SPOOKY ROOM PRODUCTIONS
LAIR OF SWORD & SORCERY
ISSUE 2 JAN 2015

PRICE

Lair of Sword & Sorcery

2

COMBAT

Lair of Sword & Sorcery
Issue 2 January 2015
The Combat Issue

Credits

Copyright Ripley Stonebrook 2015
All art, writing, and rules by:
Ripley Stonebrook Editor and Creator.

submissions & questions:

Send any comments, rules questions or submissions to
spookyroomproductions@gmail.com
Check for updates at:
lairofswordandsorcery.blogspot.ca

How can I get involved?

Join your forces with the powerful creators of the awe inspiring world of Kartharka!

Website:

You best place to start is the Lair of Sword and Sorcery Site at:

lairofswordandsorcery.blogpot.ca

Here you can comment on updates, and respond to questions and polls on the direction of the game and what you would like to see, or not see, in the game.

There are also regular articles on the sword and sorcery genre, fantasy, the setting of Kartharka, the tone of the game, and designers notes on the game system.

Google+:

Those who are on Google+ can get their lair updates there by adding:

Ripley Stonebrook

We also appreciate +1's and reposting of content on Google+

Facebook:

You can also receive your updates on Facebook at:

Lair of Sword and Sorcery

Like and follow Lair on facebook to get updates, and we of course appreciate any reviews and reposts to your own facebook page.

Email:

Send in any and all submissions, rules, art, questions, stories, comics, pictures of your demonboard, and pictures of your group.

Or if you are looking for players or demonlords in your area send in your contact email and we'll put it in the next issue or post it to the site.

spookyroomproductions@gmail.com

Retailers: If you are interested in carrying the Lair of Sword and Sorcery game then please send an email to:

spookyroomproductions@gmail.com.

If you would like your local retailer to carry the game then you can urge them to send us an email.

WHAT IS LAIR OF SWORD & SORCERY?

Welcome to the second Issue of the Roleplaying game "Lair of Sword & Sorcery" (shortened to "Lair") and the world of Kartharka in which it is set.

Issue 1 tackled the main ideas behind the game. That is should be fun, easy, and cheap to play. It also included instructions on how to make your own "Demonboard", the playing board on which all games of Lair are played.

With Lair I thought I would be upfront about how the game was meant to be played right off the bat. It is made to be played on a board, on the table, with little walls clearly marked and little figures clearly showing where everyone is.

This is because I feel that roleplaying games today (including the big ones) seem to want to pretend that a board is optional, yet the rules and gameplay are obviously based on you absolutely having to play on a board.

Play a game of modern D&D for 5 minutes without a board and try to see if you can 5 foot step around an enemy without an argument. Can't be done.

So in Lair I did something different. Instead of selling you a playing matt or board I showed you how to make and use one. In Lair you can make the simplest version of the board and a set of walls in an afternoon while watching TV. You can do it with a couple of dollars worth of Materials from a Dollar Store.

This did make for a somewhat odd first taste of a roleplaying game in issue 1. No rules, no characters, no stats or tables. What's this game all about?

Well in this issue you get to find out.

Everything you need to start playing is here in this booklet.

Along with rules are Designers Notes on why things are the way they are, and notes on the overall style and feel of the game and what further issues will touch on.

So Venture on Brave Heroes, stride from the Winterlands to the Summerlands watching your heroes fame grow in the fertile ground of their enemies bodies..

Questions and Answers

Question: Why don't you just publish everything in one book and be done with it?

Answer: I already did.

Sitting on my shelves is another game. It was a basic roleplaying game, had a generic fantasy setting, made sure to include all the usual fantasy RPG tropes, and included everything for the Gamemaster including treasures, magic items and monsters.

I finished, looked at it, and realized it was just another piece of garbage to clog up the internet with. It has been done before and will be done many times more. The world doesn't need another basic RPG retroclone.

Question: So how is Lair different?

Answer: Lair is not created for Roleplayers.

Lair is created for anyone who loves Fantasy and Sword and Sorcery. It is purely for having fun on a Friday night, not for playing an epic 3 year long campaign, where you can't miss a single week and each session runs until 3 in the morning.

Question: Why a magazine format?

Answer: All great roleplaying games are written in magazine format.

In the 70's there were many new roleplaying games but the original Dungeons and Dragons rose above the rest to continue on to this day. The reason for this was because of the Magazines. On our side of the ocean there was Dragon Magazine, and on the other, White Dwarf.

Two magazines run by game companies to promote their product and publish new material.

The magazines served two purposes, new content for the game every single month, and a way for players of the game to connect with each other in an "official" capacity.

Generating a magazines worth of content every month would be difficult for any company but luckily they could rely on the fans to send in their own rules, lists, monsters, adventures, stories and art. When your material got printed in Dragon it was official Dungeons & Dragons material.

Anyone could be part of the game and could add to it and control the way it grew.

The letters column alone gave the people a way to connect with the game creators and each other.

So I thought I would just start with a magazine from the beginning.

So be a part of the game, make it your own, and send in anything you think would be interesting.

See the indica to the right for the submission rules and the email address for Submission.

A hero is born!

(No elfs, dwarfs, or half-elfen dragon-rider/assassins)

Are you ready to stride the mountains like a hurricane? To smash the heart of the deepest mine, to wring forth the iron from it's dripping heart?

To see the villagers tremble with fear and desire when you enter their pitiful town square heaped with the treasure of a thousand dead enemies?

Good!

To play the game of Lair of Sword & Sorcery you will need two things; a Demon Lord to lay out and plan the terrible Lairs you will enter, and a Hero to call your very own.

A hero to use, and use up. To act out your terrible vengeance on a world that displeases you, to right the wrongs that have been done to you.

Look to the Hero Record sheet appearing later in the issue. In this issue we will show you how to fill in all these boxes on the sheet to create your hero. In this issue you will also find the combat rules, so that your enemy can finally feel the crushing blow of your axe in his chest.

A couple of things first before we jump right in.

Lair is a game of Sword & Sorcery, in a brutal world of feuding empires and squabbling city states.

It is a world of Men. A world of Humans. The world of Kartharka has men of all statures, types, colours, and philosophies, much like our own. The amount of variation of people on our own planet means that there is more than enough variety in the realm of humans already without having to include "fantasy" races such as Dwarfs and Elfs in the Hero creation process.

Revel in the variety of the Human condition when creating your character and don't feel the need to ever fall back on the old tired classic of "I'm an Elf" to make your character interesting.

There are no "classes", "jobs", "careers" or other types of distinctions between heros.

In the world of Kartharka there are certain things that all heroes can do and they do not require a title or distinction on a character sheet to do it.

Everyone can fight, worship a god of their choice, hunt for their food, or dig a hole in the ground.

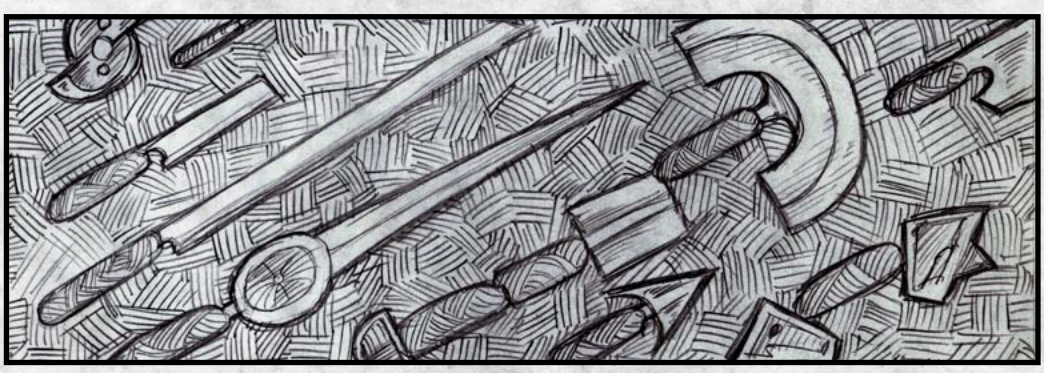
What makes your hero unique, powerful, lauded or despised, are their actions. And their actions are wholly up to you.

In the Lair system Heros all begin on a equal footing, it is the players choices for how they will grow and expand that set them apart. The Lair Veteran system of Hero advancement allows the players to grow their hero in any way they choose, to become a better fighter, to learn the secrets of the sages, to penetrate the inner cloisters of the Wolf-Brothers temple, or to become a spice merchant if they so choose (the travails of a spice merchants life or more perilous than you would guess).

The Lair system is one of creativity, freedom, speed, and high adventure!

You can make a character in five minutes and have him thrown into the latest Lair the Heros are penetrating. Playing an advanced game with a group of Heros that have been plundering for years is no problem! Throw that new Hero in the mix and watch him reach new and dizzying heights in no time!

Remember, all you Kartharken Blood Reavers; it's not what's on the sheet that's important, it's what the Hero does with it!



LIFE IN THE WINTERLANDS

Before creating your hero it may help to know a little of the world he lives in (or she, women warriors are welcome!)

The Winterlands are not a kind or friendly place. Survival is just barely possible through communities struggling together against the mountains.

The black road of the Emperor winds through the mountains and up to the mining capital of Stroh-Branoch.

Maintenance of the road is possible only because of the hot springs dotting the mountainside.

Each spring is ancient and each has it's own story of how it was found, dug, or gifted from the gods.

These hot springs usually spill into an underground cavern filling a large pond and then flowing back out into the ground.

On top of these caverns a family will build a house, (called a wayhouse) the strong dome shaped structure made of stone common to the winterlands.

The hot springs heat the home which usually also serve as a way station or inn along the road.

The families that own these houses are responsible for maintaining the roads for a few miles in either direction.

They are gifted Iron plows by the emperor, they scrape the snow flat, while a large flat plate is dragged behind to flatten the hard packed snow, with spikes to score and break up any slick ice.

This keeps the black road throughout the Winterlands open to travel.

But what do the people eat in the winter wastes?

The evergreen trees of the winterlands provide hard bitter berries and acorns which the smaller animals eat.

Larger snow cats, bears and wolves live off of these and are in turn hunted by the people.

But the main source of food in the winterlands is the interconnected raising of Matten and the Takket.

The Matten is a fast growing grass, whose roots are large and bulbous.

The Matten grows near the underground pools of the hot springs. Indeed it grows so fast that if it is not harvested often it would soon choke the hot spring.

The roots make a serviceable though tasteless gruel or can be dried to make a gritty flour. (The ubiquitous matten flour, the staple of the winterlands).

The grasses are inedible to humans but are loved by the winterlands takket.

The domestic takket of the Winterlands resembles a large wide goat, or a tiny Bison. As tall as a mans waist they are covered with a shaggy coat.

The takket provides meat, milk, fur, leather and wool for the people of the winterlands. So useful are they that the most ancient stories of the Winterlands are about the gift of the takkets, matten, and hot springs from the gods.

But their use fullness doesn't end there. The takkets also supply another useful product, manure.

The takket manure is spread amongst the matten, causing their meagre bulbs to grow to twice normal size.

As if doubling their matten supply was not enough the people of the winterlands found another use for the manure.

After the manure is used to fertilize the Matten it becomes hard and brittle. The people of the Winterlands use this material as a fuel, burning twice as long and hot as wood. It is easy to carry taking up little room on a persons drag sled.

Indeed without this fuel many would have froze to death at night when travelling the roads.

Government and Law

The government of the Winterlands are not interested in creating laws or upholding them. They care not for the petty squabbling of people amongst themselves. The people should have the strength to protect themselves and their families.

Instead the Winterlands are governed by a group called "The Targ". Though it is mostly a hereditary title any may become a Targ if it is agreed by the people. Any Targ may also be called upon by the people to give up their position.

The Targ are in charge of the precious resources of the Winterlands, food and heat.

The Targ administrate the maintenance of the large outdoor heaters which any may gather

around. These are scattered throughout any town or village.

They also control the distribution of the food supplied by the Emperor.

The emperor trades food for the right to buy the iron ore of the Winterlands. This food is stored by the Targ and distributed to all that need it.

Food is available in any number of places throughout any town, village, or roadside wayhouse.

In a place where any traveller or town can be cut off by a storm at any time, keeping a supply of food in all places possible is important.

The little food supplied by Matten, Takkets and hunting was able to support the people of the Winterlands before the coming of the Emperor. But with so many flocking to the mines from all over the world and the Winterlands, and so much time being spent on Mining, as well as populations concentrating in the cities, the peoples of the Winterlands would now starve within months if the Emperor were to stop the shipments of food.

So the Targ are in charge of maintaining a good relationship with the emperor while still keeping the Freedoms which the people of the Winterlands have, the freedom to govern themselves and freedom from the taxes of the Emperor, the northern passing taxes of wood food and gold, and the southern passing tax of slaves.

This can be a difficult job, keeping the people at least indifferent to the emperors agents.

The Targ also administrate grievances of Mining Law.

Any may stake any claim to any mine, cave, or digging that they wish, for as long as they can hold it.

Taking an others claim if they leave it is considered acceptable so guards are often left.

If someone chooses to attack another miner to take a claim then a grievance may be placed before the Targ. Mining law is complex however, with previous claims made by the attackers, or their families previous claims to the same mine, as well as their standing in the community, past grievances they have made, as well as grievances made about them, may all be considered.

Usually the only law that most people would encounter would be that of the sheriff.

The sheriffs are in charge of dispensing "road justice".

Most are stationed at way houses along the black road and other roads of the winterlands.

There job is not to capture, punish or incarcerate. Their job is to prevent the often savage retribution which the Winterlanders would dole out to each other for wrongdoing they feel have been done to them.

If a man kills another man in a brawl, it is likely that the dead mans family would then seek out and kill the murderer. And then the murderer's family would seek out that family starting a fight leaving dozens dead. This would be considered acceptable to the thinking of a Winterlander.

And so the sheriffs were created. If a wrongdoing has been done to you or your family you can bring it before the sheriff. The sheriff will then decide if retribution is required, demanding the return of stolen items, or in the case of someone being killed, will seek out and do away with the murderer if they deem them guilty. The sheriffs ruling is absolute and none may seek them out for revenge.

Attacking a sheriff will cause the entire family to lose status, leaving them unable to avail themselves of the food or heaters of the Targ. They also lose any rights to Mining claims. A revenge attack on a sheriff will be brought up for centuries whenever a mining claim grievance is brought before the Targ.

The post of Sheriff is an elected one. By the people nearest to the wayhouse they are stationed at. These people will usually bow to the wishes of the actual owner of the wayhouse however.

THE TARG

STROH-BRANOCH

MINING CAPITAL OF THE WINTERLANDS

This issue has the first pull out map of the Lair Roleplaying game.

The Mining Capital of Stroh-Branoch.

More information on this city will come in further issues, but included in this issue is a pull out map to stick up on the wall or put out on the table for the players to see.

The following text is the list of important buildings in the city as well as some more background history of the Winterlands.

1: The Imperial Essay office: Ore is sold to the Empire here. All platinum must be sold here immediately after being found. Also in charge of official mining claims, though these are not necessarily enforced by the Targ.

2: Sawbin Refinery: Winterlanders may sell their Ore here, or have their ore refined for a fee. They also sell Iron, copper and other metals.

3: Sawbin Suppliers: Winterlanders may buy their Mining tools and other supplies here.

4: Tyran's Moneychanger: A place where people may have their money exchanged for larger or smaller denominations, may sell or buy gems or sequins, silver, gold, copper, and iron.

5: Independent Miners Clan: All non-imperial miners are encouraged to join the Miners Clan. They keep their own records of claims and all Clan members will honour these claims. They also help support aged and injured miners. They may broker ore sales to the Empire, usually getting a better price than a Winterlander would get when selling ore themselves.

6: Winterlands local Targ (council hall): The local Targ headquarters. The Targ's duties are explained earlier in this issue. Each Targ hall also has the option of maintaining it's own security force or even standing army if it so chooses, though this is rare.

7: Local water spring: a heated water supply for takkets or Winterlanders.

8: Imperial Stables: Horses are maintained here for the use of imperials only. Imperials may not sell horses to Winterlanders. Horses are not native to the Winterlands.

9: Lumber mill: Quality Lumber can be bought here.

Logs, timbers and boards can be found everywhere in Stroh-branoch, remains of past shacks and mine works. These can be used for building shacks and other buildings. For a more permanent structure, or one holding more status, Winterlanders will use quality cut lumber. Heros may choose to build there shack anywhere shacks are shown on the map.

10: Independent Bronzer: In most worlds this would be a blacksmith, but with the rareness of iron most household materials, tools and weapons are made of bronze.

All materials are made to order whether they be bronze nails, pots, pickaxes, swords or armour.

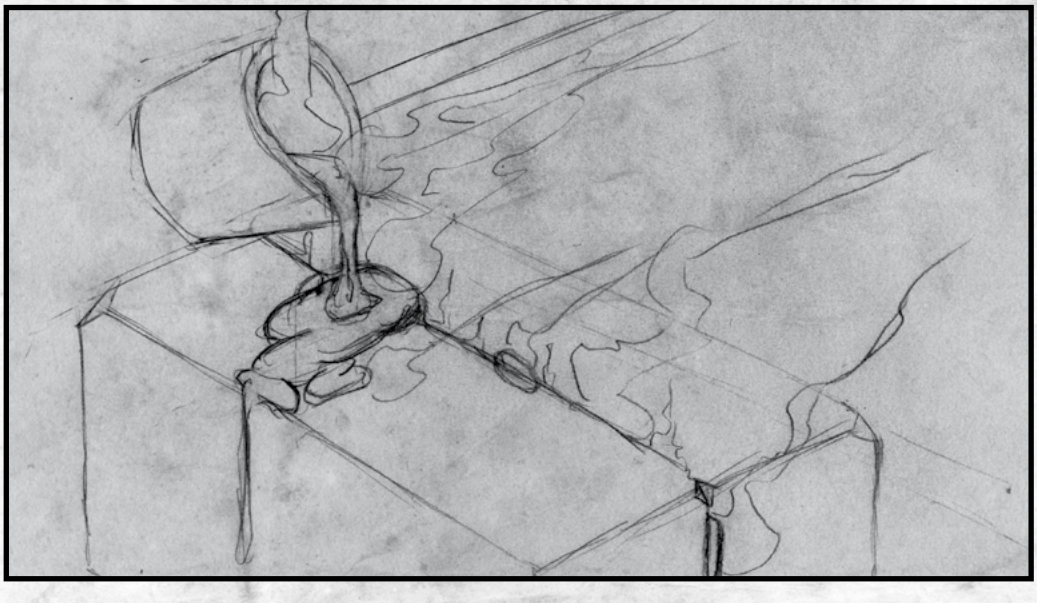
11: Independent Blacksmith: The blacksmith is a revered and honoured profession. Steel items are incredibly expensive but vastly superior to their bronze counterparts. Blacksmithing is a complicated art, and the materials are incredibly expensive. The smith is looked upon as a kind of sorcerer or mythical being.

12: Imperial Blacksmith: Available only to Imperials.

13: Imperial workers store: Only available to imperial employees (see next issue for the plight if the miners working at the Imperial mines)

14: Imperial Miners Barracks: Imperial miners can choose to live in these cramped quarters.

15: Local Targ stores and residence: Lower



ranking Targ and Targ from other towns stay here. These are also the storerooms for Targ food supplies.

16: Cast off removal: These Winterlanders are in charge of collecting cast off from the large refineries and the at home refining pits. They also keep the streets clear of debris and scrap lumber. Without them the streets would be choked with industrial debris in weeks.

17: Olne's original tavern: Food lodging and a good place for travellers to stay. No fighting or lawlessness allowed at Olne's and their Sheriff is very strict.

18: Temple of the Wolf Brother: The closest thing to a national government in the Winterlands. Each city, village, and settlement has their own Targ (collectively called the Targ).

The high temple of the Wolf Brother lies down below in the foothills of the Winterlands. All temples of the Wolf Brother follow the orders of the high priest. Each temple has it's own arch priest in charge of it's running and the followers in their area.

The temple of the Wolf Brother is used for important rites; celebrations, weddings funerals, feast days etc.

Much of the priests time is spent amongst the people and hospitals or helping the people as required.

Priests of the Wolf Brother may choose to patrol the borders as security, work in the hospitals, study ancient texts or travel to other temples.

All acolytes, when joining the temple, spend their first years travelling from temple to temple, carrying letters, whether for the temple, the targs, or for other winterlanders. These acolytes are the closest thing to a messenger or postal service the Winterlands have. See future issues for more on the lives of the Wolf Brothers priests as well as the role of Wolf Brother in the history of Kartharka.

19: Imperial Miners Guild: The Free Imperial Miners, skilled, well equipped, and well paid, the Imperial miners are eyed jealously by any miner down on their luck. They work for good wage and live a relatively good life. Unlike an independent miner however they have no chance of "striking it big" when finding the mother lode.

20: Wayfarers inn or "Wayhouse": Maintained by the Targ and dotting the roads of the Winterlands. Stockpiled with food supplies for stranded or destitute travellers.

Each also has a Sheriff, maintaining road law within their jurisdiction.

21: Wayfarer Inn and Gambling Hall: Gambling is legal in the Winterlands, though some halls are more honest than others. Some act as fronts for criminals, robbers, thieves, con men, smugglers and murderers.

22: Collapsed Limrust Refinery: Once a refinery rivalling that of the empire. The refinery caught fire and collapsed mysteriously years ago. The entire Limrust family was tragically trapped inside the Refinery at the time of it's collapse.

23: Winterlands Sages Hall: This hall is the living quarters for the local Winterlands sages. Each large settlement has it's own Sages Hall and Tower. All training, work and research takes place in the Sages Towers however.

24: Winterlands Sages Towers: The entrance is at the base of one tower. This tower contains the working quarters and research rooms of the sages. At the top of this tower is a bridge leading to the second tower. The second tower contains the libraries of the Sages. Scrolls tablets, and books made up of sheets of paper tied between two boards. They make up the knowledge of the Sages.

It is also rumoured that below this tower are basement vaults, in which are stored ancient relics of history, relics of the lost races which once ruled the first men, broken remains of their mysterious tools, and other items once rumoured to wield great magical powers in the time of sorcery. All of these are useless now but hoarded till a time when they can be understood.

25: Autumnlands Sages pyramid. A smaller version of the stepped pyramids which the Autumnlands sages occupy in their own land. Sages travelling to the Winterlands from the Autumnlands reside and study here.

26: Autumnlands Windhall (Council Hall): Ambassadors, diplomats and merchants of the Autumnlands conduct their business in this building.

27: Autumnland Tavern and Inn: Specialising and catering to Autumnland visitors.

28: Takket trainers huts and pens: Stroh-Branoch does not have hot springs, which anyone raising Takkets usually require, luckily matten grasses are so plentiful they are easily imported into the city. The trainers also supply the Takket fuel to any who need it.

29: Unsavoury encampment: The cast-off and Ne'er do wells of Stroh-Branoch. A citizen can be of no note at all, a citizen of good standing, a citizen of poor standing, or a cast off. These cast-off may not receive the free food from the Targ, may not join the others at the public heaters and may not make their dwellings in the city. They may also make no mining claims nor stay at any wayhouses. They are branded on their forehead with the mark of the sheriff who cast them out, as well as the mark of the sheriffs jurisdiction.

Encampment has no sheriffs, no food, and no heaters.

They may do business in the town if they wish but they will not be treated well, will be overcharged for any goods, and will be turned out of most taverns and gambling halls.

The unsavoury encampment can be very freeing though. No laws and no rules, no sheriffs and no Targ rulings, they are free to do as they please.

30: Summerlands Peoples Senate (Council Hall): Ambassadors and diplomats from the Summerlands stay here. Closed to the public the people of the Summerlands do not mingle with the Winterlanders.

31: Summerlands Sages: closed to the public, they will sometimes have brief contact with the Winterlands Sages, usually offering trades of information or artefacts only.

32: Apothecary: The works of the Apothecary are mainly medicinal, though they can create other liquids, such as acids or polishes.

33: Imperial Hospital: Available only to Imperials.

34: Public Hospital: Run primarily by the priests of the Wolf Brother, the winterlands sages, and the apothecaries.

35: Tindyl's Wayhouse: The highest quality Inn and Gambling house in Stroh-Branoch. Frequented by the rich and powerful, entrance is allowed only to those of great influence and wealth.

36: Merchants Plaza: A huge outdoor bazaar, housed beneath a massive and sprawling tent made of cloth, fur and wood. The rule of the Targ demands that all business transactions made with the empire and outsiders must take place outdoors, in the open, in full view of all. The actual transactions that take place here are mostly ceremonial as the goods and monies are often stored elsewhere with the actual bartering taking place beforehand. Nevertheless a ceremonial bartering will still take place in public with the Winterlander of course appearing to harshly fleece the outlander with many protestations from the poor merchant that his children will starve and that the Winterlanders drive a cruel and selfish bargain. The contract is then officially

signed and the merchants leave to oversee the transfer of goods.

37: The abandoned, and rumoured to be haunted, ruins of the Limrust family Homes: Rumours of the Empire destroying the Limrust refinery live strong to this day, though the Targ declared the event officially an accident.

None wish to try the Empires patience by exploring these ruins and opening an old and still painful wound.

38: Limrust family tombs: The Limrust family did not attend the Wolf Brother temple, they instead worshipped the Stone Brother, the god of their ancestors who first came to Stroh-Branoch. Stone Brother is worshipped more commonly upon the steppes of the Winterlands and does not have a central church as the Wolf Brother does. The family were all buried according to the Stone Brother way in family Tombs. Wolf Brother followers cremate their dead and place their ashes with the rest of the community in the great mausoleum of the Wolf Brother.

39: Winterlands Mercenaries: Fighters for hire. Hired by caravans, miners, or anyone else that has need of a sword. Their honour is based on loyalty to their contract. They will not accept all contracts but once they do they must see it through to the end whether they agree with their employer or not. In Winterland law a mercenary is not responsible for any actions he takes under direct orders from his employer.

All contracts are documented and tracked at the Mercenaries hall and every one has a goal or time limit.

Once the contract is up the Mercenary is free to take another contract but may never take one which contradicts a previous contract. For instance; once a mercenary takes a contract to protect a certain mine for 6 months he may not take a contract later to attack that mine. To break this contract or to go against a previous employer will lead to the mercenary becoming an outcast and lose all standing in the winterlands.

A mercenary may choose to do a personal job for no fee but will still be expected to lodge this at the hall as an "official" contract for no fee.

40: Winterlands Chapter of the Masters of Coin: Another group of mercenaries but far farther reaching. Chapter houses of the Coin Brotherhood stretch across the Empire with the

Father house located in the Empires Capital city. A secretive group they deal also in Information, and can be contacted to obtain specific pieces of information, or certain hard to find objects. Though their reach is far they do take time to contact their other houses. They do travel quickly however as they are one of the few groups allowed to travel with the black caravan in exchange for protection.

They are an exclusive group however and few winterlanders belong to the organization.

41: Current meeting place of the Hand: In a area where the official law is so vague, and where the unspoken rules mean death if they are broken, any "Criminal" must be careful. A con man would be immediately stabbed in the belly if found out, anyone attempting to break into an average winterlanders home is asking for a sword or mining pick in the skull. In a land where you swing either a sword or a mining pick to earn your living, the weaker must find other ways to make their fortune. The sages are not an option for those not able to read and write and pay for the privilege as well. So often the weaker must make do with being a toiling craftsmen or Merchant. But in a land where most make their own tools, houses, and furniture neither the craftsmen nor the merchant have much business to rely on.

So some turn to less honest means, smuggling and crooked gambling are the most common sources of income. Theft and murder are also a common source of income for the criminal. These people are called upon to acquire something, or kill someone for those who cannot risk being caught. Those of high standing who need to remain that way. The onus of the crime lies on the thief not the one who hired them. A captured thief will be either killed or outcast and the "law" cares little who paid for the crime. The Sheriff or Targ will ignore any such information from a thief, as false accusations of these kinds can lead to a war of retribution none want.

The Law of the Winterland is that all must protect their own and a victim of these crimes is considered foolish or weak for allowing this to happen to them.

Of course all of this requires a complicated chain of contacts and go-to people to operate and this structure is organized through meetings of like minded individuals.

The Hand controls all of these things and receives a cut of each transaction. Infighting is common however and any leader of the hand is temporary. This is all considered normal to members of the Hand and promotion is not necessarily through assassination, a Hand leader that leads the group to profits, and is able to mislead the Targ and Sheriffs about their activities will continue to lead.

42: Targ Houses: Houses of the Targ council members.

43: Ancients House: These are scattered throughout the Winterlands, especially in older settlements. They resemble an ancient Winterlands structure or hall but are made of a single piece of solid stone. With doors and windows and all other normal features also all carved out of solid stone. There are no cracks or openings to the inside . They seem to be solid monuments carved in the shape of a temple or home but with no openings.

Legend says these are the houses of the "Ancients" the peoples who lived in this land before the cataclysm that destroyed the seasons.

They serve no purpose and are mostly ignored by the people living around them. Some even build homes against them or on top of them as they would any other stony outcrop.

44: Another Ancients House

45: Puking Rock: An amusing rock outcrop from which spews a hot spring.

46: Ancients Grove: A strange grove of trees alien to the rest of the Winterlands. None travel to this place, supposedly haunted and definitely dangerous, it is roamed by particularly fierce animals.

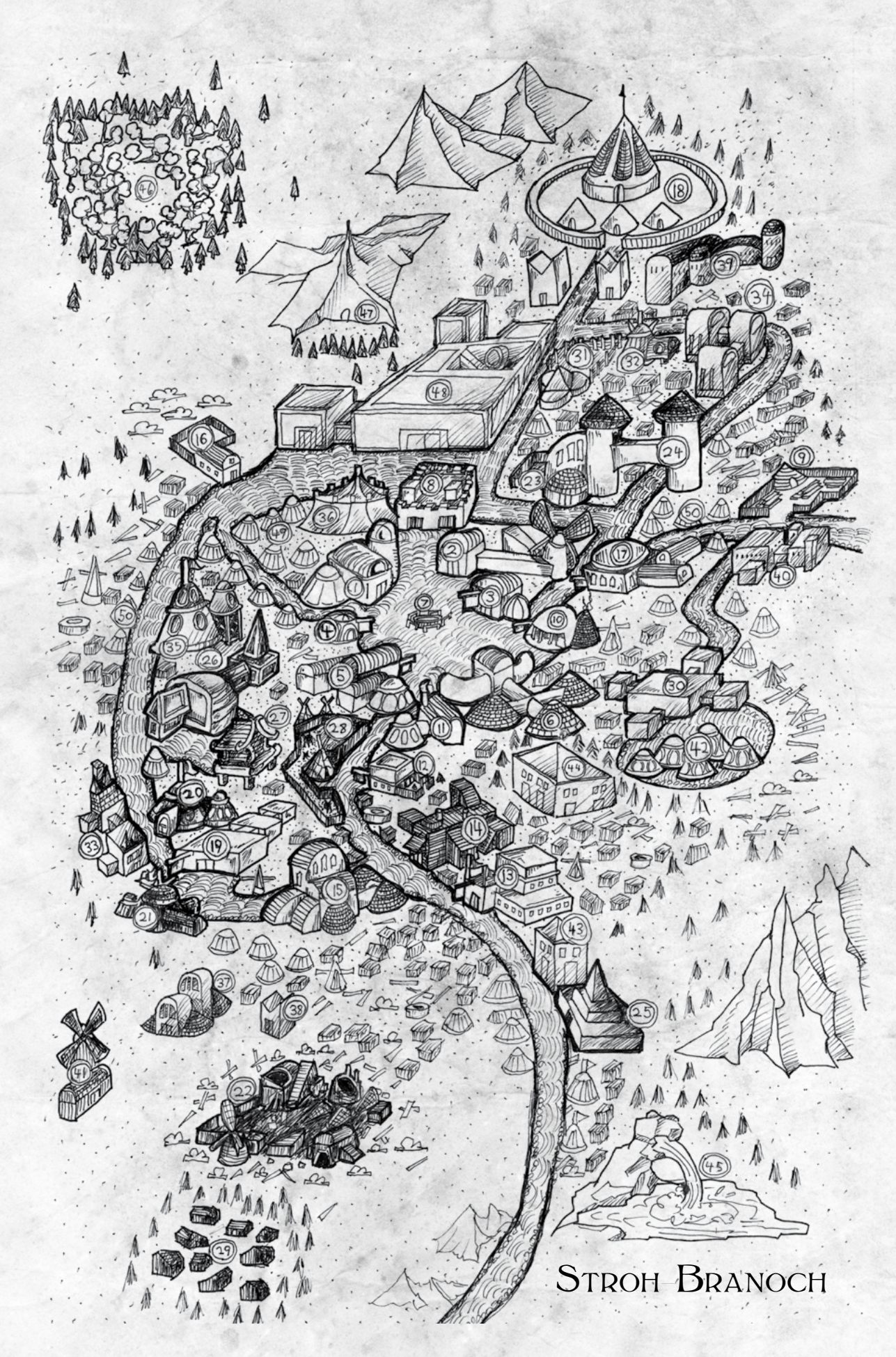
47: Wild Takket lair: This hollow is filled by a group of wild takkets, small wiry and vicious compared to the domestic takket. Some will hunt the odd takket here, or capture a few to introduce a specific trait to the domestic takket stock.

They are mostly left alone as their wild nature makes them far more dangerous than useful. Childhood tales speak of a giant multi-horned takket that roams through this herd at night. The stories say if any come too close to the Herd while the great takket roams they will be impaled on his great horns and flown to the top of the great Fang peaks and dropped upon them.

48: Imperial Checkpoint: None enter the great Imperial fortress, housing stables warehouses and refineries as well as the local Imperial Overseer.

49: Local Merchants

50: Gambling halls which may or may not be crooked.


Stroh Branoch

Hero Record Sheet

Player Name: _____
Hero Name: _____
Role: _____
Rank: _____

Demonlord: _____
Realm: _____
Homeland: _____
Demense: _____

Strengths & Weaknesses		Veteran Skills
Body — Attack		
Body — Poison		
Mind		
Quickness — Defense		
Quickness — Dodge		
Vitality — Endurance		
Vitality — Suffocation		
Camaraderie — Followers		
Camaraderie — Morale		
Other World — Sorcery		
Other World — Sorcery		

Current Fighting Power

Defense	Attack	Endurance	Damage	Move
	Shield? ☐ +2			

Special Abilities:

Demense Features:

Defense

Armour Worn
Head
Body
Arms
Legs

Quickness Bonus
Rank Bonus
Veteran Skills Bonus
Total

Treasure

Special:

Iron: _____
Gold: _____ Gems: _____
Silver: Sequins:

Equipment

Attack

Body Bonus
Rank Bonus
Veteran Skills Bonus
Total

Endurance

Starting 8
Vitality Bonus
Rank Bonus
Veteran Skills Bonus
Total

Damage

Rank Bonus
Veteran Skills Bonus
Total

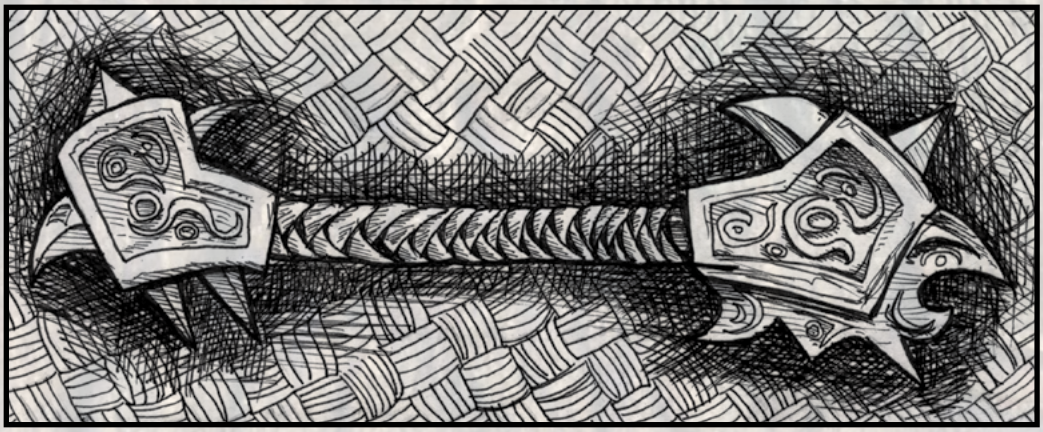
Favours

Rank Bonus

Defense: Attack: Endurance: Damage:

Veteran Points:

Lair of Sword & Sorcery



CREATE YOUR HERO

(YOU NEED SOMEONE TO DO YOUR DIRTY WORK)

Where to start

The Hero Record sheet on the previous page is what you will use to track your heroes strengths, weakness, history and glory.

You will want to make a lot of photocopies of this sheet as you'll be using a lot of them in your games of Lair.

We'll skip over the information at the top for now and get right to the heart of the sheet, the part titled "Strengths and Weaknesses"

There are 6 main attributes that define your Hero. His "Body", "Mind", "Quickness", "Vitality",, "Camaraderie", and "Other World".

Body: Defines how big and strong your hero is. His pure physical power.

Mind: Defines his intellectual faculties, such as learning, planning, solving riddles, reading and writing.

Quickness: The speed of the hero, whether when running, swinging a sword, dodging a blow, or reacting to something surprising.

Vitality: The Heroes vital fortitude, the ability to endure long marches, to suffer and heal from injuries, to overcome adversity, to soldier on when all seems lost.

Camaraderie: The heroes ability to lead and get along with others, whether leading a charge of warriors, haggling with a merchant or being able to tell if someone is not being truthful.

Other World: The stuff of sorcery, whether trying to enslave a demon, resist a witches spell or to know which shoulder to throw salt over to ward off bad luck, the other world attribute encompasses all this.

Don't worry about the specific details of how all this works yet, simply use this as a guideline for now.

An average denizen of Kartharka would have a 0 in each of these Attributes meaning that they are average, neither above or below the normal.

But you will be living the life of a Hero! Heroes stride the earth taking what they wish, or stand like a wall against the evil that would imperil their land. They are a cut above,, something special, and so they are given a little something special when you create your Hero.

You Have 5 "points" to distribute amongst the Attributes you would like to excel in. These are your Heroes "strengths"

If you wish to be a muscle bound brute towering above all those you survey then you could put all 5 points into "Body". You do this by writing "+5" in the box to the Right of "Body" (see the example character sheet to see more)

Or you could choose to have one attribute be +3 and another be +2, or put +1 into 5 different Attributes.

It is up to you make your Hero your own.

But Heroes have another thing in common, they always have a weakness. You must now assign weaknesses to those attributes which you have not added any bonus to.

You have 5 points of "Weakness" to distribute amongst any attributes you have not added a point to.

For example you could choose to put all 5 of your weakness points into "Other World", to do so write -5 in the box to the right of Other World. Just as with your strengths you may distribute these 5 points however you wish, with -3 to one attribute and -2 to another, or even -1 to 5 different attributes. The important thing is that you cannot assign these weaknesses to any attribute you have already added a bonus to.

Your character is now starting to take shape, he could be a huge lumbering brute of great power but very slow moving, or a little stronger and faster, but a little fearful of sorcery, and have difficulty getting along with others.

Make your Hero your own and worry not about their weaknesses, revel in them, or enjoy watching them overcome them as they grow and learn.

Example Hero Record Sheet

Player Name:
Hero Name: Karnak Stonethrower
Role: Hunter
Rank: 0

Demonlord:
Realm: The Winterlands
Homeland: Karthok village
Demense: None

Strengths & Weaknesses		Veteran Skills
Body (Attack / Poison)	+2	
Mind	-2	
Quickness (Defense / Dodge)	+2	
Vitality (Endurance / Suffocation)	+1	
Camaraderie (Followers / Morale)	-1	
Other World (Sorcery / Sorcery)	-2	

Current Fighting Power

Defense	Attack	Endurance	Damage	Move
3	2 (Shield? ☑ +2)	9	0	4

Special Abilities:

Demense Features:

Defense

Armour Worn
Head plate
Body leather, chain
Arms
Legs

+1

Quickness Bonus	+2
Rank Bonus	
Veteran Skills Bonus	
Total	+3

Attack

Body Bonus	+2
Rank Bonus	
Veteran Skills Bonus	
Total	+2

Endurance

Starting	8
Vitality Bonus	+1
Rank Bonus	
Veteran Skills Bonus	
Total	+9

Damage

Rank Bonus	
Veteran Skills Bonus	
Total	0

Treasure

Iron:
Gold:
Silver:

Special:
Gems:
Sequins:

Equipment

Heavy Takket Fur cloak with hood, worn
Takket fur clothes, worn
Takket fur mittens, worn
Sturdy Takket fur foot covers, worn
Sword, sheathe on belt
5 spears, quiver on belt
Weeks supply of Matten Fuel, drag sled
Weeks supply of Matten rounds, drag sled
Flint and striker, bag
50 feet of rope, worn
50 feet of rope, drag sled
2 torches, bag
2 spikes, bag
Hammer, bag

Favours

Rank Bonus

Defense: Attack: Endurance: Damage:

Veteran Points:

Lair of Sword & Sorcery

Equipment in the World of Kartharka: designers notes

The spirit of Kartharka is not one of endless tables of miscellaneous equipment broken down by price, weight, availability and cost. Your Hero is a full grown man (or woman) who has been making their own way through life for at least a year. They are often travellers and so carry a minimum of equipment. They also will have to hand all the things necessary for survival, and in the Winterlands survival means being well prepared.

All Heros will have a certain amount of equipment to start. See the next page for a list of what that is.

As Heros grow in fame and fortune they will want to improve their weaponry, armour and standard of living. These things will all be detailed in the next issue of Lair in the "Veteran" issue.

Carrying Limits: Notes

Now lets discuss the Carrying limit of your Hero. And lets be honest about why it exists. In every game there comes a point when two things will happen:

1: The Heros will want to bring every conceivable piece of equipment with them to cover every possible encounter, hundreds of feet of rope, dozens of varying weapons, poles, cages, traps, iron bars, enough food to last them months on the road, digging tools, mining tools, climbing tools etc. etc.

2: The heroes will want to bring back from their adventure every single thing which wasn't nailed down to sell; furniture, rugs, rare silks, urns full of incense, whole stone statues, etc. etc.

Game masters and designers usually react to these two things with endless rules to limit how much the heroes can carry, things like encumbrance tables, movement modifiers, combat modifiers, and more endless tables of the size, shape and weight of every conceivable item, as well as how much can fit in every bag, box, chest, or backpack.

The Heroes then respond with hiring porters, pack animals, carts and wagons, creating magical carrying devices and spells, creating teleporting potions and scrolls etc. etc.

To which the Game master again responds with more lists of tables of prices for porter and pack animals, morale systems for these poor tagalongs to see if they run off with your equipment, sorcerous ways to stymie their magical carrying equipment, and on and on.

And round and round it goes, creating more rules and spending more game time on this minutia of travel and portage and record keeping on both sides of all the details. Having to calculate the wages of your followers every time you sit down to play is not Kartharka, it's accounting.

See the next page for the Kartharka rules on carrying limits.

Armour and Weapons: Notes

The Kartharka concept of combat is very simple. Stab a man in the neck with a sword and he will die. If you stab him in the neck with a dagger he will die too. Or stab him with a sharpened stick, a Glaive-Guisarmse-Voulge, a scimitar, manriki-gusari or even a well placed dart.

All weapons can kill, what matters is how good is the person holding it. Kartharka is not about calculating the best possible weapon for any given combat depending on terrain, the opponent, his armour, your armour, whether the moon is full, or if the opponent is defending with a certain weapon. This is not Kartharka. Kartharka is when Conan ran on to a battlefield naked, swinging the chain he was shackled with earlier and crushing the skulls of every opponent he came across. So all weapons cause the same damage once they get through an opponents defence.

Death.

Armour: Notes

Many games go on endlessly about armour choices. Endlessly breaking down light, medium, heavy armour, chain, scale, leather, studded, ring, plate, full plate, field plate, helm, full helm, and on and on. Each has it's own benefits and detractions in these games, some have better defence but limit your speed, or combat ability, or the amount of other equipment you can carry, getting a better defence score always comes at a cost, and why is that? Honestly I really don't know. I believe it stems from a mind-set that came about along with the "every weapon is unique in it's own special way" thinking, and so armour must as well. They look at all the different types of armour used in our world across the ages and think there must be a reason why there are so many different types around the world. I mean if full field plate was the absolute best armour why didn't every single warrior since the history of time use it?

Of course the real answer is based on much more than "which is the best armour". It is really a case of money, time, culture, technology, and materials. This is what actually controlled armour production and not "what is the best armour", or "tactical modifiers" or "ease of movement". No soldier fighting for someone else's cause would ever trade off defence for "ease of movement". Do you really thing peasants fighting for their medieval lords chose not to wear plate armour so that they would be better able to manoeuvre on the field? No! They just could not afford it.

I could go on even more but what this boils down to is the **Kartharka tenet of armour: More armour is better, get more armour!**

The armour list included in this issue lists the most common armour available to Heros of modest means. The veteran issue will contain more obscure and better armour.

Equipment in the World of Kartharka: Rules

Starting Equipment

You Hero starts with the necessities of Life in the Winterlands. Write the items below in the equipment box on the Hero Record sheet. See the example hero sheet for how things are written.

·Heavy Takket Fur cloak with hood
·Takket fur or Takket leather clothes (any cut or style the hero prefers; long and flowing, tight to the body, well made or travel stained.
·Takket fur mittens
·Sturdy Takket fur foot covers.
·Two weapons from the equipment list, weapons come with sheathes, if a throwing weapon is chosen the hero is equipped with a bandolier of 5 of the weapons.
·4 pieces of armour, of any type, for any part of the body. A shield counts as 1 piece. The armour rules are listed in the next column along with how to record armour.
·Weeks supply of Matten Fuel for fires
·Weeks supply of Matten Flour rounds
·Flint and striker
·2 large items from the Equipment list (may choose the same thing twice)
·5 small items from the Equipment list (may choose the same thing multiple times)
·Large Leather Carry Sack (shoulder bag, may hold up to 20 small items)
·Drag sled (May carry up to 5 large items as well as 40 small items)
On the character sheet write where the items are stored, only one coil of rope can be "worn".

Carrying Limits

Lets be honest, what this really means is "How much loot can I drag back to town?" In the world of Kartharka there are three kinds of loot:

1: Enough treasure for my Hero to pay for a room and food, buy a new weapon, and blow the rest at the tavern, gambling and drinking.

2: I can buy anything on the equipment list and travel to the next town for even bigger and better things.

3: Enough loot to retire to a life of luxury in the summerlands.

Anything else is just more bookkeeping. In a world where Iron is more valuable than gold (and lighter) an steel sword is more valuable as a weapon than as treasure. Steel weapons and armour are so expensive that most people would rarely see them much less own them. If you stumbled upon this as loot you would likely throw your bronze sword to the ground and leave it behind once you found a steel one, hardly bothering to bring the bronze one back to town to sell it.

And gold coins, in the form of the Imperial Princep, are rarely found outside of a merchants coffers or a money changers vault. Gold being heavy and relatively useless is used mostly by merchants and money changers as a convenient form of exchange. Iron pieces are far more sought after and are looked at more as a trade good than a form of currency, often being melted down to create something more useful almost immediately after it is acquired.

The currency of the commoner is the copper piece, being of small value but still useful in a society where bronze is the best metal available to commoners.

For merchants dealing in larger amounts of wealth, the Sequin is the usual form of currency. Very small and light, it is a copper coin set with semiprecious stones and stamped with the value of the stones in Iron Pieces.

This means that treasure encountered in the wild is often either highly portable gems or useful things like steel items. Let them carry as much of the currency as they like. For items like gold candlesticks or useful goods they can carry as much as their large carry sack and drag sled will allow.

In the third issue of lair more guidelines will be provided to allow the heros to carry more to allow them to travel longer distances. For now assume that the heroes can carry their starting equipment as well as filling their carry sack and drag sled.

Armour

The more armour you have the better.

For beginning heros the armour available is on the armour list in this issue.

You will see in the starting equipment that you can choose 4 pieces of armour, but what constitutes a piece of armour?

Armour is broken down into 4 places on a hero, head, body, legs and arms. On each of the places the hero can wear a number of armour items. Indeed in the real world a soldiers armour was made up of many varying layers of different materials.

A hero may wear one of each of the following layers on each part of the body, cloth, leather, rings, and plate.

Cloth: A thick woollen garment, a fine silk, or quilted padding.

Leather: Thick sturdy and resistant to damage. This refers to a flexible leather layer like a jacket, pants or hood.

Rings: A metal layer of rings, whether it be completely of metal like chain mail, a flexible layer of small interlocked plates like scale mail, or rings sewn to a leather backing like ring mail. This is a semi flexible at least partially metal layer.

Plate: Solid armour of little flexibility. Whether it be made of one solid piece like a breastplate, or a semi flexible layer like banded armour it is a solid defence against blows.

Three pieces of armour adds 1 point to your defence. (Round up).

Look at the example hero record sheet to see how this armour should be written

A piece of armour for the legs or arms is considered to be a pair, so one piece of arm armour refers to a pair which is worn.

But what about the shield?

The shield is not considered armour, (except for when choosing starting equipment). It has it's own rules, and modifies the heros attack score instead of defence. (Explained in the combat rules more fully)

Money and Treasure In The World of Kartharka

Tracking and Spending Money

Let's get one thing straight about the world of Kartharka; money is used by rich people. It is used to make trading large amounts of goods between cities and countries easier. Regular people use copper coins not because it is the smallest unit of currency but because it is a cheap and useful trade good, and using it in coin form means you don't have to weigh the copper every time you want to make a purchase.

Are you peasant? Scraping a meagre existence from the land for a few coppers and then using them to buy the nights food? Or are you a hero? Striding the land like a maelstrom, making blood fall like rain on the battlefield, and gold fall like rain in the taverns!

You'll notice that coppers aren't even listed on the character sheet as a hero would not even bother picking it up.

While we don't bother tracking those coppers we assume you always have a few in a purse somewhere about your person. A hero can always be assumed to have enough money to survive. They will always have some Matten flour for food and if they choose to sleep in a chair in any of the wayhouses of the land none would bother to stop them. (Or dare to for that matter).

Money is for buying a round of drinks at the inn. For buying weeks worth of food for a long journey. For buying rope, armour and weapons. In the frozen wastes of the winterlands few things are easy to make and so all equipment is expensive but with the harshness of the countryside also comes the willingness of the people to share a fire with a fellow traveller and make sure that their fellow townspeople have enough to at least live for another day.

So when your character enters a bar, don't ask how much a mug of ale costs, throw a handful of gold on the bar and tell the barman to pour until the money is gone.

Remember Kartharka isn't about counting coins, it's about living like a hero!

When you find money (or earn it) while adventuring track it in the treasure section.

10 copper coins equals 1 silver coin
10 silver coins equals 1 gold coin
10 gold coins equals 1 iron coin
10 iron coins equals 1 platinum coin

There is a place to mark in silver gold and iron coins. Sequins are tracked by total value in iron coins.

Platinum is tracked in the "Special" section.

Large gold candlesticks and such would be tracked in the "special" section or under equipment.

Spending Money

In the winterlands people fend for themselves(similar to the pioneers in our history). They make their own tools, furniture, houses, clothes, grow their own food, keep their own animals. People do not buy things.

Heroes buy things, they travel too much to carry all the tools to make things and don't have the time to do so even if they did.

But in a large town like Stroh-Branoch people come from all across the world to make their fortunes. Being travellers themselves they also have few tools and being miners also little time to build.

So there are tradespeople in Stroh-Branoch that sell their goods.

Prices vary greatly, and when a tradesman sees a hero stride in they are definitely going to charge them more. Their prices will be measured in gold, and as much of it as they can get. Return business from a hero is not to be depended on as they often disappear soon after leaving a town.

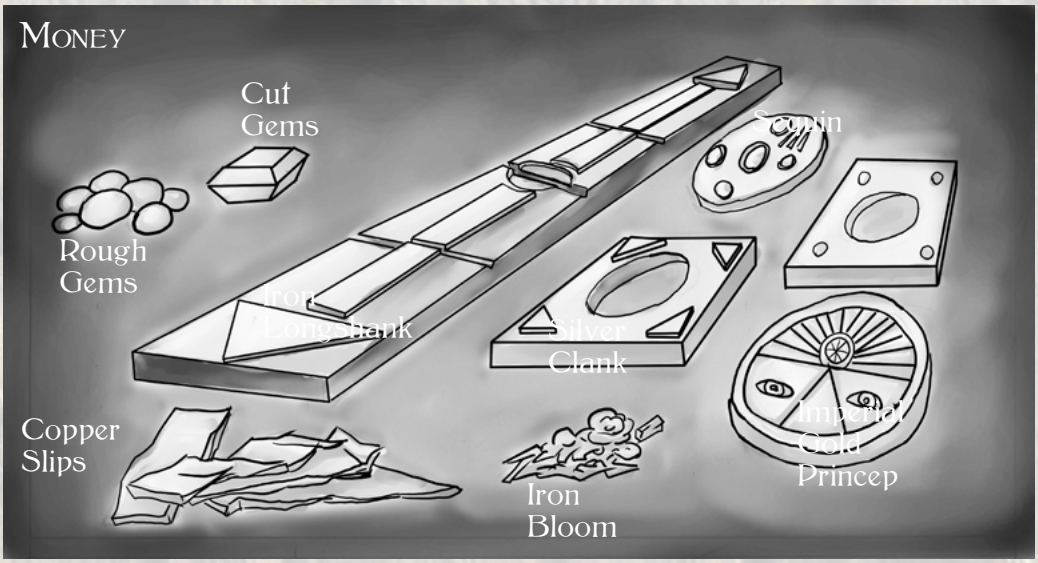
Everything on the equipment lists will cost at least a gold coin. If the Heros camaraderies is a negative this will be added to the price (A camaraderie of -1 will meant a minimum of 2 gold coins per item) or if any of the heros close friends has a negative camaraderie.

If a hero is rude, or in a hurry, or seems rich, the price will also double or triple.

And they can take the price or leave it.

Starting money

Except for the purse of a few coppers mentioned earlier the Hero starts with no money.



Weapon List

All weapons are assumed to be made of bronze. Rules for steel weapons will be included in the Veteran issue.

Axe: Makes a good weapon, and can also be used to chop wood, or slaughter an animal or quarter an animal after hunting. With a 2 foot handle and a solid head with a flat side and a chopping side. The flat side can be used in combat or to hammer in a stake or nail. The flat side may be replaced with a heavy spice, or the Hero may choose to use the crescent shaped Kartharkan War Axe

Sword: A sturdy 2 foot bronze blade, good for slashing and stabbing. A Winterlands blade has a small pommel, large enough to prevent the hand from sliding up the blade but not useful for stopping an enemies blade. They are relatively light however compared to the large pommelled imperial swords.

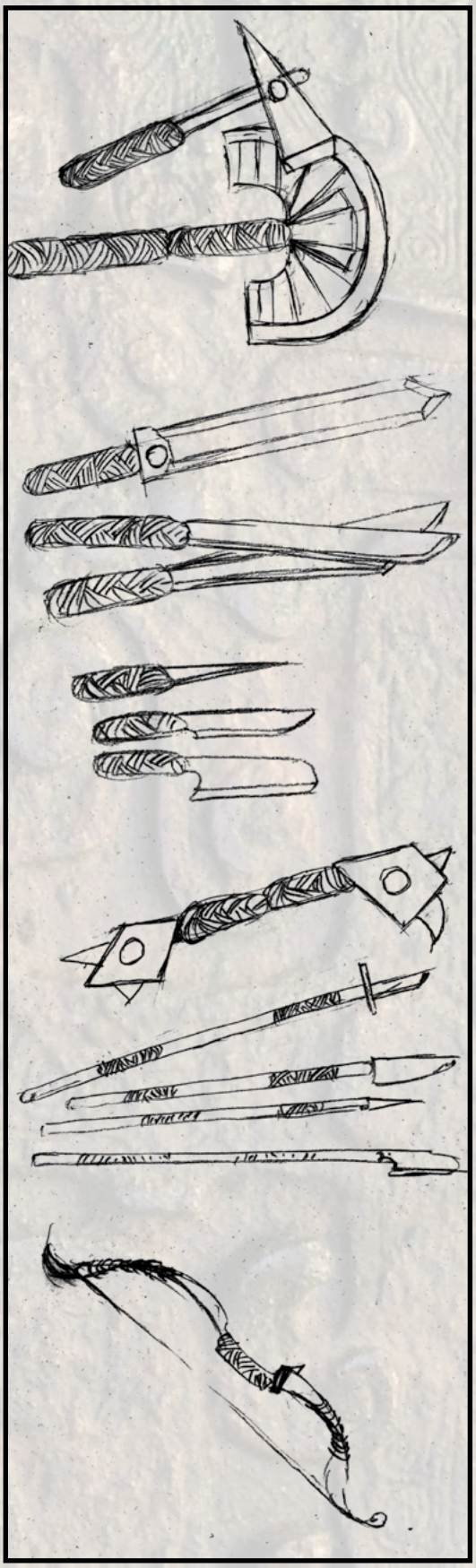
Knife or dagger: Winterland knives or daggers have no crosspieces. A knife is easily hidden, can be thrown as a weapon, and is also useful for cutting meat, rope, leather or cloth. The dagger can also be thrown. The dagger is primarily a stabbing weapon and though not as useful for cutting materials is quite good at punching holes in things.

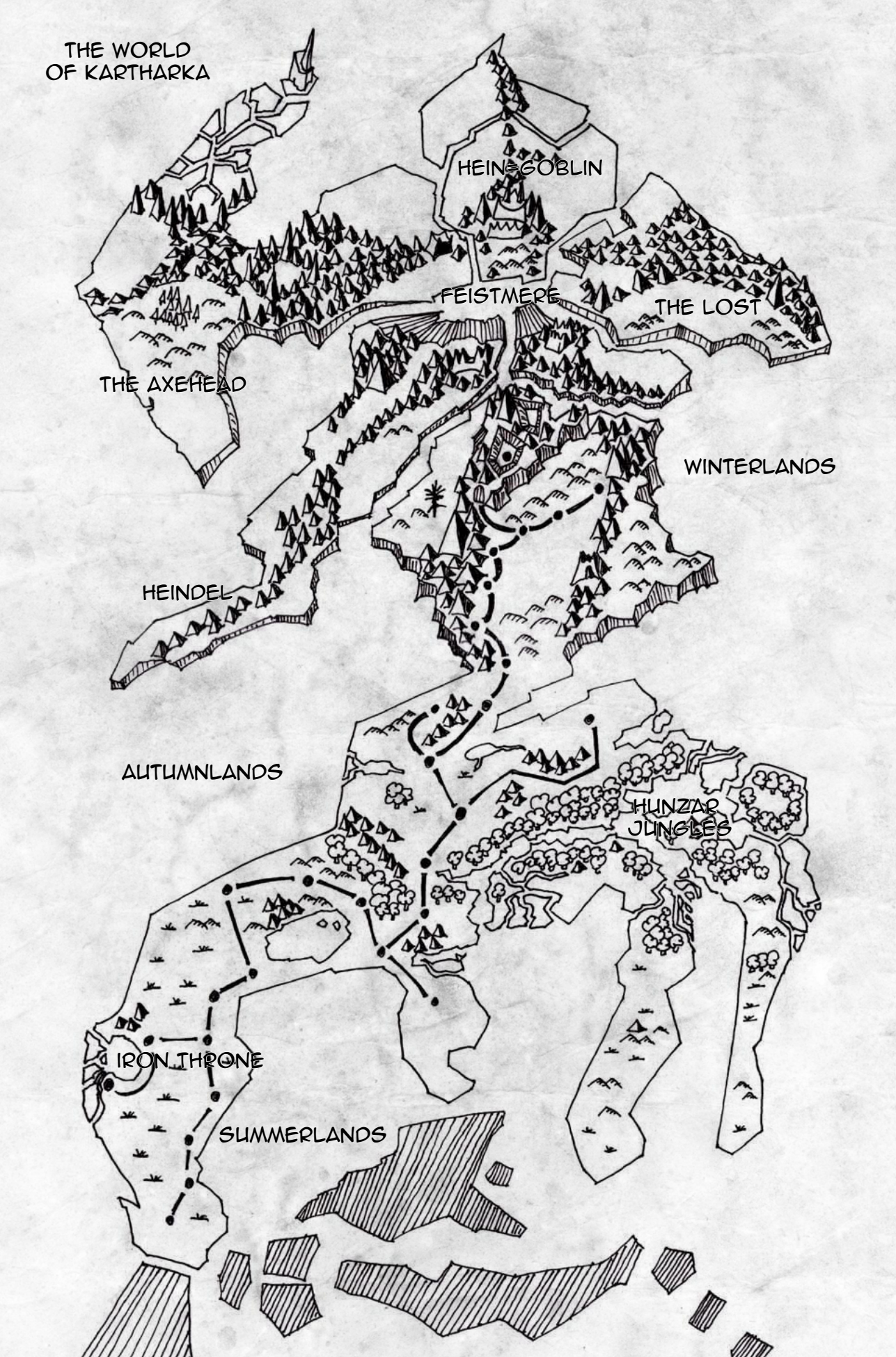
The Kartharkan Mace: A brutal weapon. It has few uses other than killing. A two foot wooden shaft with a bronze head on each end covered in short spikes and sometimes blades. Made only for killing men it is good at it. While many carry swords for defence in the Winterlands, if someone carries the Kartharkan mace they are advertising the fact that they kill men for profit. In a land where many mercenaries are hired, to protect or attack, this is not seen as necessarily a bad thing but people think twice before menacing someone wielding this weapon.

The spear: A Kartharkan spear is a useful weapon. It may be used in hand to hand combat to stab or slash or it may be thrown at an enemy or animal as well. Indeed Most hunters prefer the spear when hunting in the wilds of Kartharka. The wild animals of the winterlands often lie in wait and a bow is of little use when the bearer is pounced upon by a savage mountain cat.

The Winterlander Composite Bow: Made from stiff hardwoods, takket horn and leather. The Kartharkan Composite bow is a deadly weapon.

You will notice there is no listing for arrows on the equipment chart. It is assumed that the Hero has "enough" arrows. They don't break as often as people think and a normal quiver can quite easily accommodate 50 Arrows. Anyone who has carried a quiver of 50 wooden arrows can attest to how light it actually is and how little space the arrows take up.

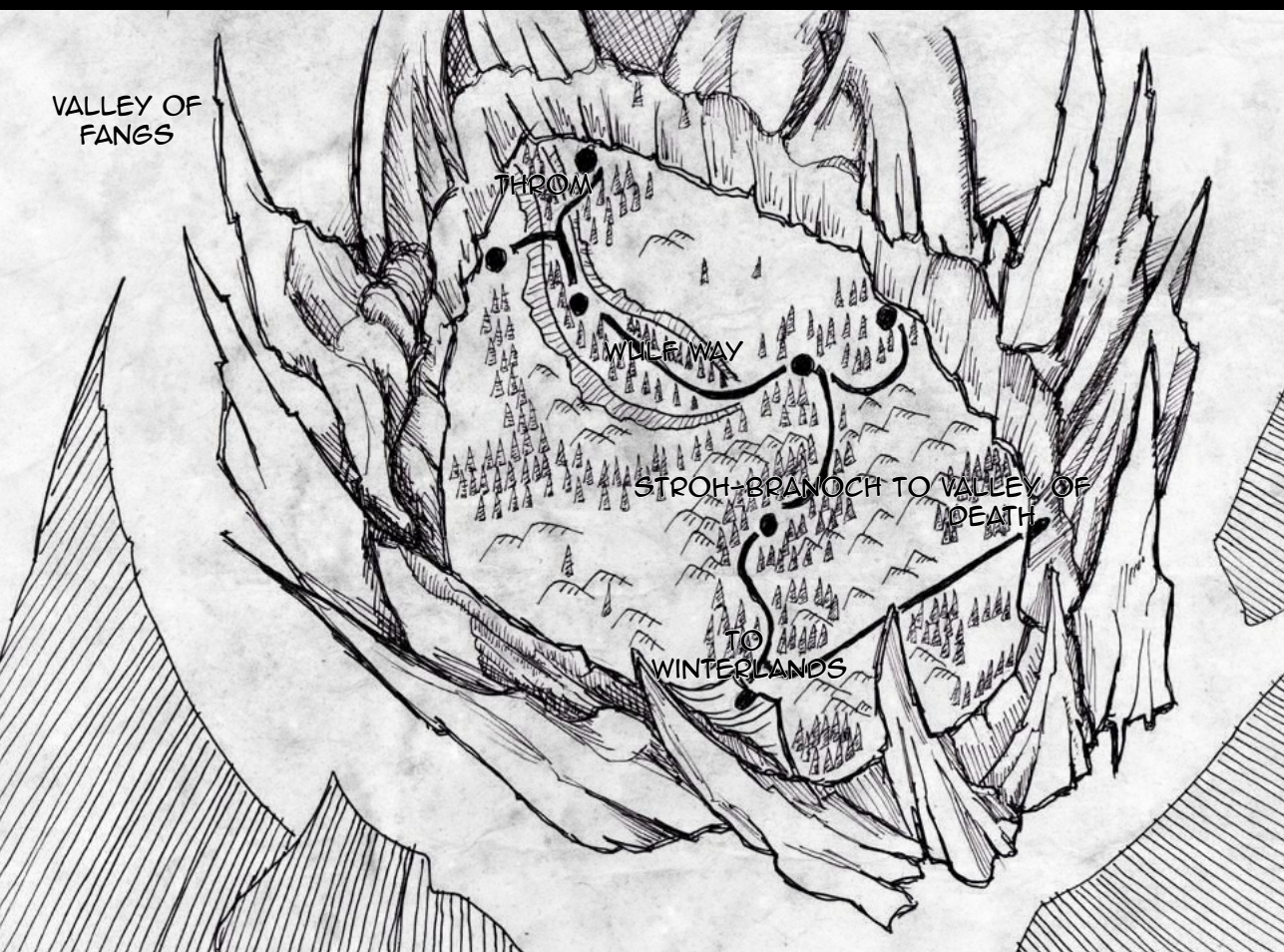



THE WORLD
OF KARTHARKA
HEIN-GOBLIN
FEISTMERE
THE LOST
THE AXEHEAD
WINTERLANDS
HEINDEL
AUTUMNLANDS
HUNZAR
JUNGLES
IRON THRONE
SUMMERLANDS

46
18
39
34
47
31
32
48
16
24
9
8
23
36
50
49
2
17
40
1
3
7
10
50
4
35
26
5
30

Stroh-Branoch

FIRSTWATCH
THE NOTCH
BRYTAX
VALLEY OF FANGS
ZOLAR
HIGH PASS
GARMACH HIGH PASS
THE WINTERLANDS


VALLEY OF FANGS
THROM
WULF WAY
STROH-BRANOCH TO VALLEY OF DEATH
TO WINTERLANDS

Armour List

This is a list of Winterlander armour and any metals used are considered to be either copper or bronze. Rules for steel armour will be in the Veteran Issue.

Head

Cloth: A quilted takket fur covering is tied to the top of the head.

Leather: A leather hood covers the full head and neck

Rings: fine copper rings are woven into chain mail covering the whole head and neck

Plate: the Kartharkan crown of Bronze, a band surrounds the head, and sometime face, protecting if from solid strikes, it is also often surmounted by flanges to ward off blows from above.

Arms

Cloth: heavy furs or a quilted square of heavy cloth is tied around the arms.

Leather: A thin flexible leather sleeve is worn tied to each other about a ring on the chest and back.

Rings: May either be a fine copper chain mail or bronze rings sewn to a thick leather backing.

Plate: The basic Kartharkan plate is often made of a hardwood with a thinly hammered sheet of copper covering it. May also be made of a similar style out of bronze. Kartharkan plate normal consists of long strips of wood or bronze held together with a bronze band. They are often also varnished and lacquered for strength and durability. A well made copper and wood kartharkan banded mail is often as good as it's counterpart made completely of cast bronze.

Legs

The armour of the legs is made in exactly the same way as the arms.

Body

Cloth: Multiple layers of quilting or fur are compressed and then stitched tightly together making a very stiff garment shaped like a vest. Pulled over the head and tied on the side.

Rings: If the hero plans to wear plate then the ring layer will usually be made of a large woven chain mail made of bronze rings. The rings are much larger than the mail of the arms legs or head. If they will not be wearing plate they will usually wear an armour of square bronze scales, held together with copper rings in a tight interlocking pattern. These scales may also be made of a hard wood with a copper sheathing and lacquered. Any of these choices can be worn with the Kartharkan plate.

Plate: The Kartharkan body plate will either be made of bands of wood and bronze held together like the kartharkan arm or leg plate.

It can also take the form of the large wooden chest plate.

Made of a solid piece of hardwood, sheathed in copper or bronze and lacquered fur and cloth it is a solid defence.

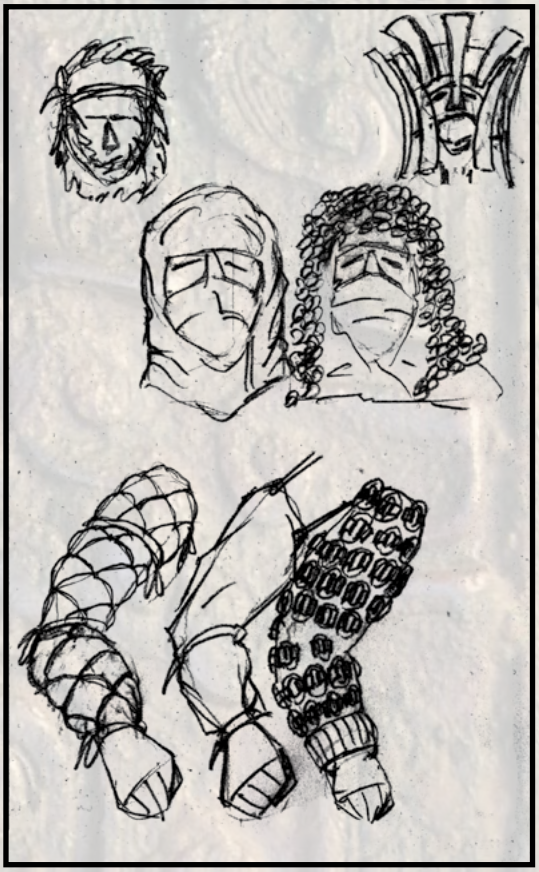
Extremely large rounded and roomy it has large opening for the head and arms. It absorbs a huge amount of impact without hurting the wearer as a network of straps and a roomy interior keeps it off the body with the weight resting primarily on the hips and shoulders.

Indeed one feels invincible when wearing these as blows bounce off easily with little impact on the wearer.

However the large arm and neck openings give ample target to an experienced warrior. These are greatly favoured by hunters as they are quite useful in protecting against the disembowelling claws of the large mountain predators.

Shield

The Kartharkan shield is a solid arm shield 2 feet wide and 3 feet tall. Made of wood and sheathed with copper or lacquered cloth.



Equipment List

The List is se per a ted into large and small items. The Heros may also buy any items appearing on the starting list of equipment.

Just because something is not on the list does not mean the heros cannot buy it. If the Demonlord feels that the item would be available where the heros are then they may buy it.

Please feel free to send in any suggestions you have for additions to the equipment list.

Small Items

- Leather straps
- Flask
- Wineskin
- Tarp
- Dice
- Candle
- Torch
- 10 foot rope
- Parchment
- Writing sticks
- Chalk
- Spikes
- Hammer

Large Items

- 6 foot pole
- Shovel
- Pick
- Snow axe
- Snow shoes
- 50 foot rope

Fill In The Combat boxes
(with a pencil)

Now it's time to fill in the combat details on the character record sheet.

These examples are from the example hero record sheet. We gave our example Hero a Quickness of +2 so we add that number to the Defence in the Quickness Bonus area.

Defence:

The Defence section is where you total all the things which protect you from being injured in combat, your ability to dodge a lethal blow, protective armour and learned skills in combat..

In the armour worn section list all the pieces of armour worn by the Hero.

For every 3 pieces of armour you are wearing you get +1 to defence (round up). If you have a bonus for quickness write it in on the quickness bonus line.

The Rank bonus and Veteran skills bonus are for Veteran characters and will be explained more in the next issue "Veteran Heroes".

Tally up all the boxes in the defence section and you will have your total defence.

Defense	
Armour Worn	
Head *plate*	
Body *leather, chain*	+1
Arms	
Legs	
Quickness Bonus	+2
Rank Bonus	
Veteran Skills Bonus	
Total	+3

Attack:

The attack section is your heroes fighting ability. It is how hard they can swing a weapon to batter down enemy defences, their skill with a weapon to both attack and parry or block an opponents attack with their weapon.

If the hero has a body bonus write it in the appropriate section.

Rank and Veteran bonus is ignored for now.

Copy the total in the total box.

Attack	
Body Bonus	+2
Rank Bonus	
Veteran Skills Bonus	
Total	+2

Endurance:

A heroes endurance refers to their ability to last in combat before being overcome by their enemy. It is a combination of physical endurance such as the ability to run, swing a weapon, and block others attacks without becoming too tired to continue fighting.

It is also the Heros ability to withstand knocks and bruises, small stabs and slashes and other physical injuries which can incapacitate a fighter without necessarily killing them. Taking a blow to a shield, while still less painful than having your ribs crushed, still hurts. The Heroes ability to ignore and withstand these minor injuries is key to continuing a drawn out fight.

The starting endurance for all Heroes is 8. A normal man has 4 endurance for comparison.

This is because Heros also have a great deal of luck on their side, a blow which should have hit misses by an inch and the Hero is safe.

If the Hero has a vitality bonus write it in the applicable box.

Rank and veteran bonuses are ignored for now.

Tally up the total and write it in the total box.

Endurance	
Starting	8
Vitality Bonus	+1
Rank Bonus	
Veteran Skills Bonus	
Total	+1

Damage:

The world of Kartharka is brutal and hard. A single blow from your enemy can easily kill you. Medicine is crude and any serious injury will soon lead to death even if you are not killed immediately on the battlefield.

You will want to depend on your ability with your weapon to keep an enemy from getting a blow in, and wear plenty of armour to keep those blows from causing damage when they land.

Note that the only bonuses to damage are for Rank and veteran skills. The damage caused by your weapon is more than enough to kill most men and animals without adding more bonuses.

Damage	
Rank Bonus	
Veteran Skills Bonus	
Total	0

FILL IN THE REST

Now let's fill in the rest of the sheet.

PLAYER NAME: Put your name here

Player Name:	
Hero Name:	Karnak Stonethrower
Role:	Hunter
Rank:	0

HERO NAME: This is where you but your Heros name. Kartharkan names are always great and are followed by a title. Alternately a family name is used which usually refers to their career. The Stonecutters, Hammersmashers, Cragsmen, and Ironmen are all old Stroh-Branoch Mining families for example.

Your character may be Gunta Stonecutter, or if he has turned to a life of adventure may be called Gunta Bloodreaver or a Caravan guard may be Gunta Roadwarden.

ROLE: This is the heroes job in life, what he tells others he does. It has no effect on their abilities or their combat scores but is purely for Role playing purposes. For example Gunta Roadwarden's Role would be "Caravan Guard". There are many things to do in the winterlands and if in doubt say you are a Miner.

RANK: This will be explained in the Veteran issue but for now you can write in the number 0.

Your hero like abilities may have protected you in a few scuffles and some dangerous scrapes but you haven't learned the skills of an accomplished hero yet.

Demonlord:	
Realm:	The Winterlands
Homeland:	Karthok village
Demense:	None

DEMONLORD: Write the name of the person who is in charge of the game, he will be the guy on the other side of the table saying things like "you are attacked by a tiger...", or "sadly you were robbed while you slept".

REALM: This is the place where your heroes are now. Likely it will be the Winterlands. Your Demonlord will let you know where you will be adventuring before you make your Hero.

HOMELAND: This is where your Hero is from.

Likely it will be the Winterlands but it may not be. You can make up a name for your hometown or village or use one from the maps from Issue 1.

DEMENSE: This is where your Heros make your home. When beginning a new Hero they have no home but are travellers. As they settle in they may choose to acquire a home instead of staying at the local tavern or wayhouse.

Details for the basics of a Demense will be in the Veteran issue.

CURRENT FIGHTING POWER:

Copy the total numbers from the left side of the character sheet into these boxes. During a scenario the numbers on the left hand side of the sheet will not usually change. But your current fighting power will constantly be going up and down based on fighting and other events.

If you are using a shield tick the check box in the attack section so you will remember to add +2 to your attack rolls.

Current Fighting Power				
Defense	Attack	Endurance	Damage	Move
3	2 Shield? ☑ +2	9	0	4

MOVE: Simply write a 4 in this box.

SPECIAL ABILITIES: You have none. This section is for Veterans only.

DEMENSE: Features: Detailed in the Veteran issue.

TREASURE: you start with no treasure, but this is where you will track any treasure you find.

Gold silver and Iron are all tracked in number of Coins. Gems are tracked by their total value in Iron coins. Sequins are tracked by their total value in Iron coins.

The Special section is where you can note something which is...special.

EQUIPMENT: This is everything your hero carries when embarking on a mission.

COMBAT

Dice
All dice in Lair of sword and sorcery are standard 6 sided dice.

Adventure Mode versus Combat Mode
There are two modes of play in Lair of Sword and Sorcery. One is Adventure mode. Where players are free to move about the Demonboard however they want, and may take any action they choose, with success and failure being controlled by the Demonlord.
The other Mode of play is the combat mode. This mode kicks in whenever the players are within a lair and an enemy is on the board. Either they players have entered a room with an enemy or the enemy has walked into a room occupied by the players.

Combat Mode
In combat mode everyone takes turns moving, attacking, or taking other actions.
In this issue we will focus primarily on the moving and attacking portions of the game.

Who goes first?
When beginning Combat mode the Demonlord will tell you whether or not the players will make their move first or if the Demonlord will be moving first. This will be determined by the scenario being played and how the enemy was revealed.
For now we will assume the players get to act first.

Lets take turns.
The player to the left of the Demonlord acts first. They move the take all of their actions and then play continues clockwise around the table, like in a board game.

Moving
Heroes may move up to 4 squares on the Demonboard (their move score), usually to bring them close to an enemy or to retreat from an enemy.
They may move in any direction they choose on the board including diagonally. They may move through squares occupied by friends but not through squares occupied by enemies.

Doing something other than attacking (sota)
The player may choose to have their hero try to do something during this time, perhaps pull a lever to open a portcullis, open a door, knock over a table to hide behind etc. The player is considered to have 5 seconds of time during their turn. So whatever your hero could do in 5 seconds they can do on their turn. The demonlord may decide it takes more than one turn for an action in which case they may have to wait until their next turn for their action to have an effect.

Time to attack
If the hero is on a square next to an enemy, whether in front of them, behind them, diagonal to them or to the side the Hero may attack the enemy. In lair of sword and sorcery the figures are not considered to have a "front" or back and are used only to mark the heros place on the board. The hero is able to turn in any direction at any time.

The Attack Roll
To make an attack the hero rolls 2 dice and adds the total to their Current Attack power on their character sheet.
The enemy then rolls 2 dice and adds the total to their attack score.
If the Heros score is higher he wins, see "Hero Wins!" for effects.
If the Heros score is lower he loses, see "Hero loses" for effects.
If the score is the same then they have a draw, see "A draw" for effects.

Hero Wins!
The hero has come out on top in the flurry of blows. To see how much he has weakened his enemy the hero rolls 1 die. The hero adds his Current Damage score to the dice roll to get the total damage he has done.
The enemy then subtracts their Current Defence from this amount of damage as their armour has absorbed some of the damage or they have dodged some of it.
If the total damage done is now 0 or less due to the enemies defence than the hero still does 1 point of damage to their enemy.

Special Rule: You always do at least 1 point of damage in combat.

This damage taken off the enemies current endurance. Erase the enemies Current endurance score and write in the new total.

This damage is not considered to be a stab in the belly, or a brutal slash to the head, it is considered to be the attack and parry, the punching and kicking, the light slashes and quick stabs to the legs, all of the things which wear your enemy down so that they cannot defend against your killing blow when it comes.

Now subtract 1 from the heroes current Endurance as well. All of this attacking is wearing down their fighting ability as well.

Special rule: when attacking you will always take at least 1 point of damage.

Hero loses:
If the hero loses the enemy gets to score damage on him. The enemy rolls 1 die and adds their current attack power. You now subtract your defence from this total and deduct the total from your endurance. If the amount of damage is 0 or less because of your defence then you still take 1 point of damage.
The Enemy however, also takes 1 point of endurance damage. Just like the hero the enemy always takes at least 1 point of damage.

A Draw:
Both the hero and the enemy take 1 point of endurance damage, regardless of current attack or

COMBAT CONTINUED...

Once the hero has finished his attack and whether it is a win lose or draw, the turn now goes clockwise to the next hero or the demonlord.

Each hero takes a full turn as described above, moving, taking an action (if they choose), and then combat.

When it is the Demonlord's turn they will move all of the enemies, then the enemies will take all their actions and then all of the enemies will attack.

This is to make it easier on the Demonlord so that they do not have to keep track of who already moved, acted, etc. It also means that they cannot see how well each combat works out before moving on to the next enemy.

When the demonlord attacks you use the same rules for combat as the heros, he considers his forces to be the Heroes, and the players heros to be the enemies.

As you can see from the rules above, combat is brutal in Lair of Sword & Sorcery.

When you attack, you do not know whether you will be dealing out damage or taking it. Because each battle is tiring, whether you win or lose, you steadily take endurance damage. If the fights are long and drawn out or against multiple enemies, even powerful heroes will soon fall to the sword.

What happens when you get to 0 Endurance?

The hero or enemy is considered able to defend themselves until they are down to 0 Endurance. Any attack on the enemy *after* they reach 0 endurance, whether successful or not, has a chance of striking a mortal blow.

When attacking someone with 0 endurance roll for attack etc like any other combat (the 0 endurance fighter may get a lucky strike in before dying). Instead of the 0 endurance person taking damage however, they roll 1 dice.

The Death Roll

1–3 they have been **STRUCK DOWN** and are unable to fight for the rest of the battle. Lay their figure down flat to signify this.
4–6 they have managed to avoid any serious blows through a frantic swinging of their weapon. They continue to move and fight in combat as usual (still at 0 endurance).

Once the current battle is over, when either the heroes are all dead or fled, or the enemies are all dead or fled, you may check on those who have been dealt a mortal blow. If they belong to the Demonlord they can be considered dead, either they are dead already or the heros put them to the sword after.

If it is a hero they must now roll a dice to determine their fate.
1 or 2 the hero has died, either immediately or soon after the mortal blow.
3 or 4 the hero is **SEVERELY INJURED** but will recover with time. Their role in the current scenario is over but if the any of the heroes succeed or at least are able to flee safely, they are able to bring the injured hero back with them to be nursed back to health.
5 or 6 The hero has been dealt a stunning blow but comes to shortly after. They still have 0 endurance but are able to rest and move on like the other heroes.

Resting:

At any time when there are no enemies on the board the group of heroes can attempt to rest.

Depending on the scenario they are playing they may be interrupted by an enemy coming in, may be ambushed by the enemy suddenly, or the enemy may escape before they can apprehend them.

If the Demonlord says that they have successfully rested then they may regain half of any endurance they have lost(round up). No matter how long they rest the amount regained will not go up. The longer you sit in an enemies stronghold, doing nothing, the worse the tension gets, and jangled nerves do nothing for your combat prowess.

For example a hero has a usual endurance of 10. In fighting they have gone down to 2 endurance.

Resting would allow them to regain 4 of the 8 endurance they have lost bringing them up to 6.

Then if they are able to somehow make it through the next combat without losing any endurance (hiding works), then they would regain 2 of the remaining 4 endurance bringing them up to 8.

If they again are able to rest after hiding through another combat they would regain 1 of their 2 remaining lost endurance points.

If this coward hides through yet another battle then they would indeed gain the last remaining endurance point bringing them up to full (technically they would get half a point but rounding up brings it to one point).

At any time during the scenario the heroes can choose to flee back to their homes to lick their wounds. This will usually mean failure in the scenario, leading to the success of whatever dire scheme which the enemies were attempting. This will often have a negative effect on the lives of the heroes and those of the others living in the area. Sometimes fleeing is the only way to survive to fight another day.

FLEEING

To escape the scenario the heroes can simply head toward the entrance which they came in. If they are able to leave the demonboard they are considered safe. If even one hero is able to leave the Demonboard, any struck down or severely injured heroes are considered to have escaped with them. If some one else is struck down or severely injured after this time then they will have to wait for the next fleeing hero to take them out of the Lair (if there *is* another hero that can flee)

Fighting without weapons:

When fighting with any weapon in Lair of Sword & Sorcery you roll one dice for damage.

Animals and monsters consider their claws or teeth to be weapons and also roll one dice for damage.

If for some reason you find your hero to be without a weapon of any sort the following rules apply.

If fighting an opponent with no weapons (a fist to fist fight) then attack and roll damage as normal. If you opponent is wearing armour when you try to punch them you do not roll a dice for damage, you only cause 1 point plus your Current Damage score. Often this will mean that you only cause the minimum 1 point of damage. You will also take the usual 1 point of endurance damage when attacking.

If the enemy wins the combat the same rules apply when they roll damage as well.

Fist versus weapon.

If you are using your fists and your opponent has a weapon the same rules apply for damaging your enemy but you no longer cause the minimum 1 point of damage. They are easily able to hold you at bay with their weapon without tiring themselves too much.

Also when fighting an enemy with your fists the minimum damage you take is 1 plus their damage score.

Moving while fighting.

Even if you have been attacked by an enemy in the last turn and are still on a square next to an enemy you may still move away from the enemy the usual 4 squares. There are no special breaking off from combat rolls and the enemy does not get a special attack just because you moved away from them. The 4 square movement score assumes that your are moving deliberately and defensively at all times. It also takes into account turning to face enemies or turning to face an enemy and backing away while defending yourself. This is also why the amount of armour you wear has no effect on your movement. Remember Armour is made to be moved in. It is not as heavy as historians would have you believe, and if you are moving slowly and defensively anyway, it will not further hinder your movement in any way.

Missile weapons

The Kartharkan bow is a vicious weapon capable of penetrating wood and armour.

A hero with a bow may fire it as their attack during their turn. If they decide to do so place a small marker next to them to show that they are holding a bow instead of a weapon.

If they are attacked before their next turn they will have to fight using the barehanded rules as a bow is hardly a good weapon to defend yourself with.

To fire your bow on your turn you first pick a target. The target may be any number of squares away. The target must be visible to your hero. The Hero may fire through a square occupied by a friend but not through a square occupied by an enemy.

If the target is behind an obstacle like a barricade, half wall, bush, or similar cover count this cover as an additional shield, as per the combat rules (the enemy gets +2 to their roll).

Roll to attack as you would with a sword or other weapon adding your attack bonus (but not your shield bonus) with the enemy rolling as well to avoid the shot (they use their attack bonus as well as their shield bonus.

If you hit your target roll for damage as usual but you do not take the usual minimum 1 damage for engaging in combat. Firing a bow if far less tiring then going head to head with a fighting hero.

If you miss your target then the enemy also does not take the usual minimum 1 point of damage as the arrow did not hit them.

Throwing knives and axes are savage as well but have a lesser range. All of the rules for bows apply to throwing weapons except:

You may only throw them up to 3 squares away

If you do so you do not have to place a marker next to the hero as they have a weapon still in their hand.

Success and Failure

Remember that all scenarios the heroes take part in have a punishment for failure and a reward for success. The reward may be the treasure they find after defeating their enemies, or it may be something more intangible like the protection of their village. These intangible rewards have their value as well, a village in debt to a hero for their lives can be very accommodating in future endeavours.

Failure on the other hand may mean that the enemies simply escape with their treasure, or it may mean that they are successful in leading an army to the heroes' village to plunder and destroy everyone within it, leaving only a smoking ruin when the heroes return to town.

Whether the heroes are successful in defeating the scenario or fleeing with their lives, a couple of days back at home will return all of their combat scores to their full amount unless otherwise stated.

If they have been mortally injured and been dragged back to town by the other heroes they will need to rest there for two weeks before being able to adventure again.

Doing Something Other Than Attacking (SOTA)

In typical fantasy video games and board games you are usually limited to: attacking, moving, or in really high concept games, pulling a lever or listening to someone else spew out a bunch of text (usually telling you to pull a lever).

In a tabletop role playing game (yes that's what we call these things) you sit around a table, the Demonlord throws the board down and you can indeed, move, attack, and if the scenario calls for it, pull a lever.

But the real fun of role playing games is going off script, doing something completely unexpected. Something the demonlord or scenario writer didn't think of, something really cool. That's where these rules come in.

In other games you may have books full of rules, endless tables for effects and defences versus every possible contingency, and endless errata and corrections for those rules.

In Kartharka we have one set of rules:

Do something other than attacking.

This is further broken down into two modes, doing something while role playing and doing somthing while in combat.

Doing something while Roleplaying

In the Lair of Sword & Sorcery game there are two styles of play, the roleplaying mode and combat mode. You are in Roleplaying mode whenever there isn't an enemy on the table. This is when you can move where you want, pick up/examine things, talk to people, pull on levers, open doors etc. We don't need rules for things like that. The demonlord can decide whether or not you are successful at whatever you try.

Simply tell the Demonlord what you would like to do. Anything that would be considered "Easy" will be automatically successful.

If there is any doubt whether or not you would be successful, like lifting something heavy or trying to do something mechanical like fix a door, then the dice will decide. The Demonlord will decide if something is Difficult, or Very Difficult.

If it is difficult then the hero rolls 2 dice. If the score is 7 or higher then success! 6 or lower is failure.

The Demonlord may allow them to add an applicable bonus to the dice roll, such as the body bonus for feats of strength.

If the task is very difficult then the hero must roll a 10 or higher for success.

If other heroes are close to the hero making the attempt then they may be able to add applicable bonuses to the die roll if the demonlord deems them able to do so, such as many heroes helping to move a boulder.

Doing something while in Combat

Combat mode occurs whenever there is an enemy on the board.

Difficult and very difficult tasks are rolled for in the same way as in Role play mode but easy tasks are no longer automatically successful. Under the pressure of combat easy tasks now require a roll of 4 or more to succeed.

When fighting off an enemy simple things become difficult, even opening a door and running through can be difficult if someone is attacking you.

The special SOTA rule.

The point of the "other than attacking" rule is that you can do something other than attack. It is not meant to be used to cause damage to enemies, especially if the do something roll would be easier than making an attack.

So something like throwing a boulder at an enemy is an attack, but pushing a boulder in front of a doorway to keep people out is not.

Swinging on a chandelier into an enemy is an attack, swinging over their head and landing behind them is not.

Deciding Difficulty and Effects

The Demonlord is in charge of deciding how hard things are to do and the effects of these things are.

Deciding how difficult these special things are is the Demonlord's job. And his decisions are final. And cannot be questioned.

Remember that Lair is not like other role playing games, it is meant to be fun quick, and easy on the game master. The game master (demonlord) will either be running a pre-made scenario or will be running one of their own based on guidelines for doing so.

Unlike other games, when in active combat mode, the Demonlord will be trying to kill your heroes, or at least cause as much damage as possible.

The Demonlord does not get to do "things other than attack" unless specified in the scenario, so he doesn't have to decide how difficult any of his own tasks are.

So keep in mind that the Demonlord is not going to be pulling their punches or going easy on you, they are going to be trying just as hard to win as you are.

So be careful with your heroes, if they are getting weakened it might be a good Idea to cut your losses and run away. Or if it sounds like a particular scenario may be more difficult than usual it may be a good time to pull out one of your backup heros for this one rather than send in your favourite hero who has taken so long to build up.

A special Note for the Demonlord

When the deciding the difficulty of actions and what their effects are be as fair as possible. Don't decide that something would be very difficult just so that you can beat the heroes, they will not want to play with you for long.

Also when deciding the effects of special actions be as fair as possible.

Remember your job as Demonlord is to be the referee, not to be another player. Make sure that your scenarios are run fair and clean and if a player comes up with something cool to beat the scenario then let them do it. Your job is not to beat them but to play the scenario fairly.

THE DEMON BOARD AND FIGURES

So now that you know a little about the spirit of the game of Lair of Sword and Sorcery, that the Demonlord is actively playing against the heroes, you can see why the Demonboard (the playing board) is so necessary.

Everything is in plain sight, and the combat rules absolutely require the action to happen on a board. With these two things we can return the fun of the game to the Demonlord.

In the first issue "Demonboard" I showed you how to make your own board.

Now lets talk about the figures you will need to play.

There are many options out there for figures.

You can buy an enormous assortment of gaming "miniatures" at any gaming store. These are small one inch tall models made of plastic or metal, usually with a plastic base. There are miniatures for every type of human, monster, and animal with every type of weapon and armour. I used them for many years for gaming. I also enjoy painting miniatures which is a whole separate hobby in itself.

But you know what? They're expensive, they need to be assembled, and after paying 5 bucks for a miniature you usually felt like you had to paint it before putting it on the table, I mean all the books show people playing with painted miniatures right?

Then you've got to store all those guys, and since they're painted you can't just throw them all in a shoebox or the paint will chip off, and since they're so expensive you don't want them to break in there or get bent. All this money, time, pressure all before you've even bought a game to actually play.

The worst thing is, when you actually do play, you still never have the right figures that you need during the game and end up using other ones to stand in for them.

So go that route if you like, I still enjoy painting miniatures and will continue to buy them, but for quick role playing use I've gone another route.

Toys! That's right. They're cheap, they're everywhere, you can throw them all in a box and they won't get broken, and they're just cheap toys, they're not supposed to have an awesome paint job, they usually come with a half decent paint job as it is anyway.

Here you see a bucket full of guys I got at Toys R Us for $25

Look at how many are inside, I'm pretty much set for anything I need for the future.

Don't just raid the toy aisle, you may have suitable guys around the house already, to the left you'll see some great soldiers I got out of an old game of "Siege".

Sometimes though it can be hard to find some old-timey knights or other fantasy fighters, that's fine too, I've got a bag of those little green army men too that I use when I need a boss that stands out. Cut off his gun and glue a toothpick to his hand, instant spearman!

The important thing is not to have the best looking miniatures or board but to just get the game on the table and actually play. It's not how good the stuff is, it's how much you get to use it.

Before you play

So now you got your little toy guys. Use them to play a few games first before you decide if you want to put in some extra effort. If you do, then read on.

Bases:

After playing for a while you may notice a few of your guys are a little "tippy", they fall over if you hit the table, or sometimes for no reason at all.

To fix this just cut out a 1" square of Bristol board like you find at any dollar store and glue it to the bottom.

That will solve all your problems. If you want to be fancy you can paint the card to match your demonboard. I just grab a few walls from my current dungeon board and cut them into squares. The best glue to use is the classic "contact cement" from the dollar store. Sticks good to all types of plastic as well as Bristol board.

Painting:

Sometimes your guys will be a funky colour, like red or blue. Sometimes this is good as it makes it easy to tell your guys from your enemies but if it's too garish you can paint them.

There are all sorts of books, tools and speciality paints for painting miniatures, but you know what?

If you just want the guy to look a little more normal than all blue, and aren't looking to get some museum quality pieces then painting is easy .

Primer:

Most normal paints don't stick to plastic very well so you'll need to prime them. Just grab a can of spray primer from any auto supply store and follow the instruction on the back. (read the instructions, please, I don't want anyone blaming me if you hurt yourself).

Sometimes these will melt your little guys so test one first before blasting them all.

If you're not too worried about paint rubbing off then just grab a bottle of white craft paint and slap it on theire with a dollar store brush.

Painting:

Painting can be as fiddly as you want it to be.

Best bet to start is to just grab some craft paints at the dollar store, in whatever colour you want the guys to be and paint it on the guy.

For brushes use whatever is the smallest pointed brush you can find at the dollar store. There is usually a kind call "chinese brush" that are a little better than the others.

If you find you really enjoy this kind of thing ask the people at your local gaming store if they can make any suggestions for books, brushes paints etc.

Dice:

The dice for Lair of Sword and Sorcery are just standard 6 sided dice. You probably have a bunch of these in other board games but if you don't just head on down to your local dollar store and you should be able to find them in packages of 8 for a dollar.

Lets play a Boardgame! The Lair Skirmish game.

Let's put all the roleplaying rules aside for a moment and have a little fun playing a boardgame as I present to you the Lair skirmish game.

In the skirmish game each player is given a small group of warriors.

They then fight a battle against each other in a simple Lair (any place mapped out on the demonboard is referred to as a "Lair)

The purpose of the skirmish game is not only to have fun but to learn the combat rules. In a skirmish game you get to move many men around, get to attack with varying ranks of heroes, as well as defend yourself from your enemies.

The skirmish game is a great way to learn the rules and tactics of Lair of Sword and Sorcery without sacrificing your precious heroes to do so.

How to play the skirmish scenario:

1: setup the lair.

Get out your walls and demonboard and setup the walls as they appear on the skirmish map. The map is marked out with block walls but if you prefer the card walls please use them instead. If you do use the card walls the rooms will be a little larger, but it won't harm anything, just make sure all the doorways and corridors are the same width that they are on the map.

2: Gather your forces.

Every player should copy on a sheet of paper (in pencil) the list of warriors to the right. This will be referred to as your force.

Now each player grabs some miniatures, little plastic men, or card counters, whichever you prefer to use.

Decide which ones represent the normal warriors and which ones represent each of your heroes. Different coloured toys help here. Each player should write this on their sheet with the stats.(Something like "silver guys with swords" above the normal warriors, and "guy with axe" above one hero, etc)

3: place your warriors

The first player chooses one of the player areas on the map and may place all of his forces anywhere in that area.

The second players chooses one of the areas and does the same

And so on...

4: See who goes first

Everyone rolls two dice, (re rolling ties) to see who goes first, play continues in a clockwise direction around the table.

5: On your turn:

Your turn will proceed in the order below.

Move: Move all of your warriors that you wish to move up to their full move (4 spaces).

Attack: If any of your figures are in a square that is touching a square an enemy is in, they may attack.

Roll for the combat as per the Lair combat rules and track any damage on your sheet of paper.

It is tricky to keep track of each of the normal warriors endurance so you can use a die next to them to represent their endurance if you like. Simply adjust the die every time they lose endurance.

When you are done the combat for all of your warriors then your turn is done. It is now the next players turn.

6: how to win.

This skirmish is a simple brawl so the game continues until only one player has warriors still on the table.

7: special rules for this skirmish

In the skirmish game there is no resting. Since there are always enemies on the board.

No one may "do something other than attacking" (Sota).

Enjoy!

Force List

10 x Normal Warriors

Defense	Attack	Endurance	Damage
1	0	4	0

1 x 0 rank Hero

Defense	Attack	Endurance	Damage
1	5	8	0

1 x 0 rank Hero

Defense	Attack	Endurance	Damage
5	1	8	0

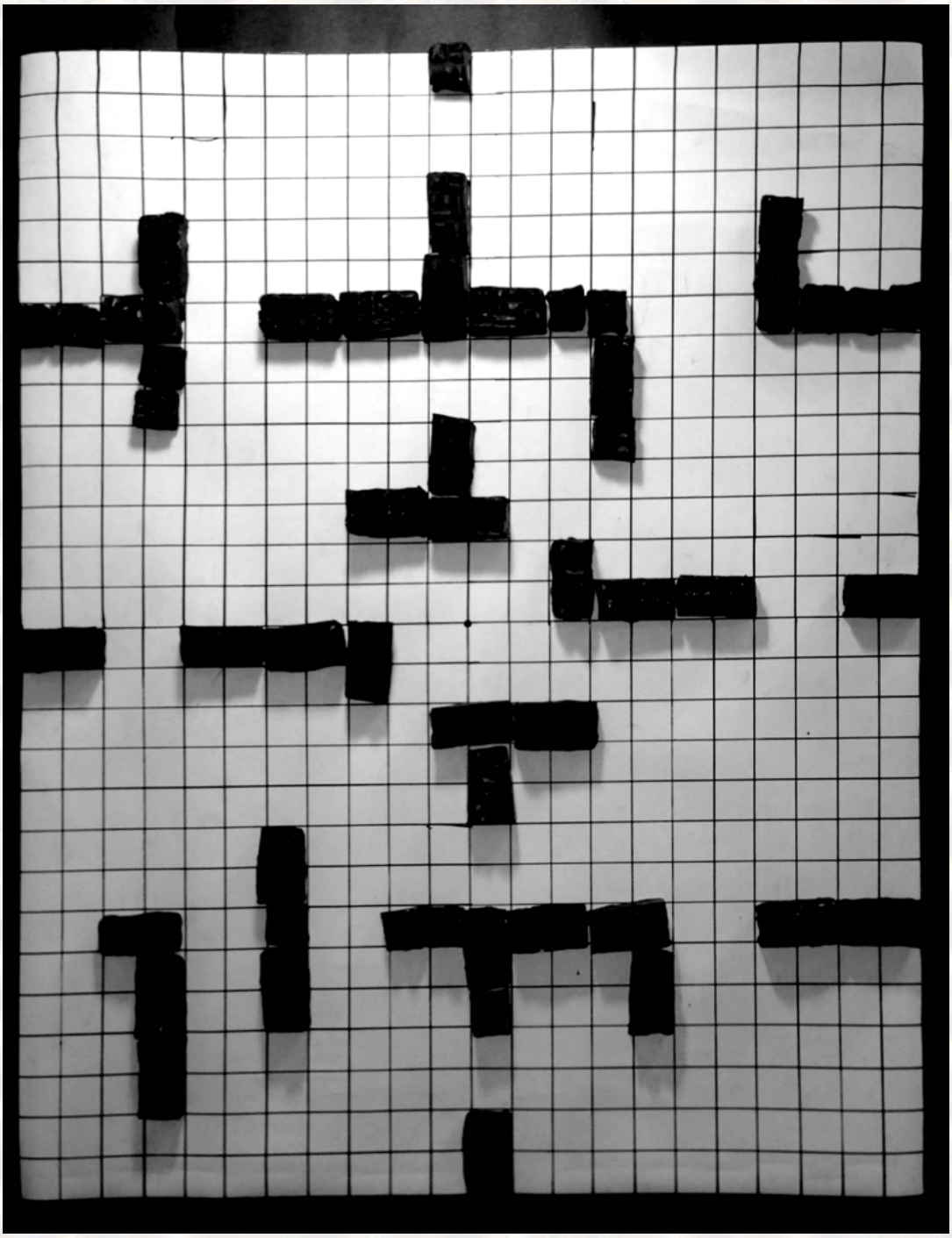
1 x 2nd rank Hero

Defense	Attack	Endurance	Damage
5	2	10	2

All warriors are armed with swords and are wearing armour.

Player 1
Start

Player 4
Start



Player 2
Start

Player 3
Start

The skirmish game vs a roleplaying game

You will see in the skirmish game that a Demonlord is not needed. The rules clearly specify what can and cannot be done, and as long as everyone plays by the rules it is fair and fun.

But in a role playing game the heroes are allowed to do much more than just move and attack. Indeed they can attempt anything they can think of. It is this freedom which makes a role playing game fun and exciting.

Someone has to decide whether these attempted actions succeed, and just how difficult they will be to succeed at.

That is where the Demonlord comes in. The players tell him what they want their heroes to try to do. The Demonlord decides how difficult the action is, and tells them what they need to roll to succeed.

The player then rolls the die and the Demonlord decides what the effects of either a failure or a success are. They act as a referee to the game to make sure that everything is fair.

If someone in your group of friends would like to give the job of Demonlord a try, set up the skirmish again but replace the two zero ranking heroes with full hero characters. Generate them with the Hero creation rules presented earlier in this issue.

Each player will have 10 normal warriors as detailed in the force list and two of these 0 Rank heroes.

The Demonlord will have 10 normal warriors as detailed in the force list and the two zero Rank heros as detailed in the force list.

No one will have a 2nd level hero in this example as rules for generating them have not be en discussed yet.

In this role playing version the players amy have their heros (but not the normal warriors) do "Something other than attack".

The Demonlord may only attack and move as in the skirmish game, (The Demonlord may never do "something other than attack" unless specified in the scenario rules.

Now although the Demonlord is playing against the players and will still try to defeat them to win the game, he must remember that his job is to be as fair as possible in his calls on how difficult Sota actions are are and what the affects of those Sota actions are.

Now run through the skirmish again and see how different everything is!

Expanding Lair Of Sword & Sorcery to a Full Role Playing Game

By this point you should have played a version of the skirmish game that allows people to "do something other than attacking. If not, go back and give it a try. This gives you the freedom of a role playing game, the freedom to do whatever you like.

But a Role playing game is more than just attacking and moving in creative ways.

What else do you need to have a full Role playing game?

Usually players expect to increase their power by improving their characters through some sort of reward system. In Lair this is called the Veteran system and is detailed in the next issue.

Players also expect there to be some sort of "Treasure" as a reward, either as more powerful items or cold hard cash.

So technically if players were able to increase their power, and were rewarded if they won, you could continue to play the "skirmish" over and over again with the players amassing more loot and power.

But it wouldn't be very interesting. As a minor diversion it would pass the time occasionally but going over the same territory again and again would become tedious.

So let us introduce the idea of the "Scenario".

A scenario takes place in a Lair. The Lair is the actual Demonboard layout with various walls and enemies placed on it.

The scenario is the set of rules which accompany the Lair and dictate success, failure and special features of the lair.

Every scenario will have at least one of each of the following.

Scenario objective: This is what the heroes must do to successfully beat the Lair. It may be told to them before they enter or may be mysterious and only discovered once they are inside.

Punishment: This is what happens to the heroes if they fail. Without a punishment for failure there can be no true reward. This may be told to the players before entering or be a mystery.

Reward: What the players will get if they succeed, they may be told what this is before beginning or it may be a surprise.

Note: The punishment may be dying in the attempt of getting the reward, and the reward may be not dying in attempting the Lair.

Special Feature: This will be something that makes the Lair special and appears in no other Lair. Often it will be the objective of the mission, or it may be the reason the Lair is there in the first place.

Special Features will always have accompanying rules which set them apart from other Lairs

These things set each Lair apart from the others and will keep the game fresh with every scenario.

These things all combine to give the players the Adventure they need.

The last thing required for a Role playing game is a Setting and a way to interact with it.

The Setting is what links the Lairs and scenarios together, and makes the heroes into personalities and not just stats.

Setting will be discussed in more depth in future issues of Lair of Sword and Sorcery, but you have some details of what this is already. The Lair of Sword & Sorcery game takes place in the world of Kartharka. The heros we create in the earlier part of this issue are assumed to be from the Winterlands area of Kartharka. Heroes adventuring in the Winterlands often make the town of Stoh-Branoch their home.

This is where they will make their home, find adventures and go to heal their wounds.

The setting is the connection between the scenarios, between the adventures, the place where players can act out their hopes and dreams, at least the ones other than attacking their enemies.

When playing a game of Lair, the beginning of the game is finding an adventure, planning for the trip and the travelling to the lair.

The middle is the actual scenario which happens on the Demonboard.

The end, for the players that survive, involves a reward and a return to town to enjoy it. To plan for the future and increase their ranks.

Miners Ambush: The first Lair of Sword & Sorcery Scenario

Miners Ambush is the first Scenario for Lair of Sword & Sorcery. It contains all the things needed for a game of Lair.

Have the players each create a character using the Hero creation rules earlier in this issue.

Usually you will use the setting together with the scenario to give a reason for the Heros to be embarking on the scenario but for this mission you can simply read the "Background" section out loud to the players.

Background: While travelling to the town of Stroh-Branoch the heroes encounter a group of wounded men camped on the side of the road.

They have been attacked by Robbers who have run off with their hard won metal ore.

The robbers have left a clear trail in the snow leading into the woods.

The Heroes decide to help the miners and, taking the least injured with them, set off to find the robbers.

Objective: To find the Miners sacks of precious metals and return with them.

Punishment: In this scenario the punishment for failure is the lack of any reward, or perhaps death as well.

Special features: In this scenario there is a room full of sacks of metal ore. The robbers are loading it onto their wagons in preparation to leave their stronghold.

There are 30 sacks and the bandits are moving them to a wagon to escape. The heroes will attempt to get as many of the sacks as they can for themselves.

The sacks are in a large room in the middle of the lair.

Each Robber can carry one sack while still moving.

Each hero can carry one sack while still moving.

When a robber gets one of the sacks to their "exit" it is loaded on a wagon through a chute in the wall. It cannot be retrieved after that.

When a hero gets one of the sacks to their entrance the miners will claim it and load it on their wagon. It cannot be retrieved after that.

The scenario ends when their are no more sacks in the storage room. Whichever side has the most sacks including those held by heroes or robbers wins the scenario..

Reward for success: the heroes will get one gold coin for every sack the miners retrieve.

Scenario set up and general rules:

Setup the walls on the Demonboard in the way shown on the map.

If a hero chooses to leave through their own exit they are out of the game and are now considered "safe".

Heroes may not leave out the Robbers exit.

Heroes may not rest when there are Robbers on the board.

Small coins or glass beads should be used to represent the "sacks".

If Hero or Robber is attacked they will "drop" their sack, in which case it is placed in the square next to them. They cannot pick it up again until their next move and so it is able to be grabbed by someone else moving before them.

You pick up a sack by moving into a square with a sacks in it and stating that you do so. This is not considered "doing something while attacking" and is always successful.

All of the heroes and miners start the game in the room next to their own entrance. The Robbers start in the room next to their own entrance.

Each player is given 3 miners to control. Their stats are listed after the map. Each miner has a sword but no armour. Each player may move and attack with their miners on their own turn.

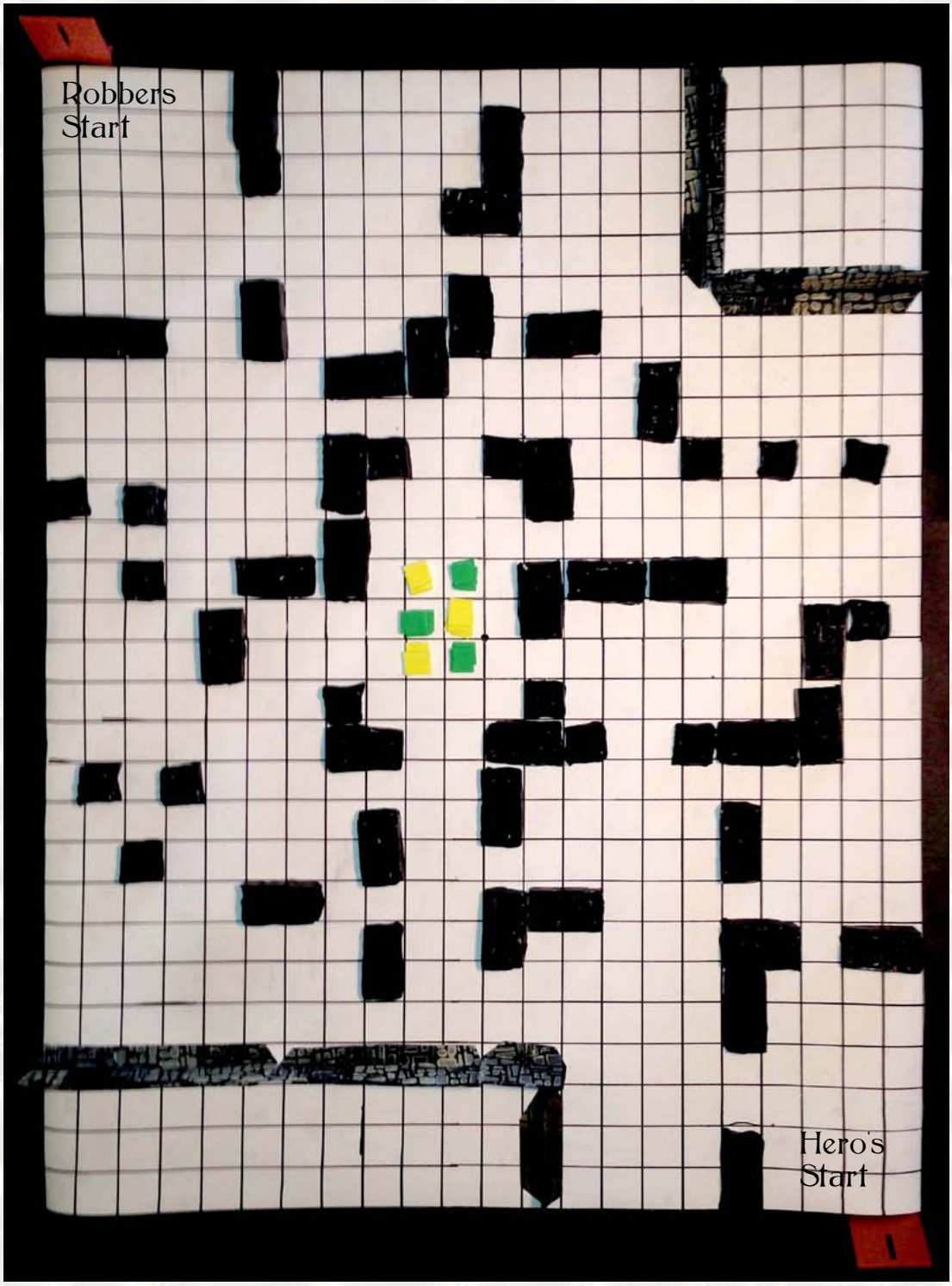
The Demonlord of course controls all the Robbers. The number of Robbers the Demonlord controls depends on how many Heros are playing. The actual number is listed with Robbers stats.

Torches are scattered about on the walls so none need carry sources of light to see.

Tips for the demonlord

Remember, your goal as the robbers is to escaped with as many sacks as possible, not to kill the Heroes.

If you tie your robbers down with fighting, the miners will quickly grab all of the bags.


Robbers
Start
Hero's
Start

Miners Forces

On the players side are the Heroes, as well as a group of miners.

The miners each have the same stats listed in the stat block. They are just regular folk though their endurance is a little higher from long days in the mines. Every miner has a sword and no armour. Each player gets 3 miners to control.

Defense	Attack	Endurance	Damage
0	0	6	0

Robbers Forces

The Robbers will have a varying number of men depending on how many heroes they face.

We will assume that the heroes are newly created (since the veteran rules have not been published yet)

The Demonlord will have 2 robbers for every hero on the players side, and one robber for every miner.

All of the Robbers stats are the same and are listed in the block

Note that they are a little tougher than the miners, that's why they were able to defeat them before..

Each robber has a sword and is wearing armour.

Defense	Attack	Endurance	Damage
1	1	4	1

Creating your own Scenarios.

You can see from the Sample scenario that creating your own is easy.

Start with a story objective, like recovering the miners gold.

Use the objective to make a special feature, here we have sacks of ore with a few simple rules for picking it up and moving,

Set up the Lair to make accomplishing the Objective interesting, here we have two exits, one for each side, a large room in the middle with the special feature (pile of sacks) and some corridors and rooms between the two, allowing some tactical movement, setting up bottlenecks, creating defendable positions etc.

Once you have played the scenario you will probably think of more ways to make it more interesting.

Varying the number and power of the robbers or miners. Adding furniture to the lair like tables, chairs, and cabinets.

Perhaps the miners have brought along a push cart, maybe the robbers are much fewer in number but have laid some traps for the players.

Anything is possible.

The important thing is to have fun.

When changing the opposing forces power and number try to keep in mind balance and fairness. The heroes can always run if things get too rough though so don't worry too much.

Rules for balanced enemy forces will be formally published in the Veteran issue. For now 2 normal people equals 1 hero in a fight. The hero would usually win this fight but does have a chance of being killed.

Usually in a scenario there would be more than 1 combat the heroes would fight, with the heroes fighting a force of enemies basically equal to them each time.

Hidden rooms: During a scenario the heroes may no know the entire layout of a Lair until they have walked through it.

In this type of scenario the players can only see the rooms and corridors the heroes have actually entered. The demonboard will start off empty except for the starting room with more rooms and corridors being added to the board as they explore.

As they enter these rooms they may discover enemies within, who will sometimes be surprised, or sometimes ambush the heroes depending on the scenario.

During these types of games the heroes may "rest" whenever no enemies are on the board, and are considered to be in "Roleplaying" mode when acting.

More on all of this will be published in future issues of Lair.

For now have fun making things up. Use toys on the demonboard to represent anything fun. Have the Heroes fight monsters, explore old houses, delve into caves, solve mysteries. Anything you can imagine.

Send in any scenarios, ideas, pictures, or rules that you make up as you go and it will be added to the Lair game for all to enjoy.

Until Next issue, stop planning your games and start playing your games!

~Ripley Stonebrook~