape and flee back into Barsaive. The ork returned to his tribe and the t'skrang to his home waters. Before this painful separation they took a Blood Oath. They swore that all of the unlawfully imprisoned Name-givers in Vivane would one day be free and the Therans burned to the ground. Today the two have reunited and are attempting to gather the necessary equipment to aid them in their singular attempt. Thus, they have created a detailed plot to steal the elemental coins from the marauding ork scorchers. Although T'retia is not aware of the exact details, he knows that the orks came upon the coins in one of their deadly raids.

DEX: (19):8/2d6 **STR:** (10): 5/1d8 **TOU:** (12):5/1d8
PER: (15):6/1d10 **WIL:** (12): 5/1d8 **CHA:** (16):7/1d12

Initiative: 8/2d6
Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: 12
Damage: 11 (ax)
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: N/A
Death Rating: 74
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 58
Karma Points: 25

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 9
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 3
Knockdown: 9
Recovery Tests: 2 (5/1d8)
Combat Movement: 45
Full Movement: 90
Legend Points: 300
Karma Steps: 4

Equipment: Padded Armor, Dagger (Damage: 7/1d12), Scimitar (Damage: 9/1d8+1d6), silk garb, large expandable sack, thieves picks, Legend Book (containing detailed information of all T'retia's successful endeavors)

Loot: Pouch containing various gems (worth total of 900 gp), 15 gp, pouch of elemental coins (10) stolen from the ork scorchers

Talents:
Climbing (5): 13/1d12+1d10
Karma Ritual (4): NA
Lock Pick (6): 14/1d20+1d4
Melee Weapons (9): 17/1d20+1d10
Picking Pockets (12): 20/1d20+1d8+1d6
Silent Walk (7): 15/1d20+1d6
Surprise Strike (9): 17/1d20+1d10
Durability (8) NA Lock Sense (6): 13/1d12+1d10
Avoid Blow (3): 11/1d10+1d8
Fence (5): 12/2d10
Trap initiative (4): 12/2d10

Skills:
Acting (4): 11/1d10+1d8
Flirting (3): 10/1d10+1d6
Streetwise (8): 15/1d20+1d6
Theran Politics (2): 9/1d8+1d6
Court Dancing (5): 12/2d10
Read/Write Dwarven (1): NA
Read/Write T'skrang (1): NA

Detect trap (2): 8/2d6
Thief Weaving (4): 11/1d10+1d8

Troubleshooting

There are two conceivable difficulties. These are: if the PCs do not allow T'retia to join them at the campsite, or if they catch him stealing. The former will require some extensive and theatrical role-playing on the part of the GM. T'retia will say absolutely anything to join them. He will also use his basic charm to best advantage. At the extreme, he will resort to openly weeping in front of the PCs and begging for their help, claiming to be emotionally damaged in his imaginary confrontation with the Horror. The latter problem can easily be solved by interjecting Encounter 2 at the moment of discovery.

Encounter 2: The Scorchers Return

Setting the Stage

Read the following when the PCs see T'retia making his move (after he has already bagged their equipment) or when T'retia has finished.

The mists of sleep slowly evaporate from your chilled body, the tantalizing light of dawn just beginning to warm the earth upon which you sleep. As your eyes flutter towards wakefullness, you see the strange t'skrang heading for the edge of your campsite. A large bag not present the previous evening. hung over his shoulder. Your mind races, stumbling over obscure facts. You reach for your weapon to comfort yourself and find that it is not there. Any action which you had hoped to take is suddenly interrupted as the entire clearing fills with activity. Harsh snorting fills the air, as does the clanking of metal and the sharp hiss of orks. Your eyes dart around you to find large ,gray-skinned beasts, horns shimmering white in the early dawn and saliva dripping from their maws. Thundra beasts! Upon each one is a mightily clad ork, his muscled, dark-olive skin lathered in sweat. Their weapons are drawn. You see the t'skrang stop in his tracks, an unreadable emotion crossing his face. But you can see him set his stance, his hand flying towardsthe scimitar at his hip. One ork rides towards you. His gravelly voice fills the air. "So, Argh Belarh finally finds the thief. I told you we would!" He looks at T'retia and spits to his left. "And look, he has his group of thieves with him. So be it. We'll just have to kill them as well. You, t'skrang, come here!" T'retia puts his hands in the air obligingly, the large pack still clinging to his body. He steps forward slowly. The leader snorts disdainfully and barks, "Get on the beast, scum! My tribe will have the pleasure of dining on your sour bones. Now then, the rest of them." He looks at his men and shouts, "Kill them!"

Themes and Images

The characters should be feeling frightened. Even with their ample powers, they are surrounded by a band of ork scorchers who would seem to want their lives. They also don't have any of their powerful weapons. Also, if they are well-versed in orkish culture, they should sense that something is extremely wrong. Action should be moving quickly now, as a mariad of thoughts whirl through their heads.

Behind the Scenes

T'retia and Argh Belarh intend to allow the orks to busy themselves with the characters as they make their getaway. The ork scorchers want the t'skrang dead, and are looking forward to killing him at their camp. They are also hungry for revenge because their most prized possession has been stolen by this cunning t'skrang. They don't realize what role Argh had in this. They will obey Argh and will rush in for the attack. T'retia and Argh will fight together, defending themselves under any circumstances. It was for this purpose that Argh left T'retia's hands unbound. Two rounds into the combat, once there is sufficient havoc and chaos, they will charge out of the clearing and move at full speed for Parlainth where they intend to search for some magical treasure which may aid them in their purpose.

Argh Belarh

Male Ork

5th Circle Liberator

This heavily muscled ork is in his mid-thirties, having spent nearly half his life in the slave-pits or dungeons of Thera. His scar-marred skin is dark ebony in color as is his waxy mass of hair. A slight tongue of gray reaches back from one of his horns. Numerous rings and bands of steel and gold decorate his tall form. Blood stains his travel-worn clothing. He is unmindful of his general appearance but pays special attention to his weapon and armor. He carries a large battle-axe, its handle wrapped in Espagra leather and studded with gems on its pummel. Argh refers to this monstrosity simply as "Marr." His armor has seen numerous battles but he has only acquired it recently (after returning to his adopted tribe). Chips, dents, and rude repairing keeps it in a constant state of griminess. Argh is a rough ork, having spent his youth alone and most of his life doing unbearable labor to benefit cruel masters. Yet he also fought for the dream of Hrak Gron and continues the vision of the Ork Uprising. But once seenm in light of his past it is possible to look beyond such superficialities. In the company of his true friends he is as compassionate as any loving mother. However, the only friends that remain alive are T'retia and a few folk still in Vivane. Those he fights to free. He will do everything in his powers to free their young souls before the end of his life (which he now realizes draws inexplicably near). He never knew his parents. They were taken by Therans near Skypoint shortly after his birth. He was adopted by hospitable ork scorchers who recognized his skill (even at an early age). But his there was insufficient time for his loyalty to grow strong prior to his enslavement. He commands his fellow orks confidently but coldly. He does whatever is necessary. And he will betray them to fulfill his promise and purpose.

DEX: (15):6/1d10 **STR:** (17): 7/1d12 **TOU:** (17):7/1d12
PER: (12):5/1d8 **WIL:** (18): 7/1d12 **CHA:** (13):6/1d10

Initiative: 6/1d10
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 16
Damage: 14 (ax)
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: N/A
Death Rating: 89
Wound Threshold: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 74
Karma Points: 40

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 13
Mystic Armor: 1
Knockdown: 11
Recovery Tests: 3(5/1d8)
Combat Movement: 40
Full Movement: 80
Legend Points: 700
Karma Steps: 5

Equipment: Plate Mail, Battle-axe (14/1d20+1d4), Dagger (9/1d8+1d6), Traveller's Garb
Loot: 16 gp

Talents:
Freedom Search (5): 10/1d10+1d6
Karma Ritual (5): NA
Melee Weapons (10): 16/1d20+1d8
Mind Blade (6): 6/1d10
Mind Armor (4): 11/1d10+1d8
Ritual of Atonement (7): 14/1d20+1d4
Durability (8): NA
Free Mind (4): 10/1d10+1d6
Unarmed Combat (5): 11/1d10+1d8
Heart of Freedom (3): 10/1d10+1d6
Shackle Shrug (5): 11/1d10+1d8
False Shackles (4): 10/1d10+1d6
Freedom Weaving (7): 12/2d10
Lion Spirit (2): 9/1d8+1d6

Skills:
Acting (6): 12/2d10
Streetwise (5): 10/1d10+1d6
Theran History (4): 9/1d8+1d6
Orkish Racial Lore (5): 10/1d10+1d6
Read/Write Dwarven (1): NA
Read/Write Orkish(1): NA

Ork Scorchers (12)

DEX: 5 **STR:** 7 **TOU:** 6
PER: 5 **WIL:** 6 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 2
Number of Attacks: 1

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 6

Attack: 7
Damage: 10
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: N/A
Death Rating: 32
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 24
Karma Points: 40
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 1
Knockdown: 6
Recovery Tests: 1
Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60
Legend Points: 50
Karma Steps: 5
Equipment: Broadsword, footman's shield, chain mail
Loot: 1d4 sp each

Troubleshooting

The possible outcomes to this combat are infinite. The PCs may role-play their way out of the situation, putting Argh and T'retia together and attempting to influence the orks' intentions. At this point Argh will use his persuasive abilities. Or, if the PCs are absolutely compelling, then Argh and T'retia will attempt to escape. They may defeat the orks and chase down the two thieves. If this occurs the two villains will attempt to weasel their way out of their predicament, even willing to return the goods they stole from the PCs. In their minds, the PCs caught them and it would only be fair. On the other hand, they 'outwitted' the orks. The PCs may also desire to join the two compatriots on their quest. In this case, the GM may have a campaign on his/her hands. Simply insure that the outcome is believable. Remember that the two thieves should be able to role-play their way out of almost anything.

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Anghali G'Hosteren: *The Changing City*

by Andrew W. Ragland

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal*** #3

Tarliman seems to be progressing south and east rapidly, perhaps a little too much so. I had rather hoped for a report from Kratas.
-- Merrox

Can you really blame him for skipping that dreadful place? Given a choice, I would also.
-- Jerriv Forrim

Anghali G'Hosteren translates literally from the Dinganni tongue as Gathering Place That Moves With The Wind. Note that the apostrophe is a glottal stop, and that the G and H should be pronounced separately to avoid arousing mirth in your Dinganni companions. As well, the first part of the name is ang-hali, not an-ghali. Referring to the city as Anghali is permitted, but will mark you as an outsider.

On the Origins of the City

Even nomads must have fixed places to gather for trade. Centuries ago, the nomadic tribes of the southwestern plains made treaties to establish a neutral meeting place for trade, for the seasonal horse fairs and to work out differences peacefully. All parties concerned sent Questors of Mynbruje to reside at the meeting place, to rule on intertribal problems and to govern the people who would live there. Anghali G'Hosteren was born.

Then came the Scourge. The inhabitants of the trade city went into kaers with their tribes. Agreements were made for the re-establishment of trade after the danger had passed. The tribes emerged from their kaers to find the world radically changed. By dead reckoning from the kaer entrances, the signatory tribes were able to find where the trade city had been. The river that the city had formerly straddled was gone. Nearby, however, was a small lake, fed by underground springs, and on its shore Anghali G'Hosteren rose again.

Location of the City

Anghali G'Hosteren lies roughly in the middle of the southwestern plains of Barsaive. From Kratas, align point phi on the Sextant with Throal, and follow Floranuus at sunrise. The city lies 6.5 days ride, 10 days walking away. From Vivane, align point E on the Sextant with Throal and follow Mynbruje at noon. The journey will require 22 days walking, 14 days riding.

On the Layout and Appearance of the City

Coming from from Kratas, the first view of the city is from a rise approximately a mile away. In the late afternoon, the sun glances off the lake and turns it to molten silver. Fringing the water to the west is a ragged arc of brightly colored tents, a few wooden and stone buildings at the center, set back from the lakeshore to avoid taking up space that is needed for water access.

Now, when the average Barsaivian hears the word "tent", the image of a small canvas or hide dome springs to mind, something that sleeps four dwarves, three humans or two trolls, and packs up small enough to carry on a single horse. While there are a few of this type scattered here and there, they are lost amid the vast expanses of brilliantly dyed silk and wool that comprise the tribal tents of the nomads. Divided into sections for travel, each tribesman carrying a panel of fabric and some of the poles and rigging, the tribal tents are divided internally into many rooms, held up by a complex web of poles and lines, and decorated with paint and embroidery that tells the story of the tribe, as well as pennons flying from the small poles and banners from the large. Watching one of these being set up is like watching a colony of spiders spinning a vast web. From the hilltop overlooking the city, the tent seems to bloom like a flower, tiny figures scurrying about it as it grows from bare earth to a fabulous blossom in only half an hour.

There are permanent buildings in the city, as mentioned previously. The problem is that there are no forests nearby. Thus, wood for building must be hauled great distances. Buildings are expensive to put up, thus few.

The Hall of Mynbruje is of stone, quarried in a nearby pit and packed across the plains by horse travois. Other than the Hall of Mynbruje, the three inns and the bath house, the Street of Merchants has most of the permanent and semi-permanent structures in town. Farriers, weaponsmiths, and other craftsfolk whose equipment is not easily portable have taken up residence, as well as food-sellers, tailors, scribes and other services. The buildings, however, have been put up in whatever clear space was available among the tents at the time, so there is no organized plan. As well, some of the structures are only semi-permanent, wooden sheds with tents attached, which can be moved to another location if need be.

The size of the city and its layout both fluctuate with the seasons, as determined largely by the breeding of horses and other riding beasts. When the latest crop of foals have been broken to the bit and are ready for market, the city swells, incorporating corrals, auction

rings, and all the trappings of a massive horse-fair. Entertainers wander the streets, and the taverns do a thriving business at all hours. In the off season, though, when the tribes are mostly out wandering the plains, the few lonely buildings sit forlornly in the middle of vast tracts of empty space, anxiously awaiting the arrival of travellers to fill the void.

During the high seasons, the streets teem with brilliant colors. The nomadic tribes don their finest to impress their customers, their rivals and even their friends. Scorchers who make their living as mercenaries or in other honest ways are welcomed, as long as they obey the strict laws regarding the peace. Their unit markings and standards add to the variety. Each merchant stand, each food-seller stall vies for the attention of passers-by. Fabric is embroidered and dyed. Ropes are braided, have contrasting cords woven in, pennons hung from them. Bare wood is painted, carved, inlaid. No surface is left undecorated. Travellers from the more conservative areas of Throal may find it all a bit too much. My Vorst guard shook his head and dismissed the entire city as not caring about their survival. T'Skrang and windlings, however, should feel right at home.

Lodging

Most people arriving bring their lodging with them, in the form of their tribal or individual tents. For those who arrive without such, or who prefer something a bit more solid, there are a number of possibilities.

First off, no Dinganni will ever refuse hospitality to an honest traveller. As long as there are fewer in your party than in their tent, and you follow their customs, there will always be space to spread a blanket, food and a fire. The polite traveller will of course make a guesting gift later in the evening. Too early and the host may feel insulted, that he is being offered payment for attending to a sacred obligation. After the meal and the first few stories told around the fire is the best time. Useful items with an interesting history make much better guesting gifts than simple donations of food or drink, although a flask of brandy or wine is always welcome.

There are other tribes that will also offer hospitality, but insist on more complex rituals, and adherence to more convoluted codes of behavior.

There are a number of taverns with rooms available, and three actual lodging-houses down near the Hall of Mynbruje. During the merchanting seasons, tent-hostels are set up by enterprising Name-Givers, offering private rooms, food and entertainment, but there are no doors in a tent, and thus no locks. While the proprietor of the establishment may be as honest as a newborn babe, there is no guarantee for the other guests, nor for the crowds thronging the streets. I myself stayed with the Biyazi clan of the Dinganni, and trusted my belongings to their honesty and their guards.

Sebkha's Lodging House

Closest to the Hall of Mynbruje, Sebkha's is the oldest of the three, put up a scant two years after the re-founding of the city. Sebkha Nairn is an enterprising dwarf originally from Travar, who heard a rumor of a new trading point and took a gamble. Loading everything he owned on wagons, along with construction materials, tools and a half-dozen hired workers, he set out overland, arriving shortly after the completion of the Hall of Mynbruje. Six months later, his lodging house opened just in time for a horse-fair, and has been doing a terrific business ever since. I asked Sebkha if he missed Travar. He nodded, saying that good stout was hard to come by this far out on the plains. But, he said, rubbing his fingers together with a gleam in his eye, he could afford to have it brought in from Travar and points further, and there was a brewmaster on his way from Throal even as we spoke. Watch, he said, in the next year the first dwarven brewery on the plains will be producing the finest ale outside of the mountain.

Constructed of wood on a stone foundation, the lodging house bears a sign as unimaginative as its name, a foaming mug over crossed keys. Fortunately, the kitchen is run by an inventive dwarven woman, a cousin of Sebkha Named Bria, who has obviously been discussing her chosen craft with the other Name-Givers who reside in the city and pass through it. Her cuisine features dishes not only of dwarven origin, but of ork, human, elven and even windling traditions. Some of her own creations borrow from several schools of cooking, mixing the grilling techniques of orkish campfire cookery with elven spicing to a delightful result. Her rendition of the regional specialty, veroniki, makes a truly wonderful meal. The dumplings are filled with ground sausage, seasoned with sage and cinnamon, deep fried as usual, and topped with a light cream sauce of Dinganni origin but with a traditionally windling spice combination of orry, ginger and hamat. Be certain to arrive with a large appetite, as the portions are oversized for the guest's race. Prices vary from a few coppers for a simple plate of bread and goat cheese to ten silver for a three-remove feast featuring the house specialty.

Sebkha's is a Guild inn. Services available and the prices for them are at the customary levels. There is a bath house on the opposite side of the building from the stables. However, I have heard that the windows do not fasten properly, leaving easy access for thieves. If Sebkha does not take steps to protect the valuables (and clothing, for that matter) of his guests while they are bathing, he may find his Guild mark in peril.

Feathered Serpent

Located at the western edge of the city, the Feathered Serpent is probably the most tightly-run lodging house in Anghali. Hattri Aldathshemne, the proprietor, is as rugged a female windling as you'll see outside of the military. The occasional ork or troll who finds the words "rugged" and "windling" amusing when put together should know that a conversation I overheard indicated that she actually did see service with the Throalic Scout Corps during the Theran War. Her old unit mates still drop by every now and then to catch up on events. As well, she keeps a half dozen friends of various races on hand as reinforcements in case of trouble. There rarely is sufficient cause for Hattri to call them out, though, as she keeps a cynical eye on the main room and the bar most of the day, and prefers to stop trouble while

it's still small. This means a quiet place to have a meal, an ale and collect your notes. I spent several enjoyable evenings in the Serpent's common room, writing this record, relatively undisturbed. There was the one fellow who tried to collect a gambling debt, and was about to reach for his dagger to emphasize his demand, when one of Hattri's assistants clipped the miscreant across the back of the skull with a sap and tossed his unconscious body out the door. There were no further incidents the remainder of the week.

Meals here are ample, though they can be somewhat monotonous. I have a sneaking suspicion that Hattri's cook is yet another of her old military acquaintances. It has been my experience that military kitchens can take the best ingredients, the choicest cuts of meat and the most delicate herbs, and produce something indistinguishable from unsalted porridge. While the food here is not that tasteless, it certainly lacks variety. The prices, though, are very reasonable. A tight budget can produce a remarkable tolerance for plain fare.

The rooms are utilitarian, lacking in decoration, but spotlessly clean. The locks on the doors are not only stout, but I strongly suspect enchanted as well. Room prices run a bit less than Guild standards, but a bit more than an average hostel. Services available include valet, laundry and repair of weapons and armor. Private dining rooms are available, but not advertised. The bathing facilities are somewhat lacking, having no hot water and no attendants.

Overall, while the Feathered Serpent does not measure up to the Guild level, it does meet high standards for security of guests and their belongings, and provides good value for the coin.

Three Foxes

A relative newcomer to the city, J'hork Cablebraider established Three Foxes only five years ago. The massive troll, a former Sky Raider, claims he got thoroughly sick of the mountains and of the raiding life. He told me that he wished to settle down and spend the rest of his days gazing across long, flat expanses and doing nothing more strenuous than doing the accounts, pouring ale and breaking up the occasional barfight. There are few of those in his hostel, most people being intimidated sufficiently by J'hork and the huge crystal axe he keeps on the wall behind the bar.

The inn stands three stories high, the first being of stone and the remaining two wooden, the upper windows giving a good view of the lake and the town despite the iron bars across each opening. The Hall of Justice is somewhat distant, but not that far, and the Questors maintain a high presence. I suppose the life of a sky raider makes one cautious about defense of the home.

While the food is simple, even plain, the portions are troll-sized and the prices fair for the quantity. J'hork's ale varies according to who offered him the best deal on the last caravan, but is never bad. He told me that he would never serve anything he wouldn't drink himself. Apparently sky raiders, or at least this particular one, have decent taste when it comes to ale.

Room prices are commensurate with a decent inn, although less than Guild standards. There is no bathhouse. I was directed to the lake and told where I could obtain soap and a towel.

A rumor floating about is that J'hork either came here fleeing something terrible, or looking for someone remarkable. In either case, the rumor says that he is looking for the right person to whom to give his axe, to complete some sort of task. Plying the troll with his own ale did not loosen his tongue on the subject. Indeed, I am certain that no amount of ale could suffice to render J'hork incautious.

On the Populace

Like their dwellings, the people of the city do not settle for anything quiet about their persons. Ornate chains and cuffs are worn about wrists, ankles, necks, waists. Ears and other locations are pierced for jewels. Every finger has a ring. Clothing is elaborate, designs woven in, painted or embroidered on. Skin is painted as well, tatooing being considered too unchangeable, too permanent for anything but clan markings, marriage emblems and other symbols kept for life. Every accessory is tooled, chased, engraved. All of this finery certainly presents a grave temptation for thieves. However, the emphasis there is upon the word "grave". The laws of the city are derived largely from the Code of the Dinganni, which has absolutely no tolerance for thieves. See my comments on Law further on in this record.

The population is predominately human and dwarven, with a scattering of orks including scorchers and settled craftsfolk and merchants. Windlings, trolls, elves and obsidimen are few, and t'skrang are practically nonexistent. The city's being so far from the nearest river might explain their absence.

Shortly after my arrival, I had gone wandering through the city to take in a first impression, when a colorfully-dressed old human woman beckoned me over to her red-draped stall. Recognizing a fortune-seller when I saw one, I prepared to part with a few coppers in exchange for some vague predictions about long journeys in strange lands.

Instead, "You are a scholar," she said, pouring black tea into gaudy red and yellow cups. "The different and the new draw you like a bee to pollen." She offered me fruit jelly for my tea. After a sip, I gratefully accepted. A mouse could have strolled across that brew without fear of sinking.

"I am that," I agreed. "What else can you tell me?"

Brushing a stray wisp of grey from her wrinkled face with a bejewelled, arthritic hand, she fixed me with a stare that must have sent hundreds reaching for their purses, certain that here was one who could tell them all, predict every act, warn of every danger and guide them to their greatest possible fortune. I stayed my hand, but felt a touch of frost up my spine.

"The red banner brings safety," she murmured, her voice deeper, rougher, maybe echoing a little. "The yellow banner brings pain, but with it, knowledge. You do not judge now, but once you threw stones. You will see the Golden Isle itself, and return to Throal before you die. Beware the dragon's wings, and be guided by the eye of the falcon."

She leaned back then, sipped her tea, hands wrapped closely around the handleless cup for the warmth, and favored me with a nearly toothless grin. "And if you keep going down this street to the farrier's tent, the one with the blue and yellow stripes, then turn left and find the stall with the sign of the fish, you'll be in for an excellent meal. My cousin makes the best veroniki on the plains."

I grinned at that. We spoke briefly about other sights in the city, I paid her fee and went on my way. As far as her other predictions, I don't know, but the veroniki were indeed excellent. And it is true, I try not to judge what I see, to write it down fairly. And I served with a catapult platoon in the war against Thera. It leaves one to wonder.

About the Government

Anghali G'Hosteren has no real government to speak of. Lacking most municipal services, such as road maintenance, street lighting and fire prevention, there are no taxes, and no administration to handle services and revenue. There are, however, city guards of a sort. As stated earlier, each signatory to the treaties that established the trading point sends Questors of Mynbruje to the city to enforce the minimal laws.

The Questors are supported by their respective tribes. Gifts and donations to the Hall of Mynbruje are accepted, but are carefully considered as to whether or not they are intended to influence the judgement of the Questors. Anything even remotely resembling a bribe is flatly refused.

About the Law

The laws of Anghali G'Hosteren are simple and straightforward, like the Code of the Dinganni that formed their basis. Most of the city laws can be summed up in a few sentences:

1. Thievery will not be tolerated. Any Name-Giver caught stealing may be held for judgement. The penalty may range from a period of enforced work to exile to death.
2. Harming another Name-Giver is forbidden. Fighting in the city streets is not allowed. Vengeance pacts and blood feuds may not be pursued within the city. The penalty for killing a Name-giver in the city may range from payment of blood price to death.
3. Water being a necessity for life, no Name-giver will deliberately or through carelessness damage the lake. Access to the lake and to its water shall not be restricted, blocked or in any way denied.

Questors of Mynbruje from all treaty signatories patrol the city. They can command the help of any signatory tribe as needed, to arrest a lawbreaker, to carry out a penalty, or to assist them in the general performance of their duties. In practice, the questors expect the help of anyone in the city to be available, and become highly irritable when a non-signatory protests the demands.

In practice, the Questors become irritable over pretty much anything. I suppose if I were spending my life riding herd on a lot of fractious horse-traders, I'd be a bit grumpy too.
-- MTekele Cloudrunner

Now, just because the city is neutral and heavily policed does not mean that it is quiet. When you set up a trading point and bring rival tribes to it, intrigue breeds faster than horseflies. The city is a hotbed of spies and information merchants. A great deal of hiring is done here for illicit purposes, a lot of pay is delivered for disreputable actions. Anghali is a reasonably safe venue for making hazardous deals with dangerous people. Every so often, bodies are found when deals go bad, but the Questors are relentless and find the guilty parties more often than not. Most of the time, when the guilty are not brought to justice by the Questors, it is because they left town abruptly after the deed, and their absence points to their probable guilt. If they ever return, they will be questioned. The Questors have long memories.

Concerning Business

The principal trade derives from the horse fairs, when the new foals are brought to market. Not only horses are brought in, however. All manner of riding mounts are offered for sale, ranging from mules to thundra beasts to the occasional griffin. As well, beasts are not the only things traded.

The wandering tribes trade for metalwork and other finished goods, as well as delicacies that they cannot grow or find out on the plains. They offer wool, butter, cheese, smoked meat, and other products from their flocks of sheep and goats, as well as products of their craftspeople -- cloth, carved bone and wood, sturdy and colorful clothing, musical instruments, jewelry, and a host of other items too many to list here. While preferring to trade their products for useful items, the nomadic tribes are no strangers to honest coin.

As well, other merchants and craftsfolk have taken up residence in the city. As mentioned earlier, folk whose trade requires tools that are not easily portable have set up shops along the Street of Merchants. The air rings with the sounds of hammers, drills, augers, and shouting voices insisting that their products are better than any other. Not only metalworkers, but tanners, leatherworkers, scribes, food-sellers and others may be found here. A traveller passing through should have no trouble meeting any of his needs -- providing, of course, that he has sufficient coin.

During the horse fairs, the city does a thriving trade. In between, however, is when the wise do their shopping. During the slow times, the merchants are a little more eager to please, a

little more anxious to make a sale that will help see them through to the next fair. Haggling for a fair price is not necessarily easier, but is certainly different when the merchant is looking at lean times and has longer to conclude the sale before going on to the next customer.

There being no taxes in the city, prices tend to be a bit lower than elsewhere. Some merchants, however, make regular donations to the Hall of Mynbruje or to other Passions and causes, and will tack on a surcharge to help support their patron. Checking for images of the Passions around the shop will help to warn the buyer of the possibility of higher prices.

North Horse-Ring

The arena to the north of the Hall of Mynbruje bears special mention, if for no other reason than its being the oldest in the city, and the most popular. Even in the off season, the ring sees a great deal of activity as an exercise yard, so much so that the ring owner, Burthold Govint, a dwarf from Vivane, posts a schedule on the gate as to when it is available and to whom.

During the horse-fairs, this ring sees the best of the stock brought in to trade. Food-sellers and other merchants cluster near the gates, and a lively time is had by all.

I suppose it may have something to do with the success of the ring and some Name-givers being jealous thereof. Any time that one person is more prosperous than his neighbors, whispers begin. Burthold does not help his reputation by being inaccessible except through layers of assistants, and reclusive in his own person. There are rumors, though, concerning the original source of his moneys, that they came from a looted kaer, one that may still have been inhabited, or from illicit deals in horseflesh, or from other unpleasant sources. None of these are substantiated, and I include this mention only because the rumors are so prevalent and persistent.

I was able to verify one peculiar incident. On the first night of the month, during the time I spent in Anghali, Burthold and two of his assistants from the horse-ring, formidable-looking ork fellows, former scorchers from what I was told, took a foal down to the edge of the lake during the night. They dragged the protesting colt up to the edge of a cliff overlooking the still water, then hurled the young animal off the rocks into the lake. It swam for a moment, after surfacing, then abruptly vanished beneath the surface and did not reappear. I cannot reveal the Name of the witness to this senseless and barbaric act, but can attest to the reliability of same. There being no penalty for slaying your own beasts, no investigation is likely in the near future.

Schools and Collegia

There is only one school in the city, a literacy academy run by Varzil the Scribe out of the back of his shop. He teaches written Throalic to the children of the city and to anyone else

who cares to pay his fee. Varzil has his shop at the northeastern end of the Street of Merchants, a large establishment for a scribe, even one who runs a school. I did find it odd that an ork scorcher would be attending his classes, and in the middle of the night, but thought that discretion was the better part of keeping mind and body together, and so did not ask about his late lessons. Apparently the school keeps whatever hours the customer desires.

Tarliman is usually sharper than this. Did he really miss the obvious, that this Varzil fellow is one of those information merchant types he spoke of earlier, or was he concerned about someone hearing of his observations?
-- Jerrik Tavry

Food and Entertainment

After two weeks of trail rations and Vorst cookery, Anghali was a true delight for the palate. I must confess that I have perhaps overdone it a bit -- my belt needs another notch cut to fit comfortably. It is so easy to indulge oneself, though, with so much good food so readily available.

Vorst cooking fills the belly without slowing the arm or distracting the mind. Food is meant as sustenance, not as entertainment.
-- Hosten Shivak, guard to Tarliman Joppos

Perhaps a brief review of the regional specialties would be in order before discussing the establishments which serve them. Like so much of Barsaive, the time spent in the kaers without influence from other peoples and traditions has resulted in the people of the area developing their own cuisine. Anghali has its particular styles and dishes, those of the tribes who wander the region, but also new inventions resulting from these varied traditions being brought together in a cosmopolitan environment.

Primary spices used in the regional cooking traditions include garlic, pepper and vinegar, and the cuisine leans toward heavily spiced foods. I suspect an orkish hand in this, as orkish cookery tends to be similar. On the other hand, pepper and vinegar are decent preservatives, and will also cover up the taste of foods that are beginning to be dubious. That may explain their prevalence. Whatever the reason, the menu will tend to include a lot of peppered meat and pickled vegetables, occasionally spiced with hot peppers as well.

The dish that is perhaps best known is of course veroniki. These are small dumplings, deep fried and served in a variety of ways. As a meal, the filling is meat or vegetables, or a combination of the two, usually quite spicy and served with a light sauce, put on just before serving so that the crisp dumplings do not become soggy. As a dessert, the dumplings are filled with clotted cream or honeyed fruit and sprinkled with sweet spices. Travellers should be aware that these are quite filling, and what looked to be a dreadfully small portion may turn out to be more than can be consumed.

Another dessert that tends to stay with one for some time are medivnyki, honey cakes made with t'skrang spices. The sharpness of the kustiss prevents the honeyed wheat from cloying. Dried fruit is mixed into these when available.

No wonder he had to let out his belt. I'm gaining weight just reading this!
-- MTekele Cloudrunner

The nomadic tribes normally grill or roast their meat over an open fire, or boil it into stews. However, they prefer a different approach when in cities. There, meat is breaded with egg and herbed breadcrumbs, then fried. While a bit greasy, the result is quite tasty. Of course, this is a bit more expensive than a basic stew, and the latter is available for travellers with a smaller purse.

A useful word in Anghali is zakushi, meaning roughly "small bites". I do not know the origin of this term, but it is one that travellers seeking serious dining experiences should know. Zakushi are small portions of finger foods served on a platter set out in the center of the table. What is found on the platter varies from one establishment to the next, and from day to day, but is never dull. Zakushi range from sweet to spicy, from mild to blazing hot, and are fried, baked, rolled, stuffed, broiled, sauteed -- even raw. Beware of the hot pickled turnip, small off-white wedges with traces of purple rind and speckled with red. Two tankards of dwarven stout were required to kill the flames.

Blue Brithan

Located at the eastern end of the Street of Merchants, close by to the Hall of Mynbruje, Blue Brithan serves primarily Elven cuisine and Elven versions of regional specialties. Zidrian Kmed, the owner and chief chef, is one of the most dour Elven women I have ever met. The pattern of scars across the left side of her face and across her hands are strongly reminescent of a cousin of mine who tangled with a bramble bush. She refuses to discuss her origins and brusquely dismisses any advance from Name-givers who find her attractive.

Fortunately, her sour attitude does not extend to her work in the kitchen. Her restaurant is by far the best in the city, as far as quality and skill of preparation. Many of the city's top merchants and senior Questors dine here on a regular basis. Prices are steep, but the experience and the company is certainly worth it.

One word of caution: Blood elves should avoid this place. The last one who tried to get a table was chased out of the restaurant by Zidrian herself, waving a meat cleaver and shouting obscenities in Sperethiel. The Questors advised her that while she could refuse service to anyone she chose, they would prefer that she use words alone and leave the carving tools in the kitchen.

Sign of the Fish

Actually, this place does not have a formal Name. Apparently the old woman who owns it comes from a tradition that holds it unlucky to Name a business such as this. Some of the nomadic peoples believe that Naming a place of trade binds one to the spot, interfering with the normal course of wandering. However, there has to be a way to identify the establishment, and so the proprietress has hung out a shingle in the form of a very lifelike fish, carved and painted to look as if it had just leapt out of the water and hung suspended before splashing back into its home. The locals refer to the place indirectly, out of respect to the owner, calling it the stall with the sign of the fish.

As I related earlier, the veroniki here are indeed marvelous. Light, flaky crust, and served either spicy-hot with sausage filling or piercingly sweet with fruit, they make the search for the tiny shop worth the while. The stall has little frontage on the street, and only six tables, squeezed in between the open front and the counter where the old woman rolls out her dough. A great deal of the neighborhood seems to pass through here during mealtimes, when seats at the tables are impossible to get, and carry off the major portion of the daily batch. During those times, the gossip flies thick and furious, as everyone who comes in trades the latest news in the few minutes between placing their order and leaving with their meal, packed in a small fried-flour bowl.

The second day I was there, the old woman (whose Name I never did learn) was in the middle of a blazing row when I walked in. The other disputant was an obsidiman, which struck my attention, in worn and threadbare magicker's robes. The subject seemed to be the nature of some sort of spirit that dwelled in the lake, and whether or not it was angry, disturbed or about to leave. I didn't catch enough of the argument to know the whole of the matter, and the debate switched abruptly to a variant of the obsidiman racial dialect when they realized I was there. I did catch the word for Horror, though, and the word for deep or bottom, when the magicker was pointing out toward the lake. No one I questioned seemed to know anything about such a situation, or was willing to talk about it if they did.

Music and Dancing

Music is a major part of life for the nomadic tribes of the region. They sing while travelling, both to pass the time and to teach their children. They chant while riding into battle. The evenings usually see instruments produced, drums, flutes, stringed instruments and native inventions.

The last includes the kirila, a long, slender tube with a reed at one end and holes along the body. The instrument is played by placing the reed in the mouth and blowing, producing sound from the vibration of the reed, and is fingered like a flute. Its sound is surprisingly mellow, like the deep-throated call of a water bird. As well, there is a variant known as the kirillin, a set of kirila-like pipes connected to a leather bag (usually the stomach of a sheep), with a separate tube for blowing into the bag to inflate it. Most of the pipes are left to drone a single note, their reeds being driven by air pumped from the bag. A single pipe off the bottom is fingered to produce the tune. The sound is far stranger than the kirila, an eerie, haunting moan overlaid with the wild skirling of the higher-pitched tune-pipe. I hesitate to

think what a troubador could do with one of those instruments in battle.

Anghali has no music halls, and few taverns with a stage or even a hearth with space for a bard, but it really has no need of such. During the evenings, the sound of rival clans announcing themselves with their sept anthems, and the fast, high, wailing dance-tunes of the tribes echo over the tents and through the dusty streets. The jingling of bells at the wrists and ankles of the dancers and tambourines, the skirling of the kirillin and the quick, intricate strumming of the stringed instruments blend into an overall rhythm that sets the pulse racing. As a farmer once said to me, why buy a cow when you get milk for free?

Trade, good food, music, and plenty of sources of information. What more could a dwarven scholar ask for? I may very well settle here in my old age.
-- Tarliman Joppos

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Tarliman Joppos is a visiting scholar from the Bardic Collegium in Urupa. In the course of his studies, he became fascinated with the phenomenon of cities, how they develop, how they grow and change, and the effects of gathering so many Name-givers into one place. He has become an expert in this line of study, the science of cities and large populations, expanding the scope of the field substantially. I am pleased to incorporate his works into the Hall of Records, and to assign him a seat as Scholar of City Lore and field researcher for the Guide to Barsaive. I feel that his insights into the structure of Barsaive's cities will be an important addition to our work in documenting our world.

-- Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records, Kingdom of Throal, in an open letter to the Scholars of the Hall and to his majesty, Varulus III, king of Throal

On the Origins of Ardatha

Shimmering like a jewel on the northwestern shore of Lake Ban, Ardatha stands as a symbol of what can be accomplished in the post-Scourge world. Originally conceived of a mere fifty years ago, its origins lie with a consortium of merchants who sought to create a major port of trade at a strategic point, without the disorganized sprawl that resulted from the lack of planning at Bartertown. Learning from its example, the consortium planned out the entire city, from the layout of its streets to the location of social venues, using a new concept they called designated zones. In this idea, areas of the city would be designated ahead of time for specific purposes, some places for shops, others for residences, government offices and for recreational facilities such as playhouses and music halls. The city would be laid out across a large area to provide for wide streets and an open, airy feel, so vital to the recovery of the spirit after so many generations in the kaers.

So the people of several kaers, who had established villages in the area, were approached by the merchants' consortium, with the idea of building the city. The villagers proved receptive to the idea, not only of creating a trading port on the lakeshore, but also of creating a city that could recapture some of the past glory of Barsaive, and that would be wholly of Barsaive, with no Theran influence in the architecture, the design or the work. The name "Ardatha," incidentally,

comes from the old High Throalic meaning "New Port." The merchants, together with questors of Upandal, drew up the plans for the site, where the streets would lie, how the piping for the fountains and the public water facilities would be laid, the arrangement of the docks, and what areas would be designated for what use. They presented their plans to the people of the kaers, and, with the usual wrangling that accompanies any project involving more than one person, the plans were approved and construction began.

Ardatha today is a tribute to the skill and the Passion-granted inspiration of its designers. The city is open and inviting, giving welcome to all with honest trade to pursue. The rate of theft and robbery is low, compared to cities such as Bartertown and Kratas, and the health of the people good. No Horrors thus far have passed by the vigilance of the watch and the boaters, more about both of which in a little.

On the Layout of the City

Ardatha stretches out across the base of a peninsula, extending from the north-western shore of Lake Ban, between the influx of the Serpent and Coil Rivers. This placement puts the city in an optimum location for trade, and offers a lengthy shoreline for the expansion of the docks as trade increases.

Center Shantaya's Sextant on Throal and align point phi on the Elf Queen's Palace. Sight along point daleth. Follow Chorrolis at sunrise. Ardatha lies 9 days ride, 14 days walk from Throal.

Currently, the city occupies only the first third of the peninsula, and extends inland for a short distance. Docks have been constructed on both sides of the peninsula, for boats arriving from the direction of each river, and will eventually meet in the middle as more docks are built down the shoreline.

The **Dockside** district is comprised of the docks themselves and the area between the two stretches. Warehouses, offices of cargo agents, hostels maintained by shipping lines for boat crews and bars take up most of the area. Many of the structures in Dockside are of lower quality than the rest of the city, as the buildings were put up hurriedly to get trade started at the port, with the intention of replacing them with more permanent structures once the city was established. Unfortunately, now that trade is brisk, it has become difficult to replace the buildings, as there is the problem of where to put everything. Nobody wants to halt their business while their old building is pulled down and a new one is put up. The Council has been arguing this problem for over fifteen years now, with no end in sight. In the meantime, Dockside lives in fear of fire, as there are not enough residents to keep a fire brigade on every street, and many of the structures are in violation of the fire codes, ramshackle wooden buildings leaning against each other and roofed with thatch. Rumor has it that a thief adept has set up a guild hall in one of the warehouses, and is training others in his Discipline. Certainly, the boaters have been watching foot traffic in the area very closely, especially at night.

The **Merchants' Quarter** lies next to Dockside, consisting of warehouses for goods in transit into and out of the city, offices of trading consortia, the Merchants Guild hall, and a number of taverns where most of the business actually gets done. The public squares in the merchants' quarter also see a good deal of business transacted. Many traders use their offices only for records storage and

clerks, and make all of their deals in the squares and taverns, and at the docks. The offices tend to be in two and three story buildings, the taverns are normally two stories as none of them have rooms for the night and only about half have private meeting rooms, and the warehouses are the usual massive barns. Some of the merchant consortia maintain hostels for their people, but these are not open to the public. Rooms for the night for the casual traveller lie either in Dockside (for the adventurous) or in the city center (for the more affluent). A good number of adventurers and mercenaries have found work guarding caravans and shipments for Ardathan merchants. While the consortia maintain their own guard forces, there are always sudden opportunities, losses or unexpected events that stretch the in-house forces thin. Many taverns along the border of the Merchants' Quarter with Dockside serve as unofficial hiring halls, providing work for someone in the right place at the right time with the right Talents.

Beyond the Merchants' Quarter is the **city center**. Here, the planners located the governmental offices, the most commonly-visited shops, and the social venues _ music halls, playhouses and the like. This area is hardly ever quiet, as during the day it bustles with the activity of the city's officials, in the evening the music halls open their doors, and through the night the taverns and inns do a thriving business. The better inns are located here. If the traveller's purse permits it, there are establishments of the finest quality, not only Guild inns, but places where a personal valet is available with the suite. The Guild inns themselves are notable examples of their type, providing locks on their rooms, bathhouses, laundry service, and numerous other amenities.

To the east are the more esoteric shops, places that are useful to have but are not frequented on a daily basis. The traveller with a large purse is recommended to visit the Street of the Gemcutters, where precious stones from all over Barsaive are worked into exquisite jewelry. For the less wealthy, there is the Street of the Spice-Dealers, a treat for the nose, or the Street of the Weavers, where finely-made cloth is on display. Also located in the East End are the residences of some of the merchants and tradesmen.

The west end of the city is normally downwind, and thus was reserved for the less pleasant trades. Tanners, glue-makers, smiths, and other trades that create a nuisance with smells, noise or smoke are located in this area. The residences here are those of the tradesmen and those who in general cannot afford to live elsewhere. The watch maintains a heavy presence here, but nonetheless, most of the criminal acts in the city occur in the west end. The traveller is advised to keep one hand on his purse and the other on a weapon, and not to pass through alone or at night.

The northern end of town boasts the largest residences, those of the most successful merchants and tradesmen, as well as the city officials. Many of the estates here have private guards, as well as magickal defenses. Gaining an invitation to the private social functions held here is a true mark of having achieved a place in Ardathan society.

Appearance of the City

Ardatha has stringent laws to prevent fire from sweeping through the city. No building may touch another, with the exception of storage sheds for tradesmen's shops, and even those must be set apart if they contain highly combustible goods, such as oil or wood. All roofs must be made of slate or tile, to be resistant to sparks. No building may be constructed of over half wood, and stone is preferred. Fire brigades are organized on each block, and drilled regularly to keep them able to

deal with a fire should one occur. There have been numerous small fires in the city over its forty-year history, but none have taken more than one building.

As a result of the fire laws, Ardatha is a city of open space. Nowhere does one feel closed in or penned, such as happens in Bartertown. As well, even the poorest of dwellings have stout walls and a decent roof. Visitors soon become used to the nightly shouts of "Fire!" and learn to check for sound and heat from the flames before becoming concerned -- the city employs illusionists to cast visions of infernos, and reduce the flames accordingly as the brigade deals with the situation.

At each intersection, there is a public square. In the merchants' quarter and the west end, these are usually taken up with a few benches and a stone table or two, sometimes with a game board inscribed in the top. In the city center and the east end, a few squares have fountains, decorated with sculpture by Ardathan artists. There are also small parks in some of the squares, although these are more prevalent in the north end. Entertainers and travelling artists find these parks a congenial place to pursue their trades, so music and exhibitions of painting, sculpture, small weaving, embroidery, and other arts are a common happening. As well, numerous enterprising food-sellers have built small carts equipped with preserver and cold chests, grills and stoves, and offer a variety of fresh-cooked or preserved edibles.

> *One could easily grow fat in this city.*
>
> -- Kern Redhand

> *Only with a heavy purse. The Ardathan diet may make lean persons fat, but it will make a fat purse lean.*
>
> -- Tarliman Joppos

The citizenry tend to gather in the public squares at the noon hour for their meal, and spend the time discussing the latest events and the evening's expected presentations at the playhouses and music halls.

The overall impression the traveller has of Ardatha is busy. There are so many shops, so many people, all thronging the streets, crying their wares from the doors and from carts and tables set up in the squares, music from bards on the streetcorners and in the halls, that it is easy for the newcomer to become overwhelmed and stand still in the middle of the street, trying to make sense of it all. The watch are accustomed to this, and will gently guide the confused person to a quieter area and ask politely if they need assistance. Once acclimated, though, Ardatha is an intensely vital place. In few other places does one truly grasp the feeling that the Scourge is over, that life will not be denied, and that the spirits of the Name-givers are still strong.

Lodging

Only a few words need be said concerning accomodations for the night, plus the inclusion of notes

on a few establishments to frequent or avoid. As has been said earlier, rooms for the night are available at inns in Dockside and the city center. Dockside inns are rarely of Guild quality. Those that do have the Guild mark are constantly in peril of losing it from complaints to the Guild. A traveller who stays at one of these had best be part of a large, well-armed group and keep a close watch on his valuables. The inns at the city center are rarely below Guild quality, frequently above. The traveller with sufficient coin may enjoy the services of a personal valet, dine in his room with the meals delivered, and avail himself of the attentions of the finest courtesans with no fear of theft or worse.

Crown and Swan, city center: Bogaman Tiltshield, a charming man who belies the notion that all orks are hostile and rude, maintains his Guild mark with scarce a complaint. His bathhouse is immaculate, laundry service is available to take dirty clothing from the bather and deliver it clean to the room, and the bath atendants are attentive without overstepping the boundaries of propriety. The food is excellent, if a trifle expensive, and the ale is from the Scorbin brewery. The common room usually has a minstrel in for the evening, and a dart board hangs beside the fireplace. Expect to pay the usual Guild rates for rooms. A bath without attendant is one silver, with attendant is five. Oils and unguents are provided with no extra charge. Meals tend to run in the middle to upper middle range as far as cost.

Fir Tree, city center: Luxury is the watchword. This is a first-class inn from foundations to peak. Valets will assist the traveller with his luggage from the street to his room, and remain if payment is arranged. The stable has its own animal healer and blacksmith. The common room is done in the style of a parlor, and does not offer meals. The dining hall serves its full menu at all hours, requiring notice for parties over ten and specialty dishes. The Gorliss family has owned and operated Fir Tree since its construction, and never once failed to make every possible effort to ensure the satisfaction and contentment of their guests. The traveller will of course pay handsomely for this level of service.

On the Populace

The approximate population of Ardatha at the time of this writing is 25,000. This is according to the tax rolls, and is not accurate, as it does not include children born in the last year, those who for various reasons (usually poverty) pay no taxes, and transients, such as boat crews. However, even adjusting for these factors, Ardatha still comes out roughly half the size of Bartertown. It sprawls across just as much land, perhaps more, but is much less densely inhabited.

The city is largely human, due to the kaers involved in the initial construction being derived from pre-Scourge human villages. However, there is a good representation of all the Name-giver races, obsidimen merchant consortia, elven artists and scholars, orks and trolls with jobs as heavy laborers or positions with the watch or the boaters, t'skrang who prefer to live on land, a few windlings, and of course dwarves are found throughout Barsaive in great numbers. The large concentration of humans however contributes to the atmosphere of the city, an urge to haggle, a certain canniness and a tendency to try and get the best of others in a deal, as well as a vitality and urgency that is lacking in more serene elven and obsidimen-dominated communities. Some humans have moved to Ardatha from Urupa and Travar, to experience living in a city so heavily influenced by their kind.

About the Government

Ardatha is ruled by an elected Council, consisting of representatives from the city's districts and from the Guilds. By the city charter, the chair of the Council is held by the Merchants Guild, which appoints the chairperson for a period of two years. The chair may be recalled by a two-thirds vote of the general Council. This rarely happens.

Each Guild, including the Merchants Guild, elects two Council representatives from within its ranks. The city watch and the Harbor Patrol do likewise. Each district of the city, the east end, north end, west end, city center, merchants' quarter and dockside, elects two representatives by simple-majority popular vote of the taxpayers. Voting is checked agains the tax records to try and prevent fraud. However, if taxes continue to be paid after a person's death, that person's vote continues to be valid until the City Clerk reconciles the records of death with the tax rolls. Thus, it is possible to buy votes by paying the taxes for that name. This practice is winked at in the West End, where politics, like everything else, is sliding into corruption.

Each Councillor has one vote in the Council Chamber. The City Council sets taxes, collects and distributes revenue, proposes and ratifies laws, and generally sees to the daily operation of the city. Laws are passed through the City Court between proposal and ratification for review by the questors of Mynbruje, and frequently are revised and sent back to the Court many times before ratification. The chairperson of the Council has a vote only in the case of ties or lack of a clear majority on an issue. The chair also has authority to table an issue for further discussion, either on the Council floor or in committee, instead of casting a tie-breaking vote.

The chair for the last three terms is **Jiralee B'Tarev**, a clothing merchant who maintains a shop of tailors, a weaving and dying concern in the west end, and an import house at dockside to handle raw materials. Jiralee is a tall, graceful human woman with a good deal of charm and political instinct, adept at the art of bringing opposing parties to compromise. Her husband, Gortne, is currently a sitting Councillor in his own right, representing the Weavers Guild. The B'Tarevs live well out in the north end, and host a number of events throughout the year. They are known to grant money and supplies to the occasional questor of Jaspree. There have been rumbles lately about the B'Tarev's power. Some seem to feel that perhaps this family has become too powerful. Certainly, Ardathan Tales has satirized them viciously of late, requiring additional guards for the troupe and the theatre. No factions have done anything violent or overtly illicit as of yet, but surely it can only be a matter of time before something underhanded is perpetrated.

Rintok Flintheart, Councillor for the City Watch, is a grizzled ork with a long history of service to Ardatha. He started in the boaters, transferred to the city watch after taking a shoulder injury that slowed him down a bit, and rose through the ranks to assistant commander. He has been a representative to the Council for the past eight years. There are no signs that he will be leaving any time in the forseeable future. Rintok is a tough opponent in a debate, arguing strenuously for measures that secure the safety and freedom of the general populace while punishing lawbreakers harshly. He has successfully defended a number of appropriations for the watch. Rintok is married, with five children. Three are watchmen, one is a questor of Mynbruje and sits on the court in Dockside, and the last is an officer in the Throal military. Again, there have been rumbles about the establishment of dynasties and expressions of dissatisfaction.

Sey'tas'then of covenant Keshti was elected as Councillor from the Tavernkeepers Guild because he was charming, easy to get along with, and pliable _ or so the Guild thought. He'd owned a small pub down in Dockside for the past seven years, bought with profits from several voyages on his covenant's riverboat, and had never made waves in the Guild, always riding with the majority. When Kylara Toringay, Councillor for twelve years, decided to journey to the Blood Wood to join other elves trying to reclaim their kin from the Curse of the Thorns, the Guild looked for a yes-man to assign to her position until a new leader arose from within their ranks. The t'skrang Docksider seemed like a safe choice. Once confirmed in his position, though, Sey'tas'then proved to have been his own person all along. The canny t'skrang made a series of deals without the approval of the Guild, all of which went contrary to established Guild policies. However, every deal profited the Guild and its members terrifically, and a recall election was narrowly averted. Sey'tas'then remains a loose cannon on the Council, taking wild risks, throwing together unlikely coalitions, and managing to pull off most of his ventures with more profit than loss. He makes his own decisions, occasionally defying outright the wishes of the Guild membership, saying that an elected representative owes his constituency not only his representation but his judgement, and that he betrays their trust when he sacrifices that judgement to their opinion. The next election is in three months. It will be interesting to see if this wild card is kept in play, or even survives to the election. He has suffered four attempts on his life thus far, none of which resulted in arrests or even identification of his assailants.

Lintok G'Reshten grew up in the East End, second son of a scribe. In his early schooling, he was taught the history of Barsaive, and became fascinated with the idea that his people, the dwarves, had played such a pivotal role, guiding the province through the Scourge, setting the standards for law and social structure afterwards, and leading the resistance to the Therans in the War. Lintok wanted to know more, and more, and eventually apprenticed to Minten Thrax, a scholar in historical lore at the Bardic Collegium. Lintok advanced to a position as a lecturer, and took on students of his own, schooling the children in the East End. This endeared him to the community, as he was willing to hold classes in the evening, after the workday was over, freeing up the children to assist their parents in their shops. Four years ago, Lintok was approached by the East End consortium, and asked to serve as Councillor for his district. He has done a quiet, competent job representing his neighborhood. His decisions are conservative, his arguments well-thought if pedantic, and his relationships with other Councillors are cautious. He has not advanced the East End as far as Sey'tas'then has the Tavernkeepers Guild, but he has not taken such tremendous risks, nor gone against the wishes of his constituency. Lintok is likely to keep his seat for many years if he continues on his current course.

About the Law

The laws of Ardatha are based very closely on Throalic law, with a system of magistrates to hear complaints and judge transgressors, and a fair and equitable system that bases fines on ability to pay and fits the punishment to the crime. Thieves tend to be punished perhaps a little more harshly than in Throal, owing to the city's origin as a trading point and the continuing influence of the Merchants' Guild on the government.

Law enforcement falls to two organizations: the **City Watch**, known for obvious reasons as the **watchmen**, and the **Harbor Patrol**, known familiarly as the **boaters**. The watch patrols in pairs through the West End, the city center, the East End and the North End. The boaters patrol in

threes through the Merchants' Quarter and along the docks, and also make sweeps through the lake for nearly a mile in all directions.

The watch wear armor painted a brilliant red, with matching red tunics and breeches underneath. Their sigil is a black key on a silver shield, and is painted on the armor on the right breast and both pauldrons as well as over the brow on the helm. They carry truncheons for non-lethal combat, and may carry any weapon they like for situations where the truncheon proves insufficient. There are magickers numbered among the watch, who normally carry a stave rather than a truncheon. More than one would-be miscreant has been unpleasantly surprised by a watchman tossing a spell from a distance.

The watch in general are affable sorts, more interested in keeping order than in punishing every minor infraction of the law. It is said that if you are going to be involved in something disreputable, that it is better to be caught by the watch than by the boaters, for the boaters will drag you off to see a magistrate forthwith, but the watch will listen to an explanation, and may be persuaded to release the potential offender or reduce the seriousness of the charge if the explanation is reasonable or amusing enough.

The watch is largely composed of humans and dwarves, with the occasional elf or obsidiman, although some of the city's ork and troll inhabitants have found positions with the watch.

The Harbor Patrol wear leather armor for the most part, with a lining of cork both for padding and for buoyancy, although the boaters who keep watch in the Merchants' Quarter will frequently wear heavier gear, as they do not come near the water in their rounds. The boaters paint their armor a bright yellow that can be seen with ease on or in the water. Their sigil is a crossed gaff and harpoon, both silver, on a blue field, and is painted on the armor like the watch. As well, boater craft fly a flag with the sigil from the bow, and from the stern as well on the larger craft. The sigil is also worn as an enamelled pin over the left eye on the cocked hats that the boaters favor, both on and off duty.

As with the watch, the primary makeup of the boaters is human and dwarven, with a scattering of elves, orks and trolls. A large number of t'skrang also work for the boaters, most of them being followers or even questors of Mynbruje, who have taken positions among the boaters to see justice done on the water. T'skrang boaters are especially harsh on pirates and mutineers.

The responsibilities of the boaters include not only the defense of Dockside and the Merchants' Quarter from thieves, but from other hazards as well. Patrol boats sweep the harbor in an irregular pattern, searching for stray ufghanti, water elementals and other hazards to life and navigation. As well, long-range patrol craft regularly check the shoreline from the city all the way to the mouths of both the Serpent and the Coil, looking for nesting places of inimical creatures and traces of Horror taint. The watch keeps an eye on the forests beyond the city, but there are farming villages not far off that provide a defensive bulwark against invasion, making their task simpler. Because of the increased hazards to life and limb, the boaters are paid at a slightly higher rate than the watch. This does not cause as much friction as might be expected, as many people transfer between the two organizations each year, and there are always positions open in the ranks of the boaters for those who want higher pay and are willing to accept greater risk. The boaters have jurisdiction from the docks up to the edge of the Merchants' Quarter, although with that edge being somewhat ill-defined, there are occasional arguments as to who has charge of an offender.

Most of the time, jurisdiction along the edge of the quarter is determined by who got to the scene first. Since the two authorities generally get along well, many an offender has been amazed to see a watchman and a boater solve a jurisdictional dispute by arm-wrestling, dicing, or a complex system of favors owed and owing.

The Courts

To become a magistrate in Ardatha, the candidate must have been a resident for at least ten continuous years. (The initial magistrates were drawn from the villages that constructed the city.) Preferred qualifications include experience in the city watch, the boaters or the military; being a questor of Mynbruje; having experience as an advocate or clerk in the court system. Meeting the satisfaction of the Appointing Committee of the City Court, the candidate is recommended to the Judicial Committee of the Council for approval or rejection. If approved, the new magistrate takes an oath to Mynbruje and to the city, and takes a seat on a low court, to hear small claims and petty crimes. Advancement comes with experience. How far and how quickly a magistrate can rise in the system depends on how many decisions stand and how many are changed by higher courts, and upon openings being available in higher positions. Politics within the court system of course is involved.

The City Court is the highest legal authority in Ardatha. It can only be overruled by royal decree from Throal, which has not happened in the history of the city. Five magistrates make up the Administrative Committee, which oversees the day to day operations of the court system. They have in their charge maintenance of the buildings, appointing and training of bailiffs, and handling of court monies. The Review Committee consists of nine magistrates, who decide on the appropriateness and consistency with previous decisions of cases appealed from the high courts, as well as new laws passed to them from the Council. The Appointing Committee has seven members, who select magistrates for advancement and candidates for positions within the court.

Below the City Court are the high courts, there being one high court for each district, and each court having three magistrates. Cases are heard before a single magistrate. Only in the Review Committee of the City Court are cases heard before a panel. Crimes involving loss of life, gross damage to property, commerce or reputation, and civil cases involving more than 5000 gold are heard in the high courts. As well, any decision made in a low court may be appealed to a high court. The case is heard over again in the high court, and the low court's ruling may be set aside, changed or confirmed. The side ruled against may appeal to the Review Committee.

The low courts hear cases of petty crimes, those involving no loss of life, and crimes and civil cases involving less than 5000 gold. A single magistrate sits on each low court. There is one low court for every 500 taxpayers in a district. A new court is created only when there are over 250 taxpayers over the boundary for an entire year. Currently, there are nine in Dockside, six in the Merchant's Quarter, eight in West End, seven in East End, five in the city center and four in North End.

Concerning Business in Ardatha

The city's primary reason for existing is commerce. The government is primarily controlled by the

merchants and tradesmen. Business is the lifeblood of Ardatha. Making deals is a way of life.

Many goods and services are available here, but let the buyer beware: the Ardathans are shrewd bargainers, and while they are for the most part honest, they are in business for their own profit, and will try to make each deal to their own advantage. Business agents are available for hire, professional hagglers who will make an advantageous deal for their client in return for a percentage of the profit. Again, let the buyer beware. Hiring the first agent met at dockside may result in more profit for the agent than for the client. The wise traveller compares fees, percentages and reputations before making a commitment.

There are banks, called accounting houses, developed during the Scourge when it was inconvenient to coin money. Many traders and merchants use them for convenience. Out of town drafts are held until payment arrives, which can take several days. Only the largest houses have magical communications to verify drafts.

Most of the shops open in the early morning, not long after sunrise, and close shortly before the evening meal. Some shops, especially those near entertainment facilities and specializing in luxury goods, will remain open into the evening, but may open later in the day. Tradesmen's shops and merchant shops tend to keep the same hours. Very few shops will close for the noon meal. Journeymen will keep the shop going while the master dines. Many people will browse the shops during the noon mealtime, and return shortly before closing to make their purchases, having spent the afternoon considering what they have seen and comparing the offerings in different shops.

Schools and Collegia

The East End is the home of the **Bardic Collegium of Ardatha**, a private college owned by the Bards Guild. Its primary focus is on the training of troubadour adepts, but any citizen with the silver may take most of the courses offered. History, mathematics, botany, composition, musical and theatrical performance are only a few of the studies which may be pursued. The Bardic Collegium was founded ten years after the city proper, and has gained a good reputation in eastern Barsaive for turning out a well-rounded bard.

There is also a **Healers Collegium** in the East End, which accepts any who wish to learn, and asks only that they pay what they can. Questors of Garlen are the primary teachers here, who seek to heal the sick and injured that they cannot reach personally by passing on the knowledge of healing that any person can use. Students of this Collegium frequently travel to other cities or to distant villages to practice their art. Again, the college is not very old, a scant thirty years, but its reputation is spreading. Some of the leading citizens of Ardatha have made gifts to the school to help keep it in operation. The collegium maintains a hall of healing that, like the college, only asks that its patients pay what they are able, and turns none away.

Smaller schools exist throughout the city, for the teaching of children. Many of these are run by the Scribes Guild, and teach literacy in Throalic and a few basic knowledges for no charge, being supported by tithes from Guild members. Trades are learned of course through apprenticeship. Private tutors are available for a fee. These individuals will often hold positions at the Bardic Collegium or be able to be contacted through that institution. Calling at the Scribes Guild can also be useful for engaging a private tutor.

On the Entertainment District

The Ardathans believe in enjoying life, and as such have devoted a large area in the city center to entertainment facilities. Some of these are businesses, and are managed for a profit, while others are city property, supported by taxation, and are open without further cost.

Playhouses

Playhouses are owned and operated by either a promoter or an actors' consortium. There are five playhouses in operation at the time of this writing, three of which are privately owned and two of which are run by consortia. All five deal with the public in the same basic way (with the exception of Odd Bits); the differences in ownership and management approach are normally visible only behind the scenes.

A simple chart would be useful here to compare the facilities and productions of each:

Name	*Seating*	*Price*	*Style*	*Ensemble*
Kylar's Drama Hall	100	4s	History, tragedy	6 leads, 15 supporters, 12 musicians
Ardathan Tales	75	4s	Satire, comedy	4 leads, 10 supporters, 6 musicians
Hall of Heroes	150	2.5s	Adventures	7 leads, 18 supporters, 20 musicians
Odd Bits	50	3s	Experimental	4 leads, 9 supporters, musicians as needed
The Last Theatre	75	3s	Repertory	5 leads, 12 supporters, 8 musicians

Kylar Ashgreth, owner of **Kylar's Drama Hall**, is an enterprising dwarf who made his original money in cargo speculation. He saw an opportunity early in the construction of the city, bought up a section of land across from the Council Hall, and had his playhouse built. He maintains a staff of three historians to research and write the plays that are presented, approximately one each month for the first twenty days. The last days of the month are used for rehearsal, stage and costume design, and other preparations for the next month's production. Kylar oversees each historical production himself for accuracy. The tragic productions are normally plays written in Throal or Urupa, and are selected with a critical eye, to balance them with the histories. Kylar does not put up with arrogant lead actors, and has been known to substitute an understudy on opening night when an actor threw one tantrum too many. His ensemble is padded out with stagehands and apprentices from the Bardic Collegium for crowd scenes.

Ardathan Tales presents satirical works based on current events in the city. Travellers generally do not find the productions as amusing as native Ardathans. The playhouse is owned jointly by three investors, who divide the labor of running the operation, conferring among themselves frequently to confirm their decisions. Hestin Jesserel, a human, is a dealer in rare manuscripts, and handles the promotion of house productions, having bills posted, selling tickets, and seeing that the bills are paid, as well as suggesting story ideas to the writers. She tends to be the spokesperson for the house to the general public. Mosvar Gynith, a dwarf, formerly supervised a district of the city watch, and now directs the house's productions, dealing directly with the actors, musicians,

stagehands and writers. He also arranges security for the ensemble when a production touches a nerve on the Council, frequently hiring out-of-town help who have no stake in the political issues that sparked the trouble. Corundar Longstrider, an elf of the southern enclave, is a dealer in spices and medicines. He originally provided the venture capital for the operation. Now that the house is making a steady profit, he spends his time smoothing ruffled feathers on the Council, assuring them that the productions are all in fun. He generally has little involvement in daily operations.

The **Hall of Heroes** puts on shows based on the exploits of post-Scourge adventurers, occasionally presenting pre-Scourge works as well, always heroic tales where the evil Horrors are extinguished by the cleverness of the Name-givers. The house is very popular among the middle and lower classes, playing to sold-out crowds on a regular basis. Mirantin Kylorell, a human who made her fortune in low-cost jewelry, saw the potential for profit in popular theatre, and while her house may be derided by the artistic community as derivative and unoriginal, even her worst detractors have to admit that her house is drawing a steady business and providing work for a large ensemble. Successful adventurers of high circle can make extra money by selling copies of their journals to Mirantin, as source material for future productions.

Odd Bits is very much of an experiment, in its management, its presentations and its relations with the public. Not all of their works are performed within the house. Members have been known to take over public squares and streets with no warning, to the confusion of passersby who cannot always tell that what they are seeing is a play. The consortium that runs the theatre organizes itself based on seniority with the ensemble and success of work. Apprentices must spend three years as supporters before being considered for lead positions. Profits are split after production and maintenance costs according to position (actor, stagehand, musician) and seniority. Odd Bits is not making a tremendous amount of money for anyone involved, but it does allow the most creative freedom of any of the five houses in the city.

The **Last Theatre** uses the same basic management approach as Odd Bits, except that only lead actors and senior musicians have a vote in what productions are presented. Supporting actors and musicians are paid a flat wage, while senior ensemble members split the after-expense profits according to seniority. The troupe has a library of pre and post Scourge works, comedies, tragedies, dramas, etc., and chooses its productions from the library. New works are regarded with suspicion, as they have not been proven in the market. The Last Theatre is considered reliable, but not innovative, as a result of this conservative policy. On the other hand, they produce a steady revenue rather than the wild fluctuations of Odd Bits.

Music Halls

Music halls tend to be owned by members of the Tavernkeepers Guild, and are regulated and taxed the same way as taverns. These are large barn-like structures with massive front doors that are folded out of the way during business hours so that the entire front is open to the street. A long bar usually occupies one wall, with small tables and chairs to fit all the Name-Giver races filling the remaining space for about two-thirds of the building. The back third is taken up by the dance floor. Most halls employ a dance master to teach new customers, lead line dances and act as master of ceremonies. Only the best musicians are paid by the hall. Most work for the coins thrown by the crowd.

The hall makes its money from the bar, which will serve ale, light wines and cordials, and chilled fruit juices, as well as light snacks and pasties. The music halls generally open at sundown, and close at the crying of the mid-night.

A list of some noteworthy music halls would be useful to the traveller, and is presented herewith.

Glenrathia, Embassy Row: Hiring musicians who have experience at the Throalic Court, and who have established a reputation in the north end, Glenrathia caters to the genteel trade. Its dances tend toward pavanes and slow bransles. The hall, like all others, does not turn away anyone at the door, but would-be customers of no social importance will find it impossible to get service at the bar. The dancemaster will not assist them with finding partners nor with the steps of the more intricate dances. A well-dressed person, however, could sit quietly at a table and overhear the most amazing conversations between city councillors, watch administrators, leading merchants and representatives from other cities.

Rose and Chalice, city center: Just down the street from Krendell's, possibly the finest restaurant in the city, this hall attracts the scions of the north end families, as well as would-be social climbers from the trade clans. The music tends to be more upbeat, and the dances put an emphasis on changing partners. Strip the Willow and Toss the Duchess are favorites. While the Rose provides a quite lively atmosphere, it is definitely for the young.

Jamie's: Located on the edge of the city center, just across the street from the official beginning of the west end, this is a raucous hall with a number of very obvious private guards. They act only in defense of the hall, however, and a fight that does not damage furniture or interfere with business will be left undisturbed. Musicians with satirical verses to sing about the government find a haven here, as do those with quick fingers and a store of lively dance tunes. Invigorating, but a hand should be kept on the purse. There are pickpockets working in the crowd.

Taverns

Taverns are defined under the city codes as public drinking houses without rooms to let. This vague definition leaves room for the music halls, as well as establishments with gaming parlors in addition to their bars. Some taverns will have a small stage, or a spot at the hearth for an enterprising musician, but the would-be bard had best remember that the primary business of such places is drinking and conversation. If his music intrudes too much, he may find a throat full of steel instead of a handful of silver as his reward. By no means should the traveller infer from this that all taverns in Ardatha are dens of ruffians; far from it. A short description of a few of the more notable establishments should give a feel for the variety offered.

Crimson Crystal, city center, near north end: Very fashionable establishment, with red silk curtains and leaded crystal windows that produce a flickering crimson light over the interior. Only the finer wines and cordials are available, and the meals are elegant and expensive. Private meeting rooms take up the second floor, with two guarded side entrances for maximum discretion. Not a lot of business during the day, other than a few Councilmen and hangers-on. The evening sees the social elite turning out to admire each other's fashions, to compare their latest conquests (business and otherwise), and to make plans for future social engagements. More than one social planner makes her office here. Rumor has it that a group of questors of Chorrolis hold rites in the

upstairs rooms. As well, it is said that some sort of secret organization dealing with social position and business profit meets here, to decide who will succeed and who will fail in their rise to the upper strata. Musicians who perform here are paid by the tavern, as it would be vulgar to throw coin in such an establishment. Harpers are preferred.

Scorbin's Alehouse, city center: Just down the block from the Council Hall, this is where many of the government officials gather for lunch and for evening drinks before concluding their day. The interior is very plain, rough-hewn furniture and sawdust on the floor, and a perpetual haze from both the grill behind the bar and the pipes of the customers. Portraits in charcoal pencil of many former lights of the city are scattered across the walls, in mismatched frames and in no particular order. The specialty of the house is a rack of pork ribs, grilled with a spicy sauce basted over them. Very messy but magnificently tasty. Scorbin's brews their own ale down in the west end, a dark, heavy brew that owes its origins to dwarven stout. The wise traveller stops after two mugs. Much of the actual business of the city's government is done here, as deals are made in an informal atmosphere.

Crooked Mouse, Merchants' Quarter: The common room is small and not well lit, but has a comfortable atmosphere. Jarlik Grootz, the proprietor, is a genial dwarf with a good sense of when to speak and when to hold his tongue. A number of merchants with offices in the surrounding area gather here for meals and to do business in a quiet way. No musicians are allowed, and games are informal and expected to be discreet. Finding a table can be a difficult proposition, as Grootz has a fine memory for where the regulars have their seats, and will not allow a newcomer to dislodge one of his regular patrons. Some of the merchants have personal mugs on a shelf behind the bar. Excellent place to pick up on the flow of business in Ardatha, and serves a filling and inexpensive lunch. Legend has it that the inn was going to be called the Cat and Mouse, until a clumsy apprentice jogged the elbow of the sign painter.

One-Eye's Alehouse: Capitalizing on sharing a nickname with the leader of Kratas, Bucknard One-Eye keeps his single orb fixed firmly on the crowd in his bustling common room. The sturdy ork was an adventurer of some sort before retiring to Ardatha to open his tavern deep in the west end. Asking about his past, though, will result in three different stories on three different nights. Games of dice and cards are available in the back rooms, some with fairly high stakes. Rumor has it that illicitly-obtained goods are available from some of the clientele, but asking around for such could prove risky. The watch is not above planting one of their own in disreputable garb to catch people attempting to circumvent the law. Bucknard of course never knows anything directly about any of this.

Tea Rooms

Tea rooms are defined in the city code as dining establishments that do not serve a full menu nor any beverage stronger than wine. The preferred choices are fresh-baked pastries and tea, hence the name. These tend to be gathering places for the quieter folk, scholars, elders, and those who simply want a quiet place to read. Tea rooms will not disturb any individual who has bought at least a cup of tea and one pastry; thus, for the cost of a snack, one may read to the sounds of subdued music for hours. There are a dozen tea rooms in the city, scattered through the north and east ends and the city center. None of them vary much, each from the other, although the north end rooms tend to be patronized by elders with interests in gardening and social events, while the east end customers are more scholarly, frequently magicians who discuss esoteric theories,

historians who endlessly argue battles from the Theran War and shopkeepers wishing to get away from their business for an hour. People who frequent tea rooms do not ordinarily visit each others' tables like customers in a tavern or music hall, preferring to keep to themselves. The general decor of a tea room includes graceful furniture of elven influence, white linen tablecloths, crystal, silver and porcelain tableware, and fresh flowers, frequently potted rather than cut.

Public Squares

Ardatha's public squares bear mention here, as they serve as entertainment venues as well as gathering places and picnic spots. Musicians who do not currently have a hall or tavern to play in will set up in a square, sometimes in competition with each other. Bardic duels are not an uncommon occurence when two musicians arrive at the same square at the same time. Artists whose work is easily portable take advantage of Barsaive's fine weather to display their works without the expense of renting space in a gallery, or paying a commission to an agent for each sale. Some squares have stone podiums erected where any citizen with the nerve to do so may address the passing crowd on any subject that troubles his mind. The watch generally keep an eye on these spots, in case the crowd begins to grow restless. Rabble-rousing is not considered an art form.

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The Grounded Drakkar

by David Caraley

originally appearing in ***Earthdawn Journal*** #3

You walk through the sooty streets of Jerris, looking for a place to wash the dust from your throats, when you come upon a faded, two story wooden building with a single mast and rotted rigging mounted on the roof. A faded and peeling sign showing an small airship embedded into the ground. As you approach, you have to walk around two men fighting in the streets with shortswords. Other passersby ignore them and continue on their ways, and you decide to do the same. You push open the door and head inside.

Your eyes get accustomed to the dim light of the old light-quartz lanterns that used to hang on various airships from long ago. You see a wooden and brass trimmed bar behind which stands a large troll. The other patrons of the inn sit in small groups, talking quietly, while various serving girls move about the tables carrying drinks and food. In the corner, a single musician plays a lute while whistling sailing tunes.

There are rope ladders and netting hanging on the walls, old brass ship bells and other brass ship fixtures make up the rest of the decorations. A barmaid, dressed in tight pants and a loose shirt tied at the midriff strides up, looks you over, and says, "Need a table, mates?"

The Grounded Drakkar is a cheap inn offering simple meals of cheese, bread, and fruit (3 cp), and average meals of fatty meat, bread, cheese, fruit, and a mug of average ale (1 sp). For drinks it serves average ale (5 cp), and bottles of wine (5 cp). The only oddity it serves is yarg (1 sp a glass), a powerful liquor favored by air sailors and crystal raiders.

As for lodging, hammocks are available in the common room (5 cp a night), or small private rooms with a bed, a trunk, and little else (1 sp). Two people can sleep in the bed, but any more would be a little crowded.

The inn is owned and run by Borig Mastmender, a former crystal raider from the Twilight Peaks. His ship crashed years ago in the Wastes, and he barely managed to survive and stagger into Jerris. Once he arrived, he never managed to leave. He opened the Grounded Drakkar back in 1501 and has never thought twice about trying to return to the mountains.

The inn opens an hour after sunrise when Borig manages to stagger down from his room, rouse some of his "crew", and unbar the door. It closes at midnight when the last patrons are kicked out, hammocks are strung up, and people retire to their private rooms.

Map of ground level

1) The Common Room

This room is done in wood and brass, with old fixtures and rigging from various dead airships. There is a wooden stairway with no railing heading up to the floor above, and a long bar trimmed in brad which stands a large, battle-scarred troll, Borig, the owner. There are several tables and benches throughout the room, and a wooden stairway without a railing heading up. In one corner is a raised platform where a single entertainer provides background music. The cash box is kept under the bar (it usually contains 2D6 x 10 silvers in assorted copper and silver coins). At the end of the day, Borig carries it upstairs to his room.

2) The Galley

This room is the small kitchen where the small amount of cooking goes on. It is the domain of Cyrus Hook, an ex-air sailor who lost a hand and now works as the cook for the Grounded Drakkar. In one of the cabinets containing cooking supplies is Cyrus' shortsword.

3) The Storeroom

This room contains extra hammocks, chairs, ale casks, food stuffs, canvas, and anything else Borig feels like tossing in there. This has included members of his "crew" he has been displeased with.

Map of upper level

4) Captain's Quarters

This is Borig's room. It has a large bed, a sea trunk, a large wardrobe, a round table with two chairs, and a small cabinet. Borig keeps the cash box under his pillow when he brings it upstairs at the end of the day. The cabinet has a small ale cask, three bottles of yarg, and large pewter mugs. The trunk is locked (needing a 7 to open) and has what is left of his raiding days, a chipped trollsword, leather armor, and a single Healing Potion. In a secret compartment (needing a PER Test with a target of 8 to find) is a small wooden box with a rough map leading out into the Wastes, and a small bag with a D8 gems worth 3D6 x 10 silvers each. The wardrobe contains an extra pair of boots, and two extra sets of clothes. When Borig is downstairs, he keeps the door to this room locked (needing an 8 to open).

5) Private Rooms

These rooms all have simple locks (needing a 6 to open). Inside are rope beds, and a simple trunk. They have plain wooden floors, and plain wooden walls. The beds are much more comfortable if the patron has a bedroll to spread out over it.

The Staff

Borig Mastmender

Troll Tavern Owner

DEX: 13: 6/D10 **STR:** 17: 7/D12 **TOU:** 15: 6/D10
PER: 8: 4/D6 **WIL:** 11: 5/D8 **CHA:** 10: 5/D8

Initiative: 6/D10
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 9/D8+D6
Damage: Fist 7/D12, Club 10/D10+D6, Troll Sword 13/D12+D10
Number of Spells: NA
Spellcasting: NA
Effect: NA
Death Rating: 38
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 29

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 0 (3)
Mystic Armor: 1
Knockdown: 7/D12
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60
Legend Points: 65

Equipment: Troll sword (kept in his room), club, dagger, leather armor (kept in his room)

Loot: 2D6 x 10 silvers

Skills:
Air Sailing 3: 8/2D6, Great Leap 3: 9/D8+D6, Local Lore 2: 6/D10, Melee Weapons 4: 10/D10+D6, Streetwise 2: 6/D10, Tale Telling 3: 8/2D6, Unarmed Combat 3: 9/D8+D6, Wilderness Survival 3: 7/D12

Commentary
Borig served upon a troll drakkar that was exploring the Wastes when a freak magical storm caused it to crash, killing everyone on board. Everyone except Borig. Borig was seriously injured, but managed to make his way out of the Wastes, cross the Poison Forest, and stagger into Jerris. Cyrus Hook found him wandering the streets, took the troll in, and nursed him back to health. When Borig recovered, he opened the Grounded Drakkar. No one knows where he got the money to start the inn, and rumors flow like water. If anyone knows the truth, it would be Cyrus Hook.

Cyrus Hook

Human Cook

DEX: 13: 6/D10 **STR:** 13: 6/D10 **TOU:** 13: 6/D10
PER: 13: 6/D10 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 10: 5/D8

Initiative: 6/D10
Physical Defense: 7

Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 9/D8+D6
Damage: Fist 6/D10, Club 9/D8+D6, Short Sword 10/D10+D6
Number of Spells: NA
Spellcasting: NA
Effect: NA
Death Rating: 35
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 27

Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 6/D10
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60
Legend Points: 65

Equipment: Short sword, club, dagger, leather armor
Loot: 1D6 x 10 silvers
Skills:
Air Sailing 2: 7/D12, Cooking 2: 8/2D6, Physician 2: 8/2D6, Melee Weapons 3: 9/D8+D6, Navigation 2: 8/2D6, Streetwise 2: 8/2D6, Unarmed Combat 3: 9/D8+D6

Commentary
Cyrus Hook was an air sailor who lost his left hand during a battle with a Theran airship. He was grounded, and served in the air docks of Jerris until one fateful day when he came upon the battered body of Borig Mastmender. After he nursed the troll back to health, the two became fast friends. When Borig opened the Grounded Drakkar, he asked Cyrus to join his crew and serve as cook. Cyrus took the job and has been happy with his life ever since. He lives in the inn, stringing a hammock in the kitchen.

Carina Ridley
Human Barmaid (?)

DEX: 16: 7/D12 **STR:** 10: 5/D8 **TOU:** 10: 5/D8
PER: 13: 6/D10 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 16: 7/D12
Initiative: 7/D12
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 10/D10+D6
Damage: Fist 4/D6, Shortsword 9/D8+D6
Number of Spells: NA
Spellcasting: NA
Effect: NA
Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 9
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 4/D6
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 38
Full Movement: 75
Legend Points: 60

Equipment: Clothes, smile, shortsword (hidden in the common room)

Loot: 2D6 silvers

Skills:

Acting 4: 10/D10+D6, Avoid Blow 3: 10/D10+D6, Bartending 2: 7/D12, Flirting 3: 10/D10+D6, Lock Picking 2: 9/D8+D6, Melee Weapon 3: 10/D10+D6, Silent Walk 2: 9/D8+D6, Singing 1: 8/2D6, Streetwise 3: 8/2D6, Unarmed Combat 3: 10/D10+D6

Commentary

Carina is hardly the typical barmaid found in taverns and inns throughout Barsaive. She is a complete scoundrel who is convinced that Borig has a fortune hidden away somewhere in the inn. She searches whenever she gets a chance, and is biding her time, waiting for Borig or Cyrus to slip up and mention where they have the treasure hidden. Carina is a beautiful dark-haired young woman in her early twenties. She is dressed identically to the other barmaids, in tight pants, and a loose shirt, and cuts quite a dashing figure. She sleeps in a hammock in the common room at night. She is a flirt who is always looking for an angle to riches. She actually has become quite fond of the inn, and will fight to defend it, though she will only use her short sword as a last resort. Her shortsword is hidden behind a loose board in the common room.

Livia, Siri

Human Barmaids

DEX: 11: 5/D8 **STR:** 9: 4/D6 **TOU:** 10: 5/D8
PER: 11: 5/D8 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 14: 6/D10

Initiative: 5/D8

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 6/D10

Damage: Fist 4/D6

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Death Rating: 31

Wound Threshold: 8

Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Physical Defense: 7

Spell Defense: 6

Social Defense: 8

Armor: 0

Mystic Armor: 0

Knockdown: 4/D6

Recovery Tests: 2

Combat Movement: 27

Full Movement: 45

Legend Points: 50

Equipment: Clothes, smile

Loot: 2D6 silvers

Skills:

Bartending 2: 7/D12, Flirting 3: 9/D8+D6, Singing 1: 7/D12, Unarmed Combat 1: 6/D10

Commentary
Livia and Siri are two sisters who enjoy the rowdy crowd that frequent the Grounded Drakkar. They think that there isn't much life to the city of Jerris, and what little life and excitement there is can usually be found among the adventurers and air sailors that patronize the Drakkar. Livia has dark, curly hair that tumbles down past her shoulders, while Siri's dark hair is straight and cut short. They both look ravishing in their tight pants and loose shirts, and they tie their shirts off at the midriff.

Brooz Sprungstring

Dwarf Musician

DEX: 12: 5/D8 **STR:** 13: 6/D10 **TOU:** 14: 6/D10
PER: 13: 6/D10 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 13: 6/D10

Initiative: 5/D8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: Fist 9/D8+D6
Number of Spells: NA
Spellcasting: NA
Effect: NA
Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 28

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 6/D10
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 24
Full Movement: 48
Legend Points: 55

Equipment: Craft tools (including something used as a club), padded cloth armor
Loot: D6 x 10 silvers
Skills:
Appraise Music 3: 9/D8+D6, Local Lore 3: 8/2D6, Melee 1: 6/D10, Play Instrument 3: 9/D8+D6, Tale Telling 2: 8/2D6, Trading 3: 8/2D6
Commentary
Brooz is a dwarf who spent his entire life sitting around the air docks of Jerris, listening to tales, and picking up bits of folk songs and air shanties. When the Grounded Drakkar opened, Brooz wandered in, started playing, and has become part of the regular staff. He lives off of tips and whatever food and drink Borig will give him. At the end of the day, he sleeps in a hammock in the common room. Brooz is a balding dwarf approaching the tail end of middle age. His brown beard is trimmed, and he wears bright and colorful clothing that looks out of place in a city like Jerris.

Adventure Seeds

1. Borig has a map to where the drakkar he was serving on crashed. The ship was on its way back from looting an abandoned kaer out in the wastes, and was loaded with treasure. Borig managed to take some of the easily transportable items, gems and jewelry, which is how he paid for the inn, but the bulk of the treasure is still out there. Borig might be convinced to sell the map for a share in the profits, but he would expect the characters to take a Blood Oath to insure their honesty. The treasure could have almost anything, but it should have at least one magical item of note. Remember, it is in the Wastes, and anything can happen out there.
2. Carina has numerous money making schemes, some of which require help of various sorts. She can be used to drag characters into all sorts of trouble. She can also play the poor, endangered female to the hilt, in case one of her schemes goes wrong, sometimes enticing characters into schemes to help her out of a jam.

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Hammerstone

by Jeremy Mettler

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #8***

This quickly growing town of some 6,000 residence is located at the south western base of the Tylon mountains. Hammerstone is a well kept and orderly town whose inhabitants are friendly and self-reliant. The citizens of the town are a mixture of dwarf, human, and ork that work the local trade going to Kratas or the silver mines in the nearby mountains. Elves and obsidiman are occasionally seen among the populace, but trolls, t'skrang, and windlings are very rare.

The dwarven established government is well structured and well run. A large town watch that patrols the town and neighboring area (one day ride radius) is maintained. The town has many cosmetic laws that require its citizens to maintain a certain level of upkeep to there properties and persons making the town very pleasant looking. Accurate and fare tax rolls are kept and elections, open to property owning citizens, are held for government officials. Government meetings are open to the public, and citizens are sometimes allowed to speak. Any major policy or law change is always decided by a vote of the public. The government sustains itself through various means, but the main source of income is taxes. The town collects taxes based on a property tax, but their main source of tax revenue comes from taxes collected from the road.

The people and government of Hammerstone engineered and built a road that runs between Hammerstone and Kratas along the base of the Tylon mountains. This allows the hundreds of villages in the valley south of Hammerstone quick, easy and protected travel to the markets in Kratas. Patrols from the town ride the length of the road making it safer for travelers and making sure all who use the road have paid the road tax.

With the increasing strength of Hammerstone have come many new challenges. Ork scorchers from the valley north of the Liaj and Sky Raiders from the Twilight mountains have begun to prey on the area and villages surrounding the town. Although they have not attacked Hammerstone itself the town has felt the economic impact of these attacks.

Another threat to the town is from Kratas. Several of the various ruling gangs and factions in Kratas wish to gain control of the town and put it under their direct control. The criminal elements in Kratas enjoy the use of the road by have become angered at the harassing nature of the patrols from Hammerstone, who make them pay to use the road. Many in Kratas dream of the day that Hammerstone falls under the control of Kratas or is just wiped from existence; just as long as they leave the road most do not care which happens.

Center Shantaya's Sextant on Kratas, and align point (on Throal. Sight along point (. Follow

Floranuus at Midnight. Hammerstone lies 6 days riding, 10 days walk from Kratas.

History

Hammerstone was founded around the year 1426TH when several opportunistic dwarven families from Kratas came to the area because of reports of silver finds. The reports were accurate, and the dwarves settled down in a make shift camp and began mining the nearby mountain. The dwarves never planning to stay permanently, only long enough to amass a fortune and return to Kratas, did not create the mountain dwellings that dwarves are accustomed to building in the mountains and mines.

As word of the dwarves success traveled, orks, humans, and more dwarves from Kratas and nearby areas began to arrive and they also settled down in the camp. The small camp quickly grew and several years later it was a small town that resembled a miniature version of Kratas.

Almost three decades after its founding, Hammerstone found itself in the middle of the Theran War. The town, used as a jump off point by Throal to battle Theran forces in Ustrect and Liaj, swelled in numbers. Toward the end of the war the focus of Throal strategy changed and Hammerstone was no longer used by Throal forces. The town quickly diminished in size, until the war came to an end.

One of the Throalic armies, lead by General Peiron, a dwarf cavalryman adept, had been formed in the first year of the war. Peiron's Guard as it was known, spent the entire war in the lands between the Tylon mountains and the Twilight peaks. The army passed through Hammerstone many times and General Peiron became fond of the town. When the war ended Peiron disbanded his army, and then he and his family plus many of his senior staff and soldiers all settled in Hammerstone.

Peiron and the one hundred people he brought with him found post war Hammerstone a filthy, rotten, cesspool for thieves and claim jumpers. Within a year Peiron and his people wrestled control of the town from the thugs that ran it, and immediately after a small war between the criminal elements and Peiron broke out. All the criminal rackets, gangs, and guilds were defeated and run out of town by Peiron and the honest townsfolk. This period is now referred to by the townsfolk as "The Cleansing".

It was Peiron's leadership that made Hammerstone what it is today. Peiron and the former members of his staff organized the town and its government; they established all the current laws and regulations, including the tax system and election system. Several years after "The Cleansing" in an effort to increase trade to the city, the former head field engineer of Peiron's Guard built the road. Even though it was a difficult task it has already begun to pay off for the town.

The Town

There are six main areas to Hammerstone each officially known as a district. The six districts are: the White district, the Green district, the Market district, the Old district, the Merchant district, and the Plaza district.

The White district is a residential are just north of the Plaza district. This is where the towns wealthiest citizens live. All of the houses are grandiose with giant lawns separating them and walls marking their boundaries. A few years ago crime began to increase in this area and the residents of the White district wanted first rights to watch patrols. Their request was denied by the town council so the residents pulled together a large sum of money and hired a local mercenary force known as the Sentinels to act as the district's personal watch. Although the city watch still patrols the area and has jurisdiction, its the Sentinels that have managed to decrease the areas crime rate to almost zero.

The White district is also where construction of the town's defensive wall has begun. Only about three hundred yards have been completed so far, but it will eventually encompass the White, Plaza, and Market districts and part of the Green district.

The Green district, located west of the Plaza district is mostly a residential area. The people that live here make up most of the town's middle class. This district buildings are well ordered and almost uniform. The people here take pride in the superior cleanliness of there district.

South of the Plaza district, is the Market district. The main feature of this area is the Mall, a large open paved area where farmers and others from the nearby villages and surrounding areas come to set up stands and booths to sell there goods. The mall is about 200 yards north to south and about 80 yards east to west.

The rest of the district is made up of small businesses such as dry goods shops, groceries, farm equipment shops, and other business that supply the seeds of the alley's local villages. A large unpaved road known as the Farmer's Road runs from the Mall south out of the town and into the valley.

North east of the White district is the area known as the Old district. A mostly residential area it is the oldest portion of the town. The north part of this district is populated by the town's silver miners and the upper lower class. A large unpaved road known as the Miner's Road runs from here out of the city and into the Tylon mountains.

The southern part of this district which boarders the eastern side of the Plaza is were the town's lowest lower class reside. Even though this area is unorganized and the buildings in it are usually small shacks it still reflects the town's good upkeep and cleanliness.

The Merchant district resides on the eastern side of the market district and is a combination of a middle class residential area and business area. Artisan shops are the primary business in this district. Armorers, brewers, cobblers, physicians, jewelers, masons, smithies, tanners and many more can all be found here, including all manner of inns and taverns. Most live in their shops but there are many town house areas where the upper middle class, successful artisans and merchants live.

The Plaza district, the smallest of all the districts, lies at the center of the town. It is here that all the government buildings, guild headquarters, parks, and plazas. At the center of the district is the Circle plaza, a large circular area with a fountain in the middle. The fountain bears a statue of General Peiron. The plaza is surrounded by the most important government buildings, including the Council Hall, Judicial hall, and Administration Hall.

The Road

The road running from Hammerstone to Kratas was originally begun by the Throalic military during the Theran War, but was abandoned after a few years. It was small and not very wide and did not go but half the way to Kratas. After "The Cleansing" Perion ordered the road to be completed and expanded.

The road was completed just under a decade ago and is already seeing extensive use. It begins at the Mall and runs through the center of the Market and Merchant districts until it comes to a keep on the eastern boarder of the town. The Keep is a town watch sub headquarters where they collect the road tax from all who enter and leave the town on the road.

The road then runs along the base of the Tylon mountains until it ends just outside of Kratas. Hammerstone maintains several roadside inn and watch sub headquarters along the length of the road for use by travelers and patrols alike. The trip from Hammerstone to Kratas, a dangerous trip which would take villagers 11 days walking, now is a much safer trip that only takes about 8 days walking.

The road tax is 2 silver pieces per head (this includes any animal that is not caged up), anyone who uses the road must pay the tax. Most pay at the town and then are given a certificate that states they have paid. The Hammerstone watch patrols the road and check travelers for certificates. If they do not have one, then they pay the patrol and receive a certificate from them. If they refuse to pay then the traveler is taken into custody and held in Hammerstone until the toad tax is paid.

The Government

The town government is organized into a council system. The council is made up of thirteen people, two property owning residents from each district and a mayor who is elected by the town as a whole. The mayor is the agenda setter for the council and makes sure council and public meetings are carried out according to the law. The mayor also appoints the head of each administrative office and acts as ceremonial leader of the town. The council approves all administrative decisions and appoints the magistrates and the watch captain. The mayor and council members terms are six years long with no term limit. Elections are staggered so only two council members are up for election on any given year.

There are two other parts to the government, the administrative and judicial parts. The Administrative Hall conduct the daily business of the town. This includes the Tax office, the Public Works office, the commerce office, etc. The Judicial Hall maintains the law and order in the town. this includes the magistrates offices, judicial courts, penitentiary system, and watch headquarters.

There are three political parties in Hammerstone, the Preservation party, the Expansionist party, and the Tolerance party. The Preservation party, by far the largest party in the town with six council seats and the Mayors office, is dedicated to keeping Hammerstone a sovereign entity and to preserve the values and beliefs of General Peiron. The Expansionist party is the second largest political party with three council seats. They believe that Hammerstone is destined for great things and that it should begin making its place in Barsaive. They want to place the nearby villages around Hammerstone, who depend on the town for their survival under the town's rule. Lately the Expansionists have become stagnant and the party has become divided in its interpretations of their beliefs, almost nullifying there effectiveness. Finally the Tolerance party is the smallest with only one council seat. They believe that Hammerstone is not ready for any confrontations with outside forces and that they must seek aid to protect their future. They wish to have Hammerstone be annexed by Kratas for protection purposes. There are also 2 independent council members, they tend to vote with groups such as guilds and unions.

The People

The first census in the history of Hammerstone was conducted last year by the Tax office. The census found that approximately 6,300 people live in Hammerstone with about 2,800 of them are dwarf, 1,800 are ork, 1,300 of them are human, and 300 of them are elf. Of these 54% are citizens, that is a member of a family who owns a least one property and paying property taxes. The rest are squatters, renting a property or legally living on someone else's property, or transients.

The people who live in Hammerstone all tend to be below average in height, and the

architecture reflects this (probably the reason why trolls don't often come to this town). They are all of good temperament and very friendly. The people of this town are hardworking and self reliant. They believe that every person is responsible for themselves and that it is wrong to expect from someone what you can't give to them. These attitudes and beliefs are what has united the people of Hammerstone and made it a safe and cohesive community.

Important People

Onora Rian

DEX 5 STR 6 TOU 6

PER 7 WIL 5 CHA 6

The mayor of Hammerstone is a native of the town and the daughter of a wealthy merchant. Onora is a tall dwarven women with a large stature. She has long black hair that she keeps braided and bushy sideburns grace her face. She has a keen intellect and is very observant. She is very eloquent, a natural orator, with a large vocabulary. She likes talking about all of the latest philosophical subjects, but frowns on small talk as useless ranting.

Onora took to politics at an early age. She was a young women when General Peiron came to Hammerstone. Though her influence and assets were small she joined Peiron's cause during "The Cleansing" and quickly became one of his greatest allies. After his death nine years ago she was elected to replace him as mayor.

She is the leader and greatest member of the Preservation party. She recognizes that Hammerstone has the potential to be a great city, but must be able to keep it united if it is going to overcome its future challenges.

Onora is in a position of great influence, so she often finds herself hiring local adepts to act as scouts and information gatherers, so she can make the most informed decisions possible. When talking with her, most notice her eagerness and attentiveness when listening to there opinions and her nonjudgmental attitude.

Druas Nels

DEX 5 STR 5 TOU 4

PER 5 WIL 5 CHA 6

A council member that is one of the representatives from the Green district and Onora's

greatest opponent in the Tolerance party. A young (about 29) human about 5' 4" in height with brown hair and blue eyes. He is highly intelligent and Onora's equal in oratory and debating skills. He tends to be sickly and has glassy wide eyes that most consider unsettling. He is very friendly person that is easy to get along with, but when speaking of government or debating, he uses scare mongering to make his point playing on peoples fears and uncertainties to get his points across.

Druas has succumb to the greedy ways of his friends in Kratas and believes that the only way Hammerstone will survive its future is to become a protectorate of Kratas. Druas has many important contacts in Kratas, he has also amassed a small fortune their and in Hammerstone.

Aubert Ruusu

DEX 5 STR 7 TOU 5

PER 5 WIL 5 CHA 4

This council member is the leader of the Expansionist party and an adept of the Weaponsmith discipline, he represents the Merchant district. He is a dwarf of average height and medium build, but is very strong. He has reached 8th circle in his discipline and has excelled at forging blades (rank 11) and is an expert fighter (Melee Weapons Rank 9).

Although he is their official leader, he has fallen in disfavor with his party. He has had an inability to push the Expansionist agenda in official meetings. Secretly, the reason for this is he has fallen in love with Onora, though she does not know this, and he does not want to anger her by opposing her. Outside of official areas he rarely talks about politics, he would rather talk of lighter things or hear a good tale. Most people notice that Aubert seems to care little about politics, until they see him in a official function, when he can be very zealous.

Aubert, a former adventurer, has a rather large collection of magical weapons, which he uses to inspire his own creations. He has expert knowledge of legendary weapons, which he uses to inspire his own creations. He has expert knowledge of legendary and magical weapons.

Torht Rand

DEX 5 STR 5 TOU 4

PER 5 WIL 6 CHA 4

One of the wealthiest merchants in the town owning several businesses, including an inn and two taverns. He is an ork, 5' 11" in height and is frail by ork standards. He is a capable business man with great determination. he is a well groomed and well dressed individual.

Torht is a secret member of the Lightbearers. Although he is not a Lightbearer in the

traditional sense, he has turned over his resources for use by the organization. He uses his businesses as safe houses and Information gathering and exchange locations for the agents of the organization.

Torht is a private person, not often does he go out and socialize. When he does he is a very blunt person and speaks his mind. He has many contacts in Throal, Kratas, and Vivane, plus he personally knows one of the Swords of Light. At his disposal is a small army of agents and adepts to do his business and assist the Lightbearers, although they usually don't know they are doing this when he sends them on a mission.

Engres Colby

DEX 7 STR 5 TOU 5

PER 5 WIL 5 CHA 7

A thief adept who moved here from Kratas about three years ago and now lives in the Old district. He is a human about 5' 9" with noble and handsome looks. He is seventh circle and is most proficient in the clandestine talents (Silent Walk rank 8) and is skilled in Evidence Analysis. He is a suave speaker and he always says as little as possible, never volunteering information. He is noticeable by his cool and calm demeanor and how he always seems in control of a situation.

Engres is an agent of Garlthik One-Eye sent here as a spy to determine the threat to Kratas posed by Hammerstone. He has bribed and blackmailed many minor government officials into giving him information and could probably get more from them if he wanted.

Slean Esma

DEX 7 STR 6 TOU 5

PER 5 WIL 4 CHA 6

Hammerstone's watch captain and is an adept of the swordmaster discipline. He is an ork about 6' in height who is nimble and strong. When he talks he speaks slowly and clearly with as little words as possible. Although he is a man of few words, he is a good listener and entertains any complaints and suggestions his office gets.

This bladesman has obtained ninth Circle and is also a skilled investigator.

He is a adamant Preservationist who wishes to keep the town ideals enforced, he places a lot of infuses on enforcing the town's cosmetic laws. He believes the watch should set examples for the public. He requires all of his watch to be well groomed and clean when the go on duty.

Slean has many allies in the town and knows most everything that goes on. He knows about both Torht Rand's and Engres Colby's operations and activities but not who they work for.

Audrey Mayda

DEX 5 STR 5 TOU 5
PER 5 WIL 5 CHA 6

A questor of Lochost and an activist against the growing power of Hammerstone. She is a very attractive and charismatic human, 5' 4" in height.

She is not an orator but is an expert at talking to people on a one-on-one bases, she is skilled in Conversation (rank 7) and Speak Language (rank 5). She finds it easy to talk to anyone, and has a soothing comforting voice.

She feels it is her duty to protect the freedom of the villages that surround Hammerstone. She protests gatherings and meetings of the Expansionist party and frequently harasses the other council members. She can also be found in many of the villages trying to convince the villagers that they must live without Hammerstone. Audrey is familiar with life in all of the villages in the area and how they interact with each other, she has many contacts and friends (not to mention enemies) in each one.

Important Places

Caravan Center

A large open air building next to the Gate Keep. Here is where travelers that are going to be traveling on the road can find out information on when the next merchant caravans are scheduled to leave. They can also sign up and pay for a place in the caravan, which then entitles them to protection from the caravans hired guards. Merchants can also leave there wagons, carts, and animals in the protection of the center, for a fee.

Circle Plaza

A large circular plaza at the very center of the town. In addition to the Council Hall, Judicial Hall, and the Administration Hall, many other important buildings can be found here. The Guild House, the headquarters for Hammerstone's merchant guild lies next to the Council Hall. Elmer Collage is a three story building opposite of the Council Hall. It is a highly exclusive institute of learning, only accepting 10 candidates a year for a five year curriculum. The education is above average, employing the best sages in the valley. Also on

the circle is a small ritzy weekend theater called Montgomery's Stage and various office buildings rented out to numerous groups.

Convention Hall

Found in the market district at the north end of the Mall. It is a building with various banquet rooms rented out on a temporary bases to the smaller guilds and organizations who do not have a permanent headquarters. Every harvest season the rooms rent out quickly by the numerous husbandry guilds found in the area.

Gate Keep

The official eastern exit/entrance to the city and the building where travelers pay for the right to use the Hammerstone-Kratas road. The watch assigned to this location are solely responsible for patrolling and keeping the road safe and maintaining and administrating the road side inns. Patrols leave daily from here.

The Emporium

A large warehouse in the Merchant district owned by a consortium of magicians. Here the magicians create and sell unique and common magical items and provide a forum for the local mages together. The have thousands of common items that are at a reasonable price, ten to twenty percent lower than average.

Silver Piece Inn

Found in the Merchant district and is owned by Tort Rand. It is a quaint middle class establishment with fare prices and good service. It is a safe, quiet, and respectable place to stay for the night. Secretly it is also a safe house for the Lightbearers. It makes use of an access to the tunnels to fairy in and out agents in hiding.

The Tunnels

During the war the Throalic generals began building the road and to a lesser extent began building a sewage system to help improve the town. Like the road, the sewage system was abandoned. Over the years it has been covered up and forgotten. Very few people still know it exists and there are only a few usable entrances left. The tunnels, as it is now referred to, consist of about twenty passage ways that crisscross the town in perpendicular paths to one another, forming a kind of grid. Each tunnel is about ten feet underground with a eight foot height and six foot width.

Adventure Ideas

Hammerstone is a perfect place to introduce characters to a low level political campaign. It has many different elements that might make intriguing adventures. Here are some possible ideas:

1. The attacks by Raiders on the surrounding villages has steadily increased in frequency over the last few months and has begun to significantly affect Hammerstone's economy. The players are asked by Rian to rally and coordinate the villages against the Raiders, but the Expansionist party sees this as an opportunity to expand there power by placing mercenaries in the villages. Now the players must decide which is the greater good, Rian and the Preservationists, who want to teach the villages to defend themselves or the Expansionist who wish to use city resources to protect them. All this while trying to stop the Raiders.
2. A group of Dinganni make camp next to the town. They begin to make a mess and become a general nuisance. On behalf of the council the players are asked to tell the Dinganni to leave. When the players talk to the Dinganni they refuse to leave. The Dinganni are actually being led by several Lightbearers who are in contact with Tort Rand. Recent actions by these Lightbearers have accidentally released a Horror, which is now traveling toward the town. They have come to intercept it and warn Rand. When the players report the Dinganni refusal to leave the town decides to vote on having them forcefully removed. One of the Lightbearers approaches the players and confides in them. The players must now convince the council to let the Dinganni stay for a few more days without compromising the Lightbearers security or letting anyone know this is a Lightbearer operation.

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The Lazy Eye

by David Caraley

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #4***

The Lazy Eye is located in a seedier side of Bartertown, down twisting side streets past numerous back alleys. As the party travels towards the tavern, they will be approached by women looking to sell their bodies for 5 silvers a night, young thugs offering various drugs, and if the party wasn't in a group, and carrying weapons, other thugs that would try to attack and rob the players.

> *There before you stands, or squats, the Lazy Eye. It is a rough wooden building, only one story tall, that has definitely seen better days. The boards are weather beaten, and a single rusty oil lamp illuminates the sign, a sign that shows a single eyeball with the lid half closed. There are a few figures hanging out by the alley near the corner of the building. They look up, and move a bit farther away from the light coming from the window and go back to talking to each other in whispers. There is the sound of raucous laughter coming from inside.*
>
> *You enter the dimly lit common room. It has a hard packed dirt floor, and smoke from the lamps, from people's exotic pipes, and from the incense burners in the corners all serve to make it more difficult to see. The room is filled with tables made from barrels, and rough wooden chairs. And the clientele seems to be made up of Ork Scorchers, mercenaries, and others of the rougher trades. Everyone seems to be armed with some sort of weapon, and some seem to be wearing leather, or padded leather. They are sitting around telling stories, playing dice, arm wrestling, and latching onto the barmaids that pass by. A few of them look up as you come in, but they just go back to whatever they were doing. There are two Orks in leather armor at the door who watch you enter. A Human with a scarred face stands behind the bar, pouring drinks and passing them out to the barmaids. The barmaids are clad in flimsy silks or tight leathers. A drummer keeps a beat in the corner while an attractive dancer in very little clothes gyrates wildly for the amusement of the crowd. The crowd throws coppers every now and then.*

The tavern serves ale (3 coppers), good ale (8 coppers), Dwarven stout (15 coppers), and Lightning (1 silver), a clear distilled liquor of great potency (for every drink, make a TOU test with a target of 7, or gain a -1 step modifier to any test involving DEX or PER. It also serves simple meals of breads, cheeses, and fruit (3 coppers).

The Lazy Eye opens at sunset when Tevis arrives to unlock the place and let the staff in.

Tevis puts the cash box (containing 2D6 x 10 silvers in assorted coins) under the bar, and opens for business.

The tavern stays open until sunrise when the last of the patrons are thrown out, and clean up begins. Once the place is cleaned, the staff leaves and Tevis locks up and takes the cash box (now containing 3D10 x 10 silvers in assorted coins) home.

The Staff

Tevis - Human Tavernkeeper

DEX: 9: 4/D6 **STR:** 11: 5/D8 **TOU:** 13: 6/D10
PER: 12: 5/D8 **WIL:** 9: 4/D6 **CHA:** 8: 4/D6

Initiative: 4/D6
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 5/D8
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 45
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 27
Equipment: Bar things, dog
Loot: 3D6 x 10 silvers

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 5
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 5/D8
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 20
Full Movement: 40
Legend Points: 50

Skills: Conversation 4: 8/2D6, Legends and Heroes 2: 7/D12, Local Lore 3: 8/2D6, Lock Picking 3: 7/D12, Music: Flute 1: 5/D8, Pick Pockets 3: 7D12, Speak Languages 8: 13/D12+D10 (Dwarven, Elf, Human, Obsidiman, Ork, Troll, T'skrang, Windling), Streetwise 5: 10/D10+D6, Unarmed Combat 2: 6/D10

Tevis was a minor thief that was caught after a particularly profitable robbery. He went to jail, where he received his scar. Still, he never talked, and when he was released five years later, his former partners set him up with this small tavern. He now runs the place and turns a decent profit. He is also well liked by the local underworld.

Grod, Nurg - Ork Bouncers

DEX: 10: 5/D8 **STR:** 16: 7/D12 **TOU:** 14: 6/D10
PER: 12: 5/D8 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 9: 4/D6

Initiative: 5/D8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 8/2D6
Damage: 10/D10+D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 28
Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 1
Knockdown: 7/D12
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 29
Full Movement: 57
Legend Points: 60
Equipment: Leather armor, club
Loot: D6 x 10 silvers
Skills: Melee 3: 8/2D6, Streetwise 3: 8/2D6, Unarmed Combat 3: 8/2D6

These two are best of friends and used to be street thugs, mugging people in back alleys until they got this more legitimate job. The still get to bust heads, but now the Watch doesn't arrest them for it. As many of the patrons are their friends and owe both Tevis and the two Orks favors, most of the clientele will fight to defend the tavern staff.

Nevia, Enya, Fiani - Human Barmaids / Dancers

DEX: 11: 5/D8 **STR:** 9: 4/D6 **TOU:** 10: 5/D8
PER: 11: 5/D8 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 14: 6/D10

Initiative: 5/D8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 4/D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 4/D6
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 27
Full Movement: 45
Legend Points: 50
Equipment: Clothes, smile
Loot: 2D6 silvers
Skills: Bartending 2: 7/D12, Dancing 3: 9/D8+D6, Flirting 3: 9/D8+D6, Singing 1: 7/D12, Unarmed Combat 1: 6/D10

These girls serve drinks when it is not their turn to dance. They are all flirts, and their favors are for hire if the price is right. They generally charge 1 silver per CHA step below 10 (for example, someone with a Charisma of 14, with a Step 6 would be charged 4 silvers). They

also charge Orks and additional 2 silvers. They won't go off with Obsidimen or Trolls.

Scarlet - Elven Barmaid / Dancer

DEX: 13: 6/D10 **STR:** 9: 4/D6 **TOU:** 8: 4/D6
PER: 12: 5/D8 **WIL:** 11: 5/D8 **CHA:** 17: 7/D12

Initiative: 6/D10
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 7/D12
Damage: 4/D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 28
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 19

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 9
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1
Knockdown: 4/D6
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 33
Full Movement: 65
Legend Points: 55

Equipment: Clothes, smile
Loot: 4D6 silvers
Skills: Bartending 2: 7/D12, Dancing 4: 11/D10+D8, Flirting 3: 10/D10+D6, Pick Pockets 3: 9/D8+D6, Singing 1: 8/2D6, Streetwise 4: 9/D8+D6, Unarmed Combat 1: 7/D12

Scarlet is a beautiful elf girl with flowing red hair who grew up an orphan on the streets of Bartertown. She had no money or family, and rapidly learned that there was more money to be made with seducing than with stealing. She generally will not make passes at anyone under a CHA of 13, and only seduces Humans and Elves. Though she isn't any type of Adept, she has learned to spend Karma on Seduction. She charges 8 silvers.

Norvan - Human Musician

DEX: 12: 5/D8 **STR:** 11: 5/D8 **TOU:** 11: 5/D8
PER: 13: 6/D10 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 13: 6/D10

Initiative: 5/D8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 8/2D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 32

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 5/D8
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 29

Wound Threshold: 8 **Full Movement:** 57

Unconsciousness Rating: 24 **Legend Points:** 50

Equipment: Craft tools (including something used as a club), padded cloth armor

Loot: D6 x 10 silvers

Skills: Appraise Music 3: 9/D8+D6, Melee 1: 6/D10, Play Instrument 4: 10/D10+D6, Streetwise 3: 9/D8+D6, Trading 3: 8/2D6

He is an old drummer who has seen too much and worked too hard. He now sits back and takes a quarter of the tips thrown to the dancers. He overhears a lot, though, and might be willing to exchange information if the price was right.

Adventure Seeds

1. Tevis hid his share of the loot from his last mission before he was caught and sent to prison. Since he was released, and gifted with this tavern, he has never gone back to get his loot. He knows where it is, he hid it in the floor boards of an abandoned house. The problem is that the house isn't abandoned anymore. It is now the home of a powerful Nethermancer Adept. And he values his privacy. Make the loot contain something of interest to the players, a magical amulet, or a book of some sort that has information that they need.
2. Scarlet is being stalked by a jilted lover and she attempts to seduce a player in order to get him to protect her. Of course, the jilted lover is a Swordmaster Adept of violent temper. He will view any interference in his pursuit of Scarlet as an insult.

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The Oasis

by David Caraley

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #4***

As you wander through the bazaar of the magnificent city of Travar, on of the few surviving pre-Scourge cities, taking in the sights and sounds of a city still in its full splendor, you come face to face with a single story, white stone building with a hanging sign depicting a small watering hole surrounded by a few palm trees. Underneath, written in dwarven and human, are the words 'The Oasis'.

After tying the horses to the hitching posts outside, you proceed into the establishment past the man at the door dressed in a light tunic and loose-fitting pants, curved sword hanging from his belt. The common room is light and airy, with a high ceiling, and silk hanging from the rafters and beams. There are pillows scattered on the floor around low tables, several of which are occupied by patrons of the tavern. Young women dressed in cool, flowing silks move from table to table, carrying drinks and food, laughing and flirting with the customers while a trio of musicians play drums, flute, and some sort of stringed instrument in the far corner.

As you continue looking around, you notice that the whole rear wall of the building is open to the outdoors. You can see more tables with benches and chairs outside, with shade provided by palm trees and silk awnings. More patrons sit at these tables, sipping drinks and snacking on cheese, fruits, and breads.

You turn towards the bar, a large bar carved out of wood and trimmed in ivory, and a dwarf with a twinkle in his eye waves and calls out a greeting, "Well met, weary travelers. What can my humble self do for you?"

The Oasis is a merchant inn that serves simple meals of cheese, fruits, and breads (3 cp), average meals of dried meats, cheeses, fruits, breads, and a mug of average ale (1 sp), and good meals of roast meats, vegetables, soup, three different types of breads, two types of cheeses, and a small pitcher of good ale (3 sp). The bar provides mugs of average ale (5 cp), good ale (1 sp), dwarven stout (2 sp), and bottles of wine (ranging from 3 to 10 sp).

The Oasis also provides sleeping arrangements. A traveler can sleep in the common room or outside under the silks and palm trees (1 sp), or get a private room with a trunk, a wardrobe, and a large bed that can sleep three people comfortably (3 sp), or get a private room with the addition of a bath (5 sp). The private rooms have good locks (needing a 7 or better to open).

The Oasis opens at first light, when Abu Navar and his wife Annora wake up and head down for the common room and the kitchen and start preparing for the day. Only simple meals are served in the morning while the cooking gets started for the noon and evening meals. At this point Evert will arise and start waking the patrons that are sleeping in the common room.

By noon some of the serving girls will arrive, along with some of the musicians. This is when the first rush occurs as people from the surrounding businesses and shoppers from the bazaar will come in and enjoy a light lunch of simple and average meals. At this point Binah and Jovana will arrive and start cleaning the private rooms.

After the mid-day crowd clears out, the serving girls will clean up the common room while the kitchen staff starts to prepare the evening meal. The musicians will take a break and wander about the bazaar, shopping, and sometimes playing at some corner or at the fountain for whatever coins the crowd will toss their way.

By late in the afternoon the musicians will return, and the tavern will start serving dinner. Binah and Jovana will leave for home, and the other serving girls will arrive. The Oasis is an enjoyable night spot with food, drink, music, and dancers. There will usually be a table or two of gamblers, and a good time will be had by all.

At midnight the tavern will start to close up, and the final call for drinks will go out. Those who are not staying the night will be ushered out the door, and it will be barred from the inside. The serving girls will join the bar staff in helping clean up, and the crew is usually done and heading for home within an hour of closing. Those who are sleeping in the common room can then get some sleep while the others retire to the private rooms.

The Staff

Abu Navar - Dwarf Tavernkeeper

DEX: 9: 4/D6 **STR:** 11: 5/D8 **TOU:** 13: 6/D10
PER: 12: 5/D8 **WIL:** 9: 4/D6 **CHA:** 8: 4/D6

Initiative: 4/D6
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 5/D8
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 5
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 5/D8
Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 45
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 27
Equipment: Bar things, dog
Loot: 3D6 x 10 silvers
Combat Movement: 20
Full Movement: 40
Legend Points: 50
Skills: Conversation 4: 8/2D6, Legends and Heroes 2: 7/D12, Local Lore 3: 8/2D6, Music: Flute 1: 5/D8, Speak Languages 8: 13/D12+D10 (Dwarven, Elf, Human, Obsidiman, Ork, Troll, T'skrang, Windling), Unarmed Combat 2: 6/D10

Abu Navar is a middle-aged dwarf with a trimmed beard and a neat, pleasing appearance. His black hair and dark eyes make him look somewhat mysterious, and his friendly nature couples with his looks makes him an enjoyable host.

Abu Navar inherited The Oasis from his father who inherited it from his father before him. It is a family run establishment, with Abu's wife Annora acting as cook and bookkeeper.

Abu has never been an adventurer, enjoying his nice, safe life in Travar, but he loves to hear tales of far away places and acts of bravery. Quite often, if he hears a story that pleases him (roll Tale Telling against Abu's Social Defense, on an average success, Abu will treat the teller to a mug of good ale, on an excellent success, he will treat the teller to a good meal).

Annora - Dwarf Cook

DEX: 12: 5/D8 **STR:** 13: 6/D10 **TOU:** 14: 6/D10
PER: 13: 6/D10 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 11: 5/D8

Initiative: 5/D8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 9/D8+D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 28
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 6/D10
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 24
Full Movement: 48
Legend Points: 55
Equipment: Cooking gear (including something used as a club), padded cloth armor (as aprons).
Loot: D6 x 10 silvers
Skills: Appraise Food and Drink 3: 9/D8+D6, Bookkeeping 3: 9/D8+D6, Cooking 4: 10/D10+D6, Melee 1: 6/D10, Trading 3: 8/2D6

Annora was the cook here at The Oasis for several years before she and Abu fell in love and got married. She is a nice, gentle dwarf who enjoys her life and enjoys the success her husband has had with the inn.

Annora spends most of her time in the kitchen, organizing the kitchen crew and making sure that the food is up to her high quality standards. She is absolute ruler of the kitchen, and has been known to kick Abu out if he gets in the way.

Evert - Obsidiman Bouncer

DEX: 9: 4/D6 **STR:** 24: 9/D8+D6 **TOU:** 17: 7/D12
PER: 11: 5/D8 **WIL:** 12: 5/D8 **CHA:** 9: 4/D6

Initiative: 4/D6
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 14/D20+D4
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 40
Wound Threshold: 14
Unconsciousness Rating: 32

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 1
Knockdown: 9/D8+D6
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 19
Full Movement: 38
Legend Points: 60

Equipment: Curved broadsword
Loot: D6 x 10 silvers
Skills: Melee 2: 6/D10, Streetwise 2: 7/D12, Unarmed Combat 2: 6/D10

Evert is a large obsidiman, standing seven and a half feet tall. His skin is brownish-gray, and he is quite an imposing figure, standing silently in one corner or other of the inn. He normally carries a curved sword tucked into his sash.

Evert is quite loyal to Abu and Annora, having worked here for the past ten years. He cares deeply for the inn, and will use his huge size to intimidate potential troublemakers.

Abu and Annora allow Evert to sleep in the common room, which provides the inn with some protection once it has closed for the night. He awakes at first light and works tirelessly throughout the day.

Milan al Samir - Human Bouncer

DEX: 11: 5/D8 **STR:** 13: 6/D10 **TOU:** 13: 6/D10
PER: 12: 5/D8 **WIL:** 12: 5/D8 **CHA:** 13: 6/D10

Initiative: 5/D8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 7/D12
Damage: 11/D10+D8
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 35
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 27

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 1
Knockdown: 6/D10
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 27
Full Movement: 54
Legend Points: 55

Equipment: Leather armor, curved broadsword, club

Loot: D6 x 10 silvers

Skills: Flirting 2: 8/2D6, Melee 2: 7/D12, Streetwise 2: 7/D12, Unarmed Combat 2: 7/12

Milan is The Oasis' other bouncer. He is a dark-haired, dark-eyed, handsome man who enjoys flirting with the female patrons. He has tried to sleep with all of the attractive dancers and barmaids in the inn, though most have gotten tired of him.

Milan arrives during the lunch rush, and stays until closing. He fancies himself a skilled warrior, and will not back down from a fight.

Leigh - Elven Barkeeper

DEX: 11: 5/D8 **STR:** 9: 4/D6 **TOU:** 8: 4/D6
PER: 13: 6/D10 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 11: 5/D8

Initiative: 5/D8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 7/D12
Damage: 4/D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 28
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 19

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 4/D6
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 29
Full Movement: 57
Legend Points: 50

Equipment: Bar things, dog

Loot: 3D6 x 10 silvers

Skills: Conversation 4: 9/D8+D6, Legends and Heroes 2: 8/2D6, Local Lore 3: 9/D8+D6, Music: Flute 1: 6/D10, Speak Languages 8: 14/D20+D4 (Dwarven, Elf, Human, Obsidiman, Ork, Troll, T'skrang, Windling), Unarmed Combat 2: 7/D12

Leigh is a silvery-blond elf with violet eyes who dresses in colorful clothes, and always has a ready smile on his face.

Leigh comes in around five and stays until closing. He tends bar and engages the customers in conversation. He is friendly, and seen as being slightly exotic by the clientele.

Pascal - Human Barkeeper

DEX: 9: 4/D6 **STR:** 9: 4/D6 **TOU:** 10: 5/D8
PER: 12: 5/D8 **WIL:** 9: 4/D6 **CHA:** 10: 5/D8

Initiative: 4/D6
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 4/D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 4/D6
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 24
Full Movement: 48
Legend Points: 40

Equipment: Bar things, dog

Loot: 3D6 x 10 silvers

Skills: Conversation 4: 8/2D6, Legends and Heroes 2: 7/D12, Local Lore 3: 8/2D6, Music: Flute 1: 6/D10, Speak Languages 8: 13/D12+D10 (Dwarven, Elf, Human, Obsidiman, Ork, Troll, T'skrang, Windling), Unarmed Combat 2: 6/D10

Pascal is a black haired man who is friendly and outgoing. He is in love with Anika and sometimes causes a scene when a patron pays too much attention to her.

Pascal comes in for the noon rush, and leaves after dinner, around nine. During this time, he does his job, and enjoys talking with the patrons, but he always has his eye out for Anika.

Anika, Dorea, Flavia, Nuala - Barmaids / Dancers

DEX: 11: 5/D8 **STR:** 9: 4/D6 **TOU:** 10: 5/D8
PER: 11: 5/D8 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 14: 6/D10

Initiative: 5/D8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 4/D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 4/D6
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 27
Full Movement: 45
Legend Points: 50

Equipment: Clothes, smile
Loot: 2D6 silvers
Skills: Bartending 2: 7/D12, Dancing 2: 8/2D6, Flirting 3: 9/D8+D6, Singing 1: 7/D12, Unarmed Combat 1: 6/D10

Anika and Flavia come in for the noon meal and stay until nine in the evening. Dorea and Nuala arrive around five and stay until closing. They are all dark-haired beauties who both serve drinks and meals, and dance for the patrons. They wear revealing silk clothes, and enjoy flirting with the customers.

Anika knows that Pascal is infatuated with her, but she hopes to attract a man of wealth and position, and does not wish to settle down with a "mere" bartender. Flavia often teases her about her love struck suitor.

Amber and Fawn - Elven Barmaids / Dancers

DEX: 13: 6/D10 **STR:** 9: 4/D6 **TOU:** 8: 4/D6
PER: 12: 5/D8 **WIL:** 11: 5/D8 **CHA:** 15: 6/D10

Initiative: 6/D10
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 7/D12
Damage: 4/D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 28
Wound Threshold: 7

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1
Knockdown: 4/D6
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 33
Full Movement: 65

Unconsciousness Rating: 19 **Legend Points:** 55

Equipment: Clothes, smile

Loot: 2D6 silvers

Skills: Bartending 2: 7/D12, Dancing 3: 9/D8+D6, Flirting 4: 10/D10+D6, Singing 1: 7/D12, Unarmed Combat 1: 7/D12

Amber and Fawn are two elven sisters who dance and wait tables at The Oasis. Amber's light blond hair and blue eyes make her a rarity in Travar and she has many admirers. Fawn's tawny brown hair and green eyes make her almost as rare, and fights often break out between those who admire one over the other.

One of the sisters is scheduled to come in from noon to nine and the other is supposed to work from five until closing. The two sisters usually switch shifts whenever they feel like it, much to Abu's annoyance, but they are so good with the customers that he doesn't dare fire them.

Alban, Kian, Tyrus - Human Musicians

DEX: 12: 5/D8 **STR:** 10: 5/D8 **TOU:** 11: 5/D8
PER: 13: 6/D10 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 14: 6/D10

Initiative: 5/D8 **Physical Defense:** 7

Number of Attacks: 1 **Spell Defense:** 7

Attack: 6/D10 **Social Defense:** 8

Damage: 7/D12 **Armor:** 0

Number of Spells: 0 **Mystic Armor:** 0

Spellcasting: 0 **Knockdown:** 5/D8

Effect: 0 **Recovery Tests:** 2

Death Rating: 32 **Combat Movement:** 29

Wound Threshold: 8 **Full Movement:** 57

Unconsciousness Rating: 24 **Legend Points:** 55

Equipment: Musical instrument, dagger, colorful clothes

Loot: D6 x 10 silvers

Skills: Acting 2: 8/2D6, Emotion Song 2: 8/2D6, Etiquette 2: 8/2D6, Flirting 2: 8/2D6, Legends and Heroes 2: 8/2D6, Melee Weapons 1: 6/D10, Play Instrument 3: 9/D8+D6

Alban is a dark haired man native to Travar. He plays the drum for the trio, supplying the beat for the dancers. He is a slow and steady person, and is the most reliable out of the trio.

Kian is a sandy haired man from Bartertown. He plays the flute for the trio, and is often found trying to pick up attractive female patrons during the band's breaks.

Tyrus is another dark haired man from Travar. He plays a strange stringed instrument called the bikir. It has three strings and a fret board. He is more flamboyant than his band mates and does the negotiating for them (he has Haggling 3: 9/D8+D6).

Binah and Jovanna - Human Chambermaids

DEX: 12: 5/D8 **STR:** 11: 5/D8 **TOU:** 11: 5/D8
PER: 13: 6/D10 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 13: 6/D10

Initiative: 5/D8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 8/2D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 32
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 5/D8
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 29
Full Movement: 57
Legend Points: 50

Equipment: Craft tools (including something used as a club), padded cloth armor
Loot: D6 x 10 silvers
Skills: Etiquette 2: 8/2D6, Cleaning 3: 9/D8+D6, Melee 1: 6/D10

Binah and Jovanna are attractive young women who come in and clean the rooms after the noon meal when patrons have to check out. They both hope to become barmaids and sometimes stay and watch the entertainment after they have finished cleaning. They are each only sixteen, and are easily impressed by travelers who have tales to tell.

Binah is dark haired and dark eyes, as is common in Travar. She is a little shy, and tends to be quiet. Jovanna is a light brown haired girl who is more outgoing and aggressive. She will question travelers about where they are from and what they have seen.

The Tavern

Room#	Description

1	**The Common Room** - This is the main room of the tavern. It is where the dining and dancing and music takes place. The room has pillows and low tables throughout it where patrons can recline and relax while snacking on food and watching the barmaids dance. Silks hang from the ceiling and the walls, giving the room a soft and relaxing feel. The bar is also located in this room, and this is the area that Abu is most likely to be found. Underneath the bar is the cash box where the day's receipts are kept. The drawer on top has 4D6 x 10 silvers in assorted coppers, silvers and gold. There is a slot underneath the drawer where excess cash is dropped. This will usually contain an additional 2D10 x 10 silvers by the end of the lunch shift, and 4D10 x 10 silvers after dinner. This section is bolted to the bar, and locked with a small padlock (needing a 7 to be opened).
2	**The Oasis** - This section of the tavern is open to the sky, though there are silk and canvas awnings scattered about. This area has tables and benches, and the patrons can enjoy eating in the great outdoors. At night this area is lit by light quartzes behind some of the colorful silks. In the center of this courtyard is a natural spring that gives The Oasis its name.
3	**The Kitchen** - This is where the meals are prepared for the tavern. It is here that Annora can be usually found. She considers this to be her domain and anyone entering had better have a good reason.
4	**The Storeroom** - This room contains all the supplies needed for the kitchen, and some of the miscellaneous supplies needed for running the tavern. During the day it is unlocked as the kitchen staff constantly needs to get in and out, but after closing it is locked (needing a 7 to open).
5	**Abu and Annora's Room** - This bedroom is nicely furnished with a beautiful rug, silks hanging from the walls, and a large bed covered with pillows. There is a wardrobe in the corner and a chest by the side of the bed. A cabinet, small table and two chairs make up the rest of the furniture. The wardrobe contains Abu and Annora's extra clothes, and the chest (locked, needing an 8 to open) contains some of their other possessions, including a beautifully carved jade elephant (worth 100 silvers), 2 Booster Potions, and 2 Healing Potions. The cabinet contains a small cask of dwarven stout, and three bottles of wine, each worth 20 silvers. There are a set of four glasses on a tray kept in the cabinet. Under the rug is a hiding place where Abu keeps a strongbox (needing a PER Test of 8 to find). The strongbox is locked (needing a 7 to open), and contains 4D6 x 10 silvers, 2D6 gold, and 1D6 gems worth 3D6 x 10 silvers each.

6	**The Private Rooms** - These rooms all have large beds that can sleep three, a trunk, a small table, and two chairs. There are rugs on the floors, and most have a wall hanging or two. The rooms all have doors that lock (needing a 7 to open), and can be barred from the inside.
7	**Private Rooms with Baths** - These rooms are identical to the other private rooms, but have large brass bath tubs, and a hand pump that will pump water from the oasis into the tub. There are small coal heaters underneath each tub that can be used to heat the water to whatever temperature the patron desires.
8	**The Latrines** - These rooms are the typical latrines of the day, usually long planks with holes in them mounted over deep holes in the ground. Each room has six stalls.

Adventure Seeds

1. The players witness a small party taking place in the common room. One of the guests seems to drink more than he can handle, and a few of his friends show up and help him out. Later, news comes out that one of the champions due to compete in the Founding has disappeared. A reward of 5000 silvers is offered for his return. The missing champion was kidnapped by thugs working for another Magistrate who wishes to insure his continued position. He will do his best to thwart the players' investigation. The players can make important friends, and important enemies during this investigation.
2. There has been a rash of thefts occuring in the middle of the night. Rooms have been expertly broken into and robbed. Abu hires the players to catch the thief and hopefully recover some of the stolen loot. The thief ends up being a female Thief Adept of great beauty and cunning who will do her best to escape the player's clutches.

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The Raven

by David Caraley

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal*** #3

The Raven is an inn located in a low-rent neighborhood in Kratas. It is a rambling two story structure made of stone. It was once an old town watch building, but Klevis, the owner, took over the building during some local gang wars. He then converted it to an inn, but the tavern and the rooms do retain the atmosphere of a stone jailhouse. A feature that attracts certain clientele.

When you enter, you step down onto a stone floor. There are several heavy wooden tables with benches for seats, and a bar against the far wall (where the cash box is kept, containing 4D6 x 10 silvers in assorted coins). A stone stairway leads up at the left wall, and a hall leads deeper into the building at the rear. The crowd is quiet, sitting in groups, talking in hushed tones, playing cards or dice, and drinking ale or wine. They don't appear even remotely interested in you. There are two women serving drinks and trays of bread and cheeses. The man behind the bar looks you over. He stands about 5' 10" and looks busy. Cleaning glasses and mugs, wiping down the bar, serving customers, constantly on the move. He has shaggy brown hair hanging in the way of his dark brown eyes. "What can I do for you?"

The Raven is a "cheap inn" where it costs 5 coppers to stay in the common room overnight, and 1 silver to have one of the private rooms. The private rooms have one large bed that can sleep three people, and a large trunk. The doors can be barred from the inside, and the windows still have bars on them from when this was a town watch building. There are hasps on the outside of the doors that a patron could put his own lock on if he wished to keep the room secured when he was out.

The Raven offers average ale for 5 coppers, and good ale for 1 silver. It serves both simple meals of cheeses, breads, and fruits for 3 coppers and average meals of fatty meat or pork, bread, cheeses, fruit, and a mug of average ale for 1 silver.

The tavern closes at two in the morning. At this point, Klevis will take the day's cash and head home, using the darkness of night as a cover. Harris will bar the doors from the inside, and the guests can get some rest. Harris will then lay out his bedroll behind the bar. Upon occasion Harris has been known to let people in past closing, for a fee of a few silvers, of course.

The Staff

Klevis - The Owner

Third Circle Thief Adept

DEX: 16: 7/D12 **STR:** 10: 5/D8 **TOU:** 10: 5/D8
PER: 16: 7/D12 **WIL:** 13: 6/D10 **CHA:** 13:6/D10

Initiative: 7/D12

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: Melee 10/D10+D6; Surprise 9/D8+D6

Damage: S. Sword 9/D8+D6, Dagger 7/D12 or 16/D20+D8 by surprise

Number of Spells: 0

Spellcasting: 0

Effect: 0

Death Rating: 46

Wound Threshold: 8

Unconsciousness Rating: 36

Equipment: Short sword, dagger, padded cloth

Loot: 1D12 x 10 silvers

Physical Defense: 9

Spell Defense: 7

Social Defense: 7

Armor: 2

Mystic Armor: 1

Knockdown: 5/D8

Recovery Tests: 2

Combat Movement: 38

Full Movement: 75

Legend Points: 300

Talents:
Avoid Blow 2: 9/D8+D6, Climbing 3: 10/D10+D6, Durability 3, Fence 4: 10/D10+D6, Karma Ritual 2, Lock Pick 3: 10/D10+D6, Lock Sense 2: 9/D8+D6, Melee Weapons 3: 10/D10+D6, Pick Pockets 3: 10/D10+D6, Silent Walk 3: 10/D10+D6*, Surprise Strike 2: 9/D8+D6

Skills:
Appraise Goods 4: 11/D10+D8, Read/Write 3: 10/D10+D6 (Dwarven, Human, Orkish), Speak Language 4: 11/D10+D8 (Dwarven, Human, Orkish, Troll), Streetwiae 3: 9/D8+D6, Tale Telling 2: 8/2D6

Commentary:
Klevis is a man in his mid-fifties. He stands 5' 8" tall and is of average build. He has dark brown hair going gray, and quick brown eyes. He had been a rising young thief who managed to make one very good score. Good enough to pay Garthik One-Eye for the right to open The Raven. For a while, Klevis was happy, living in retirement and running his small inn, but eventually he began to feel the need to get his hands back into the game, and started to operate a fencing ring that buys stolen goods and sells them to merchants and traders that take them out of the city. He does a good business, and is happy once more. While at the inn, he plays at being a bartender, but really just hangs out and socializes with his friends while waiting for his next business deal.

Gorlis - Ork Bartender

DEX: 8: 4/D6 **STR:** 12: 5/D8 **TOU:** 11: 5/D8
PER: 12: 5/D8 **WIL:** 7: 4/D6 **CHA:** 9: 4/D6

Initiative: 4/D6
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 5/D8
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 32
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 24
Equipment: Bar things, dog
Loot: 3D6 x 10 silvers

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2
Knockdown: 5/D8
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 25
Full Movement: 50
Legend Points: 40

Skills:
Conversation 4: 8/2D6, Legends and Heroes 2: 7/D12, Local Lore 3: 8/2D6, Music: Flute 1: 6/D10, Speak Languages 8: 13/D12+D10 (Dwarven, Elf, Human, Obsidiman, Ork, Troll, T'skrang, Windling), Unarmed Combat 2: 6/D10

Commentary:
Gorlis is a quiet Ork that comes in, does his job, and leaves when his shift is over at sunset. He knows that the entire city is filled with thieves, but prefers to do an honest day's work for honest pay. He is sure that Klevis is still involved in illegal activity, but Gorlis wants to know nothing about it.

Harris - Human Bartender

DEX: 9: 4/D6 **STR:** 9: 4/D6 **TOU:** 10: 5/D8
PER: 12: 5/D8 **WIL:** 9: 4/D6 **CHA:** 10: 5/D8

Initiative: 4/D6
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 4/D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 4/D6
Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22
Equipment: Bar things, dog
Loot: 3D6 x 10 silvers
Combat Movement: 24
Full Movement: 48
Legend Points: 40

Skills:
Conversation 4: 8/2D6, Legends and Heroes 2: 7/D12, Local Lore 3: 8/2D6, Music: Flute 1: 6/D10, Speak Languages 8: 13/D12+D10 (Dwarven, Elf, Human, Obsidiman, Ork, Troll, T'skrang, Windling), Streetwise 2: 7/D12, Unarmed Combat 2: 6/D10

Commentary:
A slick operator who stands about 5' 10" with dark features, Harris knows about all of the illegal doings in the tavern, and can arrange a meeting with Klevis to fence stolen goods. He is trusted by Klevis, and makes a little money on the side by keeping Garthik One-Eye, the magistrate of Kratas, informed of anything interesting that passes through the inn.

Harris is the evening bartender, coming in at sunset and working until closing.

Marla - Female Human Cook

DEX: 12: 5/D8 **STR:** 11: 5/D8 **TOU:** 11: 5/D8
PER: 13: 6/D10 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 13: 6/D10

Initiative: 5/D8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 8/2D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 32
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 24
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 5/D8
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 29
Full Movement: 57
Legend Points: 50
Equipment: Craft tools (including something used as a club), padded cloth armor
Loot: D6 x 10 silvers

Skills:
Appraise Food and Drink 3: 9/D8+D6, Cooking 3: 9/D8+D6, Melee 1: 6/D10, Trading 3: 8/2D6

Commentary:
Marla is a middle aged woman who makes her living cooking at the inn, and then goes home to her husband, a mundane thief. She watches the patrons of the tavern, and will sometimes suggest marks for her husband to prey upon.

Nevvi, Hannah - Human Barmaids

DEX: 11: 5/D8 **STR:** 9: 4/D6 **TOU:** 10: 5/D8
PER: 11: 5/D8 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 14: 6/D10

Initiative: 5/D8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 4/D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22
Equipment: Clothes, smile
Loot: 2D6 silvers

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 8
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 27
Full Movement: 45
Legend Points: 50

Skills:
Bartending 2: 7/D12, Flirting 3: 9/D8+D6, Singing 1: 7/D12, Unarmed Combat 1: 6/D10

Commentary:
Nevvi is a dark haired beauty with mysterious eyes. She is sultry and quiet. She does her job, and if she spots someone who is attractive, and the person seems to have money, she is willing to suggest a "private" meeting in the person's room for more discreet entertainment. The cost of that type of entertainment is usually 2 silvers for an hour, or 5 silvers for the night.

Hannah is a blond haired, blue eyed girl who seems filled with energy. She flirts openly with the customers, She is also willing to make "arrangements" with customers, but will just as often go off with someone for fun as for profit. Roll a CHA test against her Social Defense. With a normal success, she will charge 2 silvers, with a Good success she will go for nothing.

Adventure Seeds

1. A new gang in Kratas is slowly taking over the block. They are trying to muscle in on The Raven, and Klevis is trying to remain independent. After a few violent incidents at the tavern, and a ruined beer and ale shipment, Klevis is ready to hire some help to raid the stronghold of the gang. He can identify a few of these new gang members, and is willing to pay a flat 1000 silvers for someone to teach these ruffians a lesson.
2. Klevis has come into the possession of an item of value and has a buyer in Travar. He is willing to pay for adventurers to take the item to Travar and deliver it. He also knows that a business rival may try to liberate the item before it can be delivered. You can make this as dangerous as you wish, with creature encounters, a pursuing gang trying to take the item, and even the buyer trying to avoid paying.

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Servalen

From the accounts of Tarliman Joppos

Located on the shore of Lake Pyros, Servalen is a bustling, brawling community of some 7,500 Name-givers at best estimate. There being no central tax rolls, and what with the scorchers varying the number of troops in town with no warning, determining population is difficult. Many of the people in Servalen are transients, ork scorchers and riverboat crews on liberty, mercenaries waiting to be hired, explorers staging for expeditions into the jungle, and merchants from Urupa, Ardatha and further working out deals with local traders.

Servalen is a village that outgrew itself, whose government did not anticipate the popularity that their location would bring. Being set on the shore of Lake Pyros brings a good deal of trade to the city, although not as much as in safer regions. Having a dangerous jungle at their doorsteps (and frequently creeping in as well) brought the villagers to believe that few would come.

Instead, the dangers of pirates on the lake, poisonous animals and savages in the jungle, and the Thunder Mountains to the south brought a good number of Name-givers. The sort it brought, though, were not what the villagers would have preferred. In a few short years after the village's founding, bars and military equipment shops outnumbered what the original villagers considered more legitimate businesses. Although the situation is not as bad as in Kratas, the disreputable element certainly has the upper hand.

Center Shantaya's Sextant on Throal, and align point U on Parlainth. Sight along point daleth. Follow Thystonius midnight. Servalen lies 10 days ride, 16 days walk from Throal.

About the Layout of the City

Servalen is loosely organized into the Docks, the Market, the Bilge and the Hill. The outlying farms are close by, and indeed the boundaries between city and farmland are vague.

The Docks include the piers and the region immediately surrounding them. Bars and flophouses are prevalent in this district, as are warehouses and the offices of the traders who

make their living from the riverboat traffic. This is a dangerous area during the day. At night, travellers should move in groups of no less than five, keep a hand on a weapon and know the location of the nearest questor of Garlen.

> **Kitavik Hechen**, Peaceforcer. A lithe, graceful human in her late forties, Kitavik is an accomplished swordmaster, having attained the ninth circle. She and her partner, Lassiminde Downspinner, an Elven warrior of grim and silent demeanor, have patrolled the Docks for the last seven years. Kitavik is determined to keep the rot from spreading, and if some of her prisoners find their trip to the magistrate cut short by a stroll off the end of a pier, well, that's one less prisoner to be sold off to the pits. Her enforcement of the law tends to be harsh and quick, more tempered by justice than mercy. Lassiminde being a Questor of Mynbruje, he tends to back up her decisions more often than he argues with them. The two are known locally as Ice and Stone. More than one attempt to do away with them has ended with the would-be assassins swinging from a rope, or being fished out of the river downstream. Of note, most of the law-abiding citizens of the Docks get along with the pair quite well, and are normally happy to see them. Recently, Kitavik has adopted a human child orphaned by robbers, and is training the boy in the ways of her Discipline. Rumor has it that she is thinking of retiring from the Peaceforcers as soon as her replacement is ready.

The Market is a random collection of shops, stalls, pushcarts and blankets spread with goods that extends inland and north from the Docks. Here the merchandise that comes off the river is sold, and local products are bought for shipment elsewhere. The smoke of the smithies, the stench of the beast-sellers and the tanners and the butchers, and the noise of hundreds of people all hawking their wares is enough to produce headaches. There is neither rhyme nor reason in the arrangement of the shops or the streets, and indeed in some areas the traffic lanes will shift and change according to where the mobile vendors have set up for the day.

> **Litallo Mosvendar**, spice merchant. Owner of one of the more prestigious shops in the Market, built of stone with magical protections against thieves (and a very large dog with a taste for live meals), Litallo makes his home on the Hill. He deals in large quantities of spices both native and imported, supplying the city's larger kitchens and food preparation industries, such as the smokehouses and the butchers. His shop caters to the wealthier clientele, carrying smaller quantities of staples and exotics. His daughter, Salira, is a budding socialite given to lawn parties at the Mosvendar residence. Invitations to these parties are capriciously given, sometimes on the spur of the moment should Salira encounter an out of town bard or other promising entertainment. Her parents put up with a great deal, making exceptions for her occasional bouts of wild behavior and telling themselves that if they could only re-establish themselves in a better location, closer to Throal, that she would not be so bored and would settle down. In the meantime, Litallo maintains an even temper and goes on with his business. He dresses conservatively, by Elven standards, and has an open, honest face, if a bit careworn.

Mosta Verdeen, elementalist for hire. Mosta is a round, enthusiastic dwarven woman with a terrific gusto for life. She dresses in brilliant colors and lots of sparkly jewelry, laughs loudly and enjoys her work. Her shop in the Market is crammed full of trinkets, magical novelties, potions and just plain junk, making it difficult for anyone larger than her to maneuver. Mosta does a thriving business in cold chests, boxes with elemental air and water woven into them to chill anything placed inside. She also sells a lot of charms and magical weapons to mercenaries and scorchers, as well as providing basic household items such as firelighters to the general populace. Mosta serves as the hub of Servalen's tiny spellweaver community, holding frequent gatherings at her house up on the Hill where far too much food and drink is served and the guests spend the evening gossiping, trading magical techniques and generally enjoying themselves. Travelling magickers are invited if Mosta knows that they are in town.

The Bilge extends south from the Docks, and inland a little ways. More bars, more flophouses, houses of ill repute, gaming parlors, and all the services a pirate or scorcher seeks on liberty are here. Illicit goods are traded in the street. Weapons and the skill and nerve to use them are mandatory. The city fathers would love to see a good fire rage through this district, but fear the repercussions if such a thing were to happen.

Jacor Rosten, proprietor, Grinning Skull. Better known as Three-Finger Rosten, Jacor owns and bartends one of the more popular watering holes for free lances. This is definitely the place to hire mercenaries who will not ask embarrassing questions. Be prepared to buy several rounds, as tradition dictates that the prospective employer provide the refreshments during negotiations. Three-Finger is a human swordmaster who lost part of his dominant hand to a Theran in a border conflict. He still wears his old uniform tunic, and boasts loudly that he still fits into it well, which he actually does. He despises Therans far beyond the usual Barsaivian distaste, and will gladly help out with contacts and connections any effort that is likely to harm the Empire. The Skull is a typical Bilge bar, wooden walls and dry-leaf roof, with trophies of past campaigns strewn liberally about for decoration. Strong drinks of average to poor quality are all that are available. There are private rooms available for interviewing, at a cost of four silver per hour.

Diktain Shieldeater, pitmaster at Three Arrows. A massive ork retired from the Red Fangs tribe, Diktain runs the fighting pit that is the primary attraction at Three Arrows. He arranges the fights in cooperation with the betmaster, oversees the animal handlers and the guards for the prisoners, and announces the fights. On occasion, he breaks up trouble in or around the pit. Diktain takes no guff and gives no slack. His name comes from an incident during his fighting years, when a Theran locked blades with him, and the two stood glaring at each other, shield to shield, both straining for an advantage. Diktain leaned to one side, and took a bite out of the Theran's shield. The move cost him a broken tusk, but it so unnerved the Theran that he dropped his guard. Diktain still has

both the shield and the head of the Theran, both mounted on the wall in his office. The tusk he had capped with gold. Off duty, he can be found either in his office doing the paperwork, or out front, drinking with other scorchers. What he does not know about the trade in animals and prisoners could be writ large on a windling's toenail with room left over.

G'vork Haultimber, enforcer for the Bilge Taverners Guild. A former crystal raider who got his name from his habit of carrying a tree as a club, G'vork has the swamp-end of the Bilge in his charge. His job is to collect the Guild dues from each tavern and bar, ensure that the proprietor is buying his supplies from approved sources, and act as a watchman for the area. If a Guild tavern gets into trouble that its own bouncers can't handle, G'vork and his dozen or so underlings can be summoned to deal with the problem. This prevents bar fights from damaging business, at the expense of damaging a few customers. G'vork knows personally every bartender, bar owner, ale cart driver, bouncer, butcher's delivery boy and hostel operator in his district. He recognizes on sight all regular customers and streetwalkers, as well as anyone who has ever made enough trouble to require his attention (and survived). The green tunic he favors, with the Taverners Guild emblem on the sleeves and over the right breast like a badge, makes him very easy to spot.

The Hill is a long, narrow rise of land extending from the north of the Market inland to the north and west. Most of the citizens who do not work in the Bilge or at the Docks have their residences here, above some of the smoke and noise and stench. There are also a few passable inns here, including one or two with Guild marks -- although the traveller would do well to question the validity of those marks.

Beyond the Bilge is swamp, jungle and shoreline. There is very little room to expand further outward, away from the city, thus the Bilge has begun to expand into the Market. Beyond the Market is farmland, and of course the Hill. The residents of the Hill keep a fearful eye on the border between the Market and the Bilge. They do not like to see their buffer zone diminishing, and the rot growing closer.

About the Appearance of the City

Servalen has no fire laws, or at least none that are enforced. Buildings are thrown together out of whatever is at hand, mostly wood. Unfortunately, stone would be a better choice throughout most of the area, due to the proximity of the jungle. Termites and wood-boring beetles find the city a feast, wood that does not resist their presence. The continual dampness encourages rot. The wooden structures fight a constant battle to keep from crumbling or collapsing outright.

In the Bilge, stone is simply out of the question. The ground is soft, almost marshy at the southern end. Land subsidence precludes the use of heavy building materials. While tile or

thatch is a preferred roofing material elsewhere, in the Bilge the large green leaves of the jungle trees, some as large as a troll's shield, are often used. While still green, these leaves provide good roofing, as they are resistant to catching fire from stray sparks, and shed rain like a duck. When dry, however, and this does take a long time in the humid climate, the leaves become no better than tinder for the first spark that happens along. Rain pelting down on the dry leaves makes a sound like gravel pouring onto metal. Conversation is impossible inside a leaf-roofed building during a storm.

The Hill generally uses the frame and plaster technique common throughout Barsaive, and roofs with tile or thatch depending upon the owner's wealth. More houses are roofed with thatch, obviously, than with tile. Fire is not as much of a hazard here, due in part to well-trained fire brigades, and partly to the houses being set a little apart from each other whenever possible. Some of the larger structures, such as the homes of wealthier inhabitants and the inns, will have their first story made of stone, and any upper levels of wood and plaster. Creosote, a black, sticky tar obtained from the swamps south of town, is smeared liberally about the foundations of the buildings to ward off insects, usually for a foot up the walls and out along the ground. Some of the buildings will also have poured creosote on the ground before construction of the floor. These places will have a distinctive oily smell permeating the entire structure.

Most buildings will have large windows with metal bars across the openings. The reason for this somewhat odd arrangement becomes obvious if one considers the environment. A large opening is required to allow even the slightest breeze. On the other hand, with thieves abounding, the bars are also a necessity to protect the building from invasion. The gaps between the bars, alas, are too large to prevent small creatures and insects from entering. Most building owners cannot afford the fine wire mesh that the wealthier Hillers and merchants use to completely stop the outdoors from becoming the indoors.

About the Populace

The original villagers were human, elven and windling, with a scattering of dwarves and few of other races. Once the village became a going concern, scorcher tribes returning from duty near Death's Sea and in the southern mountains began setting up hostels for their people, which meant orks taking up permanent residence to run the establishments. T'skrang also began to frequent the town as river trade picked up.

At the time of this writing, the population is largely human and ork, with some elves, many t'skrang in the Bilge and Docks regions, and a few members of other races. The windlings who have stayed seem to be adventuring and thieving clans who do not as a rule raise children in the city.

The populace is divided into two primary groups, the Dockers and the Hillers. The Dockers are all those who make their living in the Docks or the Bilge, and who, while they might like

to see their lot improve, are not in favor of ridding the city of its unsavory element. The Hillers are largely those who live on the Hill, who would like to see the Bilge burn flat to the ground and the city return to being a quiet farming community. The two clash frequently, often violently. If something does not resolve the situation soon, the city may erupt into open warfare between the two groups.

About the Government

Servalen is ostensibly governed by a council of nine elders, as the kaer it came from was during the Scourge. These elders are chosen by the council from the residents of the city when there is an opening. The council makes laws, creates taxes, disposes of city revenues, and generally sees to the operation of the city. There is a court system, based on Throalic law, that answers to the council, with seven magistrates for the Hill and Market.

In reality, the council controls only the Hill and the outlying farmlands, and has some measure of control over the Market. The council's Peaceforcers, who have in their charge maintaining adherence to the law, act as a watch as well as providing bailiffs to the magistrates. They are overburdened with the Market and their attempts to create order on the Docks, and do not normally venture into the Bilge. The general attitude on the Hill is to let the Bilge sink into its own rot. With any luck, a riot will break out one night and by morning the Bilge will have removed itself from existence. If a Bilgerat kills another Bilgerat, well, that's one less rat in existence.

Thus, the extent of the law, its enforcement and interpretation is determined by the area of the city. Throalic law holds sway on the Hill, has a loose grip on the Market and the Docks, and may as well not exist in the Bilge.

Concerning Business in Servalen

While the Market does not offer the variety of the Throalic Bazaar, it does have a good selection of smithwork, leather and cheap jewelry, and exotic spices. Nearly anything made of metal, especially items needed in war, is available. Prices tend to be higher than in Throal by some ten to thirty percent, partially due to the distance raw materials for ironmongery must travel.

T'skrang goods, including fish and river spices, are in plentiful supply. More exotic spices harvested from the jungle are also offered for sale. Some of these can be quite surprising to the palate. The traveller is advised to be wary of the tiny yellow peppers, usually sold dried or pickled but occasionally fresh. One of these requires an entire pitcher of ale to quench the flames. On the other hand, there is a pungent root that the farmers dig up in the jungle that is

quite pleasing when ground fine and added to stews and grilled meats.

In the Bilge, many items are offered for sale, most of which are not legal, or at least frowned upon, under the Throalic code. Poisons, fell magicks, and dangerous drugs can be found with a very few questions. The buyer of course assumes all risk, both for the possession of the item and for anything untoward that occurs in the process of making the deal. There are rumors that some of the houses of ill repute are involved in the slave trade with Thera, either as suppliers or customers, or as both.

The market closes for the early afternoon. The climate is simply too hot to do much of anything during this part of the day. Most natives retire indoors to spend the time in quiet pursuits, card games, catching up on the accounting, or sleeping. The market reopens shortly before the dinner hour, and most shops do not close until an hour past sundown.

Because of the heat, elementalists do a thriving business in cold chests and magically-produced ice. Some of the bars will keep their ale casks in cold chests. Chilled drinks are quite popular, but bring a high price, up to three times what would normally be paid for the beverage.

On Lodging

The traveller with either no care for his safety, or with sufficient force of arms, companions and reputation may find pallets or rooms on the Docks for a very minimal price. This price may rise sharply in the middle of the night, however, as the charge for the lodgings is renegotiated over the edge of a dagger. The Bilge has inns that offer rooms, but they are pest-ridden and plagued with thieves. Again, there are rumors of slavers, and of people who have gone upstairs to bed and gone out the back unconscious into the hands of the Therans.

The inns on the Hill are by far the safest choice. Two are worth mentioning.

> **Barking Ligana** has a brightly colored local lizard rampant with its mouth open upon its shingle. Its Guild mark has been recently renewed. Harl Jerren, the human proprietor, is a cautious sort, careful about who he lets his rooms to, and quick to call the Peaceforcers at the first sign of trouble. The food is good, if unimaginative, and worth the money. His stable is guarded by one of the largest trolls in the province, known only as Dicer, probably from his habits with the cutlass he carries -- the blade is easily the length of a human's leg. There is no bathhouse at the time of this writing, as the piping to carry water from upriver had been damaged in a storm. The locks are sturdy, and so are the doors, and the windows all have bars over them that are easily released from inside but not from without. The ale is only passable, as it is made upriver and does not travel well.

Kygren's Roost. The shingle bears a nest with a large, ungainly water bird perched precariously over it. This seems somehow appropriate, as the inn is perched at the brow of the hill, looking out over the Market. The building has obviously been added to several times, by different builders, none of whom had more than passing relationship with Upandal. The floors are a tiny bit tilted in spots, some of the doors stick from being out of true, and travellers should know not to set their mugs on the mantel, as the mortar is not that solid. The proprietor is a great, grinning scarecrow of a human named Velden Budgden, who seems a bit askew himself. While he is an enthusiastic host, and can tell the traveller quite a bit about the city and its environs, his discourse is rambling and spotted with non sequiturs. His wife, Lutha, handles the kitchen, moving her vast bulk from counter to stove to cold-room to pantry with the grace and majesty of a galleon under full sail. She too is a cheerful sort, never without a smile and a fresh-baked pastry to offer. Velden's sons and daughters work in the common room, the bathhouse and the stables, and there are either a great many of them, or they move very quickly. The food is excellent, the ale potable although a bit thin, and there is even a musician on occasion. The entire place just seems a bit odd, something that is perhaps a combination of the architecture and Velden's rambling and his wife's constant cheer, and maybe something else. Whatever it is, Velden should consider applying for a Guild mark, as his inn is worthy of it.

Concerning Entertainment

The chief entertainment on the Hill seems to be worrying about when the Bilge is going to expand large enough to swallow the rest of the city. There are few bards in the city, those that make their home here being folk who could not find a position anyplace else. Thus, the level of talent is generally poor.

Music in the Bilge tends to be river chanties and rude, boisterous soldier's songs, mostly dealing with conquests both martial and amorous. Little dancing is pursued. Some of the better houses of ill repute, if such a place can be said to be better, will bring in musicians from other cities to provide the relaxing strains that help their customers to spend more, or to not notice the drugs in their drink and the fingers in their purse. It does not do to be too good, however, as that distracts customers from the real business, whether that be in a house of ill repute or a bar. Servalen has very little to worry about in this regard.

The primary entertainment in the Bilge consists of drinking contests, fights in the streets and wagering on the same, gambling, and pit fighting. This last custom must certainly have been brought in from Thera, and like the other major Theran import, slavery, Barsaive would be better off without it. A pit is dug into the earth, usually with its sides made higher and steeper with wooden walls. Spectator benches are erected around three sides of the pit. Into the pit are cast two opponents. In Thera, these would be slaves, armed but not armored, and the fight

would be to the death, with only the survivor allowed to climb out of the pit. Here, the opponents may be prisoners of war who are not considered worth ransoming (usually Therans of ignoble birth), criminals, or one or both may be animals. A popular combination is a condemned criminal and a blood monkey. Wagers are made before each bout, with betting continuing up until its resolution. Sometimes the victor is allowed to go free after the match, but this is unusual. It is more likely that those who have lost money on the fight will force the victor into another bout, hoping for his death, or that those who have won money will see a chance for further gain. Hurling objects into the pit to try and influence the fight will invariably result in a brawl in the benches, sometimes with the offender being thrown into the pit himself. This happens two or three times a night, depending upon the crowd and what they have consumed before arriving at the pit. Vendors of ale and grilled meats have their stalls by the entrance. The combined smell of unwashed bodies, sweat, blood, stale beer, smoke and death is enough to turn all but the strongest of stomachs. Sadly, the Peaceforcers have been unable to stop this barbaric practice.

In the Docks, nearly every bar has a game of some sort in the evenings. A few gambling parlors may be found, but these do not turn a brisk trade. Apparently the reputation of the Bilge overshadows whatever the Docks may have to offer. Most of the money that is spent on gambling goes to the Bilge.

There are no playhouses in Servalen.

Concerning Natural Hazards

What with the jungle being so close, an abundance of small and not-so-small animal life has crept over the boundaries and made its home in the city. Chief among these non-Name-giver residents are the mosquitos. These tiny insects feed on blood, draining too small an amount to be noticed, but the bite turns red, swells, and itches abominably for two or three days. Mosquitos travel in clouds of hundreds, and infest the city. Being swarmed by them is enough to harry the most experienced traveller. For some reason, though, they do not seem to bother orks. Perhaps there is something in the blood that they do not like; the cause is unknown. Many people would like to discover what it is. There are two plants that are useful in dealing with these pests, one whose sap repels the beasts and one whose sap relieves the itching. Local apothecaries will be able to supply these. The sap of both is pungent and sticky, considered by some people to be nearly as bad as the insects they ward off.

The city is also infested with tiny orange lizards known by the natives as spoogras. Growing to just under three inches in length, spoogras have a love of salt. This leads them into piles of dirt laundry, searching out old perspiration, into packs and rations looking for dried meats, and generally into places where they are not wanted. Their bite is annoying at worst, even to the smallest and frailest Name-giver, so dealing with them is simple enough -- just toss them aside. Catching them is another matter entirely. Spoogras move like lightning. The fastest hands are sometimes eluded by these irritating creatures. Travellers should be certain to shake

out their boots in the morning before putting them on, and should lock up their rations and other fragile gear in stout wooden or metal chests.

Venomous snakes occasionally crawl out of the jungle. Any shady or cool, damp area near the jungle should be approached with caution. Disturbing a sleeping reptile is a dangerous business. The bite of the larger serpents can generally be dealt with by applying a poultice, but beware of the tiny, brightly-colored snake known as the kyrell. Its bite can slay a troll in the space of three breaths. The kyrell's distinctive pattern of black bands separated by red and yellow stripes should make it easier to avoid.

Spiders are a common sight in Servalen. The inhabitants maintain a cautious but friendly relationship with them. While some of these insects are venomous and can injure or even slay a Name-giver, they devour such a great number of other annoying insects that they tend to be left undisturbed to pursue their quarry. The egg sacs of non-venomous spiders are sought out and placed in safe locations in bars and shops, in the hopes that the spiderlings that hatch will remain in the structure to help free it of mosquitos and flies. The traveller should be aware of the attitude toward spiders, and ask before killing one.

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Tesrae ti'Serenmistishsa

Citadel of the True Followers

by Andrew W. Ragland

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #7***

Overview

After all the ill that is spoken of the Theran Empire, I must in all fairness say that it was simpler to enter the Theran Quarter of Vivane than to visit Tesrae ti'Serenmistishsa. Being dwarven posed no restriction in Vivane, and being Barsaivian in a Theran enclave was at most an inconvenience. My race, however, proved to be a difficulty in the Elven city.

Gaining entry alone was troublesome. I had to swear an oath to avoid disturbing the progression of the inhabitants along their Paths, in excessively vague terms. This severely limited the questions I was able to ask without fear of harsh penalties.

Once inside the city, my every movement was closely watched. Three times I was turned away from a line of questioning, once by a Warrior adept, once by one of the Pathless and the third time by a bailiff, who forbade me to enter the Circle of Lords ever again. Any factual errors are therefore the result of insufficient clarification being available.

These are a harsh and stringent people, who do not approve of scholarly discourse in the normal manner. Studying their way of life was a decidedly unwelcome task. It is my belief that the inhabitants of the Citadel would be more content to remain undocumented, but my commitment to knowledge, my own Discipline, will not allow such a thing to come to pass.

I have been warned of possible reprisals. If they come, then so be it. At least I can know that I have made a contribution to the store of knowledge.

-- Tarliman Joppos, Scholar of City Lore, Hall of Records, Throal

Origins

Tesrae ti'Serenmistishsa was founded centuries before the Scourge, but after the exile of Elianar Messias. The date cannot be pinned down any more exactly without access to city records

restricted to those on the Path of Lords, or a visit to Blood Wood, neither of which are likely.

What can be determined with certainty is that the Separation of Shosara and the exile of the Martyr Scholar set off a series of schisms within Elven society. Many of the Dae'mistishsa drifted further away from strict adherence to the dictates of the Elven Court. Some abandoned the Paths entirely. What is not commonly known is that the more observant Sa'mistishsa also drew away from the Queen. One particular faction apparently decided that Failla's actions divorced her from the Paths, and rendered her and her Court unfit as a model for the strict followers. From what I was able to gather, this faction would have preferred a stronger and more thorough purge of elvendom, to rid the elven people of heretical ways and bring them back into line with the Paths. When Failla did not order such a purge, the hard-line Sa'mistishsa removed themselves to avoid what they saw as corruption of their ancient elven traditions.

Leaving Wyrm Wood, this faction journeyed far to the south, following the general path of the Martyr Scholar, and ending up in the Delaris Mountains. That range's tricky reputation proved itself well-deserved, as the elves were unable to find either Messias or the monastery where he had taken residence. They did, however, find a hospitable valley with fertile ground and a small river, fed by springs high in the peaks. With a few years of hard work, a viable settlement was established.

Over the intervening years, the elves of the Citadel have refined their view of the Paths. Their Eoerin, or scholars who study the Paths and their meaning to the elven people, have extended the domain of the Paths to every facet of their lives. The Paths determined the layout of their city, the design of their homes, trades studied by the non-Adept majority of the population, even who they could and could not associate with or marry. When the Scourge came, the Paths shaped their survival.

Rejecting outright the Court's approach, and caring little about the opinion of Failla's successor, they struck their own bargain with the Therans. After all, the Books of Harrow had been discovered by an elf who argued for the preservation of traditions, who pressed for holding to the established ways so strongly that he was cast out from an increasingly heretical Court. The Rites of Protection and Passage had been developed by his inheritors, people who while they did not follow the Paths followed older traditions still. Designing their kaer to the specifications of the Eoerin, they retreated within to wait out the Scourge.

The current city stands on the same site as its predecessor. Great magics have been worked to restore the valley and to rebuild the Citadel. The Scourge gave the Eoerin hundreds of years to further refine their interpretation of the Paths. Diverging somewhat from the mainstream of Sa'mistishsa thought, their beliefs now pose a further barrier to reunification with the Court and the rest of elvendom.

Location

Tesrae ti'Serenmistishsa lies at the lower end of a deep valley in the Delaris Mountains. Finding the valley with Shantaya's Sextant is virtually impossible, due to the difficulty of seeing the lights

of the Passions from within the mountains, and the shifting nature of the Delaris range. The would-be visitor to the Citadel must either be willing to spend many days hiking about the most confusing peaks in Barsaive, or have a finding stone given to him by one of the inhabitants. How the finding stones lead someone back to their origin when the holder of the stone has never been there, I have no idea.

Government

The inhabitants of the Citadel recognize no power as supreme to their own. They flatly refuse the dictates of the Elven Court, claiming that Failla diverged the Court from the Paths when she exiled Elianar Messias, and that her subsequent actions and those of her successor have taken the Court further and further from the true Elven Way.

Structure

Rule within the Citadel is divided up proportionately among the Paths according to their degree of advancement. Each Path elects representatives to the Council, under a gradated system of representation. There is one council representative for every twenty Lords, one for every fifty Sages, one for every hundred Travelers, one for every hundred and fifty Scholars and one for every two hundred Warriors. Each representative receives a single vote in the council, resulting in the power accruing to those further advanced on the Paths. Thus, the Lords have the greatest say in governance, while the Warriors have the least, and the Pathless none whatsoever.

From the Council a ruling tribunal is elected, seven representatives who form the high authority in the city. Like as not, these are followers of the Lords, and often Questors of Mynbruje. The tribunal elects its own chair, who presides over the tribunal and the Council. Also elected from the tribunal are the commander of the city's armed forces, the overseer of public works and the Keeper of the Paths, more about which in a little. Offices within the tribunal and Council are exclusive of one another, to prevent any one person from amassing too much power.

Council representatives stand for re-election every ten years, with the exception of tribunal members, who stand every twenty. Campaigning for election is generally a quiet process, as the candidates go about their district discussing their past achievements and future goals with their constituency. No public speeches are made, this being felt vulgar. Generally, once someone is elected to the Council, their re-election is almost assured, and they tend to retain their position for life.

Command of the city's military forces falls to an elected member of the tribunal. This officer is responsible for planning the city's defenses, evaluating the level of any potential threat, and having plans in hand to meet emergencies. In concert with the overseer of public works, the commander of the militia prepares disaster response plans to cope with fire, flood, earthquake and Horror infestation. At the time of my visit, the commander was Jael T'lilliu, a follower of the Lords well

into her third century. Battle-hardened during her time on the Path of Warriors, Jael carries a scar across her cheek, just below her left eye, from a sword-cut. Her time on successive paths only seems to have tempered her spirit, as she still carries herself with military bearing and speaks with a drill-yard snap.

Responsible for roads, drainage, sewage, fire control and any other issue that may affect the city's physical fabric, the overseer of public works manages the largest workforce in the city. As well, the overseer may call upon assistance from the militia in case of civil emergency, such as fire or flood. In the case of a siege of the city, while the commander of the military would be responsible for the actual defense of the city, the overseer would make certain that provisions were rationed appropriately, that enough stores were laid by and that the elemental water wells did not run dry. All permits for travel into, within and out of the city are issued from the overseer's office, meaning that the overseer controls the movements of every outsider and all of the Pathless. At the time of this writing, the overseer is Bevian Taesyo, known as Bevian Beadyeyes among the Pathless. A follower of the Lords, Bevian has made a fearsome reputation for himself, holding his office for the last six elections. It is said that nothing in the city escapes his glance, or at least that of his minions. He grips the reins tightly, making certain that every regulation is enforced to the letter. As long as you're prepared to do things his way, you can get along reasonably well. Unfortunately, this means everything takes twice as long and costs twice as much as it should, due to the papers and tariffs involved.

The Telegitish ke'Mes'sa, or Keeper of the Paths, is quite possibly the most powerful officer of the tribunal, and thus wields the greatest sway of anyone in the city. In his charge is the maintenance of the traditions, guidance of the way of life of the inhabitants of the city. Much like a Questor, the Keeper's life is devoted to spiritual goals and their material manifestations. Overseeing the city's Eoerin, the Keeper sits at the head of a spiritual court, that decides whether or not any particular thing, be it an action, a thing or an idea, fits properly in the structure of the Paths. Any prospective change or new interpretation in the Paths must be approved by the court and ultimately the Keeper. Also, the actions of outsiders are subject to the Keeper's court. While outsiders are not subject to the Paths themselves, they are responsible for not interfering with the citizens' progress thereon. I was warned by the bailiff that if I pursued my line of questioning, he would have no choice but to take me before the court for a decision regarding my fate. I am told that the penalties for Path digressions are harsh, ranging from fines to mutilation, and that the penalties for interfering with someone else's Path are worse.

The Keeper, unlike the rest of the tribunal officers, must be a Lord and is elected for life. The current Keeper of the Paths is Orosei Liriliqirz, a woman of strikingly handsome aspect, elected Keeper some thirty-two years ago, not long after she had acceded to the Lords. Barring accident or disease, she should hold the seat for another half-century at least. I have not met her, but I am told she is gracious but stern, disliking direct conflict but not avoiding it, and while stringent in her interpretation of the Paths willing to consider new developments in their light.

The Minister of the Pathless is not an elective position. Rather, it is foisted off on the youngest Lord of the Council, providing such person holds no other office. Danirpin Socrireesa, newly come to the Path of the Lords, is from an otherwise undistinguished family with a long history of civil service. Being a career bureaucrat from a family of such has served him well in his first few years as the Minister of the Pathless, allowing him to avoid the obvious pitfalls. He has managed to be a fair advocate for the city's Pathless without ever once seeming to defend their status or

their choices. As such, he'll probably be stuck with the office for as long as he sits on the Council.

Law

The primary legal authority in the Citadel is the Paths. From interpretations of the Paths, all subsidiary law is drawn. The court of the Keeper, which meets in the College of Eoerin, oversees a system of lower and higher courts. Judges of the lower courts are charged with seeing to lesser infractions. They may institute any penalty short of mutilation or death. Higher courts serve as a route of appeal, filtering through only the most troublesome cases to the court of the Keeper for a final decision. Only the court of the Keeper may institute drastic punishments, and then only for major offences such as murder or deliberate interference with Path progression.

There is a written code of law, the Code of the Keeper, which consists mostly of recorded precedents -- who did what and with which and to whom, and the punishment inflicted. The Keeper occasionally reviews decisions, and adds commentary to the Code, which has the same force as the decision proper. Also, when a novel incident occurs, or when the Eoerin come up with some truly new theory regarding the Paths, the members of the court of the Keeper are required to write monographs on the subject. These are in turn reviewed by the Keeper, who writes a final opinion on the subject. Only the Keeper's opinion is entered into the Code, but the opinions of the court are retained in private archives for review by the Eoerin and subsequent courts.

Judges are selected for the lower courts by a council consisting of two Warriors, three Scholars, five Travelers, seven Sages and nine Lords, who are in turn selected jointly by the court of the Keeper and the council of the Eoerin. Advancement from the lower courts to the higher, and to the highest, is made by personal selection of the Keeper. Theoretically, the Eoerin must certify the candidate as ideologically pure, but this is a formality as no member of the Eoerin would ever go on record as questioning the Keeper's judgement.

Lower court judges tend to be of the more advanced Paths for obvious reasons. Generally, they favor their own Paths slightly above others, which is considered correct behavior, but must shun blatant favoritism. First off, judges must remember that they too were once of a lower Path, and will hopefully advance to a higher, and secondly, any favoritism that transgresses the Code or offends a Lord is likely to doom the judge to a lifetime spent in low chambers.

A far as the Code goes, suffice to say that it closely resembles the Throalic system in its condemnation of acts against person, property or freedom. Even the Pathless are granted the right to such a life as they can make, and the slaying of one by even a Lord is dealt with harshly. The Code, however, is much more intrusive than Throalic law. It pokes itself into nearly every facet of life, ruling on such details as wearing a color inappropriate to your Path, and the repercussions of crossing into another Path's quarter (which differ if it was accidental or purposeful).

On the streets, the Code is enforced by Guardians and bailiffs. The former are followers of the Warrior who see to the peace of the city. The latter are followers of more advanced Paths, usually of the Sages, who ensure adherence to the Path strictures. Frequently, the Guardians must call upon the bailiffs to help them resolve a situation, as Guardians are not permitted to enforce Path

requirements themselves. The Guardians answer to the commander of the militia, while the bailiffs answer to the Keeper. Theoretically, the bailiffs do not have power over the Guardians, but a suggestion by a respected bailiff is generally treated as a command.

You can tell one from the other by the badge, worn as a brooch for the cloak on the right shoulder and on the hat over the right eye. Guardians carry a round badge, featuring a shield with crossed swords, while bailiffs bear a sword crossed over a quill on a lozenge-shaped badge. Also, bailiffs are never of the Warriors, so if the officer questioning you is dressed in black or brown, he's a Guardian, not a bailiff.

Layout and Appearance

From the cliffs overlooking the Citadel, the design of the city is much more readily apparent than from within it. Roughly circular in shape, the city is divided into four quarters, one for each cardinal direction, with a fifth area taking up the center. Quarters is perhaps a poorly chosen word for these areas, considering that there are five, but so it is.

As an aside, the word that is translated throughout as Quarter, Kesev, is more accurately interpreted as section or part, with an implied meaning of incompleteness, a piece that is not whole by itself. There is no succinct way of expressing this in Throalic, so the word Quarter is used. However, the reader will not completely grasp the significance without either some knowledge of Sperethiel or this explanation, and I feel it important to know that each area of the city is considered an incomplete part on its own. This has implications in the underlying philosophy that gave birth to the city, which should be appreciated for a deeper understanding of the Citadel.

Each quarter is dedicated to a Path, with its placement being determined by the hour and True element associated with the Path. Thus, Mes ti'Meraerthsa, the Path of Warriors, aligned with Earth and the hour of midnight, takes up the north quarter. The following chart is perhaps a simpler reference than would be a lengthy explanation.

Path	Element	Hour	Direction
Mes ti'Meraerthsa	Earth	Midnight	North
Mes ti'Telenetishsa	Fire	Dawn	South
Mes ti'Cirolletishsa	Air	Midday	East
Mes ti'Perritaesa	Water	Sunset	West
Mes ti'Raeghsa	Wood	All	Central

Within each Quarter, the arrangement of the buildings and streets is determined by the Path. All

homes must face the direction of the quarter's Path, so that the inhabitants literally set their feet on their Path every time they set forth from home. Fortunately, shops and work areas are not under the same restriction, so the opposite side of every street isn't necessarily a series of back walls.

The streets tend to be laid out ruler-straight so that the doors don't have to be on a corner, although I observed a few homes that had had diagonal entrance halls built so that their door would exit in the proper direction. Many homes will have a back door for use in case of emergency, but the inside of the door tends to be painted to look like the surrounding wall. The only time that these doors are used is when the building catches fire, an infrequent occurrence among a population so orderly and painstaking in their daily affairs, or when someone in the home abandons their Path. This last is apparently a rare occurrence, but I could gain little insight as to why it would occur or under what circumstances. All I could gather was that the Pathless tended to originate in homes of lower rank, and are sometimes referred to as "children of the lesser door".

In the center of each quarter is a Path shrine, where many people gather each morning, at noon and again at night for group Path rituals. Some individuals also spend time at the Path shrine to meditate upon their development. Adepts frequently use the Path shrine as a place to meditate for Talent development. Upon arriving at a change of Path, the individual goes first to their current Path shrine, then to the Wheel of Change, then to the Path shrine in their new quarter.

Homes in the central quarter, the Draesis ti'Raeghsa or Circle of Lords, all face inward, and the streets are circular. Again, while the doors of homes must lead inward, in the direction of the Path, the doors of other structures may let out wherever might be convenient. Some workplaces find it best to dispense with walls and doors entirely, making do with a roof and the open air.

In the center of the Circle of Lords lies Draesis ti'Desach, the Wheel of Change, the circular court where rites of Path changing are done. This vast open space demonstrates the Elven nature of the city, to my mind, better than any other area. Intricate mosaics decorate the pavement, with representations of each Path in each direction. At the very center is a fountain. It would be inappropriate for any person to occupy the center, since that is the location of the true ideal that all followers are striving for. Surrounded by four statues, one of each of the four True Elements the fountain is capped with an orichalcum sculpture to represent the Lords. Four figures, facing inward, gaze upward at the central column of water splashing against a wooden canopy. While the worth of the statue in materials is nearly incalculable, its worth to the city is greater. Here stands the soul of the Citadel, here is the heart of the city both literally and spiritually.

Each quarter is readily identifiable by its aesthetics. Colors, motifs, and even styles of architecture are determined by the Path of the quarter. Set down blindfolded anywhere in the city, I could locate myself within seconds once I could see. The stark straight lines and somber colors of the north, the light, graceful curves and pale blues of the east, the south's recurring flame motif and brilliant reds and yellows, the heavier recurving lines and darker blues of the west and the predominantly unpainted wood of the center all serve to identify the quarter with its Path and reinforce that path among its inhabitants.

The Citadel's water and sewage needs are served by an ingenious system of underground pipes. A massive tunnel was dug through the bank of a nearby river, leading the flow of water into the maze. The force of the river keeps the water flowing at a steady pace, so that by sinking a small pipe into the main under a street, water will flow into a basin in the house at the turn of a valve.

Garderobes in the more affluent homes also have a water pipe, to rinse the garderobe after use.

The drainage from washbasins and garderobes flows into a second system of pipes, flushed out several times a day by diversion of water from the supply system. The outflow goes into a series of holding ponds at the downstream end of the Citadel. Once a week, each pond is drained, on a different day, and the following day the dung carters shovel out the bottom. The resulting muck is carted off to the farmlands for composting and eventual use as fertilizer. This system keeps most of the odoriferous effluent downstream, downwind and out of sight of the Citadel.

Typical Encounters (City-wide)

- Baker's apprentice delivering bread to a dining hall, with a carter driving the wagon for him.
- A pair of bailiffs who inquire politely as to the party's business
- Ashes falling from above, followed by a shouted apology from a chimneysweep
- Pathless hauling a dung-cart
- Ratcatcher chasing a terrier who's chasing an amazingly large rat
- Guardians talking with a tavern owner at the door of his establishment
- Laundress struggling along under a heavy bag of clothing

Notable Locations

Herein I describe some of the more noteworthy places within the Citadel. I have attempted to give information of the sort that the traveler to the Citadel would need.

Kesev ti'Meraerthsa (Warriors' Quarter)

Finyl Roguda, Horsetrainer

With her horse-ring and stables located on Cattle halfway between Goldenflower and Rising Birds, Finyl's business is well placed to demonstrate her stock to her primary customers. Only one street over are the drill grounds for the city militia. Many of the soldiers walk over to Finyl's after morning drill to watch her exercising her horses, and to discuss possible future mounts. While only a small percentage of her steeds go for cavalry mounts, most of her horses are bought by soldiers for patrol use or for their families. Finyl herself is a tall, sturdy woman, well-muscled for an elf and weathered by her constant outdoor work, who dresses in dusty leathers and prefers the company of horses to Name-givers.

Relanta Stelsyn, Master Weaver

Two doors down from Green Fields on the Street of Looms is a small, unprepossessing shop, set a little back from the street. Within, only one person pursues her craft, in a room mostly taken up by a massive loom. The products from this single weaver, however, are among the most highly sought fabrics in the city. Relanta, a willowy woman of short stature for an elf, no taller than a human, has a talent with her loom that is seen only once in a generation. This is in its own way a serious problem. Relanta is fast approaching a time when she must change Paths, at which point she must abandon her loom until she achieves the Lords, a development only the most shallow of her competition would not mourn. There are some who say that she has more than skill with the loom, that she has Talent. These rumors suggest that she may be developing a Weaver Discipline, that she may have woven threads of a mystical nature to her loom. If she changes Path, she would have to abandon not only her loom, but her fledgling adept status. If she continues to pursue her Discipline, however, she must leave the Paths, and fleeing the Citadel is difficult enough without trying to take a room-sized weaving loom with you. The tension among the workers of fabrics is almost palpable as everyone waits for her decision.

Uravil Gesenedek, Master of Hounds

On Stones at Gate is a small house with a large kennel behind it, the home of Uravil Gesenedek and his charges. He trains some of the finer hunting and tracking dogs in the Citadel. Unfortunately, his animals are also among the most intelligent in the Citadel. Every so often, one of his hounds escapes from the kennel. Most of the time, they come around to his front door and scratch to be let in, having such an attachment to their trainer. The occasional hunting dog, however, decides to make it on its own. Dog attacks are very rare but they do occur, and if the animal manages to breed with the local wild dogs before it can be captured, the stock of the stray animals is vastly improved. I admit, I had a few nervous moments during my stay when I spotted a pack of strays down the street, not knowing if they would decide to put dwarf on the menu.

Typical Encounters

- A troop of city militia on their way out of the city for field exercises
- A small crowd outside of Thystonius' shrine, listening to a Questor preaching a campaign against Blood Wood
- Two paviers arguing with a mason over a cartload of stone
- Housewife dickering with a potmender over the price of a repair job
- Woolcomber, spinster and weaver discussing the quality of a batch of wool
- An elf leaving the shrine of Thystonius with a mad gleam in his eye, ready to draw steel or raise a hand to the first person (preferably a non-elf) who crosses his path

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Kesev ti'Telenetishsa (Scholars' Quarter)

Gidron Reitenar, lensmaker

Gidron's shop, on the south side of Glass between Pine and Great Smoke, was designed by Covicit Toriwo, a noted pre-Scourge architect who did his finest work in the early days of the kaer. Reitenar's family held the plans for the shop until the opening of the kaer. During the rebuilding of the Citadel, they erected the shop for Gidron's father, since progressed to the Sages. Many visitors to the shop go originally to admire the building. Its soaring spires and intricate moldings create a palace in miniature, two stories of royal elegance.

Quite a few come away with one of Gidron's complex lens sculptures. These are elegant arrangements of glass in metal frames that send light bouncing and shattering into brilliant multicolored shards, the patterns changing according to the direction of the incoming light.

While well known for his talent at turning light into art, Gidron's best skill lies in precision grinding of lenses. He supplies the Citadel's top astrologer, Ertelailen J'Hessirn, among other observers of the sky, as well as officers and scouts in the military. His work is constantly in demand, but Gidron refuses to take on any further apprentices. To do so, he would have to move his shop to a larger building, and he will not allow the work of Toriwo to pass out of his family's hands. As a result, his lenses bring a high price.

Gidron is elegant and well-spoken, like all Reitenar. He keeps his light brown hair cut much shorter than the elven norm, for convenience and safety in his workshop. Each morning, as part of his opening ritual, he paints a Fire symbol on his face, under his right eye. By the evening, when he closes the shop, the symbol is no more than a few streaks of paint, washed nearly away by perspiration as Gidron works over his annealing fires. He dresses in light fire colors, yellows and pale oranges. His only jewelry, other than his Path brooch, is his marriage bracelet, worn on the left wrist.

Obetid's Bakery

Halfway between Pine and Great Smoke on the Street of Ovens, the bakery of the Obetid family faces their home across the street. While not producing the fancier pastries and delicacies that elven bakers are justifiably famous for, the Obetids turn out vast quantities of rolls, trencher loaves and buns each day. Most of their products go to dining halls, and some to the great estates in the Draesis ti'Raeghsa, with very little going to private homes. The business is suffering currently, due to a recent accident. One of the apprentices, a lazy young boy who has since been returned to his family for training in a different skill, passed on a bag of rye flour that should have been rejected due to black smut. People all over the Kesev ti'Meraerthsa, where the batch of rolls was delivered, spent the day having visions and stomach cramps. Svidipay Obetid, the current owner of the bakery, is still renegotiating delivery agreements, at a decided loss of profit.

Torlin Hroan's Candle Shop

Four doors toward Great Smoke from Wolf, on the Street of Lights, a small, unprepossessing building hides a great treasure. Torlin Hroan is a quiet man of calm demeanor and great patience, an asset in his line of work. Beside the standard tapers, his shop carries time candles in six and twelve hour sizes, as well as candles that burn with colored flames. While he does not have marriage candles or those elaborately carved decorative pillars that elves seem to be so fond of,

his more subtle work is nonetheless appealing.

Typical Encounters

- Librarian apprentice struggling along under a heavy load of paper
- People giving a wide berth to a charcoalburner as she delivers her load
- Candlemaker hawking his wares
- Large group of scholars arguing over some obscure point of philosophy and blocking the street
- Rush of heat out a doorway as a mailler airs out her shop

Kesev ti'Cirolletishsa (Travelers' Quarter)

Blue Horse

A tavern and dining hall on the Street of the Blue Horse, which takes its Name from the establishment. the Blue Horse has been in business since shortly after the founding of the city. Only during the transfer from city to kaer and from kaer to city did the Horse ever close its doors, and then only for a few days. Meals served in the dining hall are of the highest quality and represent the best of elven daily fare. More elegant establishments exist, certainly, but you wouldn't want them on a daily basis. The Blue Horse has regular customers with their Names carved into their accustomed places. Also, the Horse is one of the few public halls where members of different Paths can dine together, and where non-elves are also welcome.

The back of the Horse has a distillery and bakery as well as a kitchen. Their wines and ales are made over in the Sages' Quarter, where all the breweries are located. Rooms are not available, there being no lodging houses within the city. Turei Nuriskori, the current proprietor, personally oversees the tavern, and pops into the dining hall during mealtimes to check on the quality of the food and the satisfaction of his guests. He's a bit portly for an elf, I suppose from the temptation of being around so much good food all day. Rumor has it he may be progressing soon, however, which in a way would be sad, as his progression would mean a great loss to his establishment.

Ertelailen J'Hessirn, astrologer

One of the top astrologers in the Citadel, J'Hessirn uses the movements of the stars among the lights of the Passions to predict the future, analyze the past and forecast the most auspicious times for planned events. He consults with the Keeper of the Paths regarding festivals, progressions and other rites. Many citizens also seek his advice for the best time to progress to a new Path, to plant their crops, to consider having children, and other major decisions. His maps of the sky are used by the military and the few traders for navigation at night, the stars and the lights of the Passions being one of the few reliable means of finding a path in the Delaris Mountains.

J'Hessirn's shop is a tall, cylindrical building at the corner of Moon and Boundary. His consulting office is on the first floor, his home on the second and his observatory on the third. He keeps his jet-black hair neatly brushed but worn loose down to his waist, contrasting starkly with his pale blue, almost white robes, embroidered with the sigils of the (sane) Passions. Ertalailen makes few moves without first consulting the stars, and likes to have a few days to consider the birth-signs of a potential new customer before doing business with them. His wife, Trinocia, teaches basic literacy at the copyist's down the street. He has two daughters, Ehlesor, 5, and Dorwilet, 9, from his present life. His children from previous existences are grown and on the Paths of their own right.

Xanfia Cartage

With warehouses on Wagons from Moon to Far Journeys, and a fleet of drivers and teams, Xanfia is the largest hauling and storage firm in the Citadel. They claim with pride that they carried half the Citadel into the kaer and back again. Many residents of the Citadel store their outmoded belongings with Xanfia until they reach Lords and can reclaim items from previous existences. The warehouses are of stout stone construction to reduce the hazard of fire, double-locked and patrolled to discourage thieves, and inhabited by a small army of cats to hold down vermin. Wagons with the barrel, tree and crate emblem of Xanfia are a regular sight on the streets.

Across the Street of Wagons from the central warehouse and offices is the home of the Xanfia family's Followers of the Path of Travelers. This rambling three-story house takes up a third of the block, the family having bought neighboring lots twice for expansion. Several architects have worked on the dwelling, not all with the same vision or style, leaving a hodgepodge of square, rounded and pointed arches, narrow and wide windows, steeply pointed roofs and dormers, and two entry halls of vastly different style. Visitors are admonished not to wander off, not for the protection of the family's privacy but so they don't have to be rescued from the maze. Rumor has it the family has forgotten where some of the rooms are.

The house certainly reflects its owners. The Xanfia family is a large, expansive group of elves, given to rambling discourses, unexpected turns and hidden complexities. Their relationships with other families are complicated by a web of marriages, children, progressions and remarriages to where only the family elders can really keep it all straight. The primary Name for any outsider to know is Dirgon, the current administrator of the family cartage business.

Typical Encounters

- Backed-up traffic due to a large convoy either arriving at or departing from the warehouses of Xanfia Cartage
- Troupe of musicians discussing the music to accompany a production with its playwright
- Hawk stooping for a rat far too close to the party, as the hawker watches from a rooftop
- Wagon with no driver or horses comes rolling out of a side street unexpectedly with a trio of wheelwright's apprentices chasing it
- Mapmaker stops the group and asks if they'd like to earn some silver comparing their experiences with her work

Kesev ti'Perritaesa (Sages' Quarter)

Temple of Healing

On the corner of Sun and Life, the front of the building is set back behind a decorative colonnade, and covered with a magnificent fresco mural of Garlen healing the sick during the Shaking Plague. Within, a staff of professional healers sees to all injuries and disease that come through their doors, charging according to the patient's Path and means. A Lord of modest means will pay more than a wealthy Warrior, for example, as the Lord is assumed to have more connections and more potential for earning than someone of lesser Path. Strangers to the city can also be healed here, and are asked to pay whatever they can and feel appropriate. Potential healers are trained here, apparently doing most of their early practice with the Pathless and other indigent patients.

Erpossonya Brewery

Out at the corner of Ale and Illuminations, Tephis Erpossonya oversees her family's brewery as her father did before her, and his uncle before him, back to times well before the Scourge. Tephis boasts with justifiable pride that not once in the history of the brewery has the mastery ever been passed to someone not in the direct family line. Their recipes and techniques have been refined over the centuries to produce a series of truly astonishing brews. Quite a bit lighter than dwarfish tastes would prefer, it is true, but their ale goes down amazingly well. Erpossonya supplies the better taverns in the Kesev ti'Perritaesa and the Draesis ti'Raeghsa. They also have their own on-site taproom, where you can discuss the relative merits of ales and wines with the master brewers themselves.

Purauil Galsteca, Pursuivant

On the Street of Standards, only one door down from Illuminations, is the office of one of the more notable heralds in the Citadel. Purauil is a woman of striking aspect, tall even for an elf, who wraps herself in her cloak of office like a warrior in his armor. She holds herself aloof from politics, intrigues and petty rivalries, maintaining that only thus can she keep her art pure. Her field is the study of the sigils of families and bloodlines, both within the Citadel and without, and knowledge of the histories that accompany the emblems. Anyone wishing to verify or identify a coat of arms may consult her for a fee, as well as those wishing to register a new patent of arms for differentiation, as when elves from two houses marry and wish to combine their arms. Purauil knows more about the past of the noble families of the Citadel, in all likelihood, than is recorded in the library in the Draesis ti'Raeghsa. Convincing her to speak of such things is expensive, though, as this knowledge is her stock in trade. Ah well, not all of us can afford to give our knowledge for free.

Typical Encounters

- Loud bang followed by flying bits of wood and metal as a distillery has an accident
- Inkmaker and limner arguing over a shade of ink
- Rush of brightly-colored water spilling out of a doorway and down toward a drain in the street; a dyer's apprentice is dumping a tub the quick way
- Vintner offers a free sample of his product to the party, trying to entice them to buy a delicious but expensive bottle of wine
- Midwife comes hurrying out of a side alley following a frantic young boy, still fastening her cloak and fumbling with her bag
- Poet staring off into space, leaning against a building and muttering bits of verse as he works on his next saga

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Draesis ti'Raeghsa (Circle of Lords)

College of Eoerin

Sprawling across most of a block, from Great Smoke to Far Journeys and from Government back to Carpenters, the College takes up four buildings. The main structure opens onto Government in the middle of the block with a grand staircase sweeping up to the great brass doors of the College. At least one member of the Pathless is present at all times, polishing the doors or the railings of the stairs or the decorative work. Within are the offices of the collegium staff, the reception hall and the primary lecture halls. To the left of the grand entrance is a smaller building with bailiffs guarding the doors. This is the library of the College, to which no one is admitted who is not a member of the Eoerin. Within, or so I am told, are the founding documents of the Paths, as well as countless arguments and treatises written over the centuries by all of the eoerin of the Citadel. Perhaps the collegium members do not want ideas that could be construed as heretical available to the general populace, but it's still quite annoying to present your credentials as Field Researcher and Archivist of City Lore for the Hall of Records in Throal and be turned away like a beggar. The other two buildings are offices for the eoerin themselves and adjunct lecture halls.

Militia Command

A great, sprawling complex that obviously used to be many separate buildings, the senior staff of the city militia not only works here, many actually live within the granite walls. Access is only through the front doors, guarded by adepts from the militia who glare impartially at any passing civilian. I was told not to proceed past the front hall and the museum, and after getting a look down a couple of the hallways, had little desire to do so. Many renovations and repairs over the years have left the building a warren of twisting passages that even a native Throalite would have trouble navigating.

The front hall is impressive, however, with its displays of arms and armor, trophies of battle and the mounted head of a Horror looming over the main entrance. I am assured that nethermantic enchantments have made certain that the Horror is very dead and that no other Horror could

manifest through the remains, but it makes me nervous just the same to walk under that wretched thing.

To the left as you pass through the hall is the entrance to the museum of the militia. Within are displayed the standard of every unit ever formed in the history of the Citadel. Many standards stand proudly above lavish displays of legendary weapons, armor, prizes of combat and even the crypt of a former general of the city, slain protecting the inhabitants as they retreated to their kaer. If you have the time, ask the staff on duty about the items. All of the elves working here as curators are retired from the militia after many years of honorable service, and know the stories of the artifacts on display intimately. I'm told that a position at the museum is an honor in itself, granted only to those members of the militia who have distinguished themselves particularly well over their careers.

Commander's Home

Across Carpenters' Street and facing the windowless, doorless back of the Militia Command building, stands the three-story home of the militia commander. This house is hereditary with the office, and is half taken up with records of previous engagements, personal trophies of past commanders, briefing rooms, a formal dining hall and other official function rooms. Only the top floor can be truly said to belong to the current commander, and then only for her tenure. I am told that it's either a great honor or a moment of extreme dread to be invited up to meet Commander T'lilliu in her personal quarters.

Public Works

Bustling with activity, this monument to bureaucracy employs more clerks, copyists, librarians and other shufflers of paper than any other building in the city. Four stories in height and taking up half of a city block, every bit of public construction is planned, overseen and paid for through these offices. The usual corruption of such places is not nearly so in evidence here, as most of the clerks will not ask for a service fee up front, and few even hint that such a thing might speed matters along. The records are stored in a fashion every bit as complex as Throal's own, however, and a clerk is vital to locating any document. Tipping after a document is located seems acceptable.

Around the Circle of Change

1. Home of the Keeper

This elegantly small home is hereditary with the office of the Keeper of the Paths. While a masterpiece of design, the home is overshadowed by the shrines around it, as it should be. The office of the Keeper is of vast importance, but of less significance than the Paths and the Passions themselves. Only rarely does the Keeper receive anyone at the house, and then only one or two people in the group. Most of the Keeper's business is conducted from the Collegium of the Eoerin.

2. Shrine to the Mes ti'Raeghsa

Considering that this is the shrine of the final Path, the culmination of progress through all the stages of life, it's surprisingly small. Only half, maybe a third of the size of the other four Path shrines, the Shrine of Lords is wedged in between the Keeper's house and the Shrine of Mynbruje. The front of the building bears the sigils of the other four Paths, carved of stone, crystal, gold, and silver respectively, placed to symbolically support the wooden arch at the entryway, with the symbol of the Lords carved in wood over the doors. The building itself is a masterpiece of carpentry, every piece carved with such precision that not one nail was used in the structure. All of the construction was done with pegs, mortise and tenon, dovetailing and tongue and groove joints. Numerous woods were chosen, and placed in such a way that the darkest are at the foundations and the lightest at the apex, representing the spiritual journey toward enlightenment.

Only the Lords know what is inside the Shrine. I am told, however, that the interior is a single room, with few decorations. Visitors to the shrine are supposed to find what they need in the empty space and within themselves. Strict silence is observed within, as echoes could easily disturb other visitors. Only during group rituals is the ban on speech and sound broken.

3. Shrine of Mynbruje

A popular spot with the Guardians and bailiffs as well as the followers of the Lords, the shrine is an imposing stone structure of solid and faintly forbidding aspect. Over the doorway, the crescent and star of Mynbruje are inlaid in dark blue stone, the only exterior decoration of any sort. Straight and exact, the building's lines are unbroken by crenellation, spires, or even a curve.

Within, the main hall presents the visitor with a set of scales large enough to accommodate an elf in the left pan, the right being occupied by the Book of the Law, and the entire assembly balanced across the tip of an enormous sword sculpted out of the same dark blue stone used for the entry. Scenes of famous judgements, the giving of harsh justice and tender mercy, are inlaid in mosaic around the walls. Further rooms are available for private meditation, one of which is reserved for the Keeper.

4. Shrine of Wood

In startling comparison to the elegant constructed buildings around it, the Shrine of Wood appears to have grown rather than being deliberately built. Twelve massive trees rise up from the cobblestones of the court and streets surrounding the shrine, a gap between the front two wide enough for three people to walk through abreast. Overhead, the branches interlace to form a roof impenetrable to weather. I'm told that Questors of Jaspree assisted in the regrowth of the Shrine after the Scourge, in order to have trees of this size in such a short time. Within the Shrine is a courtyard, lit by sun brought in with lenses and mirrors. At its center, a sapling grows, planted when the shrine was completed after the Scourge. I'm told that when it reaches sufficient size, and the last of the Horrors have been exterminated from the surrounding regions, it will be taken from the shrine and replanted atop the Citadel's kaer.

5. Shrine of Chorrolis

Certainly a splendid building, the citizens have honored Chorrolis with exorbitant expenditures to

create a miniature palace of gems and precious metals. The sigil of the Passion over the door is an elaborate work in enamel inlay and gilding. The doors themselves are not only exquisitely carved but painted in exhaustive detail. In any other setting, the shrine would be magnificent. Compared to the simple elegance of the Shrine of Lords and the natural beauty of the Shrine of Wood, it seems a little overdone by comparison.

The interior is a masterpiece of opulence. Not a surface exists that is not gilded, painted, enamelled, bejewelled or carved and inlaid. At the front of the room is an altar of expensive woods, holding up a chalice fully the size of an adult dwarf that brims with riches. Jewels are heaped within, chains of gold and silver spill out over the chased lip. No guards stand over this treasure, as no sane Namegiver would risk angering the Passion by stealing from the temple. Questors of Chorrolis are rare, but at least one resides in a back room of the shrine at all times. Obviously, such a person must be a follower of the Lords.

6. Shrine of Garlen

Next around the Circle, this small, homey building has a comforting look even to dwarven eyes, although it's built more to elven specifications. Flowers and medicinal herbs grow in the windowboxes and along the cobblestone walk up to the door, a simple entrance of plain wood. Within, Questors of the Passion maintain an atmosphere of peace and welcome, serving meals to any in need without question, providing healing for body and soul, and protection for the occasional person in danger from other residents of the Citadel or from the authorities. Apparently, anyone managing to enter the Shrine of Garlen and claim sanctuary within may not be haled forth for judgement, regardless of their crimes, without the agreement of both the Keeper of the Paths and the chief Questor. Considering that the current top Questor is Dorenito Xanfia, and that the pragmatic Xanfia and the hard-nosed, ultra-orthodox Liriliqirz rarely see eye to eye on theological and philosophical issues, if the crime is less than conspiracy with a Horror, the miscreant is quite likely to spend the rest of their life in the Shrine. Mind you, the likelihood of anyone making it all the way to the Wheel of Change with the Guardians and bailiffs on their tail is very slim. Beyond that, anyone claiming sanctuary must eventually submit to some form of justice, throwing themselves on the mercy of Garlen if they do not surrender to the civil authorities. Garlen's judgements have sent several individuals off to work off their crimes with restitution or with deeds outside the Citadel. With exile being considered a worse fate than death, the miscreant may want to reconsider before appealing to the Passion.

7. Shrine of Lochost

Lochost is viewed with mixed feelings by the followers. On the one hand, the Passion represents the freedom to live your life the way you desire, a freedom that the ancestors of the current inhabitants sought when they founded the Citadel. On the other, deviation from the Paths when you so desire is considered heresy, and celebrating a Passion that holds forth the freedom to change outside of the proper times is looked upon with revulsion.

This dichotomy permeates the design of the building and holds fast in the minds of those who visit. An oddly shaped structure, the shrine reminds me of a large animal trying to break out of a sack, tossed into a cage barely large enough to hold it. The structural members show in some areas, while the interior pushes out through and past the framework in others. In the lower right front, the entryway appears to have been only half planned, and ripsawed out at a convenient

location.

Within, burst manacles dangle from the walls, while other semi-destroyed symbols of repression are scattered about at random. A straight course from one section of the building to another is deliberately impossible, although there are always at least two routes from which to choose. Visitors are rare, and the staff is minimal -- only two Questors when I arrived, and one was a former soldier in the Theran War who had retired to the Citadel.

8. Shrine of Upandal

Certainly the most meticulous in construction, the shrine is a masterpiece of engineering, in tribute to the Passion of design and building. Every angle is calculated to a fraction of a degree, each section is in perfect balance to the rest. Materials were chosen with an eye not only to strength, placing the hardest stone and wood in loadbearing locations, but to aesthetics as well. No paint or stain was used; all of the coloring is natural. I found the building reminiscent of the Shrine of Wood, across the Circle, in the techniques used for contruction and the arrangement of materials in their natural colors for decorative purposes.

9. Council Hall

Four stories high, the Hall is one of the more imposing buildings in the Circle of Lords. Murals of the founding of the Citadel cover the exterior, neatly interspersed with the columns of the facade. Within, the entry hall is two stories high, an echoing vault lined with statues of previous Councilors of note. Beyond, a long hallwy extends the length of the building, opening into the offices of the clerks and scribes who do most of the work, writing the proclamations and degrees, drafting the proposals to be introduced into the Council and recording the decisions made into the books of law. Above them are the offices of the Councilors themselves, where they meet with their consituents and hold small meetings outside of full Council. The top two stories are given over to the Council chamber itself, more of an amphitheater than a meeting hall. Spectators are not allowed during convocations of the Council, but Councilors can bring the occasional visitor. The Council Guard, a large team of adepts of high Circle, guards the building and posts several of their number within the chamber during meetings of the Council.

Typical Encounters

- A desperate member of the Pathless seeking refuge in the Shrine of Garlen
- Senior members of the Collegium on their way to a meeting with the Keeper
- Procession from one Quarter to another via the Circle of Change for a Path change
- Cabinetmaker overseeing her apprentices as they struggle along with a large piece of furniture
- Two barristers walk with a judge, arguing the merits of a case
- Council representatives pouring out of the Hall and into the taverns after a lengthy meeting

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Shrines

Three shrines stand in each Quarter: one to the Path, one to the Element of the Path and one to the Passion who governs the Path. Central to the quarter, the Path shrine is the most impressive, but the other two are by no means second-rate. The Passion shrines rival anything I've seen in dwarven communities for manifest displays of devotion. Shrines to the remaining four Passions (there are of course no shrines to the Mad Passions in the post-Scourge reconstruction of the Citadel) are on the western side of the Draesis ti'Desach.

Path Shrines

Mes ti'Meraerthsa

A long, low building of stone, the Shrine of the Path of the Warrior takes up most of the block along Shrine Way between Goldenflower and Rising Birds. The shrine proper occupies only one end of the building. The rest is an enclosure for visitors to the shrine, to keep the rain off and provide them with surroundings made of stone. Only followers of the Path are allowed within, as with all of the Path shrines, so I have no description of the interior. Those I interviewed would only speak of the shrine in very general terms. I do know that there are symbols of the Warrior Discipline as well as of the Path, mounted on a solid stone slab that was brought to the city with magical assistance.

Mes ti'Cirolletishsa

Its outside decorated with various symbols of travel, wagons, wheels, birds, horses and murals of roads, the Shrine of the Path of Travelers leans slightly outward, to the east, giving an impression of impending motion. Visitors are encouraged to move through the shrine by the layout within, or so I am told. Like all of the Path shrines, only followers are allowed inside. I do know from observation that followers of the Path of Travelers tend to spend less time within their Shrine than followers of other Paths, and are usually moving briskly on both entrance and departure.

Mes ti'Telenetishsa

At the back of the Shrine of the Path of Scholars is the feature that most distinguishes it from the other Path shrines -- a library. Unfortunately, the holdings are closed to all but followers of the Path and members of the Collegium of Eoerin, and the Collegium does not recognize visiting non-elven scholars. By the Passions, these people have no concept of the free sharing of knowledge that is the basis for calling oneself a scholar. The rest of the building is interesting enough, I suppose, but again I've no personal observations of the inside from which to draw conclusions.

Mes ti'Perritaesa

Besides the mosaics of water scenes, scrolls and great arcane discoveries that decorate the Shrine of the Path of Sages, the building itself suggests the sweep of water in its graceful repeating arcs. The main entrance is done up in carved scrollery suggestive of waves, and painted in delicate

shades of pale blue and nearly-white. While there are no windows, as with all of the shrines, there are skylights, which from the street appear to be of stained glass. Without being admitted to the building to view them from underneath, however, I cannot comment on the design.

Of the functions of the crescent-shaped building next to the Shrine, and the one on its far side with the concave facade, I have no idea. None of the inhabitants would answer my questions. I suppose I should be grateful that they did not call for a bailiff.

Element Shrines

Unlike the Path shrines, the shrines to the Elements (and to the Passions) are open to anyone who cares to visit. Indeed, upon my arrival in the Citadel, the bailiff who processed my application for an entry permit recommended that I should visit the Shrine of Earth. I would feel more at home there, he said, than anywhere else in the city. Well, perhaps he assumed too much sameness of the dwarven race, that we all are quite taken with caves and living deep in the earth, but I took his recommendation and was quite pleased to have done so. Over the span of time I was in the Citadel, I spent many hours in the Shrine of Earth, refreshing my soul and clearing my mind for further study. Any of my race would feel at home there, no matter how long they had dwelt upon the surface or how little they cared for the traditional dwarven habitations. The remainder of the Elemental shrines were every bit as beautiful as the Shrine of Earth, but nowhere near as comfortable.

Earth

A solid structure of stone and clay brick on Shrine Way next to the Shrine of Thystonius in the Kesev ti'Meraerthsa, the Earth Shrine appears more to have been sculpted from a hill than to have been built. The entry is done as a cave mouth, with bits of light quartz embedded in the walls giving a random sparkle to the non-magical quartz and other crystals in the stalactites and stalagmites, impossibly close to the opening but somehow appropriate anyway. In many respects, the shrine defies some basic rules about how caves form, and yet still seems right and proper, as if reflecting a greater truth about Earth. Inside, the main cavern is a wondrous echoing vault with the supports for the ceiling cleverly built into ridges within the rock walls. Veins of precious metals and gem-bearing ores scrawl bright lines across the dark granite surfaces, traceries too delicate for anyone to ever consider setting a pick to. The value of Earth as it naturally exists is brought forth in splendour and grace. Here indeed is a home for the soul. If the Path Shrines have the same atmosphere to them, it is no great wonder that the inhabitants of the Citadel feel so strongly about their chosen way of life.

Fire

A double hexagon next to the Shrine of Floranuus on Shrine Way in the Kesev ti'Telenetishsa, each of the two lobes is centered around a cauldron of permanent flame. I am told that these are fed by True Fire and some form of flammable gas, not unlike the gases that create hazards in the deeper reaches of the Throal Mountains. Each is a horselength across, massive bowls of stone

carved intricately with Fire symbols and elementalist runes to control the blaze. Mirrors of brass and steel and glass, of varying sizes and shapes, hang in random spots around the courtyard, breaking the firelight into thousands of dancing points. Quite impressive, if uncomfortable due to the heat.

Air

Separated from the Shrine to Astendar by a column of cleverly worked glass spun up into a vortex, the Air shrine can best be described as a building that is barely there. Only the lightest framework exists to hold up the necessary symbols, with much open space between the beams. More glass has been used in the construction of this building than I have ever seen before. Apparently bits of True Air are also woven into it, to prevent breakage every time a high wind comes along. I found the shrine to coexist well with the Travelers' Path shrine just down the street, as not only the breezes but people pass through with ease and frequency. There just don't seem to be any places in this quarter where people congregate properly for discussion; I suppose it's because of the Path. All debate seems to be held while strolling, making it difficult to join in.

Water

No other Element shrine seemed to me to be as alive as the shrine to Water. Countless fountains, flowing streams and cascades surround you from the moment you step within. The air sings with the burble and chuckle of fluid in motion. Plants grow alongside the channels in profusion, baffling the sound so that it's not overwhelming and creating a tranquil feeling of a secluded mountainside. Nowhere is there a static symbol for the element, but if you look carefully, you'll be able to trace the ancient elven magical symbol for True Water in the courses of the fountains, repeated in the sprays that arc gracefully through the air. Here, unlike the shrine to Air, followers of the Path of the quarter gather to relax, and to engage in thoughtful debate. While outsiders should be careful of the subjects they broach, at least one can take part in the discussion properly. Benches are scattered throughout the shrine so that visitors can relax and contemplate the Element, although few of the elves I saw there seemed lost in meditation. I suspect a great deal of business is transacted informally here, where the surrounding noise would make it nearly impossible to eavesdrop. Indeed, several conversations ceased abruptly when I came about a turn in the path through the interior of the Shrine, to resume once I was out of proper hearing range.

Passion Shrines

Thystonius

Located on Shrine Way in the Warriors' quarter, mosaics cover the outer walls of this blocky granite building with scenes of conflict, most from the history of the Citadel. I was advised to avoid the area in the morning, at luncheon and in the evening, as visitors to the Shrine frequently emerge spoiling for a fight and looking for a non-elf, any non-elf, to engage thusly. Ceremonies within tend to be loud and boisterous, especially by elven standards. Not being particularly someone who identifies with the Passion of Conflict, I never paid a visit inside the shrine.

Floranuus

Located on Shrine Way in the Scholars' Quarter, the concave ends of the shrine draw the passerby in and keep him moving on through. The interior is a single massive hall, a bit disorganized but certainly decorated with enthusiasm. At least once a month, the shrine and its Questors sponsor some form of community celebration, ranging from foot races on Great Smoke to the harvest-season wine presentation, an excuse for the normally reserved elves of the Citadel to drink a bit too much and laugh loudly for a day. I've heard rumors that there are other, more vigorous celebrations, but those are restricted to followers of the Path of Scholars and the entire quarter is closed to visitors for that day.

Astendar

Located on Shrine Way in the Travelers' Quarter, the most prominent feature of the shrine is the stage facing the glass vortex between the Shrine of Astendar and the Shrine of Air. At least three times a week, presentations are given -- poetry readings, musical performances and dramatic productions. Exhibitions of static arts such as painting and sculpture are ongoing, with the exhibits themselves changing from day to day as new works arrive and old ones are taken away to be returned to the artist or sold. Interestingly, troubled relationships are frequently counseled here rather than at the shrine of Garlen, the elves apparently feeling that the emotional aspects of the couple take predominance over the peril to the home.

Jaspree

Located on Shrine Way in the Sages' Quarter, the primary difference I could see between this place and the Shrine of Water next down the street was the shift in dominance from running water to growing plants. A host of small animals run free within the complex, creating a section of forest within the bounds of the city. Some of the Questors who operate the shrine maintain a shelter for injured or diseased animals, healing those who can be healed and released and easing the transition for those who will not survive.

Living in the City

Residing in such an ordered and highly structured environment provides a strong sense of purpose and place, while at the same time posing unexpected hazards for the outsider. Special considerations involved in daily life will be more understandable with some close examination.

Residents

First off, every adult resident of the city proper is Elven, and a follower of the Paths. Non-elves are not allowed to take up the Paths. No person who is not a follower of a Path may reside in the city. Therefore, no race other than elves resides in the city. As well, every adult in a household must be on the same Path. Children, being too young to take up a Path, are exempt from this restriction. This permits children to stay with their families, while the household goes about its daily business. Children of the household wear the colors of the appropriate Path, with an identifying brooch to identify their household. They must stay within the quarter of their parents' Path, although trespass by children is handled much more leniently than trespass by adults. In most cases, the child is taken by a bailiff back to his or her parents, who are then admonished to educate their child properly. The public humiliation of being lectured as to proper child-rearing is sufficient to keep most parents in line.

Division of labor is very strictly handled, with tasks restricted by Path. Considering that only ten percent of the population are likely to be Adepts, the Eoerin had to consider whether or not the Paths would be denied to the majority. During the journey from Wyrm Wood, they decided that the Paths were accessible to all Elves who desired to follow them. Accordingly, all then-known occupations were discussed as to which Path they would fit. A list of occupations, later to become known as the Roll of Careers, ordered by Path was drawn up, and when construction of the city began, planning took the Roll into account.

As new skills are developed, they are presented to the Eoerin for placement on the Roll. No new occupation may be practiced until it has been entered onto the Roll and the Keeper has signed the entry. After that, the occupation must be practiced exactly as described on the Roll. Any modification to an existing occupation, for instance a new method of forging horseshoes, must be cleared with the Eoerin, and the Roll entry amended, before the new development may be used. This makes progress slow, but does have the beneficial effect that no unexpected side effects are ever encountered. For example, the citizens of the Citadel have never had trouble with mine tailings poisoning a stream, as disposal of such minerals were planned for long before the first shovel bit into the soil. A partial index to the Roll, which now spans many volumes, is provided as an appendix to this article.

Lodging

Residents of the city live in the quarter appropriate for their Path. As stated before, their children may reside with them. Elves who are followers of the same Path, who have come from outside the city or from households in other quarters, may stay as guests in the home of a resident. The head of household assumes responsibility for their actions while they live under his or her roof.

Non-elves and non-followers must reside outside the city proper, in the Ring of the Pathless or along the road into the city. Inns operated by the Pathless tend to be shabby, not from lack of effort but from lack of resources. Guests are few and far between, and sales of thin beer to the other Pathless don't turn much of a profit. Any item whose manufacture is the responsibility of a Follower must be obtained from same, on harsh financial penalty. The higher the Path for the item, the more expensive the fine. Thus, brewing of beer is a cheap offense, but making a barrel to keep it in is terrifically costly.

The two inns on the road are maintained by non-Elves, and used primarily by the few merchants who maintain the city's limited trade with the outside world. The Crumpled Crescent stands two stories tall. It has dwarven stout, but few rooms available, and most of these are filled when a caravan comes in. Across from it, the Goat and Stars is larger, with more rooms and more spacious accommodations, but the food and beer are both terrible and not worth the high prices. My recommendation is to stay at the Goat and Stars, apologize to the proprietor, and go across to the Crescent for meals. Barliman, a human short and wide enough to be mistaken for a tall dwarf, is generally understanding, and will let the incident go with a tirade against his suppliers and the general operating conditions imposed by the Elves. The Crescent's proprietor, an ork Named Towo Goldbiter, works for the Overland Trading Company, which might explain why she has access to better raw materials for her meals.

Outsiders are very definitely unwelcome, and are watched closely for any interference with elven ways while in the city. Whether deliberate or not, any questioning or change is dealt with harshly. Looking about to be certain no Guardians or bailiffs are present is no guarantee against penalties. Many of the citizenry will report any straying from what they consider sound ideology, both to protect the Paths from corruption and to protect themselves from being accused of conspiracy to corrupt, a death-penalty offense. Business should be concluded as quickly as possible.

Daily Rituals

Numerous rites mark the daily life of the inhabitants of the Citadel in a progression as regular and stately as the march of the stars past the lights of the Passions. From sunup to sundown, these acts reaffirm the Followers' place in the world and on their Path.

At first rising, the Follower says a short prayer while donning the regalia of his or her Path. This is followed by a moment of quiet meditation, focused on a Path symbol, made into a brooch that is fastened to the clothing after the meditation is over. The symbol remains with the Follower at all times, a tangible reminder of who they are and what they are striving to be.

Another prayer is recited over the morning meal, this one said in unison by all members of the household. The prayer affirms the entire household's place, and serves to bring the people together, strengthening their sense of community.

Those who have to travel through their quarter to reach their employment, and those who feel the need, stop at the Path shrine in the center of the quarter before work. There, they spend a few moments in silent meditation. If any prayers are involved, they too are silent to avoid disturbing others and possibly interfering with their progression along the Path.

Upon opening the place of trade, a ritual peculiar to the craft is performed to begin the day's work. Each occupation has its own way of reaffirming its place in the Path and in the lives of the followers. For example, a baker kindles a twig from the coals of the previous day's oven fires, and lays the flaming brand on a shelf by the door. He then sprinkles a pinch of flour over the flame, and thinks about the transformation that fire brings, that his craft depends upon. That done, the baker will then stoke the ovens and begin making the day's bread.

At the nooning, anyone who has not brought food from home or does not have food to hand will repair to one of the many fine establishments scattered throughout the city. Some will attend the public dining halls, which are open to anyone regardless of their Path. Others will go to the Path halls, which admit only followers of that Quarter's Path. There, each guest is welcomed by a bailiff who assures the guest that everything in the house has been tended to appropriately. Once all tables are occupied, the door is closed and the bailiff then leads the diners in a brief rite according to their Path, involving their Path symbol. I was unable to discover the exact details of this rite, as I was shooed away from the window at a crucial moment. The Guardian informed me that he would be most happy to demonstrate his Warrior Adept abilities if I were to persist in such activities. Not wishing him to become any less polite, as he had informed me in sarcastically gracious terms, I departed the area, and was never afforded another such opportunity. Apparently the Guardians talk among themselves much more than the authorities of any other city I've visited.

Many followers take the time at nooning, either before or after their repast, to again visit their Path shrine for silent meditation. This tends to be longer than the morning session, as business comes to a halt for a considerable time during the day. It requires a goodly span for everyone to be accommodated, one dining-hall at a time.

At the close of business for the day, and this will of course vary, the baker banking his fires long before the blacksmith, a closing rite is performed. Again, this varies according to the trade and its Path. The pattern, however, does not vary. Some form of symbolic gratitude is expressed to the element of the Path for its involvement in the trade. The nature of the Path is also considered, and how the two relate to each other is celebrated. The tradesman then goes home. Notably, hardly anyone locks their shop. Theft is almost unknown in the Citadel, the act being prone to classification as Path interference. Take a gardener's hoe and you interfere with his relationship with Earth, thus interfering with his Path. No one wants to be put to death for the theft of a hoe, so tools and lesser goods are left unsecured. Only the most expensive finished goods are put under lock and key, and then more out of a sense of responsibility than fear for their safety. No one wants to be accused of tempting another to steal and thus either stray from their Path or interfere with another's.

The evening meal is most often taken with the household. Infrequently, followers of a particular career may get together for the equivalent of a guild dinner, but I was unable to gather much information regarding those. Apparently whatever form of professional organizations these people have are very secretive and do not like being discussed. Prayers said over the evening meal have the same basic purpose as the morning, reunifying the household under the blanket of the Path. Dining halls do very little business in the evening, with the exception of professional dinners and the occasional household celebrating an event such as a Naming Day or a windfall profit.

Finally, the citizens spend some time in meditation before going to bed. This tends to be a longer and more complex process than any other during the day. Events of the day just ending are reviewed in the light of the Path and career, and decisions are made as to the appropriateness of each major action taken. The individual reviews his or her progress on the Path, and reaffirms his or her commitment to the Path and its ideals.

Rites of Passage

The followers of the Citadel have derived many of their major rites of passage from basic elven practice. I will limit my comments to differences between the usual ritual and the rite as practised within the Citadel.

Birth and Naming

Instead of simply presenting the new baby to the sky, the child is taken in a procession down to the Path shrine, and presented there. For children born to Warriors, the father declares their journey on the Paths to have begun, that from this spot their progress begins. Fathers of all other Paths present their children with the declaration that although they were born on a later Path, their feet will be set at the beginning when appropriate. Their birth in a later Path is auspicious, as it will help them progress more rapidly on that Path when the time comes. All gathered at the shrine then join in a group prayer, thanking the Passions for the new life that has been given to the community. They pledge to take care of the child as a group, every follower accepting responsibility for raising the child in the right and proper way. A Path symbol is then presented to the new baby by the keeper of the shrine, one left behind by a person changing Path. This person is carefully selected, as they will be the model for the new baby. I suspect some influence on the child's pattern by the Path symbol, certainly a powerful pattern item, even if for a person who at least technically no longer exists.

Change of Path

In the Citadel, they make a great deal more fuss about a change of Path than outside. Three days are set aside for the rituals involved, during which the elf going through the change and all their household attend to nothing else. Their relatives and professional brethren come in to cook for them, run their business, and see to the mundane affairs of living.

On the first day, the household celebrates a rite similar to a funeral. The person changing Path is symbolically laid to rest. All of their belongings are packed, with everything that pertains to their current Path set aside for distribution to the people left behind. Only items that are not Path-specific, or that are to be held for when the person attains to the Lords, are not handed out. The one making the change visits their Path shrine for the very last time, and leaves their personal Path symbol behind. They emerge dressed in a plain, unadorned white robe, with no Path symbol affixed.

On the second day, the person undergoing the change makes a solitary progression to the Lords, all the way to the Draesis ti'Desach. During that progression, no other person will look directly at him or her, nor acknowledge his or her presence. This person has given up their identity on the previous evening. For a time, the person has no identity and thus does not exist, so far as the followers are concerned. At the Wheel of Change, the person is attended by a bailiff, or by a member of the Keeper's court or even the Keeper if of a sufficiently important family. Starting at the symbol of their former Path, the person makes at least three complete circles sunwise, ending up at the symbol of their new Path. Some form of prayer and meditation is involved, but as I

approached to try and overhear what was said, a bailiff stopped me. We had a brief discussion, with the effect that I had to leave the Lords Quarter, never to return. I was able to ascertain that the person changing Paths spent that night in the Lords Quarter.

The third day, the person changing Paths, again accompanied by a bailiff, proceeds to the gate between the Lords Quarter and the quarter of their new Path. At the gate, they enter a small gatehouse, to emerge shortly after dressed in the colors and symbols of their new Path. The person and the bailiff go straight off to the shrine in the new quarter, where the keeper of the shrine presents the elf with a Path symbol brooch. After a half of an hour's meditation, the elf emerges from the shrine, without the bailiff, and announces his or her new Name, career and Path to the assembled crowd. And yes, there's always a crowd, although its size may be related to the importance of the person's family. The new follower then marches off to see to their new accomodations, business and so forth.

No member of their previous household accompanies them, unless they too are changing Path at the same time. Children are normally left behind, unless that would leave them without a parent in the household. If brought, children must go through an abbreviated version of the adult ceremony all on the second day, going to the shrine of their old Path to give up their brooches and their Names, to the Wheel of Change to choose new Names and then off to the Path shrine in their new home quarter to receive Path brooches. Children are presented after the Path-changer has introduced him or herself, and are announced in the same manner as new births.

I feel that it is important to notice that all migration from one path to another is done through the Lords. Thus, someone leaving Warriors and moving to the South would pass through the center of the city, rather than through another path's quarter. Even if you're moving to an adjacent sector, you move through Lords to reflect the ultimate goal of the move. Also, the followers never refer to the person by their former Name. While the family Name is retained, the personal Name is retired and that identity treated as if the person is no longer among the living. Any affairs not completely wrapped up before the change of Path are left suspended and never completed. Only in extreme cases, for example if the person changing Paths had witnessed a murder before their change and needed to be questioned after, would the followers ever refer to a person's previous existence on another Path, and then only in private and with extreme delicacy.

Death

Death is a peculiar situation. The death of a Lord is considered the culmination of the spiritual journey, and is cause for celebration. The followers believe that the person dying is off to the Citadel of the Shining Ones, there to exist in a permanent state of spiritual perfection. The death of someone on a lower Path, on the other hand, is a tragedy. Dying before you have reached the Lords interrupts your journey irrevocably. Your life is incomplete. The followers mourn such a death intensely.

For eight days, the members of the household and immediate family do no work, spending their time in group meditation. Like the time of Path change, more distant relatives and professional acquaintances come in to take care of household chores. The deceased's business remains closed, regardless of the position the deceased held within it. Whether the proprietor or a humble apprentice, all work stops in mourning. Life simply must go on without the services of the

business for the duration of the mourning period.

At the end of the time of mourning, the closest family member takes the deceased's Path brooch to the shrine, where it is put away, never to be used again. The keeper of the shrine makes a new Path brooch to replace it, which is held in reserve for the next child born to the Path.

The mourners dispose of the body according to the deceased's Path. Warriors are buried, Scholars are cremated on a pyre and their ashes stored at the shrine, Travelers are left on an open platform on the outside of the city wall and Sages are wrapped and dropped into the river. Nothing akin to the Dinganni rite of taking the deceased's place exists. These people feel that no person can complete your journey for you. If you die with the journey incomplete, then you must come back around the Wheel and start again.

The Pathless

Yes, there are elves who are not on the Paths. Outside the city proper are the homes of the Pathless, the so-called children of the lesser door, those elves who do not follow the paths themselves so that they can support those who do. Also among the Pathless are the few non-elven inhabitants of the city. These are the low laborers, the people who either perform tasks considered beneath the citizenry (such as dung cartage) or which do not fit the Paths at all, after discussion by the Eoerin. They occupy a peculiar niche in society, well above slaves but well below citizens, neither free nor in bondage, not quite people but accorded more respect than draft animals. Without the Pathless, the Citadel could not function, an irony I find quite amusing.

The Pathless wear unadorned grey and are permitted anywhere in the city as long as they have business there. The dwellers in the various sectors know the Pathless well, and would easily spot any deviation in the routines of daily living. Thus was I dissuaded from taking up the grey myself for the purpose of observation.

From what I was able to gather, the Pathless are divided into two camps, those born Pathless and those who become Pathless. Children of the Pathless can, if they can find sponsorship in a household of the Warriors, take up the Paths and leave the grey behind. Those who become Pathless are never allowed back into the level of society they have abandoned. Why anyone would choose to become Pathless, I do not understand. This is one of the lines of questioning I had to abandon. No member of the grey would tell me anything, and I was finally warned by one of the Pathless that if I persisted in seeking these answers, I would be reported to the bailiffs. Apparently even the Pathless have duties under the Paths, and the right to appeal to the bailiffs to have their spiritual order maintained, such as it is.

Not all of the non-Elven inhabitants of the Citadel are among the Pathless. The proprietor of the merchant inn wears clothing of Barsaivian design, and speaks good Throalic. Only those whose business requires them to travel daily into the Quarters take up the grey. Their ceremony is quite simple, an oath to avoid interference in anyone's Path, to avoid emulating the Paths themselves and to report any deviation to the bailiffs, then the donning of the grey robes. I suspect that for the elven Pathless, the event is much more complex. During my stay, I was not able to observe such a

rite, nor was I aware of such occurring.

I can only speculate on where the Pathless come from. When the city was originally founded, perhaps there were laborers who committed themselves to the lower tasks of building the Citadel to the exclusion of actually living in it, a sort of martyrdom, sacrificing themselves for the betterment of their race. Perhaps the Pathless originate from slaves provided by the Therans and freed but not assimilated. These explanations, while elegant, leave essential questions unanswered.

Why would anyone choose to be Pathless? Could being relegated to the Pathless be used as a punishment for particularly heinous crimes? What about children born of adultery? Could it be the sins of the parents being visited upon the children, punished for their forebears' mistakes? I have no clear answers to these questions, and, regrettably, no hope of gaining such.

Families

In such a closed society, family lines cross and recross in a complex web of relationships. Knowing who is related to whom is vital for negotiating any sort of agreement in the city. Because of the Paths, each family will have members in every quarter and scattered throughout all levels of society. Dynasties do not form solely in the ruling levels, but instead reach throughout society in a network of control. Also because of the Paths, families do not necessarily stay invested in the same facets of society and commerce. If no member of the family is on the right Path to inherit a business from a progressing member, the business is sold to a family ally, frequently with the understanding that the ally will sell it back to the family when they in turn progress.

Several families have achieved sufficient control in the city to be worth examining. Newcomers to the city should be aware of these bloodlines, what they hold and what influence they can bring to bear. Learn to recognize their emblems, as these symbols are carried across Path lines.

T'lilliu

Strongly present in the military, the T'lilliu line counts not only Warriors in the front lines but Travelers in the supply corps and Sages in the tactical advisory unit. From the supplies interest, the family branches into food production and supply, armoring, weapon making, horse breeding and training, cartage and warehousing. Being one of the larger lines, the family nearly always has someone to pass their properties to when a member changes Paths.
Notable Members: Jael T'lilliu is the current Commander of the Militia.
Emblem: A wagon wheel, with crossed sword and grain sheaf superimposed over it.

Taesyo

The Taesyo clan traces its roots back to the leaders of the separationist movement. Since the founding of the city, the family has held roles in its governance. Within the Paths, members tend to pursue more cerebral occupations, or careers with leadership positions. They also have a

predominant interest in banking, moneylending and moneychanging. Like the T'lilliu, they rarely have to pass businesses out of the family when a member progresses.
Notable Members: Bevian Taesyo is the overseer of public works.
Emblem: A stone tower with a pointed roof, with a circle drawn around it.

Liriliqirz

From a position within the Eoerin at the founding of the city to the current day, the Liriliqirz family has been the most orthodox of the orthodox. Members of the family serve as bailiffs, judges and Guardians. They lead a stricter and more rigorous life than most other citizens in the Citadel, which is saying quite a bit. In the lower Paths, they maintain interests in precious metals, working as miners, smelters, gold and silver smiths, jewelers and lapidaries.
Notable Members: Orosei Liriliqirz is the current Keeper of the Paths.
Emblem: A wave crest over a red jewel.

Xanfia

Primarily involved in food production and animal handling, the Xanfia run farms in Warriors, kitchens and bakeries in Scholars, train birds and handle overland shipping in Travelers, make their livelihoods from the river in Sages as fishers and boat crew, and eventually move into building boats, wagons and barrels in Lords. The family prefers a hands-on approach to life. They believe that you learn best by doing, and the more active the pursuit the better. To engage yourself fully in your Path, take up a career that requires strenuous manual labor as well as mental. Xanfia members tend to be large and sturdy for elves as a result. Once in a while, one of the more strapping specimens gets recruited into the military, but they rarely rise to officer rank. Xanfia elves are plain spoken and straightforward, as much as elves can be in that contorted language of theirs.
Notable Members: Dirgon Xanfia is the current head of Xanfia Cartage, a Sage who's been fined more than once for referring to his years as a teamster, before he took up accounting and control of the business. A bit short for an elf, Dirgon is well muscled and has a prodigious capacity for ale. Think of him as an overly tall dwarf and you'll have a grasp of how to deal with him. He keeps his dark brown hair just to collar length and prefers plain, simple clothing, with the minimum of ornamentation required by his Path. His brooch is nicked in a few places from the occasional time he spends in the warehouse, where he lends a hand to keep in touch with the daily business.
Emblem: A tree with fiery leaves, a barrel on the left and a packing crate on the right.

Reitenar

Cloth and knowledge define the influences of this family. Throughout their progress along the Paths, they're involved with one or the other, and sometimes both. Spinners and weavers, librarians and tailors, playwrights and tapesters, dyers and inkmakers and scriveners, bookbinders and papermakers, the Reitenar are invested in every facet of the process of creating clothing and literature. If I could have spent the night in the city, I'm sure I would have found a warm welcome among such kindred spirits as these. Well versed in not only elven writings but those of other

races, the Reitenar are gifted conversationalists who seem to be invited to most open social functions. Apparently training in social graces begins at an early age in this clan, as I had the opportunity to observe a young boy, no more than six years old, hosting a small gathering for his peers, with his mother in attendance, guiding him through the complex rituals of an elven tea ceremony.
Notable Members: Falenu Reitenar, a woman of striking grace and presence even for an elf, is the current head librarian of the Collegium of Eoerin. She wears her golden-blonde hair in a loose fall to her knees, and dresses in flowing robes that almost touch the ground. Her position puts her in charge of the primary storehouse of knowledge in the Citadel, and makes her responsible for who gains access to that knowledge. Unfortunately, it takes a good deal of time and the proper, subtle approach to cultivate a relationship with her. I had neither the time nor the resources for such. Her husband, Gidron, is the chief lensmaker to Ertelailen J'Hessirn, the Citadel's pre-eminent astrologer.
Emblem: A blue iris outlined in gold.

Skerrinu

Builders of one sort or another, the Skerrinu pursue the crafts of mason, bricklayer and plasterer as Warriors, architects and decorative carvers as Lords. In between, they make glass, thatch roofs, paint and install plumbing. Members regard the family as the foundation of the Citadel, a Name others use also. The Skerrinu are considered solid citizens, reliable, enduring and hard workers.
Notable Members: Vetrun Skerrinu holds the office of chief architect of the Citadel, responsible for the design of all official buildings and public works. Despite having lost his left arm in an accident when he was on the Path of Warriors, Vetrun has accomplished himself well during his progression, going into fields where his disability was irrelevant. His work is easily recognized by the graceful arcs and distinctive swooping facades, Vetrun having a dislike for straight lines in the visible portions of his structures.
Emblem: A bear, standing on all fours, facing to the left, underneath a four-pointed star.

Occupations

A few important observations:

1. While many food preparation and production occupations are classified under the Paths, preparation of meals is considered essential to the survival of all elves, and thus is classed as a non-Path task. This applies, however, only to preparation of meals for oneself and one's immediate household. Any person who prepares food as a trade must be a follower of the Scholars, the Path of Fire. These people are permitted to travel into other quarters in order to practice their trade, as otherwise everyone who did not prepare their own meals would have to travel into the Fire Quarter, a much more disruptive proceeding.
2. The Pathless are apparently allowed to lease facilities for their business within the walls, but are not allowed to own property except for outside the Citadel proper. Thus, a Pathless basket maker could theoretically have a shop in someone else's building. In practice, the Pathless do not hold business establishments. The basket maker would have to sell his

goods to a shopkeeper who was a Follower, rather than directly to his customers.

Mes ti'Meraerthsa	Mes ti'Telenetishsa	Mes ti'Cirolletishsa	Mes ti'Perritaesa	Mes ti'Raeghsa	Pathless
Armorer	Archer (Non-adept)	Astrologer	Accountant	Architect	Basketmaker
Beekeeper (also known as Apiarist)	Baker	Bard	Alchemist	Bailiff	Bonecarver
Brazier (Makes Brassware)	Bowyer	Blacksmith	Alewyfe	Banker	Butler
Brewer	Cannoneer	Cantor	Apothecary	Barrister	Carver
Bricklayer	Charcoalburner	Carter	Bargeman	Cabinetmaker	Dung Carter
Chainmaker	Chimney Sweep	Cartwright	Bath Attendant	Carpenter	Furrier
Cheesemaker	Confectioner	Chandler	Boatman	Chamberlain	Laundress
Coiner	Cook	Cobbler	Clark	Chancellor	Maid
Costermonger	Farrier	Drayman	Copiest	Constable	Molecatcher
Cowherd	Founder (Foundryman)	Falconer	Distiller	Cooper	Potboy
Crofter	Glassblower	Fowler	Dyer	Cordwainer	Privycleaner
Crossbowman	Glazier	Hawker	Felt-maker	Diplomat	Ragpicker
Dairymaid	Gold Beater (Makes Gold Leaf)	Herald	Ferryman	Drywaller	Raker
Delver	Goldsmith	Horner	Fisherman	Engineer	Rat Catcher
Ditcher	Lensgrinder	Innkeeper	Fishmonger	Exchequer	Scullion
Dog Trainer	Librarian	Jester	Inkmaker	Jailer	Skinner
Executioner	Lighterman	Landlord	Lawyer	Joyner	
Fletcher	Mailer (Enameller, Not a Maker of Armor)	Mapmaker	Limner	Judge	
Forester	Military Engineer	Master of Revels	Mathematician	Papermaker	
Gamekeeper	Saltboiler	Musician	Midwife	Quartermaster	
Gardner	Smelter	Navigator	Netmaker	Ropemaker	
Girdler	Silversmith	Painter	Nurse	Sawyer	
Glover	Tailor	Pilot	Philosopher	Shingler	
Goatherd	Tallowchandler	Piper	Physician	Shipwright	
Gravedigger	Waxchandler	Player	Plumber	Spy	
Grocer	Writer	Playwright	Poet	Turner	
Groom		Poulterer	Printer	Userer	
Guardsman		Saddler	Professor	Wood Cutter	
Haberdasher		Sailmaker	Pursuivant	Woodcarver	
Hatter		Sailor	Scrivener		
Hayward		Scout	Shrimper		
Horseleech		Sea Captain	Solicitor		
Horsetrainer		Shipchandler	Surgeon		
Huntsman		Swordsmith	Theologian		
Ironmonger		Tapester	Tutor		
Jeweler		Teamster	Vintner		
Knife-grinder		Tentsman	Waterseller		
Lacemaker		Thatcher	Weirkeeper		
Lapidary		Tumbler			
Leadworker		Wheelwright			
Linenspinner					

Mail-maker					
Mason					
Master of Hounds					
Miner					
Nailmaker					
Needler					
Pavier					
Pewterer					
Pinmaker					
Plasterer					
Plattner (Beat out Sheets of Metal)					
Plowman					
Pot Mender					
Quarryman					
Reaper					
Seamstress					
Seige Engineer					
Sergeant-at-arms					
Sheepshearer					
Shepherd					
Sherrif					
Silkwoman					
Spinster					
Stonecarver					
Swineherd					
Terrazo Grinder/Mosaic Layer					
Threadmaker					
Thresher					
Tinker					
Tinsmith					
Trapper					
Watchman					
Weaver					
Wire Drawer					
Woolcomber					
Woolman					

In closing, I must say that I have very mixed feelings about the Citadel. I find that I am drawn strongly to some aspects, just as strongly as I am repelled by others. The severity of restraint that the Paths apply to the inhabitants, and the resulting oppression of the Pathless, is antithetical to the Throalic ideal of individual freedom. Dwarven nature, on the other hand, is at its soul orderly, and the rigorous order of society with a place for everything and everything in its place appeals to my own love for organization. I could not live there, but I find I can admire it from afar. At a distance,

many of the faults are no longer visible, and the Citadel is a fine and shining place.

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Truaga'ar: A Town of Trolls

by Dan Allard

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About the Town

On the northeast side of the Throal mountains, a growing town lies at the base of the foothills. This is the town of Truaga'ar, inhabited mainly by trolls from many parts of Barsaive. Truaga'ar is different in many ways from other troll settlements; both their architecture and lifestyle could almost be described as dwarven, though trollish culture certainly has a strong influence here.

The Founding

A troll by the name of Tueg Na'hak was born in the Throal kaer a few years before the end of the Scourge. He was schooled with other youths, mostly dwarfs, and at an early age showed exceptional skills in mathematics and engineering. As he grew older he became an architect and participated in the design and construction of the cities of Oshane and Yistane in the kingdom of Throal. Unfortunately, his attempt to make parts of the cities more "troll-friendly" were met with resistance from the more conservative dwarven engineers; after several years of frustration, Tueg finally quit and left the kingdom of Throal for good. Driving him along was his vision of a place as civilized as any dwarven city yet where all races, even the largest ones, could be comfortable. Of course, he new no such place existed, so he figured he would have to build it himself.

He traveled with this wife Tesseg and his best friend, the dwarf Alavelus. Alavelus was a fellow architect who admired Tueg's skill and his somewhat odd ideals; as a dwarf, he was a little eccentric himself, for he had a continuing urge to leave the underground and live under the open sky. The trio spent several months searching for the proper place to build a town fit for trolls; along the way, they picked up a variety of otherwise homeless name-givers who were inspired by Tueg's vision.

Finally, Tueg settled on a small valley at the base of the northeast side of the Throal mountains. Some mountain dwelling troll clans had been trading with local dwarven villages

with some time, and many had already started to move down out of the mountains into the more comfortable foothills; Tueg found it easy to convince them to participate in his project. Many small ork families were also scattered through the hills, and some of these were also inspired at the idea of a better lifestyle.

Alavelus and Tueg planned carefully while trolls, orks, and a few neighboring dwarves started to excavate stones and clear out some of the surrounding forest. As the town began to take shape, more trolls moved out of the mountains and joined them in their task. While Tueg worried more about the actual layout of the town, Alavelus used his skills to design a rather dwarven irrigation system to be used in the valley below the town.

Truaga'ar and the Lands Surrounding

The town itself is set up into the hills overlooking the valley; in the morning, farmers travel down from the tend the fields, while herders tend to the flocks of sheep and goat up in the hills. For most of the year, a stream runs along the south side of Truaga'ar from the mountains, though during the rainiest seasons, this stream becomes a small river. Much of this stream is diverted into the fields for irrigation; for this reason any tampering with the stream is severely punished. The town is surrounded by a partially built stone wall; as the town continues to expand, the wall is torn down and moved farther and farther outward. About two miles to the south, a river runs out of the Throal Mountains and down eventually to the Serpent River; most trade to the town is brought along this river.

Defense of the Town

For many years, the town had few outward defenses, for the citizens relied upon their brute strength to keep out any intruders. However, some ten years before the current, a scorcher band heard rumors of the developing town and decided to pay a visit. The scorchers attacked and managed to burn down about a quarter of the town before they were driven off by the enraged residents. As a result, the Truaga'ar council decided to build a stone wall surrounding the town and also had two stone towers built, one on the north side and one on the south. Each tower is manned by four crossbow wielding guards, usually all trolls; they also have a large gong available to alert the town of attackers. A troll scout named Hekku is the current captain of the guard and has been for some time; he is well respected among the town guardsmen, though they would prefer that he take a more relaxed outlook towards his job.

Though a few other guardsmen can be found in the streets, the residents of Truaga'ar do most of the policing here; they are quite proud of their town and are not pleased when the peace is broken.

On the Architecture of Truaga'ar

Upon entering Truaga'ar, a non-resident might feel like he was entering a town of giants. All doorways and archways are tall enough to fit a tall troll comfortably; ceilings are at least a foot higher. As a rule, the cobbled streets are wide enough to fit two large carts side by side; most main streets are even wider. Few buildings are over a story high; the few that do sit at the south edge.

Truaga'ar regulations state every building must have at least one room with dimensions fit for a troll. Anyone who does not wish to abide by this policy must build outside of town; however, if the town expands into an area where a smaller home is already built, that home will be considered exempt from this policy.

Despite its size, the architecture shows a simplified dwarvish style with plenty of arches and pillars around. Most buildings are made of wood, though along the west hills more stone buildings can be found set into the hillsides.

On Business and Agriculture

Truaga'ar is supported largely by farming in the valley and herding up on the slopes of the foothills. The forested regions around the valley are also ripe for hunting, but this only supplements the food supply of the town. Truaga'ar also keeps the main road to the nearby river open to encourage trade from more distant lands.

The main export good from Truaga'ar is wine. The lower hills are ripe with grape vines; for years these were picked and the grapes eaten fresh or dried into raisins. About thirty years before the present, the Pelegri family moved into town; this was a family of dwarven vintners seeking to expand their business and take advantage of the wild grapes of the foothills. The Pelegri family taught the art of glassblowing to some of the residents and hired others to help pick the grapes and crush them. Soon, others would start to ferment their own wines, and the wine market became competitive. Truaga'ar now exports wine regularly; while almost all wine from this town is considered good, Pelegri wine is acknowledged as the best of the bunch. Not surprisingly, it is also the most expensive. Other wines tend to be a bit stronger than Pelegri wines and are more suited to trollish tastes.

An obsidiman called Shaleside lives permanently in Truaga'ar and is the local representative for Overland Trading Company. He has the final word for which wines go out on Overland trading caravans; he is considered the chief expert wine taster of the region and is often

called upon to judge wine tasting contests. He is also widely respected for his honesty; attempts to bribe him have been met with a hard, stony fist.

Layout of the Town

The Quarters

Truaga'ar can be divided up generally into four quarters that surround Truaga'ar Circle, though the term "quarter" has fallen into disuse. Generally, a resident will describe a location in town as being "south of the circle" or "in the northeast corner" or something similar.

Truaga'ar Circle

At the center of town is Truaga'ar Circle which serves as the town's square and central meeting place. At the very center of the circle is a four foot high, twenty foot diameter stone slab called the Standing Stone; four sets of steps lead up to the top, and four pillars support a domed roof. Officially the Standing Stone is used for town meetings and the like; however, it is more often used as a playground for local children. It is occasionally rented out by traveling troupes of actors and musicians, though these must register with the town council and pay a small fee.

Most of Truaga'ar Circle is lined with cobblestone, though the Standing Stone is ringed with a garden, and four fountains sit at the north, south, east and west edges of the circle, also surrounded by garden. Making up the outer rim of the circle are a variety of store fronts, mostly dealing different crafts. Some store fronts include a blacksmith shop, a tailor, a glassblower and a pair of wine-sellers.

Circle Inn

The Circle Inn sits at the east side of Truaga'ar Circle. The inn is a large, sprawling building which houses many of the travelers who come to Truaga'ar; as such, it is a center for information and gossip. The tavern is always busy and occasionally rowdy; fights are often only kept in check by the proprietor, Terek Na'hak, and his assistants. Name-givers of many races can be found here; it is one of the few places where t'skrang and elves are found in any numbers.

The Northwest Quarter

This area is the oldest section of the town and is almost completely residential; unlike the Northeast Quarter, most homes are built above the ground and arranged in an orderly fashion in east-west rows. Homes of many important members of the town can be found here,

including the sprawling residence of Tueg Na'hak and most of his extended family, and also several members of the town council. Most homes are built simply with additions added on seemingly at random; the house of Tueg has a more planned appearance and dwarven style of architecture.

The Southwest Quarter

This area is made up mainly of store fronts and residences; the quarter boasts a higher percentage of orks and dwarves than the other quarters. The widest east-west running street boasts a free-standing market; sensibly the street was renamed Market Street after a few years of this sort of activity. Most types of food and clothing can be found here; dealers in crafts such as blacksmiths and potters tend to work from established store fronts.

The Northeast Quarter

This area is largely residential and rather hilly. Several dwarf families can be found here, including the Pelegri family which has a sizable estate enclosing an acre or so of grape vines. Dwarf homes include a front room built large enough to be comfortable for trolls; the rest of the house is often completely underground and built for a dwarf-sized family. Trolls living in this area have also adopted this architectural style; of course, the back rooms of a troll home are large enough for troll comfort.

The Southeast Quarter

This area has been expanding eastward for some time and is home to many of the newer residents of Truaga'ar. The town walls to the south and northeast of this quarter have been torn down and rebuilt several times to make room for expansion; at any given time, they might be in any state from completely torn down to fully built. Much of the Southeast Quarter was burned down during the scorcher raid of thirty years before the current, so even the oldest part of the Southeast Quarter is made up of mostly new buildings.

Blerkha Inn

One of the older establishments of the southeast quarter is Blerkha Inn, a smallish inn with some very unlikely patrons. Blerkha is an Orkish word which translates roughly to "outcast" and refers to the main customers of the inn.

Blerkha Inn caters mainly to outcast trolls; while there may be a few other non-troll patrons of the inn, all of the trolls that frequent the inn have been outcast by their tribes. The tavern of Blerkha Inn is typically quiet; the outcasts who frequent the place do not normally talk to each other at all. The proprietor and main barkeep of the inn is Muebblharg, an ork of tremendous size and strength. Surprisingly, bar fights and other problems are almost nonexistent in the tavern; the outcasts who frequent the place are quick to defend the place that they consider a home.

Since most outcast trolls only really wish to be left alone with their drinks and their thoughts, Muebblharg encourages certain protocols when people wish to talk to or deal with the outcasts. If a person wishes to meet an outcast, it is suggested that he buy the outcast troll a drink; if the outcast is interested in dealing with the person, he will drink his drink and join the prospective patron for another; if not, he will drink his drink and push it away. Muebblharg typically steps in when a patron is too persistent and will not send a drink from a patron to the same troll twice in a night.

Politics of Truaga'ar

When the town was near completion, Tueg was the obvious choice of town leader. However, he refused, for he claimed he was not interested in politics; instead he helped to put together a council of residents to make decisions on town matters. There is only one named position within the council: "Arbiter" is the only appropriate Throalic translation from Trollish. The Arbiter's job is to maintain peace within the council and to arbitrate disputes within. Decisions are made on a majority vote; therefore, the council is always kept at an odd number. Currently there are fifteen members of the council. The vote for members of the council is an interesting event. Once a year, the town gathers in Truaga'ar Circle and the old council plus anyone else who wishes to be on the council is brought up on the Standing Stone. Each council member and potential council member is paraded in front of the rest of the town, who either applaud or jeer that candidate. Election is based entirely upon this crowd response, so most often the popular, charismatic candidates will win. Normally, old council members will be re-elected first, especially if little has happened over the past year; however, sometimes a council member will leave willingly and thus leave a spot open for a new member. Membership on the council is generally uninteresting, so there have even been times when the council has shrunk due to a lack of interested residents.

Though Tueg is no longer the Arbiter for the council, he has been on the council since it's conception. He is not particularly active on the council these days due to his extreme age, but is always consulted on matters of zoning and new construction.

On Races in the Town and their Relations:

Trolls make up about %75 of the total population of Truaga'ar. Orks and dwarves each make up another eight percent or so, while humans make up about five percent. The remaining four percent is made up of t'skrang, obsidimen and elves; windlings are almost unseen here, and there are no windling residents. There are several notable obsidimen residents; they tend to appreciate the large living spaces and simplicity of trollish architecture.

Trolls being a generally testy bunch, it is inevitable that inter-racial conflicts will occur. The most common inter-racial problems are between the trolls and advice-giving dwarves who don't understand trollish privacy; fortunately for the peace of the town, the trolls have found a way to maintain their honor and still chastise the offending dwarf. When a dwarf shoves his nose into a troll's business, he will soon find himself hanging by his feet and being shaken severely until his face turns a light purple. The dwarf is then dropped solidly upon the ground among the clatter of loose objects dropped by said dwarf. The sight of an indignant, purple faced dwarf struggling to rise after such an ordeal is enough to send any troll into gales of laughter; as payment for this amusement, the troll will usually drag the dwarf off for a round of drinks. All in all, these events lead to greater understanding between dwarf and troll.

The worst problems are between different trolls who maintain their old clan alliances. Usually, old rivalries spring up between hot-headed younger clan members and may even result in street fighting; other residents normally sweep down before the guard can even arrive and break up the whole ordeal. Combatants are then dragged off to be dealt with by the council. One particularly violent clan picked so many fights with other residents that it was driven out of town for good; needless to say, members of this clan resent their treatment at the hands of Truaga'ar and forever plan revenge against it.

Views of Throal

Residents of Truaga'ar are an independent lot and most are suspicious of Throal and the motives of the Throalic government. However, they are also a fairly well informed and educated community and keep their ears open when merchants and other travelers arrive from Throal. Tueg Na'hak spent many of his aging years decrying Throal and their treatment of him, and much of his attitude rubbed off on other residents of the town. Despite this attitude, Truaga'ar would support Throal over any invading force (such as a Theran one).

Troll Views of Truaga'ar

For trolls living in Truaga'ar, the town is an important achievement; it is a shining example of trolls living on their own terms alongside their fellow name-givers. However, trolls living outside of Truaga'ar have rather different views of the town. While some trolls look up to and try to emulate the relative success of Truaga'ar in their own communities, many trolls, especially highland trolls, consider Truaga'ar to be the greatest abomination to trollkind; they feel that the residents of Truaga'ar have sacrificed all of their values for the comforts that other name-givers enjoy. Some are simply enraged by the name of the town which is a corruption of the Trollish for "trollhome". These negative attitudes have so far led only to the occasional street fight between residents and visiting trolls, but some believe that it is only a

matter of time before some troll clan decides to launch a full scale raid upon the town.

Events and Holidays

The Smashing of the Grapes

This annual event falls on the 15th of Raquas during the height of the grape picking season. The whole town gathers in the center of the southwest quarter where a large pit has been dug out of the ground; the pit is six feet deep and fifteen in diameter, and lined with wooden planks. In the morning, the pit is filled a foot deep with grapes; for the rest of the day, volunteers wrestle in the pit in pairs until one or the other is tossed out or both are beaten to unconsciousness. Winners are later paraded around the town and filled with liquor until they pass out. This particular event has been used by many a troll to settle a variety of disputes; others participate for the simple joy of unarmed combat. Non-trolls occasionally take part in the event, but this is is typically against their wills or better judgment. The pit used in this event is called the Smashing Pit and is covered by a semi-permanent wine-selling establishment for the rest of the year. The small building covering the pit is dragged a dozen yards or so away from the pit the morning before festivities commence; the building is ceremoniously dragged back into place the day after.

The Breaking of the Casks

This event coincides with the new year; all residents of the town join in for the festivities. At dusk, the town gathers in Truaga'ar Circle where two dozen casks of wine are set to hang in mid-air by gallows-like structures. At the signal of the Arbiter of the town council, the casks are broken open with axes and participants in the event catch the falling wine with mugs and open mouths. When these casks are empty, another two dozen are hoisted up and smashed again. Local musicians perform on the standing stone while much of the rest of the town drinks for the rest of the evening and late into the night.

Some Important Residents of Truaga'ar

Tueg Na'hak

Tueg, the founder of Truaga'ar, is in his late 60's and is showing his age both physically and mentally. Though Tueg's wife died ten years earlier, Tueg often forgets this and talks to her as if she was still around. Somehow, his architectural expertise has survived his senility; he is often conferred with on building plans and is quick to catch any flaws in a design.

Terek Na'hak

Terek is the second son and third child of Tueg Na'hak; his older sister was slain adventuring in the mountains of Throal, and his older brother is married and raising troll children elsewhere in Truaga'ar. Terek is quite involved in the daily happenings of Truaga'ar; he is the proprietor of the Circle Inn and is also a member of the town council. Though Terek did not inherit his father's interest in architecture, he is still quite educated and an excellent judge of character.

Shaleside

This obsidiman has been a resident of Truaga'ar for the last 20 years and many assume that he is a permanent resident of the town. He does not actually consider himself a permanent resident, though this may have more to do with him being an obsidiman than anything else. He is often found in the Circle Inn catching up on the latest gossip and news from the outside.

Araan Pelegri

This dwarf is the current head of the Pelegri family and as such is quite wealthy and influential. Araan is the eldest brother of the Pelegri family and for nearly a century he battled with his father over the management of the family business. Upon his father's death some thirty years earlier, he moved the entire clan into Truaga'ar where he took advantage of the better growing conditions for grapes and the greater availability of trade. Now nearing two hundred years old, Araan is quite set in his ways and is becoming a bit difficult to deal with. Araan leaves most of the daily management of the family business to his sons; his brothers and sisters are still quite active in the business, though he keeps them busy with the daily business of wine-making and away from management of money and trade. He is forever suspicious of them wanting to take his place at the head of the family and does not trust them with financial matters.

Hekku, Captain of the Guard

This aging troll scout is highly disciplined and also highly respected by a majority of the local populace; he takes his job very seriously. Anyone causing trouble in town will very likely be brought before him for a summary judgment; for most minor crimes this usually means being run out of town. Major crimes such as murder or arson usually are usually brought to the attention of the town council for judgment; Hekku's judgments for lesser crimes are almost always backed up by the council, so appeals are rarely made.

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The Windsong

by David Caraley

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #5***

As you walk down the main street of Bartertown, marvelling at the sights and sounds, you come upon a quaint three story building constructed of wood, except for one side wall made of stone. The Windsong Inn is written in Dwarven on a sign hanging above the door. The windows show the flickering of shadows over light that attests to the crowd inside.

You enter to see a crowded tavern. You stand near the end of a long wooden bar looking out onto the common room. And what a sight. The tables are arranged in a horseshoe and are crowded with patrons eating, drinking, and cheering. The cheering is for the entertainers in the center of the horseshoe. There are singers, dancers, and acrobats, all performing for the crowd. A large Ork wanders over behind the bar. He is dressed as an innkeeper, but still carries himself as a warrior. "Well met, travellers. What can I get ya?"

The Windsong is a Merchant Inn that caters to the adventuring crowd that travels Barsaive. The inn is owned and run by an Ork named Brak, a retired mercenary who has become an innkeeper. Brak has a staff of 13 people working for him. This includes 2 cooks, 2 stablehands, 2 chambermaids, a bartender, 3 bouncers, and 3 barmaids.

The inn is a three story wooden building with one wall made of stone. The entire ground floor is made up of the common room and kitchen, with an underground storeroom. The second floor is made up of 8 private rooms with 2 beds in each. 4 of them have private baths. The third floor has 4 more private rooms with 2 beds each, Brak's room, and a large room for the staff with 6 cots for those who need to stay the night. There is a stable with room for 10 horses in the back. Brak charges 5 cp per night for boarding horses.

The Windsong is known for its entertainment. Minstrels, storytellers, troubadours and dancers all come to play and entertain, hoping for tips from the clientele. The entertainer rolls his or her skill. They generally earn 5 silver pennies in coppers and silvers for each number above 5 that they roll. For example, if a dancer with a Step of 8 rolls an 9 on 2D6, she would earn 20 silvers that night. It would probably be mostly in coppers, maybe 150 coppers and 5 silvers. It is considered impolite to hog the stage, and anyone is given a chance to tell a story or entertain. Because of this, it is difficult to get a spot on the lineup for the evening. A person has to convince Brak, needing a successful Charisma Test against Brak's Social Defense. Bribery sometimes works, as does Haggling.

All meals and entertainment take place in the common room, a large room with the tables set

up in a large horse-shoe so that the entertainers can perform in the middle. It also makes it easier on the barmaids to deliver food and drink. Food consists of simple meals (3 cp), average meals (1 sp), and good meals (3 sp). The drinks served are ale (5 cp), good ale (1 sp), Dwarven stout (2 sp), bottle of wine (5 cp), bottle of fine wine (5sp and up). Rooms go for 3 silvers a night, or 5 silvers with bath.

The inn opens at first morning light when Llara and Trevin start making the simple breakfasts for the patrons that stayed the night. At noon the rest of the staff shows up and starts the day, continuing to work until closing at mid-night. At this point, the doors are barred and clean up begins. Patrons who are staying in the common room are encouraged to aid in the clean up, given a free ale for their troubles.

The Staff

Brak - Former Ork Scorcher, Owner

DEX: 13: 6/D10 **STR:** 15: 6/D10 **TOU:** 12: 5/D8
PER: 10: 5/D8 **WIL:** 9: 4/D6 **CHA:** 10: 5/D8

Initiative: 6/D10

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: Melee 11/ D10+D8; Second Attack 7/D12

Damage: Short Sword 10/D10+D6; Spiked Mace 12/2D10; Dagger 8/2D6

Number of Spells: 0

Spellcasting: 0

Effect: 0

Death Rating: 34

Wound Threshold: 9

Unconsciousness Rating: 26

Physical Defense: 7

Spell Defense: 6

Social Defense: 6

Armor: 0 (or 4)

Mystic Armor: 0

Knockdown: 6/D10

Recovery Tests: 2@D8

Combat Movement: 30

Full Movement: 60

Legend Points: 130

Equipment: Padded leather, short sword, spiked mace

Loot: 5D6x10 Silvers

Skills: Rune Carving 1: 6/D10, Legends and Heroes 2: 7/D12, Local Lore 3: 8/2D6, Melee Weapons 5: 11/D10+D8, Second Attack 1: 7/D12, Conversation 3: 8/2D6, Speak Languages 8: 13/D12+D10 Obsidiman, Ork, Elf, Troll, T'Skrang, Windling, Human, Dwarf

Brak is a former Ork "mercenary", actually a former scorcher, who retired with enough money to open the Windsong. He is a jovial man who no longer wishes to risk his life and is quite content running his simple inn.

Morley Drago - Human Bartender

DEX: 9: 4/D6 **STR:** 9: 4/D6 **TOU:** 10: 5/D8
PER: 12: 5/D8 **WIL:** 9: 4/D6 **CHA:** 10: 5/D8

Initiative: 4/D6
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 4/D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 4/D6
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 24
Full Movement: 48
Legend Points: 40

Equipment: Bar things, dog

Loot: 3D6 x 10 silvers

Skills: Conversation 4: 8/2D6, Legends and Heroes 2: 7/D12, Local Lore 3: 8/2D6, Music: Flute 1: 6/D10, Speak Languages 8: 13/D12+D10 (Dwarven, Elf, Human, Obsidiman, Ork, Troll, T'skrang, Windling), Unarmed Combat 2: 6/D10

Morley has been tending bar at the Windsong for over five years. He knows of Brak's past, and looks out for his friend in case anyone carrying a grudge comes in and tries to get even. Morley is a middle-aged man whose hair is going gray, but he still thinks quite clear, and is often the one whom entertainers go to when they want a chance to perform.

Llara - Female Ork Cook

DEX: 11: 5/D8 **STR:** 14: 6/D10 **TOU:** 12: 5/D8
PER: 13: 6/D10 **WIL:** 8: 4/D6 **CHA:** 11: 5/D8

Initiative: 5/D8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 9/D8+D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 34

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 6/D10
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 30

Wound Threshold: 9
Full Movement: 60
Unconsciousness Rating: 26
Legend Points: 55
Equipment: Craft tools (including something used as a club), padded cloth armor
Loot: D6 x 10 silvers
Skills: Appraise Food and Drink 3: 9/D8+D6, Cooking 3: 9/D8+D6, Melee 1: 6/D10, Trading 3: 8/2D6

Llara and Brak are lovers and she helps him run the inn. She is a good cook, and enjoys her work. She is a good hearted individual who sometimes feeds the poor from the back door. She is also fond of strays, and there is usually a few dogs and cats out back.

Trevin - Human Assistant Cook

DEX: 12: 5/D8 **STR:** 11: 5/D8 **TOU:** 11: 5/D8
PER: 13: 6/D10 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 13: 6/D10

Initiative: 5/D8
Physical Defense: 7
Number of Attacks: 1
Spell Defense: 7
Attack: 6/D10
Social Defense: 7
Damage: 8/2D6
Armor: 2
Number of Spells: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Knockdown: 5/D8
Effect: 0
Recovery Tests: 2
Death Rating: 32
Combat Movement: 29
Wound Threshold: 8
Full Movement: 57
Unconsciousness Rating: 24
Legend Points: 50
Equipment: Craft tools (including something used as a club), padded cloth armor
Loot: D6 x 10 silvers
Skills: Appraise Food and Drink 3: 9/D8+D6, Cooking 3: 9/D8+D6, Melee 1: 6/D10, Trading 3: 8/2D6

Trevin is a simple cook who works at the Windsong. He is a quiet men who goes home at night to his family. He is in his mid-40s and tries to live a simple life.

Sevvi, Gunnir - Human Stablehands

DEX: 12: 5/D8 **STR:** 11: 5/D8 **TOU:** 11: 5/D8
PER: 13: 6/D10 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 13: 6/D10

Initiative: 5/D8
Physical Defense: 7
Number of Attacks: 1
Spell Defense: 7

Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 8/2D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 32
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 24
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 5/D8
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 29
Full Movement: 57
Legend Points: 50

Equipment: Craft tools (including something used as a club), padded cloth armor

Loot: D6 x 10 silvers

Skills: Appraise Animals 3: 9/D8+D6, Animal Handling 3: 9/D8+D6, Melee 1: 6/D10, Trading 3: 8/2D6

Sevvi is an old man and Gunnir is his grandson. They care for the horses and other mounts that are kept at the inn. They both love animals and are quite good at their jobs. Sevvi wishes he could get training for Gunnir to become a Beastmaster Adept, but can not afford it.

Helva, Fran - Dwarf Chambermaids

DEX: 12: 5/D8 **STR:** 13: 6/D10 **TOU:** 14: 6/D10
PER: 13: 6/D10 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 11: 5/D8

Initiative: 5/D8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 9/D8+D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 28
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 6/D10
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 24
Full Movement: 48
Legend Points: 55

Equipment: Craft tools (including something used as a club), padded cloth armor

Loot: D6 x 10 silvers

Skills: Appraise Own Craft 3: 9/D8+D6, Craft 3: 9/D8+D6, Melee 1: 6/D10, Trading 3: 8/2D6

Both of these Dwarven women moved to Bartertown to try and find husbands who struck it rich. So far they have had no luck, though Helva is falling for Roarc despite his present poverty.

Ella, Gwen - Human Barmaids

DEX: 11: 5/D8 **STR:** 9: 4/D6 **TOU:** 10: 5/D8
PER: 11: 5/D8 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 14: 6/D10

Initiative: 5/D8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 4/D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22
Equipment: Clothes, smile
Loot: 2D6 silvers

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 4/D6
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 27
Full Movement: 45
Legend Points: 50

Skills: Bartending 2: 7/D12, Flirting 3: 9/D8+D6, Singing 1: 7/D12, Unarmed Combat 1: 6/D10

Ella and Gwen are in their early 20s. They are both good-looking. Ella is a blond haired, blue eyed tease who plays the dumb blond to perfection. Gwen is a red haired, green eyed girl who simply smiles seductively and does her job.

Muriel - Windling Barmaid

DEX: 12: 5/D8 **STR:** 5: 3/D4 **TOU:** 7: 4/D6
PER: 12: 5/D8 **WIL:** 10: 5/D8 **CHA:** 16: 7/D12

Initiative: 5/D8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 6/D10
Damage: 3/D4
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 27
Wound Threshold: 6
Unconsciousness Rating: 18
Equipment: Clothes, smile

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 9
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 3/D4
Recovery Tests: 1
Combat Movement: 16 / 33
Full Movement: 32 / 65
Legend Points: 65

Loot: 2D6 silvers

Skills: Bartending 2: 7/D12, Flirting 3: 10/D10+D6, Singing 1: 8/2D6, Unarmed Combat 1: 5/D8

Muriel is a dark haired, violet eyed girl who is always curious. She is always trying to hear stories about foreign places and adventures. Though she sometimes gets distracted, customers seem to like her.

Orin, Roarc - Dwarven Bouncers

DEX: 11: 5/D8 **STR:** 15: 6/D10 **TOU:** 16: 7/D12
PER: 12: 5/D8 **WIL:** 12: 5/D8 **CHA:** 8: 4/D6

Initiative: 5/D8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 7/D12
Damage: 9/D8+D6
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 39
Wound Threshold: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 31
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 5
Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 1
Knockdown: 6/D10
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 24
Full Movement: 48
Legend Points: 60

Equipment: Leather armor, club

Loot: D6 x 10 silvers

Skills: Melee 2: 7/D12, Streetwise 2: 7/D12, Unarmed Combat 2: 7/12

Orin and Roarc are two cousins from Throal who thought they could make a fortune in the ruins of Parlainth. They were wrong, and ended up deep in debt. Since that time they have been working to pay off their bills here at the Windsong, and staying on the third floor. They both still own shortswords that they keep behind the bar. They tend not to interfere in normal brawls until the inn gets damaged or things escalate out of hand. Orin is a balding Dwarf with a brown beard, while Roarc is a red haired Dwarf who likes to flirt with the ladies.

Llarg - Troll Bouncer

DEX: 11: 5/D8 **STR:** 17: 7/D12 **TOU:** 15: 6/D10
PER: 11: 5/D8 **WIL:** 13: 6/D10 **CHA:** 10: 5/D8

Initiative: 5/D8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 7/D12
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6

Damage: 10/D10+D6 | **Armor:** 3

Number of Spells: 0 | **Mystic Armor:** 1

Spellcasting: 0 | **Knockdown:** 6/D10

Effect: 0 | **Recovery Tests:** 3

Death Rating: 35 | **Combat Movement:** 27

Wound Threshold: 9 | **Full Movement:** 54

Unconsciousness Rating: 27 | **Legend Points:** 60

Equipment: Leather armor, club

Loot: D6 x 10 silvers

Skills: Melee 2: 7/D12, Streetwise 2: 7/D12, Unarmed Combat 2: 7/12

Llarg discovered early on that he didn't enjoy sleeping on the cold ground, trekking overland for days on end, and getting rained on. He did, however, enjoy the occasional fights that adventuring brought. When he arrived in Bartertown, he gave up wandering, and became a bouncer at the Windsong.

Adventure Seeds

1. The Windsong is an excellent place for adventurers to hear rumors, stories, and tales about anything that you can think of. There are entertainers and storytellers with any type of clues to places where heroes are buried, long forgotten kaers, and lairs of creatures with hordes of treasure. Of course, not all are true, but such are the perils of adventuring.
2. Llarg the bouncer knows of the location of the lair of a Jehuthra. This is where he lost two of his companions, one of which was wearing the mystic Ring of Takka'kar. Llarg was never really sure what the ring did, but he knows that it was magical, and worn by the Elementalist in his group. For a marginal fee of, say, about 250 silvers, Llarg would be willing to tell where this lair could be found.

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Arms and Services

by Aaron Porter

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #8***

"You sure ask a lot of questions, son. All I can tell ya is before you start runnin off to anywhere, you should stop at Firebreather's ...

"You never heard of Firebreather's? He's the best forge in town. He's got just what ya need, and he'll know exactly what ta give ya. One warnin, though. You make sure you got plenty of time to spend there. Yah'see, Firebreather tends to get a bit long winded. He loves to talk. He'll go on for hours, but ya don't wanna interrupt him, that's bad manners no matter where yer from."

Overview

A visit to the weaponsmith. It may be an everyday occurrence for some player's characters, and the judge must either be prepared, or spend valuable game time in making up prices for everything the player can imagine. This article gives the judge what she needs to maintain a constant price level in goods, and adds flavor to the visit for the player.

The dwarven weaponsmith, Firebreather, has grown a good reputation of selling quality work from his clean little workshop. His stock is never large, but what he doesn't have, he can get. The dwarf has a full line of normal weapons, armor, shields, horse shoes, nails, and all sorts of hand forged goodies. Firebreather's constantly busy with special orders, too , but he's always ready to take on another challenge.

Firebreather is not only known for his skill at the forge, but even more remarkable is his ability to talk. The dwarf's mouth never stops from the moment he greets someone until they're able to escape. He talks about the weather, local families, gossip, legendary people, politics, jokes, clients, travels he's been on or heard about, philosophy, fashion, fads, everything and anything on the dwarf's mind seems to roll right off, and out of his mouth. He never really stops gabbing, but doesn't seem to take a stand on anything he says. It's rumored that he lost his last two assistants because he talked while he worked, when he ate, and even in his sleep.

Some customers are irritated by this quirk, and don't ever come back, but Firebreather only

thinks he's being friendly. He blames the customers for not recognizing his quality work. Actually, the dwarf believes his ramblings to be helpful, revealing information that will aid, and inform his clients. Most people try and avoid a conversation with him, but Firebreather does have friends who have learned to put up with his babbling, and some even find it endearing.

However much the dwarf may ramble, his work is excellent. He can take steel and iron, and turn it into a beautiful, sturdy, magnificent weapon. His love for his craft is expressed in every blade, every wedge, and every hinge he creates. He could easily charge a fortune for his work, but what good would it do if his creations just hung on the wall of his shop? Firebreather's price is quite fair on his forged and reforged items. Some say they're down right cheap. His prices on normal equipment can be a bit high, but he gets no complaints. His work has become well respected in the community as that of quality.

"Me Usual Stock..."

Anyone looking for a specific normal melee weapon, missile weapon, throwing weapon, armor, or shield could find it here. The availability rating for most of these items is "Everyday" (-2: see ED p250), but certain less common items reach "Average" (0) to "Unusual" (+2) levels. At Firebreather's , None of the items listed above that are found on the Goods and Services tables will ever be higher than an "Unusual" level of availability.

The price for these items is a little higher than normal. Firebreather sells them 10% to 20% higher than the Goods and Services tables. This is not only because his quality is good, but also so he can maintain the availability of more rare items.

"Hey ... How bout somethin' a bit more potent?"

The thread weapons, and thread armor listed in Earthdawn Companion may be found here. These items are considered "Unusual" (+2) to "Very Rare" (+9) for availability. If the item is found to be unavailable, Firebreather may be able to find one and have it brought there. This is up to the judge on whether she wants the item available to the characters yet. It usually takes several weeks for Firebreather to find a specific item of this type. The price for these items will be very near the listed price in Earthdawn Companion.

Firebreather also keeps a number of weapons around that he has reforged and upgraded using his Forge Blade talent. These weapons will be from +1 to +3 on their damage step rating, and are of high quality and craftsmanship. The availability of these weapons depends

on the bonus rate. The availability rating for a +1 weapon will be "Unusual" (+2), a +2 weapon will be "Rare" (+5), and a +3 weapon will be "Very Rare" (+9). The specific type of weapon requested can be anything listed on the Goods and Services tables, but the price varies for each item depending on the base cost of that particular weapon. A list of some example weapons, their bonuses, and suggested prices are as follows:

Melee Weapon	Damage Step (+1/ +2/ +3)	Price In Silver
Dagger	3, 4, 5	100, 300, 600
Dwarf Sword	4, 5, 6	110, 310, 610
Whip	4, 5, 6	110, 310, 610
Short Sword	5, 6, 7	116, 316, 616
Broad Sword	6, 7, 8	125, 325, 625
Troll Sword	7, 8, 9	150, 350, 650
Two-Handed Sword	8, 9, 10	225, 425, 725
Hand-Axe	5, 6, 7	115, 315, 615
Battle Axe	7, 8, 9	135, 335, 635
Pole-Axe	9, 10, 11	250, 450, 750
Pole Arms	9, 10, 11	200-275, 400-475, 700-775
Lance	6, 7, 8	250, 450, 750
Spear	5, 6, 7	105, 305, 605
Trispear	6, 7, 8	125, 325, 625
Sap	2, 3, 4	100, 300, 600
Quarter Staff	3, 4, 5	105, 305, 605
Club	4, 5, 6	100, 300, 600
Mace	5, 6, 7	120, 320, 620
Flail	6, 7, 8	135, 335, 635
Spiked Mace	7, 8, 9	140, 340, 640
Warhammer	8, 9, 10	225, 425, 725

Missile Weapon	Damage Step (+1/ +2/ +3)	Price In Silver
Blowgun	2, 3, 4	100, 300, 600
Sling	4, 5, 6	105, 305, 605
Troll Sling	5, 6, 7	115, 315, 615
Windling Bow	4, 5, 6	103, 303, 603
Short Bow	4, 5, 6	115, 315, 615
Longbow	5, 6, 7	160, 360, 660
Light Crossbow	5, 6, 7	150, 350, 650
Medium Crossbow	6, 7, 8	200, 400, 700
Elven Warbow	6, 7, 8	300, 500, 800

Thrown Weapon	Damage Step (+1/ +2/ +3)	Price In Silver
Darts	2, 3, 4	100, 300, 600
Bola	4, 5, 6	110, 310, 610
Throwing Axe	4, 5, 6	125, 325, 625
Flight Dagger	3, 4, 5	125, 325, 625
Windling Spear	3, 4, 5	145, 345, 645
Hawk Hatchet	5, 6, 7	225, 425, 725

"Sure, I Could Do That... "

Firebreather is more than happy to take special requests. The dwarf can use his Forge Blade talent on weapons the client wishes to upgrade, or he can even create a weapon specifically for the client. Whatever the client wishes, review the description of Forge Blade (***ED***, p. 107), and go over the special rules for creating weapons, armor and shields (***Adept's Way***, p. 138).

Firebreather works cheap. Instead of using the Forge Blade talent prices, use Firebreather's general price. He charges 50 silver multiplied by the Final Damage Step per week of work. At the end of every week he makes a Forge Blade test as stated in the Forge Blade talent.

For Example: Firebreather is asked to work on a normal broadsword. The broadsword is damage step 5, and the Final damage step will be 6. Firebreather will charge 300 silver per week (50 silver X 6) for as long as it takes him to finish.

The price seems higher than the available weapons above, but special requests do take extra time and energy, and actually his price is much lower than the rules call for.

"That Shield Sure Took A Beatin ..."

Firebreather will also repair weapons, shields, and armor. He can restore weapons and armor to almost new by using his forging skills. Use the process described under *Damage to Weapons and Armor* (***ED Companion***, p. 117). Also, use the prices described there.

"That's a Lovely Sword Ya Got There..."

The dwarf may also buy some items, and sometimes accepts trade. He'll pay a fair price, close to his own usual prices, but because his prices tend to be low for exceptional items, sometimes he doesn't give the best deal around. It's often best to sell your stuff to someone else.

"This Weapon Has A Long Past ..."

Firebreather may also give private consultation with anyone who has rare or historical weapons or armor. If the client wishes to know more about their item, Firebreather will request to keep the item for a week of study. The dwarf will use his Weapon History talent to find information for the character. Often the dwarf uncovers the Test Knowledge of the item, and may be able to instruct the client on how to uncover the Key Knowledge to tie threads. However, Firebreather's tendency to ramble may confuse more clients than help them. His information is always accurate, but is usually overwhelming and ambiguous.

The price for this consultation varies with each occasion, but if the dwarf uncovers the Test Knowledge (***ED***, p. 270) required for an item, then he charges an amount of silver equal to the legend point value of that rank.

For Example: If a client were to bring Firebreather Nioku's Bow (***ED***, p. 281), he would charge 500 silver for the first test knowledge because the legend point cost for the first rank

of the Bow is 500. The second bit of knowledge would cost 1300 silver (rank 3).

Firebreather charges this flat rate no matter how long it takes him to uncover the item's history.

Firebreather loves finding the long stories behind every item brought to him. He may even aid in finding rare information if asked and the story is good enough. However, his unwillingness to leave his shop may intercede any decision he makes.

Statistics

Firebreather

Sixth Circle Dwarf Weaponsmith

DEX: (15):6-1d10 **STR:** (13):6-1d10 **TOU:** (14):6-1d10
PER: (16):7-1d12 **WIL:** (13):6-1d10 **CHA:** (10):5-1d8

Initiative: 4-1d6
Number of Attacks: see below
Attack: 12-2d10
Damage: varies with weapon choice
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 72
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 58
Karma: 12

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 6
Armor: Ring mail: 6 (or his choice)
Mystic Armor: 1
Knockdown: 10
Recovery Tests: 3-1d10
Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60
Legend Points: ???
Karma Dice: 1d6

Equipment: Firebreather can get about anything from his shop, but his favorite weapon is a huge spiked mace (Damage Step 9) that he's been crafting in his "spare" time. He also carries around his tools in a large belt apron everywhere he goes.

Loot: Firebreather lives above his store and keeps all his money hidden around his place. He also has a stash buried in his basement. Normally he only carries enough money for whatever he has planned for that day.

Skills: Craftsman 6 (12-2d10) (i.e. Forge/Repair Armor and Shields and other non-weapon forging), Legendary Weapons 3, Gossip 2, Weather Prediction 1, Politics 1, Legends and Heroes 1, Runic Carving 5

Talents:
I Avoid Blow 5(11-1d10+1d8); Forge Blade 6(13-1d12+1d10); Karma Ritual 6; Melee Weapons 6(12-2d10); Steel Thought 5(11-1d10+1d8); Weapon History 6 (13-1d12+1d10)
II Durability 6(36/30); Haggle 6(11-1d10+1d8); Read/Write Languages 5 (12/2d10) Elvish, Human, Ork, Troll, T'skrang
IIIAbate Curse 5(12-2d10); Detect Weapon 6(13-1d12+1d10)
IV Speak Language 4(11-1d10+1d8) Elvish, Human, Obsidimen, T'skrang; Thread Weaving 6(13-1d12+1d10)
V Temper Self 6(12-2d10); Warp Missile 3(10-1d10+1d6)
VI Conceal Weapon 4(11-1d10+1d8); Spot Armor Flaw 3(10-1d10+1d6)

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Common Thread Items

by Timothy Reynolds

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #7***

From the Library of Victoris Wiseman

Greetings and salutations, fellow Barsaivians. I am Victoris Wiseman, scholar and sage from the town of Gennen. This is the second of my series on the unusual items of power the Heros of Gennen have encountered. Together with the previous information, I hope this information is useful to the future heros of Barsaive as they search for a way to make life better for all of us.

Common Thread Items

Somewhat of a misnomer, Common Thread Items are those which are created by talented magic smiths, working for extended times, and at considerable expense. Nonetheless, they are reproducible and can often be found for sale in the largest of Barsaive's towns. Further information on Common Thread Items can be found in the Earthdawn Companion, pg.55+. Many of these items are Talent Boosters, that is they increase the effectivness of specific Talents, and as such are most useful to specific Disiciplines.

These items all have Maximum Threads of one and a Spell Defense of 9. All prices are in silver and very subject to available and demand. All Common Thread Items have only one Key Knowledge, their Name.

Sprinting Shoes

These shoes usually are made as expensive messenger shoes, adorned with expensive lacings and decorations.

Price: 500

Rank 1 Cost: 100

Effect: The wearer may use the Sprint Talent at a rank equal to the thread rank they have woven to the shoes. Characters possessing the Sprint Talent may add the thread rank to their own.

Rank 2 Cost: 200

Effect: The wearer may speak the name of the shoes aloud, and spend a Karma point instead of the strain required by Sprint. The result of the Karma die is added to the character's Sprint Talent for one round only.

Reins of Might

These are highly decorated reins, which are very difficult to place and remove (10 minutes). Although the most common are sized for horses, reins exist to many of the more uncommon mounts Cavalrymen might use.

Price: 500

Rank 1 Cost: 100

Effect: When being used, Reins of Might add the Thread Rank the wielder has woven to them to their Trick Riding Talent tests.

Rank 2 Cost: 200

Effect: As Rank 1, but with Empathic Command.

Rank 3: Cost: 300

Effect: +1 PD for both mount and rider when the reins are used.

Geode Pendant

Carved from the heart of a Geode, these stunning pendants seem to shimmer with their own rainbow light when a thread is woven to them.

Price: 1000

Rank 1 Cost: 200

Effect: The Pendant will function as a Spell Matrix of Rank equal to the Thread woven to it, but only for a magician.

Rank 2 Cost: 300

Effect: The wielder's Thread Weaving for the Pendant's Matrix only is increased by the Rank of the Thread woven to it.

Rank 3 Cost: 500
Effect: The wielder may take an additional Fire Blood recovery test per day, if they possess the talent.

Eye Clasp

Usually made from the purest silver, this cloak clasp has an opened eye design which seems to follow the observer as they move.

Price: 500

Rank 1 Cost: 100
Effect: Any illusion cast upon the wielder adds the Rank of the thread woven to the Clasp to its Sensing and Disbelief test Circle equivalent. The wielder adds the same amount to their Willpower saves for such illusions.

Rank 2 Cost: 200
Effect: The wielder may add the Clasp's Thread rank to all Disguise Self Talent Ranks.

Rank 3 Cost: 300
Effect: The Clasp will act as a Rank 3 spell matrix for its wielder.

Spirit Loom

This small hand loom has a ghostly weave playing about within it. When used, patterns develop and change in the weave.

Price: 700

Rank 1 Cost: 100
Effect: The wielder may add the Loom's thread rank to their Astral Sight Talent step.

Rank 2 Cost: 200
Effect: The Loom will act as a Spell Matrix for its wielder, with Rank equal to the Loom's thread rank. This Matrix cannot be attuned on the fly.

Rank 3 Cost: 300
Effect: The wielder may spend a round working the loom to add 3 steps to their Thread Weaving Talent for one spell.

Air Trolldens

These shoes are fashioned like traditional Troll Skyraider boots, with even more outrageous decorations.

Price: 700

Rank 1 Cost: 100
Effect: The wearer may add the shoes's Thread Rank to their Avoid Blow Talent or Skill step.

Rank 2 Cost: 200
Effect: When the wearer yells the shoe's name, they may add the shoe's Thread Rank to their Great Leap Talent step.

Rank 3 Cost: 300
Effect: As Rank 2, but with the Wind Catcher Talent step.

Rank 4 Cost: 500
Effect: The wearer's Swift Kick Talent and damage are increased by 4 steps.

Balance Cape

Only the most stylish capes are ever made Balance Capes, and the expense of their construction is reflected in their price.

Price: 1500

Rank 1 Cost: 100
Effect: The wearer may add the Cape's Thread Rank to their Wound Balance steps.

Rank 2 Cost: 200
Effect: As Rank 1, but with the Avoid Blow Talent or Skill.

Rank 3 Cost: 300
Effect: +1 Physical Defense in hand to hand combat only.

Hush Cloak

These non-descript cloaks are always colored in muted tones. They typically are full of odd hidden pockets and hiding places.

Price: 700

Rank 1 Cost: 100
Effect: The cloak adds +1 step to the wearer's Silent Walk Talent step for each Rank they have the Cloak woven to.

Rank 2 Cost: 200
Effect: The wearer's Physical and Mystical Armor Ratings are increased by 1 each.

Rank 3 Cost: 200
Effect: The wearer's PD is increased by 1.

True Tuning Fork

Containing a bit of true earth, these devices for tuning instruments are extremely tough, loud and sweet sounding.

Price: 1000

Rank 1 Cost: 200
Effect: An instrument tuned with this fork, which takes about half an hour each day, will add the fork's Thread Rank to any Emotion Story step in which it is used.

Rank 2 Cost: 300
Effect: When struck during an attempt to use the Speak Language Talent, the fork will add its Thread Rank to the attempt.

Shield Charm

Coming in many sizes, shapes and designs, Shield Charms must be attached to a shield to operate.

Price: 700

Rank 1 Cost: 200
Effect: The Physical and Mystical Armor Rating of the Shield is increased by +1.

Rank 2 Cost: 300
<>Effect: The wielder may add the shield's Thread Rank to their Air Dance talent step.

Rank 3 Cost: 500
Effect: The wielder may add 3 steps to their Anticipate Blow Talent step.

True Steel Forge

A small, but mostly immobile forge, decorated with many magical runes and enchanted with bits of true earth and fire.

Price: 1000

Rank 1 Cost: 200
Effect: The user may add the Forge's Thread Rank to their Forge Blade talent steps.

Rank 2 Cost: 300
Effect: As Rank 1, but with Weapon History tests.

Rank 3 Cost: 500
Effect: While using the Forge, the wielder may make Recovery Tests, even while forging. These Recovery Tests are at +3 steps and the wielder may make one extra of these Recovery Test each day.

Well scholars, I hope this dissertation has been as helpful to you as the information gathered by the Hero's of Gennen was to me. My next correspondence will be upon the preponderance

of Blood Magic our hero's have uncovered. Until then I am yours in learning,

Victoris Wiseman

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On Elemental Items

by Stephen Kenson

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #6***

Many of the magic items in the world of Earthdawn are the items of legend: powerful weapons, armor and talismans used by heroes in times past. But most magical items in the Age of Legend are not legendary at all. Magic is the common "technology" of Earthdawn and the source material contains numerous examples of minor magical items that are used to enhance day to day life in Barsaive.

Most of these items are created with the True Elements. These five elements can be woven, either singly or in combination, into material items by a skilled elementalist to produce a broad range of magical goods that are sold by merchants and enchanters throughout Barsaive. The amount of elements used, the combination and the specific weaving ritual determines the type of item that will be made.

Listed here are some additional minor items that a gamemaster may wish to introduce into a campaign for player characters to find, purchase or... otherwise acquire.

Air Elevator

A platform, generally of wood, woven with elemental air that allows the platform to rise and fall at the command of whomever is standing on it. The floating platform can be pushed from side to side, but otherwise remains steady against forces like wind. Small air elevators are used to carry heavy items or provide means to access high library shelves or upper floors of a building without the use of a ladder or stairs. Larger elevators are used to move materials on to floating airships and even massive platforms like Theran kilas.

Cost: 3,000 silver pieces, more for larger elevators.

Cleaning Broom

Elemental wood and earth are woven together to create a whisk broom capable of magically capturing all loose dust and dirt that it comes in contact with, making cleaning a simpler task. The elemental wood neutralizes all of the dust that the broom picks up, allowing it to be

used over and over again. Cleaning brooms are quite common household items for better-off folk.

Cost: 25 silver pieces.

Floating Chair

Elemental air is woven into the cushions and fabric of this sedan chair to create a sort of floating pillow that is like reclining upon a fluffy cloud. The chair hovers about three feet off the ground and can be pushed about slowly. It does not drift once it comes to rest turns and moves at a slow and comfortable pace.

Cost: 250 silver pieces.

Heat Stone

A piece of elemental earth is woven with elemental fire, making the stone glow a deep red and become as hot as a burning coal. The elemental earth is slowly consumed over a period of about a year, depending on the quality of the enchantment. During its useful life, heat stones are kept in metal containers and used as bed warmers, room heaters and fire-starters, providing a perpetual and steady source of heat.

Cost: 100 silver pieces.

Message Stone

Small crystals of elemental earth are woven with elemental air, allowing them to capture sounds within their crystalline matrix. The sound trapped in a message stone can be released at a later time by speaking a command word. These stones are often used to carry important messages so they can be delivered in the sender's own voice. Generally used by official couriers of kingdoms like Throal and wealthy merchants since they are too expensive for general use.

Cost: 300 silver pieces. Some more expensive message stones will also have warding spells cast on them to protect their messages from tampering.

Season Lamp

These elaborate hanging lamps or lanterns are made from brass or iron, woven with true air and fire. The elements woven into the lanterns alternately warm or cool the room where the lamp is kept to keep it at a constant, even temperature regardless of the season or the outside weather. Season lamps are used in the homes of the well-to-do to ensure a comfortable environment.

Cost: 350 silver pieces.

Wind Instrument

Musical instruments such as the flute are often woven with elemental air to give the instrument a clearer, purer sound that carries better than it normally would. The elemental air also allows a musician to play the instrument with less effort and for longer periods of time. An adept using a Wind Instrument gains a +1 bonus on rolls for talents such as Emotion Song (that's +1 to the die roll, not +1 Step).

Cost: varies based on the instrument, but generally 250 silver pieces and up.

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From Upandal's Forge

by Paris Crenshaw III

originally published in Earthdawn Journal #4

Tranko Vigrass: "Thystonius' Wings"

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

Tranko Vigrass is a flight dagger crafted of very fine steel with a hilt of a strong and very rare golden steel alloy. The dagger's hilt is carved into the shape of a stylized bird of prey -- perhaps an eagle -- wings folded back over its body, blade emerging from the bird's beak. The eagle's claws hold a deep black pearl which makes up the dagger's pommel. The blade itself is perpetually sharp and shiny, and bears the words "Tranko Vigrass" colored fiery red in old ork runic carving down its length.

Rank 1

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The great ork beastmaster, Umagra, of the ancient kingdom of Cara Fahd, carried this dagger in the days before the Time of Hiding began. She became legendary for her exploits in the region surrounding Death's Sea. Umagra was a fierce follower of Thystonius, and showed her devotion by Naming her dagger after him. The wielder must learn that this blade's Name is Tranko Vigrass.

Effect: The blade does +4 Steps damage. As soon as a thread is tied to the blade, it begins to feel warm. From then on the blade will stay slightly warm in all temperature conditions. The blade is highly resistant to fire. The blade has a Spell Defense of 26 against all fire based attacks.

Rank 2

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: Umagra traveled with her lover, Ikav Spiritwind, an ork weaponsmith.

Together they made many journeys, performing numerous missions for the ork kingdom. At the end of one particularly harrowing adventure, Ikav made the dagger for his beloved. He gathered the strange alloy to make the hilt from a magical fountain of fire near Death's Sea, and purchased the pearl from a merchant on the Aras Sea. The wielder must learn who obtained the gold-steel alloy and crafted the beautiful blade.

Effect: The blade may be used to provide the wielder with protection from fire once per day. The effect is the same as that for a resist fire spell (+3 Armor rating against fire and fire-based attacks) for a period of time equal to 6+the dagger's thread rank in minutes.

Rank 3

Cost: 500

Effect: The blade's damage increases to +5 Steps.

Rank 4

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: During a trip to one of the more permanent formations on the shores of Death's Sea, Umagra found a wounded firebird chick (see ***Creatures Of Barsaive***, pp. 28-9). She used her abilities to heal the bird and then set it free. During the weeks of convalescence, the bird came to trust Umagra, and she came to care for the bird, which she Named Soulfire. When the time came that Soulfire could return to the skies, Umagra set him free, thinking never to see him again. The wielder must learn the Name of the firebird which Umagra cared for.

Effect: The blade can be thrown to knock an opponent down. If the attack roll achieves a successful hit at a level of Good or better, the target struck must make a knockdown test against a difficulty number equal to 13 + the dagger's thread rank. If the dagger also inflicts a wound, the normal knockdown difficulty number is added to the dagger's magical difficulty. When an opponent is knocked down, he feels a sensation of intense, burning pain, as though the wielder had actually thrown a torch instead of a dagger. The pain is just a side-effect, however, and does no damage.

Rank 5

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: When Ikav obtained the strange alloy for the hilt, he accidentally angered

a fire spirit who lived in the fountain. The spirit demanded materials to replace those which he took, which Ikav did not have. He swore a blood oath to return within a year and a day, but was killed before he could do so by a jealous ork warlord who wanted to have Umagra to himself. Great ork stories are told of the seven days of cruel revenge with which Umagra served the warlord's play for her attention.

Deed: The wielder must go to the firefountain near Death's Sea where Ikav gathered the golden steel and place 1000 gold pieces' worth of gold and an equivalent amount of pure, unworked steel in the fountain, telling the spirit that he is completing the unfinished work of Ikav Spiritwind. The spirit will use its own magical abilities and reveal the dagger's Fire Aura power. The deed is worth 800 Legend Points.

Effect: The wielder may utilize the Fire Aura power of the blade. For a cost of 2 points of Strain, the blade will turn a deep black. Once thrown, the blade generates intense heat for one round. As long as the attack test achieves greater than a poor success, the blade comes at least within ten feet of its target. All those within ten feet of the blade, except the wielder, suffer Step 3 damage from the heat of the blade. This heat damage is in addition to any inflicted by a successful attack test.

Rank 6

Cost: 2,100

Effect: The dagger's damage increases to +6 Steps and the Fire Aura damage doubles to Step 6. In addition, the weapon's useable distance increases to ranges of 2-30/31-80/81-150 yards.

Rank 7

Cost: 3,400

Key Knowledge: One of Umagra's greatest adventures is still told around ork campfires. The tale of Umagra and Raggedaemon is a favorite among orks in the southern regions of Barsaive. The legend is the tale of Raggedaemon, a fiery beast of a Horror who had been stalking the villages just south of the Twilight Peaks, moving north out of Death's Sea to wreak havoc on the struggling people there. Umagra heard of this Horror's evil deeds and set out to destroy it. Many years had passed since she had last traveled into Death's Sea, but her knowledge of the wilderness there was great. After weeks of searching, she eventually found Raggedaemon's lair. She stepped to the mouth of a great cave surrounded by fire and challenged the beast to face her. Raggedaemon ggladly accepted and they charged toward each other. The battle was bloody and ferocious. Umagra's resistance to fire was enough to help her, but not defend her totally, against the creature's flaming skin and breath. The Beastmaster became weaker and weaker as her wounds bore her down. A particularly

vicious strike sent Umagra on her back, and she lay there, ready to die.

The Horror was very near her when she heard a familiar shriek from above. A swift black form barreled into Raggedaemon, sending it rolling across the shifting klenka. Soulfire had returned when it realized Umagra was in danger. The fierce bird, now grown into a strong and powerful adult, raked its claws across the Horror's face, keeping it back long enough for Umagra to recover herself. Then together, the two struck quickly, eventually overcoming the burning Horror. Raggedaemon finally fell, but not before Soulfire took a mortal wound and lay dying in Umagra's arms.

Umagra shed many tears over her fallen friend, and with a blood oath swore that his bravery would never be forgotten. That oath drew the spirit of the firebird into the dagger she held dear and the two merged to create the magical blade it is today. The legends say that only the heat of the Death's Sea will free the spirit of noble Soulfire.

Deed: The wielder must go to the Death's Sea once again. He must find the location of the battle between Umagra and Raggedaemon. There he must throw the dagger into the Sea, calling out a cry for Soulfire's release. The blade will sink beneath the molten waves, and suddenly Soulfire will emerge in full firebird form, its silver sheened feathers reflecting the brilliance of the Death's Sea. The bird will land in front of the wielder and drop the black pearl in its claws into its new master's hands. This deed is worth 2,100 Legend Points.

Effect: The wielder has released the spirit of Soulfire, which will trust and willingly serve its master for as long as he possesses the pearl. Any character who both carries the pearl and has a thread tied to the dagger may command Soulfire. Simply having the pearl deprives others of its use; it does not allow control of the bird.

Tranko Vigrass now has the ability to change from a dagger into the legendary firebird. In order to perform this miraculous feat, the wielder must throw the blade, take 4 points of Strain and make a Willpower test against the dagger's Spell Defense. If successful, the dagger will shapeshift in flight taking Soulfire's form, ready to fight.

Soulfire has all of the abilities of a firebird. At will, he may use his weight to knock opponents down and his color change ability to hide himself, but his heat attack is very limited. Since firebirds do not actually create the heat for their attacks as fire eagles do, Soulfire must have a large source of intense heat to "recharge" himself. There are very few sources for this heat when Soulfire is free from the blade, since he would normally require the temperatures of the Death's Sea to re-energize him. A very large bonfire may produce enough heat if Soulfire were to sit in it for about thirty minutes. Only lava flows of some sort will produce the temperatures required for Soulfire to quickly gather enough energy for his heat attack.

However, certain magics may be employed when Tranko Vigrass is still in its dagger form which will supply heat to the firebird. For example, if Flameweapon is cast upon the dagger, the spell will not have its normal effect. Instead, the magical heat will be absorbed by the

blade and stored for use when Soulfire emerges. Exposing the blade to elemental fire will also give Soulfire the heat he requires. The GM should feel free to develop similar means by which the dagger may be recharged.

Regardless of how the power is recharged, the stored heat will only remain with Soulfire for ten rounds before it must be renewed. This means that, unless Soulfire is in the Death's Sea area, if he wishes to regain his heat aura in combat he must revert to dagger form and some magic must be used on the blade before he returns to battle. This heat loss is only applicable while Tranko Vigrass is in Soulfire form.

Soulfire will fight for its master in bird form until recalled or destroyed, when it will revert to dagger form in the hands of whoever currently possesses the black pearl, even if this person has no thread attached to the dagger. If Soulfire ever takes his death rating in damage, he is temporarily banished and cannot be called forth from the blade for a year and a day.

GM's Notes

Tranko Vigrass is a very powerful weapon. Its magic was formed under extremely heroic circumstances, and therefore it is very potent. Before you enter the dagger into an existing campaign, be sure that it does not unbalance things. If you believe it will, you may decide to keep the legend associated with it and change its powers slightly.

Also, the golden steel alloy is a highly magical material, available only at the Firefountain in its molten form. Only weaponsmiths of great power will even know of its existence and even they do not know how to create it. When having the blade examined by normal means, characters will learn only that the alloy appears to be gold, but is too strong to be anything but steel...this should cause enough confusion to worry them.

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Ithuriel's Archery

by Mike Swiernik

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #7***

"Look around the place. Ask questions, because I don't think you've seen most of these before. Some I made, some I found, and most of them have interesting stories. And don't touch anything. No, not even that...I told you so."

-- Ithuriel Thionn, Elven Archer, selling some of his wares to an overcurious browser.

Specialty Arrows

All Adepts in Barsaive attempt to enhance their abilities through the use of magical equipment. Archers are no exception to this rule. The following is a far-from-complete listing of arrows that Archers use, both normal and magical.

The listing is broken up into two sections: one describing arrow shafts, and the other arrow heads. The player and the GM can put these two arrow components together in virtually any combination to achieve the desired effect. Following these two sections is a more detailed section describing special rules for arrow manufacture as well as for the two special magical items, the Threaded Quiver and Threaded Arrows. All of these specialty arrows can also be made as crossbow bolts, unless otherwise stated. Variations of each of these arrows exist for each variety of bow or crossbow, although finding the right kind and size of arrow might be exceedingly difficult. Most Archers make these arrows themselves.

The Cost of the items are listed as "Cost to Purchase/Cost to Make." In most cases, the cost is shown as a multiplier to the normal cost, assuming the normal cost for a head or shaft is half that for a complete arrow, as listed in the rulebook in the Missile Weapons Cost Table. In some cases, the actual cost for the component's construction is shown in silver pieces. These costs are per item, i.e. one head or shaft.

Range modifications exist for some of these shafts and heads. These are shown as the modifications to short, medium, and long range in the following format, short/medium/long. For instance, +10/-10/-30 would be interpreted to mean the short range is increased by 10 yards, the medium range is shortened by 10, and the long range is shortened by 30. These modifications are made to the farthest distance of that weapon's range. For example, a longbow firing an arrow with the above range modifications (normal ranges for a longbow are 2-40/41-100/101-220) would have the final range of 2-50/51-90/91-190. The

modifications imparted by heads and shafts are cumulative.

Heads

The heads, or tips, of arrows and bolts are typically made of stone or metal. There are many different styles of heads, depending on the person designing them, but these are some of the more common and interesting heads that archers use. Combinations of some of these heads can be made at the GM's discretion, e.g. crystal armor-piercing tips.

Non-magical

Armor-piercing

Cost: Normal/Normal

These heads are very long and narrow, and forged of metal, designed to pierce armor of all types. An armor-defeating blow is dealt with a Good success on the Attack roll. There is a -2 Step penalty to the Damage roll, and, although the range remains the same, their ability to pierce armor at Long range returns to that of a normal arrow (Excellent success required).

"These go in easy. That's good if you're not on the receiving end. If you are, the only good thing is that they come out just as easy - no fins or extra stuff to rip or anything. Makes them easier for you to retrieve, too." --I.T.

Broad Tip

Cost: Normal/Normal

These arrows have especially broad tips for causing extra damage against unarmored opponents. An Excellent success is required for an armor-defeating hit, and the range penalties are 0/-10/-20. There is a +1 bonus to the Damage Step. These tips cannot be used with crossbow bolts.

"I've got dozens of designs for these. Leaf-shaped, gem-shaped, eye-shaped, you name it. But they all do the same thing." --I.T.

Flamer

Cost: 2X/Normal

The flamer head is specially designed to burn very hot when lit. It consists of a metal tip and

core, with pieces of flammable wood forming the edges. The tip can be easily lit on fire, and gets a +1 bonus to the Damage test when so lit.

"I design the metal core of mine so that they work like armor-piercers after the wooden fins have burnt off. That way, they're still useful after you've used them once. Plus, the wood I use can absorb blood if I don't light it. It comes handy for getting blood from creatures that don't necessarily want their blood sampled, if you know what I mean..." --I.T.

Ricochet

Cost: 4X/Normal

These tips are conical in shape, designed to be uniform all the way around to minimize random scatter. They can be used to make ricochet shots off of hard surfaces by individuals without the Bank Shot Talent (ED p. 98). Only one bank is possible when used in this manner. The Attack Step suffers a -2 penalty, and the Damage Step a -1 penalty. When used by someone with the Bank Shot Talent, there is an Attack Step bonus of +1, but the Damage Step penalty remains -1. They can bank the shot as many times as their Bank Shot Talent allows.

"My best use of one of these was to bank a shot off a scorcher's shield and hit his companion in the back. The first one felt so bad at the "accident" that he paused momentarily. That's when I pulled out the used flamers I had..." --I.T.

Vial

Cost: 10X/5X

These heads are specially designed to carry a small amount of material and break on impact, delivering the material to the surface of the target. Typically carried materials include acid, contact poison, dye, and any other liquid or powder that the archer might desire. The range modifiers of this type of head are -10/-20/-30, due to the unbalancing effect on the arrow. The Damage Step is reduced to 1 with this type of head. One typical use of this type of tip would be an Archer using a Called Shot to hit a lock with acid, allowing companions access to the chamber beyond.

"I sell some really useful acid, right from the basilisk's back, so to speak. Useful for any situation, chains, doors, trees, an annoying enemy, and now and then just for fun..." --I.T.

Magical

Crystal:

Cost: 50 sp/50 sp

These tips are made of living crystal, and must be re-enchanted yearly at a cost of 10 sp each, or they lose their bonus. These tips give a +2 bonus to the Damage Step.

"I bought these from a sky raider Archer, one of the best shots I've ever seen. We have a little arrangement now, so I can get as many as you want to carry out the door." --I.T.

Elemental

Cost: Special

These tips are very expensive and rare in the extreme. They cost twice what an elemental coin of the same type costs, as they are often forged directly from these coins when made. The attributes of the heads depend on the type of element they are forged from.

Air - The range modifiers are +20/+40/+60. Cost 2,000 sp.

Earth - There is a +1 bonus to the Damage Step. There are additional abilities when combined with the Elemental Earth shaft (see below). Cost 200 sp.

Fire - Functions like the Flamer head above, except with a +2 bonus to the Damage Step. These heads require special orichalcum-lined containers to prevent fires. Cost 2,000 sp.

Water - These tips are rarely used by Archers. There are additional abilities when combined with the Elemental Water shaft (see below). Cost 200 sp.

Wood - These tips are very rarely made or used, and often only for very specific purposes (e.g. ritual magic). Statistics for their use would depend on the specifics of the situation, and so are not provided.

"These are the best around. The water and Earth ones are useful, and nobody can deny the Air ones. But the Fire ones are the most fun. Sure they're dangerous, but I just keep praying my Quiver doesn't mix these and my blood tips up. No, that can't happen...forget I said it." --I.T.

Blood Magic

Cost: 100 sp/200 sp

These tips are magically powered by the Archer's blood. They are made with metal fins attached to a living crystal core. In contrast to blood charms, blood arrows are empowered just before use, and cause 2 points of blood magic damage that can be healed after the arrow is fired. The Archer draws the blood arrow, uses the tip to cut the forearm and draw blood,

which is absorbed into the crystal core of the tip, and then fires the arrow as normal. It does not take any extra time to empower the blood magic tip. The blood tip gives a +2 bonus on the Damage Step if the Attack Test is successful. This bonus only applies for the shot that is made immediately after empowering the tip, any following shots must be empowered in the same manner. Firing the tip without empowering it does not result in any adverse effects, instead the tip does normal damage.

"These are some of the prettiest tips I own. Useful too. The only bad thing is, look here, see all these scars? You can tell anyone who uses them a mile away, just look at their forearm." --I.T.

Shafts

Non-magical

Curving
Cost: 2X/Normal

The shaft is fletched to fly in an curving arc, allowing for certain trick shots. The degree of curvature is dependent on the fletching, and can range from very slight to a full 90-degree turn. The degree of curvature is set at the time the arrow is created. Due to the nature of the fletching, the arrow can curve in two opposite directions, depending on how the Archer nocks the arrow. For example, a typical arrow might be fletched to curve to either the right or left, and the Archer would simply flip the arrow around to make it curve in the opposite direction. These arrows do not spin during flight like normal arrows, and so their range is reduced significantly (-20/-40/-60). The Attack Step is given a -1 penalty when using this type of arrow, due to the changes in flight characteristics.

"These are fun, and they confuse the enemy quite a bit. For me, though, I'd rather use the ricochet tips - more accurate. Just a personal thing." --I.T.

Flamer
Cost: 2X/2X

This shaft is made of special wood, designed to burn well when exposed to flame. These are often combined with Flamer heads and designed so that the burning head of the arrow catches the shaft on fire during flight. Flammable objects hit by a flamer shaft have more time to catch fire, and damage from such a shaft, if not removed, is prolonged. Every round for 10 rounds after a successful hit, the arrow causes Step 4 damage to the target.

"These are useful for those special occasions when you have to burn somebody out. I usually keep a couple around, just in case. You want that many? Might I ask what for...?" --I.T.

Flight

Cost: Normal/Normal

These shafts are longer and lighter, and are designed to fly greater distances. They have a -1 penalty to the Damage Step due to their light weight, and their range modifiers are +10/+20/+30.

"These are fun to take out those confident Therans, who sit just outside what they think is your bow range and watch. And if you put the Fire tip on, they're even more fun. Have I shown you those yet?" --I.T.

Prestressed

Cost: Normal/Normal

These arrows are designed to break upon impact. They are often used during sieges where the attackers want to prevent the enemy from reusing their arrows. Any normal arrow can be changed into one of this type in one round by an Archer with a successful Half-Magic test against a Difficulty of 6.

"These are pretty easy to make. Well, for me they are. I've already made these, and I'll give them to you cheap." --I.T.

String

Cost: 5X/2X

The string shaft is hollow, and contains packed string, usually hair from some creature magically joined end to end and painted red. As the arrow flies from the bow, the string spools out behind it (assuming the Archer tied it down before firing) to a maximum distance of 100 yards. Two varieties exist, one where the string remains attached to the shaft at the end of flight, bringing the arrow to a halt, the other where the arrow continues to fly and leaves the string behind. There is a -1 penalty to the Damage Step, and the range modifiers are -10/-20/-30 due to the extra drag.

"Never used one, but that's probably because I'm not very creative. I'm sure they have uses, just haven't figured one out yet." --I.T.

Whistler

Cost: 5X/Normal

This shaft is carved to let out a low whistling sound when shot from a bow. They are often used to signal attacks. Depending on the way the shaft is cut, the sound can range from a high-pitched whistle to a low moan. In no case will the sound be loud enough to sound over pitched melee unless it flies very close by.

"I love to play with these. Scared off many a superstitious villager with one of these. It's none of your business why I had to scare off villagers. Have I shown you the Fire tips yet...?" -- I.T.

Magical

Elemental

Cost: Special

These shafts, like their corresponding heads, are rare, and cost even more to make. They are usually only found in treasure troves from the pre-Scourge era or possessed by palatial guards. They cost three times their corresponding elemental coin value, and are remarkably thinner than a normal shaft due to their increased strength. Their attributes are dependent on the type of element they are forged from. All of the shafts are unbreakable short of magical means.

Air - The range modifiers are +20/+40/+60. Cost 3,000 sp.

Earth - None. When combined with Elemental Earth tip, can pierce stone and earth as if it doesn't exist. Cost 300 sp.

Fire - Works like the Flamer shaft, but the damage will last forever. These require special containers to hold, and also modifications to the bow or crossbow firing them. Orichalcum is used to line all of the surfaces these arrows come into contact with, and the nock of the shaft is covered with orichalcum. Cost 3,500 sp.

Water - None. When combined with Elemental Water tip, can be used underwater as effectively as in the air, with no range penalties. Cost 300 sp.

Wood - This type of shaft is extremely rare, since True Wood is so difficult to acquire. Any shafts of this type are made for specific purposes (e.g. ritual magic).

"This Fire shaft I retrieved from a tree as it burst into flames. It was shot at me when I was scouting out a Theran ruin we believed was empty. I took it as a warning, but I couldn't leave

the arrow, not one that interesting. I used some orichalcum gloves I had (don't ask, long story) to pull it out, and then I ran. Never had the urge to go back again, but I could get you the map there, for a fair price..." --I.T.

Levitating

Cost: 20X/20X

This arrow is unaffected by gravity, and flies in a straight line after being fired. It still suffers the range Attack modifiers as normal, but Long range is extended for a great distance, usually equal to several miles, before the bolt ceases forward movement. After it stops moving, it slowly drifts towards the ground over a period of several hours. They also enable Archers to fire their weapons in narrow spaces, like corridors, for long ranges without having to worry about the arc of normal arrows. These arrows are crafted with the use of a Named Spell of Levitation made permanent on the arrows, and so are very rare as the wizard must spend Legend Points to create them (see ***Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets***, p. 36).

"This shaft's uses are limited only by your imagination. Again, mine's pretty poor, so I've only used one, but it did the job!" --I.T.

Manufacture

These shafts and heads can all be made by an Archer using the Half-Magic rules given in ***The Adept's Way*** (p. 114), with the exception of the magical arrows, which need to be created with the assistance of more specialized Adepts (Weaponsmiths, Wizards, or Elementalists). The costs given are for buying the shafts and heads from someone else, the costs for an Archer manufacturing them are based on the materials used. Making non-magical shafts and heads takes twice as long as making normal arrows (except for Armor-piercing and Broad tips, and Flight and Curving shafts, which take the usual amount of time). Making magical arrows requires the efforts of someone who is able to work with the materials in question (True Elements or crystal) or cast the spells required (Levitation), and so the time for construction depends on other factors, but is no less than four times the normal amount of time.

The Threaded Quiver

In addition to manufacturing arrows and bolts, Archers can manufacture a special magical item called the Threaded Quiver. Many Archers individualize their Quiver, which can be made of any material, by adding personalized designs to the surface. The Quiver is also often

lined with orichalcum in order to hold Elemental Fire, and can have multiple compartments to hold different arrows. The creation of the Quiver takes the Archer three Circles, and specific tasks must be performed at each Circle in order to continue the creation of the Quiver. The Archer can not begin to create a Quiver before Second Circle, and so can not finish creation of the Quiver until Fourth Circle at the earliest.

The first task the Archer must perform is the acquisition of the materials. The materials used should be very fine, such as expensive leather, espagra skin, or other hard-to-acquire materials, including the orichalcum that might be needed to line the Quiver. The second task is the manufacture of the Threaded Quiver. The time required for this task depends on the complexity and intricacy of its design, but should take no less than a week of time. Both of the first two steps require the Archer to make a Perception-based Half-Magic Test against a Difficulty Number of 12 to succeed. The third step is the weaving of a Thread to the Quiver. Using the Thread Weaving Talent, the Archer weaves a Thread at Rank 1 to the Threaded Quiver, thereby enchanting it with its unique powers (see below). It can then also be used to create Threaded Arrows (see below).

The Quiver grants the Archer several unique and useful abilities. The Quiver can, upon request, "offer up" an arrow or bolt to the Archer. The Archer simply has to think of the desired arrow, and then, reaching for it in the quiver, will retrieve the arrow. This is useful for Archers who use many different types of arrows, often specialty ones, as described above, or when using the Quick Shot Talent. Also, the quiver can hold more arrows or bolts than its size might indicate. Although the exact number is left up to the GM, the Quiver typically holds twice the number of arrows or bolts a regular quiver of the same size would hold, and cuts the weight of these arrows in half. Note that only arrows and bolts receive this weight reduction, anything else placed in the quiver will weigh normal. In addition to all this, the Quiver has more abilities when used to make Threaded Arrows.

"I made my Quiver from Invae skin. I know that sounds disgusting, but I spent most of the time during the beginning stages of the Quiver fighting those cursed spirits that I thought it would be appropriate. Made the quiver very resistant to injury, let me tell you. Yes, spirits, not Horrors. Who's the expert here? Let me tell you a story..." --I.T.

Threaded Arrows

The Archer, through the Threaded Quiver, can create Threaded Arrows. Any arrows can become Threaded Arrows, although most Archers will use either magical arrows or personally created arrows. To make a Threaded Arrow, the Archer must place the arrow in the Threaded Quiver, which already has a Thread woven to it. The Archer then calls for the arrow, pulls it from the Quiver, and fires it at the target. This target is usually ceremonial, but can be anything. The Archer then retrieves the arrow, which is now capable of being magically connected to the Quiver. At any time after this ceremony, the Archer can choose to raise the Rank of the Thread woven to the Threaded Quiver. Doing so magically links up to

three arrows, now called Threaded Arrows, to the Threaded Quiver, in essence making them one magical item. The Arrows' and the Quiver's Patterns fuse together, and the Archer has a Thread woven to this new Pattern. Since each Rank after the first in the Thread woven to the Threaded Quiver can support three arrows, an Archer with one Thread of Rank 6 woven to the Threaded Quiver can link the Quiver to fifteen Threaded Arrows (three for each Rank after the first). The number of arrows linked in this way is determined when the Rank in the Thread is acquired, with a maximum of three.

Threaded Arrows are useful in several ways. They can be called back to the Quiver using an ability similar to the Call Arrow Talent (ED, p. 100), except that all Threaded Arrows are returned within the round. No roll needs to be made. Also, Threaded Arrows receive a +1 bonus to any Talent Step involving the firing of the Arrow, e.g. Called Shot, Missile Weapons, Bank Shot, True Shot, but not to Talents where the Arrow isn't actually fired (Stopping Aim, Mystic Aim). Direction Arrow does not receive such a bonus. The Flame Arrow Talent is typically not used on Threaded Arrows, as it destroys them, but if it is, it also does not receive the bonus. Threaded Arrows also get a +1 bonus to the Damage Step when they strike.

Most Archers work very hard to create a set of Threaded Arrows, linked to their Threaded Quiver. The Arrows are typically manufactured by the Archer, and have been personalized to suit the Archer's tastes. The Arrows and Quiver provide the Archer with many advantages, but are also the Archer's weak spot. Many Archers have the quiver as one of their Pattern Items, usually at least a Minor one, and they must wait a year and a day after the loss or destruction of a Threaded Quiver to begin construction on a new one. The Quiver and Arrows provide none of the normal benefits for anyone other than the Archer who created them, nor can they ever be made to, but possessing them provides a distinct advantage over the Archer. Most Archers will go to great lengths to recover their Threaded Quivers and Arrows, for obvious reasons.

"I spent the better part of a week once trying to get back one of my Threaded Arrows. The Quiver couldn't call it, and it turned out to have fallen into a zone where magic simply failed to function. Don't ask me to explain. Our wizard couldn't figure it out. You don't believe me again? Let me tell you a little something about the Western Catacombs. Yes, in Parlainth..." -- I.T.

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From the Library of Victoris Wiseman

by Tim Reynolds

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #5***

Greetings and salutations, fellow Barsaivians. I am Victoris Wiseman, scholar and sage from the town of Gennen. Ah, you've heard that name, haven't you? It is because of the reputation of the group of adventures known as the Heroes of Gennen. Nice lot, with hearts like pure spun gold, but not too imaginative, they are. It is because of their extensive travels and encounters that I am writing this missive. I have been trying to catalog some of the more interesting items they have encountered and acquired. I hope, with this information duly copied to the appropriate section in the Great Library, that future generations will benefit from it, as a source of research and inspiration. With those lofty goals set, let us begin to delve into this knowledge.

Potions

The following brews are not widely available through out Barsaive, but I hopefully have included enough information for a skilled Alchemist to be able to duplicate their function upon request. Please note that the prices listed reflect the rarity of the required ingredients around Gennen and the Thunder Mountains, and that often Alchemists will charge 3 times or more the base price of a potion to have to "invent" it, even if you supply the formula. Of course, supplying the more exotic ingredients will lower the price, perhaps to twice its base price. The asking price for a new potion should also drop after others begin to make it, and the novelty has worn off. An Alchemist will generally take a week of experimentation to "perfect" a mixture, with results varying according to his skill, the ingredients, luck and other factors. I have included the relative difficulty of brewing these potions, so let the buyer beware. All prices are in silver.

Brew of the Berserkers

Main/Exotic Ingredients: Cadaver Man Skin
Price: 250
Weight: 2
Difficulty: Very Hard

Effect: When imbibed, this potion causes the drinker to become a Berserker, gaining the benefits and penalties of the Aggressive Attack Maneuver (ED pg. 200) without the cost in strain. In addition, Knockdown, Recovery Tests, Physical and Mystic Armor are also at +3 Steps. This potion lasts 10 rounds, at which time the drinker must make a Toughness test against a difficulty of 5 or take 10 Strain.

Bug Go Oil

Main/Exotic Ingredients: Tar/Skunk Oil
Price: 150
Weight: 2
Difficulty: Easy
Effect: This foul smelling brew is spread over the exposed parts of a character to keep insects from harassing him. Normal bugs will not bother the protected individual, but then again neither will most people (-2 to all positive social rolls). Insects larger than a man's hand must make a Willpower test against a difficulty of 10 to be able to approach an oiled person. This effect lasts for 4 hours. Water will not remove this oil, only alcohol.

Draught of Heroes

Main/Exotic Ingredients: Finely Made Ale, Heart of a Powerful Magical Beast
Price: 400
Weight: 1
Difficulty: Very Hard
Effect: Draught of Heroes infuses the drinker with magic, making him more effective in combat, according to how well he can channel the natural magic of the world. The potion gives the imbiber the equivalent of 5 extra Karma Points, which can be spent on any combat action. This potion is only effective if drunk in combat, and only lasts as long as the combat lasts. Drinking more than one of these potions a day has no effect, except to inebriate the drinker.

Draught of Legend

Main/Exotic Ingredients: Finely made Vinlo (T'skrang wine)/Blood of a Legend (Dragon, Hero, etc.)
Price: 750
Weight: 1
Difficulty: Heroic
Effect: This most rare of elixirs infuses the drinker with massive amounts of magical energy, similar to the energy of Draught of Heroes, above. The drinker gains the equivalent of 10 Karma Points, which can be spent on any combat action. In addition, these points can be

added to Unconsciousness Rating or Wound Threshold. It also adds one step to the affected's Karma Step. This potion is only effective if drunk in combat, and only lasts a long as the combat lasts. Drinking more than one of these potions in a day is very dangerous, as it acts as Step 6 poison for 6 rounds, drains 5 Karma and has no beneficial effect for the drinker.

First Strike Potion

Main/Exotic Ingredients: Leg of Jackrabbit, Quicksilver (an Alchemical substance)
Price: 100
Weight: 2
Difficulty: Average
Effect: This potion increases the reflexes of a combatant, so that 6 steps are added to their Initiative for five rounds. This effect will also increase talent steps which replace Initiative.

Frog's Legs

Main/Exotic Ingredients: Frog's Legs
Price: 100
Weight: 2
Difficulty: Hard
Effect: Upon imbibing a Frog's Legs potion, a character's legs become capable of great leaps, increasing his maximum vertical leap to 20 yards and horizontal of 50 yards. The character also gains 7 steps to his Avoid Blow Talent (or Dexterity if lacking the Talent) for the duration, which is 9 rounds.

Frosty Potion

Main/Exotic Ingredients: Snow
Price: 110
Weight: 2
Difficulty: Average
Effect: This drink protects the user from the effects of natural heat, or even such diffuse magical heats as Death's Sea. Its effect lasts for up to 6 hours, with the duration being one hour less per 10 degrees above the drinker's body temperature it is. Any direct magical heat attack will negate this protection.

Hot Meal Sauce

Main/Exotic Ingredients: Hot Squash (a vegetable native to the area around Death's Sea)/T'skrang Spices

Price: 100
Weight: 1
Difficulty: Average (With the aid of a Cook: Easy)
Effect: Added to a meal for up to 10 persons, this spicy sauce not only flavors and warms the meal, but anyone who eats it will gain +3 steps on the next recovery they make. Those with a delicate constitution should beware of gaseous side effects.

Liquid Heat

Main/Exotic Ingredients: Ork Flamegut Liquor/1 Grain of Elemental Fire
Price: 100
Weight: 2
Difficulty: Very Hard (With the aid of an Elementalist: Hard)
Effect: When drunk, Liquid Heat protects the user from natural cold for up to 8 hours, depending on the actual temperatures. For each 10 degrees below freezing, lower the duration by 1 hour. A magical cold attack will negate this protection.

Mental Shield Potion

Main/Exotic Ingredients: Hair of a Magician/Iron
Price: 200
Weight: 2
Difficulty: Average
Effect: A foul tasting brew with excellent results. If taken orally, one will find one's Spell Defense increased by 2 points. In addition, one's Mystic Armor is increased by 2 points. This effect lasts for 10 rounds

Oil of the Flaming Weapon

Main/Exotic Ingredients: Volcanic Ash
Price: 75
Weight: 2
Difficulty: Hard (With the help of a Weaponsmith: Average)
Effect: When poured upon a weapon and exposed to flame, the weapon's attacking surface is engulfed in flames, causing an extra 1D4 in damage, which is effected by physical armor. The weapon is unharmed by the flame, unless the initial exposure required to set it aflame damages it. If the wielder of the weapon is sufficiently careful with the placement of the oil, they receive no damage, as only the parts of the weapon oiled are aflame.

Potion of Balance Most Excellent

Main/Exotic Ingredients: Blood Monkey Brain/Bit of Wire
Price: 150
Weight: 2
Difficulty: Hard
Effect: This potion increased your balance, so that Dexterity or Strength rolls for such actions as Knockdown, Climbing, and swinging are increased by 6 Steps. This effect lasts for 9 rounds.

Sticky Oil

Main/Exotic Ingredients: Thunder Tree Sap/Jehuthra Web
Price: 200
Weight: 1
Difficulty: Average
Effect: When spread on an object, it will bind to another object with a force of step 10. You must place the second object on the area covered with this oil within 6 seconds or the potion will evaporate. Have a care not to spill this in your pack! A small jar contains enough Sticky Oil for one application, on anything up to human size. The bond will last 1 hour.

Wiseman's Wine

Main/Exotic Ingredients: Touch of Ipecac/Diva Bird Egg/T'skrang Tea
Price: 50
Weight: 1
Difficulty: Easy
Effect: This is my personal offering, as I have dabbled a bit in Alchemy. When drank before a night of debauchery it will render you immune to a reasonable amount of alcohol. The effect lasts a base 4 hours, minus one hour for each drink beyond 8. It totally negates the flavor and effect of any drink taken within that time. It also has the useful side effect of diluting more hard acting poisons (+1 to saves). I hope you can forgive the name's pun.

I hope you have found this text useful, and be assured that I will continue to update you on more items as the Hero's of Gennen continue to encounter them. Now where did I put that list of Common Magic Items?

Yours in Learning,
Victoris Wiseman

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Reflex Booster

by Ash Black

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #5***

Reflex Booster

Cost: 400
Weight: 1

The reflex booster charm causes 5 points of permanent damage to the wearer. Made of black sapphire which swirls with red when activated, the reflex booster charm can be used to increase its wearer's initiative step a variable amount. Each round the wearer wishes to use the charm she must take a number of points in Strain equal to the number of steps she wishes her initiative increased. For example, in the first round of combat Ilona wishes to use her reflex booster charm to increase her initiative step by three, therefore she must take three points of strain. If she wished to continue doing this, each round she would have to take three points of strain to give her the three step initiative bonus, or two points to give her a two step bonus, etc.

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Sarabrennos' Spellbook

by Aaron Sullivan

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #7***

Greetings, fellow Name-Givers. Allow me, if you will, a moment for introduction. My name is Sarabrennos, and it has been my privilege to walk many paths in my search for wisdom; what began as a dabbling in the way of the wizard has led me to studies in all the formal spellcasting disciplines of our beloved Barsaive (one could hardly consider those bushwatching, self-styled "shamans" as formal practitioners, now could one?). It is now my honor, at the request of my dear friend Merrox and the Library of Throal, to share a bit of the arcane lore that I have spent so very long accumulating. The learned reader will find in these writings a sampling of the spells that I have devised, learned, discovered, and . . . . otherwise acquired. My fervent hope is that my work will serve to educate and enlighten my fellow name-givers to the same rich extent it has my own humble self.

Sarabrennos the Serendipitous,
Magician of Travar

> *Though his attitude may offend some readers, and understandably so, Sarabrennos' abilities in his chosen disciplines are well-known and widely respected. Please take from these pages more the value of this information than its accompanying ostentation.*
>
> *-- Merrox, Master, Hall of Records*

Name: Astral Blade

Type: 8th Circle Nethermancer

Threads: 3 **Weaving Difficulty:** 11 / 18

Range: Touch **Duration:** Rank / minutes

Effect: Willforce + 10

Casting Difficulty: 9 (see description)

This spell conjures into existence a blade-like construct of pure magical energy. The caster initially makes a spellcasting test against a 9 to bring the "blade" into being. For the duration of the spell the caster may attack with the construct anyone who is within melee range. To attack, the caster makes a spellcasting test against the target's spell defense; if successful the magician may then roll the effect dice for damage. Only mystic armor applies against the damage. The spell has a somatic component during its casting -- the magician must swing his closed fist around as if mimicking a display of swordsmanship. Adepts should note that there is a possible drawback to this spell. As it uses pure (i.e., unfiltered) magical energy for its effect, casting this spell using raw magic adds +5 steps to both the damage and horror mark tests involved in that procedure.

Name: Cloak

Type: 7th Circle Illusionist

Threads: 5 **Weaving Difficulty:** 13 / 20

Range: Self **Duration:** Rank / Hours

Effect: Hides a person from all forms of location

Casting Difficulty: Target's Spell Defense

This spell simultaneously cloaks the caster from being detected by sight, sound, or smell, while also making it far more difficult to detect him via magical means. If the caster makes a successful spellcasting test he may then add the result of a Willforce roll to the perception difficulty of anyone attempting to locate him with normal senses, or to his spell defense (solely) for the purpose of opposing magical divination.

Name: Dancing Dragon

Type: 8th Circle Illusionist / Nethermancer

Threads: 4 / 4 **Weaving Difficulty:** 9 / 12

Range: 25 Yards **Duration:** Rank / Minutes

Effect: Creates an illusion of a two-headed dragon

Casting Difficulty: 10

The Dancing Dragon spell enables the caster to create the complex and semi-autonomous illusionary construct of a ferocious two-headed dragon , approximately 30 ft long and 20 ft tall (though size can be modified to either 50% larger or 50% smaller than this base), which appears to be composed entirely of inky shadows. Once the spell is cast, the caster no longer has to remain in the vicinity for the spell to function, as the spell harnesses the rudimentary intelligence of a spirit (summoned into the construct during the casting) as a sort of "control system." Note that the 25 yards under the **range** category refers to how far away from himself that the caster can have the beastie initially appear.

This illusionary beast will attack with its claws and fangs. It can attack however many people the caster designates as targets, up to a number equal to the caster's spellcasting rank, and will continue to do so for the duration of the spell. The "creature" has attack and damage steps both equal to the caster's Willforce, and a number of attacks per round equal to his spellcasting rank.

The construct may be attacked by its targets as if it possessed a physical defense rating of 10 and will, if "injured," adjust its own illusory make-up to reflect an appropriate amount of damage inflicted; however, it should be noted that no amount of physical damage will destroy the Dancing Dragon -- this would require either a successful Dispel Magic or successful disbelief rolls by every one of the Dragon's targets . A successful disbelief roll by a single target will cause the Dancing Dragon to cease to exist for that person only -- but watching their compatriot walk around unscathed while blathering about the absence of the Dragon gives characters a +5 step bonus to their perception checks for their own rolls to disbelieve.

Name: Mind Blast

Type: 3rd Circle Wizard

Threads: 0 **Weaving Difficulty:** NA / 15

Range: 50 Yards **Duration:** 1 Round

Effect: Willforce + 8

Casting Difficulty: Target's Spell Defense

Eldritch Blast is essentially an area effect version of the spell Mind Dagger. The caster whips his arm forward as if throwing a heavy projectile. The caster then makes a spellcasting test versus the highest spell defense of any of the targets within the area of effect (a thirty foot diameter hemisphere), with one point added to the difficulty number for every additional target beyond the first. If successful the caster then rolls the effect dice for damage. As this is purely mystical damage, only mystic armor protects from it. Physical armor provides no protection.

Name: Ghostwalk

Type: 10th Circle Nethermancer

Threads: 6 **Weaving Difficulty:** 13 / 23

Range: Self **Duration:** Rank / Minutes

Effect: Makes the caster immaterial

Casting Difficulty: 12 or Spell Defense, whichever is higher

This spell makes the caster immaterial, though the clever use of a levitation effect keeps the caster from sinking through floors and such involuntarily. For the duration of the spell, the caster can pass, either partially or completely, through any physical material except those containing True Elements (such as Orichalcum). Further, no normal physical attack can touch and therefore harm the caster during this time; however, spells, spirits, Horrors, and thread weapons (i.e., things with an astrally active presence) do not fall under this restriction and do their full, unmodified damage to the caster.

Name: Ironskin

Type: 8th Circle Elementalist / Wizard

Threads: 4 / 3 **Weaving Difficulty:** 11 / 16

Range: Touch **Duration:** Rank / Minutes

Effect: Willforce

Casting Difficulty: Spell Defense

Ironskin melds the target's physical body with a form of elemental metal, strengthening it considerably. If the spellcasting test is successful, the caster rolls the effect dice. The result of the effect dice becomes the target's natural armor rating. In addition, the caster's Willforce rank is added to the target's wound threshold. The target reflects the effects of the spell in his physical appearance, which takes on a dark,

metallic look. Also, the target's weight effectively doubles and he loses all buoyancy (as the spell in no way bolsters the target's respiratory processes, casting this on an ally while afloat could be a remarkably bad idea).

Name: The Jester's Mask

Type: 11th Circle Illusionist

Threads: 6 **Weaving Difficulty:**

Range: 75 Yards **Duration:** Rank / Rounds

Effect: Willforce + 15

Casting Difficulty: Spell Defense + 1 for every 5 targets involved

The Jester's Mask enables the caster to control the emotions of a large group. The caster makes a spellcasting test against the highest spell defense from among the target group, with one point added to the difficulty for every five targets in the group. If successful, he then rolls the effect dice and compares the result to a social defense rating modified as per spell defense above. On an average or good success the caster can make minor alterations to the group's emotions, such as changing mild depression to indifference. An excellent success enables the caster to make major changes in the group's emotional state, such as changing indifference to severe depression. An extraordinary success allows the caster to alter the group's emotional state by any degree he desires, such as changing utter joy to mindless rage. When the caster successfully completes the spellcasting test, the illusion of a colorful actor's mask appears in the air, high enough and large enough to be seen by the entire target group. The mask displays whatever emotion the caster wants to impress on the group and can shift between emotions at the casters whim and at any time during the spell's duration.

Name: Mistaken Identity

Type: 9th Circle Illusionist

Threads: 7 **Weaving Difficulty:** 15 / 23

Range: Touch **Duration:** Rank / Weeks

Effect: Obscures people's perceptions of the target's true identity

Casting Difficulty: Spell Defense

A spell for the petty sadist in us all, Mistaken Identity makes anyone encountered by the target believe that the target is someone other than who the target really is. The caster must make a successful spellcasting test against the target's spell defense. The result of that test, if successful, is applied against the spell defense of anyone the target encounters. If the result equals an average or good success, the target's appearance will change only slightly. Anyone who actually knows the target may notice a resemblance; however, the changes in the target's features are significant enough that the person encountering the target will believe that they are meeting someone who only resembles the target, not the target himself. An excellent success or better will produce an appearance grossly disparate to the target's actual features. This includes race, color, size, body odor, etc.

There are spells less difficult to cast if one merely wants to alter one's own appearance. The true value of

this spell becomes apparent when it is cast on an unwilling subject. If this spell's standing result can beat another person's spell defense, no amount of argument can convince that person of the target's true identity. In fact, one function of the spell is that the more the target argues for his true identity, the more confident the other person becomes in their misperception of the target's identity. Each person who successfully disbelieves this illusion and attempts to argue on behalf of the target's true identity only serves to increase this effect. The GM can reflect this function best by making those encountered by the target less likely to attempt (if an NPC) or even feel the need to attempt (if a player character) a disbelief roll; however, this effect in no way penalizes the disbelief roll itself. Combining the illusion's effects with its lengthy duration, this spell has the capacity to completely ruin someone's life

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Useful Magic Items

by Andrew W. Ragland

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #5***

Hey! Welcome to Mosta Verdeen's elemental goods shop! Are you enjoying your stay in Servalen? No? Well, you've found a bright spot, and I don't mean my outfit. Oh, mind that -- never mind, they're cheap. Yes, it's kind of cluttered in here, but I know where everything is, and besides you'll never find this much variety under one roof anywhere else. If it's got true anything in it, I have it. Or I can make it. You want to discuss maybe some custom work? No? Sure, let me show you some of the latest stuff.

Light Pack

A pack with elemental air woven into it. The weight of the pack stays the same regardless of how much stuff is loaded into it. You'll probably want to add elemental water to keep the contents dry. That's more silver, but let me tell you, it's well worth it. No, you can't load everything you own into it. It's a pack, not a bottomless pit. However, if you're smart, and you look like a clever person, you'll load your smallest and heaviest items in the light pack, to concentrate all the weight where you won't feel it.

Mechanics:
The pack weighs the same as an empty normal pack of the same size. Its volume is the same as a normal pack.

Pack Size	For	Weight	Cost
Small	Windlings	2	225
Medium	Dwarf	3	250
Large	Elf, Human, Ork, T'skrang	4	280
Extra Large	Troll, Obsidiman	5	325

Theft-Proof Bag

Ever have your pocket picked or your purse cut? Never happen again. This belt pouch has true earth woven into the lining. On purchase, the bag is linked to the buyer with blood magic. If anyone else handles the bag, the true earth makes it heavier than a thundra beast. Only the rightful owner can pick up and handle the bag without difficulty. Someone else touching the bag while it's in the rightful owner's possession will not trigger the effect.

Mechanics:
Cost: 150
The pouch takes 1 point of blood magic, which can be recovered by unlinking it (thread weaving by the owner against a 6, by anyone else against a 14). An unlinked pouch doesn't trigger the weight effect. Theft-Proof Bags weigh 1 to the owner but 800 when triggered.

Flight Boots

Those boots are heavy, aren't they? That's because they've got true earth woven into the soles. Obsidimen wear them when they have to travel by air. Lets them maintain a link with earth no matter how far away the ground is. Disadvantage is they're heavy, and can't be worn by anyone save obsidimen and trolls. Flight boots will make you harder to knock down, but they'll weigh down your feet and slow you in combat.

Mechanics:
Cost: 300
Flight boots increase the knockdown step by 4, but tack on an initiative penalty of -2.

Long Singing Lyre

This lyre has elemental air woven into the frame. It'll double the effective range of the performer's voice and playing. Every now and then you'll find one you can weave a thread to, but the effects will vary according to the history of the instrument. Other musical instruments with true air amplification are also available. I've also used the same technique to make signal pipes. You can hear a whistle from the pipes halfway across the mountain range.

Mechanics:
Cost: 400 to 5000 depending on instrument, complexity, history, etc. Named instruments will of course be more expensive than instruments with no history.
The lyre or any other long singing instrument doubles the effective audible range of musical performance. Troubadour Talents that involve performance, such as Emotion Song, have their effective radius extended similarly. Signal Pipes can be heard clearly for many miles,

although their volume at the point of origin is not apparently that loud.

Scarless Pitons

For Name-Givers who care about preserving the natural beauty of cliff faces, or are concerned for other reasons about leaving traces of where they've been, these pitons are a fusion of metal and true earth. On a command word, they fuse into any stone they are held against, no hammer required. On another command word, the piton being held emerges from the stone, leaving no mark behind.

Mechanics:
Cost: 150 per piton.
The pitons will hold up to 2000 pounds each before breaking. Weight is normally distributed among pitons in a group of climbers.

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Unpleasant Blood Charms

by Graeme Lindsell

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #8***

These charms are not intended to be used by players; instead, they are meant as background, to demonstrate some of the "dark side" of blood charms, to show to players one of the reasons for their unpopularity in much of Barsaive, and to have at least some charms that are of no use to adventurers.

Bind Will

This charm is a creation of the Therans, and was developed to break the wills of unruly but valuable slaves. Its effect is to suppress the free will of the person who is forced to wear it: once attached and activated, the victim will have their Social defense reduced by 5, and will have to make a Willpower test against a target number of 10 in order to disobey any command. The Bind Will charm inflicts 2 points of permanent damage on the wearer.

As all blood charms take 24 hours to take effect, the victim is usually kept bound for this period. Once released, they can try to remove the Bind Will charm, but the charm's suppression of their will makes this difficult - to remove the charm requires a Willpower or Willforce test against a target number of 15, and may only be attempted once per week. Eventually the charm breaks the will of the victim: after every three attempts to remove the charm, increase the required success level needed to remove it, until an extraordinary success level is required to remove the charm.

As with other blood charms, the charm is destroyed after a year and a day of use, but most Namegivers who have worn a Bind Will charm for 12 months will undergo a permanent change in personality, and will need no charm to accept themselves as a slave.

Simply possessing one of these charms is a criminal offense in Throal; using one is a capital crime. Oddly, the Cult of Dis also disapproves of these charms, because they believe it removes the achievement of breaking another's will.

The charm consists of a chain of interlinked iron and lead rings; at either ends of the chain are barbed hooks that inflict the damage required by the charm.

Cost: 250 in the Theran Empire, usually 1000+ in most of Barsaive
Creation Difficulty: 13

Drug Charms

These charms are a diverse group, created by filling a hollow charm with a drug while it is being constructed. Once attached, the charm induces a permanent state similar to that caused by whatever drug was used in its creation. A drug charm usually has no other effect, and inflicts 2 points of permanent damage on the wearer.

In Throal, the most common drug charms are made using alcoholic drinks of some sort; rarer ones are based on opium. The alcohol blood charms create a mild state of drunkenness, the opiate charms a mild anesthesia. Many more drug charms exist, especially in the Empire. Game-masters should be wary of creating beneficial drug charms without side effects.

These charms are unpopular with the authorities in most areas: wearing one is a sure sign of addiction, and permanently drunk or high Namegivers are rarely welcome. In Thera, to wear one is a sign of inadequacy, as one is rendering oneself less capable of commanding magic and slaves, and is a social faux pas - a Theran should be able to afford the real drug! Some healers may use an opiate charm as a permanent anesthetic, for patients who are dying or in permanent pain, but even this use is frowned on by most people. Even with this opposition, there is a market for these charms almost everywhere.

The charm consists of a hollow piece of transparent crystal, within which a solution containing the drug has been sealed. This solution enters the user's blood stream when first attached; from then on the charm is filled by the user's blood. Drug charms are one of the easiest blood charms to make, and are, at best, a disreputable source of income for those who can produce them.

Cost: Varies depending on drug used and legality, but at least 100 silver pieces.
Creation Difficulty: 9

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For Such is the Truth

by Stephen Kenson

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #4***

Legends are what makes up the fabric of the world of Earthdawn. Legends of great heroes, terrible creatures, lost treasures and fantastic deeds are the very stuff of the Age of Legend. Legends also provide the Earthdawn gamemaster with a valuable tool: they can form the basis of many wonderful adventures in their Earthdawn campaigns and make their players feel like they are really participating in the creation of legendary tales of adventure.

This column is intended to serve as a source of legends for Earthdawn gamemasters to draw upon for their campaigns. Each includes the legend as player characters in Barsaive might hear of it as well as a short section on how the legend could be adapted as an Earthdawn adventure. Gamemasters can use these legends as the basis for adventures or simply as background material the next time the player characters stop at an inn and ask the local Troubadour to tell them a tale.

Read on, and learn the Legends of the world of Earthdawn...

The Windling Flowers of Love

Oh yes, my large friend, we Windlings have our sad tales. They are not the same as those that your people have, but something that shows how foolish we Windlings can sometimes be, especially in the name of love. So, listen and hear about the origin of the winged flowers of the jungle...

Long ago in the Land of Barsaive, before the time of the Scourge, there lived a windling tribe in the depths of the Liaj Jungle. They were a prosperous and happy people that dwelled peacefully in their jungle home, with little contact from outsiders. They lived on the plentiful bounty of nature and never went unsatisfied for it.

The rulers of the tribe were a wise and happy couple, revered for their wisdom and kindness. They had a son named Kaile, who was their pride and joy and that of everyone else in the tribe. Kaile was a fine child, smart and happy and fair of face and form. Kaile was especially well known for his wings, which were perfectly and delicately formed and always tinted with the shades of the most beautiful blossoms of the jungle. As he grew older he became a very handsome young man.

His parents looked forward to the day when he would find a mate and settle down, but Kaile showed no interest in the heartfelt sighs of the windlings maidens and youths who found him so attractive. He was satisfied with his own company and did not feel a need for companionship. He was never cruel to his suitors, but broke many a heart nonetheless with his polite refusals of their company.

One day, the young prince happened to be hunting in the jungle alone, as was his habit from time to time. He wandered a distance from his home following the trail of the brightly colored jungle birds that provided fresh meat for the windling village. Landing on a branch to rest for a short while, Kaile heard a terrible sound and rushed to investigate. As he peered through the thick foliage from the treetops, he beheld an amazing sight. A stranger, the first that the young price had ever seen, was locked in combat with a fierce sabre-cat. She was a human, clad in strange armor and wielding a flashing sword that she used to fend off the great cat. But her armor and clothing were torn and stained with blood from the great hunters attacks and Kaile wasn't sure if she would hold out against it.

Suddenly, the two were locked in fierce combat, rolling upon the ground. Kaile quickly nocked an arrow to his hunting bow, took careful aim and let fly into the flank of the great beast. The tiny arrow was of no concern to a creature such as a sabre-cat, but the poison coating the arrow worked its way quickly into the cats veins, slowing it with its paralyzing effects. The warriors used the last of her strength to drive her blade into the cat and slay it before herself falling to the ground.

Kaile rushed back to his village to get help for the fallen warrior and it took the work of several windling magicians to bring her back to the village. The windlings treated her injuries, which were not fatal. Kaile stood nearby and watched the whole time as the windling healers and magicians worked to aid the fallen warrior and for the first time he felt the stirrings of love in his heart, for the warrior woman was the most beautiful creature he had ever seen.

When the healers had done their work, Kaile still remained and kept watch over the fallen warrior, so that he was the first person she saw upon awakening. As the warrior recovered, she and the prince spoke often. He learned that her name was Shara and that she was a warrior an adventurer who traveled the land. As the weeks passed and Shara continued to heal from her injuries, the two became inseparable and Kaile's love for the human woman deepened. He dreaded the day when she would be well enough to leave his village and never return.

Kaile wished to take Shara as his, but he knew that he could not be a proper mate to her, so different were they, Windling and Human. A dark cloud seemed to hang over him and the people of Kaile's village grew concerned for him. Days passed and Shara healed quickly until Kaile knew that it would soon be time for her to leave. He thought that he would surely die if Shara were to leave him and so came upon a plan.

Kaile sought out Nazor the Mad, an powerful Ork wizard who dwelled deep in darkest part

of the jungle. He left the village late one night and set out without a word to any for the place where the solitary wizard lived. He traveled through the darkened woods with only the light of the pale moon to guide him, carefully avoiding dangerous beasts and twisting undergrowth until he reached the deepest and darkest area of the jungle, where the moss-hung trees blocked out all view of the sky and the world beneath the jungle canopy was always night. Nazor's hut was decorated with skulls of many name-givers and painted with strange rune and symbols and pictures that seemed to writhe underneath ones gaze.

Kaile was afraid, but his love of Shara was his passion and he called upon Astendar to strengthen him. He made his way to the hut and was confronted by the wizard Nazor himself, a twisted old Ork, bent and gnarled like an ancient tree. He asked the Windling why he had come so far from his home and Kaile told the sorcerer his tale, of how he loved Shara, but could not take her for his mate. The Ork wizard told Kaile that he could use his magic to make the Windling a proper mate for the beautiful Shara, but that there would be a price: in return the wizard wanted the gifts that were unique to the Windlings, Kaile's astral-sensitive sight and his beautiful wings. Kaile agreed to Nazor's terms and the wizard cast a powder made from dried roses and lovers tears over him, while chanting a powerful spell.

The young Windling grew and grew to the size of a human, like becoming a great giant, but gone were his gossamer wings and dimmed was his windling sight of the magical world. Kaile was saddened by this loss, but Astendar still filled his heart and soul and he did not think twice about what he had lost before he rushed to be at Shara's side.

What Kaile did not know was that Shara had many enemies that she had made in her adventuring career. When the human-sized Windling prince burst into her tent, eager to declare his love, the warrior reacted with all of her training and struck him a blow with a dagger she kept hidden with her. It is said that the young prince died of heartbreak before his wound could prove fatal. Realizing her mistake, the warrior woman wept bitter tears over Kaile's fallen form and where her tears and the princes blood mingled there sprung up a flower with petals like Kaile's lost gossamer wings. The Windlings call these flowers kailes after the lost prince and believe that they are symbols of love.

The village was lost during the Scourge, the Liaj Jungle forever changed by the ravages of the Horrors, but it is said that in some isolated patches of the jungle kailes still grow. Legend says that they contain the essence of what the windling price sacrificed for his love and that the flowers are special blooms blessed by Astendar as gifts of true love.

Adventure Ideas

If the tale of Kaile and Shara is true, then the flowers known as kailes may indeed possess magical powers. If the flowers are blessed by Astendar, one might serve as an Enchanted Gift that inspires love as if it were created by the Questor ability of the same name (see The Earthdawn Companion for more on Questor abilities). The adepts, in the role of

matchmakers for some destined couple, might seek out the blooms in the depths of the jungle or be send to find a hapless, lovestruck youth who has traveled into the jungle seeking them. A questor of Astendar might also seek out the legendary blossoms as an act of devotion to the Passion.

The tales of the love-inspiring blooms might also attract the attention of less scrupulous merchants, profiteers and wizards, any of whom would be interested in acquiring some of the flowers for experimentation and possible resale as a valuable love potion or spell component.

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Character Creation of Earthdawn Spellcasters

by Drew Caldwell

originally appearing in ***Earthdawn Journal*** #2

I enjoy playing spellcasting characters in Earthdawn. Some of my observations on game mechanics and making the most of your starting resources follow.

Two attributes drive spellcasting talents in Earthdawn; Perception and Willpower. Three races have a spellcasting advantage; Elves, Windlings, and Humans.

Elves

Elves gain a +1 to their Perception attribute and a +1 to their Willpower attribute at character creation. If you invest maximum points in these two attributes you can begin play with a base Step 8 in each attribute, onto which your beginning talents are added. At third circle perception or willforce can be increased one step (by buying a +1 to the attribute prior to advancing to each new circle). By Sixth Circle, both attributes can be increased by one step. The increase in base perception and willpower steps has a pervasive impact on spellcasting. It boosts the game effect of the increased talents for circle advancement.

Early on in the character's development the elven mage has a better spell "punch" than his windling and human counterpart. The elf also has better spellcasting ability than his human counterpart. Over time, these abilities even out between the races.

Windlings

Windlings gain a +1 to their Perception attribute, have a +2 physical defense bonus for increased survivability, can fly for increased tactical options, and have the astral sight talent as an innate ability. Wizards have access to the astral sight spell at First Circle and Nethermancers have access to the astral sight Talent at Second Circle, but all windling mages have this useful ability from the beginning. At Second Circle, windling Willpower can equal the elven starting step. By Fourth Circle, Perception or Willpower can be increased by a step, and by Seventh Circle, both can be increased by a step.

Early on in the character's development, the windling mage is more likely to survive combat

than his elven or human counterparts. After spellcasting abilities even out at higher circles, the windling mage continues to enjoy several unique
special abilities.

Humans

Humans have no attribute or special ability bonuses, but they do have the versatility Talent at First Circle. When initially creating a human character, you can take several thread weaving Talents. This allows you to pick and choose favorite spells from different spellcasting Disciplines at game start. For example, you might begin play with a mix of your seven favorite elementalism and wizardry spells. At Second Circle, human Perception or Willpower can be increased to the elven starting step. By Third Circle, both can be increased to the elven starting step. By Sixth Circle, Perception or Willpower can be increased by a second step, and at Ninth Circle, the other attribute can also be raised by a second step.

It takes longer for the human generalist to catch up with his elven or windling specialist counterpart, but the human has a broader range of spells to choose from during his early adventuring career.

Note that the human mage's elven and windling counterparts can choose to learn Talents from a second Discipline cost-effectively at higher Circles. The question is, "Do you, as a player, want less spellcasting ability across a broader range of spells early on, or more proficient specialized spellcasting early on?"

My Recommendation

Play a character you enjoy. Spellcasters of any race can provide hours of roleplaying fun. If you want to maximize spellcasting abilities, play an elf, windling, or human. The elf makes a terrific "pure" mage, the windling makes a slightly less powerful spellcaster, but has some very nice special abilities, and the human mage makes a wonderful spellcasting generalist.

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Combat Mage

by Ash Black

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #4***

The combat mage combines the fighting abilities of the warrior and swordmaster with the spellcasting abilities of a wizard. The dwarves of Throal were the first to become Combat Mages in the dark days before the beginning of the Scourge. In those times it became expedient to have certain adepts who could not only cast spells or fight, but do both. Since followers of this discipline generally manage to get themselves into very dangerous situations, it is not at all uncommon for them to adorn themselves liberally with blood charms.

Important Attributes: Dexterity and Perception

Racial Restrictions: None

Karma Ritual: The character sits, meditating on the how to combine her martial abilities with her magical ones to aid her in defending her charges and defeating her foes. Halfway through the ritual, she envisions the worst foe she can and how she can use the abilities she meditated on in the first half of the ritual to defeat this foe. When the foe is defeated the ritual ends.

Artisan Skills: Embroidery, Runic Carving

1st Circle

- Karma Ritual
- Read and Write Magic
- Spellcasting *
- Spell Matrix
- Thread Weaving (Wizardry) *
- Melee Weapons *

2nd Circle

- Durability (6/5)
- Spell Matrix
- Air Dance

3rd Circle

- Avoid Blow
- Unarmed Combat *

4th Circle

Character may spend karma on Recovery Tests

- Astral Sight
- Wood Skin *

5th Circle

Increase character's Spell Defense by 1

- Willforce *
- Throwing Weapons

6th Circle

Increase character's Physical Defense by 1

- Enhanced Matrix
- Life Check *

7th Circle

Character may spend karma on Willforce and Willpower

- Earth Skin
- Second Attack

8th Circle

By spending a karma point the character is allowed to use one of her available Recovery Test at any time, even during combat. Roll the karma dice for the Recovery Test. This ability does NOT require an action.

- Hold Thread *
- Spirit Strike

9th Circle

Character may spend karma on Damage Tests.
Increase character's Physical Defense by 1.

- Armored Matrix
- Range Pattern
- Missile Twister

10th Circle

Matrix Split: Same as Wizard's 10th circle Discipline Ability as detailed in the Earthdawn Companion by FASA Corporation.

- Matrix Strike
- Critical Hit

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The Inquisitor

by Brian C. Schoner

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal*** #2

The Inquisitor Discipline was once a respected and renowned one throughout Barsaive and the Theran Empire. Their abilities focus on the investigation of misdeeds, of finding the responsible parties and bringing them to justice. While they have much in common with questors of Mynbruje, their role is not necessarily to punish criminals, merely reveal them to the rightful authorities (or, in some cases, the vengeful relatives of a murder victim). If no other punishment is possible, however, inquisitors will take this role upon themselves.

There were never many of inquisitors, and most of those who spent the Scourge in Barsaive's kaers failed to pass their Discipline on to others. In the fearful confines of the kaers, crime dropped in the interest of self-preservation; furthermore, the paranoid mob mentality of destroying anyone "different" made the inquisitors' rulings largely irrelevant. Now that the kaers have opened once more, these seekers for truth are slowly coming back, but still remain largely unknown in Barsaive. They are, however, avidly sought by organizations such as the Lightbearers and the Grim Legion.

In Thera, the inquisitors' history was rather different. They became the investigative arm of the Empire, ruthlessly seeking out any hint of discontent or rebellion, and using their growing political clout to discredit any who sought to limit their power. As a secretive but influential factor in Theran politics, the inquisitors have become both powerful and feared. Many inquisitors are now among Thera's agents in Barsaive.

Important Attributes: Perception and Willpower.
Racial Restrictions: Troll, Windling
Artisan Skills: Body painting, rune carving.(metal)
Karma Ritual: The inquisitor cuts himself slightly with a small knife, then spins around with his eyes shut and throws the weapon away from himself in a random direction. With his eyes still closed, he meditates on the cut and the weapon that inflicted it, and begins finding his way to the knife. When he finds it, he passes the flat of the blade over the cut, then opens his eyes to reveal that the cut is healed. As he does so, the ritual is complete.

FIRST CIRCLE
Astral Sight
Avoid Blow
Karma Ritual
Silent Walk
Throwing Weapons*
Tracking*

SECOND CIRCLE
Blood Share
Durability
Evidence Analysis*

THIRD CIRCLE
Detect Weapon*
Empathic Sense

FOURTH CIRCLE
Disguise Self
Thread Weaving (Truth Weaving)
Experience Death: Once per day, the inquisitor may use this ability, identical to the first circle nethermancer spell of the same name. Use the inquisitor's Perception and Willpower step in place of both his Spellcasting and Willforce talents.

FIFTH CIRCLE
Detect Trap
Lip Reading
Karma: The inquisitor may spend a Karma Point on any action using Perception only.

SIXTH CIRCLE
Disarm
Disguise
Halt Flight: The inquisitor can command any fleeing suspect to stop by naming his crime, i.e., "Stop, thief!" or "Halt, murderer!" Treat this as the fourth circle illusionist spell Stop Right There, using the inquisitor's Perception or Willpower step in place of the Spellcasting or Willforce step. If the target is not guilty of the crime he is accused of, he gains +5 to his Willpower step to resist this ability.

SEVENTH CIRCLE
Lifesight
Sense Poison*
Spell Defense: Increase the inquisitor's Spell Defense by 1.

EIGHTH CIRCLE
Incite Mob
True Sight*
Social Defense: Increase the inquisitor's Social Defense by 1.

NINTH CIRCLE
Detect Falsehood*
Lion Heart
Steely Stare
Initiative: Increase the inquisitor's Initiative Dice by 1 step.

Physical Defense: Increase the inquisitor's Physical Defense by 1.

TENTH CIRCLE
Multi-Tongue
Safe Thought
Karma: The inquisitor may spend a Karma Point on any action using Perception or Willpower only.
Recovery Tests: The inquisitor gains an additional Recovery Test per day.

ELEVENTH CIRCLE
Thoughtful Expression
Weapon Breaker
Eye of Truth: At the cost of 1 Strain point, the inquisitor may activate this power for a number of rounds equal to his Circle number. During this time, anyone who attempts to tell a lie to the inquisitor's face must make a Willpower roll against the inquisitor's Spell Defense in order to do so. If this roll is failed, the subject may not lie, though he is not compelled to tell the truth (he may, for instance keep silent or evade a question). If the subject cannot see the inquisitor's face, this ability has no effect.

TWELFTH CIRCLE
Truth Skit*
Wound Transfer
Social Defense: Increase the inquisitor's Social Defense by 1.
Spell Defense: Increase the inquisitor's Spell Defense by 1.

THIRTEENTH CIRCLE
Blood Guilt Weapon*
Detect Influence*
Initiative: Increase the inquisitor's Initiative Dice by 1 step.
Physical Defense: Increase the inquisitor's Physical Defense by 1.
Vengeful Blade: At the cost of 2 permanent damage points, the inquisitor may enchant a murder weapon to slay the murderer. If this is done, the weapon gains +5 steps in all Attack and Damage tests against the murderer who wielded it, but loses 5 steps against any other targets. If several people were directly involved in the murder (i.e. struck blows at the victim), any of their murder weapons will be effective against any of them. This ability is not effective if the victim was slain other than with a weapon (poison, spell, bare hands, etc.). If the murderer is slain by anyone using the vengeful weapon, the enchantment ends and the inquisitor regains the 2 damage points spent.

Inquisitors' talents for the Fourteenth and higher Circles are no longer known; some of these Adepts may still know these lost abilities, but if so, they have not shared them with anyone yet.

Rituals of Advancement
Inquisitors have no fixed advancement rituals for two reasons. Firstly, a ritual of this kind

requires the inquisitor to rely on others' judgment rather than his own, which is against every teaching of the Discipline. Secondly, since the Scourge, inquisitors are generally widely separated, and have little opportunity to organize any kind of formal advancement ritual. The inquisitors' Ghost Master Ritual, however, is known:

The inquisitor commits a minor, harmless "crime" -- stealing a rock, "assaulting" a willing and cooperative "victim", or the like. He then flees into the wilderness or to some other hiding place, and meditates on the way that a criminal's mind works. After an hour of such contemplation, the ghost master appears and confronts the inquisitor about his crime. The inquisitor must make amends for his crime and beg forgiveness from the ghost master. If the Ghost Master Test is successful, the master accepts the apology and the ritual continues as normal.

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Mystic Warrior

The Mystic Warrior is a fighter who has learned to rely upon himself and his inate abilities, instead of material items, to combat his enemies. Disdaining the use of most weapons and armor, the Mystic Warrior prefers to engage his opponents up close. However, the Mystic Warrior is not all combat. He also has honed his body and spirit to resist intrusions and pain.

To reflect the Mystic Warrior's disdain of weapons and armor, reduce all talents that rely on Dexterity by the initiative penalty of the armor. Additionally, if the Mystic Warrior chooses to use a melee weapon, reduce all attack tests by the BASE damage step bonus of the weapon.

Important Attributes: Willpower & Dexterity
Racial Restrictions: Windlings & Obsidimen
Karma Ritual: The Mystic Warrior sits alone in a quiet place and begins meditating upon his darkest fears. After 15 minutes these fears begin taking form into shadowy beings which harass and taunt the Mystic Warrior. At this point the Mystic Warrior engages the shadowy beings in an attempt to drive them off. Once the last being leaves the ritual is complete.
Artisan Skills: tattooing, body painting

FIRST CIRCLE
- Karma Ritual
- Acrobatic Strike *
- Avoid Blow
- Air Dance *
- Steel Thought *
- Unarmed Combat

SECOND CIRCLE
- Durability (6/5)
- Iron Fist *
- Great Leap

THIRD CIRCLE
- Swift Kick

Tiger Spring

FOURTH CIRCLE

Karma: The mystic warrior may spend karma on any action using Willpower only.
Resist Taunt *
Thread Weaving (War Weaving)

FIFTH CIRCLE

Spell Defense: Increase the mystic warrior's Spell Defense by 1.
Fire Heal
Throwing Weapons *

SIXTH CIRCLE

Physical Defense: Increase the mystic warrior's Physical Defense by 1.
Disarm
Endure Cold

SEVENTH CIRCLE

Recovery Tests: The mystic warrior gains an additional recovery test per day.
Wood Skin
Life Check

EIGHTH CIRCLE

Initiative: Increase the mystic warrior's Iniatiative Dice by one step.
Astral Sight
Anticipate Blow

NINTH CIRCLE

Spell Defense: Increase the mystic warrior's Spell Defense by 1.
Physical Defense: Increase the mystic warrior's Physical Defense by 1.
Critical Hit
Bestial Toughness
Fist Frenzy

TENTH CIRCLE

Spell Defense: Increase the mystic warrior's Spell Defense by 1.
Physical Defense: Increase the mystic warrior's Physical Defense by 1.
Champion Challenge *
Lion Spirit

ELEVENTH CIRCLE

Initiative: Increase the mystic warrior's Iniatiative Dice by two steps.
Defense
Matrix Strike *

TWELFTH CIRCLE

Recovery Tests: The mystic warrior gains an additional recovery test per day.
Poison Resistance
Earth Skin

Note:

The talents Iron Fist and Fist Fenzy correspond to the talents of Claw Shape and Claw Frenzy respectively. The game mechanics function exactly the same, just the name and effects change. Instead of the Mystic Warrior's hand forming into a claw, it hardens to the consistency of iron.

Iron Fist

Step Number: Rank + Strength + 3
Action: No
Skill Use: No
Requires Karma: Yes
Strain: None
Discipline Talent Use: Mystic Warrior
The Iron Fist talent hardens a character's hands to the consistency of iron. The character uses his Unarmed Combat or Acrobatic Strike talent to make an Attack Test with Iron Fist. Make the Damage Test using the Iron Fist step, plus the required Karma dice. If using Iron Fist with Fist Frenzy, the character may use a Karma Point for each Damage Test, but is not required to after the first. Iron Fist lasts until it does damage, then immediately fades away.

Fist Frenzy

Step Number: Rank + Dexterity Step
Action: Yes
Skill Use: No
Requires Karma: Yes
Strain: None
Discipline Talent Use: Mystic Warrior
Using the Fist Frenzy talent, a character can make more effective, and possibly, multiple attacks using the Iron Fist talent. When using Fist Frenzy to attack with Iron Fist, the character uses the Fist Frenzy talent instead of Unarmed Combat or Acrobatic Strike. In one round, a character may attack using Fist Frenzy a number of times equal to his rank in Fist Frenzy. For example, Rank 3 Fist Frenzy would give the character 3 Fist Frenzy Attack Tests. The character must spend the Karma Point required to use Fist Frenzy on the first Attack Test. He may spend an additional Karma Point on each subsequent Fist Frenzy test, and may also spend Karma on the Iron Fist Damage Tests. For each Iron Fist attack made during Fist Frenzy, use the Iron Fist damage step to make the Damage Tests.

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Songsmith

by Craig Wright

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The Songsmith discipline is an elven discipline with a major focus on the arts, among other things. As capable of performing as theTroubadour, they employ illusions to enhance performances; they are also able to construct the fine examples of elven art as expressed in elven weapons. A cross between the Troubadour and the Weaponsmith with minor Illusioncasting abilities thrown in, the discipline is appreciated far more by elves than the Weaponsmith and is therefore found in the elven population far more often than that discipline. However, the Songsmith has another purpose also, one which has been lost with the corruption of Wyrm Wood - Songsmiths originally acted as agents of the Elven Queen, both through preserving elven culture and through other means.

Songsmiths of the present day are therefore a pale shadow of what they once were, although the Blood Elves may yet preserve Songsmiths who fulfill their original purpose. Songsmiths were rarely single disciplined, as the discipline was originally only taught to those elven Adepts who demonstrated a desire to serve the Elven Queen; only with the creation of Blood Wood, and the splintering of the elven race, did single disciplined Songsmiths become relatively common. Many of the legendary Songsmiths of Sereatha, for example, were also Swordmasters.

Attributes: Perception, Willpower, Charisma
Racial Restrictions: Elves only
Karma Ritual: A Songsmith performs his or her Karma Ritual through an artisan skill. Once the Songsmith begins performing, he or she cannot stop until the performance is ended; the Adept must be completely immersed in their artisan skill.
Artisan Skills: Acting, Musician, Dancer, Storyteller, Painter

First Circle:

Avoid Blow*
Emotion Song*
Karma Ritual
Melee Weapons
R/W Language
Skilled Artisan*

Second Circle:

Forge Blade
Item History

Speak Language*

Third Circle:

First Impression*
Thrown Weapons

Fourth Circle:

"Glamour" as per the Illusionist
Empathic Sense
Thread Weaving (Illusions)*

Fifth Circle:

+1 to Social defense
Weapon History
Winning Smile

Sixth Circle:

May spend a Karma on a Charisma Test only
Abate Curse
Resist Taunt*

Seventh Circle:

+1 to Social Defense
Disguise Self*
Mimic Voice

Eighth Circle:

+1 to Spell Defense
Detect Weapon
True Sight*

Ninth Circle:

+2 to Social Defense
Armoured Matrix
R/W Magic
Spellcasting

Tenth Circle:

"The Kiss" as per Troubadour
Conceal Weapon
Lasting Impression

Eleventh Circle:

+2 to Spell Defense
Life Check
Memorize Image

Twelfth Circle:

+25 points Maximum Karma
+1 to Spell Defense
Multi-tongue
Safethought*

Thirteenth Circle:

+1 to Spell Defense
Spirit Talk
Thought Link

Fourteenth Circle:

+1 Recovery test
+1 to Initiative step
+1 to Social Defense
Poison Resistance
Tiger Spring

Fifteenth Circle:

+2 to Initiative Step
May spend a karma point on a Recovery test
Astral Pocket
Slough Blame

* denotes discipline talents

Skilled Artisan

Step Number: N/A
Skill Use: No
Action: No
Strain: None
Requires Karma: No
Race Restriction: Elves only
Discipline Talent Use: Songsmith

Skilled Artisan is a talent learned by many elves over the course of their lives, which allows the elf to learn and develop artisan skills using magic. Functioning in a fashion similar to the human talent of Versatility, each rank of Skilled Artisan allows an elf to purchase one artisan skill as though it is a talent of 1st to 4th circle. Each artisan skill must be paid for with legend points seperately. The maximum rank in any artisan skill bought through Skilled Artisan is equal to the rank of Skilled Artisan itself. An elf may also choose to learn artisan skills without the use of magic, in which case normal skill rules apply; an elf may also teach others the skills, although without the Skilled Artisan talent these are taught without magic and learned normally. Available to any elf at 1st circle, the talent is available only to elves. Skilled Artisan applies for purposes of circle advancement only as part of the Songsmith discipline, wherein it originally developed.

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The Spy

by Paris E. Crenshaw, III

originally appearing in ***Earthdawn Journal*** #3

"You wish to know what it is to be a Spy? Then watch the shadows cast by the moon as they slither silently across the nightscape. Lie still in your safe, warm bed and listen to the sounds of the city as its dark denizens carry out deeds beyond speech, or even thought. It has been said that those who follow the way of the Spy belong to the night, and it is so...in the same way that our muscles and bones belong to the skin which covers them. The night gives us shape and distinction, but beware. For the night lingers during the day...in the form of shadows.

"I have walked unseen and unheard through the very halls of Theran palaces, chuckling to myself as they discussed their plans for domination of Barsaive. Did I give that information to Throal? Such a question. I have offered some 'speculation' concerning the dealings of Thera and her allies to King Varulus III, himself -- for a fine price, of course. But I have also spoken to Theran officials on matters concerning the resistance of Theran control in their 'unruly province'.

"Do not waggle your self-righteous tongue at me. Allegiance is meant to be hard-earned, my naive young friend. And those who do not remember that fact suffer worse than any slave I have ever known."
-- Kevelian, Master Spy (of supposedly Elven descent, though several sources disagree)

Spies are the envoys of political intrigue throughout Barsaive. Spies act as specialized information gatherers, and sometimes assassins. Their reputation is dark, making them only slightly more accepted than Nethermancers, and often far more feared by those in positions of temporal power. Most spies prefer to work alone, but they are anything but antisocial, being of the of type who love interacting with people if for nothing more than to see how many lies they can get them to believe.

Though there are many involved in the art of spying, there are very few actual Spy Adepts in Barsaive. This rarity is partially due to the tremendous demands the magic has, both socially and physically, for those who wish to follow it. But more importantly is the secrecy which surrounds the magical arts of Spying. The Spy is taught never to reveal his secrets unless he is certain that the student will completely embrace the Way. Because such total devotion to a discipline is demanded, no Spy will ever attempt to add a second discipline to his studies without losing all Spy abilities forever.

Important Attributes: Dexterity, Perception, Willpower, and Charisma
Racial Restrictions: Obsidiman, Troll, T'Skrang
Karma Ritual: To perform their karma ritual, spies must sit quietly, preferably in a dark room, with their eyes closed, often blindfolded, and their ears plugged with wax. Once completely shut off from all normal sensory perceptions, the spy reaches out with magic to discern all details of his surroundings. Once the image and importance of all aspects of their surroundings are firmly grasped, the ritual ends.
Artisan Skills: Acting, Performing Arts, Writing

First Circle

Karma Ritual
Lock Picking
Melee Weapons
Read and Write Languages
Silent Walk*
Surprise Strike*

Second Circle

Disguise Self*
Durability (6/5)
Evidence Analysis*

Third Circle

Book Memory
Book Recall

Fourth Circle

Karma: The spy may spend a karma point on any action using perception only.
Astral Sight
Thread Weaving (Spy Weaving)*

Fifth Circle

Social Defense: Increase the spy's Social Defense by 1.
Detect Trap
Lip Reading

Sixth Circle

Physical Defense: Increase the Spy's Physical Defense by 1.
Conceal Weapons
Steely Stare

Seventh Circle

Spread Rumor: For the cost of 1 point of strain, the spy can begin a rumor, which can be infused with magic to spread. After taking strain, the spy makes a Charisma test against the first recipient of the "information". The level of success of the test indicates how far the rumor spreads. On a good success, the rumor affects a small group of people. At the GM's determination, each success level increases the size of the group in large multiples. A truly legendary success could put the rumor on the tongue of the entire population of a city.
Missile Weapons
Sense Poison

Eighth Circle

Initiative: Increase the spy's initiative dice by 1 step.
Eagle Eye*
Orbiting Spy*

Ninth Circle

Karma: The spy may spend a karma point on any one recovery test.
Social Defense: Increase the spy's Social Defense by 2.
Bardic Voice
Detect Falsehood
Memorize Image*

Tenth Circle

Move Unseen: For 4 points of strain, the spy may pass unnoticed through a crowd of people. The spy makes a Disguise Self test against a difficulty number determined by the GM representing how closely people are looking out for him. Success indicates that he and his actions seem nothing out of the ordinary and no one bothers to notice him. However, if asked later, members of the crowd may remember seeing the spy pass through, they just thought nothing of it at the time.
Multi-Tongue
Safe Thought

Rituals for Advancement

Much like thieves, Spies have no set rituals for advancement to the next Circle of power. The secrecy surrounding this ancient discipline does not allow for large gatherings or ornate ceremonies for one person to display their skills. When a mentor takes on a student, the training forms a strange bond between them, allowing the teacher to sense when their student is ready to advance. The mentor will suddenly appear shortly after the criteria for Circle advancement are filled and make himself available as a teacher. If the student ever locates a ghost master (the procedure for which is listed below), the mentor realizes his expertise is no longer required and gladly disappears...possibly forever.

Ghost Master Ritual

Much like the Karma Ritual, the ghost master ritual begins with the Spy seated in a pitch black room, completely separated from all visual or auditory input. After reciting a litany of desire for knowledge, the room's darkness seems to lighten, as the Spy is drawn deep into a maze of corridors within his own mind. The Spy makes his way through these corridors, avoiding foes and finding allies to guide him. When he has finally reaches his goal, the Spy will be in a room containing nothing but the ghost master. The Spy will then exit his subconscious and find the ghost master waiting for him in the actual room. The Ritual then proceeds as normal.

Note: The Spy Adept can be especially effective in campaigns designed to thwart Theran efforts to overtake Barsaive. Spies are not always without moral convictions and can sometimes be convinced to work toward a worthy cause--such as freeing Barsaive from the threat of Theran oppression. Some Spies of legend have even been known to take up the waay of the Lightbearer, using their talents to gain information which would be detrimental to the Horrors.

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The K'stulaami Taildancer

by Michael E. Colton

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #6***

As I walked through the great halls of the Library of Throal, I encountered a most unusual t'skrang. A t'skrang who was one of the k'stulaami. The k'stulaami had a thin membrane, or k'stulaa, extending from his hips to his wrists. I am told that this membrane allows the k'stulaami to glide for long distances. I had thought their house, the House of the Spirit Wind, was a reclusive people, seldom leaving their homes in the mountains of Throal. When I asked him of this he stated that my information was correct. Furthermore, the k'stulaami are ostracized by other t'skrang. He introduced himself as P'norr Swiftail, a k'stulaami Taildancer. I had never heard of the Taildancers and as a researcher of the Disciplines of Barsaive, and the Adept's who practice them, I asked him to tell me of the way of the Taildancer. This is his story.

- - Presented by for the edification of the reader by
Derrat, wizard of the City of Yistaine

So you wish to hear the tale of the Taildancers? I can weave that yarn. However, before you can comprehend the way of the Taildancer you must understand the way of the k'stulaami. The k'stulaami are born to sail the skies. Not like the Air Sailor or Sky Raider, who must use ships of wood and stone to fly. The k'stulaami are blessed by Syrtis to have the natural ability to soar and glide without the aid of anything except their k'stulaa. Flying is ingrained in our hearts and woven into our patterns. It is an integral part of our very essence. A k'stulaami would rather wither up and die than not be able to fly.

On Dancing the Taildance

All Taildancers begin their training as members of the House of the Spirit Wind's elite fighting unit called Jik'harra K'stulaa T'Syrtis, or Deathwings. Those k'stulaami, who have been chosen to attempt initiation, are handpicked from the most brave and daring of the young k'stulaami. Upon completing our initiation, we dedicate our lives to the mastering of the discipline and the protection of the k'stulaami people. More times than not, the children picked are k'stulaami born to non-k'stulaami parentage and have found their way to our home in the Throal Mountains. Occasionally, one of these Taildancers leaves the clutch and take up the lifestyle of an adventurer. I am one of those Taildancers, one who has taken up the life of the legendary heros. That is how I came to meet with you this day.

I can see by the expression on your face that you are confused. A Taildancer dedicates his life to his discipline and the protection of his people even if he leaves them. Interesting phenomenon, eh? Many of the k'stulaami are not born to the House of the Spirit Wind. In fact, a majority are born to other houses. In their eleventh or twelfth year they undergo kaissa and feel the need to fly. At this point they make their way, one way or another, to the k'stulaami's mountain citadel. Those hatchlings have seen the world and some wish to see it again . . . this time from the skies. These Taildancers leave the house in a never ending quest to spread the legend of the k'stulaami. To prove to others that we are not freaks or outcasts. To show the other races that we are t'skrang! As worthy as any Name-giver!! So, in our own way, we are still protecting our people. We are breaking down the prejudices of the past in hopes of a better future.

Of Taildancers and the Art of Combat

The Taildancer's primary weapon is his tail. He learns to fight with it while on the ground and whilst airborne. A common form of attack is swooping down with a massive downward blow, then landing and finishing off his opponent with several more well placed tail attacks. Our Weaponsmiths have developed a weapon called Blood Spikes to enhance the effectiveness of our tails. The Weaponsmith embeds razor sharp shards of living crystal into our tails. The magic in our blood causes the shards to grow into razor sharp spikes better that an half a foot long. These spikes have been known to increase the damage potential of a tail attack comparable to that of a troll's sword. When combined with the eloquence of the taildance it makes this a mighty weapon.

At times, the Taildancer is not in a position to use the tail. At this point we must rely on other weapons. Generally weapons that are thrown, because if a Taildancer can strike an opponent with a melee weapon he will opt to use his tail. Doing otherwise would insult the litany of Taildancers before him. Most Taildancers choose the Hawk Hatchet as their thrown weapon of choice. The k'stulaami Weaponsmiths again followed their Discipline and created an enchanted hawk hatchet that employs the use of thread magic. I have one here. It is known as Bloodhawk and it has served me well. In fact, it is not unusual to see journeyman or higher Taildancers wielding a weapon such as Bloodhawk as their secondary weapon.

Of Taildancers and the Talent of Gliding

Gliding . . . how can I describe to you the sheer joy of gliding. It is a part of me. It is something I just do. But I will do my best. I hope I do this wonderful feeling justice. As I have repeatedly told you, we t'kstulaami are born to fly. However, the Taildancers take that one step further. We hone our gliding abilities and enhance them with magic. A Taildancer

can control his flight to appear as graceful as an eagle or swoop down like a deadly espagra. As we perfect our mastery of the taildance we gain even more talents that improve our skill with the k'stulaa. We can dive from great heights, stopping momments before striking the ground and glide to a safe landing. We can soar higher than a Sky Raider's ship and touch the clouds. It is a joy that I wish you could experience.

This concludes my tale. I trust it has shown the value of the k'stulaami. We are just a unique people in a unique land.

Honored readers, this concludes the tale of P'norr Swiftail. For more information on the k'stulaami, I direct you to read T'chal Siandra K'veechnalonika V'strimon's treatise entitled "Of The T'skrang Who Fly" in Denizen's of Earthdawn, Volume 1, pp 68-69.

-- Derrat, Wizard of the City of Yistaine

Game Information

Important Attributes: Dexterity and Willpower
Racial Restrictions: K'stulaami only
Karma Ritual: To perform his Karma Ritual, a Taildancer lies down on his back, k'stulaa spread wide, staring at the open sky. After a few minutes of meditation, he levitates as if using the Air Dance talent. As with the Warrior, the ritual use of this talent does not cause strain. The Taildancer then spins about his three axes, gradually spinning faster and faster for 30 minutes until he is almost a blur. The ritual ends abruptly when the Taildancer suddenly stops balanced perfectly on the tip of his tail.
Artisan Skills: Body Painting, Tattooing

First Circle

Acrobatic Strike
Air Dance
Gliding(D)
Karma Ritual
Taunt
Unarmed Combat(D)

Second Circle

Durability (7/6)
Maneuver(D)
Throwing Weapons

Third Circle

Tiger Spring
Wind Catcher(D)

Fourth Circle

Karma: The Taildancer may spend a Karma Point on any action using Dexterity only.
Climbing
Thread Weaving (Tail Weaving)

Fifth Circle

Regrow Tail: Like the t'skrang, the k'stulaami have been known to lose their tail through trauma. For a cost of 1 Blood Point, the Taildancer can force regrow his tail in one week. The Taildancer must rest while his tail regrows. As with other Blood Magic, this point can be recovered after one year and one day has passed since the tail was regrown.
Avoid Blow
Gliding Stride(D)

Sixth Circle

Karma: The Taildancer may spend a Karma Point to increase the damage of any attack made with his tail.
Lizard Leap(D)
Resist Taunt

Seventh Circle

Physical Defense: Increase the Taildancer's Physical Defense by +1.
Life Check
Second Attack

Eighth Circle

Karma: The Taildancer may spend a Karma Point on any action using Willpower only.
Down Strike(D)
Wound Balance

Ninth Circle

Initiative: Increase the Taildancer's Initiative dice by 1 step.
Cobra Strike
Eagle Eye
Great Leap

Tenth Circle

Prehensile Tail: For a permanent cost of 2 damage points, the Taildancer can make his tail prehensile. This effectively gives the Taildancer a third hand. Taildancers often use their prehensile tail to throw items (i.e, a hawk hatchet) while gliding.
Recovery Test: The Taildancer gains 1 additional Recovery Test per day.
Body Blade(D)
Whirlwind

Roleplaying Hints

Taildancers are free spirited k'stulaami who love nothing more than soaring the skies. They pride themselves on their ability to glide, often scorning those who cannot. However, they are also the self-proclaimed ambassadors of the k'stulaami people. They will never do anything that would disgrace the k'stulaami.

Taildancers are talented fighters and love to "show-off" their unique combat abilities. Like the Swordmaster, a Taildancer will often perform a spectacular maneuver more for the showmanship than for its effectiveness in defeating an opponent. When at all possible they will try to incorporate their gliding abilities into combat maneuvers.

Discipline Violations

Taildancers must remain true to the taildance. If he sways from its calling, he may suffer talent crisis. The use of a melee weapon in combat in favor of his tail will invoke varying levels of talent crisis. If the Taildancer had lost his tail due to trauma and is in the process of growing it back the use of a melee weapon constitutes a Serious violation. Using a melee weapon while the Taildancer has a fully functional tail can invoke a Severe violation.

All k'stulaami live to fly, but to Taildancers it is not just a want but a need. If a Taildancer opts to walk down stairs or an incline when they could have glided, they may have committed a Trivial, if not a Mild, violation of their personal vision. If the most obvious way down is to fly and the Taildancer refuses to do so, he may have invoked a Serious or Heinous violation.

Multi-Discipline Combinations

Taildancers rarely take on additional disciplines. However, when they do they usually combine the taildance with the way of the Scout or the Elementalist. A Taildancer/Scout is an unparalleled airborne reconnaissance unit. The Taildancers who learn the way of the Elementalist often specialize in the element of air. The combination of the Taildancer's love of flying and an Air Elementalists constant dealing with the air elemental spirits make for a unique and mutually beneficial union of two disciplines.

Questors

While not actually a second discipline, taking on the life of a Questor can often be just as

rewarding. Taildancers who chose to devote their lives to a single passion often choose Floranuus or Thystonius. Questing Taildancers who leave the k'stulaami mountain citadel and take up the life of an adventurer are usually devotees of Floranuus. They use his optimism to help spread the legends of the k'stulaami. They also revel in their ability to fly and often attempt to find higher locations to launch off of and glide for as long as they are able. The k'stulaami phrase "stairs are for going up" was coined by a Taildancer Questor of Floranuus. A majority of the Taildancers who have taken up the life of a Questor of Thystonius are often Taildancers who do not leave the House of the Spirit Wind's mountain citadel. These Taildancers have devoted their lives to protecting the citadel. A Taildancer Questor of Thystonius is usually who officiates the various test that prospective Taildancer initiates undergo before they are initiated.

Special Rules

Special rules for Taildancers include uses of half-magic, rituals of advancement similar to those on pages 120-125 of the Earthdawn Companion, and the new talent of Gliding.

Using Half-Magic

Taildancers may make Half-Magic Tests to recognize different flying animals and creatures. Taildancers may also use Half-Magic Tests when trying to predict weather conditions, updrafts, thermals and other natural phenomenon that will affect their flights.

Rituals of Advancement

Taildancer rituals and tests for advancement often require aerial feats of bravery, endurance or showmanship. Since the Taildancer discipline only consists of ten circles, their levels of mastery come at earlier circles: novice (2-4), journeyman (5-7), warden (8-9), and master (10).

Recruitment: Those k'stulaami who have been chosen to attempt initiation as a Taildancer are handpicked from the most brave and daring of the young k'stulaami. More times than not, the children picked are k'stulaami born to non-k'stulaami parentage. The fact that these children have found their way to the House of the Spirit Wind's home in the Throal Mountains without the aid of others is usually enough to convince the Elders to accept the initiate.

Novice (Circles 2-4): The adept demonstrates his ability to fly by performing various aerial acrobatics or endurance tests of increasing difficulty: long distance gliding (Second Circle), diving an extreme distance and pulling out moments before hitting the ground (Third Circle) or gliding directly at a vertical wall at high speeds only to quickly stop and "land" on the wall (Fourth Circle).

Journeyman (Circles 5-7): The adept must demonstrate his ability to precision fly through obstacles. Elders pride themselves on finding new and unusual locations for these rituals (i.e., badlands or unique rock formations).

Warden (Circles 8-9): Adepts advancing to the pinnacle of the taildance must demonstrate to their peers as well as themselves that have indeed mastered the taildance by creating their own advancement rituals.

Ghost Master Ritual: The Taildancer climbs the highest point in the surrounding area. He then blindfolds himself and leaps into the air, gliding in a random direction, allowing the magic to guide him to a safe landing. All the while concentrating on the desired ghost master. Wherever he lands the ghost master will be waiting and the ritual proceeds as normal. (See Ghost Masters, p. 225, ED, for a complete description of this ritual.)

Gliding Talent

Step Number: Rank + Dexterity

Action: No **Skill Use:** Yes

Requires Karma: No **Strain:** None

Discipline Talent Use: Taildancer

Race Restrictions: K'stulaami only

This is the talent version of the skill Gliding found in Denizens of Earthdawn, Volume 1, page 122. For gaming purposes, the use of this talent is handled as the skill.

New Weapons

Living Crystal Tail Spikes

The k'stulaami Weaponsmiths and Elementalists have created a new and innovative way to use living crystal. Razor sharp shards of crystal are embedded inside a k'stulaami's tail. The magic in the character's blood causes the crystal to grow until they have formed into 6"-8" razor sharp spikes projecting out of the end of the character's tail.

Implanting the crystal causes 1 point of damage plus 1 per additional step of Damage caused

by a Tail Attack, to a maximum of +3 Damage steps. This damage cannot be healed as long as the character keeps the spikes. Implanting or removing living crystal tail spikes requires four hours plus four hours per Damage step of work by a trained Weaponsmith or an Elementalist. Living Crystal Tail Spikes, or Blood Spikes' as they are more commonly known, are normally worn by lower circle Taildancers. They are often removed by the time a Taildancer has reached the tenth circle and has learned the Body Blade talent.

Cost: 250 silver + 250 silver per Damage step.

Thread Hawk Hatchet

The Thread Hawk Hatchet appears as an ornate hawk hatchet. However, it is not uncommon for its handle to be made of wood inlaid with strands of elemental air.

Cost: 2,500 silver pieces
Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 12

Rank 1 Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the hawk hatchet.
Effect: The hawk hatchet does STR + 5 damage.

Rank 2 Cost: 300

Effect: The hawk hatchet does STR + 6 damage. Range is 35/100/150.

Rank 3 Cost: 500

Effect: The hawk hatchet will return to its owner when thrown. Retrieving the hawk hatchet in this manner costs 1 point of Strain. The Damage step is STR + 7.

Rank 4 Cost: 800

Effect: The hawk hatchet does STR + 8 damage. Range is 50/120/170.

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Brazt'ul-char

by David R. Henry

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #7***

The player characters are on a road somewhere between Here and There. Suddenly, they round a bend of a hill, and there, squatting obscenely, is a Horror. Big one, too. It looks like a combination of a thundra beast and a toad, and large, pustulent sores creep over its skin, breaking and hissing and releasing a cloud of acidic gas all over its vast form. Rheumy eyes blink down under a makeshift hat of treetrunks and river mud, while one long arm slowly fans itself with the unfortunate remains of a large oak. Muttered spells and hungry weapons are momentarily paused when the Horror blinks slowly in surprise, smiles (perhaps, if you can call that a smile), and says "Passions blessings to you on this fine day, my friends!" What could this monstrosity be?

It's Brazt'ul-char, the Horror, that's who. Brazt'ul-char knows all too well what nasty, annoying adepts do to hard-working Horrors such as himself: chop them into little pieces. Brazt'ul-char has no particular desire to be chopped into pieces of any size. He also has a very slow metabolism and needs a while to digest the most recent village he's devoured -- usually a few months. During those times he wanders slowly across Barsaive, moaning about his upset tummy and complaining bitterly about the ungodly heat in this inhospitable dimension. In his home, as he's happy to tell anyone who spends the time to sit down and listen to the Horror, there's none of this annoying *thawing* which Barsaive seems to be subject to. If it wasn't for his fragile constitution (pause for dramatic, phlegmy cough), why, he'd have packed up centuries ago and returned to his home. Really, he has no idea why he stays here (he says as he gnaws on a troll leg he saved for just such a scorching afternoon), but, well, there you have it.

Players may be shocked at being cordially addressed by a Horror. They certainly will be surprised when the Horror shows no sign of wanting to corrupt, consume, control, or confuse them. Brazt'ul-char, you see, is the epitome of polite society. Sure, he's evil, calculating, murderous, disgusting, vile, utterly without a soul, and dedicated to the eradication of all earthly life. Who isn't? It's just he sees no reason why he has to be impolite about it. Brazt'ul-char has combined his apprehension of meeting a large group of adepts he cannot handle with his slow and cautious nature to come up with a really bizarre idea in the boiling depths of his fevered brain: If he's polite to everyone, they won't attack him, and leave him to digest his meals in peace.

As such, Brazt'ul-char can act as a very unusual (and different) role-playing opportunity for an Earthdawn campaign. The GM should make sure that their players aren't dedicated Horror-stompers bloodsworn to strangle Verjigorm with their own intestines to save Barsaive if they must; such spoilsports will miss the true oddness of an encounter with Brazt'ul-char, and,

besides, they're tedious and crude, not of interest to as refined a conversationalist as Brazzy, who will probably thwap such offensive beasts on the head soundly with his 30' foot tree trunk a few times to get them to settle down. Most players will probably appreciate a few rounds to gather their wits when they encounter a large Horror, during which Brazt'ul-char will open up in conversation. If the players follow up on that, they're hooked.

Brazt'ul-char is a polite and decent, if not exactly witty, conversationalist. After a large binge of innocent souls, he really isn't in the mood to fight, and will keep the players talking as long as possible. He's also a very physical Horror; the Scourge was good to him, but he's dined on too many Name-Givers, and now if he is forced to retreat to astral space he'll lose his grip on the real world entirely, and will have to return to his home dimension. Gamemasters should play him as a very worldly, polite, but grumpy older uncle who is constantly griping about his war wounds, the weather, the politics, the taste of salt-water t'skrang, and so on.

Brazt'ul-char is quick to defuse hostile situations. If the players attack him straight out, he says "Wait? What is the meaning of this? What harm have I done you?" If pressed on his record as a Horror (which he never denies; after all, he's quite proud of his work), Brazt'ul-char will regale players with endless, sickening tales of the terrible crimes he's perpetrated on humanity; for years, if they'll allow him. "Certainly, I have raped and pillaged entire countrysides! But is that any reason to attack me? I think not; how many people have *you* slain for no good reason, my good adepts? At least I am sustaining my life through my activities; what good came of your slaughter, eh?" Brazt'ul-char knows very well how blood-checkered the past of most of Barsaive's adepts is, and will use that as a leveraging point to his own activities.

Brazt'ul-char knows other things, too. He's more than happy to trade information, intelligence, and outright lies about his fellow Horrors to save his own miserable hide. He's not stupid, though, and doesn't rat on Horrors who are capable of reducing him to sludge in retribution (such as Ristul or Verjigorm). Brazt'ul-char also knows the location of a magical trident lost somewhere in the Caucavik Mountains that he may trade to get annoying characters off his back; that it's located in a lost valley filled with giant undead spiders is just the least of the details he leaves out in his enthusiastic gushing about the weapon.

Players who begin to annoy him may find themselves Horror Marked just out of exasperation, and then Cursed Lucked and Corrupted Karma into oblivion when they're busy fighting some other foe. And of course, if attacked, Brazt'ul-char will fight to defend himself. He will always be looking for a way to escape combat, though with his very slow movement that will frequently be impossible for him. He frequently leaves opponents that he defeats alone, hoping they'll learn from their mistakes and never attack another Horror again (Brazt'ul-char is a bizarre form of optimist in his own way, and considers himself an unthanked leader among his kind in public relations efforts with the Name-Givers). Note that Brazt'ul-char is not insulted by effective argumentation from the Name-Giver's side; indeed, he enjoys a good debate immensely (helps as a digestive aide, you know). The players won't be able to convince him of the error of his ways, of course.

Players may, after a few encounters, decide Brazt'ul-char is a "friendly" Horror that they can

safely mine for information on more active, dangerous Horrors. If so, they're already trapped in Brazt'ul-char's world of deceit: good for you, GM! He may be lazy, he may be slow, he probably has more etiquette than the PC's put together, but he's still a Horror. The gamemaster knows Brazzy is being played right when the players are bemused, confused, or even charmed by him. Brazt'ul-char has no supernatural powers to sway people to his side, unlike other Horrors such as Bone Crown; the gamemaster has to pull out the stops to make this shambling, festering pile of evil charming and eloquent.

You know you're doing OK if the players decide to talk a while with Brazt'ul-char (truthfully, his sheer size will probably inhibit most parties from attacking); you know you've got them where it hurts if they actually take a liking to him. Play up their "friendship" as much as you can. Brazt'ul-char is not the sort of Horror to Mark everyone he meets and then use them as pawns across Barsaive; no, his taint is much more subtle. Instead of Marking heroes, he makes them rethink one of their most deeply held positions, that Horrors are uncaring, unreasonable beings that slay only because they must. Once they realize that, they may start questioning their own role in fighting such creatures. Then they start noticing how their very own Name-Giver governments sacrifice hundreds of people in useless wars, how thieves and murderers take things from their own species without regard to kindness; indeed, all the crimes of humanity against humanity itself. Once they are doing that, and under Brazt'ul-char's subtle guidance, they may lay down their arms forever against the Horrors. Doing such would certainly require quite the lengthy campaign of manipulation, but it's certainly far more in Brazzy's style than just telling the players "OK, you've been Horror Marked. Now you're under his control." That's not using the finesse that Brazt'ul-char exudes.

Another option for an adventure with Brazt'ul-char can happen much later in a campaign where he is a recurring character. The players can come across him, finally with an empty stomach, plotting to annihilate a sleepy hamlet of 2,000 or so overnight in one huge munchfest. Brazt'ul-char will invite any "friends" he has to come along and join him, and will loudly bemoan any of his "friends" who turn against him. Couldn't they at least wait until the dinner hour has passed for this conversation? Savages. And then he would beat them on the head with his tree trunk, complaining "Why can't we discuss this like civilized beings?" Rip. Tear. Consume. Burp.

Brazt'ul-char

The "Friendly" Horror

DEX: 5 **STR:** 23 **TOU:** 26
PER: 18 **WIL:** 28 **CHA:** 23

Initiative: 4
Number of Attacks: 5
Physical Defense: 23
Spell Defense: 32

Attack: 20
Damage: 26
Number of Spells: (1)
Spellcasting: 15
Effect: Varies
Death Rating: 195
Wound Threshold: 24
Unconsciousness Rating: 150
Karma Points: 30
Social Defense: 20
Armor: 25
Mystic Armor: 35
Knockdown: 28
Recovery Tests: 15
Combat Movement: 15
Full Movement: 30
Legend Points: 105,000
Karma Step: 9
Powers: Acid Cloud 12, Corrupt Karma 25, Cursed Luck 30, Horror Mark 23, Invisibility 35, Thought Worm 23, Spells (see below)
Equipment: None
Loot: Tree trunk, classy hat (if you're into lean-tos)

Brazt'ul-char is a Horror dedicated to the unusual belief that good manners will get you anywhere; in Brazt'ul-char's case, into the good graces of your Name-Giver prey. The size of two or three large bull elephants, Brazt'ul-char resembles a sore-pocked, six-legged rhinoceros with front legs that double as prehensile arms. Acidic poison vents and steams from the abcesses on his skin, and he's frequently found wearing a makeshift lean-to on his head (to keep out the cruel sun) and fanning himself with a thirty foot tree, which he'll happily turn around to beat uncouth barbarians into the ground with.

Brazt'ul-char is a slow-moving, mainly physically-based Horror, who relies on guile and charm to keep nasty Name-Giver swords away from his baby-smooth hide (as he describes it, at least). He only usually uses his magic in the rare times he's engaging in a despoiling of a town; otherwise, it's used only in desperation or out of a deep abiding aesthetic dislike for a target. For physical attacks, Brazt'ul-char relies on his massive limbs, although if he has a tree trunk fan, he'll use that as a club instead. The tree trunk will raise his Damage Step to 36. Alternatively, he will make a wide sweep of the trunk to try and knock down opponents. Such a sweep uses up four of his physical attacks, and can affect as many opponents as he can reach in a thirty-degree angle in front of his body up to thirty feet away or so. To sweep attack, Brazt'ul-char rolls an Attack Test as normal against the Physical Defense of all the opponents in the arc. Those he hits have to make resist a Knockdown Test with a target number generated by his Step 36 Damage Test. Sweep attacks also cause Step 26 Damage to those caught in the branches of the tree.

Brazt'ul-char is surrounded by a cloud of acidic poison that seeps into the ground beneath his claws and forms a yellowish mist a foot or so around him at all times. This acid has little effect against organic substances (plants, dirt, flesh, and so on), causing damage only after prolonged minutes of exposure. Against metal, however, it is a fast-acting corrosive agent. Any metal object that pierces Brazt'ul-char's acidic cloud automatically takes damage. The GM should adjust the results of the acid as the encounter seems fit; the cloud doesn't reduce even a normal sword to a puddle with one pass, although it will scar it and pit it, and

successive hits against Brazt'ul-char's tough hide will certainly break it. Use Step 12 for any Tests the acid cloud should take against metal objects or magical metal things (or creatures!) that may come up. Brazt'ul-char may add Karma to his acid tests, like normal Horror Karma.

Brazt'ul-char comes from a very cold climate, and finds the temperate weather of Barsaive quite repressive. He takes an additional +6 Steps of damage from any sort of fire attack, but will be unaffected by cold/ice attacks most players will be capable of generating (GM can adjudicate for very powerful Elementalist ice spells).

Brazt'ul-char has access to a number of unspecified Illusionist spells and abilities, which vary as the GM sees fit. He knows no combat illusions, and mainly uses his illusions to escape combat or to scope out a town before he attacks it. He has the ability to mentally inspect an area from afar (much like the Thoughtful Expression Talent), and always uses that to formulate a plan before attacking a new village. Brazt'ul-char can also turn invisible once per hour. Doing so costs him 10 Strain, and he rolls his Invisibility Test to generate the target number for any form of sensing to find him. If Brazt'ul-char does not move from the spot where he turned invisible, he may remain invisible indefinitely (useful for hiding or extended scouting). If he does move, the invisibility will end after an hour (and he must wait an hour before turning it on again). Characters who cannot see Brazt'ul-char when attacking him are at -5 Steps to all their tests to affect him if in close combat (he is a big target, after all, and somewhat tough to miss). The penalty for long-range sniping or spell combat against him should be adjusted by the GM for the situation; even a big target can be missed if the archer is facing the wrong direction entirely. The -5 Steps should be the minimum penalty, however. For spell attacks, Brazt'ul-char can use the higher of either his Spell Defense or the result of his Invisibility Test. Brazt'ul-char can take all his normal actions while invisible.

Note that Brazt'ul-char's invisibility actually covers a lot more than just sight; it also cloaks him astrally, makes him silent, and so on. However, his effects on the physical world are still obvious (like the side of a building crashing in). Also, the slow yellowing and corruption of the plants around him from his acid will give away a position that he's held for a long time. He cannot turn his hat and fan invisible with him, a source of great personal disappointment. A player character Illusionist who can come up with a way to manage such a feat will gain a (crafty, sinister, unspeakably evil, and loathsomely hideous) friend for life.

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Children of Jaspree

Volume 1

Kygren
Kyrell
Spoogra
Ufghant

Evanten Farseeker is not your usual questor of Jaspree. Most of his kind have gone dashing off into the Wastes and the Badlands to try and heal the damage there. Evanten is taking a more organized, more methodical approach. He believes that in order to heal the land, we must understand the effects of the Scourge. He has thus devoted his life to cataloging the flora and fauna of current-day Barsaive, and comparing his work to pre-Scourge records. In this fashion, he expects to gain insight into the effects of the Scourge on Barsaivian life and possibly to discover the key to healing the land of its wounds. His work is the first attempt to produce a comprehensive guide to life in Barsaive since the days before the Scourge.

-- Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records, Great Library, Throal

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Kygren

The kygren is one of the largest of the fish-eating birds that inhabit the banks of the Serpent River. Its brilliant white plumage is set off by black feathers at the tips of its wings and black edging on its tail. Unfortunately, as far as appearance goes, its plumage is its best asset. The kygren's head is narrow, coming nearly to a point at the apex, and its beak is enormously long. The lower beak is but a frame for a pouch of skin that can distend to hold many small fish or one very large one.

As a flier, the bird is at best passable. It frequently misjudges distances from its wingtips to the water or other obstructions, such as boats or other kygren, and the resulting collisions can be quite spectacular. On occasion, a kygren will become so intent on tracking the fish it sees just under the surface that it will fail to notice what is in its path until far too late. Kygren have been known to break windows and ports, punch holes in sails, entangle themselves severely in rigging and knock sailors overboard.

On land or in the water, the birds are no more dexterous than in the air. Bad landings with much tumbling and shedding of feathers are the rule rather than the exception. Taking off requires a short run. On land, this is simple enough, needing only a stretch of ground a few paces long with no obstructions -- trees, shrubs, rocks, other kygren. On water, this results in a comical display as the bird tries to pick up enough speed to rise out of the water, and then maintain its balance running across the top of the water until it reaches sufficient speed to become airborne. On occasion, the kygren will strike a wavelet or dip a wingtip into the water, lose its balance and tumble beak over tailfeathers.

Such an inept bird would normally not survive well, but given the vast amount of fish in the Serpent, finding food is not difficult. The kygren's size leaves it few natural enemies, its primary predators being the ufghant and a few species of lizard that find its eggs a tasty meal.

Kygren mate only for the season, but only with birds of their own generation, never with those of previous or later years. How they tell the age of a prospective mate is unknown at this time.

Both birds will attack viciously to defend the nest. In a fight, the kygren will stab with its beak if on land or water, rising up on its legs with much flapping of wings to balance itself before the strike. If

airborne, the kygren prefers a swooping attack with a strike from the beak.

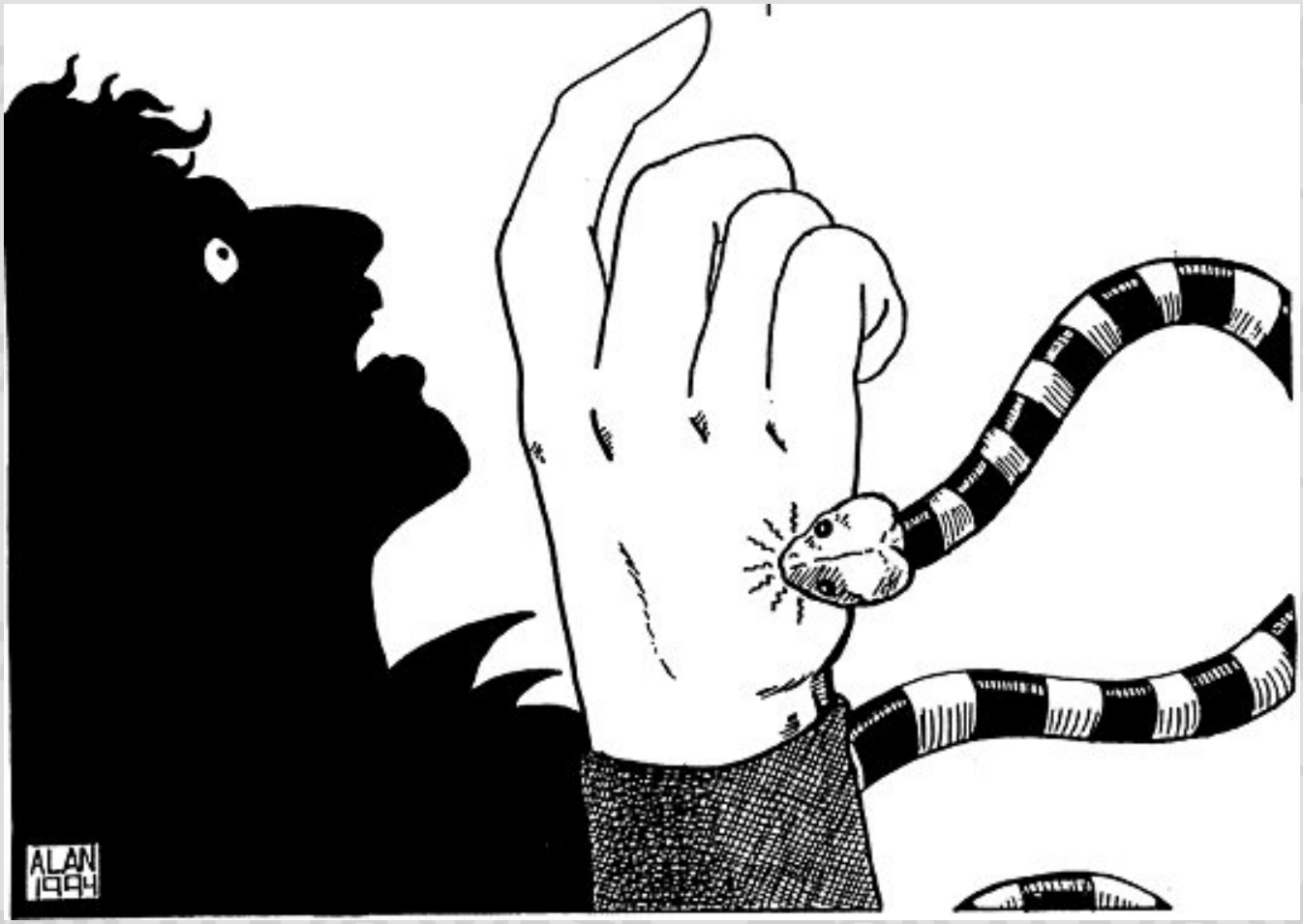
DEX: 4 **STR:** 5 **TOU:** 6
PER: 4 **WIL:** 6 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 5
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 9
Damage: 8
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 28
Equipment: None
Loot: None, although the eggs are edible...

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2
Knockdown: 8
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 22/50
Full Movement: 43/100
Legend Points: 50

Kyrell

The



kyrell is one of the deadliest serpents of the Servos area. Its poison can kill a troll in seconds, and its appearance is deceptively innocuous. Attaining a maximum size of two feet in length and a girth no greater than a human's last finger, its smallness leads Name-givers to underestimate its lethality. The distinctive pattern of red and yellow bands on a black background make the kyrell stand out in grasses or under rocks, but among the flowering plants of the Servos it is easy to miss.

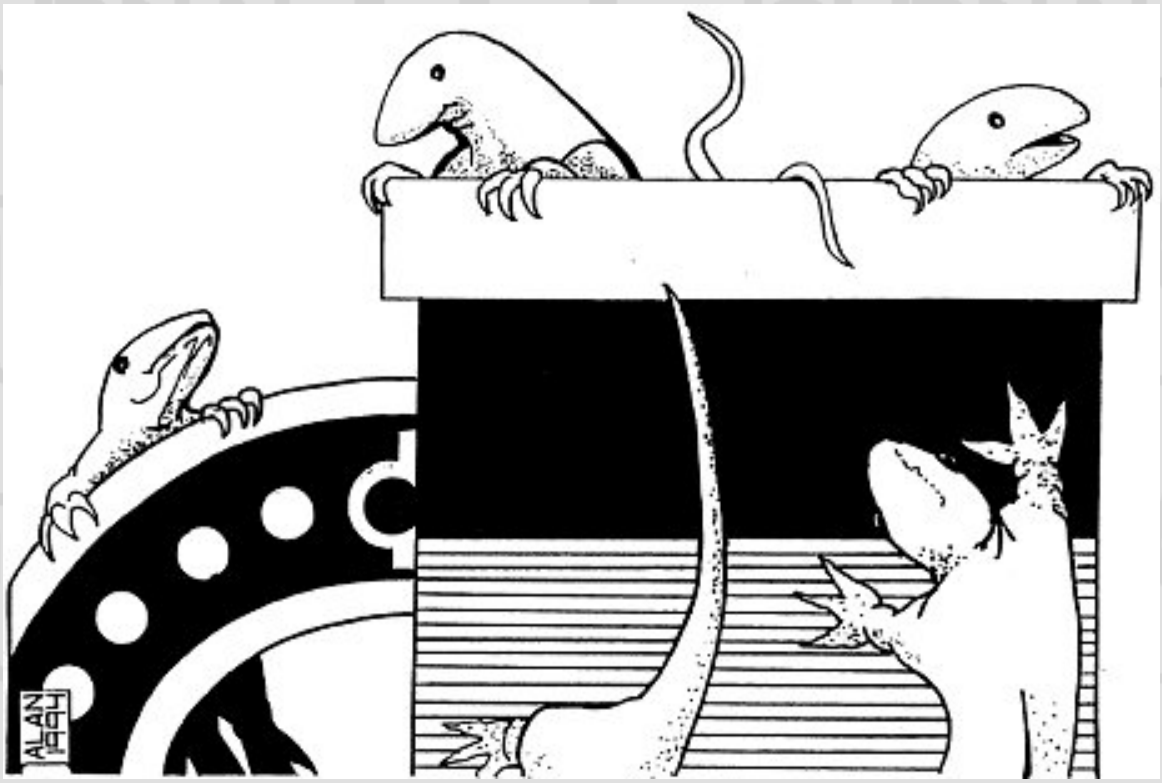
Like all snakes, the kyrell is fond of dark, damp places. It reproduces by laying eggs, and the female broods on the nest until hatching, striking instantly at anything coming within reach. Baby kyrells are hatched with full venom sacs, and can slay a human right out of the egg. Travellers in the region of the Servos should take note of the native habit of turning over rocks and breaking up brushpiles from a distance, usually with a long stick, and of shaking out clothing and boots in the morning before putting them on. Picking up these habits could save a life.

DEX: 3 **STR:** 3 **TOU:** 4
PER: 4 **WIL:** 4 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 9
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 14
Damage: 6
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 21
Effect: 15 (poison)
Death Rating: 28
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 19
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 9
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 6
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 45
Full Movement: 90
Legend Points: 40

Spoogra



The Servos Jungle is home to a wider variety of small lizards than are found anywhere else in the province. The heat and humidity, coupled with the vast population of insects, have encouraged a burgeoning of the form and diversification into the hundreds. While this plentitude can keep a naturalist contentedly busy for months, perhaps even years, however, to the common Name-giver it is no more than an annoyance. Possibly the most annoying in everyday life of all these lizards is the spoogra.

Tiny and bright orange, not growing to over three inches in length, spoogras have infested every area where Name-givers live in or near the Servos. They have a love of salt, which leads them into many places where they are not wanted. Food must be locked up in stout wooden or metal boxes, especially travel rations which are normally dried and salted. The pests will chew on anything salt-bearing, which puts armor straps, shoes and dirty laundry in peril, as well as saddles and tack, documents written in saline ink, and even containers that might have something salty in them. The little beasts will chew their way into a bag on the off chance that it contains something tasty.

Dealing directly with spoogras is not terribly difficult -- just toss them out of the way. Their bite is no more than an annoyance to even the frailest of Name-givers. Killing them is another problem entirely. Spoogras are quick enough that even the deftest swordmaster will have difficulty striking one. They ignore most poisons, but are partial to cyanide salts for obvious reasons. So far, no-one has devised a perfect solution to the problem. The best offense seems to be a good defense, in this case. Lock up everything that the lizards might find attractive in containers that they cannot easily gnaw their way into, and hope that they do not slip past the barricades.

Certainly, Jaspree knew what he was doing when he created the spoogra. If only he would tell the world his reasons...

DEX: 8 **STR:** 3 **TOU:** 3
PER: 4 **WIL:** 3 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 12
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 10
Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 10

Damage: 2
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 20
Wound Threshold: 4
Unconsciousness Rating: 11
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 4
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 50
Full Movement: 100
Legend Points: 10

Ufghant

There is a good deal of debate as to the origin of this beast. Certainly no sightings were documented before the Scourge, either in the Eternal Library at Thera or in the Great Library at Throal. It is possible that the ufghant could have evolved from the lesser river serpents under the influence of the Horrors, and this theory is the most widely accepted. Whatever its origin, the ufghant now fills a necessary niche in the ecological structure of the Serpent River.

The ufghant has a slender, torpedo shaped body with a distinctive hump on the upper back. This hump is protected by tougher hide and dense bone, and well it should be, for the creature's brain is here, and not in either of its heads. Four paddle-like flippers propel the beast through the water. These limbs are totally unsuited for movement on land, and an ufghant removed from the water is effectively immobilized. It can, however, still attack. Extreme caution must be used.

The ufghant's two narrow, snakelike heads are supported on long, supple necks that provide excellent mobility. While its bite is painful, however, and it can strike the same victim twice in the

time that most creatures can only strike once, its venom makes it a feared competitor for mastery of the river. The toxin affects breathing, the beating of the heart and the ability to move, retarding all severely. As well, Name-givers will find it difficult to concentrate, and thus to take complex actions or to defend themselves with magic. Healing magics are effective against this venom, but must be applied swiftly.

The ufghant's venom may be delivered by bite, or by projection; the creature can spit a stream of venom a good twenty feet with reasonable accuracy. The venom is a contact poison, and remains viable for up to an hour. If the ufghant can see its target with both heads, however, it can deliver a devastating crossfire of uncanny accuracy. It is this crossfire that the ufghant uses against its preferred prey, the large, fish-eating birds that nest on the banks of the Serpent. The ufghant will lie just below the surface, with only the tops of its heads exposed, and drift, waiting for a bird to pass within range. Then, quick as a snake, its heads rise up, and the bird is caught at the crossing point of the ufghant's venom streams and drops into the water, to become dinner.

Ufghanti have been known to attack riverboats in packs of up to 20, driven by an older bull. T'skrang boats are favored because of the crew's habit of swinging out over the water, and thus making good targets of themselves. The attack is led by the younger ufghanti, partially out of fear of the bull. If the bull can be killed, and this is no easy proposition, as he will stay at the rear of the attack and lie low in the water, the attack will disorganize and usually break off in the face of stiff opposition.

Ughant venom is a primary ingredient in poultices used against poisons, and brings a high price - up to 300 silver for a small jar of preserved venom, and up to 5000 silver for the intact poison sacs of an ufghant, again preserved.

DEX: 8 **STR:** 10 **TOU:** 10
PER: 5 **WIL:** 6 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 12
Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: 13
Damage: 10
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 10
Effect: 10 (poison)
Death Rating: 60
Wound Threshold: 14
Unconsciousness Rating: 55
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 14
Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 2
Knockdown: 8
Recovery Tests: 4
Combat Movement: 50
Full Movement: 100
Legend Points: 375

Notes: The ufghant's attack step is increased by 3 when both attacks are directed at the same target, to represent the effects of triangulation. A venom crossfire adds 5 to the casting step and 4 to the damage step of the attack. The bull of a pack has his physical stats increased by 2 steps and his mental stats increased by one. The brain hump is treated as having physical armor +4. Called shots to the hump are thus exceedingly difficult. The ufghant's venom is a paralyzing toxin, and if the victim fails his Toughness save, it subtracts half the victim's initiative step, and reduces all action steps by 4. Contact with residual venom is treated as having half its original damage and casting step.

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Children of Daspree

Volume 2

Diva Bird

Qural'lotectica

Thunder Tree

Tigathna

Diva Bird

Evanten Farseeker has interrupted his cataloging of trees to send a report of an animal that I truly do not know how to classify. Should I file this under Threats to Life and Limb; Hazards, Minor; Curiosities or what?

-- Kylara B'Tenn, Senior Clerk, Fauna Room, Hall of Records

File it under Pests, Amazing and be done with it.

-- Merrox, Master, Hall of Records

It is true that often big things arrive in small packages. For example, the lineage song of a Windling is an immense ballad that rivals the heroic sagas of my own people. A terrible

Horror, the crystal entity, capable of wreaking immense havoc, is in physical dimension no larger than a packing case. I have only this morning heard something truly immense emerge from something quite small. The natives are still communicating with me in signs, as my ears have not stopped ringing.

The bird, I am told, is known as leavy'g'deeva, "Large Song of the Morning". I have taken to calling it the diva bird, after the term applied to large, loud singers in the music halls. Perhaps the name is not fitting physically, but what the diva bird lacks in physical size, it more than makes up for with enthusiasm.

Growing to only two-thirds of an elven handspan in length, the diva bird is plumed in a medium brown, with brilliant red feathers on its head, leaf green on its wings and a deep brown tail. When motionless, it can easily blend into the vegetation about it, appearing to be a flower and a cluster of leaves on a short branch. Its bright red bill is long and sharply hooked at the end, telling the true story: this is a meat eater. The diva bird hunts for its meals, but will eat carrion while fresh. It has a unique method of providing itelf with fresh kills made by other animals on which to feed.

In the early morning, the diva bird looks for grazing animals that have wandered off by themselves on awakening. The bird notes the presence and location of any nearby predators, and perches on the far side of the herbivore from the predator. It then makes a noise that I can only compare to a troop of sky raiders pounding their shields and screaming in preparation for battle while the stone galley they are in tumbles down a mountain, breaking all the glass aboard and enraging the brithan in the cargo hold. The sheer volume of the sound normally stuns the intended victim, and every predator in the Servos seems to recognize the call of the diva bird as an announcement of easy prey. Even if the herbivore is not stunned, and flees the sound, it runs straight into the waiting claws of the predator. Thus, for a few minutes' work spying out the terrain, and a single cry, the diva bird may eat its fill from the kill of another animal.

Fortunately, these birds lay only three eggs in a clutch at the most, and frequently only one or two. As well, many of the larger birds in the jungle find the diva to be a tasty snack. Otherwise, every living thing in the Servos would soon go deaf. I am told that the effect is transitory, under normal conditions, and that I should have my hearing back come this evening. I sincerely hope so, and am thankful that I was not directly in front of the bird when it opened its beak.

DEX: 12 **STR:** 2 **TOU:** 3
PER: 6 **WIL:** 4 **CHA:** 5

Initiative: 16
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 8 (beak)
Damage: 4

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 0

Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 15
Effect: 14 (stun)
Death Rating: 15
Wound Threshold: 4
Unconsciousness Rating: 9
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Mystic Armor: 2
Knockdown: 5
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 40 (flying)
Full Movement: 80 (flying)
Legend Points: 160

Notes: Name-Givers being attacked by the diva bird's call at close (combat) range must roll their Toughness against the bird's Spellcasting result. An Extraordinary success leaves the character unaffected. An Excellent success leaves the character deafened for half the bird's Effect roll in rounds, but not stunned. A Good success extends the deafness to the full Effect roll in rounds, and again the Name-Giver takes no stun. An Average success extends the deafness to minutes, as well as the Name-Giver in question taking the stun damage, a Poor to hours, and a total failure results in permanent deafness. Increases in distance from the bird reduce the difficulty of the save by 2 for Short (5-15 yards), 5 for Medium (16-40) and 10 for Long (41-80).

Qural'lotectica

> *I really wish Evanten would move on. His descriptions of the -- things -- that live in the Servos are beginning to give me nightmares. I dreamed last night of meeting this nasty in one of the lower galleries. Got up, had a pot of tea, and spent the rest of the night in my study. Going back to sleep was simply out of the question.*
>
> -- Kylara B'Tenn, Senior Clerk, Fauna Room, Hall of Records

I had thought of myself as having seen the worst that the post-Scourge world could offer, and having developed some measure of equanimity in dealing with Horror constructs and mutated creatures. Yet, I find myself still shaken and uncertain, unwilling to go back to my hut, fearful of what may lie in wait, of what may come creeping out of the darkness while I am asleep. This day, I have lost one of my best acquaintances in this village, a young man Named Tiji'keiypa. He had attached himself to me soon after my arrival in this village, appointing himself my guide and assistant, bringing me my meals and carrying my less fragile gear when I allowed it. I admit that I had grown somewhat fond of the boy. His industriousness and earnest curiosity about my studies had a sort of endearing charm. And now he is gone.

Tiji and I had set out in the early morning, intending to tavel about a half day's walk to the north to study the differences in the foothills that lie in that region. A small change in elevation can make remarkable changes in plant and animal life, and I expected to find a quite diverse environment from what I had previously seen.

We had nearly reached the area where I intended to make camp, and spend the rest of the day and the next morning making observations and sketching. The ground had taken a sharp angle, and we were climbing with some difficulty, myself more than Tiji -- to be expected given our difference in age. He had gone well ahead to scout the trail, and I had lost sight of him among the trees when I heard him cry out.

I rushed to the spot to find him apparently trapped in the midst of a web spun between two large trees, its edges nearly invisible but its center a deep crimson. His jaw hung slack and his eyes were wide and staring. I looked quickly about for the spider that had spun such a web, and realized with shock that the web was the creature, that what I had taken for strands of webbing were tentacles, many of which had pierced Tiji's skin. The deep crimson color was the young man's blood being drawn from his body.

I circled around swiftly and discovered a small, bulbous body at the convergence of the tentacles. Drawing my blowgun, I made use of a toxin given me by a Windling friend and put a dart into the creature. It convulsed and died within seconds, crumpling into a wad no larger than my arms could encircle, and freeing Tiji, but he had lost too much blood already. I have had few times in my life when I regretted the Passion that I follow, but I would have traded all my years of research then and there to have been chosen by Garlen instead of Jaspree.

I fashioned a litter and took Tiji and the creature both back to the village, the one for a proper funeral by his own people and the other for dissection. A full examination of the creatue will have to wait until morning, but I made some basic observations while the body of Tiji was prepared for the rites. I have time, now, as we sit vigil for his soul, to record what I have learned thus far.

The creature is known as qural'lotectica, the self-spinning web. The elders tell me that they have not seen one in many years, but that during the Scourge, they were quite prevalent. From what they tell me, the qural was made by a Horror to roam the tunnels of the underground shelters the tribespeople fashioned, to strike out of the darkness and then vanish, bringing uncertainty and fear into their lives. The creature is nearly transparent, making it exceedingly hard to see - unless it has fed recently. It dines on the blood of anything warm, but prefers the blood of Name-Givers. The blood that it consumes dyes it crimson for several hours, until its meal is digested.

The tentacles are hollow, and serve to carry blood from the creature's prey to its stomach, which comprises most of the body. At the end of each tentacle is a sharp claw, round in cross section, and hollow. Glands at the base of the claw secrete a paralyzing toxin, so that once the qural has laid a tentacle into its prey, more tentacles can be easily attached, and the

creature will not take damage from the struggles of its meal.

The natives tell me that the qural is vulnerable to fire, and that they would frequently march through their tunnels in large groups, pushing lit torches into every nook and cranny that could possibly hold one of these abominations. The tentacles are also not terribly strong, and can be broken or severed with the application of sufficient strength or a sharp blade. The toxin, however, and the creature's near invisibility more than compensate for these weaknesses.

I have heard no reports of anything like this being used by Horrors outside of the jungle. We can perhaps count ourseles fortunate that Horrors, unlike Name-Givers, are not given to sharing their knowledge each with the other. I share this knowledge in the hopes that no one else will meet with Tiji's fate.

DEX: 14 **STR:** 9 **TOU:** 12
PER: 8 **WIL:** 9 **CHA:** 3

Initiative: 14
Number of Attacks: 4
Attack: 12
Damage: 15
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 18
Effect: 20 (paralysis)
Death Rating: 60
Wound Threshold: 12
Unconsciousness Rating: 48
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 16
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 4
Knockdown: 14
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 40
Full Movement: 80
Legend Points: 1,400

Notes: The qural has normal vulnerability to toxins delivered either by ingestion or injection. It takes double damage from fire and fire-based attacks, such as flame flash. Noticing a stalking qural requires a PER test against a 15 in normal forest lighting conditions, a 20 in subterranean areas. No roll is required to notice a qural that has fed within the past three hours due to the coloration provided by the blood it has ingested.

Thunder Tree

With so many varieties of tree in the Servos Jungle, one wonders where to start cataloging and describing. I have decided to note those which pose a hazard to Name-Givers first, as if

one does not avoid those varieties, the remainder will not be seen.

Scattered throughout the jungle, but thankfully rare, is a variety the natives call shi'raksen, the thunder tree. It is easily recognized by bark and foliage. The bark of the trunk is a dark grey in hue, smooth and ringed horizontally with ridges approximately the width of an elf's finger, spaced a bit less than two elven handspans apart. The leaves are pinnate and serrate, growing in clusters of six and groupings of five clusters, and reaching a maximum length about half again that of an elf's middle finger. Blooming occurs year-round, as is customary, with the flowers sprouting from the center of the leaf groupings. The blooms themselves have five outer petals and four inner, of deep rose and pale blue respectively, with a deep calyx of a golden hue. The stamens have golden stems and are tipped with bright blue. Once fertilized, the flower closes and begins to harden into a seed pod.

It is the fruit of this tree that makes it worth noting, as a travel hazard and a biological curiosity. The pod grows to about the size of an elf's fist, and has a shiny, very dense skin of a deep blue color. Inside, the seeds are embedded in pulp of surpassing sweetness. Some of the natives use the unripe fruits to brew wine of amazing potency. When the seeds ripen, however, the pod's connection to the branch shrivels. The pulp inside quickly decays and ferments, producing a large quantity of gas. The skin being so dense, most of the gas is trapped inside the pod. Eventually, the process of decay begins to attack the skin itself from the inside, making it thinner and thinner. Some of the pods will burst simply from the pressure contained inside, as it passes the ability of the skin to contain it. This normally happens with the pods near the top of the tree. Warmed by sunlight, the pressure builds rapidly during the day, and in the late afternoon, the pods begin to explode with reports like small firecannon.

The pods in the lower branches, however, do not receive enough sunlight to warm them to bursting. The usual circumstance is that they fall from the tree, as the stem withers, and upon striking the ground explode, scattering their seeds. These falling pods pose some hazard to Name-Givers, for the escaping gas flings the seeds with such force that they can do injury to those nearby. If close enough, an exploding pod can drive its seeds through leather armor, possibly even through metal if a seed were to find a seam or other weak point.

The natives have been known to use these pods as weapos, harvesting them before fully ripe and carrying them with extreme caution. Hurling or dropping a pod near an enemy is sufficient to cause great injury, considering that the natives have little concept of armor.

Travellers in the Servos are warned to avoid passing near to these trees, especially if they are riding large animals, as the vibrations in the ground from their passing can shake down a pod or two, certainly sufficient to spook the riding beasts and possibly cause grievous injury. As well, one should be cautious about engaging the natives in combat. If it becomes unavoidable, watch for a native attempting to throw an object at the party. The hurled object could be merely a stone, a throwing axe, or one of the thunder tree's explosive pods.

Game Mechanics:

An exploding pod does 5+d8 steps damage, and attacks with either the skill/talent of the wielder or with a step 8 if falling from a tree. Harvesting a ripe pod requires a DEX test against a 15 to avoid a premature explosion. Harvesting unripe pods is a simple action requiring no DEX test, but an INT test or Botany Skill test must be made (against a 12 or 8 respectively) to distinguish ripe pods from unripe. Carrying ripe pods into combat requires a DEX save against a 12 each action to avoid jostling the pod and setting it off by accident. A similar test must be made against an 8 when throwing a pod, to avoid squeezing it too hard while throwing. Natives of the jungle do not make DEX tests to throw the pods, and make all other tests at half the stated difficulties due to familiarity with the pods.

Tigathna

I have noticed a marked propensity for Name-Givers to equate size with dangerousness. A Windling, for example, is often considered less of an opponent in combat than a Troll, yet the Windling may be substantially more skilled with his weapons. While not doing as grievous a wound with each attack, the Windling will nevertheless score more often than the Troll, and the cumulative effect is that the Windling will dispatch his opponent with much greater efficiency than the Troll.

Thus it is with a beast the natives of the Servos refer to as lektas'tigathna, literally the "surprising ankle biter". The tigathna reaches a maximum size of three elven handspans in diameter, and appears for all the Passions to be a harmless ball of fur. However, hidden underneath the fur are six quite powerful, if short, legs, and a mouth nearly half the length of the creature, filled with teeth sharper than a well-forged blade.

Preferring to dig a burrow alongside a game run, the tigathna will lie at the top of its burrow and hold itself motionless, its green-tinged brown fur giving it the appearance of a moss-covered stone. When a game animal passes by, the tigathna pops up out of its burrow and clamps its teeth on its victim's leg, usually severing the tendons on the first bite. Thus crippled, the victim has little defense against further slashing attacks, which usually go for the throat next. Frequently, tigathna will work together in packs of three or four to bring down a large animal, and divide the spoils among themselves.

Even animals which are normally predators are vulnerable to the pop-up attack. Tigathna rarely check to see what is passing, only noting whether or not it is within striking distance. I have seen a large hunting cat brought down within heartbeats by a group of five tigathna, one determined individual of which kept its grip on the cat's throat with both teeth and legs despite being rent by multiple strokes of the cat's foreclaws.

Tigathna are mammalian, and have litters of two to five kits once per year. They mate only for the season. Males are highly conscious of status within a pack, and frequently quarrel to establish their place. Females do not normally take part in pack status, but there are rare

exceptions. Packs tend to be loose in structure, coming together as needed and separating again after a successful hunt. Thus, before a group hunt can be undertaken, the status order of the newly brought-together pack must be established. Listening for the snarling of a tigathna pack can give warning of a group hunt.

The natives distrust the game trails, preferring to travel through the upper branches of the trees. When walking on the ground, they poke at anything suspicious with the butts of their spears, constantly looking for unpleasant surprises. I, too, have taken to prodding anything that I am uncertain of with my staff. Alas, I fear I shall have to replace my staff in the near future, as it has collected far too many bite marks, and the bottom is beginning to splinter.

DEX: 9 **STR:** 4 **TOU:** 5
PER: 3 **WIL:** 6 **CHA:** 3

Initiative: 9
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 13
Damage: 9
Number of Spells: None
Spellcasting: None
Effect: None
Death Rating: 35
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 27
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 1
Knockdown: 12
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 35
Full Movement: 70
Legend Points: 130

Notes: Once a tigathna has latched onto an opponent, it must make a WIL save against its remaining Death Rating to let go before the opponent falls. If the victim falls down, or the tigathna is attacked by someone else, the tigathna may change its attack strategy however it sees fit. Thus, if a tigathna bites into your ankle, if you fall down intentionally, it will probably let go. However, its next move is normally to go for the throat.

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Children of Daspree

Volume 3

by Andrew Ragland

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #4***

Jidwar

Pencarrig

Tabri

Turfcutter Beetle

Vofoq

Jacoti

Ntelok

The Jidwar

There are times that I am very glad I became a librarian. While the work is oftentimes tedious, the subjects of my study lie quietly and wait for their pages to be turned.

-- Kylara B'Tenn, Master Clerk, Fauna Room, Hall of Records

While researching the creatures of the swamps, I made an error in where I trod. I am told that I will walk again very soon, but that my balance will be off until I learn to compensate for the missing toe. In the mean time, while I am unable to resume my travels, I can catch up with documenting my discoveries, including the one that cost me part of my left foot.

Not all of the creatures changed by the Horrors are of the large variety, immediately recognizable as a threat. In at least one case, a previously innocuous insect was corrupted, becoming just as great a danger as the larger constructs in its own way. The jidwar is a small beetle, approximately the length of my smallest finger, with a dark brown shell. Instead of legs, the jidwar is equipped with flippers like an aquatic turtle, giving it great mobility in water and a passable rate of progress across mud or marshy ground. Its mandibles are large, extending nearly a third of its body length, and razor sharp.

Making its home in the swamps and marshes of southern Barsaive, the jidwar feeds on anything that happens its way. If there were only one in a given pool, perhaps its voracious eating habits would not be such a problem, but jidwars occur in swarms of thirty to over a hundred, or so I am told. I did not have the opportunity to count the ones in the swarm that I ran afoul of, being more concerned with removing myself from their habitat. They attack by swarming, reacting instantly to any disturbance in the water. I am told that a horse putting a foot down wrong and getting its hoof mired in the bottom muck can have its leg stripped to bone before the rider can dismount and free the animal.

Fortunately, while the jidwar is prolific, it has great difficulty traversing land and, despite its aquatic nature, remains an air breather. The combination of the two restricts the insect to connecting bodies of water, and renders it vulnerable to oil poured carefully across its habitat. It is not necessary to set the oil aflame, only to wait for a short while, as the oil prevents the insects from breathing. They drown quickly, and the area may then be crossed in relative safety. As well, if no food wanders into the jidwars' pool for a time, they turn on each other, thus keeping their numbers down. The simple expedient of tossing a small bit of wood into suspicious waters will reveal the insects, as they mistake the wood for something edible, and will churn the water to foam around the twig for a few seconds before realizing that it is not food.

I think that I shall carry an ample supply of small twigs when I am once again able to travel.

Game Mechanics:

DEX: 8 **STR:** 2 **TOU:** 2
PER: 4 **WIL:** 6 **CHA:** 2

Initiative: 10
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 11
Damage: 6

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 3
Armor: 0

Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: N/A
Death Rating: 20
Wound Threshold: 4
Unconsciousness Rating: 11

Mystic Armor: 2
Knockdown: 5
Recovery Tests: 1
Combat Movement: 29
Full Movement: 57
Legend Points: 5 per insect, with a minimum swarm of 30

Equipment: None

Loot: None, although there may be random items at the bottom of their pools from previous victims

Adventure Hook:

The group is hired to retrieve the cargo of an airship that went down in the swamps. The crash of the ship stirred up the local life forms, especially the jidwars. The abrupt arrival of so much food (in the form of the crew, all killed in the crash) has resulted in a population explosion, and swarms of jidwars have taken up residence in the waters surrounding the wreck. The merchant has put a deadline on the cargo retrieval, as his market will not wait forever. The airship is wooden, thus flammable, so the usual quick method of dealing with jidwars (burning oil) will not have desirable results. Waiting for the jidwars to turn on each other is also not an option, as that will take much too long.

The Pencarrig

I began my journeys, what would become my life's-work, in an attempt to understand the effects of the Scourge. I felt that by cataloguing the flora and fauna of current-day Barsaive, and comparing what I found with pre-Scourge records, that a greater understanding of the damage done to our world would emerge. Armed with this knowledge, I and my fellow Questors of Jaspree, along with like-minded individuals, could make greater progress in repairing the damage done by the Horrors.

Thus far, most of my work has dealt with animals and plants that are simply new species that have appeared during or since the Scourge, or species that we knew of before the Scourge but had never properly catalogued. This record, however, assesses a bird that has been changed quite radically by the passing of the Horrors. Its origins are quite obvious, but its current form is corrupt. I admit that while its habits are disturbing, I cannot bring myself to hate the poor things as its neighbors do. Instead, an overwhelming pity takes hold of me on encountering the pencarrig, and a resolve to use the knowledge gained from their study to reverse the taint that has infected the land.

Before the Scourge, the marshes on the northwest fringe of the Mist Swamps were inhabited by a variety of water birds, including the pencarrig. Its long legs and widely-splayed feet gave

it excellent mobility in the uncertain ground, while its binocular eyesight and long, sharply pointed bill made it an effective predator. Its primary diet consisted of frogs, fish and the occasional lizard. It had the notable habit of spearing its victims with its bill, then tossing its prey into the air and catching the falling meal in its open beak.

The bird and the marsh are still present, but neither is the same. The Mist Swamps are inhabited by fell creatures warped by the passing of the Scourge, the very ground rendered unhealthy. The pencarrig likewise has been tainted by the Horrors, quite possibly deliberately. While the bird's anatomy remains more or less the same, its plumage, formerly a brilliant white tinged with blue at the edges of wings and tail, is now a dusky grey, the highlights turned the reddish-brown of dried blood.

Its feeding habits likewise have changed. While the pencarrig still hunts amphibians and fish, and still maintains the odd habit of tossing its meals into the air, it hunts larger game now. When Name-Givers are passing nearby, the bird hides itself in the dense marsh grass and makes a sound like an anguished moan. This sound plucks at the heartstrings of anyone with even a thought for their fellow Name-Givers, urging them to find the injured person and assist them. The bird uses the moaning to lure people into marshy ground, where they become trapped. The pencarrig then feeds on the body after the Name-Giver dies. Occasionally, the bird will attack trapped animals and smaller Name-Givers, striking for the eyes and throat, doing horrific damage with a beak capable of stabbing through a frog in one stroke.

Only those of strong will, or carrying magical protections, can resist the moaning cry of the pencarrig. I have heard tales as well of the birds cooperating, working together to lure in groups of people to a watery grave. Fortunately, the bird does not migrate, and so is not found outside the southern swamps. We know what the pencarrig was like before the Scourge. With close, careful study of this bird, guarded by strong magicks, I hope to gain an understanding of the changes the Horrors have wrought.

Game Mechanics:

DEX: 6 **STR:** 5 **TOU:** 5
PER: 6 **WIL:** 6 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 8
Damage: 9
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 15
Effect: 18

Death Rating: 32

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 5
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 4
Knockdown: 8
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 19 ground, 38 air

Wound Threshold: 8
Full Movement: 38 ground, 75 air
Unconsciousness Rating: 24
Legend Points: 270
Equipment: None
Loot: The tailfeathers of the pencarrig are treasure (1d6 * 10 SP) worth Legend Points.
Notes: Failing a WIL test against the Effect result, Name-Givers must follow the sound. The bird will lead anyone following it into the swamps hoping to get them mired. Characters following the bird may make a WIL test against the Effect result each round to break off pursuit. (The pencarrig does not get a new Effect result unless it makes a new Spellcasting attack.) They may also make a PER test each round to avoid getting mired, modified downward by the difference between their WIL test result and the Effect result. Thus, if the bird gets a 24 Effect result, and the player rolls a 15 for his WIL test, his PER test is at -9 for that round. If the PER test is failed, the character steps in the wrong place and becomes mired. Characters mired in the swamp are Harried, and may not use any Talent or maneuver that requires movement of the legs, such as Air Dance or Giving Ground. The pencarrig may attack at that point, striking first to blind, then to kill. Escaping the mire requires a STR test against a 14, adjusted downward by armor modifiers.

Adventure Hook:

Evidence is brought to light that a Major Pattern item for a Horror was lost in the Mist Swamps shortly after the Scourge. The Horror in question is still at large. The route to the last known location of the item leads past a nesting ground of pencarrig. Getting past the birds will be difficult, especially if the group has not heard of the birds. The moaning cries could easily be mistaken for cries for help from a previous expedition that the adventurers were told of, an expedition that never returned.

Tabri

This is the first in a series of dispatches from the southwestern plains, written by Evanten Farseeker. For those who have not seen his previous work, Evanten is not your usual questor of Jaspree. Most of his kind have gone dashing off into the Wastes and the Badlands to try and heal the damage there. Evanten is taking a more organized, more methodical approach. He believes that in order to heal the land, we must understand the effects of the Scourge. He has thus devoted his life to cataloging the flora and fauna of current-day Barsaive, and comparing his work to pre-Scourge records. In this fashion, he expects to gain insight into the effects of the Scourge on Barsaivian life and possibly to discover the key to healing the land of its wounds. His work is the first attempt to produce a comprehensive guide to life in Barsaive since the days before the Scourge.

-- Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

When Name-Givers are told of herds wandering the southwestern plains, they tend to think of large grazing mammals, with shaggy fur and wide horns. Unless they have actually been there, they do not think of birds.

The tabri are large flightless birds that travel in flocks or herds, much like the grazing mammals that are also found on the plains. Long of leg and neck, their skin is a medium grey, while their plumage is a medium brown. Males have a fan-shaped tail whose feathers are tipped with white, that they display during courtship behavior. The tabri move in small groups led by a dominant male, easily spotted as the largest bird in the flock.

The tabri are polygamous. The males fight viciously during mating season to gain control of coveys of females. New coveys are formed each season, the coveys breaking up after the females are fertilized. Within a herd, several coveys can coexist, although not peacefully during the rut, as the males will contest with each other to gain control of their rival's females. Equipped with talons on the middle toe of each foot the size and sharpness of a dagger, courtship fights frequently draw blood and sometimes kill.

These same talons can do serious damage to Name-Givers and their mounts if battle is joined. Fortunately, like most herding animals on the plains, flight is the primary mode of defense. Tabri only attack if flight is not an option, as when defending a nest or their young. While their eggs are edible, and reportedly something of a delicacy, obtaining them is a very risky proposition. If an aggressive response is seen, serious consideration should be given to backing away, unless the Name-Giver in question is willing to tangle with an animal that kicks with the strength of a horse, is armed with the equivalent of a pair of daggers, and moves quickly and with surprising agility. The nomadic peoples of the plains hunt tabri with spears and bows, only when found in large groups and never during the mating season.

Game Mechanics:

DEX: 8 **STR:** 7 **TOU:** 7
PER: 5 **WIL:** 4 **CHA:** 3

Initiative: 10
Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: 8
Damage: 7 beak/11 talon
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 40
Wound Threshold: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 32
Equipment: None

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 4
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 11
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 55
Full Movement: 110
Legend Points: 90

Loot: None

Adventure Hook:

A merchant in Anghali has found a market for tabri eggs. She has provided the group with several cold chests, large boxes with elemental air woven into them that keep their interiors cold but above freezing, and wants them returned full of eggs. Raiding the nests wholesale will put the group at odds with the Dinganni and other plains nomads, who count on there being a large hatching each year. Taking the eggs will greatly reduce the size of next year's flocks, something the group did not consider or thought irrelevant when they accepted the contract.

The Turfcutter Beetle

Not all threats are immediately visible. Even out on the southwestern plains, where there is very little cover other than the long grass and the occasional gentle rise of the land, danger can lie hidden. Such is the turfcutter beetle, a hazard that rarely fails to take its victims by surprise.

Surely a Horror construct, as insects do not normally reach such a size, the adult turfcutter grows to a length equal to that of a large dog. Such a large creature requires a good deal of sustenance. The turfcutter has a means of hunting that is not normally seen in anything this large, yet more evidence of interference by a Horror.

The beetle uses its long, curved mandibles to slice a disc out of the sod, cutting through the thick mat of prairie grass roots. It then hollows out a cavity in the soil large enough for it to crouch in, and pulls the sod over itself, creating a trapdoor. When anything large enough to make a mouthful wanders by, the beetle pops up from its hiding place and seizes its prey, usually slicing it into multiple pieces with the first stroke of its scythe-like mandibles. The beetle does not hesitate in attacking very large animals. I have seen a turfcutter lunge from its hollow and neatly remove the leg from a tabri, then slice off the bird's long neck as it fell. Strong bone will stop the beetle's jaws, but a horse attacked will normally be hamstrung, so the fact that the leg is not severed is moot.

Fortunately, the beetle only spawns once a year, in the middle of the rainy season, and only after a series of courtship battles in which the males compete savagely for the few available females. Its grubs, the size of rats and dark brown with lighter brown banding, make a feast for the birds, further reducing the number of young. The odds of encountering a turfcutter beetle are thus very slender -- yet still enough that since I learned of their existence, travel across the plains has become a nervous business.

Game Mechanics:

DEX: 9 **STR:** 10 **TOU:** 10
PER: 5 **WIL:** 5 **CHA:** 3

Initiative: 11
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 18
Damage: 17
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 52
Wound Threshold: 15
Unconsciousness Rating: 45
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 4
Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 4
Knockdown: 18
Recovery Tests: 5
Combat Movement: 60
Full Movement: 120
Legend Points: 640

Adventure Hook:

A Horror has been encouraging the breeding of turfcutter beetles, causing severe trouble for the plains nomads. The adventurers are contacted and offered a generous reward, including tribal friendship, if they can eliminate the Horror and reduce the beetles to their normal population. Getting to the Horror will be half the fun, as the beetle population density increases near the Horror's lair. The entrance cavern has been transformed into a beetle hatchery, and is swarming with grubs and adult beetles.

The Vofoq

Not all of the unusual animals of Barsaive are found out in the wilds. Some have adapted quite well to life among the Name-Giver population, moving into the towns and cities and finding their niche in the urban setting. People well familiar with pests like the rat and the spoogra may be happy to know that when such animals are present, sooner or later a predator will appear. In the southwestern regions of the province, Name-Givers have come to know the vofoq as a sometimes uncomfortable but nonetheless useful neighbor.

A small mammal with a lean build, the vofoq has a pointed muzzle with long whiskers. Its eyes are set wide and well forward in its skull, under large, rounded ears. Its forepaws are small and dexterous, the rear paws being larger and longer at the end of strongly muscled legs. Its plushly furred tail is usually carried erect, but is held straight out when the animal is stalking its prey. The vofoq's fur is light grey with dark grey banding across the shoulders and haunches, dark rings down the tail and a black mask across its face, dark fur surrounding its eyes and extending up its ears.

During the day, the vofoq sleeps, its preferred home being a burrow under the foundation of a building, or a nest in straw or other loose vegetation. At twilight, it comes out to hunt, its principle diet being small rodents and the occasional lizard or large insect. Dwellers in the cities of the southwest have grown accustomed to seeing the vofoq prowling about in the shadows, stalking and pouncing, and welcome its presence for its abilities at pest control -- despite its one odious habit.

The vofoq secretes a foul, sticky liquid from glands under its tail, which it can squirt with terrific accuracy when irritated or marking its territory. The odor of vofoq musk is unmistakable and detectable from a good distance, making it easy to know when you are in the claimed hunting territory of one of the animals. The musk does not wash off with even the strongest of lye soaps, the oily liquid sinking quickly into skin, leather or cloth, and the smell takes days to dissipate. I have yet to meet anyone who is not offended by the odor. If you find a vofoq underfoot, don't kick it out of the way. Even if it refrains from using its musk, its bite can be quite painful.

Given a choice between an infestation of rats and spoogras, or the scent of vofoq musk in the background, I'd have to take the lesser of the two evils and learn to live with the vofoq. A great many people have.

Game Mechanics:

DEX: 6 **STR:** 2 **TOU:** 3
PER: 6 **WIL:** 6 **CHA:** 5

Initiative: 9
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 9
Damage: 6
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 14
Effect: Special
Death Rating: 24
Wound Threshold: 5
Unconsciousness Rating: 15
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 7
Recovery Tests: 1
Combat Movement: 38
Full Movement: 75
Legend Points: 155

Notes: Spell effect -- Bad smell, causes revulsion (WIL vs. 16 to avoid nausea immediately after). Target makes a DEX test against a 20. The difference is the number of days it takes the smell to fade. Thus, if the target rolls a 12, the smell will take 8 days to fade. The target number for the WIL test drops by 2 each day.

Adventure Hook:

The group is on its way to deliver a shipment of fabric for a merchant when a vofoq makes its nest in the cargo. Removing the animal before it shreds the fabric too badly, without resulting in the vofoq fouling the cargo or the adventurers, will be quite a challenge. For an additional complication, the vofoq in question is female, pregnant and about to have kits.

Jacoti

Far too often, danger is only associated with predators. Grazing animals are regarded as potential food sources, not potential perils. In the Servos Jungle, this is a serious, possibly a fatal, error.

With the abundance of foliage, a large variety of herbivores make their home in the jungle. To survive in such a harsh environment, many strategies are adopted, from protective coloration to foul odors to fleetness of foot. The jacoti survives and flourishes in much the same manner as a crystal raider: by being the largest and meanest creature in its environment.

Standing seven feet tall at the shoulder and weighing over two thousand pounds, an adult jacoti is a force to be wary of. Its deep green hide is rough in texture, and thickens into armor-like plates over most of its vulnerable areas. The neck is protected by a bony plate that sweeps up and back from the head. At the end of its massive, reptilian-like tail is a large bony knob that strikes with all the impact of a mace. Projecting from the top of its snout and from over each eye are horns, not compressed hair like the horn of a rhinoceros, but true horns, with needle-sharp points.

The jacoti's teeth consist primarily of molars, for grinding its leafy diet, and shovel-shaped incisors which are best suited to separating plants from their roots. While not suited to the tearing of flesh like the teeth of carnivores, the jacoti can still deliver a fearsome bite to anyone who approaches too closely.

Jacoti enter their mating season approximately every six months. During this time, the females are anxious to produce offspring, but will not accept any male that she has not seen prove himself in combat. Thus, for two weeks out of every sixth month, every male jacoti of breeding age is spoiling for a fight, preferably in front of a female. Travellers would do well to learn to tell the gender of a jacoti from a distance, and to avoid the vicinity of the females no matter how arduous the alternate route.

In combat, the jacoti attacks by charging with head lowered, aiming its horns at the widest part of its target. Once it has closed, it will rake with its horns and use its tail club to tear and pound its enemy into submission. Jacoti are fierce and stubborn, and will not give up a fight unless mortally wounded. Even then, they do not flee abjectly, but make a fighting withdrawal, continuing to threaten their foe until no longer in range.

Females will normally bear a single young. Twin births are highly uncommon, and multiple births have never been observed. Birth weight averages two hundred pounds. The young are able to defend themselves within a day or so of birth; the mother will stay with her young until they achieve half their adult growth, usually a period of ten to twelve months. Females do not enter the mating cycle again for two years after giving birth.

Jacoti bulls are highly territorial. They stake out an area usually a half day's walk in all directions, and do not tolerate other bulls in their domain. They tend to react to thundra beasts as they would to other jacoti, dominating the females with ritual aggressive behavior and attacking the males. The only time bulls are normally found within each other's territory is during the mating season. Young bulls must carve out their own territory in a series of fights, or wander far afield from their birth area to find unclaimed land. Older bulls have been known to attack anything approaching their size, becoming more defensive of their domain as they age.

One out of every hundred jacoti is born an albino. These white jacoti are smaller and less powerful physically, but are blessed by Jaspree with powerful magics to make up for their size and coloration. Albino jacoti have been observed causing minor earth tremors by pawing the ground and enshrouding themselves with mist and fog to render combat a chancy business. As well, the horns over the eyes store magical energies. If an albino strikes with both of these horns, the energies are discharged into the target, causing grievous wounds. Magicians prize these horns and pay a high price for them. So, too, do the hunters, often paying the final price once they locate an albino jacoti and try to relieve it of its horns.

While there may be predators in the Servos Jungle, both four and two-footed, that represent a grave danger to travellers, the charge of the jacoti remains the most fearsome onslaught likely to be faced in this part of Barsaive.

Game Mechanics:

Standard Jacoti

DEX: 7 **STR:** 14 **TOU:** 15
PER: 5 **WIL:** 8 **CHA:** 3

Initiative: 7
Number of Attacks: 2 (1)
Attack: 12
Damage: 16 (bite), 19 (tail), 20 (charge)
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 80

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 10
Armor: 12
Mystic Armor: 1
Knockdown: 18
Recovery Tests: 8
Combat Movement: 65

Wound Threshold: 20
Unconsciousness Rating: 70
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Full Movement: 130
Legend Points: 240

Albino Jacoti

DEX: 8 **STR:** 12 **TOU:** 13
PER: 7 **WIL:** 10 **CHA:** 5

Initiative: 9
Number of Attacks: 2 (1)
Attack: 14
Damage: 14/17/18
Number of Spells: 2
Spellcasting: 12
Effect: Zap (damage step 12); Earthshake as Elementalist (uneven ground for 5 rounds); Fog Cloud (Willpower for Effect, vs Spell Defense, reduces attack by Effect steps)
Death Rating: 70
Wound Threshold: 17
Unconsciousness Rating: 62
Equipment: None
Loot: Horns, worth d100 * 10 sp each, treasure worth legend points

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 8
Knockdown: 15
Recovery Tests: 7
Combat Movement: 75
Full Movement: 150
Legend Points: 360

The Ntelok

> *With all of the hazards to travel -- bandits, disease, Therans, predators like these -- there are times when I am quite happy that I chose a career in the Hall of Records.*
> -- Kylara B'Tenn, Master Clerk, Fauna Room

Stalking the grasslands of the southwestern plains, the slopes of the Twilight Peaks and the Delaris Mountains, and the lands between the mountains and Vivane, the ntelok is a splendid mix of cunning, stealth, grace and ruthless savagery, truly a predator among predators. Differing from the common wolf by the mane or ruff of black fur about the back of its head and extending in a stripe or ridge halfway down its back, the ntelok is built with longer legs, making for greater speed, longer leaps and the unique ability to stand erect on its hind limbs for long periods of time.

Its ears are larger than the common wolf, rounded at the top instead of pointed or tufted, and

highly mobile. This gives the ntelok hearing far superior to most predators, and certainly superior to any Name-Giver. Its eyes are likewise large, and highly reflective. At night, with its enhanced senses, the ntelok rules the plains. During the day, it lairs in deep grass, under bushes or in caves or large burrows when the former occupant is either gone or can be evicted. When encountered in daylight, the ntelok's sensitive eyes prove a disadvantage, leaving it more vulnerable to attack.

In the night, however, even Name-Givers in large groups can fall prey to this clever hunter. The ntelok hunts in packs, most of which fan out through the area in a rough arc. One wolf stands erect at the center of the arc, using its augmented height to spot movements in the grass that might mean the presence of game. The others then close in on the quarry, under magically-enhanced silence so as not to betray themselves with a rustle of grass. From a distance, in the dark, the spotter could easily be mistaken for a Name-Giver, perhaps a human or an Elf. Hails, of course, will not be returned, and by the time the true situation is realized, the pack may very well be upon you.

A wizard of my acquaintance related a story to me of how he and a group of explorers were travelling through the ntelok's territory, and came upon a pack. He instinctively tossed a flame flash at the first sign of danger, and even nteloks that were not struck by the fire turned and ran, yelping and shaking their heads. As mentioned before, the ntelok has excellent night vision, but is vulnerable to bright light - and the sudden flare of the flames was sufficient to dazzle, perhaps even hurt. I have also heard of travellers using dark lanterns or light quartz kept in velvet bags for the same purpose, to produce a sudden bright light in order to drive off such nocturnal predators.

Game Mechanics:

DEX: 8 **STR:** 6 **TOU:** 6
PER: 6 **WIL:** 5 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 10
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 8
Damage: 12
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 12
Effect: 14 (Silence, must roll over Effect result on a PER test to notice ntelok)
Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 28
Equipment: None
Loot: Pelt worth 6d20 sp if skinned properly

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 5
Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 4
Knockdown: 12
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 60
Full Movement: 120
Legend Points: 130

Notes: The ntelok gets an extra 2 steps on all PER tests at night, but is at -3 steps in daylight. When faced with a sudde bright light, the ntelok must make a WIL save against a 12 or flee. When trying to determine whether or not a spotter is a Name-Giver, a PER test is required against a 12.

Adventure Hook:

A farming village hires the adventurers, claiming that a gang of bandits are poaching their sheep. They've seen the bandit leader standing out at the edge of the forest, directing his forces. What the village is actually dealing with is a pack of nteloks, a few more in number than the adventurers. Due to it being the dry season, there are no footprints to give away the true situation. As well, there's a small group of travelling entertainers camped just a short way from the village, through the forest.

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Children of Daspree

Volume 4

Storm Spirit
Kwaltec
Tonduy
Walking Heads

Storm Spirit

This one properly should be filed in the Magical Studies collection. I am having a copy made for just such a purpose. However, since the record does describe a unique entity that does represent a threat to travellers, I am filing the original in our collection.
-- Kylara B'Tenn, Master Clerk, Fauna Room

Forward a copy to Karon Foll as well. I am certain he would have some comments to add.
-- Merrox

While my primary expertise deals with those creatures that have solid form, that breathe and eat and reproduce, as well as plants and other living, growing things, I have by necessity gained some knowledge of non-physical beings and Horrors. As Vasdenjas said in his recent

work, what the traveller does not know about can quite easily kill him. This particular Horror, due to its nature, can attack without warning, and easily drive unwary adventurers to their doom.

While the climate throughout most of Barsaive is in general calm, with little variance (see my recent work on Weather), in the mountains severe storms can and do occur frequently. High winds and driving rain are accompanied by the stabbing forks of lightning and the crash of thunder, often loud enough to set off rockslides on steep slopes. Travel during such climatic outbursts is difficult enough already, but the presence of an entity I can only call a storm spirit can make being out in such doubly dangerous.

The storm spirit is either a type of Horror not previously classified, or a Horror construct not catalogued before or during the Scourge. Considering the difficulty of detecting its existence, and the rarity of encountering one, I cannot say that I am terribly surprised that there has been no record. I would also not be surprised to discover that other scholars have observed the existence of the storm spirit but did not survive to file their reports. This is a terrifically dangerous entity. Do not let its lack of material existence convey a sense of lack of physical threat. Indeed, its nonphysical nature is one of its greatest strengths.

The storm spirit manifests within mountain storms of already forbidding savagery. Once present, the spirit whips the storm into a frenzy, raising winds that can sweep horses off their feet. Hail falls like sling bullets, denting metal armor and injuring unprotected flesh. Lightning strikes with uncanny aim. During my (thankfully brief) encounter, one of my guards was transfixed with a searing white bolt. The poor ork spasmed once, then curled up like a spider touched with fire, and his smoking corpse, fused with the remains of his mount tumbled off the path and down the cliff face.

Therein lies the true danger of the storm spirit. In the midst of all of the storm's fury, a reaction of fear and confusion is to be expected. The storm spirit enhances these feelings, raising fear to stark, unreasoning terror. In the grip of panic, Name-Givers and their mounts make serious, often deadly mistakes, plunging to their death in crevasses and over cliffs. I have seen a troll warrior seized with terror attack anyone and anything that came within blade's reach, slaying his friends without realizing what he was doing. After the storm and its driving force passed, and we resumed our travels, we came upon the remains of another caravan, shattered on the rocks at the base of a high cliff. From the look of it, the horses bolted, and stampeded over the edge before their riders could regain control -- if indeed they even attempted to.

Powerful magics are needed to protect oneself from a spirit of this type. We were fortunate in that we had a nethermancer of high rank travelling with us, who was able to ward most of the party, and a troubadour who kept our spirits up and our minds focused. We were, however, restricted to defensive measures, lacking any way to attack a non-physical entity. I have heard tales of Adepts who could turn their weapons ethereal, or reach into the spirit world. Abilities such as these might prove effective against the storm spirit. I know that it did not seem to notice our Swordmaster's attempts at insulting it.

The troll moots living in the Crystal Peaks have a creation legend involving a spirit they call Grandfather Thunder. I wonder if there could be a connection between their creation spirit and the entity we encountered? If so, then I would have to reclassify the storm spirit. Referring to a relative of another Name-Giver's ancestral spirits as a Horror would be a terrible insult. Perhaps the storm spirit is the result of Horror taint infecting the troll thunder spirits. There is no simple way of answering any of these questions.

Game Mechanics:

DEX: NA **STR:** NA **TOU:** NA
PER: 19 **WIL:** 23 **CHA:** 20

Initiative: 22
Number of Attacks: 4 hail / 1 lightning
Attack: 17
Damage: 12 hail / 18 lightning
Number of Spells: 2
Spellcasting: 24
Effect: Special
Death Rating: 150
Wound Threshold: 30
Unconsciousness Rating: 150
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: NA
Spell Defense: 18
Social Defense: 22
Armor: NA
Mystic Armor: 15
Knockdown: NA
Recovery Tests: 8
Combat Movement: 200
Full Movement: 400
Legend Points: 24,500

Notes:

The storm spirit can attack two different targets with its two spell effects with no reduction in attack step. Fear and Confusion effects are cumulative.

Spell Effects:

Fear 20 (vs target's Willpower):

- Average -- Victim is Harried
- Good -- Victim is Harried and flees area unless a WIL save is made against the Effect result. PER saves to find a safe path are at -2 beyond the Harried penalty.
- Excellent -- Victim is Harried and flees area, no WIL save possible. PER saves to find a safe path are at -5 beyond the Harried penalty. Victim attacks anything that gets between him and escape, but will break off combat if the obstruction gets out of the way.
- Extraordinary -- Berserk fury. Victim aggressively attacks anything within reach until a WIL save against the Effect result is made. Victim automatically makes all Knockdown saves. Victim's spell defense is doubled against all mental effects, but

not against physical effects.

Confusion 20:

- Average -- Harried
- Good -- Harried, WIL save at +5 vs Effect to decide on a course of action.
- Excellent -- Harried +3, WIL save vs Effect to decide on a course of action.
- Extraordinary -- Harried +8, victim unable to decide on a course of action. Social Defense doubled against all suggestions.

Kwaltec

> *If Evanten Farseeker travels much further south, he'll leave Barsaive entirely. While the flora and fauna of the Theran Empire are no doubt interesting, they are not appropriate for inclusion in works about Barsaive.*
> -- Merrox
>
> *I'll try and get word to him about this.*
> -- Kylara

The kwaltec, or ovenbird, is a large flightless bird inhabiting the far southern reaches of Barsaive in the region of the ancient Ork kingdom of Cara Fahd. While it travels in large flocks, and vaguely resembles the tabri, the kwaltec is by no means as ill-tempered, and far more useful.

It stands about the height of an Elf, including the brilliantly-hued crest on the males. The females are a drab brown hue with flecks of darker brown and black, but the males are really quite impressive, bright blue and white with green edges on their wings and tail. The male crest is fledged in hues of red, and stands erect when the male is defending his territory or his harem. Both genders have spurs on the back of the foot, the male's being somewhat larger and sharper.

Kwaltecs live in communal groups, small flocks sharing territory to form larger flocks. Each small group, or harem, is presided over by a dominant male. His harem consists of as many females as he can hold against challenges from other males, plus chicks and fledglings. Males are turned out of the harem when they molt to their adult plumage, at about two years of age. They must then carve out their own territory and collect their own harem, or live on the fringes of the flock. Some males seem to discard the idea of building a harem, and serve out their lives as guardians at the edge of the flock's territory. These males are perhaps the most dangerous to Name-Givers, as they will fight to the death to preserve the flock.

Each harem builds a large dome of mud and twigs, strengthened with strands of tough prairie grasses. Resembling a large bread oven, hence the name ovenbird, the dome is partitioned

into an antechamber and several nesting rooms. The dominant male has his own chamber, and each hen who has clutched has her own, which she shares with her chicks and fledglings. Males line their nesting chambers with feathers from their hens and from defeated males, over a bed of grasses. Females line their nesting rooms with grasses only, and frequently change their bedding to clean up after their chicks. Kwaltecs use their homes for several years before abandoning them and moving to new grazing territory. The domes bake brick-hard over the years and are useful as shelter by the smaller Name-Givers. Trolls will find it awkward as there is not sufficient headroom for their massive frames. Colonies of ovenbirds can be mistaken at a distance for Name-Giver villages, several domes clustered together in a small area.

Territory seems to be a complex issue with male kwaltecs. The dome itself is considered harem territory. No males other than the dominant bird and his fledglings are permitted inside. The area immediately around the dome is a neutral ground, where combats can and do occur. The open spaces between domes in the flock's "village" are apparently uncontested neutral ground. Beyond the village, each harem has a preferred feeding ground, which the dominant male and sometimes his hens will defend. The flock's entire range is another defended territory, watched over by the guardian males. Interestingly, the dominant males will ignore a guardian male passing through their territory, or even sleeping in the antechamber of their domes. Non-guardian males from the fringes, however, are attacked on sight if they pass within a dominant male's boundaries.

Challenges to a male's dominance occur under three circumstances. Another male can attack the dominant male to take a specific hen from him. This usually is a young hen, just coming into her fertility. The aggressor, most of the time a young male building his own harem, circles the hen to cut her off from her harem. The dominant male puts up a token defense, but it seems to be more for show than serious. Nine times out of ten, the intruder makes off with the hen with only a few scratches for his effort. From a breeding standpoint, this is a logical response. Dominant males would not want to breed with their own daughters for the sake of the strength of the flock.

Disputes occur at the borders of feeding grounds. Males, or sometimes the older hens, will challenge one another over prime areas. Fighting is more serious, usually leaving the loser injured, although not mortally. The winner shifts the border between feeding grounds, marking the new territory. The new border stands until the next challenge. Other birds will not intervene in border challenges under normal circumstances, but if a bird gets too close to the combatants, the opposite side may attack as a pre-emptive strike. Entire harems can quickly become involved in full-scale war when this happens. Even the chicks will peck at each other. Fortunately for the welfare of the flock, this does not happen often.

Young males can challenge dominant ones for the possession of the harem. This is a fight to the death, with the winner taking the harem, dome and all. Possession challenges are rare things. Most young males prefer to challenge for young hens one at a time, and build their own harem slowly. The occasional larger specimen, however, can decide that this takes too long for their satisfaction. Most often, the young male attacks an aging dominant male, and wins the fight. His first act after the fight customarily is to clean out his new nesting room

and line it with the plucked feathers of his fallen enemy.

Ovenbirds are occasionally eaten by the local Name-Givers, but hunting them is a risky business. Only the younger birds are truly edible, older ones developing a gamy taste and the meat becoming tough and stringy. Unfortunately for the would-be gourmand, the younger birds are fiercely defended, both by their dominant males and by the guardian males. Hens will also attack without quarter if their young are threatened. I have seen entire harems converge on predators, ripping the intruder to shreds in a flurry of spurs and jabbing beaks. Better use is made of the birds by leaving them alone and taking over their villages when they move to fresh hunting grounds.

Game Mechanics:

DEX: 9 **STR:** 9 **TOU:** 8
PER: 5 **WIL:** 4 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 10
Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: 12
Damage: 13
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 44
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 36
Equipment: None

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 5
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2
Knockdown: 13
Recovery Tests: 4
Combat Movement: 65
Full Movement: 130
Legend Points: 180

Loot: None, although tailors will pay for the male's feathers

---

Tonduy

> *This was in the last packet from Evanten. Apparently he's been making good on his promise to catch up on his work while laid up from the jidwars. File this in the Servos Jungle collection.*
> -- Kylara

Tree-dwelling life in the Servos Jungle produces a wide variety of species. Life aloft poses less of a threat than ground-dwelling existence, as the larger predators cannot climb into the thinner upper branches. This is not to suggest that there aren't smaller predators, but the

prime requisites for defeating them are cleverness and agility rather than brute strength and savagery. Very few of the denizens of the Servos can even approach the tonduy in these.

A large animal, approximately the size of a small hunting cat, the tonduy is built lean and long. Its muzzle is roundly pointed like a rodent's, its eyes set forward for binocular vision. Some experimentation has proven that the animal can see colors. A long, bushy tail gives the tonduy excellent balance for scampering along narrow tree limbs or leaping from tree to tree.

The tonduy's forelimbs are highly developed, being smaller than the hind limbs and having grasping paws nearly as dexterous as a Name-Giver's hands. Indeed, the animal has proven itself capable of amazing feats of ingenuity. In an environment rich in food sources, the tonduy has become choosy, picking its diet with the manner of a rich merchant browsing the selections his cook has prepared. I have observed tonduys using sticks to dig termites out of their mounds, stones to crack nuts, and bits of animal bone to dig for roots on their occasional trips to the jungle floor. By no means are the tonduys Name-Givers in their own right, but they are quite clever and capable of using primitive tools.

Diet is highly varied. I have observed tonduys making raids on bird nests for the eggs, and stalking lizards. Nuts, berries, roots are all included. I have yet to see a tonduy actively eating leaves, although I did see one chewing desultorily on a twig at one point. I'm not sure if the animal was actually eating the twig or using it to clean her teeth, however.

Their smoke-grey fur blends in well in the shadows under the leaves, making them difficult to spot. Like many arboreal rodents, however, they let trespassers know their displeasure with showers of twigs, stones, nut shells, and whatever else comes to paw at the moment. Tonduys tend to live in large groups, being generally unhappy on their own. They can be encountered in the singular, but never far from the main group. Like blood monkeys, they will rush to each other's aid when a distress cry is heard.

Windlings should avoid these creatures at any cost. Tonduys are fascinated with butterflies and other brightly colored fluttering things. They don't eat them, but will play with them, sometimes destructively. A windling coming too close to one could find himself an involuntary toy, possibly resulting in serious injury.

Again, I must stress that tonduys are relatively bright. They can learn simple behaviors by observation and imitation -- drinking from a cup, opening doors, untying knots, etc. Name-Givers other than windlings may find their gear in danger when traveling through the Servos. The usual expedient of securing things in a canvas bag tied to a tree with stout rope and complex knots may not protect them from the tonduy, especially if they see you tie the knots.

Game Mechanics:

DEX: 10 **STR:** 6 **TOU:** 6
PER: 7 **WIL:** 8 **CHA:** 6

Initiative: 12
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 12
Damage: 9
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 28
Equipment: None

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 4
Knockdown: 10
Recovery Tests: 3
Combat Movement: 80
Full Movement: 160
Legend Points: 175

Loot: None usually, although virtually anything could be found in their nests, depending on who's traveled through their range.

Notes: Tonduys can make a PER test against the Social defense of any Name-Giver to copy simple behaviors, such as drinking from a cup or opening a simple catch. Once successful in imitation, no roll is required to repeat the behavior.

Walking Heads

> *Brrr.*
> -- Kylara

I have seen evidence of many aspects of Horror personalities. Cruelty is the most prevalent, a sadistic bent that surpasses the most evil of Name-Givers. Horrors have also evidenced a manic glee in their workings -- the Named Horror Joie is an obvious example of this. Up until now, however, I had not anticipated a Horror having a sense of humor. Granted, it's a macabre, twisted thing, but only a being with a truly sick sense of humor could have created the walking heads.

I have no idea how to classify the heads. They reproduce by releasing spores like a fungus. They put down roots and feed off dead matter, which has been observed in plants growing on the jungle floor in the Servos. However, they are highly mobile when mature, and have a rudimentary social order, traveling in packs. Whether they are plant or animal is beyond me, and Jaspree has not seen fit to guide my hand in these words. I shall therefore refer to them as constructs, although they do not demonstrate any of the powers previously observed in Horror constructs.

In appearance, the walking heads resemble the severed and slightly decayed heads of the

Name-Giver races, with the exception of windlings and obsidimen. The mouth gapes open slightly, the eyes are rolled upward and dull, and the features have a slack expression. In general, they look dead. From the base of the neck springs forth a multitude of insect-like black legs. These function like roots while the head is immature, becoming mobile only at maturity. The heads sway randomly when moving, in a disturbing fashion.

The mature heads travel in packs, observed to range from five to thirty-two in number. I suspect that the pack size remains small due to their manner of reproduction. When a walking head becomes fully ripe and ready to reproduce, it begins to swell, attaining a bloated, decaying appearance, like a corpse will swell if not buried properly. Parts of the interior decay, producing gases that build in pressure. I described this process in detail previously in an entry concerning the thunder tree, which uses a similar means of seed distribution. Eventually, the walking head explodes, sending a spray of spores across a wide area. When in a pack, an exploding head can touch off others, resulting in a cascade of sympathetic explosions. Even unripe but mobile heads can detonate if touched off by an explosion next to them. This phenomenon results in small packs, as larger packs are obviously at higher risk for cascades.

Walking heads can apparently bring about their own detonation if they feel threatened. Unfortunately, what makes a walking head feel threatened is the presence of anything large moving close to them. As a rule of thumb, if it's larger than a walking head and it gets closer than five paces, the walking head will probably explode. A mature head is annoying, as the cloud of spores is dense and choking, and the shock of the detonation can knock an Elf off his feet. Also, the spores must be treated as an illness, to keep them from growing in the lungs. Fully ripe heads, however, explode with a force sufficient to cause injury. The spores erupt with such force that they can cause injury themselves, in the manner of the legendary wingflayer.

Walking heads do perform a useful function. Like any plant that feeds off decay, they assist in cleaning up dead things, both in the immature, rooted stage and in the mature walking form. The danger they represent is confined to explorers of caverns and kaers, as they do not venture out in open sunlight. A large stone thrown into the middle of a pack will detonate them safely from a distance. Coming around a corner, however, and finding oneself confronted with a pack can be frightening.

Game Mechanics:

DEX: 5 **STR:** 2 **TOU:** 3
PER: 3 **WIL:** 3 **CHA:** 2

Initiative: 8
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: Mature 12, Fully Ripe 16
Damage: Mature 13, Fully Ripe 18
Number of Spells: 1

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 4
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Spellcasting: 10
Effect: 8 (choking)
Death Rating: 15
Wound Threshold: 4
Unconsciousness Rating: 9
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Knockdown: 4
Recovery Tests: 1
Combat Movement: 10
Full Movement: 20
Legend Points: Mature 85, Fully Ripe 335

Notes: Any hit that does a Wound or kills a mature or fully ripe head causes it to detonate. When a head explodes, all heads within two yards must make a TOU save against an 8 to avoid sympathetic detonation. Any head that makes its attack is automatically destroyed. Both Physical and Spellcasting attacks are made simultaneously and are rolled separately for all characters within the six-foot blast radius. Any character who takes choking damage from the spore (Spellcasting) attack must receive treatment from a healer or Questor of Garlen within three days to prevent the spores from taking root in his lungs. Characters who do not receive treatment take Step 2 damage on the fourth day, damage increasing by 2 steps per day until the tenth day. Damage continues to accrue at Step 20 for five more days, until the immature head dies from lack of room to expand. The fungoid head is not strong enough to break ribs and burst out of a Name-Giver's chest. Treatment at any point by a healer or Questor of Garlen can halt the progress of the infestation. Damage accrued then heals at normal rates.

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Children of Jaspree

Volume 5

Gelteckin

Floating Heads

Vuljecn

Azontu

Gelteckin

Evanten -- are you chronicling animals or Horror constructs?

-- dispatch from Kylara B'Tenn, Chief Clerk, Fauna Room, Hall of Records, Throal

Yes.

-- dispatch from Evanten Farseeker, Questor of Jaspree, Field Researcher, Hall of Records, Throal

Inhabiting the jungles of southern Barsaive and the Mist Swamps, the gelteckin is a terrible hazard to travel. It poses less of a threat to the natives of the areas, for reasons that will become clear shortly.

Resembling the sea creature known as the jellyfish, the gelteckin's body is round, and built much like a sack turned upside down, with dozens of threadlike tentacles dangling from the lower edge all around. In the center of the underside is a beak resembling that of a parrot. Colored a pale green with brown streaks and dark green patches, the gelteckin blends in well among the foliage of the trees where it floats quietly, waiting for prey.

I have determined through examination that the creature produces a gas within its body, which it secretes into several bladders, that is lighter than air. This gas holds the gelteckin aloft, where it drifts much like a cloud, at the mercy of the winds. If enough of these bladders are punctured, the creature cannot remain in the air and will collapse to the ground. Do not assume that a grounded gelteckin is harmless, however. It can still move its tentacles when downed. Also, care should be taken in piercing the bladders, as the gas within is highly flammable. Elementalists would no doubt have some use for something which takes fire so readily, but other Name-givers should be wary of the beast's explosive nature. I have seen a wizard nearly immolate himself upon attacking a gelteckin with a flame flash. The back blast knocked the man down and singed off most of his beard, a great tragedy among dwarves or so I am told.

Glands along the edge of the beast secrete a virulent toxin that paralyzes the beast's prey. As well, the tentacles are capable of delivering a stinging jolt of obviously magical origin. Once the prey is stunned or paralyzed into immobility, the gelteckin vents enough of its levitating gas to descend onto the helpless victim and feed.

Because of the creature's mode of flight, it has a terrific fear of open flames. As such, it will not approach a village with cooking fires lit, or a campsite with a fire going. Cathan hunting parties carry unlit torches magically prepared to blaze up at a spoken command to ward off the creatures. The slightest flicker of fire appears to be enough to ward off the creature, although with its coloration and absolute quiet when moving, its approach is hard to detect.

Game Mechanics:

DEX: 7 **STR:** 3 **TOU:** 5
PER: 4 **WIL:** 5 **CHA:** 2

Initiative: 9
Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: 10
Damage: 6 beak, 12 tentacles (electrical zap)
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 14
Effect: 14 (paralyzing toxin)
Death Rating: 34
Wound Threshold: 9

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 3
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 5
Knockdown: 9
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 15
Full Movement: 30

Unconsciousness Rating: 26 **Legend Points:** 180

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Notes: Each wound done to a gelteckin punctures a gas bladder. Any open flame source or spark in the immediate vicinity will set fire to the gas, causing the gelteckin to explode like a fireball, doing step 13 damage in a ten foot radius. After three wounds, the gelteckin no longer has enough intact bladders to remain aloft, and sinks or drops to the ground, its speed of descent being determined by the number of wounds over three it has taken.

Floating Heads

I seem to be condemned lately to cataloguing more and more damage done to our world by the Horrors. Rather than documenting the current state of the natural world, I come more into contact with the unnatural. Well, whatever fate the Passions have in store for me, I can do no more than continue in my task. Here then is the latest effort of the Horrors that I have uncovered.

Floating heads are exactly that, the heads of Name-givers forcibly removed from their bodies and given the power to float in the air. Four long tentacles emerge from the ruin of the base of the neck, each lined with suckers and tipped with a wickedly curved claw. In unbelievable pain and mindlessly berserk, the constructs attack without quarter, savaging any Name-giver who comes within range. They never break off, fighting until destroyed or until there are no more Name-givers visible to them. Victims of floating heads are frequently turned into the same sort of construct themselves. The size of the tentacles, the sturdiness of the creature and the amount of damage it can inflict in a single strike varies according to the sort of Name-giver that provided (albeit unwillingly) the head in the first place.

Evidence indicates that these constructs may be unique to a particular Horror. I am reluctant to investigate, as discovering the Name could bring me to the attention of the Horror itself. Perhaps a party of adepts could be convinced or hired to follow up this information. I would happily surrender my notes on this issue to any Named group willing to pursue this matter.

Game Mechanics:

When multiple stats are given, they're in the format Dwarf / Elf / Human / Obsidiman / Ork / Troll / T'skrang / Windling.

DEX: 6 **STR:** 5 **TOU:** 8
PER: 6 **WIL:** 7 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 9

Number of Attacks: 4

Attack: 14

Damage: 10 / 11 / 12 / 17 / 15 / 16 / 11 / 6

Number of Spells: 0

Spellcasting: 0

Effect: 0

Death Rating: 42 / 39 / 44 / 50 / 46 / 48 / 42 / 34

Wound Threshold: 14

Unconsciousness Rating: 34 / 31 / 36 / 43 / 39 / 41 / 34 / 26

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Physical Defense: 8

Spell Defense: 12

Social Defense: 7

Armor: 9

Mystic Armor: 8

Knockdown: 16

Recovery Tests: 4

Combat Movement: 165

Full Movement: 310

Legend Points: 208 / 210 / 214 / 237 / 221 / 227 / 210 / 200

Vuljecn

A particularly nasty manifestation of the corruption wrought by the Horrors, the vuljecn is a small bird approximately the size of a troll's hand. Its body is compact and muscular, but well streamlined, allowing it to reach terrific speeds in a dive. It inhabits the Servos jungle and the cooler regions of the Mist Swamps, and has been seen aboard and from riverboats plying the southern and western reaches of the Serpent. Prior to the Scourge, the vuljecn was probably a seed eater, using its bill to crack open pods and nuts. Now, however, it serves a much more dangerous purpose.

The vuljecn has developed a taste for meat, and specifically for the flesh of Name-Givers. Surely this is the work of a Horror, as no animal naturally preys predominantly on Name-Givers. Covered in light brown plumage with hints of darker brown at wingtips and tail tip, the bird blends in well in the foliage, holding itself motionless in the treetops as it searches for food with remarkably keen eyesight. When the bird spots a Name-Giver, or any large warm-blooded beast if there haven't been any people by of late, the bird drops from its perch, folds its wings tightly and stoops on its prey. Reaching amazing speed in the descent from treetop to ground, it aims itself like an arrow, using its long, sharply pointed beak to spear its victim. Generally aiming for an eye, the vuljecn can do horrific damage in its first attack, frequently striking through the eye and into the brain, causing death instantly.

Lacking a distinct call, and remaining still and silent while watching for prey, the vuljecn is

difficult to detect before it makes its attack. Fortunately, it doesn't always make its strike, as large changes of course become impossible during its dive. If the intended victim moves sharply to one side right before the attack, the bird will normally miss. Also, if it fails to kill its prey with the first strike, it leaves itself highly vulnerable to a return stroke from paw or blade.

I discovered this species when I noted that the Cathan tended to walk with a staggering pace, lurching frequently to one side or the other. They explained to me that this was to ward off attacks by the vuljecn. They also posted guards within traveling groups to keep watch above, and warn the group if anything came dropping down out of the trees.

Game Mechanics:

DEX: 11 **STR:** 3 **TOU:** 3
PER: 3 **WIL:** 3 **CHA:** 2

Initiative: 14
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 8 melee/15 diving
Damage: 5 beak/21 dive strike
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 23
Wound Threshold: 5
Unconsciousness Rating: 14
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 14
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 3
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 5
Recovery Tests: 1
Combat Movement: 10 ground/100 air
Full Movement: 20 ground/200 air
Legend Points: 615

Azontu

Many adepts seem to be concerned only with creatures that can devour either themselves or their mounts. They ignore smaller animals, at their own peril. One should never discount the possibility of a very small animal causing a very large problem. I recently saw a Warrior severely injured in combat, because his armor fell off at a bad moment. The straps had been weakened by spoogras chewing on the sweat-soaked leather. Needless to say, the Warrior spent a good part of his recovery time learning to protect his gear from small pests. In this spirit, I present this record, documenting a small animal that can cause very large problems.

The azontu is an excellent example of how the animal life of Barsaive adapted to survive the

Scourge. Obviously descended from the common field mouse, the azontu is small enough to fit into the palm of your hand. Holding it thusly would be an uncomfortable experience, however, as the mouse is shrouded in a blanket of spines. Developed from guard hairs, these spines have a wicked barb on the end and detach easily from the animal when tugged sharply. When a larger animal attempts to bite the azontu, it gets instead a mouthful of spines that cannot be removed without either tearing the flesh horribly or using a sharp knife, like cutting out an arrowhead.

Given that the azontu likes to forage in dense undergrowth, it's often found along the edges of trails through the woods and jungles. The clearance above, where Name-givers have removed overhanging branches for easy passage, allows the plants at the ground level to flourish. Because of this, horses or Name-givers stepping too close to the edge of the trail put themselves at risk of taking a spine or two in the ankle should they encounter an azontu. Figuring out what has caused the damage may be difficult, as the mouse will of course make itself scarce after such a close brush with a larger creature. Having a horse, or worse, yourself, lamed by a spine will certainly slow down your travels. Removing the spine is difficult to do without causing further injury, but if it is not removed promptly, infection may set in, resulting in fever, dizziness, nausea and weakness of the muscles.

Some of the Cathans and other more primitive peoples of the jungles and southern plains find the azontu quite useful. Its spines make excellent needles for leatherwork, and can also be used as stitching, to hold items together. In the latter use, the barbs are normally clipped off after the spines are run through the layers being stitched, and the ends smeared with glue to hold the spines in place.

Game Mechanics:

DEX: 7 **STR:** 1 **TOU:** 2
PER: 8 **WIL:** 6 **CHA:** 3

Initiative: 9
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 3 (bite), 10 (spine)
Damage: 2 (bite), 7 (spine)
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0
Death Rating: 20
Wound Threshold: 4
Unconsciousness Rating: 11
Equipment: None
Loot: 2d10 spines worth 1 cp each

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 4
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 4
Recovery Tests: 1
Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60
Legend Points: 80

Notes: Taking a spine in the leg or foot cuts movement down by one-quarter. Removing it requires a Physician Skill Test against a 7 (or a Dexterity Test against a 12 if nobody has the appropriate Skill). An Average success removes the spine, but causes another Step 4 of damage. A Good or better success removes the spine with no additional damage. A Poor success removes the spine, but does Step 9 damage, and a total failure not only leaves the spine in, but does Step 11 additional damage plus an extra Wound. Normal healing rates apply. Failure to remove the spine within an hour requires a Toughness Test against a 7 to resist a debilitation poison of step 6, representing the high probability of infection from an unremoved spine.

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Corrupt Spirits

by Dan Allard

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #8***

Introduction

Just as the Scourge caused many Name-givers to lose a part of their humanity and become corrupt, so have many spirits succumbed to the influence of the Scourge. The spirits presented here represent several examples of spirits who have been affected, either physically, mentally, or both, by the corrupting powers of Horrors and the Scourge. GMs will need to have access to the Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets sourcebook for information on the various spirit powers utilized by these beings.

On Using Corrupt Spirits

Typically, a successful Summoning will conjure a healthy, normal spirit to follow the summoner's orders. However, there may be times when the GM will decide that the summoned spirit is less than ideal, particularly if the caster is summoning from a region of astrally corrupt space.

All spirits presented here are still subject to powers affecting spirits, such as Summoning Circle, even though they may be otherwise uncontrollable using spells and half-magic.

Several of these spirits are permanently manifested for some reason, and may be met as one of any other monster encounters. Note that these might still respond to a summoning, though they cannot travel through Astral space to reach the summoning spellcaster.

It is possible that some of these spirits may be cured of their respective conditions or possibly dispelled back to their original planes; however, others accept their damaged mental and physical conditions or are too far gone to be helped.

Various Unnamed Spirits

The following spirits are not Named spirits, though several of these have names that others

refer to them by. Any of these may be summoned using half-magic, though a few spirits require the summoner to be in a particular part of Barsaive for the summoning to be successful.

Wildriss'sinn

Strength 3 Air Spirit

DEX: 11 **STR:** 9 **TOU:** 9
PER: 7 **WIL:** 10 **CHA:** 7

Initiative: 14
Number of Attacks: 3
Attack: 14
Damage: 11
Number of Spells: 3
Spellcasting: 9
Effect: See Below
Death Rating: 50
Wound Threshold: 14
Unconsciousness Rating: 43
Karma Step: 5
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 17 (22)
Spell Defense: 12
Social Defense: 12
Armor: 7
Mystic Armor: 9
Knockdown: 9
Recovery Tests: 4
Combat Movement: 170
Full Movement: 320
Legend Points: 4,800
Karma Pts: 20

Powers: Aid Summoner, Astral Sight 10, Detect True Element, Engulf 13, Manifest, Manipulate Element, Share Knowledge, Spear 12, Enrage Element 13, Spells (Elementalist 3, Air only)

Wildriss'sinn was corrupted by the scourge along with many other elemental spirits. He shows few outward signs of this corruption; his corruption manifests itself as a dangerous insanity. When summoned, Wildriss'sinn will behave as a normal air spirit, and will even attempt to be helpful beyond duties required of him. However, he is in constant danger of losing control; while under the control of a summoning spellcaster, Wildriss'sinn must make a Willpower test against a difficulty of 8 each round to keep his personality from changing. If he fails at any time, the Air Spirit will fly into a manic rage and assault any living beings within his sight. If he has not manifested himself before this time, he will use Manifest as his first action, and use Engulf and Spear to assault his new opponents. If Wildriss'sinn's death rating drops to critical levels, he will come to his wits and attempt to flee the combat.

Wildriss'sinn is aware of his damaged mental condition and will not normally speak of it with his summoners; however, he wishes to be cured of it and may ask for help if he suspects the summoner is powerful enough to help him. The cure for Wildriss'sinn may well form the basis for an adventure, although a party will not be likely to want to take Wildriss'sinn along,

as he will continue to suffer from his dangerous insanity until cured.

The Reisshids

Strength 1 Water Spirits

DEX: 9 **STR:** 8 **TOU:** 8
PER: 8 **WIL:** 8 **CHA:** 7

Initiative: 12
Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: 11
Damage: 12
Number of Spells: 2
Spellcasting: 10
Effect: See Below
Death Rating: 46
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 39
Karma Step: 4
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 10
Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 6
Knockdown: 8
Recovery Tests: 4
Combat Movement: 125
Full Movement: 250
Legend Points: 300
Karma Pts: 15

Powers: Astral Sight 9, Detect True Element, Engulf 9, Manifest (permanent), Manipulate Element, Spear 9

The Reisshids are a group of corrupt water spirits who appear to be trapped permanently upon the physical plane, wandering together from place to place along rivers and across seas. The Scourge has left these spirits almost mindless; now they only hunger to engulf and devour the living. Their behavior is similar to that of the Sirens of legend, but they have no vocal power of control over the living. Reports tell of these spirits traveling in groups of ten or more; GMs should adjust their numbers as he or she sees fit.

Reisshids take vaguely elven forms when the rise from the water, though their elven forms are somewhat wraithlike and non-corporeal. When Reisshids arrive, they will begin to make a low howling sound; this soon rises to a high pitched scream. The screaming has no real game effect, though anyone who is in hearing range will find it unnerving. The Reisshids will attempt to engulf shorebound Name-givers in the form of a large wave; they will attack Name-givers in boats by tearing up the boat out from under them. Each round that the Reisshids attack, they cause 2 points of damage to a wooden boat structure.

Reisshids do not typically attack boats that are moving faster than their own movement rate;

they will give up an attack if a boat manages to reach a speed faster than they can travel. These water spirits will continue in their attack until at least half of their number are destroyed. Being mostly mindless, they are unaffected by fear causing spells or talents.

Legend has it that these spirits were forced into submission by a Horror, and became free again at the end of the Scourge. However, they had been altered in such a way that they could not return of the Elemental Plane of Water. Adepts may wish to figure out a way to dispel these beings back to their own plane; to do it, they will certainly need to find out the name and nature of the Horror that enslaved them in the first place.

The Frozen

Strength 7 Water Spirit

DEX: 9 **STR:** 12 **TOU:** 11
PER: 11 **WIL:** 12 **CHA:** 7

Initiative: 12
Number of Attacks: 5
Attack: 11
Damage: 15
Number of Spells: 5
Spellcasting: 10
Effect: See Below
Death Rating: 55
Wound Threshold: 15
Unconsciousness Rating: 48
Karma Step: 8
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 14
Social Defense: 13
Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 6
Knockdown: 12
Recovery Tests: 4
Combat Movement: 125
Full Movement: 250
Legend Points: 3,500
Karma Pts: 45

Powers: Astral Sight 18, Detect True Element, Engulf 19, Manifest (permanent), Manipulate Element, Spear 19, Enrage Element 19

The Frozen is a corrupt water spirit that dwells in the upper reaches of the Caucavic mountains, haunting what villages it comes across in its wanderings. The spirit appears to be completely mindless, and is often mistaken for a Horror; this is understandable, considering its horrific appearance. The Frozen is bound to the material plane and is unable to return to the plane of water.

The Frozen suffered long under the grip of the Horror Icebringer, serving its needs until near the end of the Scourge. Icebringer abandoned the spirit along with several others; the Frozen

was the only one to survive the departure of the Horror. The form of the spirit had been changed over the years; once a normal water spirit, the Frozen is now a great beast of ice, resembling a pile of bones with great spikes of ice pointing out in all directions. At the center of the beast is a huge face of ice resembling that of a Name-giver; the face has a permanently blank expression on it.

The Frozen is driven by conflicting desires; primarily, a seething anger moves the spirit to attack anything it encounters. On the other hand, it feels an instinct to return to its home plane; the sane part of its mind suspects it might be cured of its condition if it is able to return to the plane of water. A Name-giver will have to make a Charisma test against the spirit's Willpower to convince it to keep from attacking if the Name-giver offers to help return it to its home plane; certain Charisma based talents may be used for this test (e.g. First Impression). In the event that a Name-giver is able to restore the Frozen from its mental and physical condition, the spirit will be likely to try and reward the Name-giver in whatever way it can.

This spirit will only respond to a summoning if the summoning takes place in the colder reaches of the Caucavic mountains.

Liar

Strength 5 Ally Spirit

DEX: 8 **STR:** 9 **TOU:** 11
PER: 12 **WIL:** 9 **CHA:** 9

Initiative: 9
Number of Attacks: 3
Attack: 9
Damage: 12
Number of Spells: 4
Spellcasting: 10
Effect: See Below
Death Rating: 53
Wound Threshold: 14
Unconsciousness Rating: 44
Karma Step: 8
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 12 (15)
Spell Defense: 12
Social Defense: 13
Armor: 9
Mystic Armor: 6
Knockdown: 8
Recovery Tests: 4
Combat Movement: 120
Full Movement: 240
Legend Points: 1,000
Karma Pts: 20

Powers: Aid Summoner, Astral Sight 17, Empathic Sense 14, Find 17, Taunt 14, Disguise Self 17, Lifesense 17, Manifest, Confusion 14, Spells (Nethermancer 5)

A particularly nefarious ally spirit, a being known as Liar has caused trouble for many spellcasters. While this spirit can be bound to perform certain physical tasks for a summoner, he has a fatal flaw relating to his information gathering abilities. Any time information is requested of this spirit, there is a good chance that he will invent a deliberate falsehood or half-truth; Liar invents such falsehoods to cause as much trouble and damage to the summoner as possible. This spirit is also perfectly capable of telling the truth when necessary, especially if a lie would get him into immediate trouble.

Liar has little interest in improving his damaged psyche; his corruption has become a fundamental part of him. In any case, Liar's falsehoods are rarely discovered until after he has been released by the summoner. He uses his Disguise Self spirit power to make himself appear as a different Name-giver each time he manifests; in this way he tries to hide his identity between summonings.

Liar is, in fact, the spirit of a fallen questor of Mynbruje; the questor died during the Scourge, betrayed by a Horror that offered him immortality in exchange for the lives of other Name-givers. The questor's spirit lingered after his death and was further tormented and corrupted by astrally dwelling Horrors, until finally reaching its current corrupt state.

Named Spirits

The following spirits are Named and require the spellcaster to use the Summon talent to contact them.

Aash'ih'iar

Strength 6 Air Spirit

DEX: 9 **STR:** 11 **TOU:** 11
PER: 8 **WIL:** 13 **CHA:** 7

Initiative: 12
Number of Attacks: 4
Attack: 12
Damage: 12

Physical Defense: 15 (20)
Spell Defense: 15
Social Defense: 13
Armor: 7

Number of Spells: 4
Spellcasting: 10
Effect: See Below
Death Rating: 58
Wound Threshold: 14
Unconsciousness Rating: 49
Karma Step: 8
Equipment: None
Loot: None
Powers: Aid Summoner, Astral Sight 14, Detect True Element, Engulf 19, Manifest, Manipulate Element, Spear 17

Mystic Armor: 8
Knockdown: 8
Recovery Tests: 4
Combat Movement: 150
Full Movement: 300
Legend Points: 4,100
Karma Pts: 30

Theran legend tells of the kila called "Sword of Empire" which patrolled much of Vasgothia near the beginning of the Scourge. The kila fell under the attack of airborne Horrors; as part of this attack, a Horror spent months invading the mind of one of the Air Spirits that held the kila afloat. Finally the Air Spirit's mind cracked, and the spirit proceeded to wrestle control from the Elementalists that held it in yoke. With the spirit free and much of the kila damaged, the ship could no longer support itself and crashed to its destruction on the ground below.

The spirit, named Aash'ih'iar, retained enough of its sanity to feel terrible remorse over its actions, and sought for a way to make up for the damage it had caused. Somehow it survived the long Scourge, now trapped on the physical plane, waiting for Name-givers to help him in his mission. When the Scourge finally ended, Aash'ih'iar began searching for Name-givers to kidnap and bring to the location where the kila was destroyed. Unfortunately, the spirit suffers severe amnesia whenever it reaches the location where the kila was disabled; this point happens to be over a mile in the air over a location in eastern Vasgothia. Any Name-givers in Aash'ih'iar's grasp are quickly forgotten, and typically fall to their deaths. Once Aash'ih'iar realizes what he is done, he again feels terrible remorse, but is not quite sane enough to realize that he shouldn't do it again.

Simply dispelling Aash'ih'iar to his home plane is not likely to cure his mental condition, though it may remove the problem until he is inadvertently summoned again. Adventurers may find a more permanent solution in the ruins of the kila itself; if Aash'ih'iar could be convinced that his aid would help the ship fly again, his sanity might return enough to stop his destructive behavior. This will be a challenge, considering that pieces of "Sword of Empire" lie scattered for several miles around...

GMs should feel free to relocate Aash'ih'iar to a different site of their preference, possibly into Vivane or southern Barsaive.

Firemaw

Strength 9 Fire Spirit

DEX: 10 **STR:** 13 **TOU:** 14
PER: 11 **WIL:** 12 **CHA:** 8

Initiative: 11
Number of Attacks: 6
Attack: 12
Damage: 14
Number of Spells: 5
Spellcasting: 8
Effect: See Below
Death Rating: 70
Wound Threshold: 15
Unconsciousness Rating: 61
Karma Step: 9
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 12 (15)
Spell Defense: 16
Social Defense: 13
Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 5
Knockdown: 10
Recovery Tests: 4
Combat Movement: 130
Full Movement: 260
Legend Points: 15,000
Karma Pts: 55

Powers: Astral Sight 20, Detect True Element, Engulf 21, Manifest (permanent), Manipulate Element, Share Knowledge, Spear 22, Enrage Element 21, Remove Element, Spells (Elementalist 9, Fire Only)

Firemaw is a spirit now permanently trapped on the material plane in Death's Sea. For reasons not fully understood, Firemaw is convinced that by devouring enough True Fire that he might be cured of his corruption and allowed to reenter the Plane of Fire. Firemaw is incorrect; because of the nature of his entrapment, the more True Fire he devours, the more strongly he is bound to the physical plane. Even after all this time he does not understand this fact, and it is very unlikely that he can be convinced of its truth.

Firemaw takes the form of a great whirlpool of fire rising out of the lava of Death's Sea. He preys upon passing air ships searching for Elemental Fire; he is smart enough to wait until an air ship has pulled an amount of True Fire out of the lava sea and attempt to take hold of the net itself. If possible he will attempt to knock out the entire air ship, devouring any True Fire he finds aboard the ship. Note that Firemaw is perfectly capable of devouring the free-floating True Fire in Death's Sea, but prefers the challenge of taking it from Name-givers.

Word of Firemaw has been spreading steadily through the ranks of the miners of Death's Sea; it is said that when a large whirlpool begins to form in the lava below an airship, it is a sign that Firemaw is ready to strike. However, stories regarding the fire spirit typically become distorted on the retelling, often depicting him as some sort of Horror. As a result,

those come to deal with the beast may not be prepared to deal properly with this powerful spirit.

Firemaw can only devour a certain amount of True Fire each day before he becomes sated; this amount is typically 10 to 20 kernels worth. Though the True Fire he consumes serves to bind him more fully to the material plane, it also slowly increases his power; as a result, his Spirit Strength rating (not his Strength attribute) increases by one for every ten years that he survives. It is unknown whether his strength has any upper bound.

Nylarthant

Strength 15 Ally Spirit

DEX: 12 **STR:** 13 **TOU:** 13
PER: 14 **WIL:** 13 **CHA:** 12

Initiative: 12
Number of Attacks: 5
Attack: 13
Damage: 16
Number of Spells: 5
Spellcasting: 13
Effect: See Below
Death Rating: 100
Wound Threshold: 20
Unconsciousness Rating: 89
Karma Step: 14
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Physical Defense: 12 (15)
Spell Defense: 17
Social Defense: 18
Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 8
Knockdown: 8
Recovery Tests: 4
Combat Movement: 120
Full Movement: 240
Legend Points: 25,000
Karma Pts: 60

Powers: Aid Summoner, Astral Portal, Astral Sight 29, Empathic Sense 27, Find 29, Haggle 27, Taunt 27, Disguise Self 29, Lifesense 29, Manifest, Confusion 28, Evil Eye 28, Possession 28, Temperature, Detect Trap 29, Detect Weapon 29, Spells (Nethermancer 8, Illusionist 9)

Nylarthant is an ancient being, one whose beginnings can be traced back to a peak in the magic cycle more than 2,000 years before the Scourge. It was during this earlier magical peak that Nylarthant's psyche was damaged permanently. The spirit became active again in Barsaive some time before the Scourge; he had grown in power significantly, and rode out the Scourge without serious difficulty.

While Nylarthant is certainly corrupt in his own way, he maintains his sanity and self-control, unlike many other corrupt spirits. His existence is rumored among many Name-givers, but very few know any real facts about him. Those few who have studied this being believe that he has made a number of pacts with powerful Horrors, but the nature of these pacts is a matter of speculation.

Rumors have it that Nylarthant is allied with the Broker arm of the Hand of Corruption; it is believed that they know his True name and summon him when they need information or help regarding matters of the spirit world. Nylarthant has been known on occasion to capture lesser spirits and deliver them to Name-giver spellcasters in return for favors or even artifacts.

Although Nylarthant may be allied with the Hand, the spirit has his own agenda and is slowly attempting to build up a power base of other spirits and Name-giver contacts. Before the Scourge, Nylarthant even made headway in building up a Name-giver cult around him, but the cult was dispersed with the arrival of the Horrors.

Nylarthant relies mostly on his spellcasting abilities and spirit powers when dealing with confrontation. He is particularly displeased with being summoned by anyone who he has not had previous dealings with. When Nylarthant physically manifests, he resembles a bloated humanoid with tremendous oversized tentacles that seem to wave about randomly. His body is completely black, though he is also somewhat hazy looking even when physically manifested.

Nylarthant is obviously quite a powerful being, on the same scale of some of the more powerful Horrors. For this reason, it is suggested that he be used as a long-term enemy rather than a one shot encounter.

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The Protector of Kaer Tallin

by Brian McCallister

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #7***

I have received a letter from a trusted companion, and heard an interesting story recently. I send them together as I fear they might be related.

-- Isam Dhur in a dispatch to the Swords of Light

I received this from Ghalubh, an Oathtaker to myself

My Friend,

I have an interesting tale to tell, one which I think may have important bearing on your friends. All I know of this is what has been told me by my friend, here referred to as a Survivor.

In the North East of the Twilight Peaks the Scourge destroyed all life. The mountains have become a barren, lifeless, dust-covered waste. Buried under a box canyon in this waste is Kaer Tallin. Several Name-Givers wander Barsaive claiming descent from those that weathered the Scourge in that kaer. They tell the tale of how the kaer was almost breached during the Scourge, but the kaers greatest Wizards and Nethermancers, for they possessed several powerful adepts of both these disciplines, went through a great blood ritual to summon a powerful spirit from the Netherworlds. This spirit was bound to the Kaer, and fueled its magic wards. Through the life sacrifice of its greatest heroes, Kaer Tallin purchased protection through the Scourge.

When the Survivors, as those who claim descent from this kaer call themselves, encounter one who seems to truly have the will and desire to destroy the Horrors they will lead them to Kaer Tallin and through the magical maze guarding the entrance. I am one who was taken. Inside I met a spirit, it appeared as a small cat, actually. I'm not familiar with the ways of spirits, but this appeared absurd. The spirit explained it could only exist on our world by possessing a creature of this world. It wasn't willing to take a Name-Giver. It offered aid to me, as it will to any who prove themselves against the Horrors. It would grant me some small power, in exchange for the power it needed to survive, a bit of blood.

I was understandably hesitant. Its not every day a spirit asks you for blood. It sounded too much the deal a Horror would make to enslave someone, and I declined. The spirit understood, and bid me luck. The Survivor who lead me to the kaer remains with me, and is in fact a good friend. He has worked with me in destroying several minor Horrors in the past, and we are presently working on finding that information you asked me to gather.

Yours Truly,
Ghalubh

Tsarnak's Sacrifice

A popular tale in Kratas and Jerris. This version was told in an alehouse popular with Air Sailors, near

the shipyards, in Jerris.

You've all heard of Tsarnak the T'skrang, I'm sure. How he journeyed to the Netherworlds themselves to fight Horrors, recovered the ancient blade Dmok-Nom, and was even once returned from death by a dragon. The stories place him in any and all of the disciplines, though they all agree he could use magic as a nethermancer. Haven't heard many new stories about him lately have you? Didn't think so. He's dead.

Takes a lot to kill a hero like Tsarnak, and apparently even more to keep him dead. He's gone for good this time though. Gave himself up to the magic, sacrificed himself and his blood all to build a spell the likes of which were lost to the Scourge.

A Horror laired deep in the Twilight Peaks. Big, evil, nasty, lots of teeth, the type who's pint you don't even think of touching when he turns his back. This Horror had apparently picked a personal fight with Tsarnak, gone out of its way to take the piss out of him somehow, and now Tsarnak was onto it. Well, Tsarnak took his friends, Fannon and Marcus the Swordmasters, Arimai the Weaponsmith, Durgan the Elementalist, and even the dragon Terryphin. He pulled in some serious favors to pull together this crew, but you couldn't ask for better, Wardens or high Journeymen all, and a bloody dragon!

This wily Horror was onto Tsarnak though. It decided to end the thing here, and destroy him. It called out to its servants throughout Barsaive, calling them home, calling them to their master. Constructs, creatures, corrupted Name-Givers, even lesser Horrors were called to ambush these heroes at the Horrors lair. By the time Tsarnak arrived, a small army of corruption awaited just inside the entrance to the Horror's lair.

Arimai, that stout Windling, flew ahead of his friends, alone into the mouth of the lair. We all know Windlings get a little too curious for themselves. Don't take offense over there, and stop looking through your mate's bag! There now, Arimai alone entered the mouth of the ambush. As tempting as he was, the minions of the Horror knew they needed their ambush to destroy these mighty foes, so they let the Windling through. Arimai, quick, and strong of mind if not body, spied out the ambush, but hid his realization. He flew back and forth in the great entrance, apparently waiting for his friends. How few know that Arimai studied with the Wind-Dancers and learned their wing speech. This saved them all, for Terryphin, that dragon, knew the talk and the ambush was revealed.

Tsarnak realized all hope of destroying the Horror was lost. The host assembled inside was too great, as mighty as this company might be, they couldn't hope to battle through all of this and still defeat the Horror itself. Tsarnak made a plan.

Marcus, Fannon, and Terryphin bolted inside at a sprint. Their speed caught their enemies by surprise and they gained a toehold into the Horrors lair. These mighty Swordmasters, and the dragon itself, held off the horde in their small toehold, only ten feet into the lair. The fighting that passed, and the feats of courage, can never be properly described, except to say that Fannon and Marcus both fought to their deaths, never letting themselves be pushed back even an inch to where Tsarnak and Durgan prepared a mighty spell. Their blades moved as light itself through shadows, they held back the black velvet curtain of evil trying to destroy Tsarnak before he could complete his spell.

Tsarnak himself knew some things are more important than his own, or his friends', lives. He prepared for a last and final spell. As he wove the ten threads his blood streamed in ribbons about him, forming into a pattern themselves enhancing and powering this last spell. He wove his magic and blood together while first Arimai fell, then Fannon. Then Marcus fell, and finally just the Dragon, and Durgan the Elementalist held back the horde. The Horror raised its scarred, blackened head now, and pushed through its own minions to reach the heroes. But it was too late. Tsarnak's body collapsed just as the Horror reached the Dragon, and the magic he wove spread out all through the Horrors lair, sealing its walls and exits. Nothing touched by a Horror could ever leave there again. As Tsarnak dropped, Terryphin snatched Durgan up, and

fled the lair of the Horror to the enraged howls of those trapped.

When you fly over the Twilight Peaks, and hear an unearthly howling coming from somewhere all around you, drop a coin for Tsarnak's Sacrifice. I'm told by great wizards that he must have given his own spirit to be trapped in the spell, so he lies there now, trapped with those he hates, forever.

Game Information

The Spirit of Kaer Tallin is a Horror, though a very subtle one. It recognizes the growing power of Name-Givers and seeks to thwart this power by corrupting those who destroy Horrors. It is completely willing to grant real power to those it makes deals with, but they pay in the end.

Protector works through intermediaries, and works them slowly. It manipulates them into doing what it wants over time. It will at first offer truly useful and valid information, and even secrets of where the Horrors come from. It can read the minds of any it has marked, so it possess a great deal of information, and will share this freely with those it has freshly marked. After trust has grown to be second nature, the Horror begins twisting the information. It is still accurate, but maybe an extra piece has come in that will incriminate an innocent, or force only a partial success in defeating another Horror. As it can read the minds of those it marks, it knows how hard it can push, and will remain patient. It will not show its hand.

Protector has corrupted fully a number of powerful name-givers. He uses their powers to augment his own. It will have a number of corrupted name-givers, including a high circle nethermancer who has made extensive use of the create life/alter life spells to make interesting, technically non-horror construct creatures to defend itself with. This defense will again be of a more subtle variety than crushing anyone that comes through the entry to the kaer intending to slay Protector.

Protector

Physical stats are determined by form currently inhabited
PER: 20 **WIL:** 20 **CHA:** 20

Initiative: Form (inhabited on physical)/ 25 (on astral)

Number of Attacks: 2

Attack: 20

Damage: 15

Number of Spells: 3

Spellcasting: 25

Effect: see above and below

Death Rating: Physical Form / 150 Astral

Wound Threshold: Physical Form / 28

Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Karma Points: 45

Physical Defense: Physical Form / 16 on Astral

Spell Defense: 20

Social Defense: 28

Armor: Physical Form / 15 on Astral

Mystic Armor: 32

Knockdown: Physical Form / Immune on Astral

Recovery Tests: 10

Combat Movement: Physical Form

Full Movement: Physical Form

Legend Points: 200,000

Karma Step: 14

Powers: Horror Mark* 25, Horror Thread* 25, Unnatural Life 16, Terror 14

Equipment: None

Loot: Protector has no treasure per se, but collects powerful items in order to destroy them in Deaths Sea, or to grant as Gifts to those it seeks to control.

Protector is a campaign level opponent. It thrives on manipulation and the building of slow terror and betrayal. The Horror lives (exists?) for the moment its victims realize what has happened to them and the damage they have done. This realization is only worth it if the wait was long and the building to betrayal careful.

Protector forces one of two eventualities on its victims. Either they wind up betraying all that they love, or they are betrayed by all that they love. Both of these ends satisfy the Horror.

Presently Protector is trapped in Kaer Tallin by the magic of Tsarnak. This doesn't particularly bother Protector, though it wouldn't pass at a chance to break free. It very much bothers the constructs, and corrupted Name-Givers trapped with protector though. Any Horror, or Horror-construct that enters the Kaer will become trapped inside. Horror-marked individuals can pass freely in and out of the kaer.

Protector is an Astral Horror, and has no material form of its own. It possesses those it marks, and bides its time patiently in almost any form. To kill the Horror it must be attacked on the Astral Plane, not an easy task. Killing the present form of the Horror only destroys that form. The Horror can travel astrally to any it has marked and attempt to possess them.

Protector's Horror Mark is very special. It can only mark those who accept something from it. Accepting power in exchange for blood magic gives the Horror a +10 bonus to its Horror Mark test. After a target is marked, Protector can learn anything it seeks from the targets mind at the cost of one karma point. Protector has a vast memory and generally prods his unknowing servants over time until it knows everything about the target. Usually it is not possible to detect this probing, but a successful Perception test against a 20, a 30 if the character has made a blood sacrifice to Protector, will allow them to realize the information is being picked out as it is being found. They remain powerless to stop it however. If confronted, Protector freely admits drawing the information, and justifies it as someone else hunting a Horror elsewhere needed it. Protector posses the power of Suppress Mark, and uses this to hide his mark in every case.

Protector's Horror Thread power is his most dangerous. This is the means by which Protector grants power to its victims. Before he can weave the initial thread, the victim must have made a blood sacrifice to Protector. As he weaves threads he grants them powers. The things Protector can grant with each rank of Horror Thread are as follows:

Increase Karma Step +2
Increase an Attribute +2
Increase a Talent +2
: This does not increase the rank, merely the step at which rolls are made using that talent.
Harden the Victims skin to become chitinous
: This provides 3 points of Physical Armor on top of any normally worn. It is obvious however, so Protector rarely uses this.
Elongate and harden the victims fingers into talons.
: This allows Str + 6 unarmed attacks to be made. Any melee weapon use, or fine manipulation with the hands is at -3 steps. This too is obvious, and rarely used.
Grant Unnatural Life
: This is slightly different form the normal Unnatural Life. The victim does become undead, but can

only make additional recovery tests as per Unnatural Life at a cost of 1 karma per recovery test.

Any of the last three uses of the Horror Thread cause the victim to become a Horror Construct, and any items or spells that have a specific effect on Horror Constructs will effect the victim as one.

Protector can increase the Horror Thread rank only when the victim accepts aid directly from Protector, and that aid leads them to an act they will later regret. At that point Protector has the option of increasing the rank. However, Protector frequently will choose not to do this, and will almost always avoid using the last three powers.

When the Horror Thread rank equals the victim's willpower step the victim loses independence of thought and becomes a complete Horror Construct under the control of Protector. Protector will continue to use the victim in a subtle method, and often it is not immediately apparent the victim has lost control and the Horror has gained control. Protector will have by this time picked the victims mind so clean that he can reasonably imitate the actions, and ideas of the character. Any person familiar with the victim may roll perception against Protectors Social Defense in order to detect this for each day of casual contact. Obviously, anything brought out in role-playing doesn't require the roll.

Adventure Hooks

Characters that have a long and successful career fighting Horrors could be approached by one of the Survivors. Any sane character used to dealing with Horrors would decline Protectors trade offer. Allow this, but make sure each player is approached separately and not within hearing, out of game, of the others. Play on greed, but carefully. Don't give it away here. If they accept the offer, good, have fun. If they decline, have the Survivor accompany them and prove the worth of Protector. Maybe they will come back later and accept a gift, if not the blood sacrifice.

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Introduction
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Introduction

There is little known of the foul creatures we have come to call undead. Most simply shudder at the mention of the name, terrified by the memories of childhood stories that speak of cruel and tortured spirits that kill for pleasure and live through some form of twisted nether-magic. I too was haunted by these stories, and have taken it upon myself to speak with Fraz'l, the famed elven nethermancer, so that I might try to understand how and why these creatures exist.

From our conversations, I learned that there are many more types of undead than I was led to believe through my childhood. Of course, I had heard the stories of armies of animated skeletons and cadaver men marching on towns and slaughtering women and children alike. I had even heard of the demiwraiths, evil spirits who could hide in any shadow and waited in dark alleys and streets for children and unsuspecting travelers to pass by. I had always assumed that these were the only types of undead that a man such as I would ever have to fear. Now, after my discussion with Fraz'l, I am ashamed to say that I sleep with a lantern by my bed and a symbol of Garlen about my neck. Even though Fraz'l insists that none of the Passions exert influence over the undead, I feel safer with Her beside me.

There are many types of undead with many different natures and desires, I have come to learn. Fraz'l has classified them by appearance and purpose. The smallest and most easily defined group of undead are the corporeal undead. These are the undead which have true physical bodies, such as

zombies, skeletons, ghouls, cadaver men, and, some would argue, demiwraiths. Of these, all but the demiwraiths may be Horror constructs, animated and created by the Horrors and able to follow simple commands. These fall into the category of controlled undead. They are the easiest of all the undead to understand and deal with, and, as Fraz'l says, the easiest to fight.

The second major category are the non-corporeal undead. These seem to exist in a number of places at once, including the netherworld, the astral plane, and the physical plane. It is these undead which terrify me, ghosts which may pass through walls and banshees whose screams can pull your very soul from your body. Non-corporeal undead are also frequently called apparitions, as they generally appear as shimmering or misty vaguely humanoid forms. These undead have the most terrifying purpose as well. Very few of the non-corporeal undead are Horror constructs, spectral dancers being a most noteworthy exception. These undead have returned to their half-life most often through sheer willpower alone. They continue to exist through hatred alone, and it is this hatred of the living that drives them and causes them to seek out and kill any opportune targets. Many of the non-corporeal undead still possess a spark of intelligence from their former life, as well as bits and pieces of memories that seem only to torture them and drive them insane by reminding them of the world which they may never truly be a part of again.

These apparitions, Fraz'l tells me, are the most dangerous. Some may be quite cunning and attempt to lure you into a trap before they strike, while others will attack with a blind fury fueled by pure hatred. It is their unpredictability, Fraz'l says, which makes them so dangerous. In addition to the undead's ferocity or cunning in combat, those who find themselves in battle with an apparition may encounter other troubles as well. Those apparitions which exist mostly on the astral or nether planes often cannot be hit by normal weapons. The further a spirit goes from the physical plane, the more difficult it is to hit. Wood and stone weapons are the first to fail, followed by iron and then silver (though many doubt the effectiveness of silver in any combat, as it is such a soft metal). Eventually, one needs magical weapons that can strike into the astral to even hope to win a fight with an apparition. Fortunately these apparitions are rare -- most can indeed be struck by common weapons.

-- Jared, Assistant Researcher, Great Library of Throal, 1505 Th.

Zombies

Zombies are a type of animated undead. They are often created by Horrors or nethermancers with the 5th circle Nethermantic spell Animate Zombie (described below). Zombies can be formed from any Name-giver that has been dead for more than a year and a day. After this period of time the last of the residual soul of the deceased has left the body and it may be animated. The magic that animates the zombies gives them unusual strength and toughness. They attack with their hands, which are usually dried and drawn like bone clubs. Zombies follow the will of their masters, and may be given simple commands.

Zombies have a very interesting special ability called Restore Undead. If another zombie receives damage beyond its death rating and "dies," any other zombie within 10 yards of it may make a Spellcasting Test. The Difficulty for this test is 6 (the spell defense of the zombies). If successful, the zombie makes an Effect Test, and any fallen zombies within 10 yards recovers the result in damage points at the cost of one recovery test. If no recovery tests are available, the fallen zombies remain dead. If they recover enough damage to bring them back below their death rating, they may rise at the end of that round and continue fighting from the beginning of the next round.

DEX: 5 **STR:** 7 **TOU:** 7
PER: 4 **WIL:** 7 **CHA:** 5

Initiative: 4
Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: 6
Damage: 9
Number of Spells: (1)
Spellcasting: 5
Effect: Restore Undead (12)
Death Rating: 40
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 33

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 12
Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 2
Knockdown: 10
Recovery Tests: 2 (d12, see below)
Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60
Legend Points: 50

Equipment: None
Loot: 20% adorned with jewelry worth 2d6x10 sp

Animate Zombie

Circle 5 Nethermancer Spell
Threads: 3
Weaving Difficulty: 9/18
Range: Touch
Duration: Rank days
Effect: create zombies
Casting Difficulty: 6
The Nethermancer must be touching a corpse dead for more than a year and a day while he weaves the threads for this spell. He may only animate one zombie at a time with this spell. At the end of the duration, the zombies fall to the ground unmoving. If the nethermancer wishes he may spend a point of blood magic while casting the spell for each zombie created and they will exist for a year and a day before the spell expires (unless they are killed first of course). Zombies understand the commands of their masters and will follow a simple command to the best of their ability. While waiting to follow it's commands a zombie will remain completely still and will not move unless attacked, they are often mistaken for lifeless corpses. If the conditions for a command are not met the zombie will not follow them. (Example: Kill anything that passes through that door. If something was to come through the wall next to the door the zombie would not attack it).

Shadowmen

Shadowmen are the undead spirits of those who died without having had the chance to confront their opponents, honorable warriors who died at the hands of assassins, magicians and traps. The souls of such warriors are often so tormented by the loss of honor that through willpower alone their spirits come back to take vengeance on the world that wronged them. Trapped forever in darkness by the shadow that has fallen over their own souls, Shadowmen live an existence of torture and despair. It is sad that, with their spirits so wracked with grief and anger, they have stopped caring about honor and clean fighting. Instead, they use their powers only to kill as quickly as possible.

Shadowmen appear as wispy dark silhouettes, roughly 6 feet tall and wielding smoky blades of mist. Detecting a shadow man is difficult in all but the most well lighted conditions. In near or total darkness, Shadowmen are practically invisible. They do not give off a heat signature nor can they be seen with low light vision on a perception test less than a 20, in which case a glimpse of movement is all that is gained. Under better lighting conditions, Shadowmen can be seen normally, though they are disconcerting to look at due to their swirling form. It is important to note that, unlike a true shadow, a Shadowman does not require light to exist, nor are they damaged by too much light. The name Shadowman is given to them due to their shadow-like appearance. This misnomer has cost many a young adept their lives as they hold up a light quartz to drive the creatures back.

Shadowmen have two very frightening abilities. The first, Shadow Shift, allows the Shadowman to change his weapon from a physical blade into a mystic blade. The Shadowman must first inflict a successful hit with their shadow blade, then make a Spellcasting Test against their opponent's Spell Defense. If successful, the blade shimmers and becomes a mystic blade, passing through physical armor and causing mystic damage. After the swing, the blade returns to its physical form. The shadow blade is a step 9 weapon. It will exist for one hour after its wielder's death, then it will dissipate unless a thread is woven to the weapon. (Maximum Threads 2, Spell Defense 14, Key Knowledge: Learn the Shadowman's Name). If a thread is woven, the blade may be used as a normal weapon without the benefit of the Shadow shift ability. Though there are rumors that the weapons are true thread items, no one yet has learned more about them.

The Shadowman's second ability, Shadow Double, is similar to the nethermancy spell Spirit Double,

except the shadow body created for the spirit to inhabit is a copy of that of the target creature, who must be touched, and the Difficulty for the spell is the Spell Defense of the target creature. The Shadow Double will have the physical attributes (Str, Tou, Dex) of the parent body with the mental attributes (Per, Wil, Chr) of the Shadowman. Shadowmen frequently try to create a spirit double of a person and have it attack their likeness, before revealing themselves in combat.

DEX: 7 **STR:** 5 **TOU:** 8
PER: 7 **WIL:** 10 **CHA:** 5

Initiative: 10
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 10
Damage: 14
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 12
Effect: Shadow Shift, Shadow Double
Death Rating: 46
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: NA

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 14
Social Defense: 12
Armor: 7
Mystic Armor: 8
Knockdown: 9
Recovery Tests: 1
Combat Movement: 70
Full Movement: 140
Legend Points: 450

Equipment: Shadow blade (Treasure worth Lp. if preserved)
Loot: None

Flickerings

Flickerings are the lost souls of those who died within the walls of Parlainth during the Scourge. These souls, who for some reason were not put to rest properly, are destined to walk the ruins of Parlainth forever, trapped half-way between this world and the dimension in which Parlainth hid during the Scourge. Trapped as they are, Flickerings have a horrible jealousy of those who are able to walk the world of men and die as men. The soul of a Flickering can never be truly laid to rest without being burned in a hearth blessed by Garlen. If a Flickering dies in any other way, it will reappear in Parlainth within an hour, thus they are fearless in their attacks. Flickerings received their name from their shimmering silver blue form that vanishes and reappears from moment to moment. If they leave the ruins in spirit form they will fade from existence and reappear within Parlainth in one hour.

Flickerings have developed two special powers to aid them in their quest for death. Their blink ability allows the flickering to move from one location to another by shifting momentarily into another plane and then back again in a new location. To do this, they must make a Spellcasting test against a Difficulty of 5. They can then move up to the Effect Test result in yards from their original location.

Their second ability can only be used on an unconscious character. When a character falls unconscious, the flickering may make a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If successful, the flickering inhabits the body of the target and may use it freely. A possessed character may make a Willpower Test after becoming conscious (they must have a recovery test to become conscious, or be given a potion) to eject the flickering. The Difficulty is the Effect result of the possession. This is also the Difficulty for Dispel Magic. The flickering may be slain, driving it from the victim's body, but unless magic such as Undead Struggle is used it will harm the body as well as the spirit. Calling out the victim's name and speaking to him of memories and people important to him will allow him to add 2 steps to his Willpower Test to reclaim his body. An ejected flickering is penalized as if knocked down for a number of rounds equal to the duration of the possession. Some Flickerings retain memories from their previous life, and can use a possessed body to express their feelings and emotions.

Flickerings inhabit bodies so that they may seek out a Questor of Garlen who will help them find rest. They frequently use the possessed body to knock other characters unconscious, so that other Flickerings may take control of the body. The Flickerings only seek to rescue their people from endless torture. NOTE: A flickering cannot use any special abilities of the victims, including Talents.

DEX: 6 **STR:** 5 **TOU:** 7
PER: 8 **WIL:** 5 **CHA:** 7

Initiative: 6
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 8
Damage: 7
Number of Spells: 2
Spellcasting: 10
Effect: 14, Blink, Possession
Death Rating: 40
Wound Threshold: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: NA
Equipment: None

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 11
Social Defense: 14
Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 5
Knockdown: 7
Recovery Tests: 2
Combat Movement: 35
Full Movement: 70
Legend Points: 400

Loot: When a flickering is burned in a blessed hearth, it leaves behind a silver/blue diamond worth d4x100 sp. This gem counts as treasure worth Legend Points (poor compensation for a dead friend).

Black Daggers

Black Daggers may be of any race and profession. The numbers given here are assuming human assassins. Modifications should be made accordingly for more complex Black Dagger adepts.

Black Daggers were once powerful members of the cult known as the Keys of Death. When nearing their deaths, these men and women swore a pledge that they would continue to serve and fight for Death's freedom long after their lives had ended. They then sacrificed themselves with a jet black dagger made of the finest obsidian. Somehow their prayers were answered, and they were granted continued existence in a non-corporeal form. They have retained all of their memories and abilities and have only become more deadly since their deaths. They are found in all parts of the world, especially in and around major cities. They have the ability to physically manifest themselves at will and often use this ability to serve as councilors and advisors to those who would begin wars. When in their physical form, Black Daggers wear all black. Their hair, eyes, and nails all are of the purest ebony, while their skin is pale white. For this reason, they wear

long deep hooded black robes. Their only weapon is a magical black dagger that can shift with them along with their possessions into the astral plane. Their astral shift is not complete however, and they leave a wispy image of themselves on the physical plane.

Black Daggers consider them to be members and leaders of Death's elite army. They strive to spill as much blood as possible and they prefer to do it in a ritualistic manner as opposed to in combat. If they knock someone unconscious in combat, they will move on to the next opponent, leaving the unconscious one for later sacrifice.

In game terms, Black Daggers have two sets of scores, one for their physical manifestation and one for their astral form, the numbers for the astral form appearing in parentheses. It is rumored that some adepts have even been accepted as Black Daggers. They retain their skills and talents and karma while in their physical form, and may continue to advance as though still living.

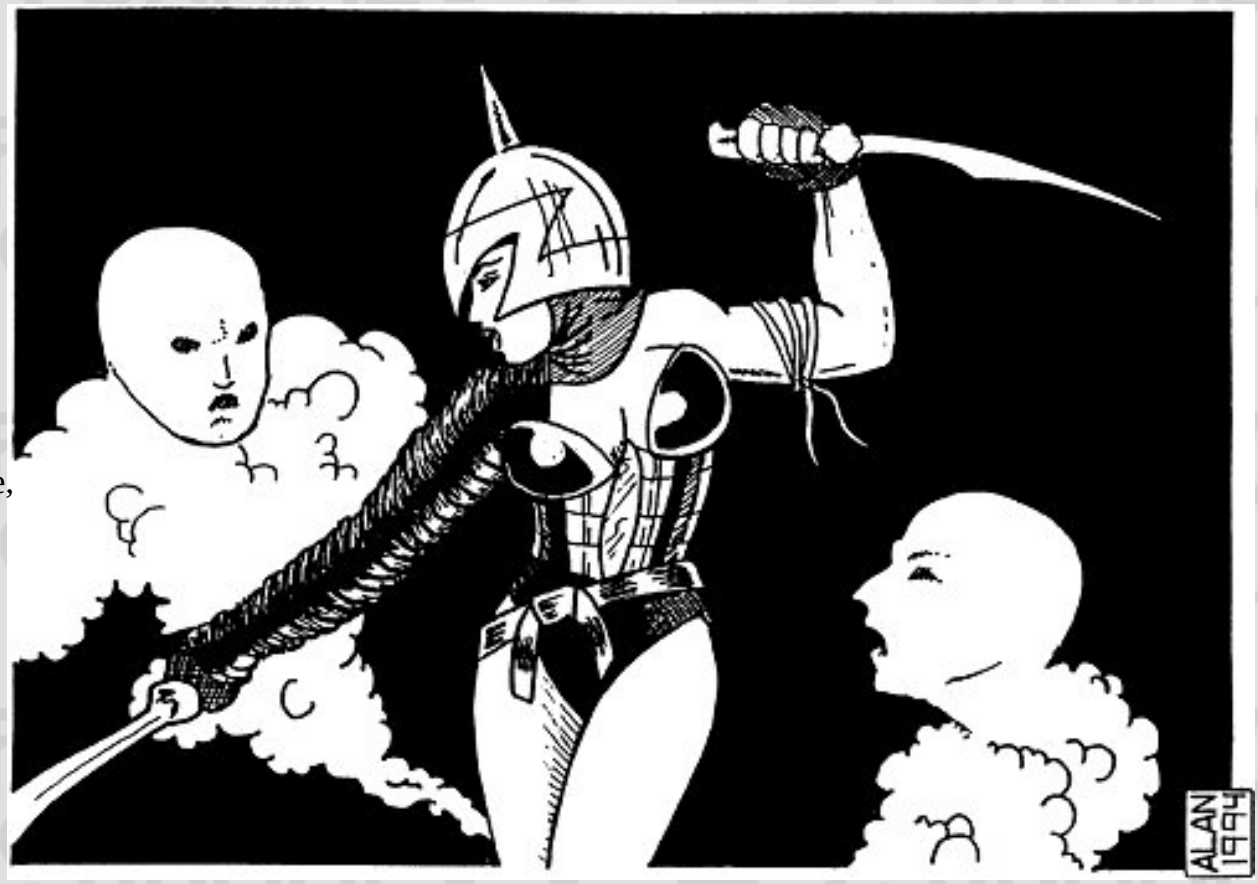
The shift from astral to physical takes one complete round, in which no other action may be performed, including tests of any sort. If the Black Dagger is forced to make a test, they may try to shift again in the next round. The only weapon wielded by a Black Dagger is the dagger that was used for their own sacrifice. It binds them to their oath, and if they are separated from their dagger for more than 1 full round, they will dissipate and never reform again. The dagger has other properties as well which allow it to strike into the physical plane from the astral. When a Black dagger is killed or dissipated, its dagger loses its magical functions and becomes a normal, finely crafted obsidian dagger. In addition, the magic that allows them to shift all equipment into the astral fails and their items fall to the ground.

DEX: 8 (10) **STR:** 7 (8) **TOU:** 9 (9)
PER: 6 (8) **WIL:** 7 (7) **CHA:** 8 (6)

Initiative: 8 (10)
Number of Attacks: 1 (1)
Attack: 12 (14)
Damage: 11 (12)
Number of Spells: NA
Spellcasting: NA
Effect: NA
Death Rating: 50
Wound Threshold: 14
Unconsciousness Rating: 43
Special Abilities: Astral Shift
Equipment: As physical manifestation
Loot: Black Dagger (250 sp) counts as treasure worth legend points

Physical Defense: 11 (15)
Spell Defense: 10 (14)
Social Defense: 10 (12)
Armor: 4 (7)
Mystic Armor: 4 (7)
Knockdown: 10 (13)
Recovery Tests: 4
Combat Movement: 50 (80)
Full Movement: 100 (160)
Legend Points: 850

Spirit Wind



A Spirit Wind is formed when a large number of people die together in a single event, such as an earthquake, volcanic eruption, being bathed in flame by a dragon, etc. When many lives are lost at once, the carriers of the dead that escort the souls to the netherworld become confused and overwhelmed by all the pleading and grabbing souls. When this occurs, a large number of souls never make it to the netherworld and become trapped on the physical plane. The souls are then abandoned by the carriers of the dead and left in anguish on the physical plane. Seeking solace, these souls often join together to form one larger entity, each soul blending into the whole. It is for these reasons that Spirit Winds frequently haunt the halls of kaers and villages that have been decimated by Horrors. Spirit Winds kill so that they may attempt to trick more souls into entering the mass. The more souls contained in a Spirit Wind, the more powerful it may become.

The strength of a Spirit Wind depends on the number of souls trapped within it. When a character dies within 100 yards of a spirit wind, the wind may make a Charisma Test against the character's Social Defense. On an Excellent success or better, the new soul is pulled into the spirit wind. On the reverse side of things, however, if a character actively attempts to appease the spirit wind, they may make a Charisma or applicable Talent test against the Social Defense of the wind. The wind has a -2 social defense against all nethermancers. On a Good success or better, a soul will leave the wind, reducing its power. A spirit wind usually forms with 3-12 souls trapped in it. Use this number for calculating the step of the wind. Winds of more than 15 souls are rarely heard of, though one legend tells of a wind numbering over 100 souls that sweeps over Death's Sea every fifty years or so.

The wind attacks by sending spirits circulating about a character screaming with an anguished wail. A psychic scream tears into the soul of the target character, and attempts to separate the soul from the body. The Difficulty for the scream is the target's Spell Defense. The Effect test determines damage. Mystic armor reduces damage. The wind may attack as many characters in one round as it has spells, as long as they are within 2+step yards of the center of the wind. The spirits are visible as pale blue white streaks of light, in the form of Name-giver bodies with stretched anguished faces.

DEX: 6+step **STR:** 5+step **TOU:** 9+step
PER: 10+step **WIL:** 12+step **CHA:** 3+step

Initiative: 12+step
Number of Attacks: NA
Attack: NA
Damage: NA
Number of Spells: 2+step
Spellcasting: 12+step
Effect: Psychic Scream (15+step)
Death Rating: 50 + (5 x step)
Wound Threshold: 14+step
Unconsciousness Rating: NA
Special Abilities: Flight
Equipment: NA
Loot: NA

Physical Defense: 14+step
Spell Defense: 9+step
Social Defense: 8+step (6+step)
Armor: 6+step
Mystic Armor: 6+step
Knockdown: 12+step
Recovery Tests: 1+step
Combat Movement: 75
Full Movement: 150
Legend Points: see below

Legend Points are based on the step of the spirit wind destroyed or dissipated.

Step	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
LP	969	1940	2959	5505	9510	19890	33125	53300	74700	101800	144150	199200

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Concerning the Weather

by Andrew W. Ragland

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal*** #4

The following is a series of records by several authors. The weather, or lack thereof, in Barsaive has spawned a spirited debate. In putting together this collection, I have tried to represent all sides fairly. I feel that I must apologize in advance for the vituperative tone of some of the writings herein, but I could not in good conscience present the debate in an altered state. Obviously, the topic has stirred strong feelings on all sides. I leave it to the reader to decide which theory is the most well-constructed and likely.
-- Thom Edrull, Archivist and Scribe, Hall of Records

A Theory Regarding The Weather

Evanten Farseeker, Questor of Jaspree, Field Researcher in Flora and Fauna, Hall of Records, Throal

In the course of my wanderings, I have found that Barsaive's weather does not show much in the way of variance. In the vicinity of the Kingdom of Throal, the frequency of rain is roughly the same as in Travar, to the south, or Jerris, far to the west. The days are generally sunny and warm, the nights cool but not uncomfortably so.

This lack of variance is not, of course, great news. Merrox himself, in the chapter "Regarding the Land and Its Places" in An Explorer's Guide to Barsaive, remarks on the lack of winter. More than simply a lack of winter, however, the climate of Barsaive is unusually even in both temperature and temperament. What differences there are in the weather are primarily due to regional influences. The area surrounding the Servos Jungle sees an increase in humidity from its proximity to the rainforest. Death's Sea and the heat washing from it renders the surrounding region perpetually hot and dry. The upper reaches of the mountains, such as the Throalic and Caucavik ranges, are colder than the lowlands, occasionally seeing precipitation as snow rather than rain.

The question that remains is, why is this so? Why is the weather so even? Old records from before the Scourge talk about weather, its effects on travel, on military campaigns, on the cycle of planting and harvesting. The log of the Earthdawn records encounters with violent storms, days of extreme heat followed by nights of vicious cold, and difficulties with the wild unpredictability of the climate. Yet just a few years later, as the kaers began to be opened across the land, the climate settled down to its current steady state. The storms

vanished, replaced by gentle, soaking rains. The temperature flattened out, so that we exist in a sort of perpetual spring.

I have given considerable thought to this question, and feel that I finally have a cogent theory to put forth. The working of magic through patterns forged in astral space is well documented. Also on record is the power of belief on a large scale. Wide knowledge of the legend of a great hero lends strength to that hero's True Pattern. Even without a direct link to that Pattern, without formal training in the moving of power through patterns, if enough Name-Givers believe firmly, power is moved, and concentrated in the pattern of the object of their beliefs.

The reason for this is simple: the highly advanced level of ambient mana. Yes, the current has ebbed, the level of magic in the world having reached its peak in the depths of the Scourge. However, again well documented is the fact that the ebb of magic from the world ceased with the ending of the Scourge, that the level of ambient mana is still quite high and shows no sign of decreasing any further. Because of the easy availability of magical power, the beliefs of Name-Givers on a large scale have power, regardless of their training in the manipulation of magic, or the lack of same.

When you meet a farmer, and ask him what he would wish for, given one wish, the first thing that comes to his mind is a good harvest. Ask yourself this: What is required for a good harvest? While you are asking questions of yourself, ask this: Does anyone ever wish for foul weather?

The answers are simple. Good weather is a common and devout wish. Weather that is conducive to good harvests, being several months of gentle, soaking rains, followed by several months of clear weather with only sporadic and brief showers, is greatly desired by the majority of the people of Barsaive, the majority making their living from the land and the cultivation thereof. It is my hypothesis that the continual wishes for fine growing weather by so many Name-Givers have forged a Pattern, and that the exertion of power through that Pattern is maintaining our climate in an even state. While not deliberate, we ourselves are the cause of the oddity.

This hypothesis can be extended, however, to an unsettling conclusion. If indeed the collective wishes of the people of Barsaive are responsible for the climate, then the normal patterns are being held in abeyance by this force. The theories of magic hold that natural forces cannot be eliminated, only diverted or suppressed. Once the ambient mana level drops sufficiently, and I am not alone in believing that it will eventually begin to drop again as the cycle of magic continues on its course, then the normal climatic patterns will reassert themselves. My fear is that the patterns of weather are like a river that has been dammed. As the level of magic in the world drops, the dam becomes weaker, while the pressure of the water behind the dam continues to steadily increase. Eventually, the dam will break, and the river will resume its normal course with great force.

Thus, I fear that the climate will return to its normal course with great violence. After a

century or more of no winter, the coming of the ice will be nearly as terrible and destructive as the Scourge. Great waves of ice will sweep south through Barsaive with such speed that animals in the field will be surprised, entrapped and frozen for later generations to find. It is quite possible that Name-Givers could themselves be taken unawares by the ice and frozen in their tracks.

I dearly hope that my theory will not see its ultimate extrapolation proven correct. In the case that I am correct, however, Barsaive should prepare for the coming of the ice. The kaers that saw us through the Scourge would work equally well against natural disaster as against magical. When the magic begins to fade from the world, the peoples of Barsaive must make a decision, as to whether or not to believe in my predictions. I do fear that sufficient belief in the coming of the ice could bring it down upon us, even if it originally would not have come.

-- EF

A Discourse on the Climate and the Reasons Therefor

Ivoc Omeodry, Scholar of Passion Lore, Hall of Records

A number of mysteries occupy the scholars of Barsaive -- the deeper secrets of magic, the origin of the dragons, the cycles of magic and why they seem to have been interrupted. An issue that has been made into a mystery, however, deserves dismissal at this time, and that is the question of the weather. A great deal of valuable time has been taken up with discussion of something that causes no harm, that inconveniences no person, and that in fact provides a great benefit to all Name-Givers throughout the province. It is high time that this discussion was dismissed, the obvious answer accepted and valuable time freed to consider issues of far greater importance and complexity.

Evanten Farseeker points out that when the Earthdawn made its historic first voyage, that the weather was terrible. This is no great surprise. The land had been ravaged by the Horrors. However, when the Name-Givers emerged from the kaers and began the task of rebuilding, the violent storms and terrible extremes of temperature quickly vanished. Evanten postulates the gradual formation of a Pattern, evolving from such vague antecedents as a wish for a nice growing season. He obviously has little understanding of the true workings of magic.

Patterns do not simply happen. They are made. There is a reason why the intelligent peoples of Barsaive are known as the Name-Givers. It is because the minds of these people are strong enough to make an imprint on the structure of the world. By Giving a Name to a thing, a True Pattern is created. That Pattern can then be manipulated by magical techniques to alter the thing Named. The creation of a True Pattern, the Giving of a Name, does not happen by

accident. Patterns do not simply arise. They are made. In order for a Pattern to exist that would affect the weather, someone, a Name-Giver, would have had to Name the Pattern.

This is the rankest of hubris, to assume the powers of the Passions to the Name-Givers. No person has ever had sufficient power to alter the weather over an entire province. If such was possible, surely the Therans would have used it against us in the War. No, the answer to the question of the climate of Barsaive is quite obvious: The Passions.

When the Name-Givers emerged from the kaers, and began the task of reforesting and healing the land, Jaspree took pity on us. Being the Passion of growing things, He of course would want to see us succeed in our task in as short a time as possible. Therefore, the Passion bent His will upon the climate, and produced a weather pattern most conducive to regrowth. When the task is completed, I am quite sure that the weather patterns will return to normal, whatever that may be for our part of the world, in a short time. But there will be no second Scourge.

Evanten Farseeker promotes himself to exalted levels, placing himself on a par with Elianar Messias and the founders of the School of Shadows, with his theory of the coming of the ice. Surely he, as a Questor of Jaspree, cannot truly believe that such a thing will occur? The Passion would never allow the forces of nature, which are after all His to control, to scour the land of the very forests which He has altered the weather to encourage.

Perhaps now this topic can be dropped in favor of more relevant and useful pursuits.

-- IO

The Question of Barsaive's Climate

Levzender Toareg, Elementalist, City of Wishon, Kingdom of Throal

This is indeed a touchy issue. I have seen very little stir up quite so much depth of feeling short of Alachia's decision to implement the Ritual of the Thorns. There do not seem to be any disinterested parties, some having a larger axe to grind than others. Having read the work of Evanten Farseeker and Ivoc Omeodry, as well as related records of the current and previous eras, and given appropriate consideration to the theories presented therein, I see a possible compromise.

We know that greater magics are possible at the height of the cycle of magic, when the ambient power is at its peak. Such were the magics spun in the depths of the Scourge, to hold back the Horrors that breached the protections of the kaers, and during the previous rise of mana, when the Books of Harrow were written. We know that there were greater magics long ago, but we do not have access to sufficient power now due to the subsidence of the

world's mana.

A mere hundred years ago, when the first kaers were opened and we emerged blinking into the grey light of the post-Scourge world, the world had been scoured of life, but magic was still quite strong, as it is today, as powerful as it had been before the Scourge, when the Rites of Protection and Passage were spun to close the kaers. It is my considered belief that in those early days, the Questors of Jaspree, the elementalists and the wizards took council together and found a way to quicken the healing of Barsaive. Powerful magics were invoked to provide an optimum climate for reforestation. In a cooperative effort between the magicers and the Questors, and with the blessing of the Passions, the Name-Givers, or at least a faction thereof, altered the weather, constructing a Pattern and empowering it quite deliberately in possibly the greatest effort of group working since the sealing of the citadels and the relocation of Parlainth.

These magics will slowly release as the world is reforested, the climate showing stronger variety, and when the land is fully healed from the depredations of the Horrors, the last vestiges will fade and the seasons return. There will be no coming of the ice, as the natural order will gradually reassert itself. The Pattern of the weather modification would logically include such a safety mechanism. It would be self-defeating to speed the recovery of the world, only to have it destroyed again in a backlash from the very method that rebuilt it.

As to why no one seems to be able to find the records of this working, that arguably must exist, as we are if nothing else compulsive about documenting our exploits? Well, I remind the reader that Elianar Messias found the Books of Harrow in the early days of our era, at a time when they were needed, and in sufficient time for them to be useful. They had lain hidden for at least eight thousand years before that, undiscovered, not needed until magic rose again and another Scourge became possible. How was this so? Surely anyone who has read this far would see the possibility of a Pattern hiding the books, and releasing when specific conditions -- the rise of magic, the presence of a scholar -- were fulfilled. Such powerful works would have been useless in lesser hands, perhaps even dangerous, and could have been easily destroyed if they had come into the possession of an illiterate. Who is to say that the techniques for altering the climate have not been recorded, and hidden away for discovery in the next cycle of magic, when they may once again be needed?

-- LT

Afterword

This comprises the central threads of the debate. There are numerous ancillary writings. A bibliography of agreements, dissents, supporting and contradictory records follows for the reader who wishes to delve further into this topic. I am considering having copies made and assembling a collected volume, but right now there simply is not enough time, the clerks and copyists are overburdened and, as Ivoc pointed out, there are more pressing subjects for

discussion and research.

-- Thom Edrull

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Cookery of Barsaive

by Andrew W. Ragland

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #6***

In the course of my travels, I have taken copious notes regarding cookery. Some of my comments have made it into the records, but only as brief observations on restaurants and rooming-house kitchens. I have thus taken the time to begin collating my notes into a proper guide to the food of Barsaive. This work will eventually be gathered into a volume, divided by racial and regional specialties, and organized in the traditional categories. For now, I will begin with my more recent culinary experiences.

-- Tarliman Joppos, Scholar of City Lore, Hall of Records, Throal

---

Veroniki with Cream Sauce

Regional/Southwest/Plains

A specialty in the region around Anghali G'Hosteren, I managed to get Bria Nairn of Sebkha's Lodging House to give me her recipe. These small fried dumplings are deceptively filling. My attempts at making them have not quite matched Bria's work, despite having her recipe, but then my hand is not as practiced as hers. Interestingly, veroniki have their origins in human culinary traditions, but Bria, the acknowledged master of the dish in Anghali G'Hosteren, is dwarven.

Pastry:

2 to 3 cups sifted whole wheat flour
2 tbsp fresh yeast
1 cup warm milk
2 tbsp softened butter
3 egg yolks
1/4 cup sugar
2 Tbsp dark ale
grated peel of 1 lemon
generous pinch of salt

Filling:

1 pound sausage (sage or smoked, not hot)
1 onion, chopped

Generous dash cinnamon

Or for elves and anyone else who doesn't want meat in their diet:

2 cups fresh greens
1 onion, chopped
½ cup goat cheese
Generous dash cinnamon
Pinch sage (scant)
Pinch basil (generous)

Sauce:

2 Tbsp. butter
1/4 tsp. pepper
Generous dash of nutmeg
1 tsp. salt
3 tsp minced fresh ginger
½ tsp cumin
1 tsp garlic powder
1 cup plain yogurt
1 cup milk
2 tbsp whole wheat flour

Bring up the ingredients from the cellar or spring room well in advance, so that they can all come up to room temperature before you begin.

Mix yeast, 2 tbsp milk, 1 tsp sugar, and set aside to rise.

Blend milk, lemon peel, salt and rum. Set aside. Beat egg, add remaining sugar and butter, beat till frothy. Add egg mixture to milk mixture. Add yeast to liquids.

Add liquids to flour and work into a smooth dough. Don't add all the liquids at once. Use about half to start with, then the rest in small portions as you blend the flour and liquids using a fork until well blended. Start with 2 cups of flour, and add more if the dough is sticky. Add flour in small amounts and work it in well before deciding whether or not to add more. Work the dough with a wooden spoon until it separates easily from the bowl. Cover and let rise until doubled in bulk, about an hour.

Crumble the sausage into a skillet, add the onion and cinnamon and fry until sausage is done and onions are transparent. Drain well and set aside to cool. The filling should be room temperature and dry before making the veroniki.

If you're working with the non-meat variety, saute' the greens in a little oil, together with the onion and seasonings. Drain very well, then blend together with the cheese. Any strong, firm cheese will do if you can't get white goat cheese. Again, set aside to drain completely and cool.

Roll dough out flat on a floured board and cut it into 2.5" squares. Fill each square with a

spoonful or two of sausage, fold over and seal the edges with wet fingers. Let rise 15 minutes while the oil heats. Your oil should be hot enough it sputters and pops a bit when you drip a little water into it. Deep fry until golden brown, turning once. This only takes a minute or two per side! Watch these closely, they burn easily. Drain well. Pour a small amount of sauce over veroniki immediately before serving.

Veroniki can also be baked. Use a hot oven and check after a quarter hour.

While the veroniki are cooking, make the sauce. Blend all ingredients except the flour, cook over low heat until smooth. Beat in the flour and continue to cook, stirring constantly, until it thickens. Serve immediately.

This recipe has been cut down considerably from the original. Bria told me, "Well, first I have my apprentices chop up about twenty pounds of sausage and a bag of onions. When they're about done, I stick my head out and take a peek at the common room, and add more if the crowd looks promising." This version makes two large platefuls, enough for two trolls or a family of dwarves.

Quaalz

Racial/Orkish

Much beloved by orks, this red bean dish is simple to prepare, filling, nourishing, and amazingly hot. Best suited for campfire cookery, I have had quaalz in orkish eating houses that was good, but did not set me to sweating the way the batch prepared by the Iron Fangs did. Their cook told me his recipe. I've cut it down a bit from the original, that makes a kettle full, to a family-sized portion.

Ingredients:

4 cups dry red beans
Soup bone, preferably with some meat still on it. Ham or beef is preferred, but whatever large animal is available will do.
1 ½ tbsp salt
2 onions, cut in large pieces
4 cloves Garlic, smashed
2 tsp D'janduin (Cayenne will do if you haven't seen a t'skrang merchant in a while)
1 tsp Black Pepper
1 Bay Leaf
1 tsp Oregano
1 tsp Thyme
Cheap beer, about a pint

In a large pot, cover the beans to the depth of the first joint of your thumb with water. (This is for orks - dwarves should use their entire thumb for the measure.) Toss in the bone and the salt and simmer uncovered for an hour and a half, or until the beans are close to done. They should squeak a little between your teeth. Keep the beans covered with liquid. Don't let them cook dry and scorch, but don't add more water than you really have to. Quaalz should be thick, not soupy.

Take out the bone, clean the meat off it, and throw it all back in. Add the onions, garlic and spices. Simmer for another half hour. Dump in the beer and cook for another half hour to boil off some of the liquid. Don't use dwarven stout or hurlg. No point in using something drinkable for cooking. Your basic cheap brown ale is best for this. Toss the bay leaf, but leave in the bone. Somebody will want it. Extra bones may help stop fights over dinner. Serve with black bread and plenty of hurlg.

Mead

Regional/Barsaive

As a good alternative to vinlo, mead is a light-bodied sweet wine made from honey. The variant I give below is one taught me by my uncle, who while he didn't make it for a living still brewed a fine batch. Now, bear in mind that what your bees find determines the quality of the honey, and the honey makes the mead. Generally, you want to place your hives well away from the fields and deep in the woods, and gather during the late spring, when the basswood trees are blooming. The darker and stronger the honey, the more flavor there is to the mead. Seasoning the must, or unfermented liquid, takes a careful hand also. Practice makes perfect, the advantage of which is you have plenty of mead around for when friends drop by.

There are more complex ways to brew this delightful beverage, but why go to unnecessary lengths? This short-run mead is simple to make, produces excellent results if reasonable care goes into the preparation, and stands up well against more involved processes. I've purposefully made this a small batch. It's a shame to waste anything, and if something goes awry in the making, you don't have much to have to toss out.

Ingredients:

One gallon water
Three pounds honey, strained
Fresh ginger
Fresh citrus, preferably an orange
Apple cider, about a pint

Heat the water in an enameled kettle. Don't use plain iron. Steel will work if it's weapon-

grade, but that's expensive and I don't personally know anyone who owns such a kettle. Stir in the honey with a wooden spoon. Keep stirring so the honey doesn't caramelize on the bottom of the pot. Keep the fire banked so the water doesn't boil. You want it bubbling slightly, but not boiling. Add a nice chunk of fresh ginger, maybe half the size of the first joint of your thumb, a good slice of orange (squeeze it into the pot, then throw it in) and a pint of apple cider.

After a few minutes, a brownish froth will start to form on the surface. This is the beeswax cooking out of the honey. Skim off the foam and discard it. Keep skimming the foam until no more rises to the surface. Discard the ginger and orange at this point also. Set the must aside to cool. Cover it tightly so that nothing gets in while it's cooling.

Wash out a one-gallon crock with boiling water. Wash the lid as well. You want this crock as clean as possible. The lid should fit snugly but not too tight. You want the pressure inside to be able to get out without bursting the crock, but no air should get in from outside.

When the must has cooled to room temperature, and this may take overnight, stir in a spoonful of good yeast. Some people will tell you that you need a special brewing yeast for this, but yeast is yeast. What the bakers use for their best pastries and breads will also make a good wine. Pour the must into the crock, all the way to the top. There should be no air left inside at all when you fit the lid.

Put the crock aside in a dark, cool place for a week and a half. Do not lift the lid and peek. Do not sample; the mead will taste bad until it's nearly done. After the time has passed, bring out the crock. Pour the mead through fine cloth into another clean crock, and put it aside in a cool place. Immersing the crock in a spring would do nicely. Leave it for two or three days, then check to see if it's bubbling. If so, and there's a yeasty smell to it, strain it again into a clean crock, and cool again. If not, then it's ready to drink.

This mead will keep for two or three weeks reasonably well. You'll have to bottle it to keep it any longer. I've had a few batches that I aged for several years that mellowed into a smooth, light wine that definitely gave vinlo some competition.

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On Dinganni Spiritualism: Mourning

by Brian McCallister

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #5***

Preface

The Dinganni are a very strong part of the human population of Barsaive. While not numerically important, these people have a strikingly different spiritual view than most other Name-givers I have encountered.

First of all, the Dinganni live in a definite cosmology. By cosmology I mean a living, interacting universe. Barsaive is not a place where the Dinganni live. They do not ride on the plains and travel after herds and water. They are a part of Barsaive. The Dinganni are a river. Water moves in a river from one place to another. The river alters the land it passes through, and the land alters the river. The Dinganni are a part of the world, not beings that exist within the world. This point is vitally important to understanding the Dinganni. Most of Barsaive, and certainly Thera and the Elves of Wyrm Wood, believe their Name-giver status puts them at a higher level than most of the life around them. The Dinganni do not believe this. They are the same as any other thing, living or dead in the environment, they just serve a different role. They name things and add to the Great Pattern.

The Scourge served to shift much of the focus of Dinganni spiritualism from the Great Pattern to kinship. The Dinganni were not known as the Dinganni before the Scourge, but by the word in their language for People. However, I will refer to them as Dinganni for simplicity. By themselves the Dinganni people before the Scourge could not have possibly survived the coming of Horrors. They were widespread, and often fought each other. There were definite bonds between the people as a whole, but the individual clans took precedence to a level where blood feuds could erupt between clans. With the coming of the Scourge the Dinganni were forced to work for surrounding people for protection. The Dinganni were a warrior culture, they traded this for protection from Horrors. The Dinganni grew separate in the years before the Scourge, especially considering this was over the course of several human generations. Children were born and raised not knowing any other clan but their own. The clans separated in order to survive. Some hired their warriors out as mercenaries. This is one way in which the Dinganni grew to hate the Rider's of the Scorched Plain. One clan, Deep Lodge, or Dark Lodge. The word translates to either, actually moved north of the Serpent River and traded their skills against the Riders to earn a place in a Kaer.

Another clan, the Silver Mane, all but died out before the Scourge when the clans separated. As their numbers dwindled one, Dim Stars, had a dream. He dreamt that silver stars fell out of the sky, leaving it empty of lights. As they fell they landed among embers. When the stars fell they rekindled the embers and fire sprung anew. The fires grew and spread across the plains until all the plains burned from the fires of the different embers, rekindled from the falling stars. Dim Stars was an Elder in his dying clan, and counseled that all of the people of the Silver Manes were to master the history and myths of the Dinganni, then separate and live with the other clans in the coming Scourge. The Silver Manes spread out and went in to the Kaers with all the other clans, all but one.

The Silver Manes sought to continue the culture of the Dinganni. The original Silver Manes all had died soon after the entering into the Kaers. The legacy had not. The tradition of setting aside historians and myth keepers had existed, but now it served a greater purpose. The Dinganni grew to feel a close kinship for all the people they never knew scattered under the ground all over Barsaive. These ties of Kinship caused the Dinganni to travel back to their old lands between Kratas and the Mist Swamps as they emerged from different Kaers. The Dinganni came together as a people and the clan structure lessened as effort was made to cross that and build the people to a united whole.

Dinganni feel kinship towards their people as a whole, but actual kin are especially important. You are not more important than any of your relatives. If a cousin admires your sword, you give the sword to that cousin. He deserves it, and the kin is far more important than anything physical. The second basic concept is the Great Pattern. The Great Pattern is a source of energy that pervades everything in the universe. Everything has it's place, and most things form a part of the pattern if just a tiny nexus. Named things have an entire tiny piece of the pattern themselves. Their piece meshes with the pattern around, then draws and lends power to and from it. This power is called halkan. Whenever energy is needed, it is lent through halkan. When a pattern is created halkan is drawn into that pattern, giving it form. This energy is not to be taken lightly, and can be very dangerous. It is power, it is numinous. In it is the potential for everything, good or bad.

All of Dinganni spiritualism draws from these two ideas.

Part I, the Five Rituals

Mourning

The Dinganni people practice a curious ritual of mourning, though for them it is not considered mourning. Everyone is a tiny piece of the Great Pattern and when someone passes who was, perhaps, a larger piece of the pattern, the Dinganni keep that person's part of the pattern alive and active. Halkan continues to flow through the pattern and the world doesn't leave the person. This ritual is referred to as Pattern Keeping.

I was lucky enough to meet a Dinganni who was in the process of keeping a pattern. He is in fact where I draw most of my knowledge of the Dinganni from.

When a person dies and someone believes that person to be especially important, as a friend, or a good worker, or a person especially espousing the ideals of life, the ritual of pattern keeping commences. One person chooses to be the Keeper. The keeper first divulges themselves of all their possessions. Everything is given away down to their last clothes. The one exception to this is thread items with a thread connecting them to the Keeper's pattern. These are considered a part of the Keeper's pattern. Standing naked the Keeper begins a ritual which is lead by another who has gone through it. Shadow Jar, my Dinganni friend, would not relate the details of the ritual. He said that the knowledge of it drew halkan from the ritual, and was unnecessary. If I were ever to desire to perform the ritual, it would be taught to me.

I do know that during the ritual the Keeper adds the deceased's name to their own. After the ritual the Keeper takes possession of all the deceased's material possessions. These are still the property of the deceased, who now has his pattern extended through the Keeper.

Also, during the name taking ceremony, a bundle is made for the deceased. The bundle contains items personal and representative of the deceased. I believe that it basically contains pattern items associated with the deceased. The Keeper keeps this bundle with him at all times for the remainder of the ritual.

For the next year the Keeper speaks for the deceased whose pattern is being kept. He represents that person, as well as himself. Having traveled with Shadow Jar as he underwent this ritual for his brother, I watched as his personal pattern changed. I can only assume that it drew to incorporate the deceased's name into the core of his true pattern. Shadow Jar said that the ritual keeps the best of the deceased alive in the Keeper.

At the end of the year, the best parts of the person being kept have become a part of the Keeper. As such the pattern may be released as the important things exist in the Keeper now.

The possessions of the deceased are all given away, and a feast is held by the relatives of the Keeper. At the feast goods are given to the Keeper to help him in his life. I have seen where Shadow Jar gave up the pattern he'd been carrying the nine months I'd known him. He was happy at the event for the essence of the pattern now lived in him. He ended up receiving gifts from all the Dinganni present. I personally think he was better off materially at the conclusion of the year long ritual than before.

-- Sinclair, Elven Troubadour

GM's Notes

What happens with this ritual is the Keeper takes the name of the deceased and adds it to his own. As the year passes the Keeper attempts to behave in a manner fitting the one being kept. As time passed the Keeper's pattern changes to incorporate the name and changes. It never matches the kept ones pattern, obviously, but a harmony of patterns develops.

Reward anyone completing this ritual with a nice dose of LP's. This ritual hurts, and is grueling to do correctly. The player must consciously try to think as the deceased would, as well as his own thoughts.

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On Dinganni Spirituality: Vengeance

by Bran McCallister

originally published in ***Earthdawn Journal #6***

Traveling with Shadow Jar, the noted Dinganni Archer, taught me that the Dinganni's moral expectations are as high as the rumors claim. They accept strangers very readily, and are forgiving of small infractions, but anything that blatantly violates their Code will be met harshly. If it is another Dinganni violating their Code, he will be banished or killed. Nothing can soften this. An outsider will generally be banished from them, with a very explicit warning that to return to them means death.

The Code is very short and simple, and is the spirit behind every just set of laws I have ever read.

> ***One will never cause harm to another member of the Tribe.***
> ***One will never steal what belongs to another.***
> ***One will learn the ways of war, so that he may protect the tribe.***
> ***One will never kill the creatures of the air, for they are our kindred.***
> ***Death awaits him who betrays the tribe to enemies.***

Four of these five laws are the basis behind every other code I have ever seen. The law against killing creatures of the air seems odd. All Shadow Jar would tell me is that they embody the freedom of the Dinganni and are to be granted their lives as the Dinganni are granted theirs. I asked if that would include a Horror which flew. Shadow Jar looked at me, even in the eye, and said they are not truly creatures of the air. They use the air, they don't embody freedom.

When I asked him what was done with someone who repeatedly violated the Code he said no one repeatedly violated it. One violation and you were either killed or exiled. Anyone who couldn't be handled by force of their peers would be handled by individuals particularly affronted by the culprit. They would swear vengeance in a formal ritual against the culprit, and then hunt him down and execute him. Once the ritual for vengeance began, there could be only one outcome, the culprit would be killed. If the hunter was killed he would be replaced and it would continue.

Specifically, Shadow Jar explained, the ritual involved a blood sacrifice to the cause of revenge. This seemed very close to a blood sacrifice to Raggok. Shadow Jar said it was very

close to that. Rather than binding yourself to the Passion, you bound yourself to revenge itself. To me this is the same thing, but there seemed a very distinct difference in Shadow Jar's mind. From what he claims happens within the ritual I cannot but hold my position that this ritual is trading power to Raggok for help in vengeance.

There are distinct parts of this extended ritual. The first is the Declaration of Vengeance. This is begun by placing a pole, the stripped trunk of a tree, upright in the ground. Thin lines, strong as bow strings, are tied to the top of the tree and run down to the ground about 20 feet from the base. One line is hung for each hunter taking part in the ritual. The hunters encircle the tree at sunset and run a half-foot long spike through their flesh, so that it enters then exits again. The line is then tied around the spike and they run the spike through their flesh again securing themselves to the line and the post. They proceed to dance around the post building up a frenzy until after sunset the following day. During this day they do not eat or drink anything. They dance bound to the tree and concentrate on the pain they feel to turn it into a burning vengeance. After sunset the pole is put to flame with the hunters still bound to it. At this point they jump back against their lines, pulling and jerking until they tear free from the spike binding them to the pole. They run out away from the pole to a hundred yards where others have left their bundled belongings, food, and water. The hunters set off as soon as they can pick up their belongings.

While Shadow Jar used the plural while explaining the Declaration to me he told me that it is usually only one person sent to exact vengeance. More than that detracts from the tribes ability to provide for itself. Enforcing the Code is important, but keeping the tribe strong is more so. For particularly heinous crimes, or a particularly savage culprit, such as an adept, more are sent. Shadow Jar told me that the most he ever heard of were seven hunters sent. I almost feel pity for anyone attempting to flee from seven Dinganni warriors. But that is overshadowed by my speculations on what that individual would have had to have done to warrant the seven.

The second part of the ritual is the Hunt for Vengeance. Ritually, each hunter carries a bow, a talon, and a long knife. These are the weapons to be used in hunting down their prey. In addition to these things each carries any personal equipment they would normally use. Shadow Jar explained that the Declaration of Vengeance inspires the hunters to never forget the crimes of their prey. The pain their prey caused burns within their breasts as it does in no others. This drives the hunters onward through any obstacle and sustains them through their hunt. It also allows them to evoke the same pain they feel in others they encounter as is necessary to convince them of their prey's guilt. They can extend their hatred of their prey to others. Theoretically if they never find their prey they can set everyone else in the world against their prey so that he can never find comfort.

When their prey is finally caught the only penalty possible is immediate death. The hunter attacks their prey with might beyond that of normal men, so inspired by their Declaration and burning. A normal, non-adept, Dinganni exacting vengeance upon their prey can do feats incredible for even an adept. An adept catching their prey is unstoppable.

GM's Notes

The Ritual of Vengeance is a blood ritual that grants strength to those partaking in it. They are sustained by their hunt so that only an hour or two of sleep are needed each day, food is almost optional, and only half the water normally required for life keeps the hunter going.

When actually confronting their prey they receive +2 steps on all attack and damage tests, and a +5 step bonus on any karma use. These benefits apply only when directly fighting their prey.

The hunter is able to Inspire Hatred in others they encounter. They must describe the crimes of their prey in a language the listener understands, then roll their Charisma against the listeners social defense. The hunter must spend karma on this action, if it is a non-adept they must sacrifice a recovery test to provide the karma. If the test is successful a portion of the hatred felt by the hunter grows in the listener. The listener generally will not seek out the prey and try to exact vengeance, but will automatically take a Hostile attitude towards the prey if she encounters him.

All benefits disappear when the prey is killed.

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On Dinganni Spiritualism: Making of Relatives

by Bran McCallister

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The Dinganni have very close bonds to any in their family. The closest bonds are between those that didn't begin as family though. Dinganni ritually bond those who they feel especially strong about. This bond technically is making another your brother or sister. However the bond tends to be even stronger than typical relations between brothers and sisters, even within the Dinganni.

When two Dinganni grow particularly close, or desire to create something stronger than peace between them they go through the Ritual of Kinship. This is not to be confused with marriage. That is an entirely different matter between a man in woman in love. This is a bond of blood, not love.

It could be expected that this ritual would involve heavy blood magic. It doesn't. The ritual is very simple, and very profound. The two who wish to bond this way each construct a formal gift with their own hands for the other person. This gift is normally some article that can be worn for ordinary use. Clothing and jewelry are the most common. However, sometimes weapons or armor are exchanged between members of certain Societies, particularly the Steel Hands. These articles are made over the course of a full year. No pain or expense is spared to procure the finest material.

While I use the word finest material here, this does not have the connotations you and I put on it. Elfweave clothe for instance would almost never be used for a gift such as this. The Dinganni value durability as much, if not more, than beauty.

When the year is almost up people from other clans usually start to drift in. By the time the gifts are complete and the formal ritual is to begin there are usually two or three clans worth of Dinganni present to bear witness. The making of relatives is very important to the Dinganni, and something that few will not go out of their way to witness.

When the day comes that the two are ready they come out of separate tents before the gathered people. They approach each other in silence. They stop four steps from each other and hold out their gifts for each other. At this point one of current relatives of each one comes forward. Shadow Jar has told me that the person to come forward is not pre-arranged in any way, but the one who is closest to the person involved in the ritual steps forward. I

cannot help but think that this act in itself could cause fights in most families. Shadow Jar claimed that it never did, whoever was closest was usually obvious. I have never seen the ritual done, but have trouble believing that no hard feelings emerge from this point.

To continue though, the ones to step forward go to their respective relative and take the offered gift. They then present the gift to the other that is being made a relative. The two who stepped forward then step back into the watchers again. The two becoming relatives then approach each other and embrace.

While embraced they each whisper a name to the other. This is a ritual naming and the whispered name becomes a part of the others Name. The knowledge of it remains between the two only though, and is never told to another, except a wife or child.

I believe that between Pattern Keeping and the Making of Relatives, Dinganni can come to develop very long names. They usually go by their original given name however, and only use their full formal Name on ritual occasions. Here they still leave out parts that are bound to a specific ritual. Such as this one, or joining a Society, as I will explain soon.

The Dinganni realize that they are a small people surrounded by richer, more populous peoples. As such they are quite willing to become relatives with one who is not of the Dinganni. Any non-Dinganni who does this is considered to be one of the Dinganni henceforth, and is held up to all of their standards. Shadow jar assures me that no discrimination occurs towards anyone who becomes Dinganni this way, as compared to being born Dinganni. He claims that even non-humans have occasionally been made relatives in this manner. The number of times this has occurred he can count on his fingers, however. As he counted for me he remembered each name, and approximately when it occurred. None were made prior to the Scourge.

GM's Notes

The Making of Relatives is a formality only. There is no magical bond of any type created between the two. It is a very serious undertaking between the two that do it. The ritual is performed very rarely, partly because of the expense of the gifts, and partly because of the very seriousness of it. Not all who are friends can become relatives. All who do it are remembered by the historians.

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