

THE SWORD OF IZIM

SAVAGE WORLDS HEROIC TALE
FOR A PARTY OF 4-6 SEASONED CHARACTERS

BY UMBERTO PIGNATELLI



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BEASTS BARBARIANS

A Sword and Sorcery Savage Worlds setting

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THE SWORD OF IZIM

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *The Sword of Izim*, a Heroic Tale for the *Beasts & Barbarians* Savage Worlds setting.

To play this scenario you need a copy of the core rules of *Savage Worlds* and *GE*. This adventure is for a party of four Seasoned heroes (20-25 Experience Points is the optimal level), but it can easily be modified, following the Golden Edition instructions, for parties of different sizes and experience.

Given the nature of the scenario, it is very good for convention play or to introduce a new gaming group to the setting.

You can play it with characters of your own, or download for free a party of pre-generated heroes from the store where you found this product, or customize the archetypes found in the *Archetypes of the Dominions and Jalizar* free supplement.

If you haven't got gaming terrain at your disposal, you will also find gaming stones and several copies of Burst Templates handy, to represent specific terrain features in fights.

Parts in italics are intended to be read aloud or paraphrased by the Game Master to the players.

Now, if you intend to play this scenario, stop here: the following sections are reserved for the Game Master.

Otherwise, if you plan to run this adventure, go on, and prepare to discover the secrets of the Sword of Izim!

CHARACTER REQUIREMENTS

The adventure includes a horseback chase, tracking down an enemy in a labyrinth

and avoiding some traps. So the party should include heroes with decent levels in Notice and Tracking, while some proficiency in Riding will be useful to everyone.

In addition at some points the adventurers will face sorcery, so a character with Knowledge (Arcana) will be useful.

That said, as this scenario is firmly rooted in Sword and Sorcery tropes, some good fighters will surely be useful.

All the above is useful, but not mandatory, to run the scenario.

Horses: Heroes start the game with mounts. If they don't own them, suppose they are provided by the city council of Kodra (they are standard Riding Horses, see *Savage Worlds*, page 138).

WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE

Nobody really knows how the fabled Sword came to Zandor; some say that the Master Mages of Zand, an ancient city now lost, forged it using forbidden words of power, others say it was an age-old relic brought by Tricarnian exiles, still another legend says it fell from the sky, like a shooting star, and was found by a shepherd at the bottom of a crater, burning with flames and sorcery.

Whatever its origin, the Sword was an item of great sorcery: it bestowed incredible strength and powers on whoever wielded it, and many battles were won thanks to its rune-carved blade.

But it was moved by a dark intelligence, and every time it was used a tragedy occurred and someone dear to the user died, a grim tribute to the evil will of the weapon.

In the end the kings of Zandor, fearful of this bewitched item, built a sanctuary on a tall peak in the middle of the southern wastelands, and put the ensorcelled sword there, guarded by a sect of watchmen, the Blade Guardians, warriors whose swords protected it, but who were absolutely forbidden to touch the cursed weapon.

In 2450 AF Zandor was invaded by Valk: in few years the eastern empire fell and was ravaged, reduced to a handful of independent city states, struggling separately against the barbarians for survival.

In these troubled years the legend of the Sword was gradually forgotten, but the Guardians continued their watch, ignored by everyone.

Everyone except the Valk.

A horde of horse-riding barbarians, led by Harmela, a Valkyria who had had a vision, came to the base of the peak. Following the orders of the blonde priestess, they attacked the sanctuary to bring her the Sword.

But the Guardians were ready. Despite being reduced to a mere two dozen, they held the sanctuary for a full month, repelling the barbarians and the monstrosities summoned by the Valkyria. In the end there were only two: Izim, the head of the order and a veteran of the Valk wars, and his young brother-in-arms, Azar.

They were trapped in the underground halls of the sanctuary. They had no food or water and knew they could not withstand another assault.

When the Valk attacked again, the two were forced to retreat to the hall of the Sword. Right in front of the altar upon which the bewitched sword was placed, Izim staggered, fell, and his hand closed almost unconsciously on the Sword's hilt.

Suddenly the power of the blade filled the warrior with a supernatural strength and the ensorcelled weapon was brandished again for the first time in five centuries. But the first blood the Sword drank was that of Azar, who didn't manage to move away from the cursed weapon's deadly path.

Howling his anger and pain, Izim, last survivor of the Blade Guardians, swooped upon his enemies like a fighting bird.

The valiant warrior fell in the end, shot down from a distance by arrows, but not before butchering thirty Valk warriors. When the Valkyria entered the underground room, the smell of blood and entrails was like a slaughterhouse. But it was the crackling, invisible energy hovering in the place that intimidated her. It came directly from the Sword, still held in the cold fingers of the dead Guardian.

Despite being a demon-worshipper, the woman was scared, and understood that no man could brandish that blade without succumbing to its dark power. On the other hand, she could not abandon the object there, to be taken by anyone, especially after the great number of Valk lives that had been spent to seize it.

So Harmela ordered to her men to bring a stallion into the hall; she sacrificed

it, and used the beast's powerful blood to cast a terrible spell on the Sword, so that nobody could touch it without being killed on the spot.

She also made the warriors demolish the upper sanctuary and seal the entrance to the underground rooms, and then gathered the survivors of her army and moved away, looking for more verdant grazelands to pillage.

In the terrible years of the war the Sanctuary of the Blade was gradually forgotten, but not the name of Izim, the last of the Guardians, and several legends about him flourished. In the meantime the sorcerous sword, craving blood, continued to sleep restlessly in its prison in the heart of the peak, waiting for someone to free and brandish it again.

And this might never have happened, if capricious Fate hadn't put the heroes on the road to the sanctuary...





PART I: THE PRISONER

LOST IN THE WASTELAND

Gouras Ghan, called the Wolf of Zandor, is one of the many bandits infesting the land. With his band of cutthroats, he brought damage and ruin to southern Zandor, stealing, murdering and pillaging wherever he could. So it was no surprise that the council of Kodra, one of the city states most severely hit by the bandit's rapacity, hired you to solve the problem.

The task proved easier than you imagined: you tracked down Gouras' band to their camp, in the hills north of Kodra, and, by night, you sneaked into their tents.

You found Gouras asleep, due to the quantity of wine he'd drunk, and it was simple to grab him, tie him up, and carry him away from the camp. Killing him would surely have been easier, but Kodra's council was adamant: the Wolf of Zandor must be taken alive, so that he can be tried for his crimes and then given to the city's executioner.

You took with you Gouras' concubine too: a poor girl called Yvanna, daughter of a Kodran merchant, kidnapped some weeks ago and submitted to all types of brutality by the bandits and their chief. You did this in a charitable spirit, but also because you hope for some sort of reward from her father.

You rode all night, building up a good lead over possible pursuers, and would have reached Kodra before dawn, if luck had not suddenly abandoned you.

You don't know this region of Zandor very well, and at an old crooked tree on the path, some hours ago, you discussed the right direction to take. You chose left, but probably right was the better path. Now is late afternoon, and you are in a large, flat wasteland, surrounded only by rocks and sun-baked earth.

Gouras Ghan, who rides tied to the saddle, wakes up from apparent sleep and says sardonically: "You got lost, didn't you?"

The prisoner is right: the heroes got really lost.

Looking around, the adventurers don't see any clear reference point, the only thing breaking the monotonous flat landscape is a tall, rocky hill, very steep, a real peak, not far away.

On the top of the peak a small building is visible, apparently ruined. The adventurers could have heard something about this place (see sidebar).

After checking for this, ask the party for a Notice roll: With a success or better they have a brief glimpse of something shimmering in the wasteland behind them.

In truth, Gouras' band has been on the heroes' tracks for several hours and the bandits are now very close: the shimmer the party saw is the reflection of the sun on a helm.

If no adventurer sees the shimmering, the whole party suffers -2 to the first Chase roll in the next scene.

IZIM'S PEAK

The characters could know something about the peak and the ruins on the top of it, by making a Knowledge (Legends and Lore) roll. Characters of Zandorian origin can roll on Common Knowledge.

For every success and raise they get one of the following pieces of info. Each entry includes the previous ones, so if a hero obtains a raise he also gets the success info.

Failure. *There is nothing important about this place. The building on the top must be a shepherds' shelter of some sort.*

Success. *The hill is called Izim's Peak, and once was a fortress of some sort. It dates back the Valk invasion.*

Raise. *Izim's Peak takes its name from the famous warrior Izim, son of a local prince. During the Valk wars, Izim and a few good men held the fortress for more than a month, resisting against a whole Valk horde. But the fortress itself is much older, it pre-dates the conquest of Zandor by the Iron Empire.*

Two Raises. *Stories say Izim's Peak was more than a simple fortress: it was a sanctuary of some sort dedicated to an obscure deity of the past. It was held by an order of warriors, very reclusive, the Guardians. Izim was one of them, the most famous and probably the last, because in the end the Valk managed to take the peak and kill all the defenders, to the last man.*

SPUR THE HORSES!

While you are thinking about what to do, you spot a cloud of dust at your back. You try to see better and...

By Hordan's tits! They are Gouras' men, and they are galloping toward you! They are least thirty. You hear their war cries while they are getting closer and closer.

"You cannot escape," Gouras says, a wry smile on his scarred face. "Let me go and I'll spare your lives."

When the bandits come near, it is clear they are too many for the party to fight, especially now they are in open country. Their only chance is spurring the horses to reach the Peak before the bloodthirsty bandits catch them!

The run for the Peak is a Chase of Standard length (5 Rounds). The maneuvering Trait is Riding. The characters involved are the heroes and a small vanguard of bandits: one group of bandits per hero. Each group is made up of three bandits.

Each bandit group is considered a single entity for the purposes of the Chase and makes a single group roll. If it is wiped out, another one quickly takes its place (two rounds later).

During this scene don't use the standard Complications rules; instead, each round an event happens, as described in the Peak Chase Table (see below).

Bandits' Tactics. The brigands try to attack the heroes, or, if they are at Medium or greater range, they shoot the horses (Toughness 8). Remember to apply the Unstable Platform modifier (-2).

Yvanna and Gouras. For simplicity consider Yvanna "linked" to a hero. The girl moves and acts with him (the adventurer makes a single Riding roll, which counts for both). Also, Gouras is linked to a character, but the bandit's chief tries to slow down the party in any way he can, causing -1 to Riding rolls.

Unhorsed! A character may be unhorsed. In this case, a comrade can go back to save him. To do this he must give up any other action in the round (apart from the Chase roll) and must make a Riding (-2) roll. In the case of success, he manages to swing the companion up onto his saddle. From this moment on, only the savior rolls on the maneuvering Trait (with -2 due to the extra weight) but both heroes can act on the same Action Card. The savior is awarded a Bennie for his heroism.

At the end of the fifth round, go on with the next scene.

(E) Zandorian Bandit (3 per Hero). See page 46.



(E) Yvanna (1). See page xxx.

(WC) Gouras Ghan (1). See page xxx.

PEAK CHASE TABLE

Round 1 – Arrows Flying! While the heroes were starting to move, the bandits had time to aim with their bows; luckily for the party, there is also a lot of dust kicked up by the horses. For this round only, the ranged attacks of the bandits receive +2 to the roll, but, if the heroes are acting on a red card they receive the protection of Medium Cover (-2), offsetting the bandit's bonus.

Round 2 – Treacherous Ground! The bleak area the heroes are crossing now is full of holes, stones and other insidious obstacles which could be very dangerous for the mounts. For this round only, use Notice in place of Riding as the maneuvering Trait. In addition, if a character rolls a 1 on the Notice die, regardless of the Wild Die, it means his horse trips. For an Extra this means automatic unhorsing and being eliminated from the Chase, while Wild Cards can make a Riding (-4) roll to avoid being unhorsed (see above).

Round 3 – Fissure! There is a large crack in the ground, just in front of the party. The only thing to do is try to cross it, by making the horse jump! Before the Chase roll, each hero must make a Spirit roll. In the case of failure the rider loses his confidence and stops the horse, which must go around the crack, losing precious time; this round, the character doesn't roll on the maneuvering Trait. In the case of success the horse jumps over the obstacle (run chase as normal), while with

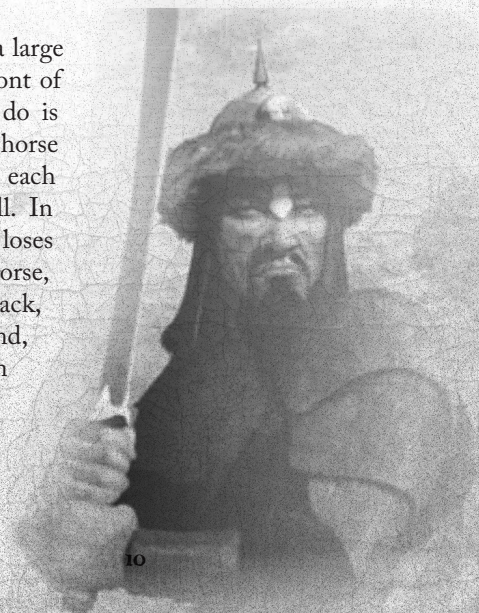
a raise or more the jump is so agile and quick that the hero receives +4 to the Chase roll.

Round 4 – Mind Gouras! The bandits' chief has waited for the right moment to escape, and that is now; the prisoner spurs his horse wildly, trying to break free from the hero leading the mount. Make an opposed Riding roll between Gouras and the character leading his horse. If Gouras wins, he doesn't break free, but the hero holding the reins suffers -2 to Riding rolls for the current and next round. If the hero wins, Gouras' attempt fails miserably, and the character receives a Bennie.

Round 5 – As Fast as You Can! The peak is very close now, the ground is flat and without obstacles, so this is the moment to push the horses at maximum pace! In this round, for each success and raise on the Chase roll the heroes (only them) receive two additional Action Cards instead of only one.

SAFE OR TRAPPED?

The horses are spent now, covered in sweat and



frothing, but you have arrived at the peak's base.

You frantically look for a path for the top of the hill and you find one: it is a narrow and steep trail, which snakes up the scree. It is wide enough for a single man on foot, but there is no space for the mounts.

You hear the shouts and curses of the bandits, while arrows fly over your heads.

Ask the characters what they want to do; in their current position, their only chance of safety consists of abandoning the horses and defending the top of the Peak.

A Quick Decision. If the party hesitates at leaving the horses behind, tell them the bandits are almost on them.

If this isn't enough, start counting down from ten to zero, slowly.

If you reach four or less before the players decide to flee up the Peak, during the Climb (see below) they'll face two additional bandits, if you reach zero they'll face four more.

THE CLIMB

Sooner or later, the heroes abandon their mounts and go up the trail, but the enemies on their heels don't give up.

The trail is even worse you supposed: little more than a fissure between rocks and stones. It's treacherous and dangerous, it would be very easy to provoke a rockslide or to fall down and get hurt.

Gouras' men don't give up.

"Stop dogs, and fight like men!" you hear them shouting at your back.

A small vanguard of bandits has dismounted and is now following you up the trail, while the others, at the base of the peak, are bringing down a hail of arrows upon your heads.

You must get rid of the pursuers as soon as possible!

Luckily for the party, the Peak itself can be used to eliminate the opposition; the party only has to make some boulders roll to create a rockslide and bury the enemy under a pile of rocks. Obviously you must be quick in such actions, so the entire process is treated as a Dramatic Task, based on Strength (-2), which can use co-operative rolls. For each success and raise, one of the bandits is smashed by a big stone.

The heroes have five rounds at their disposal, at the end of which they must fight any survivors. Enemies start at 2d4" from the party and the entire battlefield is considered Difficult Ground due to the stones.

(E) Zandorian Bandit (1 per Hero). See page 46.





PART 2

THE BATTLE OF IZIM'S PEAK

ON THE PEAK'S TOP

Breathless, you arrive on the Peak's top, while you still hear the shouts and curses of the bandits at the base of the hill.

Around you there is a small ruined building, occupying all the available ground. It is a round structure, a dozen paces wide, with very thick walls, tall as two men. The upper floors collapsed long ago and only the ground floor is accessible, even though covered by a thick layer of rubble. There is no roof, except the sky. The only access is a narrow opening in the wall, large enough for

two men, which makes this place easily defensible.

You regroup inside, ready to fight, but the bandits hesitate in following you; from this position, in fact, you could easily hold against an army.

You are safe, at least for now, and can catch your breath.

The heroes have some respite: they can tend their wounds (consider the Golden Hour as starting now), look around and assess the situation.

The Peak is very steep on every side, and made even more inaccessible by boulders and stones; the narrow trail used by the heroes is the only way to reach the top easily. Climbing among the rocks is possible, but dangerous and surely very noisy; any assailant coming this way will be easily spotted.

Unfortunately these are the only advantages of this place; there are no other exits and, more importantly, there are no springs or other water sources, so withstanding a long siege is not viable.

Exploring the Peak. There isn't much to investigate in this place, apart from the peculiar engravings on the walls, depicting armored warriors leaning on large, unsheathed, swords. There are twelve of them, every one very similar, spread evenly around the perimeter of the building, like the hours on a sundial; the entrance is at six o'clock.

The engravings are ruined, and the faces unrecognizable, but with a Knowledge (Legends and Lore) or Knowledge (Religion) (-2) roll the characters gather the following information.

Success. This place must be a sanctuary of some forgotten cult. The armor depicted in the engravings is typical of the Zandorian warriors of various epochs: the oldest ones date to five centuries ago, while the most recent ones are from immediately before the Valk wars.

Raise. While the armor in the engravings is different, the sword is always the same: a long, two-handed weapon, weirdly shaped, which isn't typical of this country. It has a Tricornian design, a very strange thing given how far Tricornia is from Zandor.

One of the engravings, the one placed at twelve o'clock, hides a secret passage, but it is blocked and well-hidden, so it cannot be found at the moment.

Yvanna. The daughter of the merchant is a strong woman; a weaker person wouldn't have endured the cutthroats's mistreatment, but she is still shocked and stays away from the others, curled up and with eyes filled with terror. She doesn't trust anyone and jerks if touched by a man. The heroes can try to calm her down and gain her trust. This doesn't require any rolls, just some good role-play. If a player manages to calm her, he gains a Bennie.

Trapped. The characters are safe, at least for now, but they are also trapped. There is no exit from this place. The bandits soon understand this, and they encircle the Peak, preparing for a siege. They are only part of the band, but before dusk the rest of them arrive. All together the marauders are about sixty in number.

Gouras, if allowed to talk, tries to persuade the adventurers to let him go, promising to spare the party's lives (a promise he obviously has no intention of keeping).

The party could last for a week by rationing food, but water supplies are more limiting, sufficient only for two days, maybe three.

Nevertheless, at the moment there isn't much the characters can do, except keep an eye on the bandits and settle in for the night.

THE DREAM

Surely the party will decide to keep watch overnight: a single person is enough to hold the door, while the others can

sleep huddled against the walls or on the rubble-covered ground.

The accommodations aren't particularly comfortable, but the characters are very tired, and soon they all fall asleep, any sentinels included! All the heroes must roll Vigor. Characters failing the roll are Shaken when they wake up (see next scene).

This isn't a natural sleep, but part of the dark enchantment surrounding the Peak. The heroes experience a collective dream in which they relive the final hours of the Battle of the Peak (see What Happened Before), from the point of view of the last surviving Blade Guardians.

In this scene the GM must try to make the transition between reality and dream very subtle, so that the players won't be fully aware of being in a dream, till they wake up.

Read or rephrase the following paragraph.

You are pacing the battlements on the top of the sanctuary, in the night. The heavy armor marks your bodies, because for many days you haven't been able to remove it. Your ritual swords rest in their sheaths, now, but they are encrusted with the blood of your enemies.

You are doomed, and you know this very well: the sanctuary's walls will protect you, but not for much longer.

Izim, your leader, a tall man with a tired, soot-covered face, points to the bonfires littering the plain below.

"It is the Valk horde. They made camp at the Peak's base," he says "They'll wait for nighttime to attack again."

You are few now, your brothers all dead. You sneaked outside the walls to recover the Valk arrows from their bodies, because any shaft can be useful, but you couldn't recover their bodies for a proper burial in the underground chambers. You know very well that when you use the stairs to the subterranean level again, it will be to retreat, because the Valk will have taken the upper floor.

"Mylord," a comrade, Azar, the youngest of your brethren, says to Izim. "We can still save ourselves. You know how! Wield it! Use it against them! It was forged for that purpose!" A strange light shimmers in the eyes of the young warrior, dressed in burnished armor, like yours.

"We cannot," Izim answers, shaking his head. "Our task is protecting it, not using it. It was imprisoned here for a reason. Using it will unleash far more death and destruction in the world than the lives saved by using it."

The players have the chance to interact with Izim and Azar during this scene, trying to understand what is happening and where they are; let the players ask their questions and look around (the sanctuary is still intact, in this moment), but, to keep interest high, reveal the least you can, and, more importantly, avoid saying what the mysterious thing hidden in the sanctuary is.

When the players seem well immersed in the situation, surprise them.

Azar is going to answer Izim's words, but you don't hear him. The sentinel at the door suddenly shouts: "They are coming!"

You must fight.

THE BATTLE

The collective dream ends abruptly, and the heroes wake up with a start.

Suddenly you wake up from your sleep on the rubble. The sentinel, (insert the name of the character on guard here), shouts almost the same words as the dream: "The bandits are coming!"

You must fight.

The sentinel of the party wakes up just in time to see a group of bandits, who exploited the darkness to climb up the trail and are going to charge, hoping to catch the heroes flat-footed.

Like the Blade Guardians centuries ago, the heroes too must fight on the Peak in a desperate situation.

The battlefield is the peak's top, a roughly round area 18" wide. In the middle of it there is the sanctuary itself, a circle 9" wide, surrounded by a 2" thick wall. Counting the sanctuary as a clock face, there is a single access point, an opening 2" wide, placed at six o'clock.

A trail, 1" wide leads from the southern border of the battlefield to the sanctuary's entrance.

The entire battleground, except the interior of the sanctuary and the trail, is Difficult ground.

The heroes start the fight wherever they want within the sanctuary. The sole exception is the sentinel, who must start near the entrance. Although Yvanna and Gouras are present, they are unimportant during this scene, so don't place them on the battleground.

The assailants are divided into two groups.

The first group, the one spotted by the sentinel (two thirds of the bandits plus the Lieutenant), is coming up the trail. Place them on the trail within 3" from the southern border of the battlefield.

Unbeknownst to the heroes a second group of bandits (the remaining third), left the trail and took a wide detour. Now they are 3" from the wall of the sanctuary, eastward of it (i.e., at 3 o'clock). Don't place them on the battlefield till the party discovers them. This group will take a round to reach the wall, and a second round to climb over it. At the beginning of the third round they will be on the top of the wall (2" high) and, if nobody has noticed them yet, they will be on Hold.

The fight goes on till the bandits break and retreat; this happens when at least two-thirds of them are defeated or the Lieutenant and half of them fall.

But tonight's nasty surprises are only beginning.

(E) Zandorian Bandit (2 per Hero + 2).
See page 45.

(H) Bandit Lieutenant (1). Use the stats of the Zandorian Bandit, adding the Command and First Strike Edges. He is a Henchman. See page 45.

TERRAIN, PROPS AND SPECIAL RULES

- **Among the Stones:** The ground surrounding the sanctuary, as well as being Difficult ground, grants Medium (-2) cover to whoever crosses it, but also causes -2 to all Stealth rolls, given the high chances of disturbing stones and rabble.

• **Cloudy Night:** The moon is full tonight, but clouds run fast in the sky. Unless the characters have other light sources, visibility on the battlefield shifts continuously. At the beginning of every round, consider the color of the highest Action Card drawn: if red, the moon is shimmering, and there is normal light; if it is black, clouds temporarily cover the face of the mistress of the night, and the battlefield is in Darkness.

• **Defend from Above:** The trail is very steep for the last few steps, and this helps the defenders. A character placed in the entrance of the sanctuary receives +1 to Parry and Fighting rolls against an opponent outside. The modifier is doubled in the case of fighters on the top of the walls' remnants, fighting against climbers.

A DAGGER ON THE NECK BEATS TEN SWORDS

You drove the bandits away! The surviving marauders turn back and flee, running down the trail. For now you are safe, and the Peak is still yours.

But it is just when you are about to cheer that the situation changes abruptly.

A harsh voice at your back speaks. It is Gouras Ghan. "Well, you beat my men, but now you'll do what I say or this tender girl will die here, tonight!"

You turn and are surprised to see the bandit chief free. He exploited the furious moments of the battle to break the ropes

tying him. And this isn't the worst thing: he must have found, or maybe he always had on him, concealed, a dagger – and he is holding it to Yvanna's throat.

The girl, imprisoned in his arms, watches you with eyes filled with terror.

Gouras is on the opposite side to the sanctuary's entrance (consider him placed at twelve o'clock, reading the map like a clock face) and is shielding himself with Yvanna, so any attempt to attack him from a distance would be really dangerous for the hostage.

Role-play this standoff situation, making clear to the players that a single wrong move could be fatal for the girl.

When the tension reaches a climax, and the heroes are about to act, or if a deal of some sort is reached, the situation becomes even more complicated.

Read or rephrase the following part, modifying it if necessary.

The bandits' chief narrows his eyes, reducing them to two slits. "You'll forgive me if I don't trust you. Now we'll get away from here, staying very close to the wall..."

Saying this, he leans cautiously on the wall behind him, touching one of the engravings. You distinctly hear a click and the section of wall on which Gouras is leaning suddenly turns on itself, taking the stupefied bandit and his hostage to the other side of the wall!



PART 3: IN THE DARKNESS

The heroes will probably run to the wall, looking for an opening mechanism for the secret door, but this cannot be found; in truth it was the sorcery of the Sword, buried deep in the Peak, which gave the necessary little “push” to the ancient mechanism to work one last time, before locking forever.

The adventurers are in an even worse situation than before now: they have lost the prisoner *and* the girl, and continue to be surrounded by bandits. If the marauders used some caution before, whenever they realise that their chief isn't in the party's hands anymore, they will attack giving no quarter or will find a way to kill them without climbing the hill, for example gathering bushes at the base of the Peak, setting fire to them and suffocating the party to death with the smoke (if this

happens, see the Smoke Inhalation rules of the Savage Worlds core manual).

The only chance for the heroes to save their skin is finding a way to leave the Peak unseen, and, possibly, retrieve Yvanna and Gouras.

The Sealed Stair. An important hint for the escape route is hidden in the strange collective dream the party was experiencing before being abruptly woken up. In it there were clear references to “underground chambers” and “stairs to the subterranean level”. This means that the sanctuary extends into the Peak's depths, and that there must be a passage of some sort, it need only be found.

The first player reaching this conclusion should be rewarded with a Bennie.

The stair entrance is on the flooring, concealed under the rubble.

You frantically dig in the rubble on the floor, bare-handed or with the few improvised tools you have. If the dream you had wasn't the fruit of madness, there must be a passage somewhere. And in the end you find it! Under two feet of debris, there is a large stone slab.

With some effort, in game terms a Strength (-2) roll, or without any roll if the group has some tool which can be used as a lever, the stone slab can be moved away, revealing a stairway, carved into the rock, going deep into the innards of the Peak...

EXPLORING THE PEAK

The scenario supposes the heroes goes downstairs and explore the underground rooms of the sanctuary, looking for Gouras Ghan and his prisoner.

It is a maze of rooms, corridors and passages, which is handled using the Abstract Navigation System (see *GE* page 135).

Each Exploration Turn (15 minutes), the GM picks a card from the Action Deck, called an Exploration Card, and plays the corresponding miniscene detailed below.

Tracks. It's important to note that the stairs found by the heroes *don't* lead to the passage taken by Gouras and Yvanna, so the characters must first find their tracks and then follow them. This means that whenever an Exploration Card is dealt, in addition to what happens in the miniscene, somewhere in the location there are the tracks of the two fugitives.

Spotting them requires a Tracking (+1) or Notice (-1) roll. Once found, the party hopefully will follow them: from this moment on, during each Exploration Turn, the characters make a cooperative roll on Tracking or Notice (-2). With



a success they gain one Advancement Token, two with a raise.

When the party gathers eight or more Advancement Tokens it means they have found Gouras and you can move to Part Four (alter this number to make the scenario shorter or longer).

Light. The underground rooms of the Peak are in Pitch Black condition unless the characters have with them a light source. Luckily, at the base of the stair they find a couple of torches on sconces. Each of them lasts for two hours (eight Exploration Turns) and others can be found in the miniscenes. Keep in mind who has light sources, especially if the party splits.

Marching Order. In several scenes it is important to know the marching order of the characters, so it is good to decide this in advance. Usually the Peak's passages are narrow and movement is possible only in single file.

Redraws. During exploration it could happen that a card is redrawn. In this case play one of the Redraw Scenes (see below).

MINISCENES

DEUCE – SCOLOPENDERS

AMONG THE BONES

You are cautiously going down a flight of steps, when you suddenly stop.

You trampled on something crumbly and crunchy, like dry leaves. You look down, and discover that they aren't leaves, but bones, probably human ones, mixed with the rusty remnants of weapons and armor.

The entire stair is covered with them, as if a terrible battle had been fought in this place.

Suddenly you hear a tapping sound coming from the bottom of the stair, like the drumming of a thousand fingers.

You raise the torch and, in the flickering light, you see a horrible creature coming from the shadows: it looks like an enormous centipede, but it has extremely long claws, covered in yellow ichor, and a nightmarish mouth, fitted with black chelae. The monster bellows and charges toward you!

In this place the Blade Guardians made a stand in their retreat toward the room where the Sword of Izim is kept (see Part 4). The creature dwelling there is a Giant Scolopender, an insect which lives off bones and corpses, which grew enormously in the the total darkness of the Peak. The monster isn't alone: its offspring, smaller but equally hungry, are right behind it.

The battleground is the flight of steps, 3" wide and 12" long on the north-south axis. The heroes are placed in the middle of it. They are going downstairs (southward). The Giant Scolopender starts in contact with the southern border of the battlefield and it simply rushes at the party.

Behind the mother, its children, the Scolopenders of Bones, are wildly chittering in the shadows, ready to join the battle in the second round. They use their Wall Walker Special Ability to engage the party as fast as they can. When the Giant Scolopender dies, the smaller specimens flee. They'll be back later, to strip the flesh off their mother's body.

Among the bones there is nothing interesting, but with a Smarts roll the heroes understand, from the shape of the weapons, that the contenders were Valk warriors and Zandorian soldiers (the latter with armor similar to the ones on the engravings in the sanctuary).

(WC) Giant Scolopender. [See page 41](#)

(E) Scolopender of Bones (1 per Hero). [See page 42](#)

TERRAIN, PROPS AND SPECIAL RULES

- **On a Stairway:** The heroes are fighting on a flight of steps, in an awkward position. When they move upstairs (northwards), they are considered in Difficult Ground.

- **Scattered Bones:** The battleground is littered with bones and debris, making it treacherous. Whenever a character rolls 1 on the Fighting die, regardless of the Wild Die, he is knocked prone and he must roll on Agility or be Shaken. As a partial compensation for this, among the bones there are fragments of weapons, armor and other assorted rubbish. With a successful Notice roll (this doesn't count as an action), the fallen character stumbles on an useful prop (a pointed bone, a piece of a shield or something similar) granting +1 to a Trick (+2 if he scored a raise).

THREE – THE GHOSTS MASSACRE

You are advancing in a corridor, sweeping away large festoons of webs with your weapons, when you hear voices and the sound of clashing weapons coming from a side passage.

If the characters decide to step into the side passage to investigate, go on with the scene. If they prefer going along the main corridor, the scene ends there, but this Exploration Turn the group cannot gain Advancement Tokens because the tracks lead into the side passage.

Cautionously, you cross the dark arch, then the passage turns right and reaches a large hall, where you see an unexpected scene.

On the other side of the room, defending the entrance of a corridor, there are three men in burnished armor, pressed by a dozen warriors, presenting their backs to you. You recognize the assailants: they are clearly Valk warriors, with curved swords and a prancing gait. They are led by a tall woman, with a mane of long blond hair, surely a Valkyria.

“Go on, Sha Mekri’s sons, bring me the hearts of these dogs!” the woman shouts. The defenders close ranks, ready to face the last attack.

The players have few moments to decide what to do: it is clear that the armored warriors, who are the ancient Blade Guardians, have very little chance to survive, unless they are helped immediately. The scene has an unreal aspect: there are no light sources but it is clearly visible, and the clash of weapons is strangely muffled. The reason is simple: these are the ghosts of the ancient fighters, who came back to haunt the halls where they died, due to the progressive awakening of the Sword.

The ghosts can be recognized for what they are with a Perception (-4) or Knowledge (Arcana) (-2) roll or by using the *detect/conceal arcana* Power.

The most likely actions of the characters are the following:

Do Nothing. In this case the Valk ghosts slaughter the Blade Guardians, exactly as happened years ago. The ghosts, dying again, howl terribly. Characters in the room must roll Spirit, with a failure of failure they lose a Bennie. At this point the Valk ghosts also disappear, leaving the room empty.

Attack the Ghosts. The characters can attack the ghosts of the Valk warriors. The opponents can be reached in one round and they have Parry 3 (because they are attacked from behind and are unaware of the heroes' presence). Whenever a ghost is hit, the entire apparition (Valk and Guardian warriors) disappears, but the room is swept by an unnatural cold wind, a real poltergeist, which rains stones and debris on the heroes. Characters must roll on Agility (-2) or suffer 2d6 damage. The hailstorm lasts for three rounds but can be stopped using the *banish* Power (consider the ghosts as having Spirit d8).

Soothe the Ghosts. The characters can try to calm the specters, persuading them to abandon their futile fight. This can be done simply by stepping in and speaking: the ghosts are supernatural beings and can understand any language. The situation is a Social Conflict, based on Persuasion or Spirit (whichever is higher). The possible results are described below.

GHOSTS' SOCIAL CONFLICT TABLE SUCCESES EFFECT

0	<i>Ghosts Get Angry.</i> As Do Nothing above, but the Spirit roll is made at (-4).
1-2	<i>Ghosts Disappear with Disdain.</i> The ghosts attack with the poltergeist (see Attack the Ghosts above), for 1d4 rounds.
3-4	<i>Ghosts Disappear.</i> The ghosts, surprised, disappear, but their presence continues to haunt the area. They are only temporarily soothed, but don't hurt the adventurers in any way.
5	<i>Ghosts are Pacified.</i> The ghosts finally understand the futility of their endless fight, and, free at last, find eternal rest. The hero who spoke with them obtains a Bennie. In addition, by freeing the specters, the power of the ensorcelled blade weakens: in Part 4, reduce the Sword's Spirit by one die step.

FOUR – TRAP!

You are in a hall, long and narrow, with massive stone columns on the long sides. On the opposite side there is a massive gate, which seems to have been broken through by brute force. From the columns hang half a dozen unlit torches.

This room hides one of the defenses studied to slow down any invaders of the Peak. A

few paces beyond the entrance, concealed in the flooring, there is a trapdoor, two yards by two yards. It is very hard to spot, a Notice (-4) roll is required, but the Thief or Treasure Hunter Edges apply.

The trap cannot be jammed or disabled, only avoided (this is easy, once it is spotted). Whoever passes over it (in marching order) must roll a d6, +2 if he has the Brawny Edge or the Obese Hindrance, -2 if he is Small. If the roll is 3 or more, the trapdoor opens, and the victim falls to the lower level. The trapdoor at this point closes, jams and can be opened only with a Repair (-4) roll or by demolishing it (Toughness 12, you need a maul or something similar).

In the meantime, the poor hero is falling: the pit is 20 feet deep, but the adventurer lands on a soft spot, suffering only 2d6 damage. On the ground, in fact, there were several pointed sticks, but over time they have rotted, creating a sort of soft cushion.

The character is now in a small room (in darkness unless the hero had a torch). Soon he discovers he is not the first victim of the trap; near him there are the remnants of the body of a Valk warrior, reduced to old bones and rags. His sword and dagger are rusty, but in his bag there is some flint and steel (which can grant a flicker of light) and a horsehair rope, fitted with a solid-looking grappling hook.

The small room has a single exit, protected by a metal grate. Originally this place would have been a prison impossible to escape, but the bronze bars of the grate are severely damaged and can be broken with a simple Strength (+1) roll.

Alone! The unfortunate character is separated from the party: unless his companions break through the trapdoor

and throw him a rope, he is on his own. This means he is considered a separate party for Abstract Navigation purposes, and he is dealt Exploration Cards independently from the others. Obviously he and the other party members can try to join up again; this means that at the end of the Exploration Turn both the group and the solitary hero must make a Smarts (-2) roll: if, in total, they score at least two successes and/or raises, they re-join. When this happens the solitary hero is awarded a Bennie for the relief of seeing his friends again.

FIVE – THE BAT-INFESTED STORAGE ROOM

You are crossing a large hall, flanked by deep, dark arches. Probably it is an abandoned warehouse, now empty, and your steps resound with strange echoes. You hear the sound of dripping water, somewhere not far away.

Ask the heroes to make a Notice roll, based on hearing. Characters with the Danger Sense Edge roll with +2. In the case of failure, the adventurers are Surprised in the coming scene, with a success they feel uncomfortably watched (so they avoid surprise), while with a raise they also see something else: dozens of small, red eyes, watching them hungrily from the dark arches (in this case the party begins the scene on Hold).

After few moments they hear the sound of dozens, then hundreds, of small paws: it is a horde of hungry rats, ready to attack the party. The heroes can stand and fight or flee. In the second case the scene is a Chase, based on Agility, of Standard duration (5 rounds).

The warehouse, 6" wide and 14" long, has two doors, positioned on the two opposite

short sides. On the long sides there are three niches per side (for a total of six), 2" by 2" wide, and separated by 2". The heroes begin the fight in the middle of the warehouse, while the rats begin in a random niche (roll a d6, but not more than two Rat Swarms can be in the same niche). The warehouse is empty, with no props of any sort.

In the room there is nothing of interest, but, if the party defeats the rats, they hear more clearly the sound of dripping water, not far away. If the group decides to follow the sound, the next Exploration round, with a Smarts roll which can be cooperative, instead of drawing a card to decide the scene, they automatically find the Spring (see corresponding miniscene).

(E) Swarm of Rats (1 per 2 Heroes).
[See page 44.](#)

SIX – THE SMITHY

You recognize this place as a smithy even before stepping inside, given the smell of soot coming from it. In the center of the room stands a massive bronze anvil, and, scattered around, lie old smithing implements, long abandoned. Opposite is the forge, large enough to cook a whole cow inside. The chimney is partially collapsed, filling the base of the forge itself with debris.

The smithy was razed by the Valk a long time ago; the raiders took whatever they could carry away. Only the anvil was left, due to its weight. The only interesting thing in the room is the forge. It is tall enough for a man to walk inside, and looking up through the flue you can see, far away, the sunlight. The flue is sufficiently large to allow a character to squeeze through it, but it is also a death trap; the walls are very brittle and damaged (a Perception or Climbing (+2) roll reveals this clearly).

If a hero wants, he can try to escape from the Peak through this chimney, making Climbing rolls, but he is doomed to fail; while the adventurer climbs up, the GM must describe the conditions of the flue as worsening foot by foot.

On the first round of climbing, the GM rolls a d4; with a 1 on the die the flue wall crumbles under the incautious adventurer's hand and he falls down, suffering 1d6 damage. The second round the wall collapses with 2 or less and the climber suffers 2d6 damage, and so on. At the fourth round the flue breaks automatically and the victim suffers 4d6 damage. After the collapse, the flue cannot be used anymore.

In the room there is another interesting thing; if the heroes search the debris at the base of the flue (before an eventual collapse) they find a big iron smith's hammer, perfectly preserved. The man using it would have been a real giant (use the maul stats, see Savage Worlds core rules).

SEVEN – THE SPRING

Even before hearing the water sounds, you smell the fresh, sweet scent of running water, which reminds you how dry your throats are. Guided by the gurgling, you locate the spring; it is a small rivulet dripping from a stone mouth carved in the wall, which fills a small, moss-covered basin at its foot.

The spring's water is fresh and good, a real blessing for the heroes after the recent days of privation and rationing. If the characters drink at their ease, they immediately feel better and recover a Fatigue level. If they are wounded and wash their cuts and bruises with this

water, they can make another Healing roll, as if still in the Golden Hour.

EIGHT – THE CLOSED GRATE

The corridor where you are now is abruptly blocked by a solid-looking iron grate. From the other side of the corridor you see the wheel of a winch placed in a wall, which was probably used to raise and lower the grate. Unfortunately the wheel is beyond your reach. If you want to go on in this direction you must find a way to pass this obstacle, otherwise you must go back.

There are a various ways to pass the grate.

The first is destroying the bars of the grate; each of them has Toughness 10 and the characters must break at least three of them to create a passage large enough to let a man pass. Each attempt requires 10 minutes of time and proper tools (like the maul found in the Smithy).

Another way consists of hooking the winch's wheel with something, for example a rope, and rotating it. This is a long and difficult task, requiring three Throwing (-2) or Agility (-4) rolls, because every time the rope must hook the wheel, and make it rotate by a third. Every attempt requires one minute. Optionally the winch can be easily activated using the *telekinesis* or *legerdemain* Powers.

Finally the third method, the easiest one, consists of locating the *second* winch, concealed near this part of the grate, which allows raising the grate: one of the large stone blocks of the wall is false, it is a simple stone tile which can be removed, revealing a small winch encased in the wall. Spotting the winch requires a Notice (-4) roll, applying any modifiers for the Thief and Treasure Hunter Edges.

If the heroes don't manage to pass the grate, they lose an Advancement Token and cannot gain other ones during this Exploration Round.

NINE – THE HALL OF VAMPIRES

This large, dark passage, is flanked by a double line of stone statues, one rank per side, as if offering a symbolic honor guard to the people crossing the corridor. The statues aren't new; they represent the same armor-clad, sword-wielding warriors you saw in the sanctuary, only better preserved. The roof here is very high, so that you cannot see the end of it, deep in the darkness. While you go on, cautiously, you feel the cold and implacable stares of the stone guardians on you.

This room hides a danger, but it isn't what the heroes suppose. The statues are disturbing, but totally harmless. The real danger is hidden high, in the darkness of the roof, where a colony of Vampires, giant-sized bloodsucking bats, dwells. They are very territorial, aggressive beasts, and are going to ambush the party.

If the heroes are watching the floor (you can take this for granted if they are following the tracks of Gouras and Yvanna), they find strange droppings – bat guano, in large quantities, which can be recognized with a Survival or Tracking (-2) roll. If at least one adventurer is successful on the roll, the party is alerted and doesn't have to roll for Surprise (see below).

The battleground is a narrow and long room 3" by 12", on the east-west axis. At roof level (6" high) there is a large cornice, 2" wide, running all around the room. In the center of the northern side, the cornice widens in the wall, creating a niche 4" by 3".

The beasts' den is right there, in the niche, and the pups are there too, hungry and waiting for food, while the adults are placed on the cornice as the GM sees fit.

The cornice is in Pitch Darkness, so unless the party has a way to light up the roof, don't place the minis of the monsters on the battlefield initially, wait until they come out of the darkness and remove them when they go back into it.

The bats wait until the heroes are in the middle of the corridor before plummeting on them.

If nobody found the guano, the party must also roll for Surprise. During the first round the beasts attack normally, while from the second round on, they try to grab a prey and drag him off to the nest, especially Shaken targets, leaving the pups the task of dispatching them.

When they have captured two preys, the Vampires don't attack anymore and are content to stay on the cornice, well protected, and defend the nest from any assailants.

Lucky Helm. After dispatching the Vampires, by searching the nest it is possible to find, among the bones of the unfortunate victims, a horned helm, slightly dented. It is a standard open helm (+2, 50% chance of protecting against a blow to the head). It didn't work very well for the previous user, but the first person putting it on will find it very comfortable. In game terms, the owner can use it up to three times to make a Soak roll, as if he had spent a Bennie. After the third use, the helm is damaged beyond repair.

(E) Cavern Vampire Pup (1 per Hero). [See page 41.](#)

(E) Cavern Vampire (1 per Hero). [See page 40.](#)

TERRAIN, PROPS AND SPECIAL RULES

- **"I am Coming to Save You!":** One or more heroes could be captured and taken to the bats' nest, then their comrades must go and save them. This can be done by climbing the wall. Two Climbing rolls are needed to reach the cornice. Using the statues as handholds, the rolls are made with +2. With a rope and a grappling hook it is possible to reach the cornice in a single round: a Throwing roll is necessary to set the hook, followed by a Climbing roll, applying multi-action penalties. Being attacked while climbing causes -2 to Parry and to Fighting rolls.

- **The Cornice:** This is smeared with bat guano and littered with bones and other disgusting things, which make it very slippery. Any character rolling 1 on the Fighting die, regardless of the result of the Wild Die, slips down! An Extra automatically falls, while a Wild Card clings to the border of the cornice. He can regain solid ground with a Strength (-4) roll, which can be cooperative.

- **The Statues:** Each statue is ten feet high, and posed on a plinth two feet and half tall. They can be represented on the battlefield as 1" by 1" obstacles. There are twelve statues in total, six on each side of the corridor, equally spaced.

TEN – THE MOLD-INVADEN LIBRARY

You are in a large hall, probably a library of some sort, filled and crammed with books and scrolls. Unfortunately all these precious relics are severely damaged by the passage of time: a thick layer of mold and mushrooms grows on the shelves and the sturdy lectern placed

in the middle of the room. An eerie light illuminates the room, and you need some moments to understand that the source is the mushrooms, which shimmer in the darkness. In particular, on the lectern, you see some very weird ones; they look like monstrous eyes growing on greenish peduncles, staring at you with malevolence. A strong, penetrating smell lingers in the room.

The Order of the Guardians of the Blade was dedicated, apart from protecting the bewitched Blade, to the preservation of knowledge. Some of the books kept here came from far-away countries and on some of them there are traces of mushroom spores from the countries where the books were written. With moisture deriving from the abandonment, mold bloomed, infesting the entire room.

With a Lotusmastery roll the strange-eyed mushrooms on the lectern can be recognized. They are a very rare and precious plant, the Ebony Lotus of the Dragon (see sidebar).

With a raise, another type of Lotus is recognized, much more dangerous for the heroes: the strange white mold on many of the books is an infestation of the dangerous White Lotus of Graves, typical of the Cairnlands. These plants are very sensitive to noise, and in presence of loud sounds they release clouds of toxic spores. In game terms, moving in the room requires Stealth (+1) rolls. In the case of failure by someone, the molds emit a cloud of spores and all the heroes in the room must roll Vigor (-2) or suffer a level of Fatigue due to coughing and chest pains provoked by the substances contained in them. Protecting the mouth and nose (for example with a piece of cloth) grants +2 to the roll. This Fatigue can be recovered with a Healing (-2) roll, otherwise it lasts till the beginning of Part 4.

HERO'S JOURNAL: EBONY LOTUS OF THE DRAGON

This peculiar Lotus owes its name to an old legend, according to which when the famous Kyrosian hero Syros, founder of Syranthia, killed the last dragon of Keron, the blood of the monster, dripping on the ground, blossomed into these strange mushrooms, in which lives the terrible breath of the beast.

The Ebony Lotus can be used in two ways: by rolling on Lotusmastery, with a dose of mushrooms you can create a burst potion (trapping: an explosion with green flames and smoke), even if you don't know the Power.

Otherwise, if you know the Power, each dose of mushrooms can be worked into two doses of a special Refined Lotus, which, apart from the standard use (see GE page 93) grants +2 to damage rolls of any Power with flame or explosion-based trappings.

The Ebony Lotus of the Dragon can be sold for 300 Moons per batch.

Crossing the room requires a single Stealth roll. Going to the lectern, picking up the Ebony Lotus of the Dragon and going back requires two rolls. On the lectern there are enough mushrooms for three doses of Ebony Lotus.

JACK – THE BROTHERHOOD'S TOMB

While you are going along an empty corridor, you notice something out-of-

place on a wall: an iron ring, consumed by rust.

If the heroes go straight on, they can skip this encounter. Instead, if they decide to examine the ring, they discover that it is the handle of a stone door, cleverly concealed in the wall. Pulling the ring, a large stone slab opens with a shrieking sound, revealing what follows.

You see, in front of you, a room of unpolished stone, totally devoid of any decoration, apart from a massive stone block, the size of a large table, in the center of the room. On the opposite side of the hall you see another stone door, very similar to the one you have just opened.

This room, in truth, is a tomb. The walls are covered with thick panels of stones, fixed on the wall with iron rings. If a hero looks at them, with a Smarts roll he understands their use: they are burial cells, each hosting the body of one of the last Blade Guardians, dressed in his armor and armed with his ceremonial blade. The stone block has a memorial function: it is very simple and undecorated, but on it there are carved dozens and dozens of names, to remember the dead brothers.

In the room lingers a peculiar energy – characters with the Danger Sense Edge can roll on Notice (-2) to feel that there is something definitely dangerous in this place: the souls of the dead, made restless by the progressive awakening of the Sword.

Unless the party leaves immediately, something terrible happens 1d6 rounds after the first adventurer entered the room (the roll is made secretly by the GM).

Suddenly you hear a loud crash behind you: the stone door from which you came in bangs closed! Immediately afterwards, you hear a low, repeated sound: thuds, coming from behind the stone panels, as if someone, long entrapped, is trying to break out of them!

The Blade Guardians, awakened by the heroes' presence, are emerging from their tombs, to attack the party.

The battleground is the whole room, a square 12" by 12", with two doors, 1" wide, placed in the middle of the east and west sides. The Altar of Names (see below) is 1" by 2" and must be placed in the center of the room.

The characters begin the fight in locations chosen by the GM (based on the actions of the characters in the moments immediately before the fight starts).

At the beginning of each round, before dealing Action Cards, roll a d4-2: this is the number of Guardians that manage to exit from a tomb, up to the maximum number written below. The Guardians start the fight in contact with the wall. To determine their position roll first a d4 (1 indicates the north wall, 2 the east wall, and so on, going clockwise), then measure 1d12" from the top to the bottom of the wall (or from left to right) and place the monster in this position. A Guardian can act the same round he emerges from the tomb.

In no event will the undead follow the party outside the room.

(E) Ancient Guardians of the Blade (2 per Hero). [See page 43.](#)

TERRAIN, PROPS AND SPECIAL RULES

• **Altar of Names:** This prop has a special meaning for the undead, because their names are carved on it. A character standing on it receives +1 to Parry and Toughness against the attacks of the Guardians. A character with an Arcane Background other than Lotumastery, with a Spirit roll, feels the energy flowing in the block.

• **The Doors:** Both doors are blocked by an invisible force, which expires only when all the Guardians are defeated or returned to their tombs (see below). The adventurers can try to pry them open, using the Dramatic Tasks rules. They must roll on Strength (-4), any characters outside the room roll with +2. The *dispel* Power, opposed by an arcane skill of d8, allows opening the room without any problem.

• **“Protect Till Death”:** The Blade Guardians, despite being dead, are still bound by the promises they made in life, in particular by the vow of their order, which is expressed in their motto “*Protake Mek Tanat*” (“Protect Till Death”). If the heroes know this (see The Corridor of Tapestries below) and say it aloud, they make a Persuasion roll, opposed by a group Spirit roll of the Guardians. For each success and raise, one Guardian retires and goes back to sleeping in his burial cell. The roll can be made multiple times, but the first time the heroes miss the Persuasion roll the words’ power breaks and doesn’t work anymore.

QUEEN – THE SWORD’S SEDUCTIONS

You are sneaking in darkness, weapons in hand and eyes open, ready for anything...

Pick a random hero. The Sword (see Part 4), now perfectly awake from its long sleep, chooses him as its new bearer, and tries to seduce and win the adventurer to its side.

The chosen character, and only he, starts hearing a strange voice, soft and persuasive, speaking in his mind and making him daydream. The phrases said by the Sword are listed below, but the GM is invited to custom-tailor them to the background of the hero to whom they are said: the demon dwelling in the Sword, in fact, probes the mind of the adventurer and knows exactly what to say to tempt him.

In the course of the mental conversation with the Sword, the hero must make three Spirit rolls, opposed by the Sword’s Spirit (normally d10 with a Wild Die), using the Social Conflict rules. An attitude of particular interest for the Sword’s proposals or docility from the adventurer applies a penalty ranging from -1 to -4, while role playing the opposite attitude, aggressiveness and refusal, applies a bonus from +1 to +4.

SWORD’S SEDUCTIONS

1. *(The hero sees in his mind an extremely beautiful woman/man, the face cloaked in shadows.) “Come to take me... I am waiting for you!”*
2. *(The hero sees himself, covered in blood. He wields a two-handed sword, engraved with runes, while he walks among piles of dead enemies.) “Together, nobody can stop us, your enemies will be mown down like ripe wheat!”*
3. *(The hero has a clear vision of the back of one of his oblivious companions). “Kill him! Kill everyone and come to take me!”*

SWORD'S SEDUCTIONS TABLE

SUCCESSSES

EFFECT

- 0 "Kill Them All!" The hero is totally enthralled by the Sword's whispers. The adventurer is under the control of the ensorcelled blade, as if dominated by the *puppet* Power. The domination lasts for 1d4+2 rounds (the GM rolls secretly), during which the character attacks his friends! The first strike, depending on the circumstances, could get the Drop on the victim.
- 1-2 "I Am Coming!" The adventurer is partially controlled by the Sword, but, rather than attacking his friends, he decides to run toward the place where the cursed blade lies! The hero runs recklessly into the darkness, and his comrades must roll on Spirit (-2) to avoid being surprised. In the case of success, they can try to stop the maddened hero in some manner, otherwise the fugitive gets away: draw an Exploration Card and play the miniscene only with the fugitive. His companions arrive on the scene after 2d4 rounds (assuming he is still alive!). At the end of the new scene the Sword's mental control of the hero breaks, but the adventurer feels very tired (suffers a level of Fatigue); this lasts till the beginning of Part 4.
- 3-4 "Get Out Of My Mind!" The hero manages to resist the enchantments of the Sword, and after a while the visions end.
- 5 "I Am Stronger Than You!" The hero's will is stronger than the cursed blade's! Not only does the hero resist its enthrallments, but answers with disdain and determination. Never, in many centuries, has the Sword met a similar iron will: the adventurer gains a Bennie, and the Sword, shaken by doubt, has its Spirit die reduced by one step till the end of the scenario.

KING - HULIAN'S ALTAR

The only entrance to this room is a peculiar door of wrought iron, narrow and tall. Spying through the metal bars of the door, you see, in the flickering light of the torches, a small room whose walls are covered with banners.

On the opposite side of the room stands an anvil-shaped altar. The whole room was ravaged and desecrated in every possible manner: the altar was damaged with a maul of some sort and covered in filth, the banners were torn and someone wrote obscene symbols and words, probably in blood, on the walls.

This room, as any hero coming from the lands of the Iron Empire knows, was a small temple of Hulian, as they were built before the cult was merged into the Divine Couple. It is quite a discovery, because Hulian worship, in this form, was outlawed centuries ago.

In truth this isn't so strange: Hulian has always been a demon-fighting deity, and the supernatural evil nature of the Sword is clear. The Blade Guardians worshipped the Smith God, and this temple brought peace to the souls and the minds of the countless warriors who spent a good part of their lives in the Peak.

The temple was desecrated by the savage Valk, who missed something important: immediately behind the altar, fixed in the wall, there are two metal torch supports. In their fury the barbarians destroyed everything, but they didn't discover that the two supports can be rotated. Spotting this detail requires a Notice roll (-4 if the players declare they are searching all the room, without penalty if they focus on the back wall of the temple), the Thief and Treasure Hunter Edges apply.

On rotating the supports in opposite directions (the left one clockwise, the right one counterclockwise), a faint click is heard and a section of the wall slips silently aside, revealing a small room. Inside, in vases, coffers and strongboxes, is kept the material wealth of the order, largely in jewels and gems. The party can take however much they want, there is enough wealth for everybody in this place! The only limiting factor is weight, they are almost all cumbersome objects, in game terms 100 Moons worth of jewelry weighs one pound.

ACE – CORRIDOR OF TAPESTRIES

You are in a long, wide corridor. A strong smell of mold assaults your nostrils, and you quickly find its origin: on the walls hang two large tapestries, one on each side, big enough to cover the entire space. The one on the north wall is totally covered in mold, and you cannot recognize anything on it, while the other one, on the south wall, is dusty, but well preserved. The corridor ends in an opening which goes on into the darkness.

The tapestry on the south wall summarizes the story of the Order of the Blade Guardians in a series of pictures.



Starting from the right, you see a star falling from the sky, followed by a shepherd who finds, among the stone fragments, a great rune-engraved sword. The next scene shows a war leader, probably a king, brandishing the blade high, at the head of an army, ready to battle. A figure, maybe a brother or a close friend, is visible near the king. In the scene immediately after, the battle is ended and the king's brother lies on the ground, with the big sword planted in his chest. The king kneels near him, weeping.

In the next scene the Peak appears for the first time, and there are hundreds of men building the sanctuary on the top. The story goes on with the king entering

in the sanctuary and placing the sword on an altar. The tapestry ends with a last scene: the sword's altar is protected by a group of men in burnished armor, the same the party saw in their dream: they are the Blade Guardians, sworn to its defense and protection. They are armed with swords similar in design to the blade they are protecting and one of them holds a banner, on which is written a motto in ancient Zandorian: "*Protake Mek Tanak*" meaning "Protect till Death". A Knowledge (History) roll is necessary to translate it, but heroes of Zandorian origin can read it with a Common Knowledge roll. This phrase could save the party's life in The Brotherhood's Tomb scene (see above).

The tapestry hides a secret door, but to find it the cloth must be lifted and a Notice (-2) roll must be made. The secret passage leads near the Hall of the Blade (see next part). In game terms, if the heroes go through it, they immediately gain two Advancement Tokens.

JOKER – THE CLUE

When the Exploration Card drawn is a Joker, draw another one immediately and play the relevant scene. During it, at a point chosen from the GM, a random character makes a Notice (+2) roll. In the case of success read what follows:

You casually spot a shimmering object in a small crack of the flooring. You pick it up: it is one of Yvanna's earrings! The girl must have lost it while being dragged away by her captor, or maybe she let it fall deliberately, to leave a track for you. Whatever the cause, they cannot be far away from you.

If the heroes haven't found Gouras' tracks yet, they automatically find them. If the

party was already on the tracks, the next two Tracking rolls are made at +2. The hero who made the lucky find is rewarded with a Bennie.

REDRAWS

In this section are some scenes to be played if the heroes draw an Exploration Card already used. Simply play the first scene at the first redraw, the second scene at the second, and so on.

FIRST REDRAW— GOING AROUND IN CIRCLES

This corridor looks familiar: you have the impression of having already passed through it, maybe in the opposite direction. Hordan's tits, this place is a damned maze!

The heroes returned on their steps without noticing it. In the next two Exploration Rounds, in addition to the required rolls, they must make a Smarts (-2) roll, which can be cooperative. If they fail, they cannot gain Advancement Tokens, because they are going around in circles. The roll can be avoided if the players find an ingenious way to overcome the problem (for example, put marks on the walls, leave a trail of breadcrumbs and so on).

SECOND REDRAW – “EVIL EYES IN THE DARKNESS”

Pick a hero, and ask his player (only him) to make a Notice roll. Regardless of the success or failure of the roll, read the following:

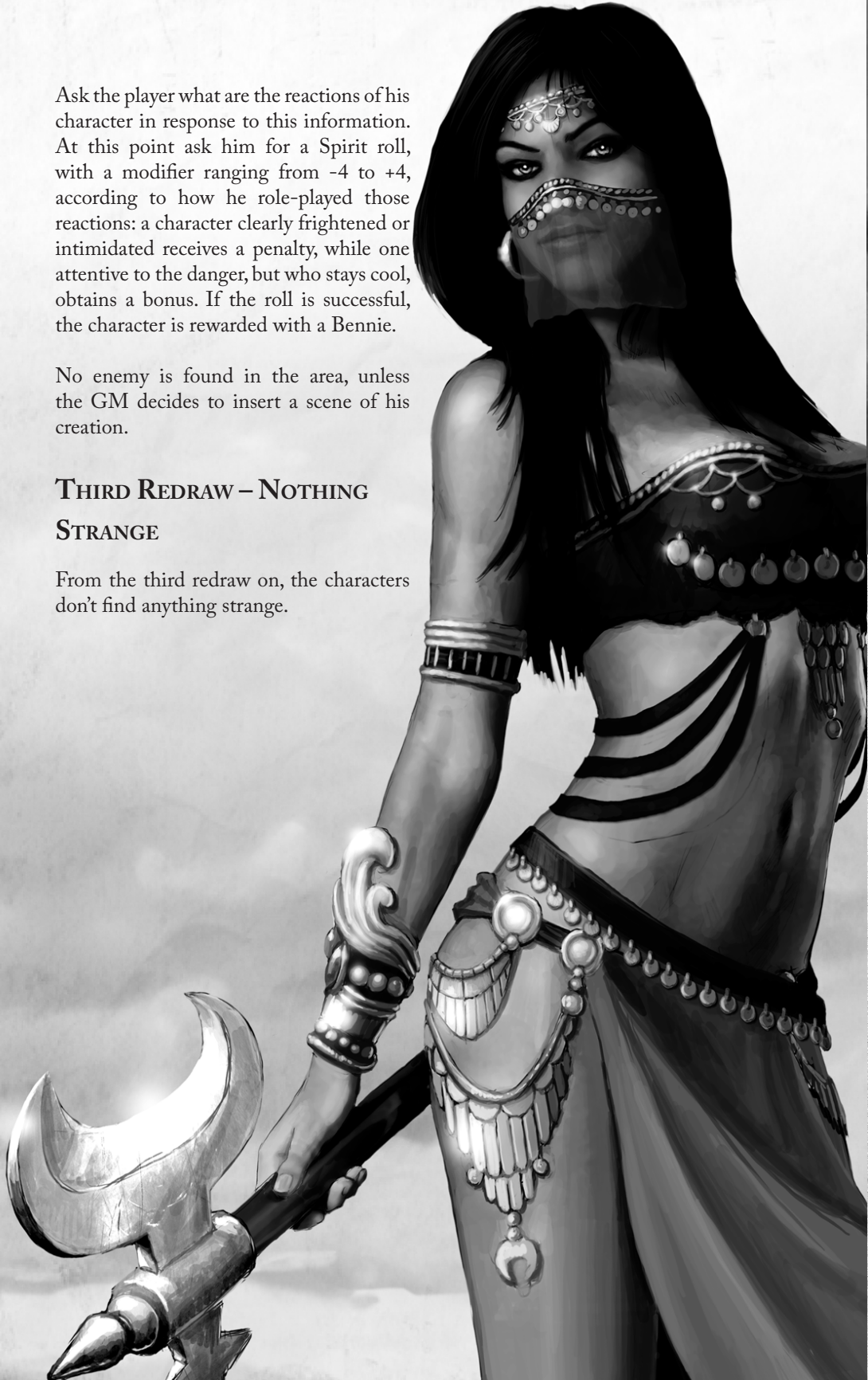
You are with the others, in darkness, when you feel a thrill on the back of your neck. Something or someone is watching you.

Ask the player what are the reactions of his character in response to this information. At this point ask him for a Spirit roll, with a modifier ranging from -4 to +4, according to how he role-played those reactions: a character clearly frightened or intimidated receives a penalty, while one attentive to the danger, but who stays cool, obtains a bonus. If the roll is successful, the character is rewarded with a Bennie.

No enemy is found in the area, unless the GM decides to insert a scene of his creation.

THIRD REDRAW – NOTHING STRANGE

From the third redraw on, the characters don't find anything strange.





PART 4: SWORD OF BLOOD

HONOR AMONG THIEVES

Finally you spot the flickering light of a torch, not far away, and you step into a large hall.

Somehow, you understand you are in the heart of the Peak, the most important room of this strange sanctuary.

In the past, this place was probably the scene of a ferocious battle. Skeletons lying in death embraces stare at you with empty sockets. Maybe in this very

place the last, heroic defenders of the temple made their last stand against the Valk invaders.

Sitting with his back against the remnants of a crumbled altar, lies the body of an ancient warrior, holding in skeletal fingers a big sword, with a red gem encased in the hilt, shimmering like freshly spilled blood.

You recognize him because he wears the same armor you saw in your dream: he is Izim, the last Guardian.

If the heroes saw the Sword painted in the Corridor of Tapestries, or fell victim to the Seductions of the Sword, they recognize the blade as the same weapon. The cursed blade seems almost alive.

On the altar, immediately behind the body of Izim, there is a bunch of old bones and skins, probably the remnants of a horse, butchered by the Valk in some dark rite.

In the room, which has no other exit apart from the one you came from, are Gouras Ghan and Yvanna. They look battered and tired, but the Wolf of Zandor is quick as a panther in reacting, and in no time he has the dagger's point at the girl's neck.

"Stand back!" he orders.

The situation is similar to the one which happened in the sanctuary some hours ago – Gouras has a hostage, and the party cannot intervene without endangering her. But, unlike before, this time there are no doors or secret passages through which the fugitive can escape.

Run the standoff as a pure role-playing moment. If a character is intrigued by the horse's remnants on the altar, with a Knowledge (Arcana) roll, the hero understands they were used as part of some ritual magic. Using the *detect arcana* Power grants extra information: the altar, the body of Izim and the sword he wields are under a powerful evil spell. With a raise it is also revealed that the magic will strike whoever touches the blade or Izim's body.

Let the tension grow, then go on.

You hear heavy footsteps behind you.

The gods aren't on your side tonight: a large group of bandits is at the room's entrance. Probably the cutthroats discovered you left the sanctuary unguarded, got inside and tracked you down through the Peak.

They wield bows, and are aiming at you.

"It's about time, dogs!" Gouras swears, relieved to see his men.

But if the gods aren't on your side, they aren't smiling on the bandit chief, either.

A man, enormously fat and with oiled hair, steps out from the newcomers' group. You recognize him: he is called Talik and is, or at least was, the Wolf of Zandor's right arm.

"Gouras, your days in command have ended!" the fat man shouts, waving the scimitar.

"Now the Brothers obey me!" he continues, spitting saliva. "Hand over the girl and tell us where you hid our loot, and maybe we'll let you live!"

At these words, the other bandits, who seem to have found another leader, shout their approval.

And you are right in the middle of all this.

THE BLADE'S SLAVE

You see a number of emotions passing over Gouras' face: surprise, disbelief and, finally, hate.

"Talík, you son of a swine! You want the girl? Come and get her!"

With a sudden movement, the bandit throws the girl in front of him, and lowers his hand to grab the big sword from the lifeless hands of Izim.

"Stop him!" Talík shouts.

And arrows start flying.

We are at the final battle of the scenario, where a lot of things are going to happen! Before placing the minis on the battlefield and handing out Action Cards, ask the players what they are going to do, making clear that arrows are flying in the room and they are in the middle of it all.

If the heroes duck for cover, they simply suffer the effects of Suppression Fire (see Savage Worlds core rules). If they decide on something different, like trying to stop Gouras before he grabs the sword or protecting Yvanna, they receive a ranged attack at short range from a Bandit (Shooting d6, 2d6 damages).

They have no time to do what they specified, but they should be rewarded with a Bennie for the intention.

Go on reading.

Gouras, heedless of the arrows, grabs the sword, holding it with two hands. But he hasn't time to raise it over his head before a wail comes from the bones on the altar, and a green flame strikes the Wolf of Zandor!

Gouras Ghan collapses to the ground, shouting: "My eyes! I am blind! I am blind!"

The big blade, abandoned, falls on the ground, ending up a few inches from Yvanna's hand.

The girl, without even thinking, closes her hand on the hilt.

At this point inhuman laughter is heard - from Yvanna's throat.

Everybody stops, shocked.

The girl stands up. She isn't the defenseless, young damsel you saved from the bandits' claws. A perverse grin animates her face, and her eyes are two black wells of madness.

"Finally, after so much sleep, blood to quench my thirst!" she proclaims, in a baritone voice which cannot be hers.

The great sword in her hands howls its joy, satisfied, the red gem on the hilt shimmering with unholy light, while Yvanna, or whatever has taken her place, pounces on you!

The battlefield is a rough, irregular square, 15" by 15". There is a single entrance, an arch 3" wide on the east wall. In the center of the room is the broken altar, while scattered around the room are large areas of debris (see below).

Yvanna, the Slave of the Sword, begins the fight standing near the altar. Gouras Ghan, prone and Shaken, lies on the ground within 2" of her.

The Bandits, with Talík in front of the others, must be deployed in the entrance's arch or within 2" of it.

The heroes begin the fight in the area between Yvanna and the Bandits, if possible at least 2" from both groups.

The fight about to happen is a savage melee: Talik and half of the bandits attack the heroes, the others go against the girl.

“Blood to Quench My Thirst!” The Slave of the Sword attacks in a totally random way. If the Action Card on which she is acting is black, she attacks the nearest bandit, otherwise she engages the nearest hero. A chosen target is pursued until he is killed or he flees at more than 6” away from the Slave. When that happens, the next Action Card of the Slave decides the new target.

The bandits, if possible, first try to disarm Yvanna (see *Savage Worlds* core rules), but when the Sword falls to the ground, it uses its Dark Lure power to obtain a new slave.

The only way to defeat the ensorcelled sword is destroying the gem socketed in the hilt (see sidebar). When this happens, go to The End.

(E) Zandorian Bandits (2 per Hero). [See page 45.](#)

(E) Gouras Ghan (1). In this battle Gouras is a simple Extra. In addition, from this moment on he permanently receives the Ugly and Blind Hindrances. [See page 42.](#)

(WC) Talik the Bulky (1). [See page 44.](#)

(WC) Slave of the Blade (1). [See page 42.](#)

TERRAIN, PROPS AND SPECIAL RULES

- **Desecrated Altar:** The altar upon which the Sword was kept was the

object of a powerful ritual of Valk sorcery. Harmela the Valkyria sacrificed a stallion upon it and used the life force of the beast to create the magical trap which blinded and scarred Gouras Ghan. Even after the spell triggered, the altar remains rich of energy. A character with the Sorcery Arcane Background who is within 6” of the altar can freely use the 10 Power Points still present in the altar. When he does so, his damaging Powers also receive +2 to damage rolls. But the sorcery on the altar is very evil: magical Backlash occurs on 1-2 on the Sorcery die, instead of the normal 1. The altar is 2” wide and 3” long on the battlefield and grants Medium Cover (-2).

- **Debris:** The battlegoround is littered with debris, rubble, parts of skeletons and so on. Every debris zone is Difficult Ground, grants Light Cover (-1) and is rich in stones (Str+d4, Range: 3/6/12) and other Small Improvised Weapons. To represent them on the battlefield you can use Burst Templates: place up to three Small, two Medium and one Large, each at least 2” away from the others.



THE SWORD OF IZIM

This ancient artifact is a great two-handed sword, apparently of Tricarnian workmanship, forged from an unknown metal. The blade is covered in runes, carved in a strange language, probably Valk symbols, but the meaning is unknown to any living sage or sorcerer.

Socketed in the sword's hilt there is a big, hemispherical gem, deep red, big as a baby's heart. The Sword hosts a Major Demon (see B&B #3 – Green World), whose only goal is killing and feeding on the souls of its victims.

Despite being very powerful, the demon of the Sword must use a human wielder to kill. For this reason the blade developed the capacity to contact and seduce mortals' minds.

The Sword was asleep for a long time, the energy animating it reduced to a few drops, but the violent acts on the Peak's top at the beginning of the scenario woke it up.

The Sword receives an Action Card like any other character, and, if it is wielded by a Slave (see below) the two are considered a single entity.

The Sword has Smarts d8, Spirit d10 and is a Wild Card. In addition it has the following powers and special abilities.

Dark Lure. *If the Sword is without an owner, and a violent event happens nearby (for example a quarrel or a fight), it can make an opposed Spirit roll against a victim of its choice within 12". If the Sword wins the roll the victim uses her next action to move and pick up the blade, becoming, to all intents and purposes, a Slave of the Sword.*

Slave of the Sword. *Wielding the blade is enough to become enslaved by its dark will. The stats of the Slave of the Sword are on page 42. The ensorcelled weapon also grants sorcerous Strength and Agility (the only element which can vary is Toughness, depending on the armor of the actual slave). If the slave is a Wild Card, at the beginning of the Sword's turn he can spend a Bennie to try another opposed Spirit roll, this time at -4. If he wins, he is free of the Sword's influence, but only for the current round.*

Weakness (Gem). *The Sword is made of an alien metal, incredibly strong (Toughness 15) but it has a weak point: the gem encased in the hilt. A Called Shot (-4) is necessary to hit the stone, but it only has Toughness 9. Using a blunt weapon (for example a mace) deals +2 damage. If the gem is destroyed, the demon of the sword is forced to escape, leaving the Dominions forever..*



THE END

The following text supposes the heroes destroyed the Sword, saved Yvanna, and that Gouras Ghan survived, even though blinded and scarred. If these conditions aren't true, change it accordingly.

When the gem of the ensorcelled sword breaks, the world itself seems to disappear: a huge explosion makes you fly around the room, like puppets.

A black wind, inside which you see hundreds, thousands of faces distorted by pain, comes out from the blade and flies whirling, toward the roof, in a chorus of howls.

You close your eyes and ears tightly shut, and, curled in on yourselves, simply wait for it to pass.

When you dare open your eyelids again, you are covered from head to foot in white, chalky dust, coming from the

walls. You look like ghosts. Scattered among the stones and debris you see the broken bodies of the bandits. None of them survived, but you won't lose any sleep over that. You find Yvanna on the ground, her eyes closed, too. You bend over her and hear her heart beating. You gently take the girl in your arms, and she wakes up, coughing from the dust.

Somewhere, someone is complaining "My eyes... I can't see..."

It is Gouras Ghan. It seems the Wolf of Zandor survived after a fashion, but the bandit's face is reduced to a burnt pulp and his eyes are devoid of any light. Well, he doesn't need them to face the executioner's axe waiting for him in Kodra.

Suddenly you understand it is strange you see all this. Your torches got lost in the explosion, you should be in darkness.

But the detonation created a large fissure in one of the Peak's walls, through which some light passes.

Cautiously you crawl out of the Peak using this providential exit.

Outside it is dawn, and you enjoy the caress of the sun on your face.

REWARDS AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

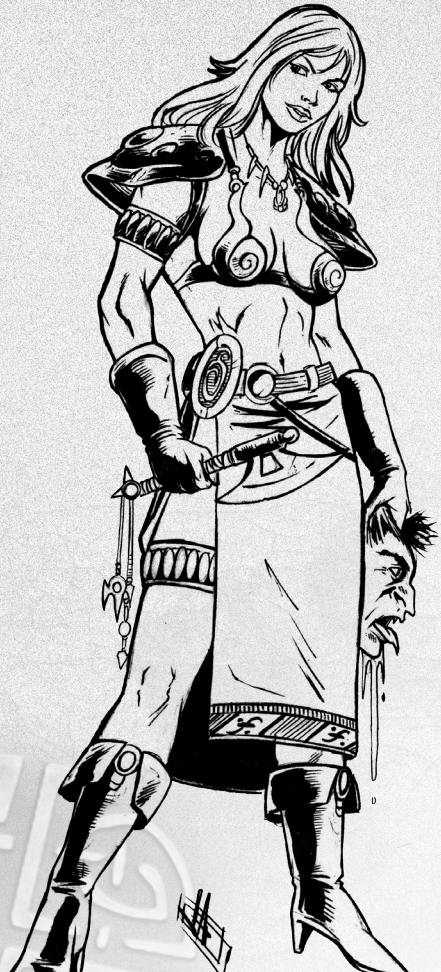
Once outside the Peak the heroes can find horses and provisions at the bandits' camp, which is now abandoned: the explosion and the howling of the freed souls was heard from miles away and this frightened the surviving bandits, who quickly fled.

After reaching Kodra, the characters will be rewarded with the bounty for Gouras Ghan (3000 Moons, half that if the Wolf

of Zandor is delivered dead) and Yvanna's father adds other 2000 for the joy of hugging his daughter again. In particular, the hero who saved the girl from the dark powers of the Sword receives an additional Bennie at the beginning of the next scenario.

There is also another option: Gouras Ghan, blind, defaced and doomed to the gallows, could reveal to the heroes where he hid the loot of his former band, in exchange for his freedom, of course.

Surely the ill-gotten gains are hidden in some dangerous place, and recovering it won't be easy, but this can be the subject of another adventure...





CREATURES AND NPCs

ANCIENT GUARDIAN OF THE BLADE

This dessicated shell, dressed in ancient armor and a tattered cloak, hosts the restless soul of a Blade Guardian. Faithful to his task in death as he was in life, he fights without emitting a single sound, making him even creepier.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 6/5; **Toughness:** 9(2)

Gear: Ritual bronze sword (Str+d8), burnished medium armor of the Order (+2), rotten wooden shield (+1 Parry, +1 Toughness vs. ranged attacks).

Special Abilities

- **Fear:** The simple sight of an undead requires a Fear check.

- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to rolls to recover from being Shaken, doesn't suffer additional damage from called shots. He doesn't suffer Wound modifiers and is immune to poison and illness.

CAVERN VAMPIRE

This giant bat probably belongs to the same animal group as the Pale Shadows (see *Beasts of the Dominions*). Gifted by nature with sharp claws and teeth, it is a cunning predator. Usually it lives off small mammals and insects, which it devours still alive, but it isn't shy of bigger prey. The Cavern Vampire is slightly smaller than a man, but has a noticeable wingspan.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8.
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities

- **Bite or Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Fly:** Cavern Vampires fly with Pace 6 and Climb 1.
- **Lifting:** A Cavern Vampire can lift a prey of Size -1 or less by winning an opposed Strength roll. If the roll is successful, the beast flies away with the prey, with two levels of Encumbrance. Two or three Vampires can cooperate to lift the same prey: for each additional Vampire, add +1 to the liftable Size of the victim, up to Size +1, and the beasts make cooperative rolls to lift. Shaken victims suffer -2 to the opposed roll.
- **Night Sight:** Cavern Vampires, being bats, ignore any penalty for darkness.

CAVERN VAMPIRE PUP

An immature specimen of Cavern Vampire. Not to be underestimated.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8.
Pace: 3; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Special Abilities

- **Bite or Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Night Sight:** Cavern Vampires, being bats, ignore any penalty for darkness.
- **Ravenous:** This beast is growing up and is frenzied with hunger. In the presence of blood (if there are characters wounded or Shaken by a wounding effect within 6") it receives +1 to all Fighting and damage rolls.
- **Size -1:** The Cavern Vampire Pup has the same size as a dog.



GIANT SCOLOPENDER

This creature is similar to an enormous centipede, but with longer limbs. The ones near the head have mutated into horrible pincers, used by the beast to kill its prey, after stunning them with its poisonous bite. This specimen is the biggest and oldest of the brood, and grew uncontrollably, devouring its brothers and sisters first, and then its own offspring. It is milky white, because it has never seen the sun, except the pincers, which are pitch black.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6.
Pace: 9; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (1)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +1:** Thick, chitinous carapace.
- **Bite:** Str+d4. The bite of this creature delivers a nasty poison. A character Shaken by a wounding effect or wounded by this creature must roll on Vigor (+2) or suffer a level of Fatigue. Multiple doses of poison can lead to Exhaustion and even to death.
- **Horrible:** This creature is so hideous that a Fear check is necessary the first time it is seen.
- **Size +2:** This creature is as tall as a big dog and ten feet long.
- **Wall Walker:** The Giant Scolopender has a number of limbs and can use them to climb over any surface, even the most difficult. It need not roll on Climbing, and can even run on walls at its normal pace.
- **Weakness (Light):** The Giant Scolopender is born and grown up in darkness, so it isn't at ease with light. Any Trick or Power based on light receives +2 to opposed rolls, if used against it.



GOURAS GHAN, THE WOLF OF ZANDOR

Gouras Ghan is the son of a Zandorian harlot and a Valk warrior. His scarred face and grim stare reveal the predator in him. Gouras is a ruthless man, a wolf among wolves; from this comes his nickname, which he earned for the wickedness of his actions. He took control of a band of cutthroats with strength and maintained it with cunning, hiding the loot of his pillaging in a secret place, so that his men would not knife him in the back. Gouras is vengeful, but he isn't a fool: he knows very well when he can fight and when he must escape.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Throwing d6.

Edges: Block, Command, Dodge, Quick.

Hindrances: Greedy, Vengeful (Minor), Wanted.

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

Gear: Fur and hide light armor (+1).

Special Abilities

- **Concealed Blade:** Gouras wears armor of furs and hides, fitted with several secret pouches. In one of these the bandit has concealed a blade, equivalent to a dagger (Str+d4). Finding it requires an opposed roll between Gouras' Stealth (+2) and the searcher's Notice.

SCOLOPENDER OF BONES

This giant insect looks like a centipede, but has longer limbs and a couple of long, sharp mandibles on its mouth. It is carnivorous and very aggressive. This specimen is part of the pack of the Giant

Scolopender, and is one of the few which weren't devoured by the mother.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6.

Pace: 9; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d4. The bite of this creature delivers a nasty poison. A character Shaken by a wounding effect or wounded by this creature must roll on Vigor (+2) or suffer a level of Fatigue. Multiple doses of poison can lead to Exhaustion and even to death.

- **Size -1:** The Scolopender of Bones is tall as a small dog but a little more than three feet long.

- **Wall Walker:** The Scolopender of Bones has a number of limbs and can use them to climb over any surface, even the most difficult. It need not roll on Climbing, and can even run on walls at its normal pace.

- **Weakness (Light):** The Scolopender of Bones is born and grows up in darkness, so it isn't at ease with light. Any Trick or Power based on light receives +2 to opposed rolls, if used against it.



SLAVE OF THE SWORD

This man or woman is only a puppet under the orders of the Sword of Izim.

Note: The Traits of the Slave are those of the Sword's demon, while the Toughness depends on the armor worn by whoever is wielding the blade at the moment. The stats below refer to Yvanna, when she is possessed by the sword (the girl wears only some tattered pieces of cloth).

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d8.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7

Gear: Sword of Izim (Str+d10, 2 hands, see below).

Special Abilities

• **Dark Powers:** The Blade Demon has inhuman powers. It has 25 Power Points and uses Spirit as its arcane skill. It can use the following Powers: *armor* (invisible protection), *bolt* (invisible force), *deflection* (flawless parry), *fear* (hellish laughter – centered on the Slave, who is immune to the effects).

• **Demon and Slave:** The Slave of the Sword and the demon controlling him are two different entities, this means they can perform two independent actions each round without any multi-action modifier. Usually the Slave attacks in melee while the Demon uses a Dark Power or tries a Test of Will.

• **Master of the Blade:** Over centuries, the sword was used by dozens of warriors, and killed many more, leeching their souls and skills. The Slave of the Sword can use the Improved Frenzy and Combat Reflexes Edges.

• **Weakness (Gem):** The Sword is made of an alien metal, incredibly strong (Toughness 15) but it has a weak point: the gem encased in the hilt. A Called Shot (-4) is necessary to hit the stone, but it only has Toughness 9. Using a blunt weapon (for example a mace) deals +2 damage. If the gem is destroyed, the demon of the sword is forced to escape, leaving the Dominions.

SWARM OF BATS

Swarms are treated just like a creature. Swarms cover an area equal to a Large Burst Template and attack everyone within it every round. When a swarm is wounded, its size decreases to a Medium Burst Template (see the Split Special



Ability for smaller size swarms). Another hit reduces it to a Small Burst Template and a third one disperses it.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Notice d6.

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities

- **Bites:** A Swarm of Rats inflicts hundreds of tiny scratches every round to its victims, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template. Damage is applied to the least armored location (victims in completely sealed suits are immune).

- **Split:** This swarm is clever enough to split into two smaller flocks (Small Burst Templates) should their foes split up. The Toughness of these smaller swarms is lowered by -2 (to 4 each) and their Agility is lowered by a die step.

- **Swarm:** Parry +2; because the swarm is composed of dozens of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do only half damage. Area-effect weapons work normally.





TALIK THE BULKY

This big, fat man, with a long braid of greasy hair, has lived in Gouras Ghan's shadow for a long time, acting as his right hand. Cunning and clever, in truth he always hated the Wolf of Zandor and he has been waiting for months for the right occasion to seize command of the band from his former chief.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d8

Edges: Command, Dodge, Extraction, Loincloth Hero.

Hindrances: Greedy, Obese, Wanted.

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

Gear: Curved bronze sword (Str+d8), bronze throwing dagger (Str+d4, Range: 3/6/12, +1 to Throwing rolls, -1 to Fighting rolls).

YVANNA

Till a few weeks ago, sweet Yvanna had no idea of the harshness and dangers of the world; pampered and tended by the servants of her rich father's house she never suffered hunger, cold or the cruelty of men. Once she was kidnapped by Gouras' band, she endured the worst a man can do to a woman. Somehow she survived, but something in her broke, and she will never again be the light-hearted, happy girl of the past.

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Riding d4, Stealth d4.

Edges: Attractive.

Hindrances: Damsel in Distress.

Charisma: +2 **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: Pieces of tattered clothing (barely enough for modesty's sake).

ZANDORIAN BANDIT

Pillager, thief, assassin, rapist: all these definitions are perfect for this wary follower of Gouras Ghan.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d4, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4, Throwing d4,

Edges: -.

Hindrances: Greedy, Wanted.

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

Gear: Curved bronze sword (Str+d6), bronze dagger (Str+d4, Range: 3/6/12), bow (Damages: 2d6, Range: 12/24/48), small shield (+1 Parry), dirty and tattered clothes, horse.

Special Abilities

- **Wolf Pack:** While the bandits outnumber their enemies (at least two to one), they feel strong and bold (+1 to Spirit roll), but when they are outnumbered they reveal their true nature as fear-filled dogs (-1 to Spirit rolls).



SOMEWHERE IN THE ZANDORIAN WASTELANDS, THERE IS A LONESOME PEAK, LIKE A GIANT SENTINEL WATCHING OVER A DYING EMPIRE. STORIES SAY THAT IN THE PAST THIS PLACE WAS HELD BY AN ORDER OF WARRIORS, GUARDING SOMETHING BOTH VERY POWERFUL AND VERY DANGEROUS.

TODAY IZIM'S PEAK, AS IT IS CALLED, HAS BEEN DESERTED FOR CENTURIES, AND ON ITS TOP THERE ARE ONLY WINDSWEEP RUINS.

BUT WHO CAN TELL WHAT SECRETS ARE HIDDEN THERE?

WILD RIDES, RUTHLESS BANDITS, COMELY GIRLS AND MUCH MORE AWAIT YOU AMONG THE PAGES OF THE SWORD OF IZIM!

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? GRAB YOUR SWORD, GIRD YOUR LOINS AND JUMP INTO ADVENTURE!



GRAMEL