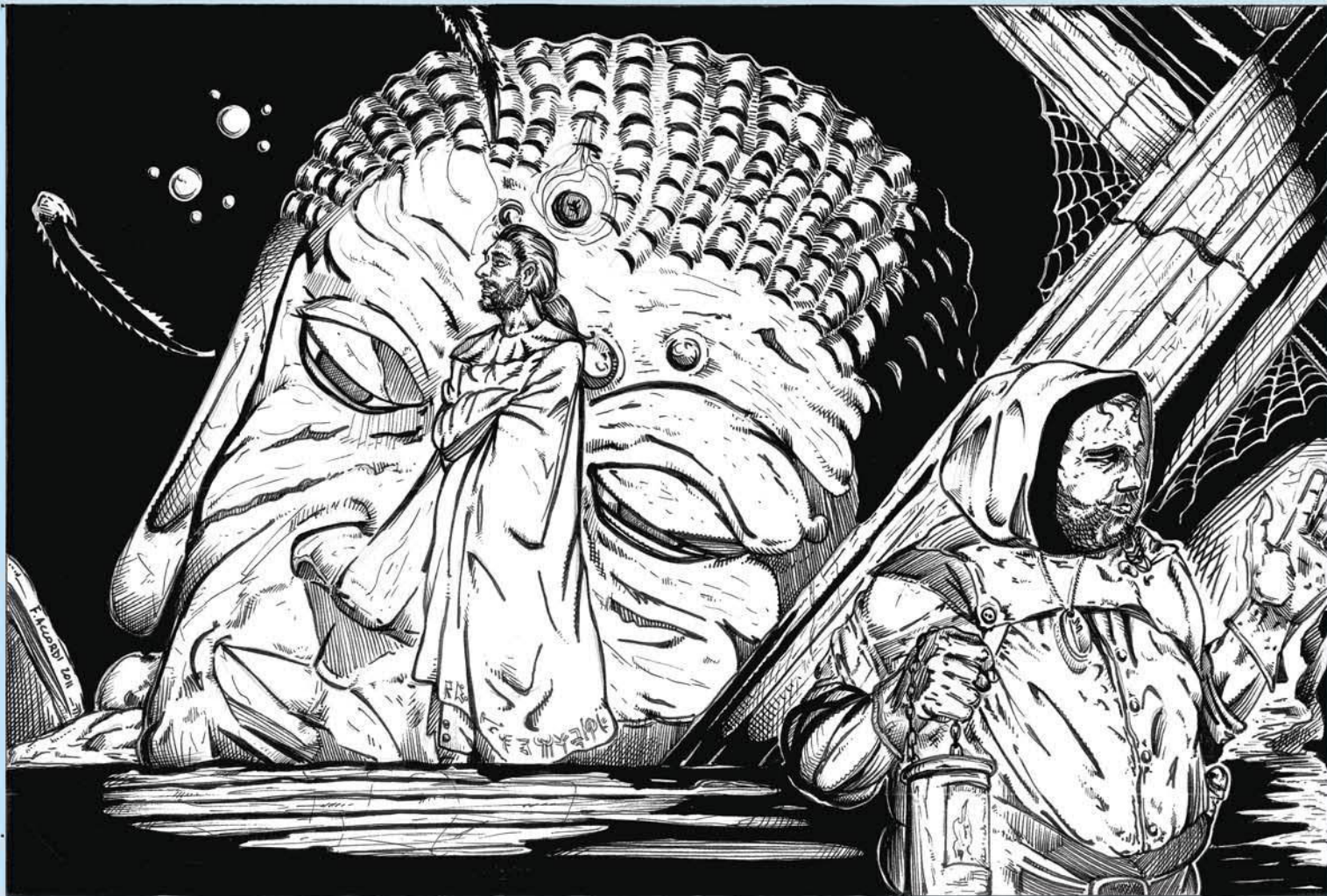


HACKMASTER®



HackJournal Issue #38

Spring 2012

Welcome to the newest edition of HackJournal, the HackMaster magazine for players and GameMasters around the world! Whether you profess to be the greatest fighter, thief, mage or cleric, you can't afford to pass up a single issue! Here's just a sampling of the inventory of secrets revealed herein:

- Unofficial Mass Combat Rules
- A Sneak Peak at P'Bapar
- New Artisan skill
- New HackMaster Monster

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This quarterly PDF supplement is written specifically for (and by) the members of the HackMaster Association, a member-driven organization of Players and GameMasters who meet to discuss and play role-playing games published by Kenzer and Company. The HackJournal also previews special pre-release material, including 'alpha' and 'beta' rules previews for future products! HackMaster Association members are encouraged to try out these new rules and provide feedback on the Kenzer and Company discussion forums.

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Unofficial Mass Combat Rules for HackMaster

By: Nick Gildersleeves

MassHacker

Introduction

These are fast and loose rules for quick and bloody resolution of skirmishes and engagements larger than your usual encounter. They are designed for GMs that want to incorporate bigger battles into their storyline, as well as for PCs wanting to partake in the Hackfest that are Tellene's many and varied interracial and international military conflicts. And why wouldn't they? While fighting five orcs can be fun, fighting fifty alongside a similar number of battle-hardened soldiers is simply fantastic. These rules are a starting point for such epic engagements.

Where five or more NPCs fight on either side, making actual second-to-second tracking overly cumbersome for the GM, these rules streamline combat results. The salient attributes of each troop of NPCs is averaged, and then represented by a couple of modifiers to their number of combatants, and attack and defense values.

Not included in these rules are such important factors of larger-scale battles, like leadership, morale, maneuver and tactical situations. This is because we want, initially, a quick and easy approach that tells us what really matters: who lives and who dies. Once we've got a handle on that we can later bring in the subtler elements of psychology and terrain.

So for now, don't worry about stuff like formation, mounted vs. not, ranged battle, being flanked, and troops having the living daylights scared out of them. All in good time. For now keep your engagements relatively simple and straightforward: foot-melees with little maneuver beyond the initial charge. Just like in the good old days.

Of course, if you want to add additional elements once you've gotten a handle on these very simple rules, feel free! You're the GM, after-all. It'd just be a matter of adding some bonuses and penalties, appropriate to

the situation, to the base modifiers presented here.

Beware: large scale melees are nasty affairs. Especially with these rules, which put NPCs on equal footing with the PCs in terms of how much death they can expect to dish out in a given period of time. In, say, one minute of battle a side might expect to suffer between 20-50% casualties. That's pretty heinous, but that's Hackmaster baby.

Overview – how a battle plays out

A battle plays out in 15 second rounds, with the GM making calculations for NPC casualties at the beginning of each round. After NPC casualties have been calculated, the GM rolls to see if any NPCs in the PCs vicinity were some of the ones killed. The PCs then take their actions as normal for the next 15 seconds, slugging it out with whoever they are engaged with and trying not to look too cowardly. At the next 15 second mark the GM makes more NPC casualty checks, and so it goes until everyone on one side is butchered, or else the GM determines through his own morale checks that the losers thought it better to save their own skins and run away.

Setting the stage for battle

When the story calls for it, and you decide it's time to throw your hapless PCs into the frenzied butchery of full-on melee, all you need to start is a good excuse. Maybe a large orc warband is approaching the town and the militia requests the PCs help. Maybe the Krangi are moving up with skirmishers on the Korakki border and the PCs are hired as auxiliaries to help meet the threat.

Whatever the story setup, once the two sides are arrayed on the field of battle (or in the woods, or whatever), all you need is a build-up. Such as, for example,

“and then Lord Grism yells ‘Charge you loveless bastards!’” - a brief interlude - “your breath comes ragged as your feet try to keep pace with the tottering weight of your chainmail-laden pectorals” - and then, simple as that, the two sides collide and you jump right into casualties.

If you need to figure out things like movement and surprise in the moments leading up to battle, just treat each side as a whole, much like you would in a standard encounter. Average their movement speed and abilities of observation (but they should get a bonus because there are a whole lot people looking around and listening for signs of threat as though their lives depended upon it) and such.

Once they’ve detected each other, you can roll Initiative as well, but do it for the whole here too, with the PCs losing their individual Initiative rolls. When becoming part of a bigger group, the PCs largely tie their fate with that of the men around them, for good or ill. If they whine about it, just tell ‘em that once they’ve made their bed they have to go ahead and sleep in it.

But treat surprise a little differently here. If one side becomes engaged before they would have reached their Count, simply give the surprised troop, and the PCs themselves if applicable, a -2 Att/Def modifier for the following 15 seconds (we’ll explain that more later).

Setting it up on the table

Let the PCs decide where they’re gonna be within the unit (if the commander allows such flexibility ... if not, definitely force them to fight at the front), and what general actions they will be taking before battle begins (this is pretty much limited to two options, actually. Either, “we’re doing what we’re told” or “we’re creating a diversion to try and avoid

being seen as the cowards we are, and then we’re getting the smack outta here”).

If you are using miniatures, use as many as you like to represent the PCs and the NPC combatants on the field. What matters most, though, are the PCs and the friendlies standing around them, and then the foes they are about to engage.

If using a *lot* of miniatures to try and represent every single combatant (awesome), I recommend just setting up the PCs and allies and then having the enemy come to them, representing only the first wave at first, and then adding in the rest if you like after. Do this even if the allies are charging, just explain to your table what’s actually happening. Doing it this way will keep you from having to move 50+ miniatures around the table whilst your players yawn at you with cocked eyebrows and sneering grins that betray their underlying disrespect for your micromanaging ways.

Once that most-anticipated moment has come, and the front lines clash together in the resounding hymn of metal on metal, you’re in, and it’s time to roll for casualties.



How to calculate casualties

The first casualty calculation happens as soon as the two sides collide. There’s lots of initial slaughter as men fling themselves pell-mell upon each other’s

swords, but after the initial engagement they'll settle into a more sustained rhythm of melee.

Below we'll go through the process of determining a troop's size and effective combat strength, as well as modifiers to their Attack and Defense, and how Att/Def are resolved and resultant casualties calculated.

The Number Of Combatants

First, determine how many combatants are on each side. This is easy. It's equal to the number of combatants *minus* the number of PCs. The PCs fight their own little battles on the table, second by second, so they aren't figured in with the overall conflict in these calculations.

For example, for the friendlies, if there are 50 NPC combatants and 5 PCs, then the friendlies fight as a 50 man troop.

For the foes do the same, *subtracting* a number of combatants from their overall total equal to the number of PCs. For example, with 5 PCs in play, an army of 60 foes would fight as a 55 man troop. This assumes that each PC will be engaged, on average, with a single foe, whose combat will be resolved with that PC rather than with the overall troop.

Troop Quality

Now determine the Troop Quality of each side by referring to the Troop Quality table below. Remember, don't consider the PCs in these calculations. They do their own thing.

Quality is essentially an average of the combined fighting prowess of a unit. In gaming terms we're used to, it's an average of all the individual character levels of the NPCs present. It represents the overall skill level of a troop, considering all their training and hard-won experience in one number, the force multiplier, which will be used in a moment to determine how much better one side is than another.

Troop Quality is the single most important element in a force's fighting ability, just as a character's level is the most important factor in determining whether or not he can go toe-to-toe with an ogre. It's the base upon which everything else rests.

Note: that it does *not* consider gear. Those details are taken into account in the following sections: Weapons, Armor and Shields. Of course, better quality troops will often also be better armed.

For a force of differing skill levels, the GM should treat them as a whole by averaging their levels. For example, if you have a troop of 20 Green (level 1) orcs, 5 Veteran (level 5) orcs, and 1 Champion (level 13) orc, simply add the sum of their combined levels and divide by 26 (the total number of combatants). $20+25+13=58$, and $58/26=2.23$, which is rounded to 2. The Quality of the overall troop, then, is equivalent to Level 2, which makes them on average Experienced Troops. Not bad, considering that four-fifths of them are sniveling wimps that haven't tasted real combat before.

By far, mixes of Green and Experienced troops are the most common. Lands fraught with regular conflict, such as Korakk, may have a solid core of Veteran, and even Hardened Veteran, troops to call upon, but anything above that becomes increasingly rare. Those are the guards, the knights, the old reliables and the heroes of legend. They are the champions of whom songs are sung, and of whose displeasure the pimply Greenies slink about in living terror of. While fighting forces of entirely Elite troops surely exist, they are highly prized and guarded by their rulers.

Also, be sure that the GM needn't know the exact detail of every individual in a force. It is enough if he simply wishes to determine and declare that, "100 yards across that sunset-burnished field of grain, ye see the host of grim and loveless hirelings of Kend step forward, drawing their steel as one. There seem to be about fifty of them. They look pretty battle-hardened." Boom. Number of combatants and quality (Veteran?)

Troop Quality and Multiplier

Level 0: Non-Warrior (rabble or civilians): 1

Level 1: Green or Untrained: 2

Level 2: Experienced: 2.5

Level 3: Veteran: 3

Level 4: Hardened Veteran: 4

Level 5: Elite: 5

Level 6: Champion: 6

Level 7: Hero: 8

Level 8: Legend: 12

Combatant Multipliers And Combatant Strength

Now that you've found the troop quality of your opposing sides, look at combatant multiplier. Combatant multipliers look at *how much better* one

side is than another. So a troop doesn't just use the multiplier indicated on the table, but uses that multiplier to compare with whichever force they happen to be fighting. The final result of this comparison is then used as a multiplier to the troop's overall combatant strength.

For Example: Say the PCs are adventuring with a band of pretty inexperienced mercenaries, who you determine on average represent a Level 1, or Green/Untrained troop. Their combatant multiplier is thus 2. Now, they've been walking through the Byth Mountains looking for some easy goblin scalps to cash in for a bounty, but they've gotten a bit off-track and wound up stumbling into a village of Slennish zealots who come out in mass to kill or (preferably) capture the mercenaries and PCs. The villagers are a rabble, so you determine that the foes are a Level 0 equivalent, with a combatant multiplier of 1.

To compare the two and get the final multiplier that will modify combatant strength, first take one side's combatant multiplier and subtract the opposition's multiplier (but don't drop below zero). Finally, add 1 to the result so things can work out mathematically.

In this example, the mercenaries would take their multiplier of 2 and subtract the villager's 1. They would then add 1 for a final result of a x2 Combatant Multiplier.

What this says is that *in this case* the mercenaries are 2 times better in terms of fighting strength than the villagers. If there are 10 NPC mercenaries fighting the village rabble, because of their higher skill they will actually fight as equivalent to 20 of the Slens. In other words, each mercenary is worth two villagers in the battle.

For the villagers you would do the same and subtract 2 from 1. This results in -1, but we don't drop below zero. Finally, add that mathematically necessary (I don't know why it works either) one to zero to reach the result of a x1 Combatant Multiplier for the villagers. If there are 30 villagers in the rabble, then they fight as 30 combatants!

In this way a unit will never fight at less than their base number of combatants, though an opposing force may fight at a higher strength because of skill.

Note: You will of course notice that while a troop's quality and force multiplier do not change, the actual Combatant Multiplier may change according to who they're facing. If this same mercenary band were fight-

ing a troop of hardened veterans, then the mercenary's Combatant Multiplier would become x1 ($2-4=-2$, which becomes 0, and $0+1=1$), while the hardened veterans would fight at a x3 multiplier ($4-2=2$, and $2+1=3$). This would mean that hardened veterans are 3 times more effective in battle than the mercenaries!

Once you know each side's Combatant Multiplier you can use that to find their overall Combatant Strength on the Attack Table (see below). From there you can roll 2D6, modified by their Attack value (if applicable), to see how many casualties they potentially inflict upon the enemy in any given 15 second round.

So now we will talk about troop gear, which will modify Attack and Defense rolls when calculating casualties.

Weapons, Armor And Shields

"Having the best stuff doesn't mean you'll win, but having the worst can just about guarantee you'll lose."
– One Smart Cookie

The weapons, armor and shield values represent the cumulative quality of the troop's fighting gear. The Weapons value takes into account melee weapons, while the armor and shield values take into account, you guessed it, armor and shields.

The Attack or Defense modifiers that they bestow upon a troop will be used in comparison with the opposing side's values to come up with an ultimate Att/Def roll modifier. But we'll get to that in a bit. For now just know that a troop's Attack value is modified by their weapons, while their Defense value is modified by armor and shields.

Since many fighting forces are helter-skelter affairs, especially amongst mercenaries and warbands, a very general approach has been taken to quantifying these values. To avoid much tedium, the GM should trust his own judgment in averaging a force's gear types and qualities. But some troops will make it easy. The king's men-at-arms would probably have Standard weapons and armor, while his knights might have much deadlier weapons and heavier armor.

Weapons

A better Weapon value means that on average the troop has superior fighting tools that do more damage: swords, battle-axes and halberds instead of hand-axes,

wooden spears and kitchen utensils. It can also mean that their weapons are of higher quality.

Attack Value Modifier

Shoddy: No military weapons of any sort, or else extremely low quality weaponry. Often, a hastily assembled village rabble out to burn a witch. **-1 to Attack**

Poor: Roughly the equivalent of improvised farm tools. Weapons will be simple and of low quality. Might be a town militia, a deprived goblin squad, or a band of mercenaries on a tight budget. **+0 to Attack**

Mixed: Mixed quality and quantity of weapons. A classic orc troop with lots of gear, but little of it well-cared for. Also, usual for the levies of poorer countries, or warbands and armies unable to maintenance/replace worn gear over time. Most units devolve to this state pretty quickly without maintenance and reinvestment. Most PCs will start in this category, unless they spent top dollar on shiny new stuff. **+1 to Attack**

Standard: Standard assortment of lethal weapons like the longsword, battle-axe and mace, all well cared for and quite new. The bulk of the troops of wealthy nations are armed thus. **+2 to Attack**

Heavily Damaging: Heavily damaging weapons, such as the two-handed sword and nasty pole-weapons. These weapons usually require the combatant to forego a shield. **+3 to Attack**

Very High Quality Weapons: If the average of a troop should have master quality weapons, add an additional +1/lvl of weapon's quality to their attack value. Must be at least Standard or Heavily Damaging quality. Champions, heroes, and legends of valor and glory are armed thus. **+1/lvl quality**

Armor

Better armor values mean that the unit has more advanced armors, like studded leather, splinted, scale, chainmail, and even plate. Beyond the type of armor it also reflects quality and upkeep. A troop that might have been armored as Standard, with studded leather and some chain and scale mail, but who doesn't take very good care of their stuff so that the leather becomes old and flappy and damaged, might actually

be armored as Mixed. This is actually rather common, especially for less disciplined troops (like orcs, meat-heads and half-wits), and for troops campaigning for long periods of time.

Defense Value Modifier

Unarmored: No armor. **-2 to Defense**

Poorly Armored: Cloth, padded and poor quality leather. **-1 to Defense**

Mixed: A mixed array of cloth, leather and metal armors, but generally nothing of great quality. This would be a mercenary band, a bunch of raiders, or under-equipped troops. Very typical of humanoid warbands as well. **+0 to Defense**

Standard: Acceptable array of studded and ring, with some chain and scale armors, all well taken care of. **+1 to Defense**

Heavily Armored: Higher quality metal armors with a good bit of chain and scale and some splinted and banded armors. These are often heavy infantry, as well as knights that can't afford plate. **+2 to Defense**

Very Heavily Armored: All-metal armors, with some made of steel, all being of very high quality, or else widespread use of plate. Knights, champions and heroes are the sorts that can afford these massive investments. **+3 to Defense**

Shields

A better Shield value means that the troop has more shields and/or that they are of higher quality and upkeep. Again, this should be seen as an average of the overall troop, and the GM should use his discretion in arriving at a sensible decision relative to these purposely vague parameters.

Defense Value Modifier

No Shields: No shield use. **-2 to Defense**

Some Shields: A few shields. **+0 to Defense**

Mixed Shields: 25-50% of the troop have small, medium and large shields. **+1 to Defense**

Good Shields: Over half have at least medium shields. **+2 to Defense**

Heavy Shields: Almost everyone has shields of at least medium size. **+3 to Defense**

In these basic rules, weapons are all that modify a troop's attack value. So, a troop's overall attack value will just equal their weapon's attack value modifier.

By adding together the armor and shields modifiers you arrive at the troop's defense value.

Converting Att/Def Values Into Att/Def Roll Modifiers

Once you know each side's Att/Def values based on gear, you can calculate the Att/Def roll modifiers that will actually be used in battle calculations.

The way this works is that one side's attack value "attacks" the other side's defense value in an attempt to cancel it out. Only positive numbers may cancel each other out, and values don't drop below zero.

For example: If the friendlies have an attack of +2 (from Standard arms), and the foes have a defense of +3 (from, say, Standard armor and Good shields), then the friendlies' attack value "attacks" the foes' defense value and negates 2 of its points, but also goes to zero. The foes still have 1 remaining after the "attack" and so will modify their defense rolls by that number.

In this example, 0 is thus the attack roll modifier for the friendlies going forward, and 1 is the defense roll modifier for the foes. Now repeat the process for the other troop.

Following the above example, if the foes had an Attack value of +2, and the friendlies a Defense value of +1, then the foes attack value "attacks" the friendlies' defense and reduces it to 0, in the process also reducing their attack value by one point to 1.

One is thus the foe's attack roll modifier, and the friendlies' defense roll modifier is 0.

What this says is that higher qualities of armor/shields negate the benefits of lesser weapons and even increase the chances of survival of their users, while better weapons will plough through the protective qualities of lesser armor/shields and increase a troop's attacking strength.

As another example, let's follow along with our mer-

cenaries as they take on the Slennish village.

Say the mercenaries have an Att value of +2 and the villagers a Def value of -4 (ouch). The villagers don't have any positive Defense points to negate the mercenaries' attack, so both values remain the same. The mercenaries' attack roll modifier is +2, and the villagers defense roll modifier is -4.

For the villagers, they have an Attack value of -1, and the Mercenaries have a Defense value of +1 (they're shield use is mixed). The villagers don't have a positive attack value to cancel out any of the mercenaries' defense, so both of these values also remain the same. The villagers attack roll modifier is -1, and the mercenaries defense roll modifier is +1.

Attacking, Defending and Calculating Casualties

Attack and Defense occur simultaneously for both sides every 15 seconds, with the initial Att/Def happening immediately on initial contact. You'll obviously have to calculate each side separately, but make sure the results are simultaneous (a five man loss for one side not reducing their attack effectiveness for that round).

Once you know a troop's Combatant Strength and Attack Roll Modifier you're ready to roll for an attack. Look at the Attack Table (see below). For the side that's attacking, find their Combatant Strength on the left-hand side. Now roll 2d6 (this roll can penetrate, but only on a double-six result) and modify the roll by the troop's Attack Roll Modifier. Cross reference the result with their Combatant Strength and you find out how many kills they've potentially scored.

Now we need to figure out how many of those potential kills the other side is able to negate with defense. To do that, look at the Defense Table. Use either the number of potential kills against them or their Combatant Strength, *whichever is less*, to find their place on the left-hand side of the table, under "Potential Kills to Negate." Now roll 2d6 (penetration rules are the same here as with attack) and modify the roll by the troop's Defense Roll Modifier. Cross reference the result with their Potential Kills to Negate. This is how many of those potential kills were negated, or blocked, by defense.

Now repeat the process by calculating the other side's attack, being sure that any men just lost are not left out of the attack (these results are simultaneous, so even if some men die they still deserve a chance to get a kill stroke in of their own).

Once you've calculated Attack and Defense for each side, go ahead and make the casualties suffered permanent by reducing the Combatant Strength of each side by the number of losses taken.

Where the combatant multiplier has made a troop fight as though they were more than their actual number (such as with veterans fighting green troops, for example), reduce their over combatant strength, but keep in mind that some "kills" might not actually be real deaths (eg., a troop fighting with a x3 multiplier would have to suffer 3 "kills" to actually lose a man). Look at this as fatigue or loss of hit-points that reduces their fighting capability. When the battle is over, if any still remain just do the reverse math to see how many men survived.

For example: that troop with the x3 multiplier would divide their combatant strength by 3 to see how many men they still have. If that troop had a combatant strength of 33 at the end of the battle, then they'd have 11 men standing. Round up uneven results, and count it as a man that was injured but will recover.



To see an example of a round of battle, let's see our mercenaries fight it out with that Slennish rabble as they first clash together.

Calculate the mercenaries' attack first. On the Attack Table, they'll start on the 20 row (they have 10 combatants, with a Combatant Multiplier of x2). A roll of 2d6 results in 4, but this is increased by their Attack Roll Modifier of +2 to 6. Cross-referencing 6 with 20 gives a total of 5. So the mercenaries have potentially killed 5 of the Slennish rabble.

Now the rabble tries to negate some of those kills with their defense. The rabble has a Combatant Strength of 30, but 5 potential kills is less than that so

use 5 on the left-hand side of the Defense Table. Rolling 2d6 for the rabble, we get an 8, but their total Defense Roll Modifier is -4, so their score becomes a 4. 4 cross-referenced with 5 gives a result of 1, which means the rabble was only able to keep one of five guys from getting killed, and they take 4 permanent casualties.

Now calculate the rabble's attack. Their Combatant Strength is still 30 for this round to attack (those four dead guys still get a chance at some kills). A 2d6 roll results in a 5, but their Attack Roll Modifier of -1 brings it down to 4. On the Attack Table 4 cross-references with 30 to become 4, which means that they score 4 potential kills against the mercenaries, who now have a chance to defend.

The mercenaries start at 4 on the left-hand side of the Defense Table, because 4 is less than their Combatant Strength of 20. They roll 2d6 for a result of 7, and add their Defense Modifier of +1 for a total of 8. 8 cross-referenced with 4 results in 3, so they've negated 3 of 4 potential kills, and take 1 permanent casualty.

This process then just repeats every 15 seconds. The only thing you'll have to change every 15 second round is each side's Combatant Strength as the size of each force is reduced by casualties.

At first this may seem like a lot to do every 15 seconds, but most of it is setup before the battle begins and doesn't change throughout. Once you get the hang of it these calculations shouldn't take longer than a minute or so.

Once the GM has calculated casualties for the upcoming 15 seconds, he can then implement the results on his table, before his PC's beady little eyes.

Basic Combat and the PCs

In these more basic rules the emphasis for you as the GM is on having fun with a big battle. While a few rules and tables are provided here to give you a guideline for the “metabattle” events going on around the PCs, feel free to use your creativity in describing and moving the flow of events.

For example: provided here is a way to calculate the chance of whether or not a foe falls at the hands of a friendly NPC, but you get to choose what the vanquisher does next. Does he move up and help the PC, does he go on to attack another free enemy (and where is that enemy at?), or does he bend down and start looting the still-twitching corpse? You are who you are (which is better than a computer) because you can do these things on the fly, night in and night out, and make them sound cool.

All PCs and NPCs are able to move and act on the first second of the initial clash. If you want you can have them roll a low Initiative die (maybe a d4 or d6) if you’re not comfortable removing Initiative entirely. If you’re real mean you *can* mandate that being attacked before reaching one’s count means you’re surprised. It’s up to you.

From then on, controlling the movements and actions of the NPCs in bigger battles is no different than in usual encounters. It’s just, well, bigger.

So, after you’ve calculated casualties for any given 15 second round, it’s time to translate those calculations into an on-table, in-game experience.

The first thing to do is figure out if any NPC friendlies or foes fell in the PC’s vicinity. If you’re representing all combatants with miniatures (again, awesome) you can do this for freakin’ everyone until you know exactly who went down. But all that really matters is who falls right around the PCs, cause they want to know who might still want to run up and stab them in the kidney while they’re sneaking a sip of water.

For each NPC that you want to check *that’s also being engaged by another NPC*, roll a d100 on the table below. Severity of Casualties means the percentage of casualties suffered by the NPC’s side at the beginning of that round.

Keep doing this for each side until you’ve either rolled for every NPC you want to know about, or until all permanent casualties have been realized on the table.

Severity of Casualties / Percentage Chance that Friendly/Foe was Killed

<10%	25%
10-25%	35%
25-50%	50%
>50%	75%

A Note on Champions And Heroes

It may come about that you have a fancy-pants champion or hero fighting as an NPC with the troop. While it’s probably easiest to play this sort of NPC separately as in a normal encounter, counting him with the PCs and not figuring him into the overall unit calculations, you may decide to just average him in for simplicity’s sake (this is why a troop quality was offered for a hero in the first place).

But whatever the case, you should at least know who he is out there on the table.

If averaging a Champion or better with the rest of the troop, treat his Combatant Multiplier as hit points, and roll for this NPC on the above table to see if he was a casualty or not. If the roll indicates he was a casualty, then remove one of his “hit points” from play. Roll again if there is another casualty pending against him. If he is indicated as a casualty again, remove another “hit point.” Keep doing this until he either dies or a roll indicates that he is not a casualty.

Once a PC has felled an enemy, you can let them move to engage as they like, as usual. But remember there might very well be more foes that wanna step in and get a swing. This is fast and brutal melee, and the fighting is probably pretty close. If you’ve got all the foes represented on the table, just decide who’s moving where, and if any move up to engage. But if you’re not using miniatures, or don’t have enough to represent all friends and foes, or can’t be bothered, you can roll on the following table to see if another foe comes up to engage.

Terms of Strength on the Field / Percentage Chance of another Foe Engaging

We outnumber 3-1 or better:	5%
We outnumber 2-1 or better:	15%
We outnumber less than 2-1:	35%
Relatively even strength:	50%
We’re outnumbered less than 2-1:	65%
We’re outnumbered 2-1 or worse:	85%
We’re outnumbered 3-1 or worse:	95%

You can also roll on this table if the PC has a flank exposed and it's reasonable that a foe might want to move up and exploit that. Make this roll every 15 seconds when you do the rest of your calculations (according to your interest and the whisperings of your inherent evil nature).

If you're growing tired of making the decisions yourself, you can also roll on this table when a friendly NPC fells a foe, to see if another comes up to engage him. Regarding NPC actions in battle, the rule of thumb should be that when defeating someone, they will always advance if their side is winning (inflicting more casualties than they're taking) or if it's even, and they'll start backing up if possible when their side is losing. If they're winning, or it's even, they'll seek to move forward and engage the nearest enemy that poses the greatest threat. He won't go for a backstab if it's reasonable another foe might come up and backstab him too.

For friendlies coming up to engage recently victorious foes, as well as possibly moving up on a PC's flank to help him out, or even engage the foe a PC is fighting, you can roll on the table below in the same way as you did for foes.

Terms of Strength on the Field / Percentage Chance of another Friendly Engaging

- We outnumber 3-1 or better: 95%
- We outnumber 2-1 or better: 85%
- We outnumber less than 2-1: 65%
- Relatively even strength: 50%
- We're outnumbered less than 2-1: 35%
- We're outnumbered 2-1 or worse: 15%
- We're outnumbered 3-1 or worse: 5%

Special Situations

PC Attacks an Already Engaged Foe

In this situation it is possible that the foe has already lost some hit points. Roll a D100, with a roll of 50 or higher indicating that the foe is damaged. If damaged, roll the D100 again. This roll indicates the percentage of hit points the foe has remaining.

For example, the first roll is 79, indicating that the foe is damaged. The second roll is 56, indicating that he has 56% of his hit points left. If the enemy were a level 1 Orc with, say, 29 hit points total, then he would have 16 hit points.

NPC ToP's

If the PCs get a ToP on a foe, simply drop the foe to the ground and count them as a casualty. This way you don't have to worry about tracking 20 different ToP's. In fact, I should now admit that all casualties scored in the overall conflict via the Attack and Defense tables could either be deaths or merely severe wounds (ToP's). After the battle it may even be possible to nurse a percentage of those souls back to health, depending of course on conditions, access to first-aid, whether the good guys won, and all that.

PC ToP

Though being ToP'd is preferable to just dying, in larger engagement it's not a *whole* lot better. The GM can go about PC ToP's in one of two ways, though it might be a good idea to present his table with the options before a battle so they can come to a consensus on their preference. Only their lives depend upon it.

The first option is to treat a ToP like any other. Leave the PC writhing on the ground for however many seconds while the battle rages on.

However, every 15 seconds roll on the New Enemy Engaging table above to see whether or not an enemy decides to be merciful by putting the screaming whiner out of his misery via the ole Coup de Grace. If you roll that one does, he'll move up and start the process.

But hope's not lost for the little blighter. The GM should also roll on the same chart for engaging friendlies, with a success roll meaning that an ally comes up to engage the enemy. In this case, the enemy will simply forget about easy kills in the interest of protecting himself. Naturally, another PC can also fill this role.

If a PC should still be ToP'd and the battle end under unfavorable conditions for his side (all his friendlies are dead or run away), then he's in trouble. He's been captured or killed, and while nasty rules for this eventuality are forthcoming, for now you'll have to come up with something on your own.

The second option is to treat all mass combat PC ToP's the same as NPC' ToP's: a debilitating wound that simply makes them a "casualty." It doesn't mean they're dead, just out of the fight.

This can actually increase the odds of the PCs not dying in battle, because this way they can just lie there and moan and groan like a good wounded person till it's over, instead of popping back up and feeling honor-bound to continue the futility until their guts spill out

on the ground. Also, there's no Coup de Grace element in this option, so that helps a lot.

But the big draw-back for the PCs here is that, as they fall, their fates will begin to slip further and further from their grasp. If their side loses and is forced to give up the field, any PCs remaining on the field will have to accept that they've been either captured or killed. And that's no fun, for them.

Resolution and Ending Combat

If you're keeping things basic, the battle won't really end until one side or the other is destroyed. Until it ends, both sides continue to hack it out in the above described manner, with the GM calculating results every 15 seconds. Of course, the GM can determine that one side or the other tries to retreat or something for story purposes, or because of dice rolls of his own concoction. This would make a lot of sense actually, because retreat is often seen as preferable to death by many soldiers.

But unfortunately the management of such events is beyond the scope of these rudimentary beginnings.



Attack Table

2d6 roll

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
4	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4
5	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
6	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	6
7	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	6	7	7
8	0	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	8	8
9	0	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9
10	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	9	10
12	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12
15	1	1	2	3	3	4	5	5	6	7	8	8	9	9	10	11	11	12	13	14	14	15
17	1	2	2	3	4	5	5	6	7	8	9	9	10	11	11	12	13	14	15	15	16	17
20	1	2	3	4	5	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
25	1	2	3	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	23	24	25
30	1	3	4	5	7	8	9	11	12	14	15	16	18	19	20	22	23	24	26	27	28	30
35	2	3	5	6	8	9	11	13	14	16	18	19	20	22	24	25	27	28	30	32	33	35
40	2	4	5	7	9	11	13	14	16	18	20	22	23	25	27	29	31	32	34	36	38	40
45	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	23	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	41	43	45
50	2	5	7	9	11	14	16	18	20	23	25	27	29	32	34	36	38	41	43	45	47	50
60	3	5	8	11	14	16	19	22	24	27	30	32	35	38	41	43	46	49	51	54	57	60
70	3	6	9	13	16	19	22	25	28	32	35	38	41	44	47	50	54	57	60	63	66	70
85	4	8	11	15	19	23	27	31	34	38	43	46	50	54	57	61	65	69	73	77	80	85
100	5	9	14	18	23	27	32	36	41	45	50	54	59	63	68	72	77	81	86	90	95	100
125	6	11	17	23	28	34	39	45	51	56	63	68	73	79	84	90	96	101	107	113	118	125
150	7	14	20	27	34	41	47	54	61	68	75	81	88	95	101	108	115	122	128	135	142	150
175	8	16	24	32	39	47	55	63	71	79	88	95	102	110	118	126	134	142	150	158	165	175
200	9	18	27	36	45	54	63	72	81	90	100	108	117	126	135	144	153	162	171	180	189	200
225	10	20	30	41	51	61	71	81	91	101	113	122	132	142	152	162	172	182	192	203	213	225
250	11	23	34	45	56	68	79	90	101	113	125	135	146	158	169	180	191	203	214	225	236	250
275	12	25	37	50	62	74	87	99	111	124	138	149	161	173	186	198	210	223	235	248	260	275
300	14	27	41	54	68	81	95	108	122	135	150	162	176	189	203	216	230	243	257	270	284	300
350	16	32	47	63	79	95	110	126	142	158	175	189	205	221	236	252	268	284	299	315	331	350
400	18	36	54	72	90	108	126	144	162	180	200	216	234	252	270	288	306	324	342	360	378	400
450	20	41	61	81	101	122	142	162	182	203	225	243	263	284	304	324	344	365	385	405	425	450
500	23	45	68	90	113	135	158	180	203	225	250	270	293	315	338	360	383	405	428	450	473	500

Defense Table

2d6 roll

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
2	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4
3	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	6
4	0	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	7	8	8
5	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10
6	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12
7	1	1	2	3	3	4	4	5	6	6	7	8	8	9	10	10	11	11	12	13	13	14
8	1	1	2	3	4	4	5	6	6	7	8	9	9	10	11	12	12	13	14	14	15	16
9	1	2	2	3	4	5	6	6	7	8	9	10	11	11	12	13	14	15	15	16	17	18
10	1	2	3	4	5	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	15	16	17	18	19	20
12	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	20	21	22	23	24
15	1	3	4	5	7	8	9	11	12	14	15	16	18	19	20	22	23	24	26	27	29	30
17	2	3	5	6	8	9	11	12	14	15	17	19	20	22	23	25	26	28	29	31	32	34
20	2	4	5	7	9	11	13	14	16	18	20	22	24	25	27	29	31	33	34	36	38	40
25	2	5	7	9	11	14	16	18	20	23	25	27	30	32	34	36	39	41	43	45	48	50
30	3	5	8	11	14	16	19	22	24	27	30	33	35	38	41	44	46	49	52	54	57	60
35	3	6	9	13	16	19	22	25	28	32	35	38	41	44	48	51	54	57	60	63	67	70
40	4	7	11	14	18	22	25	29	32	36	40	44	47	51	54	58	62	65	69	72	76	80
45	4	8	12	16	20	24	28	32	36	41	45	49	53	57	61	65	69	73	77	81	86	90
50	5	9	14	18	23	27	32	36	41	45	50	55	59	64	68	73	77	82	86	91	95	100
60	5	11	16	22	27	32	38	43	49	54	60	65	71	76	82	87	92	98	103	109	114	120
70	6	13	19	25	32	38	44	50	57	63	70	76	83	89	95	102	108	114	120	127	133	140
85	8	15	23	31	38	46	54	61	69	77	85	93	100	108	116	123	131	139	146	154	162	170
100	9	18	27	36	45	54	63	72	81	90	100	109	118	127	136	145	154	163	172	181	190	200
125	11	23	34	45	56	68	79	90	101	113	125	136	148	159	170	181	193	204	215	226	238	250
150	14	27	41	54	68	81	95	108	122	135	150	164	177	191	204	218	231	245	258	272	285	300
175	16	32	47	63	79	95	110	126	142	158	175	191	207	222	238	254	270	285	301	317	333	350
200	18	36	54	72	90	108	126	144	162	180	200	218	236	254	272	290	308	326	344	362	380	400
225	20	41	61	81	101	122	142	162	182	203	225	245	266	286	306	326	347	367	387	407	428	450
250	23	45	68	90	113	135	158	180	203	225	250	273	295	318	340	363	385	408	430	453	475	500
275	25	50	74	99	124	149	173	198	223	248	275	300	325	349	374	399	424	448	473	498	523	550
300	27	54	81	108	135	162	189	216	243	270	300	327	354	381	408	435	462	489	516	543	570	600
350	32	63	95	126	158	189	221	252	284	315	350	382	413	445	476	508	539	571	602	634	665	700
400	36	72	108	144	180	216	252	288	324	360	400	436	472	508	544	580	616	652	688	724	760	800
450	41	81	122	162	203	243	284	324	365	405	450	491	531	572	612	653	693	734	774	815	855	900
500	45	90	135	180	225	270	315	360	405	450	500	545	590	635	680	725	770	815	860	905	950	1000

Potential Kills to Negate

Kingdoms of Kalamar

Fantasy Campaign Setting

This month we take a sneak peak into an upcoming product. The city of...

P' Bapar



Outside the Walls

When discussing P'Bapar it's often easy to ignore the fact that thousands of Baparans live beyond the surrounding walls of the city. These citizens earn a living as farmers, shepherds, laborers and craftsmen. Some prefer the simple life, removed from the hustle and bustle of the city. Others live away from the protective walls for more complicated reasons, such as a need for ample land, more affordable taxes, the demands of their occupation, or the because they prefer a quieter lifestyle.

Isolated farms, ranches and homes mingle together with small clusters of buildings, walled villages, towns, and sprawling estates to comprise the majority of remote population centers. For miles surrounding the city walls, Baparans live and work. Many of these peasants never set foot inside P'Bapar, despite their proximity, while others pass through the gates on a daily basis (largely on account of the work they do).

Approaching P'Bapar from any direction, travelers will notice an increase in the frequency of farms, ranches, estates, manors and outlying buildings, as well as people. Dwellings inch closer together, while farms and large estates dwindle in size as land becomes more of a premium. Farm ready land is expensive and increases in price as one draws closer to the city walls. Inversely, property taxes are still smaller compared to living within the walls.

Craftsmen, such as blacksmiths, woodworkers, and carpenters (among others) live and work in outlying areas, just like they would in the city. Solicitation and competition for work is fierce in these outlying regions. Quality and cost of services varies greatly, but those along the main thoroughfares charge more than their competitors. In most instances, it is cheaper to employ crafters living outside of the walls, especially artisans.

Logging is a lucrative business and the sound of axes on trees is heard throughout the wooded hills surrounding P'Bapar. Woodcutters down trees in the forested foothills of the Legasa Peaks, transporting them to mills scattered around the area for processing. Wagons hauling cut boards, planks and rough lumber are common sights along the roadways leading into the city.

Laborers, millers, beekeepers, skimmers, hunters, and furriers are just a few select professions who earn their keep beyond the city walls. Fishermen troll the depths of the Banader River with poles, spear, and net in

search of river trout, while shepherds move flocks of sheep and herds of oxen through the hills and valleys of the region.

Nearing the gates, travelers discover the number of businesses and craftsmen rapidly increase. Inns and flophouses, offering lodging to those arriving after the gates close or those preferring to stay outside of the city, are easily found beyond the walls.

Lines of people awaiting entrance to the city are another common sight. Groups of sell swords, merchants, hirelings, beggars and vagrants linger near the gates looking for work, a handout, or to pick a pocket or two. Waiting to enter P'Bapar is often an excruciating affair, depending on the day. During harvest time and on holidays the wait can be as long as a day. On an average day, a wait of a few hours is typical. Even so, once a traveler approaches the gates he must be prepared to answer questions regarding his business in the city, and willing to pay any taxes or tariffs on trade goods prior to entering P'Bapar.

Soldiers patrol the perimeter of P'Bapar, on foot and horseback, but they rarely leave the roads. Bandits and thieves are problematic in outlying regions, often lairing in nearby caves, safe-houses, and hideouts in order to monitor the roads for their next victim. These lowlifes rob and steal from passing travelers, farmers, and shepherds whenever they think they can get away with it.

Complaining about banditry to the gate guards accomplishes little. On rare occasions, some noble knight, or a band of misguided heroes, will take it upon themselves to do something about the problem. When successful in their endeavors, the archduke generally rewards these heroes with some sort of compensation for their efforts. Infamous bandits who make a nuisance of themselves will find that the authorities can only be pushed so far. Postings depicting the wanted riddle walls near the gates and decorate posting boards throughout the city. Thieves unlucky enough to prey upon important diplomats or government officials will find that the Constable Lord will take immediate notice of their activity. In these instances, patrols are increased and soldiers double their efforts to root out bands of thieves from there hiding places.

O1: The Strongwater

Height: 32'

Dimensions: 50' x 40' **Stories:** 3-1/2

Occupants: Fanam Ju'Ato (owner, proprietor, lives across the street), Defyn (cook), Hovar Seri (stable boy), Neleta (serving wench), Yulan (serving wench), Elbre (serving wench), 1d6 various dancing girls (living with Fanam)

Menu/Services:

Lodging: Common room 2cp/day or 1 sp/week, private room 3 sp/day or 15 SP/week

Drinks: ale ½ cp/mug, mead 3 cp/mug, common wine 5 cp/pitcher, fine wine 15 sp/bottle

Food: Morning-meal (sweetbread, cheese and wine) 5 cp, noon-meal (soup, hard roll and ale) 5 cp, evening-meal (meat dish, hard roll, cheese, or meat and vegetable stew and a mug of ale) 1 sp. Meals are not included in the cost of a room.

Stable: Stabling a horse 3 cp/day, stabling of wagon 8 cp/day. Stabling includes hay, oats, and grooming of animals (brushing and cleaning the hooves of horses). Special needs for animals are negotiated on an individual basis with Fanam, usually for outrageous prices as he doesn't like to deal with the animals and Hovar is difficult to work with.

The Strongwater Inn and Boarding House is situated near a cluster of businesses and shops adjacent to the northern road leading from the city, toward the P'Bapar Pass. The inn is a popular place for travelers and locals alike. Proximity to trade routes, good food, clean rooms, and lively entertainment attract an eclectic crowd of patrons.

The owner, a Kalamaran named

Fanam Ju'Ato, provides the finest entertainment money can buy. He goes to extensive lengths to recruit the best minstrels, poets, dancers and showmen to entertain his eager crowds. Dancing girls are by far his favorite, and he keeps a stable of women for such purposes. In addition to entertainment, Fanam offers food and drink for fair prices, rooms to rent, and a stable and yard for wagons and horses. Traveling merchants favor the Strongwater, often leaving their goods at the inn, while they secure their business transactions inside the city.

The Strongwater is a three-and-a-half story, half-timber building with a thatched roof. The "L" shaped building houses a large first-floor taproom dominated by a massive stone hearth, situated in the center of the space with openings on two sides. Along the back wall, a bar separates a kitchen and storeroom from the customers. Two large common rooms are located on the second floor, each holding a dozen beds. The third story contains ten private rooms, while the attic provides lodging for the inn's workers, though Hovar prefers sleeping in the barn. Outside, near the front door, is a large posting board where merchants and town criers post notices. The board is a favorite stop for the unemployed, passing adventurers, sell swords, mercenaries, and anyone else seeking news.

Fanam lives across the street from the Strongwater, in a small dwelling with his live-in dancing girls. Living with Fanam is one of the requirements (among



other things) all dancing girls must endure in order to work at the inn. Most of the girls put up with it because one seasons worth of tips at the Strongwater may be more money than the girls see in a year of work at other establishments. Fanam imports dancing girls on a regular basis so his customers see a variety of women (and because he grows bored living with the same dancers).

Two serving women service the taproom (Yulan and Elbre) and are extremely busy throughout the night. A young Fhokki girl (Defyn) serves as the inn's cook. The final employee at the Strongwater is a peculiar man by the name of Hovar Seri, who lives in the stables, sleeping in a horse stall he has claimed as his own. Hovar is an expert on horses, but he refuses to talk to anyone at the inn, only grunting in response to questions. Despite instructions (or demands), Hovar tends to the horses in whatever manner he deems best for them, which is in fact, usually for the better. This often irritates customers requesting special treatment for their animals, especially when they return to find Hovar failed to listen to their demands

No one in P'Bapar may know horses as well as Hovar, but he is impossible to work with because of his refusal to speak to other humans. The only people Hovar graces with conversation are traveling elves that arrive at the inn.

Interactions:

The Strongwater is an ideal place to hear rumors or seek employment. Passing merchants, adventurers, and mercenaries enjoy this establishment on a frequent basis. Merchants and travelers heading into the pass have been known to recruit adventurers or mercenaries for caravan duty while staying at the inn. The posting board outside also provides interesting job opportunities to those with the ability to read.

Hovar, a career military man and a cavalry officer, was forced into retirement after suffering a horrendous injury in a skirmish against a band of orcs. Left to die on the field of battle, he was rescued by a band of elves who treated his wounds and nursed him back to life. During his recovery the elves taught Hovar several elven techniques for "speaking" with animals and administering care to horses. After leaving the elves, Hovar grew ashamed of his wasteful human heritage and the destruction his race enacts upon the world. He returned to P'Bapar begrudgingly, but over time has grown fairly content with his life. Should someone approach him with a question about elves, elven cul-

ture, elven customs or in search of a guide into elven lands, he would be extremely interested and may break his vow of silence.

It is commonplace for traveling merchant's to leave their wagons at the inn while they enter the city to conduct business. Only the most inexperienced merchants leave their goods unattended, but it does happen. Despite precautions, several robberies take place every year at the inn.

It is rumored Defyn was an orphan abandoned at the inn by a negligent parent. She became the inn's cook after an unsuccessful attempt to turn her into a dancing girl. This rumor is entirely unfounded. In fact, Defyn is the daughter of one of Fanam's favorite traveling dancing girls. Several years ago Fanam agreed to take Defyn in and provide her employment as a favor to her mother. Defyn is quite young, but very beautiful. She often catches the eye of patrons when she assists the serving girls during the busiest times of the night.

O2: Shyja, Blacksmith

Height: 20'

Dimensions: 12'x25' **Stories:** 2

Occupants: Shyja (blacksmith), Thakyr (assistant)

Shyja, a Dejoy blacksmith, is a native Baparan, having lived his entire life in the city. His parents relocated to P'Bapar shortly before his birth, hoping for more opportunities for their coming child. At the age of twelve, Shyja was apprenticed to a local blacksmith and eventually grew to love his chosen trade. After the death of his parents, he moved outside the walls.

Shyja is extremely prejudiced against non-Dejoy and marks up his prices accordingly (doubling them). Shyja can get away with this because he is the first smith merchants and caravans encounter when entering P'Bapar from the north. Additionally, he receives a fair amount of work from those lodging at the Strongwater unwilling (or unable) to seek cheaper prices inside the city.

A young Dejoy boy (by the name of Thakyr) serves as Shyja's assistant. Thakyr, quite large for a lad of fifteen, has proven a quick study. He possesses large, deft hands, allowing him to work intricate metal with an ease Shyja has never enjoyed. Since Shyja is without

wife or child, he hopes to teach the boy all he can with the hope of one day leaving the business to him.

Both master and apprentice live on the second floor of this building. Half of the lower floor is open to the elements (with only a roof for protection from the elements) and anyone approaching along the road will see Shyja working at his forge, or hear him striking metal on the anvil.

Shyja is able to work with shields, weapons and armor, but prefers working on horseshoes and wagons. If asked by passing travelers, he will repair armor or weapons, but he won't be rushed in his work. In addition, prices for repairing armor and weapons are always double the going rate (regardless of the race of the customer).

O3: Stron Woodworks

Height: 20'

Dimensions: 40' x 40' **Stories:** 2

Occupants: Corcren Stron (owner/proprietor, master carpenter), Vikka Stron (wife/owner), Haramel Saketi (journeyman carpenter), Dil Karel (apprentice carpenter)

Stron Woodworks is an extremely busy place of business. Traveling merchants, nearby farmers, and laborers use Stron for wagon repairs. Stranded travelers, forced to wait on their repairs, are typically found at the Strongwater waiting while Corcren works on their wagons.

Corcren and his wife, Vikka, employ a journeyman carpenter and an apprentice. They have been trying to hire a second apprentice, but have been unable to find the right fit. The couple is extremely concerned with finding workers who match their enthusiasm for the art of woodworking.

Vikka deals with the customers, allowing Corcren the freedom to work without distraction. She takes particular pleasure in haggling and dealing with tough customers. Corcren's work is such high quality that Vikka knows customers will be satisfied, and by the gods she intends to make them pay for it. Few have bested Vikka in the art of negotiation. Customers generally have the attitude that it isn't worth the argument, and they willingly pay her prices, which by all accounts are fair enough to begin with.

Interactions:

Vikka charges 15 percent more than the going book rate for all jobs. Anyone attempting to negotiate will be forced to best her salesmanship skills (65%). Should a customer win out, Vikka will drop her prices to the book rate (rather unhappily), but never lower.

O4: Talek's Boots

Height: 10'

Dimensions: 15'x30' **Stories:** 1

Occupants: Rurik Talek (owner/master cobbler)

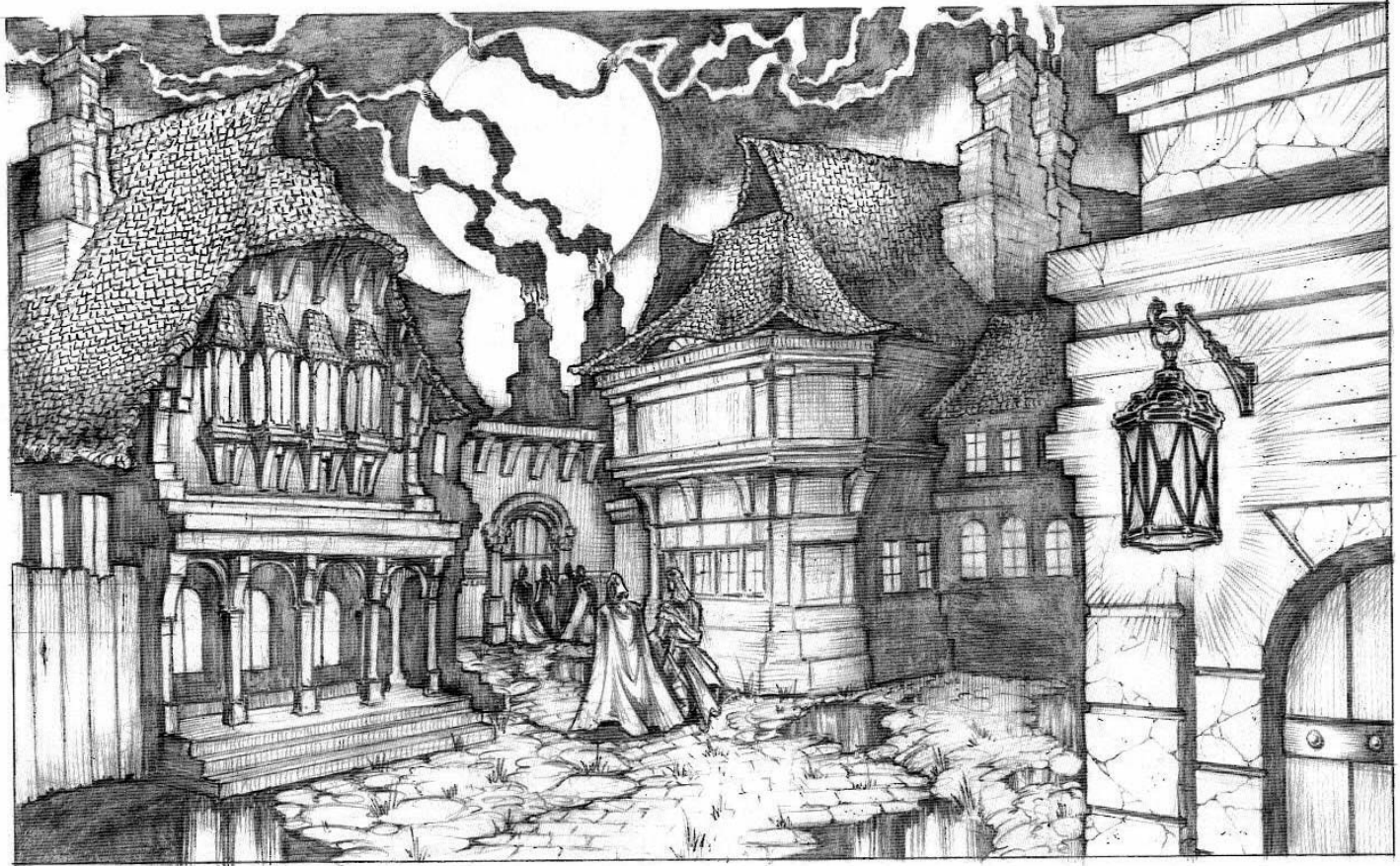
This rectangular, one-story building stands out among its neighbors along the Rancern Road. Talek's is built from worked and dressed stone with a heavy timber roof covered by sun dried, wood shakes. Passing merchants and travelers are sure to notice the building as they pass by. A common rumor is that a band of talented dwarven masons constructed the shop, as a favor to the master boot maker.

Rurik Talek, the owner, is a dwarf adrift in a sea of humans. Unlike most of his kin, he takes no pleasure in working stone or mining gems. Instead, he focuses his attention on the art of cobbling. It is rumored that the master cobbler was once part of an expedition fleeing Karasta in search of a better life in the west. They eventually settled in P'Bapar, where Rurik has remained ever since.

What is known is that Rurik is friendless. His customers provide the only social contacts in his life. He is as much of a loner as possible, and it's by choice. He wakes every morning, crafting boots until sunset, at which point he frequents the Strongwater for ale and a meal before retiring for the night.

Rurik takes immense pride in his cobbling skills and he refuses to be rushed, ever. He doesn't believe in half-assed work and his prices (double nearly every other cobbler in the city) reflect that. Those requesting work find that Rurik works at a snail's pace. A simple hole can take a week to repair, though customers put up with extensive delays because their boots return in better shape than when they were first purchased.

Though his clan originally hails from Karasta, it is Rurik's past as a former adventurer that forces his anti-social behavior. Rurik only speaks to people because he is forced into social situations in order to sell boots. Despite his love of working leather, Rurik has been entertaining thoughts about once again taking up his



axe and scouring the world of humanoids. His private fantasies aside, he is quite content in his current situation, and unlikely to ever leave.

Rurik Talek: LN dwarf fighter 2; HP: 34, Init: +4, Spd: 7 (5), Rch: 0', Atk: +3, Dmg: 2d4p+2, Def: 0, ToP: 11/8, Hon: 32, Quirk: superstitious (thinks the world is flat)

Notable Skills: languages (dwarven 87, merchant's tongue 65), leatherworking 85, cobbling proficiencies/skills?, mining 34, resist persuasion 23, Prof: battle axe, dagger, short sword

Equipment: dagger, 2d6p sp

Interactions:

Rurik has a particular hatred for orcs, a by-product of both his race and his encounters during his adventuring days. If he were approached and propositioned with the idea of heading into the wilds to kill orcs, he may decide to prematurely end his retirement and take up his axe.

Prices at Talek's shop are always double the going rate and work typically takes 2d6p days.

O5: Mindrel's Meat Pies

Height: 10'

Dimensions: 15'x30' **Stories:** 1

Occupants: Mindrel Norcrensel (owner)

The widow Norcrensel is renowned for her sumptuous meat pies, a reputation thirty years in the making. She earns a living selling her creations to passing travelers as they head out P'Bapar, and she does quite well for herself.

Ten years ago Mindrel's husband, a laborer, was crushed and killed by an errant barrel, a needless casualty of a careless porter. Since his death, Mindrel has been a bit off in the head. She constantly speaks to her dead husband, as if he were still alive, unnerving everyone she comes into contact with.

Mindrel has grown unpredictable in selling her meat pies. Some days she creates pie after pie to feed the waiting throng of locals, cooking from sunup to sundown without respite. Other days she cooks three or four pies and calls it quits for the day. As a result

jostling, elbowing, and even fistfights break out in front of her shop as customers wait for lunch.

City watchmen used to linger near this shop, acting as a deterrent and hoping to prevent any violence. This practice abruptly halted one day when the soldiers confiscated and consumed the six meat pies Mindrel released in front of the angry customers as punishment for too much fighting. The customers quickly revolted; pelting the guards with rocks, and whatever else they could get their hands on. In the end, two men were killed and another severely wounded by the over eager soldiers. Since that day the soldiers have strict orders to refrain from interfering with customers, unless a conflict becomes particularly bloody.

Meat pies cost 2 copper Forbias. Each day Mindrel cooks 2d6 meat pies to sell at a random time during the day. Customers have been known to wait hours for the window to open, ensuring they are first in line. It isn't unusual for people to linger around this building throughout the day.

O6: Thunder Transport

Height: 20'

Dimensions: 40' x 40' **Stories:** 2

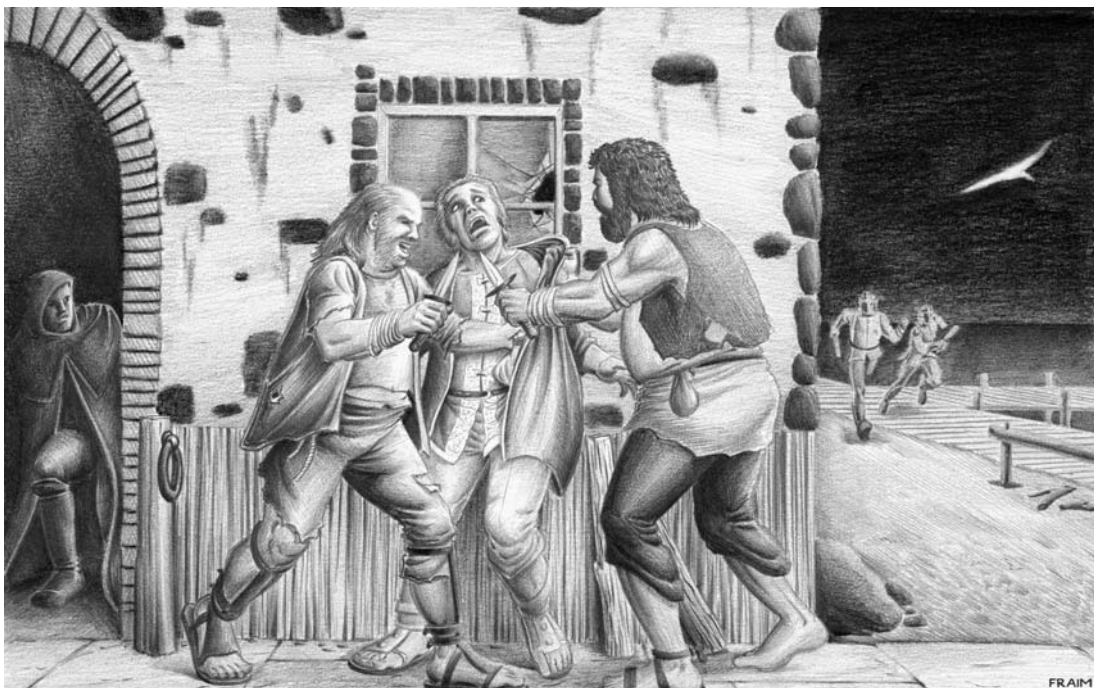
Occupants: Resemer "Thunder" Balemo (owner), Minon P'Mare (mercenary), 3d8 porters, 3d6 mercenaries

Services: Porter 2 cp/porter/delivery, mercenaries (light infantry) 4 sp/week, transporting goods 12 sp/week/wagon

After a dozen years of fighting other people's wars while serving as a Baparan soldier, Resemer "Thunder" Balemo retired to P'Bapar to found a transport business. Thunder Transport specializes in trans-

porting cargo to any desired location on Tellene, though most commissions require delivering goods through the Coniper Gap into Cosolen.

Resemer is a good natured, hardworking man who feels he's paid his dues and now it's time to reap the benefits of being self-employed. He treats his men as equals and genuinely cares for his workers. Some would call him naïve, even gullible, but Resemer prefers to see the best in people, no matter their flaws. Resemer's men love working for him and tend to be



extremely loyal, honest and hardworking.

Resemer is a massive, barrel-chested man, likely of Fhokki descent (though he isn't sure, having grown up in P'Bapar). He wears a long sword at his side, a left-over reminder of his days of service. Resemer feels the blade lends him a level of credibility his clients approve of.

In addition to transporting cargo, Resemer offers porters and mercenaries to carry goods, or serve as protection for passing merchants. On any given day 2d4p porters and 1d3p mercenaries linger across the river, near the Strongwater, propositioning passing merchants for work (on Resemer's behalf). Unbeknownst to Resemer, some of his men are actually loafing off and drinking inside of the inn. One man (the one drawing the short straw) is forced to remain outside, soliciting work and keeping lookout for Resemer or Minon, the second in command.

Minon (a terribly cruel mercenary captain) acts as Resemer's right hand man. He takes great pleasure in

punishing lazy men - typically by whipping them. In fact, complaints are common enough that Resemer was forced to increase wages to maintain order and keep his employees happy. Minon lives for the thrill of battle, and when he isn't working, he can often be found outside, thrashing his men with wooden swords during "practice sessions."

Resemer's prices are relatively high, but his men are fairly trustworthy, skilled, and work hard. Employees are typically paid a bonus for timely deliveries, which makes up for the abuse they suffer at the hands of Minon.

Thunder Transport is located in a large stucco building with a thatched roof. The first floor is expansive, and contains a large storeroom, a small stable and enough room left over to store two wagons inside. The second floor contains Resemer's office and bedroom, a private room for Minon, and a large common room with twelve triple bunk beds for porters and mercenaries to sleep on.

Resemer lives in his shop and rarely leaves, allowing Minon to lead the majority of expeditions. In times of need, Resemer hires additional porters or mercenaries. As a result, a gang of men hang around the shop each morning seeking employment.

For the past several years, Resemer has been attempting to buy a building, or a lot, on the opposite side of the river, hoping to move his business to a higher profile location. Thus far he has been unsuccessful. Since his business is barely making ends meet (see below) he is growing quite frustrated with lack of revenue and his inability to secure a lot across the river.

Interactions:

Minon has been stealing from Resemer for as long as he has been employed. He skims money from expeditions, tacks on unnecessary charges at the last minute to customers, and sometimes refuses to pay his men the bonuses they earn. Thus far, he has been able to get away with his crimes. On two occasions Minon has murdered men in order to prevent them from snitching. Minon steals mostly for the fun of it, but he also hopes to drive Resemer into a desperate situation and then offer to "buy" the business from him, using Resemer's own money to do it.

Award the PCs 250 EPs for discovering Minon's treachery and returning the lost money to Resemer.

Minon is wanted for murder in the town of Birido (in

Pekal). He is entirely unaware of the bounty on his head (125 sp) for his capture. Anyone bringing Minon to justice in Birido should be awarded 500 EPs.

Resemer "Thunder" Balemo: LG Baparan human fighter 3, HP: 33, Init: +1, Spd: 8 (6), Rch: 3-1/2', Atk: +5, Dmg: 2d8p+2, Def: +5, DR: 0, ToP: 11/6, Hon: 24, Quirk: gullible

Notable Skills: administration 51, language (Baparan 73, merchant's tongue 23), recruiting 45, resist persuasion 43, riding (equine) 56, Profs: club, halberd, longsword, and short bow

Equipment: Longsword

Minon P'Mare: NE Kalamaran human fighter 5; HP: 44, Init:+3, Spd: 8 (7), Rch: 2', Atk: +5, Dmg: 2d6p+3, Def: +3, DR: 5, ToP: 17/6, Hon: 23

Notable Skills: language (Kalamaran 79, Baparan 23, merchant's tongue 21), listening 23, monster lore 30, observation 32

Equipment: short sword +1, studded leather armor +2, potion of poison, 2d6 sp, 2d10 cp, 154 sp and 398 cp hidden under a tree root in the woods nearby, buried in a sack.

O7: Smokehouse

Height: 10'

Dimensions: 12'x12' **Stories:** 1

Occupants: Shroknorr Darrakk (owner)

This small run-down shack is home to a Fhokki hunter going by the name of Shroknorr Darrakk. Shroknorr spends half his time in the wilds, hunting game of all shape and size. The rest of his time is spent here, drying and seasoning the meat to sell for profit. In addition to smoked jerky, Shroknorr also sells skins and furs from animals he kills to tanners, leatherworkers and clothing shops in the city.

When Shroknorr is not home, this building is empty, save for a cot, a few empty barrels, bags of salt, and some knives and cleavers used to cut meat. A heavy padlock keeps nosy intruders from poking around the building when Shroknorr is not home.

Interactions:

Shroknorr may be encountered out in the wilds hunting or trapping game. He is fairly knowledgeable about the immediate area surrounding the city of

P'Bapar, and during difficult financial times he hires out as a guide, though he doesn't enjoy the work.

Shroknoor knows most of the well-traveled hunting trails and many secretive spots to find game animals. He can be bribed to reveal these secrets, along with any other places of interest he stumbles across out in the wilds.

Shroknoor Darrakk: CG Fhokki human fighter 5, HP: 43, Init: +2, Spd: 15, Rch: 6', Atk: +5, Dmg: 2d12p+4, Def: +3, DR: 3, ToP: 16/6, Hon: 54

Notable Skills: language (Fhokki 74, merchant's tongue 39), listening 23, monster lore 45, observation 32, survival 54, tracking 56, less sleep, Profs: two-handed sword, longbow

Equipment: two-handed sword, longbow, 16 arrows, studded leather, 1d6 sp, 2d6 cp

O8: Altean Artisan Glass

Height: 10'

Dimensions: 20'x40' **Stories:** 1

Occupants: Borin "Glazer" Altean (owner, master glassmaker), Virda Altean (wife, glassmaker), Furum Altean, Boral Altean, Mari Altea (children)

The slate tile roof of this one-story, stone building is covered with soot and residue from large plumes of dark, acrid smoke pouring from several chimneys protruding along the ridgeline. Inside, a band of halflings, the Altean family, work as independent artisans creating stunning glass creations (including windows) which they sell at semi-reasonable prices.

Despite the extremely high quality of their work, the Altean family has had some difficulty securing new clients and maintaining a steady workload. This is largely due to the efforts of the glassworks guild, which goes to great lengths to blackball the highly talented halfling glassmakers. The guild has made several attempts at pressuring the family into applying for membership, but thus far they have resisted, feeling the advantages the guild offer are not nearly substantial enough to outweigh the dues, obligations, and fixed pricing.

The biggest problem for the family is the fixed price structure the guild insists on implementing. Several times a year, Virda creates a spectacular piece of art she sells for a sum so large it supports the family for months. The guild insists on having a hand in pricing

her artwork, in order to make them comparable to other artists and members of the guild, something the family is unwilling to do.

Borin "Glazer" Altean heads the family. He is known by a dozen nicknames, though "Glazer" is the most common. His wife, Virda Altean, is also an expert glassmaker and specializes in intricate and colorful pieces of work that are both useful, and artistic. They have three children, Furum, Boral, and Mari, ranging in age from 12 to 25. All are learning the art of creating and molding glass.

Interactions:

The secret of the family's success is the sand used in the process of creating glass. They have it imported from a family friend near the Elos Desert. The alien sand gives their glass a broader spectrum of colors and seems better suited to creating intricate, and extremely thin, glass than local varieties of sand (including sand imported from Brandobia). Should their competitors learn the secret of the sand, the family would suffer from much stiffer competition from the glassworkers guild, possibly losing their business altogether.

O9: Shrine to the Caregiver

Height: 12'

Dimensions: 20'x40' **Stories:** 1

Occupants: Ovvi Gramdal (cleric of the Caregiver)

This small wooden building serves as a shrine dedicated to the worship of the Caregiver. Travelers stop here seeking aid, or a free meal, from the priest, a socially challenged dwarf named Ovvi Gramdal.

The shrine is an enclosed space with a large open area dedicated for worship. Several mats lay haphazardly about the floor, offering the wounded and weary a place to sleep. An iron cauldron hangs over a small fireplace, always full of soup (or stew) for hungry travelers. In the rear of the building is Ovvi's personal quarters. His small room contains a bed, a locked chest, foodstuffs and ingredients for meals, along with several of the priest's personal items.

Ovvi was once a member of a band of adventurers, but lost his companions while exploring the mountains near Fradnor's Keep. During one particularly vicious encounter against a band of entrenched kobolds he was knocked unconscious and left for dead. Eventually, a

second party of adventurers discovered his unconscious body and aided in his recovery.

Ovvi has since retired from adventuring and settled down in P'Bapar. Luckily for him, he stumbled into the city when members of his order were seeking a replacement to manage the shrine on the outskirts of town. Ovvi quickly agreed, and has been here ever since.

Anyone seeking aid at the shrine is sure to notice some of the peculiarities the dwarven priest possesses. New arrivals are often alarmed to discover Ovvi is very opinionated on all matters of service to the Caregiver. He possesses several radical (and surprisingly violent) ideas about the proper method for bringing about peace. Most assume this is simply a side effect of being a dwarf.

Ovvi lacks any real social skills. He is unable to properly articulate his point of view in an objective and unbiased manner. He refrains from eye contact and mumbles into his beard when speaking, making conversation difficult. When Ovvi becomes excited (especially when talking about his belief system) he grows agitated and fondles his weapon in a perverse manner as he speaks.

Ovvi's opinions and religious beliefs about the Caregiver are interesting, to say the least. Anyone receiving treatment, or sleeping at the shrine, is likely to overhear his alarming ideas. Ovvi believes the best way for priests of the Caregiver to bring about peace is to venture out into the world and destroy the foul things that populate it. By aggressively and proactively eliminating evil, he believes he can propagate and foster a better life for the good people of the world.

It is rumored that a few years ago Ovvi assisted in the defense of several outlying farms that had fallen prey to a goblin attack. One farmer witnessing the battle overheard Ovvi shout in a ferocious voice, "Come get

some peace!" as he smashed in the head of a goblin with his morning star. Since that time, most of the locals make sure not to cross the dwarf, just in case he feels the need to "preach" to them.

Interactions:

Ovvi has few, if any, social capabilities and even holding a regular conversation with him requires patience. To make matters worse, he is ugly, really ugly. Sometimes, he attempts to make a real effort to convert others to way of the Caregiver, but mostly he is willing to let each individual form their own opinion of his deity. Invariably, discussions about conversion become awkward for him. This usually happens about the time Ovvi's opinions on bashing monsters in the head in order to foster peace finally come to light.

Ovvi is happy to provide healing or food to travelers in need, whenever possible. The door to the shrine is

always unlocked and Ovvi welcomes visitors at all hours of the night, though he prefers the company of dwarves to non-dwarves. If pestered enough with promises of slaying kobolds (with a healthy dose of bringing about peace through acts of violence) it is possible to convince Ovvi to

take up his morning star and head back into the wilds. Anyone able to persuade Ovvi to take up adventuring should be awarded 75 EPs.

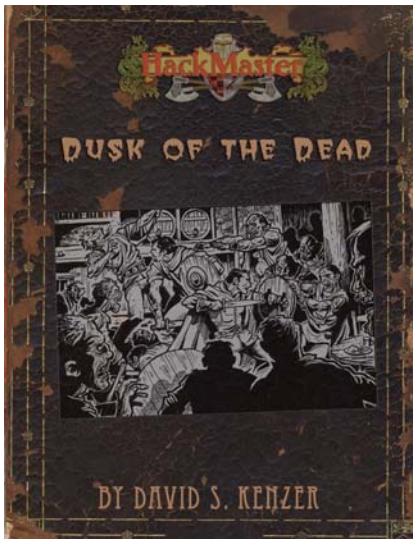
Ovvi Gramdal: NG dwarf cleric 3; HP: 36, Init: +4, Spd: 11, Rch: 3', Atk: +3, Dmg: 2d8p+2, DR: 4, ToP: 11/6, Turning: -3, Hon: 26, Quirk: afraid of heights

Typical Spells: 1st – cure minor wounds; 2nd – bless, cure light wounds; 3rd – cure wound, safe haven

Notable Skills: cooking/baking 67, first aid 74, language (dwarven 79, Baparan 23)

Equipment: Ring mail, morning star, medium shield





"The long hours on the road have left you yearning for a good night's rest at your favorite way station. Decent food, a clean bed and live entertainment have never sounded so good – especially so with those storm clouds looming on the horizon, mounting winds and periodic raindrops heralding some fouler weather to come. The warm glow of a fire and a hot meal will be welcome, but where is the wait staff?"

Dusk of the Dead is a new HackMaster adventure featuring a variety of challenges designed for four to six 5th to 7th level player characters.

Detailing a haunted location off the beaten path, *Dusk of the Dead* may be used by itself as a stand-alone one-shot adventure or easily placed anywhere in the wilderness of an ongoing campaign. Located in the wilderness near Frandor's Keep, just off the Borderland Road, *Dusk of the Dead* may also be employed as a follow-on for characters completing the Frandor's Keep mini-campaign and/or as an add-on or segue into the Mines of Chaos series of adventures. The adventure contains a myriad of hooks and ideas for introducing players to the scenario as well as follow-on integration for on-going play

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Like all Kenzer and Company products, *Dusk of the Dead* was designed with you in mind. The PDF is designed both for traditional use on a PC or to print out on your own as well as being *optimized for tablet use* with internal hyperlinks that allow you to tap on a map and jump right to the description or to follow other internal references direct to the relevant page! We prepare all the details so you can spend less time flipping pages (real or virtually) and more time gaming. Gamemastering has never been so easy or so much fun!

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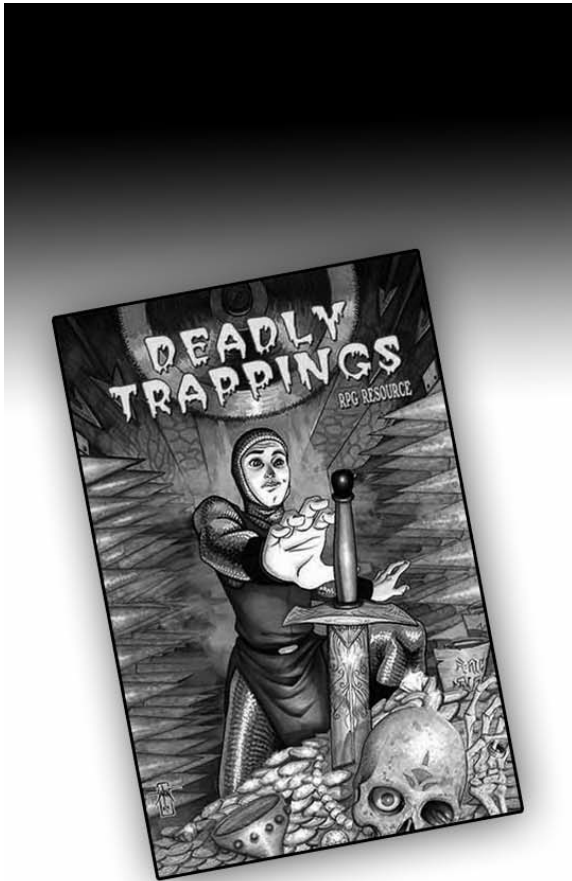
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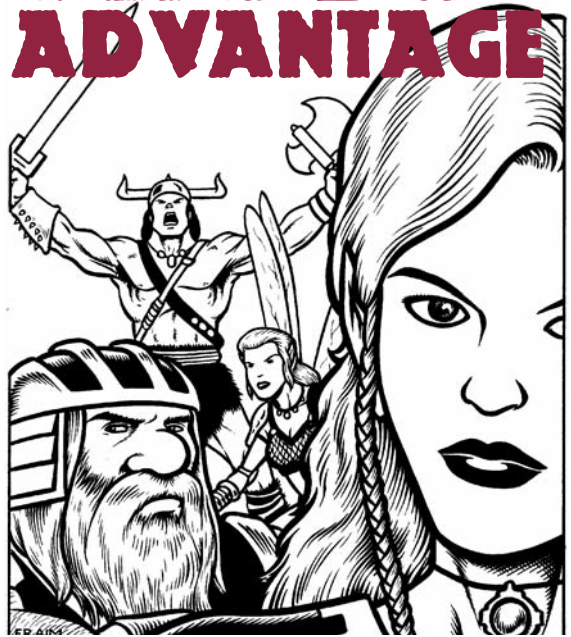
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PLAYERS' ADVANTAGE



New Artisan Skill

by Francesco Accordi HMGMA # ITA - 1 - 10412 - 11

Candle Making

Relevant Abilities: Intelligence and Wisdom
Cost: 2 BP
Universal: No
Prerequisite: None
Materials/Tools: Yes

Mastery Level	The character can...
Novice	Render fat (tallow) and create wicks. Craft rough tallow candles
Average	Craft smooth tallow candles and beeswax candles. Craft candle molds.
Advanced	Craft smooth beeswax candles. Craft time-marker candles to measure 12 hours in 1 hour increments.
Expert	Craft colored candles by adding metal shavings, and chemical compounds. Create scented candles through the use of natural products (such as flowers).
Master	Craft multi-colored candles which change color over time.

General Notes on Candle Making

In recent times, the use of tallow candles has prevailed over poorer quality small ceramic oil lanterns. An oil lantern requires constant attention as its tank must be regularly filled, the wick must be trimmed, and any fuel residuals cleaned from surfaces and other objects on which it falls. Lanterns also are likely to spill. The flammable liquid can cause dangerous fires in homes made of wood as were typical in medieval times.

The candle was initially used in conjunction with religious ceremonies. Some faiths or religions favor the custom of the faithful marching with candles during festivities; a candle is thus seen as a sacred object of the faith. Blessed candles are lit to invoke god's help during both disasters and prayers. In some areas it's custom to place a votive candle at the foot of a dying man's bed to implore divine protection for the departing spirit.

Monasteries and castles occupants make extensive use of beeswax candles, while the commoners use those made of tallow. As a result the availability of these objects spread to the middle class, where it is seen as a status symbol. The use of beeswax candles for private homes is a luxury of lords and clerics. The majority of the population uses tallow (rendered animal fat) candles that were initially produced by master soap makers using the same raw material to produce soap. In some civilized Kalamarian regions there are "candle's taxes" that are required to reimburse the expanse of candles burnt by judges or lawyers during trials.

The calorific value of beeswax is far superior to that of tallow, because the beeswax burns longer. As candles burn fairly constantly, they are also used to mark the passing of time. Obviously they are not as accurate as a modern watch, but allow the measurement of time indoors and for periods much longer than those measured with an hourglass. These specific candles are marked with 12 horizontal notches. With the development of apiculture in monasteries and big farms together with the increase of wealth in cities and surrounding areas, the beeswax candles replaced partly or completely those made of tallow in certain rich provinces. Beeswax is the substance used by bees to



build honeycombs, separated from honey. It is sold in blocks and has a dark yellow color and emanates a sweet, gentle smell.

To make candles the chandler follows a simple procedure. Typically he plunges a string of hemp (called a "wick") in a container filled with hot liquefied tar. Then he takes out the pitch covered string as it slowly solidifies. He plunges the candle several more times into hot liquid wax contained in a ceramic pot. For each dive a layer of sticky wax solidifies and cools at room temperature. The candle slowly takes shape and texture after each dive. There is another method of producing beeswax candles using multiple wicks affixed to a timber and, with a wooden spoon, wax is poured over the wicks and the surplus is reused over and over again.. Wooden moulds are used or to produce tallow candles, compressing the materials to create the bigger votive and time measuring candles injecting inside melted beeswax. In case of a failed test at the end of the process the wax or tallow can be melted again and reused for further productions.

Candles with Coloured Flames

It's possible to create also candles with a differently coloured flame. The following table serves as a reference guide for the use of minerals necessary to obtain the desired effect.

Lilac flame: Potassium

Brick-red flame: Calcium

Scarlet flame: Strontium

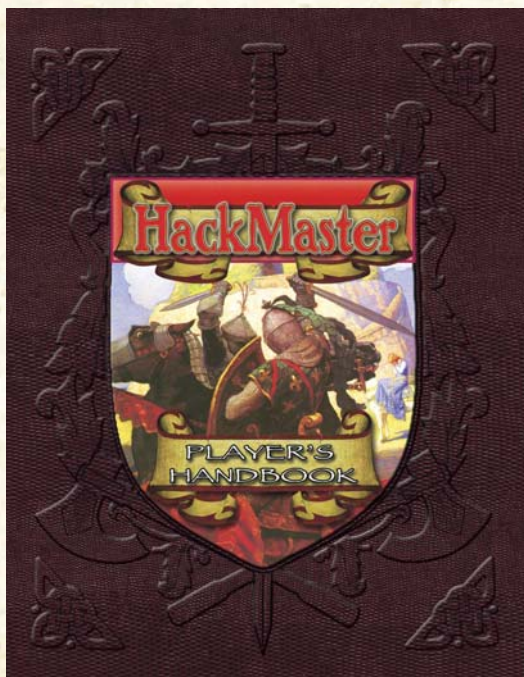
Red-purple flame: Lithium

Green-yellow flame: Barium

Blue-green flame: Copper

Green flame: Boric Acid

In a game where superstition and fear of magic are common, such effects could have an unsettling effect upon those unfamiliar with these practices, an effect that some might use to elicit a psychological advantage. Considering the material above, except for copper and calcium are only available from alchemists. The creation process is more or less the same as above, except that the wick must be immersed, after being plunged in liquid tar, in the mineral powder. The flame will then burn of the desired colour.



Player's Handbook

Problem solving underpins the play of any roleplaying game, regardless of genre. Whether that means overcoming foes with superior tactics, answering a tough riddle or discovering the secret room concealing fabulous treasure, all involve overcoming a difficulty with your friends. Nowadays, a fantasy RPG devotee has many choices in which to indulge problem solving with his fellow enthusiasts. The trend over the last decade or so has been leaning toward the heroic game. After all, who doesn't want to roleplay a hero? Heroes are very good at resolving a crisis, whether through force of arms, might of magic or otherwise. Here is where the HackMaster game sets itself apart from other fantasy roleplaying games.

The HackMaster game is about more than just playing a hero that fixes troublesome predicaments. Indeed, HackMaster allows for heroic play – play long enough and you will experience such a game. But HackMaster includes another element overlooked by the other games – the journey to becoming a hero.

In HackMaster, players begin running characters generally little better than the local commoner. True, some may be head-and-shoulders above their fellow man, but this is the exception rather than the rule. Most HackMaster characters even have one or more weaknesses that make the road to hero even more difficult. The challenge of the game is to overcome difficult situations with a band of allies, none of whom are overly exceptional. To find a literary example of this type of story, one need not look far. Arguably (if not factually) the most popular fantasy story of all is such a tale. In Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, the main character (as well as his dwarven companions) is a plain everyday person. One of the reasons we love this story is because we can identify with Bilbo; he's just like us. We root for him as he overcomes the odds on his journey to becoming one of the most storied heroes of Middle Earth. *The Hobbit* is about the journey to becoming a hero. This is also the essence of HackMaster.

Certainly, playing a roving band of superheroes a la the Justice League has its place, but arguably this is far less heroic than a commoner rising to the challenge. True heroism comes from overcoming the odds and risking life and limb in a perilous situation not the faux valor that comes from defeating supervillains when the chance of failure is slim or none. Does our society not love the story of the everyday man that saves a child from a burning building or rushing river? In HackMaster, your character will be asked time and time again to display true heroism, to overcome personal and situational deficiencies and rise to the challenge. This is not to say that other games are not fun, but I submit to you, gentle reader, that the journey from hero to superhero is less rewarding (and therefore less enjoyable) than the journey from average to hero to superhero. In HackMaster the most atypical thing about your character vis-à-vis society is his will to strive against the odds and make his mark in the world.

If problem solving is the essence of roleplaying, then the journey to hero is the ultimate method of play. The multiplicity and diversity of available quandaries in HackMaster-type play unquestionably exceeds those of the 'begin play as hero' types of game. Why bother ensuring your character carries enough rope when your party wizard can simply conjure some? With every move, from positioning in combat, to how rooms are searched, to equipping properly and so-on, if your characters begin as everyman, you'll need to think through each and every aspect of play. Your characters will need to work as a team and plan to overcome obstacles. And when you do prevail, you will experience a feeling of exhilaration like no other – knowing you succeeded by relying on your wits and gaming skill rather than the sheer awesome power of your character. This is what sets this game apart. Play HackMaster for a few sessions and you will realize that this is the last fantasy roleplaying game you will ever need.

The world of HackMaster needs heroes like you – steel your nerve, ready your wits and answer the call!

[Click here for more information](#)

GIANT, FIRE

Though I had heard tales of these fearsome giants in my youth, I paid them no great heed. In truth, they were of little concern for not once in my century of life did I hear a confirmed story of one of my clan encountering one. Not to say that I hadn't seen giants. The Ka'Asas are home to many dangerous creatures including hill giants. These I saw on more than one occasion and, though granting them a grudging respect as terrible combatants, did not consider them an overwhelming challenge to a prepared troop of veteran dwarven skirmishers.

When that bastard Kabori laid siege to Irontop, we laughed it off as yet another vainglorious attempt by the humans to futilely bleed their numbers on our impregnable fortress. Sure, their numbers were bolstered with hobgoblins but we knew these foes well and could punish their arrogance as we long had with their human allies. What changed that day was the presence of the fire giants.

Those of us who had battled hill giants were astonished at the power of these foes. Single blows would routinely kill experienced fighters and hurl their corpses yards away. Clad in iron armor, our axes could not bite deep and did little to dissuade their advance through our lines. Though relatively few in number, we could not resist and the lesser men and kargi — capable warriors in their own right — surged through and penetrated our ranks.

Our strongest gates proved child's play for the giants as they methodically circumvented them with relative ease. Indeed, it was more than brute force for they did seem to grasp the principals of metalwork and were equipped both with tools and skills to assist them in their work.

- Aro Graniteye, survivor of the Battle of Kadir Ridge

Fire Giants wield enormous hammers, picks and maces. Woe to those on the receiving end of these blows!



Fire giants are among the most formidable of giantkind. Though their stature is little greater than a Hill Giant, they are broad and muscular with a stocky build comparable to a dwarf. They are usually darkly complected though their dusky appearance is undoubtedly enhanced by soot. Most fire giants are ginger-haired and they favor broad swathes of facial hair.

Combat/Tactics:

The giants do not engage in the ad-hoc combat style typical of giantkind. More disciplined than others of their ilk, when they mount an attack it is with purpose and likely to be conducted with at least rudimentary tactics aimed at achieving their intended purpose rather

than simply causing mayhem.

When battling men and humanoids, they readily adapt to the tactics most frequently used by large numbers of diminutive creatures to forestall their advance. A pair may engage the serried ranks of polearm bearing footsoldiers but will give ground to avoid encirclement and seek to draw the creatures forward at oblique angles to disrupt their formation. Their peers meanwhile will attack the flanks seeking to drive into the rear and smash the leaders. If successful, as is often the case, they are quick to accept surrender for they are interested in adding to their slave gangs rather than butchering potentially useful captives.

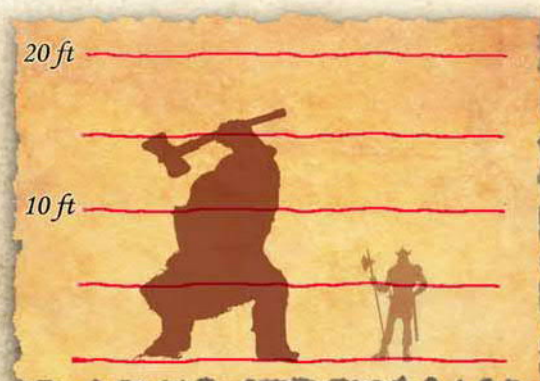
SIGN/TRACKS



RANGE ON TELLENE



SIZE COMPARISON



In battle, fire giants wear iron piece armor that provides excellent resistance (DR 12) to blows from puny creatures. They typically wield huge blunt weapons such as hammers and picks that inflict horrendous wounds – more often than not capable of crushing a man-at-arms into lifeless pulp where he stands.

Many fire giants will also be armed with smaller hammers balanced for throwing. In their enormous hands, these missiles have the range of javelins and inflict 3d8+10 HP of damage should they strike true (or 2d8p+10 damage when contacting a shield). Note that such attacks largely depend on aiming skill not brute strength and as such the giant only gains a +7 Attack bonus.

Naturally enough, fire giants are extremely resistant to fire and able to sustain 24 HP of such damage (magically inflicted or otherwise) per 10 second interval without feeling its effects.

Habitat/Society:

Fire giants do not present the same capricious threat to humanity as many other giants do for they are, by and large, not raiders. Rather, they settle in mountain ranges with active vulcanism. These regions are naturally desirous for their great warmth but serve a far more valuable purpose. You see, fire giants are adept miners and such regions often abound in iron pyrite ores as well tin and valuable deposits of copper, silver, gold and platinum. Their lairs are usually one gigantic mine. Active lava is particularly desirous as it permits direct smelting of ores.

Fire giants are more dangerous when they have played out their mines after perhaps centuries of inhabitation. In these instances, they seek out new mines. They will frequently have years or decades to plan these relocations as production from their home mines slowly peters out. During this period, they will become more active and take up scouting and raiding over a large swath of territory seeking out the best area in which to relocate. This frequently brings them into conflict with dwarves with disastrous results for the latter.

Ecology:

Fire giants have, by and large, little interest in hunting and foraging. Only the most destitute and unsuccessful clans deign to personally engage in such activity. Those who can utilize their thralls to perform such tasks. These giants are notorious slavers and routinely keep a large retinue of indentured servants to perform sundry tasks that would otherwise distract them from their chief interest in mining and metalwork. Ogres and gnoles often form the bulk of the slaves as they are hearty creatures and most likely to survive the abuse their masters dish out. And dish it out they certainly do for these dim-witted and chaotic thralls have to be actively managed.

On Tellene:

Fire giants are concentrated in areas of active vulcanism, most notably the Ka'Asa Mountains and surrounding regions (the Counai Heights and its eastern reaches the Sotai Gagalia Headlands). Fire giants are also known to inhabit the Krimppatu and Tanezh ranges in Svimohzia and are rumored to exist in the southern Elenon Mountains though these snowy peaks undoubtedly discourage fire giants from roaming much from their subterranean lairs hence the uncertainty.

The depths to which these giants bore into the earth causes many a sage to speculate as to whether or not they are engaged in active trade with the shadowy denizen of the Netherdeep and if their mines might be conduits to this frightening realm.

¹ Fire giants carry satchels that hold various mundane items. They also typically contain 10d20p gp. Fire giant lairs can contain vast amounts of wealth mined over decades, in the form of precious metals and gems.

Fire Giant

HIT POINTS:	50+12d8
SIZE/WEIGHT:	G / 1¼ tons
TENACITY:	Brave
INTELLIGENCE:	Average
FATIGUE FACTOR:	-7

SPEED 10	ATTACK +20	INIT 3
DEFENSE +9	DAMAGE 6d6p+10	DMG REDUCTION 12
long REACH	DAMAGE	TOP SAVE 12

MOVEMENT

CRAWL:	5
WALK:	10
JOG:	15
RUN:	20
SPRINT:	25

ATTACK: Attacks with huge hammers, picks or maces for 6d6p+10 crushing damage; may also hurl hammers (see text); a Fire Giant's DR is 6 sans any armor

SAVES

PHYSICAL:	+22
MENTAL:	+19
DODGE:	+18

SPECIAL:

DR 24 vs. any fire damage;
Extreme Low Light vision

GENERAL INFO

ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Diurnal
NO. APPEARING:	1-4 (patrol) plus numerous slave troops, 22-36 (lair)
% CHANCE IN LAIR:	95%
FREQUENCY:	Unusual
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful Evil
VISION TYPE:	Extreme Low Light Vision
AWARENESS/SENSES:	Standard
HABITAT:	Mines
DIET:	Omnivorous
ORGANIZATION:	Clans
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Regions of active vulcanism

YIELD

MEDICINAL:	nil
SPELL COMPONENTS:	nil
HIDE/TROPHY:	nil
TREASURE:	yes ¹
EDIBLE:	yes, but subject to cultural taboos regarding eating sapient beings
OTHER:	nil
EXPERIENCE POINT VALUE:	2000