



BEASTS & BARBARIANS

STEEL EDITION

Heroes of the Dominions

*Heroes and their awesome stories for
Beasts & Barbarians Steel Edition*

By Umberto Pignatelli

Editing: Andy Slack,

*Art: Ania Jarmoławska, Magdalena
Minko, Radosław Jaszczyk.*

What are the Dominions without a band of heroes?

*In this booklet you'll find ten
pre-generated characters for Beasts &
Barbarians Steel Edition, each of them
ready-to-play and lavishly illustrated.*

*But, there's more: each hero has a
Plot Hook and a special Reward, for
the Game Master's eyes only, to create a
Character Tale and to help the group tell
a real hero-focused story!*

So what are you waiting for?

*Gird your sword and prepare to
crush the thrones of the Dominions under
your sandaled feet!*

*So, grab your sword, and get ready
for adventure!*

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GRAMMEL



Concept: Beggar Monk.

Culture: Lhobanese.

This character is Literate.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Enlightenment d8, Healing d6, Knowledge (Religion) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Stealth d6, Survival d4.

Charisma: +0; Pace: 6; Parry: 6; Toughness: 6 (1)

Edges: Arcane Background (Enlightenment), Martial Artist, Monk (Militant), New Power.

Hindrances: One Arm, Habit (Drinking – Minor), Lost the Way (Minor), Poverty.

Powers [15 PPI]: Boost trait (memories of past lives), smite (ghostly arm appears in place of the missing one)

Gear: Metal prayer beads (count as Iron Fists, +1 Dmg unarmed) tattered warrior-monk's robes (+1), bottle of cheap wine, Lotus concoction of healing (Azure Dust of Relief).

Background: One Arm had a name, a long time ago, but it isn't important anymore. He was one of the most promising students in a monastery in eastern Lhoban. When the head of the monastery assigned him as Chela to the famous Lo Sai, a feared demon huntress, One Arm's heart leapt. Finally, his skills would really be tested.

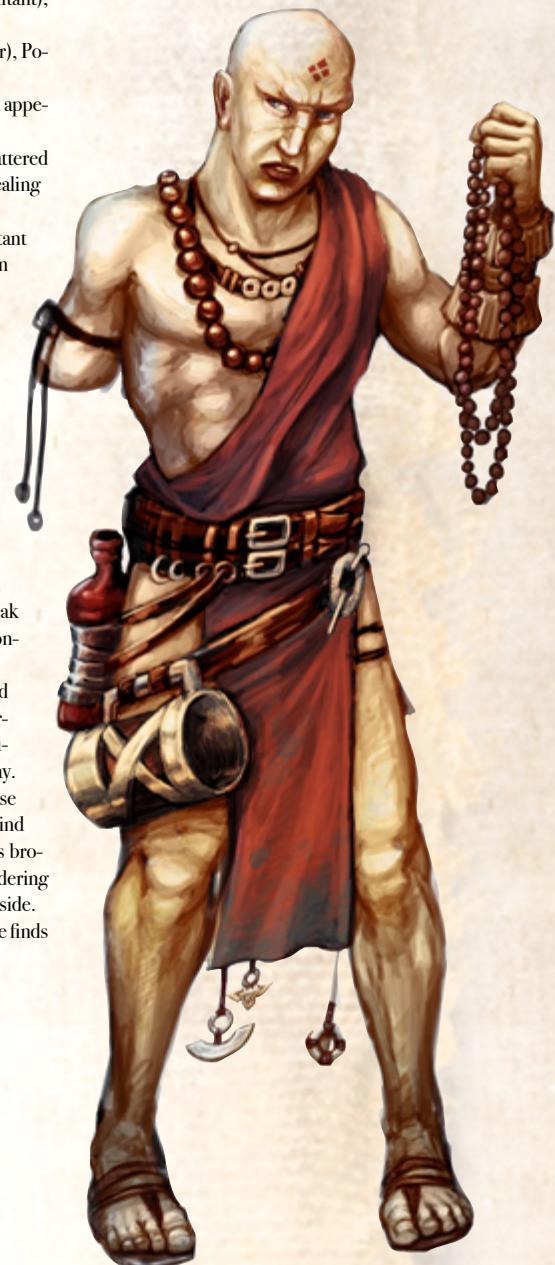
What One Arm didn't know, was that Lo Sai was on her way to the dreaded city of Collana, in Ekul, where the monks keep at bay the terrible entities unleashed by the Valk during the war.

Lo Sai took up residence on a pillar just outside the city, and kept staring toward the city, exerting the power of her spirit to keep the demons locked inside. One Arm's task was to provide for her needs: finding water and food, and sleeping at the base of the pillar during the terrible nights when the demons tried to break out of Collana, blocked only by the sheer will of the monks. But that was a very hard task: one night, a scaly creature vomited from some hell managed to break through the barrier and went to Lo Sai's pillar, where she was lying unconscious from fatigue.

One Arm tried to defend his mistress, but the scaly demon ripped his arm away and threw him aside, like a broken doll. Then darkness mercifully fell upon One Arm. When he woke up, in a misty dawn, his mistress' body lay near him, destroyed and desecrated in every possible way. That day something broke in the young Chela's soul, an injury even worse than his mutilation. Fear? Desperation? Or simply acceptance that mankind can't oppose the evil which comes from other worlds? One Arm left his brotherhood and renounced his name, becoming nothing more than a wandering beggar of the Dominions, his only consolation the bottle of spirits at his side.

But there is an ancient saying in Lhoban: "A man is only lost until he finds himself."

Only time will show if that is true.



ONE ARM

Concept: Former Corsair and Poet.

Culture: Caldeian.

This character is Literate.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d4, Fighting d10, Knowledge (Legends and Lore) d8, Notice d6, Swimming d4, Taunt d6.

Charisma: +0; Pace: 6; Parry: 8; Toughness: 6(1)

Edges: Corsair Fencer, Counterattack, Poet, Quick

Hindrances: Carouser, Overconfident, Sharp-Tongued

Gear: Iron long sword (Str+d8), bronze dagger (Str+d4, Range: 3/6/12), light leather armor (+1), book of poetry, 200 Moons.

Background: Vandero is the minor son of an important Caldeian noble. A reckless soul and a lashing tongue since his youth, his father had him enlisted in the Corsairs to instill some discipline in him, taking him away from his beloved books of poetry and from the intrigues of the capital.

Enlisted with him was his childhood friend Aros, his constant companion in mischief.

Unsurprisingly, Vandero didn't cope well with the discipline of the Corsairs, and only the importance of his family and his skill with the blade allowed him to keep a place in the crew of the *Dusk Hammer*.

Vandero's fellow Corsairs didn't really understand the tall fellow who loved to read books of poetry in his spare time and had a tongue as sharp as his blade: he made a lot of enemies and no friends. He survived his first months in the Corsairs only thanks to Aros watching his back.

The Dusk Hammer's captain, Tovar Kask, didn't like Vandero at all, and put him in charge of the ship's boarders, secretly hoping he would be killed.

But that didn't happen and a silent, reciprocal hate grew between the two.

It was with the boarding of the *Kalatryia*, a Faberterrann ship, that things changed forever: aboard, among rich silks and gold statues, Vandero found Valeria, a princess destined for a foreign marriage.

Vandero had known many women in his life, but when his eyes met Valeria's, well... he was lost.

But someone saw what passed in Vandero's heart: Captain Tovar. With a display of malignity, he took the girl as his share of the loot, and nobody could contest it.

Vandero's heart crumpled, that night, hearing the girl crying in Tovar's cabin.

The night after that the Dusk Hammer passed near Hillias' coast, and Vandero enacted a desperate plan: he sneaked into Tovar's cabin, freed Valeria and headed for the bridge, where Aros was waiting for them with a boat.

But Tovar Kask and the rest of the crew were waiting for them: it was a trap.

"Today, even your father's name could not save you, traitor!" he swore, and unsheathed his iron.

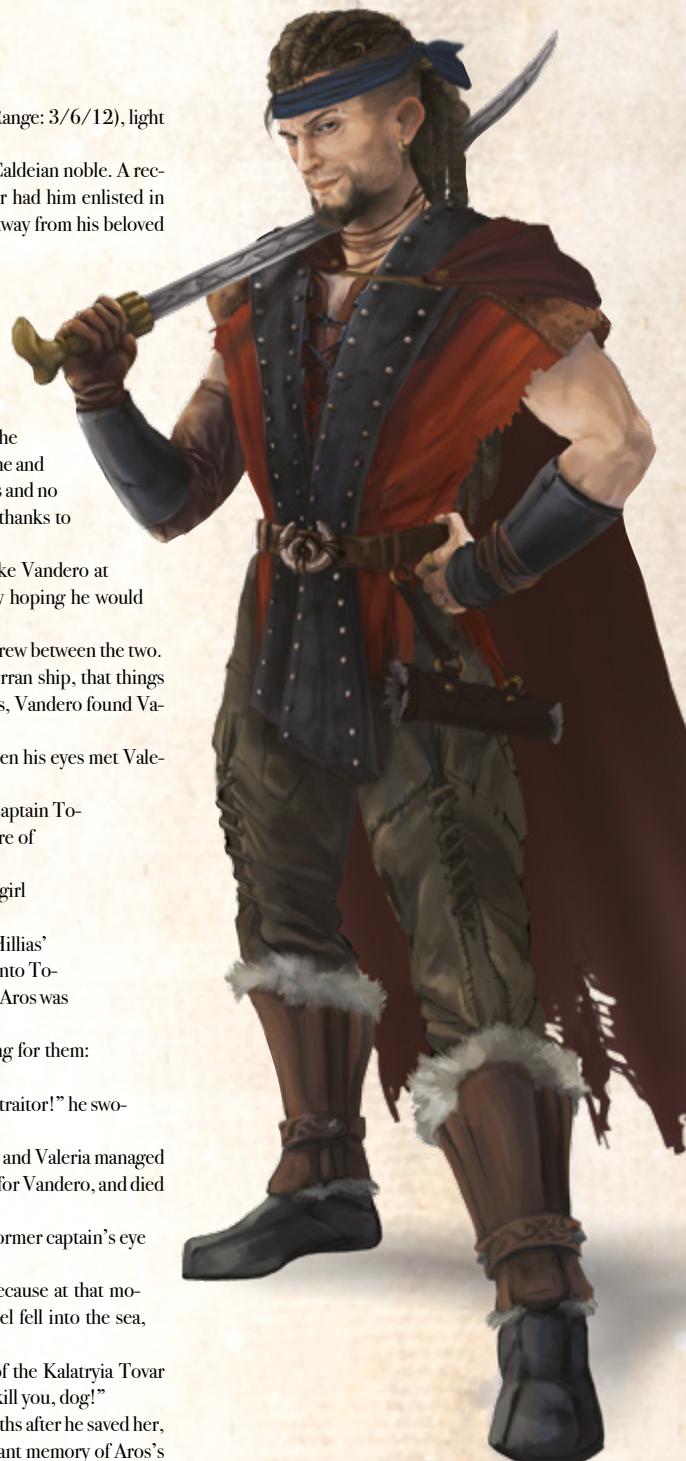
Blades flashed and blood was spilled before Vandero and Valeria managed to reach the boat, but Aros took a sword in the heart meant for Vandero, and died on the deck, while Tovar Kask laughed evilly.

With a snake-like strike, Vandero slashed away his former captain's eye and prepared to kill him.

Nobody knows how that duel would have ended, because at that moment, the ropes holding the boat broke free and the vessel fell into the sea, with Vandero and Valeria aboard.

The current carried them away while on the deck of the *Kalatryia* Tovar Kask shouted: "Vandero, hear my words! I'll kill you! I'll kill you, dog!"

Vandero is alone now: Valeria died of a fever six months after he saved her, and those days, although bittersweet because of the constant memory of Aros's demise, were the best ones of Vandero's life.



CROW



Concept: Vision-Seeking Barbarian.

Culture: Cairnlander.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Riding d6, Stealth d6, Survival d4, Tracking d4.

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Edges: Brawny, Loincloth Hero, Mighty Roar.

Hindrances: Clueless, Delusional (hears and sees the Black Auroch), Outsider.

Gear: Bone great axe (Str+d10, 2 hands, -1 Parry, AP 1), loincloth, fur cloak, Ancestor amulet (necklace of teeth).

Background: Crow is a mighty, close-mouthed barbarian of the Cairnlands. Gray of skin and with long black hair ("like the wings of a crow", hence his name). Some months ago Crow was kicked in the head by a black auroch during a hunt among old Cairns, and hovered on death's door for several days.

When he woke up, he wasn't the same man. He started hearing strange voices, belonging to the Ancestors, which told him to leave his land, and travel south looking for the Black Auroch, which will reveal his fate.

Crow picked up his axe, kissed his wife and his two young children and, painting his face with white chalk made from the bones of his forefathers, left his land, moving south.

He has seen many strange things, some of them in the Domains and others only in his mind.

The Black Auroch haunts his dreams night after night, and sometimes it even speaks to him.

"I am here," the mighty beast says.

"Who are you?" Crow asks him, in his dreams.

"I am your fate," the animal answers.



JITARA THE CAT



Concept: Acrobat Thief

Culture: Jalizaran.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6+2, Fighting d6, Lockpicking d6+2, Notice d6, Repair d8+2, Stealth d8+2, Streetwise d4, Throwing d8.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Edges: Acrobat, Cloak Heroine, Still Got One, Thief.

Hindrances: Greedy (Minor), Loyal, Overconfident.

Gear: Jalizaran hooded cloak full of blades (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs Ranged attacks, can do tricks in a Small Burst Template), custom made blades (Damage: Str+d4+1, AP 1, Range: 5/10/20 – see Still Got One Edge), light leather armor (+1), lockpicks, silk rope, tiger's claws (+2 to climbing rolls).

Background: Jitara is an orphan, born and raised in the back alleys of Jalizar. It's a tough life, one that only a street rat can survive.

Not for nothing was Jitara called „the cat”: a skilled, self-taught, acrobat, Jitara quickly learned her way around the rooftops, where she could catch fat pigeons, which she deftly killed and ate raw.

Then, one night, the roof upon which Jitara was walking collapsed, and the girl fell down into a dusty attic, full of ancient paraphernalia. She coughed, while the dust settled.

„Who enters my house?” a voice asked.

The person speaking was a man, very old, sitting on a chair.

Jitara leapt up and tried to escape, but the man deftly tripped her with the tip of his foot, without even standing. He grabbed Jitara with a fast and strong, but delicate, hand.

„A little, scrawny cat, you are; but an agile one,” he said, touching Jitara's face with his fingers. The girl understood the old man was blind.

This was how Jitara met Sweetfingers. The man, once one of the best thieves of Jalizar, took her under his protection, maybe to further some interest, maybe just to soothe his solitude, and started teaching Jitara the ways of real thieves. Under his tutelage, the girl became one of the best thieves of Jalizar, a so-called Whitemouse - a burglar who is a member of no Guild.

Jitara sneaked into many rich houses, plundering many strongboxes belonging to rich merchants; she was the hands and eyes of Sweetfingers' shrewd mind.

Then, one night, when returning to her master's hideout, he noticed he was sitting still on his chair. Too still. A thin stiletto stuck from his chest. Probably the same blade used to carve on his forehead a crude symbol in Thieves' Signs: Whitemouse.

Jitara knew she had to escape, but she remained there, still and weeping, for a while.

Then, with a swirl of her cloak, she left.



KALATOR KAAL

BEASTS & BARBARIANS

STL EDITION

Concept: Mysterious Sorcerer.

Culture: Tricarnian.

This character is Literate.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Healing d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Riding d4, Stealth d4, Sorcery d10.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Edges: Alertness, Arcane Background (Sorcery), Power Points (x2), Relic.

Hindrances: Cautious, Enemy (Major), Quirk (loves keeping mysteries – Minor).

Powers [20 PP]: Bolt (sparks of green light from the Eye), confusion (dazzling light from the Eye), deflection (I am not here!).

Gear: Sacrificial bronze dagger (Str+d4, AP 1, concealed in the vest sleeve), gray hooded vest, Eye of Son Rah (relic), Lotus concoction of slumber (Gray Lotus of Dreamless Sleep).

Eye of Son Rah: A green gem, flickering of green light. It grants Kalator +1 to Sorcery, Knowledge Arcana and Spirit rolls.

Background: Imagine serving a man, a powerful sorcerer, Tuthra Vaan, faithfully, for dozens of years. Being his servant, his most trusted disciple, but always and indubitably his slave, always trying to get some knowledge and some consideration from him, and receiving only cruelty and pain, because this is the way of Tricarnia.

Then, a night, while your master is sleeping the deep slumber caused by the lotus, you notice he left his iron box, where he keeps his most precious treasures, open. And you see, shimmering inside, the gem called the Eye of Son Rah, a source of mysterious power, staring at you.

You hesitate, but only for a heartbeat. The gem is yours now; you feel its arcane, alien strength pulsating in your hands like a second heart.

Then, before leaving, you take the dagger and raise it above your helpless master's head. One blow. A single blow will end your servitude forever, his blood washing away years of humiliation. But for some reason, you lower the blade, and slip away without striking.

This is the story of Kalator Kaal, and how, in one night, he took one good and one bad decision. Which was which? That is for you to decide.

Today Kalator Kaal is a man on the run, the agents of Tuthra Vaan never far away: he often regrets not killing his master when he had the chance, but there is no point crying over split milk.





MASTER ARABEO

Concept: Adventurous Sage and Treasure Hunter.

Culture: Syranthian.

This character is Literate.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Investigation d8, Knowledge (History) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Edges: Luck, Jack of All Trades, Quick, Scholar, Sage

Hindrances: Big Mouth, Curious, Enemy (Rutharo)

Gear: Bronze short sword (Str+d6), whip (Str+1, Reach 2, +1 Tricks), light leather armor (+1), lockpicks, 100 Moons.

Background: The sages of Syranthia are said to be mild, bookish types. Well, Master Arabeo is of a different stock. An educated, athletic fellow, Arabeo is devoted to the Great Library but he passes little time in it. He even renounced the typical robes of his order for a more practical adventuring outfit. Arabeo loves knowledge like all his peers, but more than books and tomes, his interest lies in ancient treasures and relics of the past, which he incessantly hunts across all the Dominions.

Mind you, Arabeo isn't guided by greed: in his opinion the right place for these ancient things is in the Library, where they can be studied and conserved, so that their history isn't lost.

In his explorations of the Dominions Arabeo has made a number of enemies: treasure hunters, thieves and the occasional evil cult, from which the good master stole their sacred relics.

Arabeo has a sworn enemy: Rutharo, a former Sage who left the Library and now works for a powerful Priest Prince in Syranthia, for whom he steals important Keronian treasures.

Their paths have crossed twice already... and the third time will probably be the last, at least for one of them...

BEASTS & BARBARIANS
STORY EDITION





PRINCESS VENDRA

Concept: Damsel.

Culture: Zandorian.

This character is Literate.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Healing d4, Notice d8, Knowledge (Legends and Lore) d4, Lockpicking d4, Persuasion d10, Riding d4, Swimming d4, Stealth d6.

Charisma: +3; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Edges: Attractive, Greater Luck, Fallen Noble, Temptress.

Hindrances: Damsel in Distress, Pacifism (Minor), Wanted.

Gear: Bikini, cloak, hairpins (count as Lockpicks), Locket of Zand (minor relic).

Locket of Zand: This mysterious amulet grants Princess Vendra (and other persons of the Vendra bloodline) Armor +1 of magical nature and the Dodge Edge.

Background: Vendra of Zandramor is the last heir of an important noble house of Ekul. Her family's bloodline is very old, and there are stories that, on her mother's side, it comes from the mythical city of Zand, in Zandor.

Vendra grew up pampered and educated, the most precious jewel among her father's treasures, and never knew a day of hardship in all her life, even if she missed her mother, dead many years ago.

Then, on the day of Vendra's sixteenth birthday, a man came to the palace. Romal Sha was his name, and he was a clan chief of the Ekulian Valk, a very rich one. He offered Vendra's father several herds for Vendra's hand.

Not a bad-looking man, and not an inappropriate offer, but something in Romal's burning eyes made Vendra shiver, and she felt the reptile-eyes of the man on her breasts, where the locket of Zand, the preferred jewel of Vendra and last heirloom of her mother, shimmered.

So strongly opposed was Vendra to the marriage that her father refused it.

"I'll be back," Romal Sha said, before leaving with his riders.

Three days passed, then, at night, the palace of Zandramor was woken by the screams of the wounded and the smell of fire.

"Lord Zandramor!" Romal Sha shouted, breaking into the lord's hall
"Give me your daughter and the jewel on her neck and I'll let you live!"

Vendra, terrified, hid behind her father, who stood in front of her, sword unsheathed.

"Never!" he answered.

With a snarl, Romal Sha advanced, blade in hand, but nobody knows how that duel would have ended. From behind a column, an archer of Zandramor shot Romal, hitting him in the heart.

"Fools!" whispered the Valk lord, dying.

Then, a black shadow, with burning eyes of fire, crept out of his dead body, and rose on high, like a poisonous snake ready to strike.

"Give me the girl and the jewel!" the demon hissed again.

Vendra's father knew everything was lost. "Run," he whispered to his daughter. "Run, Vendra. The jewel is the key. Your mother..."

Then he charged the creature of darkness, his sword passing through it, without effect.

With a laugh, the thing that was Romal Sha snapped back, his dark claws tearing away Lord Zandramor's throat.

"Run..." Vendra's father whispered again.

And Vendra ran.



ZHARIMA

Concept: Fallen Valkyria.

Culture: Valk.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Healing d4, Intimidation d4, Knowledge (Religion) d6, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d4, Tracking d4.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

Edges: Bikini Heroine, Count the Deaths!, Elan, Frenzy

Hindrances: Loyal, Stubborn, Vengeful (major)

Gear: Bronze long sword (Str+d8), bronze dagger (Str+d4, Range: 3/6/12), gladiator's armband (+1 Parry), bronze scale bikini.

Background: Zharima was a Valkyria, one of the terrible warrior-priestesses of the Valk. Unlike many of her kind, who dye their hair blonde, Zharima was golden-haired from the day she was born, and this is a powerful omen among the Valk, for the person marked with that sign is a chosen one of Sha-Mekri. But sometimes prophecies are wrong.

As the leader of her clan, the Jimaks, when she was asked to join the horde of Deserjaas, Zharima preferred her people to stand alone, raising more than an eyebrow from the Valk leader's envoy, Mirkana of the Red Witches, and making her own clan grumble. It was only a few days later, during the holy festival of Kumra, when Zharima discovered what had happened; as she did every summer, she sacrificed a mare and called for Jimak, the demon-patron of the clan, but it never came.

Zharima prayed, swore and cursed, but in the end it was clear she had fallen into disgrace with the demons of Valkheim, and had lost her power. Stripped of every possession and bound to a solitary tree to die on the plains of Zandor, Zharima saw her clan going away, led by their new Valkyria, her own sister Vakhra.

But Zharima didn't die: she survived by biting off the heads of the vultures which came to peck at her eyes and sucking their blood.

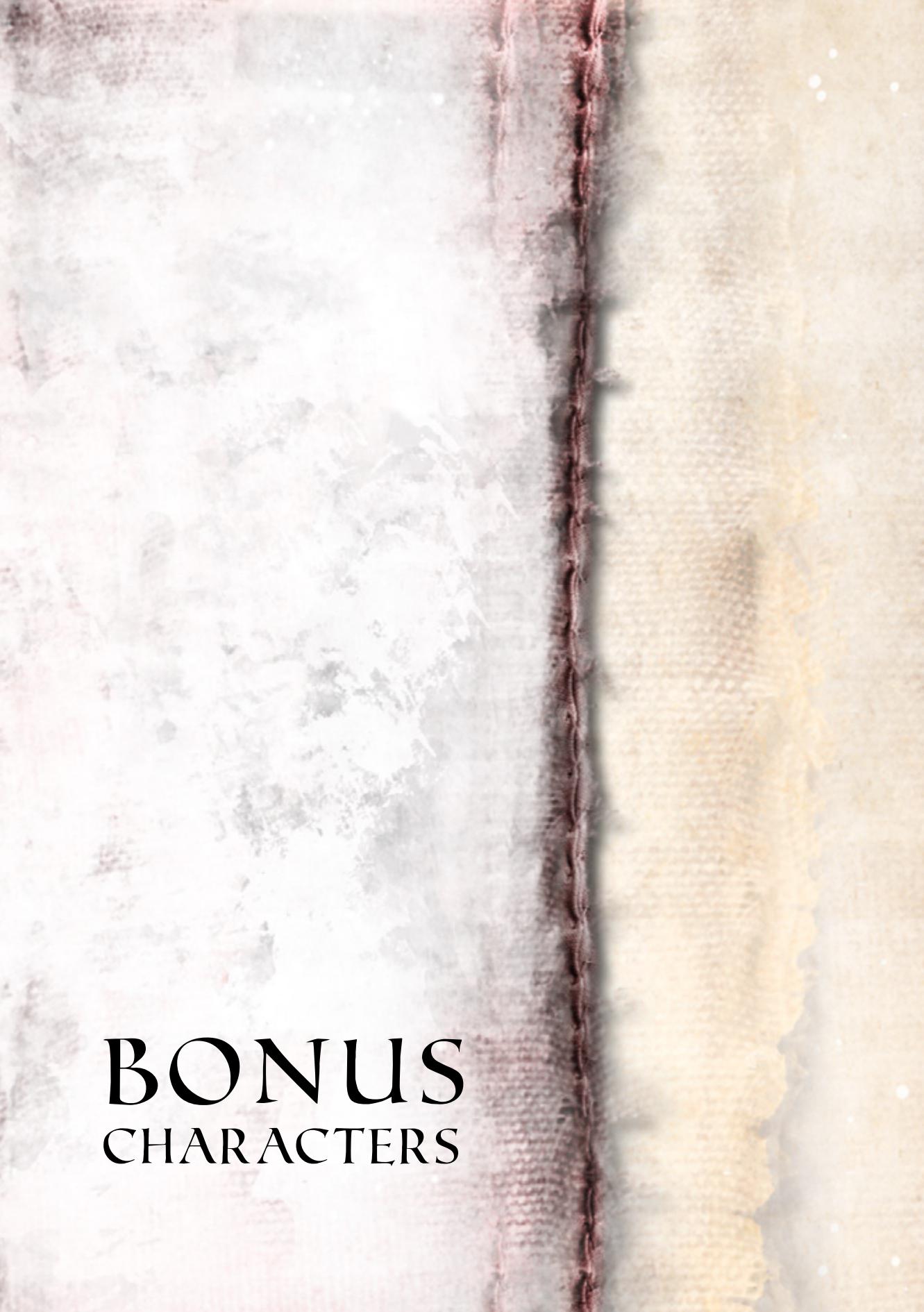
Three days later, the caravan of Jaago, a travelling merchant of Jalizar, found her, half dead and burning with rage.

"If she can survive this, she would do well at Pella," he said.

Three days later, Jaago sold her to the pen master of the Arena of Pella.

But Zharima didn't stay long in the arena, and, now outside, she tries in every way to understand what happened to her and how to recover her powers and return to her former life.





BONUS CHARACTERS

SHANGOR THE THUNDERFIST

Concept: Barbarian.

Culture: Northlander.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Riding d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6, Tracking d4.

Charisma: -1; Pace: 6; Parry: 6; Toughness: 7

Edges: Brawny, Brute, Loincloth Hero, Sweep.

Hindrances: Big Mouth, Heroic, Loyal.

Gear: Bronze battle axe (Str+d8), bronze dagger (Str+d4, Range: 3/6/12), fur loincloth, 25 Moons.

Background: Shangor is a barbarian warrior born in the bitter mountains of Northeim. Bold and brave, he left his cold home to seek fortune, fame and beautiful girls in warmer lands. His first contact with civilization was rather unfortunate. In the Borderlands, a devious Tricarnian merchant offered him a cup of wine poisoned with the Lotus of Dreams, and poor Shangor woke up as a slave oarsman on a Tricarnian galley. In the end, he managed to escape, but since then the blond barbarian has had a strong aversion to slavers of all races and types. Shangor is strong, brave and with a laugh like thunder, but when he wields his mighty axe, you must beware, because he fights with reckless abandon.

He isn't very bright, and sometimes his tongue runs faster than his mind. But, except for these minor faults, he is a great companion.



ZANDORRA THE BLOOD BRIDE

Concept: Amazon.

Culture: Ascaian.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d4, Fighting d8, Healing d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, Stealth d4, Taunt d6.

Charisma: +2; Pace: 6; Parry: 7 (1) (Amazon); Toughness: 5

Edges: Amazon, Ambidexterity, Attractive, Bikini Heroine, Two-Fisted.

Hindrances: Code of Honor (Amazons'), Overconfident, Stubborn.

Gear: Twin iron long swords (Str+d8), bronze dagger (Str+d4, Range: 3/6/12), leather bikini.

Background: Zandorra is the typical Amazon: proud, competent and bold. She was born in Ascaia, the daughter of a warship captain, and she knew nothing of how women live outside the Holy Island.

Zandorra loved both weapons and sails, so she joined the crew of a hawk ship and started the life of a sailor. She travelled to many lands and fought against barbarians and pirates, always side by side with her trusted sisters.

One night, in the port of Faberterra, she met a handsome black mariner from the remote south. Amazons aren't particularly shy, and Zandorra spent the night with him. Nine months later, in the House of Labor in Ascaia she gave birth to a baby boy. Following Ascaian law, the boy was instantly taken away from his mother. Zandorra wept that night, but only a little, then she tried to forget the whole thing.

Four years later, Zandorra was back on her ship with her sisters. One day, after conquering a slavers' galley, the Amazons discovered an unusual cargo below deck: a group of half-starved slave boys and girls.

The sight of these emaciated children touched something deep in Zandorra's soul: she yearned to see her son again, to hold him in her arms.

As soon as her ship returned to Ascaia, she went to the House of Labor and asked the Midwife Sister to tell her where her son was. The Midwife refused and Zandorra threatened her. The situation got out of control, Zandorra fought against some city guards and was forced to leave Ascaia as a fugitive.

She only knows that her son was given to a merchant of the Independent Cities named Kolash. It isn't a great lead, but it's all Zandorra has. She has thrown away her life for her son, and now she'll find him.



ONE ARM'S CHARACTER TALE

Plot Hook - The Scaly Lord. Recently, Valk raids in northern Zandor have intensified again. The mounted raiders kill and pillage as always, but this time, strangely, they aren't led by Valkyria. Their leader is a pale, scrawny man, dressed in a cloak made of human bones, who calls himself Clacker. The bandits are hitting a series of small Lhobanese communities on the Ekul border in particular, carrying off young girls to be sacrificed to the Scaly Lord, their mysterious god. When the party tracks them down (or if they are captured and herded along with the other prisoners), they discover that the base of the raiders is a ruined city, shrouded in a permanent sickly fog, and that the Scaly Lord is the demon which killed One Arm's master!

Reward - Finding Faith Again. One Arm's main quest is finding himself again. This could happen in many ways: helping his friends, defeating the Scaly Lord (see above), overcoming his dependence on the bottle. When all of these have happened, One Arm has found his faith again. In game terms, he loses his Lost the Way and Habit Hindrances, he raises his Spirit by one die type and gains the Brave Edge, because nothing can scare a man who has found his true self.

VANDERO'S CHARACTER TALE

Plot Hook - The Island of Melancholy. Vandero is hired, for his skills as a poet, to raise the spirits of a young girl, Yvannah, the daughter of a Borderlands lord who recently lost her betrothed, Terian, killed during a Caled ambush some weeks ago. Since that day she refuses to eat, she only sleeps and always dreams of her lost love, lying chained on some gloomy island. Vandero's poetry cannot free Yvannah from her nightmare, because it isn't entirely a dream. Terian's soul was captured before he died by the Howler, a malicious spirit dwelling in the Dream Kingdom, an alternate dimension whence dreams come, and who is using it to lure Yvannah's spirit inside. The only way to save Yvannah is by concocting a potion which allows the heroes to follow her to the dream island where Terian is held, and confront the Howler, which is particularly vulnerable to the power of poetry and riddles...

Reward - Vandero's Ballad. The swordsman-poet has for many years been composing a ballad, a special story about his life, including the death of his friend Aros, his love for Valeria, and the many stories he has heard in his life. When this is complete, it will be his masterpiece. In game terms, at the end of each scenario, Vandero's player can make a Smarts (-4) roll, to simulate Vandero's creative efforts. For each success and raise, he gains two Ballad Tokens. When he achieves ten Ballad Tokens, Vandero's ballad is done, and he permanently gains +2 Charisma, the Luck Edge and a free die step in Persuasion (ignoring the Rapier Wit Hindrance). To encourage role-play, if the player writes a quatrain (a stanza of poetry) he gains from +0 to +4 to the roll.

CROW'S CHARACTER TALE

Plot Hook - The Moon of the Black Bull. There is a tale, in the current land, of a city called Ketu-Ra, where the worship of Ketu, the Bull God of the far south, is practiced.

Ketu-Ra is an island of fertility in a barren, desert land. Nothing grows around the city, which dominates the region from a tall hill and whose soldiers, bearing the symbol of the Bull, enslave the nearby villages. In truth, there is a dark secret behind Ketu-Ra's prosperity. It is built on an ancient Cairn, and twenty years ago, Teron, eldest son of the King, crept inside it and discovered a strange cup, made from the

skull of a wild bull auroch and filled with a red substance. Puzzled, the boy drank the liquid, and his body suffered a horrible transformation, becoming a creature half-man and half-bull, the very embodiment of Ketu. In the same moment, another marvelous thing happened: the land around Ketu-Ra, which had been barren for years, was blessed by rain, and slowly began to be fertile again.

Teron's father, Ethor, king of the city, bowed in front of the creature that had been his son, and ordered that every year, in the Moon of the Black Bull, a girl chosen at random must be sent into the Cairn where the creature dwells, to satiate his lust and hunger, and so maintain the pact by which the land around Ketu-Ra prospers. But there is a prophecy that one day a man, a slayer, will come to end this reign of terror.

Reward - Getting Rid of the Black Auroch. The Black Auroch is the embodiment of something, probably a prophecy of some sort. Ideally, it represents his destiny as the slayer of Teron (see above), but the GM may decide the task is far more complex, and the Black Auroch must be metaphorically „killed“ many times before Crow gets rid of it. When that happens, Crows automatically loses his Delusional Hindrance and raises his Spirit and Smarts by one die step each.

JITARA'S CHARACTER TALE

Plot Hook - The Game of Irakor. Irakor and his sister Rakiria are two very bored Tricarnian Priest Princes, respectively a sorcerer and a Lotusmaster of some skill. They are rich, very rich, even if their family mansion is falling apart; this doesn't bother them. Their real passion is gambling, and no bet is more entertaining for them than gambling with human life.

For this reason, under their palace they built a complex labyrinth, full of traps and devious monsters. Usually, they throw two people in different parts of the labyrinth, and drug one of them with the Lotus of Madness, a powerful concoction which causes blind bloodlust in the imbiber. This is the Hunter, usually armed with a sharp axe. Not far from him is the other person, the Prey, who is unarmed but in full possession of his wits. The two decadent nobles spy on what happens in the labyrinth through a complex system of mirrors, and bet on who will reach the exit of the Labyrinth alive, the Prey or the Hunter. Usually the winner is the Hunter, a massive Nandal brute slave, but today the scrawny girl they had kidnapped at the docks is Jitara, one of the best thieves of Jalizar.

Reward - Ranikos' Bandages. Every thief in Jalizar knows the legend of Ranikos Blindfolded, the scoundrel-god of treachery, famous for being blind, but for seeing very well under his eye-bandages. In truth, it seems that Ranikos' Bandages are not just a story. They truly exist, and are hidden somewhere, in the Sewers, in the old plaguehouse, a place infested by the ghosts and maybe the offspring of the survivors of the last outbreak of the Red Plague in the City of Thieves. These Bandages allow the wearer to perfectly see in darkness, to use the Detect Arcana Power (using Smarts as the arcane skill and 15 Power Points) and, more importantly, to spot the invisible doors to the many Cages of Tirain, a sort of demi-plane where the demon lord plays his games and hides his treasures. Jitara can receive information about the Bandages from a story she heard from her mentor, Sweetfingers, or in any other way the GM sees fit (for example an old diary or the ravings of a lunatic).

KALATOR KAAL'S CHARACTER TALE

Plot Hook - The Eyes of Son Rah. Always on the run from the hirelings of Tuthra Vaan, the Tricarnian sorcerer has a single way to

escape. Stories say that the Eye of Son Rah was sold to Tuthra Vaan years ago by a band of adventurers, who stole it from a temple on a forgotten island. The Eye, however, has a twin. A person with both Eyes could gain enormous powers in the temple of Son Rah, enough to tear Tuthra Vaan in pieces.

The problem is that nobody knows where the second Eye of Son Rah is today: stories say it was sold to a shady Faberterranean merchant, who was robbed by a Syranthian Lotusmaster, who in turn was killed by bandits in the Iron Mountains. But there are stories, now, of a savage tribe of Nandals, roaming in a snow-covered vale somewhere in the Mountains, who worship a fiery gem, which is engulfed in flames that don't burn...

Reward - The Power of the Eyes. Once Kalator Kaal manages to get the second Eye of Son Rah, he gains another +1 to Sorcery, Knowledge (Arcana) and Spirit rolls. At this point, he needs to reach the temple of Son Rah, which is on an island somewhere in the Dread Sea. The Eyes of Son Rah were actually part of a Beasts & Barbarians adventure – The Eyes of the Night in Beasts of the Dominions: GMs can find a number of useful ideas in that tale (or they can simply devise a new tale themselves). Once in the temple, on a night of the full moon, Kalator Kaal must sacrifice a human life to Son Rah, and perform a Dramatic Task based on Spirit (-2). In the case of success, the powers of the gems are permanently imbued in his body, plus Kalator Kaal gains any combination of two New Power and/or Power Points Edges.

MASTER ARABEO'S CHARACTER TALE

Plot Hook - The Secret Floor. The Library of Syranthia is old, very old, and probably dates back to the times of Keron, like the Guardian of Askerios and few other similar monuments.

The Library has a number of underground floors and many of them are still unexplored, because nobody knows what can hide in the darkness. One day Arabeo receives a mysterious letter with a sketch, detailing the decoration of a particular column in one of the lower floors of the Library. The column contains a secret mechanism, which reveals a secret passage, leading deep into the Library's belly. Exploring the forbidden floor, he witnesses a strange ceremony, where a number of hooded persons bow and kiss a black velvet book. At the end of the ceremony, one of the persons distractedly lowers their hood and the Sage recognizes him as Master Merchant Hyrtarios, one of the most influent men in Syranthia! What are these people doing there? And who left him the note?

Reward - The Scrolls of Anderaos. Anderaos was one of the first sages of the Library, probably the founder of the order. Stories say he even knew the legendary Syros, first ruler of Syranthia. Anderaos left a number of books in the Library, to testify to his experiences, but the most important ones are the legendary Scrolls of Anderaos, a set of three vellum scrolls, full of ancient knowledge. They were lost, but Arabeo can track them down: one of them is hidden in a palace somewhere in Syranthia, the second one lies in a tomb under the sands

of the Red Desert and the third one, well, that is left to the Game Master. Finding the first scroll, and studying it raises Arabeo's Knowledge (Legends and Lore) by two die steps, the second one does the same for Knowledge (History) and the third one works on Knowledge (Arcana). In addition, possession of all three scrolls allows him to use the Sage Edge twice per session.

ZHARIMA'S CHARACTER TALE

Plot Hook - Plains of Fire. While Zharima is traveling in Zandor, in summer, she smells smoke in the air, and suddenly, she sees flames on the plain, where the tall, dry grass is blazing! The heroes must ride as fast as they can to safety, crossing a river. On the other side, there is a small town, Tazira, and all around it the ground is burned. Questioning the local people, Zharima discovers frequent fires on the lands nearby are caused by a demon, a horse whose mane is made of fire, with the sign of a burned hand on its flank. It is a Jakatal, a Valk demonic steed, and the burned hand identifies it as Jimak, Zharima's clan demon when she still had her powers! Why is Jimak free? Or is someone controlling it?

Reward - Regaining her Valkyria Powers. Zharima lost her powers due to a plot between her own sister, Vakhra, who always wanted to take her place, and Mirkana of the Red Witches, the envoy of Deserjaas, who wanted a more malleable chief at the head of the Jimak clan. The night before leaving the tribe Mirkana gave Vakhra a seed of the Tree of Death and told her to plant it, with a lock of Zharima's hair, in the Valley of Shadows, a place in another dimension which could only be reached by passing through particular doors (it is a discarded Cage of the demon lord Tirain).

Vakhra did as suggested, cutting a lock of hair from her sleeping sister and making the difficult journey.

The seed blossomed in a flower, golden as Zharima's hair because it contains the Valkyria's powers. The only way for Zharima to break the curse is to find her way to the Valley of Shadows, defeat the powerful Guardian Vakhra left, and collect the Flower.

Zharima's Rewards are split into several steps, which should ideally be received in order.

The first step is collecting the Flower in the Valley of Shadows: when this happens she obtains the Arcane Background (Sorcery) Edge for free, with Sorcery equal to the higher of her Smarts and Spirit dice.

The second step is killing her sister Vakhra. If she sacrifices her sister's soul to Jimak, her demon-lord, her Sorcery Skill is raised by one die step.

The third step is regaining command of her clan, this happens if she demonstrates to her clansmen that she has recovered her powers and defeated Vakhra. In that case she gains the Noble Edge.

In the session(s) when the various reward steps are unlocked, Zharima receives no Experience Points.

BONUS CHARACTERS

PLAYING SHANGOR AND ZANDORRA

SHANGOR'S CHARACTER TALE

Plot Hook - A Few Brave Men. The Stoneguard Fort is a small but strategic fortress on the mouth of the Anaconda River. Built many years ago by a forgotten Iron Phalanx, it fell into many different hands, and is currently under Caldeia's control. For this reason, it is important for the Independent City of Teyerana, to conquer it, gaining an important base in the south and taking control of the gold cargos that come out of the Jungle. The dangerous task of taking it fell to a band of mercenaries and pirates, the Free Company, of which Shangor is one of the lieutenants. The plan is easy: by night, the Free Companions must climb up the sheer southern cliff, and take the Caldeian garrison by surprise. The plan works well; too well, because all the soldiers are dead, their bodies bloated by the poisonous darts that killed them. Then, from the nearby jungle, pigmy war drums are heard and the Free Companion commander is the first to fall. Teyerana's ships will arrive tomorrow morning, with the high tide, but will the Free Companions hold out till then?

Reward - The Man in Charge. Shangor, at the beginning of his adventuring career, is just a reckless barbarian lad, only interested in wine, women and squandering loot. In truth, Shangor is born to be a leader, and takes being in command very seriously once he gets the chance. The Northlander barbarian should have a number of opportunities to lead men in battle, but when he finally gets his own mercenary company, bandit band or becomes the general of an army, his natural leadership talent should emerge. He automatically gains the Command and Command Presence Edges, plus a free die step in Knowledge (Battle).

ZANDORRA'S CHARACTER TALE

Plot Hook - The Manhood of Kossuth. Zandorra, during her travels, ends up in a remote village in Kyros plagued by famine. Boys and girls stare at her with empty bellies. The reason for the famine is that a band of marauders stole the holy relic of the goddess, the manhood of the elephant-god Kossuth, which secures fertility for the land (and the women) of the village. The villagers have no way to actually pay the Amazon, but, well, sometimes a mission must be undertaken simply because it is the right thing to do. The raiders have their hideout in a ruin in the mountains, but they aren't the real threat of the scenario. The problem is that the manhood of Kossuth causes strange effects, especially if touched by a woman of fertile age...

Reward - Zandorra's Son. Zandorra's life goal is finding her son. It is a quest that could take several years and can have different outcomes. If Zandorra manages to find him, the rough spirit of the warrior-woman softens a bit: she raises her Spirit by one die step and gains the Elan Edge for free. The problem now is deciding what to do with the boy. Is a life of adventure good for him? If not, Zandorra can leave him to a foster family, but is this what she really wants?

If things go badly, Zandorra's son could die. In this case, Zandorra's soul fills with rage, a burning hate for those responsible. The Amazon raises her Fighting by one die step and gains the Frenzy Edge, but she must also replace one of her Hindrances with Bloodthirsty.