

With the
SHARK BYTES

Fantasy Issue
I shall rule the World!
Mwa-Ha-Ha!



THE *FANTASY* ISSUE!

Game Master's Section

What We Talk About When We Talk About Games

AlternativePlot Point Kickoffs to Sundered Skies
by Gordon Lawyer.....2

Special Supplement Overview

The Secrets of Goblin Gorge by M.A. Cutter2

I Love an Adventure

Mask of the Magus by Jason Kemp3

Those Meddling Kids!

The Battle of Cutthroat Pass by Theron Seckington.....5

Around the World

Othelmund's Oddities by Ryan Shelton7

Let Me Tell You a Story

The Spark of Life by Brian Reeves11

The Stuff of Legend

Shaintar Legends by Sean Patrick Fannon24

Campaign for my Real Friends

Sticks, Stones & Rail Wars, Pt 3 by Jon Ginsberg.....26

Around the World

Allsburg by Jon Ginsberg32

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NOTE: This is the Game Master's section, so if you're planning on playing any of these adventures, don't look any further! The Player's section has articles anyone can use, along with our other goodies and columns (such as Licensee Corner and Raise the FLA GS) – Marc

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A big special thanks to Cheyenne Wright, who graciously allowed us to use many of his images for this issue, including that kicking cover. Check out his website at <http://arcanetimes.com/>

What We Talk About When We Talk About Games

New concepts, and more detailed or alternative explanations and uses for rules. This month, What if you really like Sundered Skies, but aren't sure if you want to start it as written in the book? Try this instead!

ALTERNATIVE METHODS FOR KICKING OFF THE *SUNDERED SKIES* PLOT POINT CAMPAIGN

by Gordon Lawyer aka "Sitting Duck"

When Sundered Skies first came out, the reaction to the Plot Point campaign was mixed. Some liked it as written while others found it to be not to their taste. Then there were those who, though overall were fine with the campaign itself, had issues with the way it started off. It is this third group for whom this article is intended for.

The primary gripe against the opener is that it can give the impression of railroading the players into the quest. If the GM isn't careful, it could result in a sullen group of players unwilling to get into the spirit of the adventure. So here are a couple of alternate suggestions on how to get the Plot Point rolling.

Prophecies are a good alternative as they can accomplish the same thing as a god bestowing a quest but aren't as direct. Thousands of years have passed since the creation of the Skies, more than enough time for prophecies to have been written and lost. The best way to introduce prophecies of this sort is through a scavenging adventure at some long abandoned ruins. Preferably this will be done after running a few more conventional scenarios. Whether these prophecies come in one handy dandy volume or are scattered piecemeal is a judgment call dependent on what you think will work better for your group. Anyone familiar with fantasy literature knows that prophecies are generally steeped in metaphor, rarely giving a straight answer. If the players have trouble interpreting the prophecies, they can always try to consult the Athenaeum or an independent scholar. A Common Knowledge roll may also be permissible on certain minor passages.

The other possibility works best if one of the characters has connections to the Athenaeum or is a priest to a god other than Festival (as that lot's disrespect for hierarchy could make this a bit problematic). As the Soulshield weakens, arcane types are likely to have dreams and visions of the impending doom with hints of how to stop it mixed in. The players can be hired by the Athenaeum or one of the churches to investigate something implied in one of these visions. Don't be afraid to mix in the occasional dead end, as this can help ward off vibes of excessive serendipity.



Special Supplement Overview

Sometimes we'll get a submission that's too big to put in an issue, as it might seem too unbalanced. This month M.A. Cutter went a little overboard with his submission, providing a massive adventure and accompanying area.

The Secrets of Goblin Gorge

by M.A. Cutter

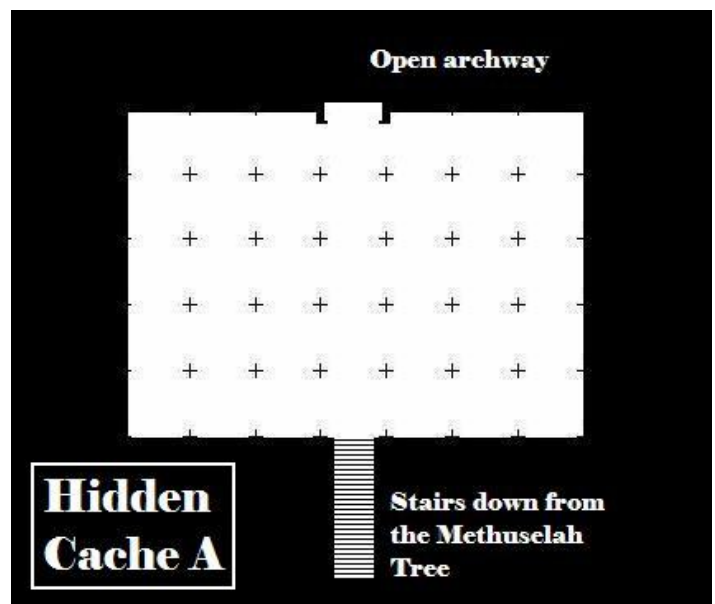
Far from civilized lands, nestled amid the jagged foothills of a lonely mountain range, lies Goblin Gorge. True to its name the high, rugged valley is home to tribes of goblins and their larger, meaner cousins—hobgoblins. These tribes aren't prone to murderous raids or banditry. On the contrary—the goblins of the gorge are gold miners, bartering their wares with merchants who travel a nearby route.

Goblin Gorge is designed to fit into any campaign setting. It is best placed in a remote mountain range, not terribly far from a minor trade route. With few adjustments it could be placed almost anywhere.

...

The story of Goblin Gorge goes back a lot further than its current residents, from whom it gets its name. In fact, it's been known by several monikers over the years.

Originally the area was called the Valley of Three Gods. According to legend, the gorge was formed when a trio of gods—all lords of wizardry—were cast down from their castles in the heavens during some forgotten conflict. Three pillars of flame descended from the sky and smashed into the earth, and when the dust cleared a strange new vale lay revealed amid the peaks.



Want more? Pick it up at Shark Bytes in the downloads section for this issue.

I Love an Adventure

...and who doesn't? Here we showcase short adventures to drop into an existing campaign, or to provide an evening's entertainment. In this issue, we have a compact adventure that would fit well in almost any campaign as a diversion or a quick means of making a little extra cash on the side.

Mask of the Magus

by Jason "Flynn" Kemp

The adventurers must track down a band of brigands and retrieve a stolen relic at the request of an old mage.

An elderly wizard, Magus Sisuthros, requests the presence of the adventurers to discuss a business opportunity. Having heard of their great prowess and recent successes, Sisuthros expresses a desire to hire these heroes to retrieve an item that has been stolen while en route to him. This item is a magical mask, a relic of a bygone era that the magus studies and Magus Sisuthros wishes it brought to him as quickly as possible. The wizard has been able to confirm that the Mask of the Magus had almost arrived in the city when the caravan that brought it was waylaid by the Shadow Talons, a vicious gang of bandits led by none other than Ekarus the Grey. Magus Sisuthros would like to hire the adventurers to lead a group of men-at-arms against the bandits and recover the mask.

Backstory

Magus Sisuthros is not all that he appears. His research does indeed lie in the magic of bygone eras, but his quest is for immortality and power. His magical companion, a fiendish imp, has convinced Sisuthros that the Mask of the Magus will unlock ancient powers within the wizard, which will in turn aid him on his quest. The imp's tale is true in one regard, but when dealing with demons, there's always more to the story. The Mask of the Magus does indeed aid practitioners of the Dark Arts (granting a +1 bonus on spellcasting checks), but taints its wearer with the Curse of Greed, driving the wearer to perform more and more acts of villainy to increase their personal wealth.



On The Road

The adventurers, along with a small group of men-at-arms under the hire of Magus Sisuthros, set out to track down the Shadow Talons. There are a number of ways this can be accomplished. For example, the heroes can attempt to locate the site of the attack and then track the bandits back to their base camp, or consult an oracle for prognostication. Perhaps the most successful means, however, would be to pose as a caravan with something worth taking, and then wait for the Shadow Talons to attack. Alternately, the players may attempt to contact Ekarus the Grey and arrange a meeting that could easily turn into an ambush. The GM is encouraged to work with the players' suggestions and allow their creativity to bring them to the next point in the adventure.

At some point along the road, about half a day's travel outside of town, the Shadow Talons will attempt to ambush the heroes and their small band. As a small group of bandits rush the group, other bandits will fire on them from the concealment of nearby trees and underbrush, hopefully with surprise. The number of archers should equal the number of wild cards on the characters' side, while the number of bandits should equal the total number of wild cards and allies on the characters' side.

Through The Woods

Once the battle is done, the heroes should learn of a game trail hidden in the woods, through tracking or perhaps the interrogation of a captured bandit. The trail is fairly narrow, and requires the adventurers to move in single file. If the party insists on having some or all of its members attempt to move stealthily through the trees beside the trail, treat the underbrush as difficult terrain and apply any appropriate penalties to any Stealth checks as needed.

Needless to say, the Shadow Talons have trapped the trail at various points along its winding way. At the base of a slight slope, the bandits have hidden a covered pit that can be leapt across easily if its location is known. If appropriate, a Tracking roll might reveal the tracks of bandits running down the slope to gain momentum to make the leap, while a Notice roll might detect the presence of the camouflaged pit before someone steps into it. The pit is ten feet deep, and deals 2d6 damage to anyone that falls into it.

Further along the trail, the bandits have rigged a deadfall in an attempt to crush any who set it off. The falling log acts as if it has Fighting d6, and if successful, it deals 2d6 damage, possibly increased by +1d6 should the attack roll of the deadfall achieve a raise.

There may or may not be other traps along the path, at the discretion of the GM.

At the Bluff

After roughly a mile, the game trail opens onto a small meadow on the other side of the woods. Ahead, the heroes can see a small bluff, and the collapsed ruins of a watch tower that once stood atop the hill. During the day, the party may notice the presence of smoke rising from a camp on the other side of the ruins. If it is at night, the party might notice the ruins silhouetted by a large campfire on the other side of the ruins. Three small guard patrols, bandits equally the number of wild cards, protect the perimeter of the camp from various directions. One squad in particular is assigned the duty of watching the game trail and the meadow, waiting for the return of the brigands that the heroes defeated earlier.

Should the heroes be noticed leaving the game trail and crossing the meadow to the bluff, the guards will send one of their number to alert the camp, and fire on the heroes once they reach the base of the bluff and begin to climb. Otherwise, the adventurers must stealthily cross the meadow and climb the bluff without detection.

The Bandit Camp

The bandits camp on the other side of the collapsed watch tower, using the ruins to store their provisions and their ill-gotten goods. Aside from the three squads that protect the perimeter, the camp itself contains a number of bandits equal to twice the number of adventurers and their allies, as well as Ekarus the Grey and Korgath, an orcish shaman that serves Erakus and the Shadow Talons. Should the heroes give themselves away, the Shadow Talons will be ready for a fight; otherwise, it is possible for the heroes to surprise their foes, thus getting the drop on them should conflict arise. Should things go poorly for the bandits, the Shadow Talons retreat into the ruins, and Korgath calls for his animal companion, a brown bear he calls Crusher. Should Korgath fall before he can join his pet, then Crusher waits in the ruins, guarding the accumulated treasure of the Shadow Talons.

All That Treasure

The accumulated wealth of the Shadow Talons is sizable, to say the least. Adventurers will easily find over \$20,000 in a combination of coin and goods, as well as the Mask of the Magus and, at the GM's discretion, other items of interest. If the heroes have not fought Crusher as yet, he is the last guardian of the treasure, and so he must be overcome before the heroes can divvy up the spoils of their victory and deliver the mask to Magus Sisuthros.

Cast of Characters

Ekarus the Grey (Wild Card)

Human bandit chief

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Throwing d8

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 8

Hindrances: Greedy, Mean

Edges: Block, Combat Reflexes, Command
Treasure: Worthwhile.

Gear: Chain mail (+2), long sword (Str + d8), bow (damage 2d6, range 12/24/48, ROF 1)

Bandit (Extra)

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Greedy, Mean.

Edges: —

Treasure: Meager per 5 bandits.

Gear: Leather armor (+1), short sword (Str + d6), bow (damage 2d6, range 12/24/48, ROF 1)

Korgath (Wild Card)

Orc shaman

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

Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Spellcasting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Pace: 6, **Parry:** 6 (1), **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Greedy, Vengeful (major)

Edges: Beast Master, AB (Magic), New Power

Gear: Leather armor (+1), Staff (Str + d4, Parry +1, Reach +1, 2 Hands)

Power Points: 10

Powers: blast, bolt, burst, boost/lower trait

Crusher (Wild Card)

Animal companion – bear

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Swimming d6

Pace: 6, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 10

Special Abilities:

Bear Hug: Bears don't actually "hug" their victims, but they do attempt to use their weight to pin their prey and rend it with their claws and teeth. A bear that hits with a raise has pinned his foe. The opponent may only attempt to escape the "hug" on his action, which requires a raise on an opposed Strength roll

Claws: Str+2d6

Size +2

Those Meddling Kids

This column deals with introducing new players to the wonderful world of Savages that we are. It can be about kids, or just new players in general. This month, it focuses on new players with a complete adventure, including detailed characters provided as a set of one page sheets as a supplemental download.

The Battle of Cutthroat Pass A Demo for Savage Worlds

by Theron Seckington

This adventure was written to showcase the Savage Worlds game system. It is intended for experienced Game Masters who want to run a demo at their FLGS. Therefore, it mostly involves combat. In an effort to make the game more Savage, the PCs are all members of the Army of Shadows, an army of misfits, renegades, and anarchists out to stop the incredibly corrupt Army of the Sun, assembled by idealistic princes but commanded by liars and thieves. This game takes place in a fairly normal “elves and dwarves” style fantasy setting, which should make most new players fairly comfortable.

Six pregenerated characters are available, all with various abilities and tactics available. [ed. note: The basic stats are here. More detailed descriptions of each character are provided as supplemental downloads] The adventure takes place in three parts with very little need for roleplaying or characterization—this is deliberate, as the goal is to show off the system rather than an awesome setting or story. The adventure is written to be run with at least 4 PCs.

Some other notes:

- The characters should introduce themselves (or the players should glance at each other's sheets) before everything starts. They are all soldiers in the same division, so they should know each other and their unique talents fairly well.
- You're showing off Savage Worlds. Bring lots of minis. The last battle features up to 60 or more soldiers.
- Be familiar with every character! This should go without saying. I included a list of unique combat options for every character, so expect them to use at least a couple of them.
- Play to the strengths of the characters, rather than hitting them where they're weak. If this means forgoing your normal bag of GM tricks, do it. After all, you want to demonstrate how cool Savage Worlds is rather than beat them unconscious.
- Introduce one new tactic at a time. Intimidation, Tricks, Wild Attacks, Gangup bonus...don't throw them all at the poor players at once. This is a demo,

not another chance to beat your regular group into a pulp.

- The characters are not in any particular branch of the Army of Shadows. Instead, they are attached to the Unspecified Services, a bunch of troubleshooters who don't have the discipline for the Army proper but bring unique talents or abilities to the fray.
- Hopefully, you are able to get 6 people together. If not, then the adventure requires only the Gekkommin Guide and the Seelie Necromancer to play as written. In the event nobody wants to control these characters, hand out a couple d6s in Tracking and Knowledge (arcana) to the characters they do choose.

Part One: Night Raid

To set the scene, read or paraphrase the following to your group:

You are camped only a day or so's march away from the Army of the Sun. Tomorrow's inevitable battle may decide the fate of the divisions in this region and allow one or the other side to push through to gain a foothold near a more vulnerable front. This battle will probably spell the beginning of the end for either side—so you wish you were resting instead of on second watch!

As they are only one part of a large army, all the characters are on watch. They are around a fire that provides light in a Large burst template. Have everyone who is actually keeping an eye on things make Notice rolls with a -2 penalty for darkness (but remember that some characters have Low Light Vision or heightened senses). Those who succeed hear drunken laughter and are dealt in normally as some Human Rabble charge the group (as per Surprise). It's an ill-planned raid; tell the players their characters have standing orders to take prisoners if attacked.

For this fight:

- **Human Rabble, 2 per PC:** Drunken locals conscripted by the Army of the Sun and emboldened by promises of easy victory.
- The Humans open their doomed raid by charging. They attack on two sides and begin 12" away from the fire.
- For characters without Low Light Vision, fighting in the darkness (or firing into it) incurs a -2 penalty. This includes the attackers, if anyone asks.

After the fight, if the players think to interrogate a raider or bring them to their superiors, the drunk spills the beans pretty quickly (although he thinks he's not doing any such thing):

Heh, I'm not talkin'. I seen the artillery they're going to use, you guys don't stand a chance tomorrow. They'll move

them things close in and just pound you into dust once those wizards get to work on 'em.

If tortured (hey, we never said the Army of Shadows was squeaky clean) the man screams everything he thinks the characters want to hear and doesn't let out more useful information. Other raiders say similar things if they survive; they are all blustering and overconfident. If anyone asks, these raiders were acting without orders—they believed all of the propaganda that the Army of Shadows was a bunch of fearful rabble and got themselves drunk enough they thought they'd take the whole army.

However, this is enough to go on; the commanding officers are able to piece together (if the players don't) that the Army of the Sun has some kind of secret weapon artillery. With this new intelligence, the players are instructed to rest for four hours while plans are adjusted based on all the new information that came along that night—very few of the Army of the Sun's raids were successful.

- The PCs rest up. Wounds from nonlethal damage disappears, 4 PP are regained, and all the players can go get a soda or another iced tea. Healers will patch them up if need be; restore 1 Wound to all the PCs. Don't worry about rolling.

Part Two: Scouting Around

After a few hours rest, the PCs find that the bulk of the Army is preparing to march. The PCs are roused from slumber by a group of Dwarven siege technicians who lead them to their commanding officer. There, they are briefed on the situation:

As you learned last night, the Army of the Sun is fielding some kind of new artillery piece. Unfortunately, we have no further information at this time. Since we can't send the entire army after a secret weapon that a few drunks mentioned, we're sending you lot instead. You are to track where the artillery moved, scout the enemy artillery position, and report back. You're being supported by a handful of Rangers.

Take ten minutes and resupply. Pick up some climbing gear, too, there's a lot of rocks in the area and we don't know where this artillery might be located.

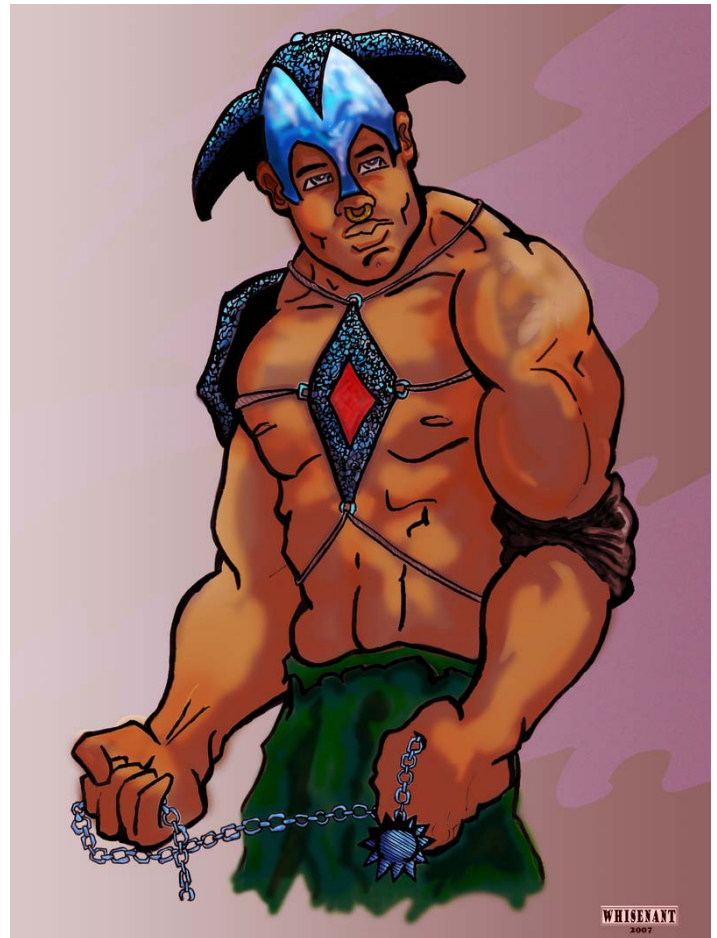
- **Support: 1 Seelie Ranger per PC.** Remember they make group rolls for Stealth and Notice (which is about to be important).
- The PCs are issued more equipment. Restore all their ammunition (including the Assassin's poisons and bombs). They are also given climbing gear which grants a +2 to Climbing rolls.
- The PCs can also request items from the supply master within reason. With some smooth talking (Smarts roll) or appropriate Intimidation (such as threatening the soldier's job), the characters could wheedle a single Power Potion out of him as well

(restores 1d4+1 PP when used).

Once the PCs move out into the field, it's time to start making some Notice rolls to find some of the places the various raiders let slip that would lead to the artillery position. The Guide's Heightened Senses do not apply here, since they're mostly based on smell, taste, and variations in temperature.

A successful Notice roll finds one of the rocky outcroppings that was revealed under interrogation. This is enough to start the Tracking rolls but at a -2 penalty. A success with a raise means the heroes have noticed several of the landmarks they are on the lookout for and are able to begin Tracking without the penalty.

The heroes need three Tracking rolls to find the artillery position. Though they are tracking large artillery pieces, the Army of the Sun's Druids have covered their tracks very effectively. Luckily, the PCs have a native of the area working with them.



Every Tracking roll also crosses the path of a patrol. Have the group make Stealth rolls; with a success, they are able to hide and avoid the conflict or stage an ambush. With a raise, they are able to predict where the patrol is headed and choose their battleground more carefully; arrange terrain so it benefits the PCs a little more. Patrols get the chance to Notice an ambush normally.

Every fight takes place in rocky terrain with substantial cover scattered about. Clever PCs may decide to climb to higher ground or set up traps if they prepare for an ambush. Reward thinkers appropriately.

Patrols consist of the units listed below and carry no appreciable treasure other than a few gold pieces and personal weapons. Remind PCs who want to carry everything to a town and sell it that there's a war going on.

- **Human Rabble, 2 per PC:** Again, these guys are pretty stupid. If half their number is killed, they run away and desert.
- **Dwarven Musketeers, 1 per PC:** These musketeers will fight to the death. Normally one half reloads behind cover while the other half opens fire.
- **Seelie Rangers, 1 per 2 PCs:** If you play any enemies as smart, these should be it. Generally, one tries to get away and report the ambush.
- All patrols are encountered in mixed areas of ruins and natural desolation, so count them as both urban and wilderness terrain as far as the Thief and Woodsman Edges are concerned.
- If any Ranger gets away, subsequent patrols are on Active alert.

The trail leads through to ruins of an ancient bandit stronghold—Cutthroat Pass (both the name of the pass it guarded and the fortress itself). Everyone may make Common Knowledge rolls (-1 for the Guardian, +1 for the Guide) to remember that only 30 years ago a half dozen princes fought a bloody battle to destroy this very stronghold and almost failed because the bandits were able to hold a plateau upon which they'd moved their artillery. It's logical the Army of the Sun had the same idea, but the PCs can't report back until they've actually verified this.

The PCs can follow logic and make a Climbing roll to try to get to a position to observe the plateau, or they can follow chance and make another Tracking roll. Either way, they are able to confirm what they may have suspected: The Army of the Sun has set up six artillery pieces on the plateau.

- The artillery is mostly metal, which is odd, and gleams in sunlight. A Knowledge (arcana) roll or Smarts roll at -4 deduces the artillery pieces are most likely magical.
- Only a dozen or so soldiers are manning the site, which is unusual—siege machines this size normally require large numbers of technicians to operate. In fact, no technicians of any kind are identifiable, but instead a half dozen men and women in robes hustle about prepping the artillery.
- No ammunition large enough for the catapults is on the plateau.

- A Notice roll spots some odd company: A huge man in chainmail, a pair of dwarves, and some sort of elf with a pair of hounds at her side. They do not wear any heraldry that signifies their division, and the soldiers all seem to give them some room. They are noticeably apart from the preparations.

Magical artillery is a matter of concern, and if they brought so little to a battle like this then its purpose must be grave indeed. Time to report back.

Part Three: Turning Tables

Once the PCs give their report, the CO tells them they have 30 minutes to prepare for an assault upon the artillery position. Already, a group is making a diversionary raid on another area to draw patrols away from the artillery position, meaning that no opposition will be encountered on the way.

The CO also informs them that, since so many of the Army of Shadow's soldiers fight well in the dark, the weather wizards have been working on a spell to cloud the skies. Once the sky has turned black, the artillery had best be history!

- **Support: 2 Mountain Giants; 1 Zombie per PC; 1 Dwarven Musketeer per PC; 1 Seelie Ranger per PC; 4 Unseelie duelists**
- Note there's about 1 type of support troop per PC and the Tactician can always summon his own. Divide evenly. Note that Zombie stats are found in the SW rulebook.
- Healers get to work once again restoring 1 wound each. The PCs are resupplied.
- About two hours has passed since the PCs left the camp. Spellcasters get 2 PP back. Additionally, each spellcaster is granted a Power Potion to use as they see fit.
- Again, anything normal the PCs require is given to them.

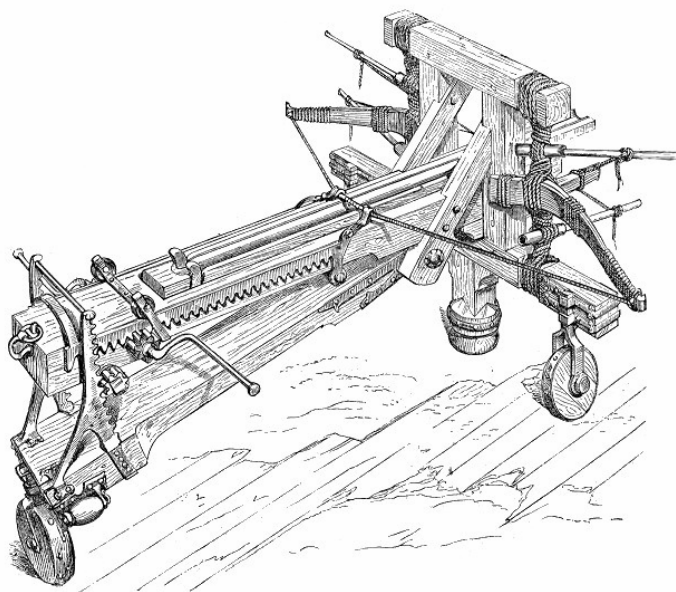
As the PCs take the route the Rangers give to them, they can hear sounds of battle. A few times, the Rangers scout ahead and dash back to steer the PCs on a different path. Finally, they reach the plateau from above; the PCs will need to make a single Climbing roll to approach.

Though their descent is noticed, the soldiers did not really expect an attack from that direction, so unless the PCs have a particularly cunning plan neither side has Surprise.

- **6 Siege Wizards, 2 Dwarven Musketeers per PC, 2 Mageguard per PC**
- **Human Barbarian, Dwarf Gadgeteer, Dwarf Priest, Seelie Ranger Elite**
- The only cover available is the metal siege engines themselves, which provide Light cover but are large

enough to kneel or go prone behind (for full cover).

By the third round of combat, the sky is turning pretty dark. After that round everyone will suffer from a -1 Dim lighting penalty (except those with Low Light Vision, of course). On the fifth round, the catapults begin to shake and grind themselves into firing position! Balls of light begin to form in the bucket which would normally contain rocks to hurl at the enemy. They spark with electricity at anyone who gets too close.



On round eight the catapults are ready to fire, which any surviving siege wizards will attempt to do. The firing mechanism on each catapult is mechanical in nature and could be smashed (Toughness 10) or deactivated using a Lockpicking roll at -1. Disabling the mechanism stops the catapult from firing.

- Once fired, each catapult requires only 4 rounds to recharge and then begin to fire on their own.
- Every magical round that lands opens a short-lived gate into a dimension of fire and madness, destroying nearly a tenth of the Army of Shadows' forces with every hit. A Notice roll allows any group to see this and is good grounds for a Guts check.
- Four hits will rout the Army of Shadows from the field. A good portion of the Army of the Sun's troops are mercenaries, prisoners, or magical creatures, so they don't care about hurling such a destructive force into the midst of battle.
- Players may wish to aim the catapults at the Army of the Sun's reserve. This choice is probably morally unsound, but war's war, right? Doing so requires both a Knowledge (arcana) and a Knowledge (siege craft) roll. This can be a cooperative roll (which is valuable since so many of the PCs will have to default). If necessary, the Dwarven Musketeers have Knowledge

(siege craft) of d6, but they can only take part of a PC's cooperative roll (so that the focus stays on the player characters and not NPCs).

- Firing even a single siege weapon into the Army of the Sun's reserves ends the fight, favor Army of Shadows. The reserves contain many of the wizards and priests that are used to coordinate the large magical assault, so fully one fifth of the Army of the Sun's magical forces go berserk or disappear with the impact.

Aftermath

With the catapults stopped (and possibly with their reserves decimated), the Army of the Sun has lost a major tactical advantage. They can't retrieve their weapons without risk of being flanked, and they can't continue the offensive without the element of surprise. Though the decisive victory everyone hoped for did not materialize, the Army of the Sun's progress is stymied in the region. Not only that, but their callous treatment of local militia and mercenaries has turned a good number of the populace in the area to the Shadow's cause. The Army of the Sun's forces will have a difficult time finding food and other logistical support in the area and, when winter comes around, will be forced to withdraw.

Of course, who knows what could happen in those few months...

As for the PCs, there is no rest for the wicked. As soon as they return, they're given a brief banquet, some gifts, and packed on a transport to their next mission. All part of the life.

Character Quick Reference

Dwarven Guardian (10 XP)

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d10, Stealth d8

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 5 (7 with shield); **Toughness:** 8(2)

Hindrances: Mean, Slow, Vengeful, Yellow

Edges: Low Light Vision, Quick, Tough

Gear: Chainmail Hauberk (Armor +2), Pot Helm (Armor +3 to head 50% of the time), 40 crossbow bolts, Tower Shield (+2 Parry, +2 Toughness vs. ranged attacks; so heavy it subtracts -1 from physical rolls when using; may be set up as Heavy cover to hide behind with one action), Crossbow, Shortspear; Warrior's Brew

Gekkommin Guide (10 XP)

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Guts d4, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Tracking d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Cautious, Habit (subservient), Loyal,

Outsider, Quirk (refuses weapons)

Edges: Florentine, Heightened Senses (+2 to Notice rolls, always Active when detecting Stealth), Natural Climber (+2 to Climbing rolls), Natural Weapons, Two Fisted

Gear: Shield Ring (+1 Toughness), Winged Anklets (+2 Pace)

Notes: Cutthroat Pass and the surrounding areas are where you were raised. You benefit from the Woodsman Edge in this terrain (+2 Stealth, Survival, and Tracking in this area)

Halfling Tactician (15 XP)

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (siege craft) d4, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Taunt d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5 (6 with rapier); **Toughness:** 8(3)

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Outsider, Small, Vow (retain integrity)

Edges: Command, Luck, Lucky, Natural Leader, Spirited, Strong Willed

Gear: Pistol x4, 20 shot+powder, Rapier, Plate Corselet (Armor +3), The Rough Tumbler, flask of whiskey

Notes: When you drink whiskey out of the Rough Tumbler (which requires an action), you summon 4 spectral warriors to your side. These warriors have d6s in every relevant stat, the Low Light Vision ability, and deal Strength+d6 damage with their broadswords. You take a -1 penalty to physical actions due to intoxication every time you do this. This penalty disappears after one hour, and the warriors also disappear when you sober up.

Human Priest (10 XP)

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

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Healing d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6 (7 with shield); **Toughness:** 7(1)

Hindrances: Delusion (life without pain is not worth living), Habit (regularly cuts and flagellates self), Ugly, Vow (holy vows)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Arcane Resistance, Nerves of Steel

Gear: Enchanted Barbed Chain, Healer's Kit (+2 bonus to Healing rolls, 10 uses), 3 Healing Potions (Heals Wound automatically), Crossbow, 20 bolts, Leather Armor (Armor +1), Shield (+1 Parry, +1 Toughness vs. Ranged attacks)

Arcane Background: Healing (wounds stitch selves shut), Stun (pain)

Seelie Necromancer (10 XP)

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d8, Knowledge (arcana) d8, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4 (5 with staff); **Toughness:** 5(1)

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Quirk (obsessed with death), Vow (do not harm the Seelie)

Edges: Agile, Arcane Background: Magic, Low Light

Vision, Wizard

Gear: Leather Armor (Armor+1), Spell components, Fireball scroll (Casts *Blast* in Large Burst Template for 3d6 damage), Staff, Bow

Arcane Background (10 PP): *Bolt* (drains life), *Fear* (chill of death), *Zombie* (no trapping)

Unseelie Assassin (10 XP)

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Throwing d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6(1)

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Arrogant, Cautious, Vow (serve the Queen of the Night)

Edges: Agile, Alertness, Low Light Vision, Quick Draw, Thief

Gear: Leather Armor (Armor +1), Knife, 8 Throwing Knives, 12 doses poison, 2 smoke bombs (casts *Obscure*), 2 flash bombs (casts *Stun*), 2 tanglers (casts *entangle* on a single target), Shadow Garrote, Lockpicks

Skills to use:

Knowledge (arcana) to identify the ammunition

Lockpicking to open the chest which contains some kind of key or wand or something

Climbing to reach the plateau

Allies

Seelie Rangers

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Shooting d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6(1)

Edges: Block, Low Light Vision

Gear: Shortsword (2d6), Leather Armor (Armor +1), Longbow (15/30/60, 2d6)

Dwarf Musketeers

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8(2)

Hindrances: Stubborn

Edges: Musketeer

Gear: Chainmail, Dwarven Musket (10/20/40, 2d8+1, Reload 1 with Musketeer), Bayonet (Str+d6, Parry+1, attached to musket)

Mountain Giant

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Throwing d6

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Frenzy

Gear: Massive Club (d12+d8+4), Throwing Rocks (5/10/20, d12+d4+4)

Abilities:

- **Size +3:** Mountain Giants are big creatures, the size of ogres.
- **Mighty:** All of a Mountain Giant's attacks have AP 1.

Unseelie Duelists

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Guts d10, Taunt d8, Throwing d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6(1)

Hindrances: Vow (martial vows)

Edges: Ambidextrous, Block, Dirty Fighter, Florentine, Quick Draw, Two Fisted

Gear: Leather Armor (+1 Armor), 2 knives (3/6/12, d6+d4), lots of throwing knives (3/6/12, d6+d4, +1 Throwing, -1 Fighting)

The Opposition

Human Barbarian [WC]

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d6, Notice d4, Throwing d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7 (6 with axe); **Toughness:** 10(2)

Edges: Berserk, Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Hard to Kill, Sweep

Gear: Chainmail (Armor +2), Greataxe (2d10; Parry-1; 2 hands; AP 1), Throwing Axes (3/6/12; d10+d6)

Dwarf Priest [WC]

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Faith d8, Guts d10, Notice d6, Shooting d6

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9(3)

Edges: AB (Miracles), Low Light Vision, New Power, Power Points

Gear: Platemail (Armor +3), Battleaxe (2d8), Crossbow (12/24/48; 2d6; AP 1; 1 rd. reload)

Arcane Background (15 PP): *Boost/lower trait* (phantoms aid or hinder the character), *Healing* (ghostly glow), *Smite* (weapon shines like new)

Seelie Ranger Elite [WC]

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8(1)

Edges: Beast Friend, Beast Master, Luck, Low Light Vision, Marksman, Two Fisted

Gear: Leather Armor (Armor +1), Two Shortswords (2d6), Longbow (15/30/60; 2d6), Kep and Hup (battle hounds; use Dog stats but add Armor +1 for barding), Ranger Cloak (-1 to be hit by ranged attacks)

Dwarf Gadgeteer [WC]

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d8, Repair d10, Shooting d8, Weird Science d10

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 5 (6 with buckler); **Toughness:** 7(2)

Edges: AB (Weird Science), Command, Musketeer, New Power x2, Quick Draw

Gear: Chainmail Armor, Pistol x4 (5/10/20, 2d6+1, AP 1, Reload 1 with Musketeer), Cutlass (2d6), Buckler (Parry+1), Weird Science devices

Arcane Background (10 PP per device): *Bolt* (Dragon Rifle, fire trapping), *Dispel* (Arcane Dampener Gun), *Entangle* (Net Launcher; fires 1 barrel for a single target or 4 barrels for Medium Burst)



Dwarf Musketeers

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8(2)

Hindrances: Stubborn

Edges: Musketeer

Gear: Chainmail, Dwarven Musket (10/20/40, 2d8+1, Reload 1 with Musketeer), Bayonet (Str+d6, Parry+1,

attached to musket)

Tactics: Fire volley, move back, reload, and repeat until the enemy is in charging range

Human Rabble

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5(1)

Hindrances: Fated to be killed by PCs (-1 Toughness)

Gear: Heavy Clubs (2d6; requires 2 hands), Leather Armor

Tactics: Run in like lambs to the slaughter

Seelie Rangers

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Shooting d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6(1)

Edges: Block, Low Light Vision

Gear: Shortsword (2d6), Leather Armor (Armor +1), Longbow (15/30/60, 2d6)

Tactics: Case-by-case basis

Human Siege Wizards

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d6, Knowledge (battle) d8, Knowledge (siege craft) d8, Notice d6, Spellcasting d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4 (5 with staff); **Toughness:** 5

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Power Points, Scholar

Gear: Staff (2d4, Reach 1", Parry +1)

Arcane Background (15 PP): *Bolt* (trappings vary by caster), *Fear*, *Entangle*

Tactics: If they have backup, Siege Wizards seek to *Entangle* as many opponents as possible and let better fighters take them out. If they do not, then half will lash out with *Fear* and the other half will pick off targets with *Bolt*. Survive at all costs until the catapults can be fired.

Human Mageguard

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9(3)

Edges: Arcane Resistance, Brave (+2 to Guts)

Gear: Plate corselet (+3 Armor to torso), chain leggings and vambraces (+2 armor to legs and arms), battle axe (2d8), Shield (+1 Parry, +1 Toughness vs. ranged attacks)

Tactics: Plant selves between siege wizards and threats. Pick off any fighters the mages *Entangle*, counting on arcane resistance and courage to fight off their spells. Target spellcasters first.



Around the World

Every city needs a curio shop. Here is a fully stocked one. May I present...

Othelmund's Oddities

by Ryan Shelton

Off a ramshackle backstreet there is an alley where a worn stone plinth memorializes a long-forgotten event. Down this alley is a door marked with the sigil of an owl and an elephant. As you open the door a small bell tinkles, announcing your entry. You are immediately aware of the smell of strange spices, the sound of something bubbling, and the sight of a green smoky haze hovering near the low ceiling. Candles and lamps throw a golden light around the chamber. This is Othelmund's Oddities.

Above the door is the bejeweled skull of some beast you do not recognize. Tucked into its twisting tusks is a small pot emitting the green smoke. Next to the door post is a message writ in antique characters on a mouldering board, "Licsensed to sell weasels and jade earrings" The room is crowded with shelves, cabinets, and trunks. Some of the shelves hold leather bound books with titles in forgotten scripts. On other shelves sit thick jars, their contents obscured by amber liquid and dust. Idols carved from ivory and stone perch on the tops of cabinets filled with musty carpets and tall green bottles. Surrounded by vases, metal boxes and hanging thuribles, a severed hand clutches a candle behind the glass of a cabinet inlaid with gold. The overall effect is one of contained chaos.

As you wander through the shop, two men come through a curtained doorway. The first is one of tallest men you've ever seen. His dark robes and head cloth cover all but his eyes. His companion is a swarthy man whose well-fed belly protrudes beyond his gaudy vest. Bells on his pointed slippers and his red turban jingle as they leave.

A moment later the curtains part again and another man exits the back room. Behind him you hear the faint strains of a stringed instrument. He sees you and begins to walk towards you. His head is barely covered by a cerulean skullcap embroidered with silver arcane symbols. His robes are a dark green. Around his waist are thin belts of black leather, colorful woven fabric, and a thin silver chain. Suspended from each belt are many pouches. His face is lined and partly obscured by a bushy white beard, but his eyes are dark and mischievous.

"Hello," he says. "I am Othelmund Plunkett. How can I help you?"

Othelmund's Oddities is a market place for the exotic and the weird. Entering his shop is like traveling to a strange land. The unusual patrons arrive at all hours of the day and are just as likely selling as buying. He specializes in hard to find items, items with a nefarious past, and items of possible magical properties.

Othelmund Plunkett (WC)

Mysterious shopkeeper

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Investigation d10, Knowledge (Antiquities) d12, Knowledge (Arcane) d12, Notice d10, Persuasion d10, Shooting d8, Streetwise d10, Weird Science d10

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

Hindrances: Curious, Hard of Hearing (minor)

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Charismatic, Danger Sense,

Gear: Dagger (Str+1), Magic wand, powders, and phials.

Power Points: 10

Powers: Armor (magic powder), Blast (wand), Bolt (wand), Conceal Arcana (potion), Deflection (magic powder), Detect Arcana (wand), Light (wand), Obscure (wand), Speak Language (potion)

Notes: Othelmund Plunkett is a special kind of wizard. He has no innate magical ability, save enchanting powerful items and brewing potions. Mechanically, his powers work just like a Weird Scientist.

Below is a sample of the items he may have for sale

Hand of Glory

The severed hand of a hanged criminal, a hand of glory can open any locked door it touches. Also, if a candle is placed within its grasp, it will cast those not holding the hand into darkness. As per the Obscure power.

Thurible of Dreams

A censer suspended from three chains, the Thurible of Dreams causes those not swinging it to fall asleep. After lighting the incense, swing the thurible for one round. Anyone within a Large Burst Template must make a Vigor roll at -2 or fall asleep for 1d6 rounds.

Bottle of Shadow Serum

The contents of this squat bottle are more like a thick oily smoke than liquid. When applied to clothing, Shadow Serum causes the wearer to become cloaked in shadows. The bottle contains enough for three applications. As per the Invisibility power.

Bloodthirsty Oil

When applied to a blade, bloodthirsty oil makes any wound inflicted deeper and more grievous. There is enough oil in the bottle for two applications. Each application provides +1 damage for 5 rounds of combat.



Mouse Tower

This item looks like a tiny model castle. If the owner places the tower on the ground with a piece of bread, a swarm of mice will appear and attack any one foe the owner directs them to. They will continue attacking until they are slain.

Balzan's Scabbard



A shabby looking dagger scabbard with tarnished silver adornments, this once belonged to an infamous assassin. Any size sword may be sheathed in Balzan's Scabbard and the scabbard remains dagger sized. Furthermore, when a blade is drawn, the scabbard hones the edge to razor sharpness. This provides a +1 damage (non-magical for purposes of wounding creatures affected only by magical attacks).

Hamadin's Stirrups

These golden stirrups grant the user the skill of a Hamadin Horse Warrior. They may only be used on a horse. Increase Riding skill by one die type when used on a horse.

Cloak of Ymir

This fur-trimmed cloak comes from the tribes of the northern wastes. It grants the wearer protection from cold and the ability to move freely through snow and ice. +2 to resist the effects of cold and ignore the difficult terrain penalty for snow or ice.

Knife of Peace

The Knife of Peace has a wide three inch blade that appears to be made from obsidian. The handle is jade and has no guard. The blade is enchanted to cut through anything, except flesh. While the blade is short, given time, an persistent wielder could hack through objects thicker than three inches.

Adventure Seed – Delivery

While Othelmund Plunkett often commissions adventurous types to collect specific items, this time he needs an item delivered. The only problem is that there are several groups that know Othelmund is having the item delivered and they will stop at nothing to get it. Because of Othelmund's usefulness in the community and the numerous anti-theft enchantments on his shop, the item is safe until it leaves the store's premises. It needs to be delivered to the manor house of Lord Yann. The lord's estate is 40 miles away. The first and last ten miles of the trip is over well-traveled roads. The middle twenty miles is a rarely used by-way that skirts a dense forest.

Along the way various groups and their agents try to get the package from the heroes. These range from the Cult of Abraxis to the Brotherhood of the Ragged Blade. Just getting out of the city alive could pose a challenge.

Let Me Tell You a Story

Adventures with a lot of flavor text, game stories, or fiction are part and parcel of Let Me Tell You a Story. This issue, Brian Reeves provides a tale of courtly intrigue with a twist.

The Spark of Life

A Savage Worlds Fantasy adventure

by Brian Reeves

Introduction

The Spark of Life is a Savage Worlds adventure designed for fantasy characters of at least Heroic rank. The challenges in this adventure range from roleplaying to combat, and the adversaries are designed to test the characters' very limits. It would not be difficult for a GM to reconfigure the adventure for lower ranks; simply reduce the damage dealt by each monster by a die or two, limit the amount of spellcasting and abilities of Serevalac and his dragon, and cut the number of Magekillers by half.

Places of names and locations can be changed to suit the Gamemaster's needs.

The adventure begins when the characters are contacted by a powerful queen, who beseeches them to discover who among the courtiers has committed a terrible act of theft and murder. Due to restrictions on her part and those of her deputy, she is unable to ask the kinds of questions the characters can. Once the characters learn of the plot underway in the court, they trace the perpetrator back to a mage and his tower, and discover all is not as it seems.

Chapter One: A Message

The characters are relaxing between adventures when they receive an urgent summons from Queen Aldinae, who rules a medium-sized kingdom not far from the characters. Tales of their exploits have begun to spread across the land, and they seem a perfect choice for assistance. The message is delivered by a young squire on horseback, or by falcon, depending on the circumstances. A rolled-up parchment sealed with a red wax seal depicting a unicorn and sword is unfurled to read the note at right.

The squire cannot offer any further information, as he was not entrusted with knowledge even of the contents of the scroll. The city of Tanashere is no more than a few days' ride from where the squire meets the characters. The squire, whose name is Terl, must return immediately and cannot wait for the characters to assemble gear. However, if they are ready to go, he will gladly ride with them.

Squire Terl (Extra)

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d6, Riding d8, Shooting d6, Throwing d4.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

Hindrances: Code of Honor (major)

Edges: Champion

Gear: Longsword (Str+d8), chain hauberk (Tou +2), riding horse, bit and bridle, saddle, bedroll.

My Friends in Light,

*Our introduction is late in coming,
but I have it on good authority
that your team has performed
miracles on behalf of the forces of
honor and righteousness. I call
upon you now with a mission of
such utmost urgency that I cannot
dare to reveal it in this message.
Only know that a dark hour is
upon us, and I fear for my
kingdom and her people. I beseech
you to hurry to my court at
Tanashere palace with great haste.*

Yours,

Queen Aldinae

Copy the note and hand it to the players.

Whether or not the characters journey to Tanashere with Terl, the message of their recruitment has obviously made it to enemy ears. One night from the city, the characters will be intercepted by an assassin summoned to make sure they never reach the palace. This encounter happens as they make their way down the road, though it can be altered to occur at night, in a tavern or campsite, or wherever the characters might be. Read:

The clear skies slowly turn to grey as a cloud bank gathers over the rolling hills. Before too long, you're riding against a cold wind, pulling cloaks up against a steady rain. Water pools in ruts along the road. What before was a solid track

soon turns to a mushy, muddy mess. As you cross a mossy stone bridge over a shallow brook, you suddenly get the strange sense that something is wrong. The hair on your heads literally seems to be standing on end. In that instant, a bright, searing light arcs out of the river and into the wet earth. For the briefest of moments, you swore the energy had a bestial, half-human look to it.

The lightning demon attacks with electric-based attacks. Characters wearing metal armor are particularly prone to these attacks.

Lightning Demon (WC)

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d4, Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Shooting d8

Pace: see below; **Parry:** 10; **Toughness:** 7.

Special Abilities:

- **Quick:** Discard draw of 5 or less for initiative
- **Hard to Hit:** Move fast enough to dodge most attacks. Parry is +4.
- **Energy Attack:** The Lightning Demon can use its energy attack as a melee or range weapon that does 2d6 damage, and an additional +4 to characters wearing metal armor.
- **Transference:** Since it is made of electrical energy, the Lightning Demon can travel through anything that would conduct electricity, such as water in the ground or river, or even through the characters. When traveling this way, it can move up to 20 squares a round. If it manifests in humanoid form, it can coalesce through the air at only Pace 4.
- **Weakness:** Due to its nature, the Lightning Demon is especially prone to attacks from wooden weapons. All hits by wooden weapons are +4 damage.

Once the Lightning Demon is defeated, characters with Knowledge (Occult) or Spellcasting can make a roll to determine that such creatures are not natural. They are typically summoned by powerful wizards and exist only a short time before expiring. Nor do they attack indiscriminately.

When the characters are ready to move on, read the following:

At last the storm abates, and though the weather remains grey, you make it to Tanashere without further incident. The city is sprawling and crowded, and the citizenry look haggard and miserable, many once-grand buildings faded under economic depresssion. The palace rises above all, with archers on the walls banners depicting the unicorn-and-sword flapping in the wind.

Inside the palace, the resplendent halls are draped with banners of the six Houses, and white-armored guards stand at every intersection. You are led by a formal servant into the throne room, where sitting upon a grand filigreed throne is a woman in a light blue dress. Resting atop fiery red braided hair is a slender crown. She rises as you enter and orders all but her most trusted advisors to leave. Among those allowed to stay is a woman in armor with a

tabard displaying crossed swords. She remains near the queen as she addresses you.

"Welcome, a thousand times welcome. I am Queen Aldinae, Lady of the Unicorn, and I am grateful that you obeyed my summons. I trust your journey has been an uneventful one?"

If the characters tell Aldinae about the Lightning Demon, she looks very disturbed. *"I'm saddened to hear of this. That means the leak in my court is worse than I feared. It seems someone was hoping you wouldn't make it here."* She will continue:

"I wish I had time for pleasantries, but my general, Aelwyn, just brought me some bad news and I'm afraid it is weighing heavily on my heart. These are dark times for our kingdom. You may not know the whole story about how I came to be here, but it is a troubling one. Over twenty years ago, our kingdom was invaded by a necromancer by the name of Serevalac. As his armies marched across my lands, we made a stand, and it was in the halls of Castle Tanashere that I met him face to face in a battle of magic. But I was not strong enough to vanquish him. He usurped my body and buried my mind and spirit deep within, taking control of me as though I were but a marionette. For many years, he ruled our land in darkness, shattering long-held alliances. The Six Houses, forever squabbling and maneuvering for power in the best of times, was split asunder with three of the Houses fighting against Serevalac, and three others united under him. Fortunately, several heroes were able to destroy Serevalac and free me from his influence.

"After much effort I managed to bring back to the fold one of the Great Houses, House Jandar. It is through their alliance with the other houses, Aldrich, Garrik, and Andorr, that I hope to reunite our lands, but the challenge is great, for the remaining houses have embraced darkness and now struggle to hang on to the power they had under Serevalac.

"Are you following me so far? Good, for there is one more element to this puzzle, a crucial element. Please come with me to my inner chambers." At this, she and Aelwyn lead you through several halls into quiet, though no less resplendent, rooms. At last your walk ends in a towering library stuffed with books, scrolls, portraits, globes, and all manner of tools of knowledge. Aldinae stops in the center of the hall and resumes speaking.

"This remarkable library was founded centuries ago by a group called the Order of the White Sigil. Many old relics are held here from that time. I have since found uses for many of them with my bravest knights. But there rested upon these shelves many books regarding legends of antiquity. Several days ago, someone stole into this library, killing the High Magister and two of his best mages, who were studying in these very chambers. They died where you now stand. Out of all

the priceless items in this hall, the assassins stole only a painting. There -- you can see where it hung on the wall for centuries. It depicted a wizard that lived in this palace two hundred years ago, a fellow named Rinivous Graycastle. I have seen it on many an occasion but it meant nothing out of the ordinary to me. Evidently, it meant something more to someone else.

"I need you to find this painting for me and discern its importance. Surely this theft, and the easy murders of the best wizards in this land, must be the work of a powerful cabal. However, due to the delicate political situation, and limitations imposed upon me by the peace accords signed upon the overthrow of Serevalac, my hands and those of my general here, Aelwyn, are tied. The representatives of the other Houses and their staff are the only ones allowed in this wing of the palace during the time when the act was committed.

"However, we cannot accuse the representatives of any crime without evidence, nor can we legally investigate them because their personal quarters are off limits to us. Again, the particulars of the accord forbids it. However, it does not forbid us from deputizing others as outside investigators so long as they are not citizens of this country. And that is where you come in. If you will accept the charge, I will deputize you immediately to investigate. Do I have your consent?"

If the characters agree, she will add the following:

"The representatives of the Houses were the only ones in this wing of the palace at the time of the theft. Ask them and see if they know something. I am sending Aelwyn with you to observe, should you need it, though she will not be permitted inside the chambers of the representatives. Of all my aides, I trust her most. She will guide you well in these treacherous waters."

For doing this, the characters will be rewarded with land and a modest castle, or a hefty ransom.

Chapter Two: Courtly Intrigue

This chapter involves a great deal of interaction and roleplaying. The GM is strongly advised to have a solid sense of the major players and what they have to hide, and what they wish to gain before beginning this chapter. Players who are unused to dealing with this level of roleplay might feel bored or bewildered after a while. If this occurs, feel free to use Aelwyn to drop a hint here or there.

Aelwyn Aldrich (WC)

Knight of the Realm

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Miracles d12, Riding d10, Shooting d6.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 9 (3)

Hindrances: Code of Honor

Edges: Charismatic, Arcane Background (Miracles), Champion, Holy Warrior, Improved Trademark Weapon (Pelgrin Blade), No Mercy, Nerves of Steel, First Strike, Improved Block

Gear: The Pelgrin Blade (Str+d8+1, can cast Light upon command, can only be wielded by those with the Holy Warrior Edge), Plate corselet/leggings/greaves (Toughness +3 on body, arms and legs)

Power Points: 15

Powers: Armor, Boost/Lower Trait, Dispel, Healing, Smite.



The characters must arrange to visit the representatives on their own. But before they get started, an aide to Aldinae, an older fellow named Hiarith, shows them to their chambers.

"You're very fortunate to be offered a chance to stay here in the palace. It's not every day the Queen extends such hospitality. She must really think you're something special. I've heard of your exploits; it's no wonder she says such great things about you.

"But ruling Tanashere is very taxing for her. I can tell she's looking forward to a resolution on this matter so she can return to other business. Next week she's expecting delegates from Melvar, in regards to this

trade route business, and I know she's not looking forward to that.

"Ah, here it is. These will be your chambers for these evenings. They're part of the Silver Wing, where many of our visiting ambassadors take up residence. I think you'll find the appointments quite luxurious. If you require any assistance, please pull this rope and a bell will sound, and in short order you'll have one of the palace attendants at your door. Please call upon their services for any food or drink you require, or if the rooms get cold, which they tend to do.

"There will be a banquet this evening in honor of your arrival. The representatives of the six Houses will be in attendance. The representatives have permanent quarters in the Gold Wing, which is normally off-limits to all others, but under the circumstances you are free to enter there. At promptly sundown a servant will be sent to fetch you for the feast. Please be dressed in your finest attire, as I'm sure you will be, and of course please leave weapons of any kind securely in your chambers. I regret having to remind you of this formality, but I rather suspect people of your... station are accustomed to being able to carry such vulgarities whither you will. It would not be advisable in this palace, lest you find yourself rapidly losing Aldinae's good grace.

"Should you require to attend business outside the palace, you must call for a servant who can escort you to the outer bailey where you will be added to the roster of acceptable persons, which will permit you reentry. Horses may be stabled at no charge, however other, more exotic animals have no place in this castle. Neither do guests. Don't bring any. Now, if that is all?"

The banquet offers a great chance for the characters to get to know the representatives, but it is not a good place to ask probing questions or make accusations. For that, they will need to go to each representative in their private chambers. This is what Aelwyn can tell them about the houses:

- **"House Andorr** broke with Aldinae while she was possessed. William Andorr remained convinced she was the victim of sorcery, and when her possession was cast off, he restored Andorr to its rightful place at her side. The local representative is Rodrick Andorr."
- **"House Dellecourt** cast its lot with the dark when Serevalac invaded, and has not since come back to the fold. It is out of custom that they maintain a representative here, though it is House Dellecourt that causes much of the trouble in the outlying regions. You will be speaking to Manfred Dellecourt. Watch him, for he is a snake in a man's form, and he will do anything to undermine us."
- **"House Caulbrith** lost much of their power during the war that followed Serevalac's conquest of our world. Now, they eagerly assist Aldinae, though I think

partially this is out of the desire to see their power partially restored. Duncan leads the Caulbrith house here, and his hatred of Dellecourt is almost palpable."

- **"House Jandar** has grown fat and wealthy off the spoils of 500 years of war, yet they repented upon the return of the Lady of the Light, and during the time of darkness secretly worked to undermine Serevalac. Eorlin Jandar is their representative here, and I believe he, like the rest of the House, is very eager to repent for the sins of dealing with Serevalac so lucratively for so long."



- **"House Farran** walks a fine line with Aldinae. Under Serevalac, they took to slavery and conquest to gain power, and though they no longer swear fealty to Serevalac, nor have they abandoned their dishonorable ways. Nalron, House Farran's representative, bows and scrapes to Aldinae, and yet I have seen the looks he casts her way when he thinks she is not aware. They are up to something yet, and though their House is torn from internal rebellion, I believe they seek only power, and will take it where they can find it."

- *"As for my house, **House Aldrich**, we are not without our own troubles. It is currently ruled by my brother Gareth, though none have seen him in over a year. He dwells yet in our family palace in Andier, though his representative, his advisor Molakai, stays here at this palace. I have little to do with them, as I have sworn off family fealty and claim only membership in the new Army of the Light, and as Knight Protector of the People's House, the united delegate legacy."*

As they go about visiting each of the representatives, they will need to finagle information from them. Below is what the representatives can offer. If the information is true, it will have a (T) after it. False information, with an (F), can only be determined false with a successful Persuasion or Intimidation roll or with magic. Every representative has a cadre of three advisers and assistants. Casting any aggressive spells, including those designed to force representatives or their employers to speak or act, is against the law and will immediately result in the forfeiture of the contract. They will need to sort through the tangled web of lies and alliances on their own.

House Andorr: Rodrick is pleasant and cooperative. When pressed, he can offer the following information:

- At the time of the theft, he was in his chambers playing a game of chess with Eorlin Jandar. (T)
- His advisers were all present at the time (F -- one of his servants, Yaran, was inexplicably absent at the time, taking extra long to bring him a decanter of wine. When interviewed, Yaran will balk, but eventually say that he saw something slithery moving through the halls, and hid in the kitchen. He was too unsure of himself to say anything.)
- He thinks it might be Nalron Farran. A week ago, he thought he heard muffled screams coming from Nalron's quarters, but when he confronted him, Nalron claimed one of his aides had a fever. (T)

House Dellecourt: Manfred is uncooperative and threatens the characters with arrest for even daring to ask questions of him. Then he seems to have a change of heart.

- At the time of the theft, he was in his chambers with three maidens (T).
- He went for a midnight stroll and saw Eorlin Jandar heading toward the throne room. He seemed nervous and walked quickly, though Manfred chalked it up to Jandar being a pathetic worm and thought nothing more of it. (F)
- Now that he is thinking about it, he recalls overhearing Eorlin Jandar talking to Duncan Caulbrith about the painting and wondering what it was worth. (F)

If the characters search Manfred's room, they will discover a painting frame. He has no idea how it got there and will protest, but this is evidence enough for Aelwyn to arrest

him. The frame is meaningless, however, and was placed there by Duncan Caulbrith.

House Caulbrith: Duncan Caulbrith is somber and doesn't talk much, seemingly depressed. If asked about the source of his depression, he says he recently learned that a plague is infesting his lands back home and he is worried for the survival of his house.

- Duncan was drunk the night of the theft, and remembers nothing. (T)
- However, he believes Manfred Dellecourt is at the heart of it all, because he remembers seeing Dellecourt walking around the grounds near the library for a couple of hours at dusk, as though scouting the place out. (T -- Dellecourt was actually waiting to meet Molakai)
- He remembers seeing Manfred walking through the halls late that night carrying a large square object wrapped in a cloth sack (F).

House Jandar: Eorlin Jandar is obsequiously nice -- almost too nice. He offers them wine and cheese and dragonberries, and has his nubile servants wait on them hand and foot.

- He was out at the theatre the night of the theft, seeing a production of *The Sword of Dunad* at the Globe theater (T -- can be confirmed by guards and the carriage driver and his mistress, Mina).
- He is sure the theft is the handiwork of Duncan Caulbrith. He says Caulbrith has been bent on building the fortunes of his fallen house, and saw value in the painting. He claims to have seen Duncan in London later that night after the play was through. Duncan's carriage was stopping in front of an art dealer's shop, though Eorlin didn't see what transpired there. (F)
- He says he smelled something strange in the halls. It smelled oily and unnatural, like Wyrms oil (a substance used to cast some spells, primarily warding spells), and he thinks the smell originated from Duncan's chambers. (T, though the last is speculation).

If the characters search the Jandar chambers, they will find a sheet that appraises many paintings around the palace, including the one in question. It was planted there by Manfred Dellecourt.

House Farran: Nalron is oily and unctuous, but largely cooperative.

- The night in question, he was alone in his chambers doing some reading. Nobody was around, so this cannot be verified (T).
- He was out doing some reading near the maze when he saw Rodrick Andorr walking out toward the palace stables just after dusk. A carriage entered, and Rodrick led someone from it into the palace. (F)

- He thought he heard the sound of chanting coming from Molakai's chambers on his way back from reading, but when he paused near the door, he heard nothing more. (T)

If the characters search Nalron's chambers, they will find a hidden lab behind a secret door where Nalron has been constructing new torture devices. Tied to a chair is a hooded prisoner, who turns out to be a rebel of his House.

House Aldrich: Molakai comes across as being irritated and bored by this inquiry, as though he is above it all and it simply humoring the queen.

- Molakai spent that evening in his parlor playing chess with Manfred Dellecourt. (F -- he was actually in his chambers casting a ritual to open a portal.)
- Molakai observed Aelwyn acting nervously all afternoon, and saw that she excused herself from the group dinner. He caught sight of her again hastening toward the dungeons, though he didn't follow because he didn't want to entertain suspicions against his own. (F)
- Just last week, Aelwyn came to him and asked him what the "best way is to kill a mage." Presumably this is because she knows Molakai was once a minor spellcaster before becoming an adviser. He told her mages are difficult to kill, and listed the reasons why. He said the best way is to use a mage killer, since they are immune to magic, and when she asked where they come from, he thought it best to feign ignorance. Again, he didn't want to press the issue out of loyalty (F).



If the characters search Molakai's chambers, they will find an odd oil on the ground that smells faintly of rot. This is the same scent Eorlin Jandar smelled. Aldinae's mages believe it to be Wyrms oil. They also see that a rug has recently been moved, with a corner sticking up from under the legs of a divan. If they slide the rug back, they will be able to see the faint outline of a seven-pointed star. A successful Knowledge (Occult) or Spellcasting spell lets the characters know these symbols are usually used for summoning spells. In the fireplace is the burned remnant of a note. Only a small portion is still legible: "*sister Aelwyn... frame... at all costs... valec... open the... Black Tow... Sereval... stone... do not fail...*"

Just after investigating Molakai, the characters will be met by Terl, who breathlessly tells them they must return to their room because some evidence has been discovered there (if Terl died earlier in the adventure, this will be a nameless serving boy instead). When they rush in, they will be attacked by six magekillers. Terl will fade away -- an illusion! But a barrier spell is thrown up over the doors and windows to keep them from escaping or calling for help for the duration of the encounter.

Magekiller

Abilities: Agility d12, Smarts d8, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d12

Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d10, Stealth d12, Tracking d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 8.

Gear: Magecutter (Str+d8+1),

Special Abilities:

- **Improved Arcane Resistance:** Magekillers ignore all magical effects, including weapons and magic bonuses, but not to psionics. They cannot be seen or scried upon with magical means.
- **Magic Sponge:** Just being around a magekiller draws away magical power. Spellcasters within a medium burst template lose 1 power point each round of exposure. In addition, no spells or magic items work within that medium burst template. Psionics work as usual.
- **Improved Block:** Parry +2
- **Improved Dodge:** -2 to be hit by ranged attacks
- **Improved Frenzy:** One extra attack without penalty
- **Combat Reflexes:** +2 to recover from Shaken
- **Quick:** Discard draw of 5 or lower for initiative
- **Infravision:** Can see with heat signatures
- **Wall Walker:** Can move on walls and ceiling as normal
- **Chameleon:** Can change color to match backgrounds, adding +2 to Stealth rolls.

During this encounter, the characters will strongly notice a smell of rotten oil. Upon defeating a magekiller, it dissolves into a pool of green filth that will slowly eat away stone until it evaporates. This pool covers a 1" square and is highly acidic, doing 2d6 damage to anyone who steps into that area (except other magekillers) for 3 rounds.

Once the characters think they have enough information to make an accusation, they find Aldinae and Aelwyn helpful. If Aelwyn is the accused, she will willingly submit, believing she will be found innocent. If anyone but Molakai is taken, a thorough investigation that takes several days will turn up nothing, though the characters will certainly lose some credibility. If this happens to members of House Dellecourt or Farran, an assassin will sneak into the characters' chambers in the middle of the night and try to poison them.

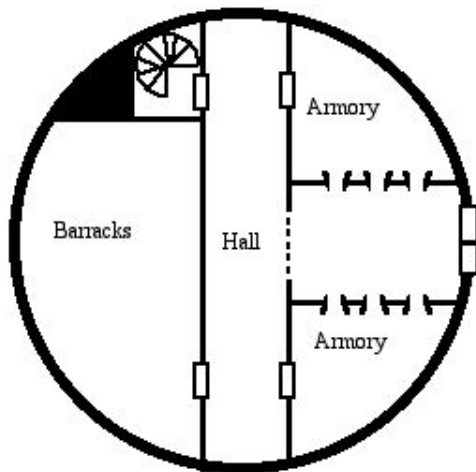
If they correctly arrest Molakai, an interrogation will reveal that he was assisting the necromancer Serevalac. Everyone knows about Serevalac: he was the powerful necromancer defeated years ago and thought to be dead. Under duress, Molokai reveals that Serevalac cast a special spell to seal his soul away in exchange for eternal life, becoming a lich. Serevalac discovered that the painting of the mage Rinivous was actually the secret hiding spot of a magical gem called the "Spark of Life." Rinivous is said to have discovered the Spark on one of his many travels, and used it to uncover the creation of many half-living creatures, from golems to homunculi, giving

them life beyond previous knowledge. Learning of this, Serevalac ordered Molakai to steal the Spark from the painting. Molakai knew that would involve killing the High Magister and any apprentices that might be in the library, so he created magekillers to do the dirty work. After that, he took the Spark and delivered it to Serevalac. The lich lives in the Black Tower, which can be found on an island in a cold lake near the town of Glencoe, a day's ride from Tanashere.

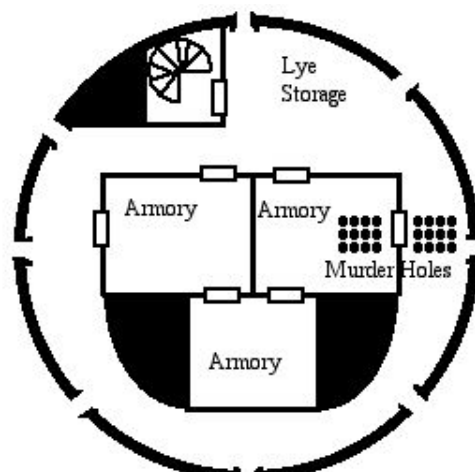
Chapter Three: The Black Tower

When the characters arrive at the area around the Black Tower, read the following:

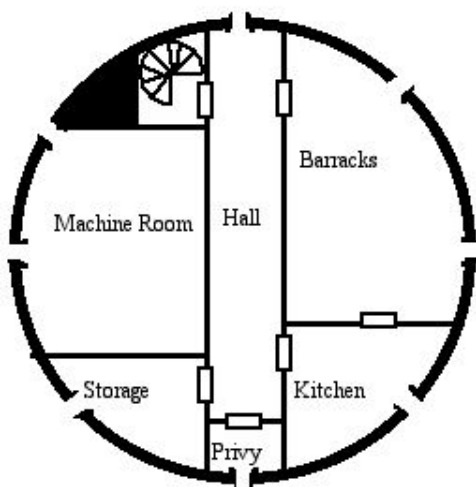
Lake Alish is a narrow, long flat finger of water. The dark waters lap fitfully upon the pebbles of the shore. Scattered oak and maple trees crowd the banks, their leaves hissing in a constant cold wind. A fog has settled over the valley, drawn to the body of water like flies to a corpse, but through it you can clearly see an ebon tower, like a split in space and time, looming over a tiny fishing village. The



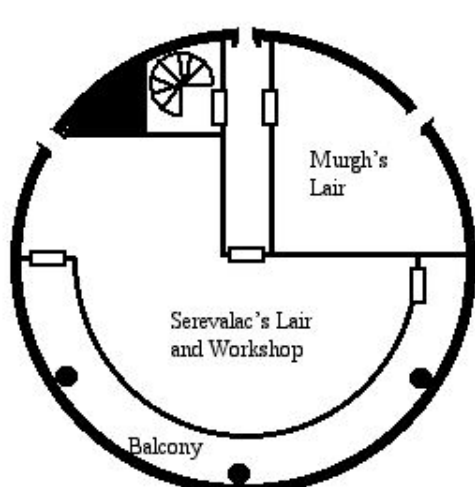
Tower Level 1



Tower Level 2



Tower Level 3



Tower Level 4

The Black Tower

form of the tower is indistinct through so much mist, but you can tell it must be nearly 100 feet tall, a featureless black spire in all aspects but the top, where crenellated battlements appear like a crown on a dead king's head. Just looking at the tower fills you with a potent dread; it is hard to imagine how the villagers who must live in its shadow can fare.

Once the characters enter Glencoe, read:

This miserable village, kneeling right at the edge of the cold, black waters of the lake, can be home to no more than 200 people, though it looks like it might have seen a recent decrease in population. Many of the buildings appear to stand empty, their facades whitewashed plaster with exposed beams. Lanterns hang from posts outside occupied dwellings, lending a feeble light that cuts partway through the oppressive gloom. Fishmongers roll wheelbarrows up the cobbled streets shouting out their wares, while grubby barefoot children chase skinny dogs through the town square, and sullen-looking house matrons sweep dust from their lintels. All cease what they are doing and watch you as you enter the town, though you can't tell if the expression they wear is one of fear or hope.

Most of the villagers derive their living from the lake -- or, at least they used to. If the characters speak to any villagers, they will learn that, since the tower's mysterious arrival a month ago, the bottom of the loch has become filled with the dead. Hundreds and hundreds of skeletons, just standing there, like an army awaiting the word to attack. There is an inn called the Shepherd and Plough right in the center of town, down near the docks. The inside of the tavern is warm and friendly, if rather unpopulated.

People in the village are dispirited but too impoverished to leave the area, so they carve out a meager existence. Their own mayor was disemboweled by a terrible bugbear named Murgh, who they believe to be the owner of the tower. He has proclaimed himself their "Overlord" and demands constant tribute. As it happens, Murgh arrives shortly after the characters get to town, and he strides into the center of the town square and begins barking out demands for new taxes to be levied that afternoon. He also says that he demands another young woman and the family who can provide one will be exempt from taxation. If the characters confront Murgh, he will fight them, but try to flee if the fight goes poorly. He arrived at the town by means of a rowboat with a skeletal pilot (who does not attack).

For defeating Murgh, the townsfolk will swear loyalty to the characters if they can destroy Serevalac and free them from their oppression. Around Murgh's neck is an odd-shaped iron key.

Murgh (WC)

Abilities: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d12, Intimidation d12, Notice d6, Reality d6, Stealth d8, Throwing d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 14(3)

Hindrances: Arrogant

Edges: Mighty Blow, Tough as Nails, Brawny, Improved Frenzy, Combat Reflexes, Level-Headed, Improved Sweep.

Gear: Great Axe of the Berserker (Str+d10+3, AP 1, 2 hands, -1 parry, causes wielder to go berserk upon suffering one wound), Plate corselet (+3 armor), Plate vambraces (+3 armor), Plate greaves (+3 armor).

Special Abilities:

- **Low-Light Vision:** Halve penalties for low lighting
- **Size +1:** Slightly larger than human

The characters cross the lake to the island where the Black Tower is located. They can take the outboard motorboat for this or a fisherman's boat.

The tiny wavelets beat against the prow of the boat as the Black Tower looms ever closer to you. Deep under the water, barely visible through the swirling brine, you can see the skeletal forms of dozens -- scores! -- of the dead, standing eerily in rank and file, all facing the east. Their bony heads turn and watch you with empty sockets as your boat glides past overhead.

The Black Tower looms overhead, rising into the mist like a cyclopiian giant. The sickly waters beat against a tumble of rocks at its base, and you can see a boat landing sandwiched between two massive boulders. No sooner than you've pulled the boat onto the shore, but you become aware of something passing overhead. High above, not much more than a silhouette in the fog, you see the distinct form of a dragon glide to the tower's top and land, folding its wings. A shower of pebbles rains down, but you see no other sign of the creature beyond that.

The path leads to a stout doorway guarded by four archer skeletons. Pretty quickly, the characters will be able to tell something isn't right about the skeletons. Each looks as though portions of its body have been replaced with scraps of iron.

Iron Skeletons

Abilities: Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6+2, Intimidation d6, Notice d4+2, Shooting d6+2.

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10.

Gear: Longbow (2d6, 15/30/60), OR Longsword (Str+d8) and Medium Shield (+1 parry, +2 armor against ranged shots that hit).

Special Abilities:

- **Alertness:** +2 to Notice checks
- **Bony Claws:** Str+d4
- **Fearless:** Immune to fear and intimidation
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness, +2 to recover from Shaken, No extra damage from called shots
- **Hybrid Body:** Each skeleton has been partially replaced with iron, giving it +2 Toughness.
- **Necromantic Perfection:** Infused with greater power, each skeleton gains +2 to attacks.

Once past the archers, the characters can turn their attention on the tower. The door itself is magically locked, and can only be opened with an Open power, or the password, which is "Calad Arhaven Shial." Murgh knows this password and will tell it to the characters under duress.

The double doors open to a 20 x 20 chamber with ominous-looking arrow slits along the sides and murder holes in the ceiling. Torches in cressets on the wall provide flickering light. On the opposite side is a broad portcullis with two more skeletal archers stationed on the other side. But there is something odd about these skeletons. Each has lengths of metal pipe or chunks of unidentifiable steel in places where portions of the bones are missing, and you can even see wires snaking out of some of the metallic parts to connect to the skull.



There are also two skeletal archers in each of the rooms to the right and left, ready to fire through the arrow slits. If there is a fight, the skeletons from the two barracks will emerge to join the action, adding 12 more skeletons to the fight. The portcullis is locked and trapped with a spell that unleashes a 3d6 bolt on anyone who interferes with it. The key is the one around Murgh's neck. While the characters are in this room, skeletons above will pour lye down through the holes. Any exposed living flesh immediately begins to take 2d4 damage per round. In addition, lye in the lungs causes characters to make a Vigor roll every round or begin drowning, and the damage increases to 2d6 per round. Healing will not work until the lye is removed, which requires an acid. Washing it off in water will work, but causes one last burst of 2d6 damage to the subject.

The Black Tower is 50' across. The ceilings are 20' high on all floors. The rooftop is open with crenellated battlements. External walls are 5' thick, while internal walls are 1' thick; all stone. Floors are stone reinforced with beams. Doors are heavy oak.

Level 1 locations:

The Hallway

This broad hallway shows evidence of much use. Torches burn in cressets on the walls and a peculiar, dusty odor hangs over everything.

Armories

This room is evidently for storage of weapons. A rack along the wall carries four bows and several quivers of arrows.

Barracks

This room has a horrible odor, like the smell of rotting bones. A malignant reek of decay hangs over everything. Apparently, this amount to barracks for the skeletons that guard this level. It appears as though nothing human ever spends time here.

Stairwell

A cramped, steep spiral staircase cuts upward into the stone of the tower here. From above, you hear the odd sound of clicking, and some kind of low hum.

Level 2 locations:

Most of this level is a long, serpentine hallway that gives defenders room to move around and defend the tower. It is thick with more cyberskeletons, 20 in total.

Armories

These tiny rooms are armories for the skeletal tower defenders. Each one is lined with racks of swords, axes, shields, bows, and armor. There are also odd pieces of metal here.

Murder Holes

Along this stretch of hallway, you can see a grid of tiny one inch holes in the floor. Nearby are buckets of lamp oil and torches burning in wall cressets.

Level 3 locations:

This level is where Serevalac's bugbear servants live, and it houses a number of other maintenance functions. All rooms are lit with crude light bulbs, but lamps are nearby in case of outages. The bugbears on this level will respond to any noise, emerging from the southeastern room.

Hallway

To your shock, this hallway is lit not with flickering torches, but with small glass vials that emit light. There is one every five feet or so along the length of the hall, glowing fitfully, connected each to each by a long drooping wire. The wires appear to emerge from a doorway in the center of the west side of the hall. No sooner do you enter, but a door at the far end opens and a beastlike man-thing emerges, snarling when it sees you and drawing an axe.

Privy

This tiny room, separated from the hallway only by a panel door, contains the tower's only privy, a filthy hole on a

bench that spews waste outward to the side of the tower. The stench in here is nearly unbelievable.

Machine room

An odd sound comes from this room, almost like a rhythmic humming. Inside the small chamber is what can only be described as a machine, shaped like a metal barrel with dozens of wires emerging from it and connecting to other metal boxes with gauges and dials upon them. Standing guard nearby is a skeleton, which draws its sword as soon as it sees you.

The machine operates on a kind of necromantic fusion, drawing energy from rotting matter inside it. At the moment, there is a desiccated body inside. Destroying the machine is possible, but it has four wounds and is designed to lash out with energy Bolts against anyone in sight of the machine.

Storage room

This cramped room is piled high with bits of machinery, tools, gadgets and cables. You can see all manner of parts scavenged from strange clockworks, pipes and shards of steel, wheel axles, wiring, nuts and bolts of all shapes and sizes, and plenty of other mechanical pieces.

Kitchen

This room is just big enough to have one huge long table running down the center. To the far side are peculiar metal boxes that emit heat from one and cold from the other. Both seem to be in working condition. The room, however, is filthy, littered with bones and chunks of uneaten food. The place stinks like a cattle pen. Obviously whoever dines here has no sense of manners.

The machines function like an oven and a refrigerator, respectively, and are powered by the machine in the Machine Room, above.

Barracks

Bunks line the walls of this room, enough to house at least 20 warriors. A common table sits in the center, housing numerous daggers, bone dice, and even a deck of cards that appear to have been heavily used by animal hands. The reek in here is tremendous. One stretch of wall has a rack upon which dozens of axes and swords rest.

Level 4 locations:

This is Serevalac's lair, and the room wherein his lieutenant, Murgh, dwells. If the characters did not defeat Murgh in the village, he will be here.

Murgh's Room

This chamber, running 20 x 40, is a mix of both crude and fancy goods, from a monstrous wolfskin rug on the floor, to a fine bed on the far wall. Bric-a-brac that ranges from a tavern sign, a statue of some six-armed god, a silver urn, and a glass bowl full of poisonous eels, fills shelves and table spaces everywhere. The ungodly stench of bugbear hangs over everything.

Nothing in this room is of any real use, except for a small leather pouch that contains one potion of Boost Spirit, one potion of Speed, and one potion of Greater Healing. Tucked under the bed are a pair of elfskin boots that add +2 to Pace, though they automatically cause elves to despise the wearer. On a peg near the bed is also a Cloak of the Wolf, which will transform the wearer into a wolf, but has the drawback of causing the wearer to forget their original identity, making them roll a Spirit roll in order to remove the cloak (they only get one more chance to remove it, 1 day later, whereupon failure means the wearer becomes a wolf for life and forgets his original self).



Serevalac's Lair

This massive room, the largest in the entire tower, is even more astonishing than the room you just left. Tables occupy nearly every walking space, each covered from end to end with bits of machinery, metal, wiring, and what can only be described as semi-functioning gadgets. Wires cover the floor like snakes in a den, reaching every table or shelf in the room. The only clear area is in the center, where an odd symbol is drawn in chalk on the floor. Standing there, as though waiting for you, is what appears to be a zombie wearing parts of a machine. His broad shoulders end in metal arms complete with whirling gears and springs. Half of his head is covered in a metal plate, and his left eye is a glowing red orb. A pipe on his left

shoulder emits a constant flume of steam, releasing it from an engine mounted on his shoulder. His legs end in iron claws. In one hand he is holding a sword, while the other holds a strange wand. "What is the meaning of this intrusion?" he barks, with an unearthly voice.

Serevalac is first and foremost a mage, though he has always had a fascination for machines and weird science. Before being defeated, he found a way to extend his life through a bizarre mixture of necromancy and machines. Currently, he is hard at work at perfecting his masterpiece, Vermithrax, the dragon golem, which is why he needed the Spark of Life. He will threaten to unleash the dragon if the characters attack him, upon which it will bear down on the village and begin laying waste to it.

If the battle seems to be going badly, he will teleport to the roof, where Vermithrax awaits. The dragon has been partially replaced with machinery, its whole head nearly replaced with gear, including both eyes.

Serevalac, the Golem Lich

Abilities: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d8, Investigation d10, Knowledge (Occult) d12, Knowledge (Machinery) d10, Notice d6, Repair d10, Shooting d10, Stealth d4, Spellcasting d12, Taunt d6, Throwing d6, Tracking d6, Weird Science d10.

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 18 (8).

Hindrances: Lame

Edges: Wizard, Arcane Background (Magic), Arcane Background (Weird Science), Level Headed, Gadgeteer, McGyver, Mr. Fix It.

Gear: Corrupt Longsword "Amroth" +3 (Str+d8+3, causes corruption), Weird Science Ray Gun (1 - 3d6 damage, ROF 1, 24 charges, may double tap, can switch to arc-fire mode for 6 charges), Eye-Beam Neural Disruptor (arcane vs. target's smarts, victim is at -2 to Trait rolls or -4 with raise until they spend a round clearing their head with a Smarts roll), Force Field (-4 to hit, lasts 6 rounds), Invisibility ring (Invisibility power, 3 round duration, 3 charges).

Special Abilities:

- **Death Touch:** Instead of a normal attack, Serevalac may make a touch attack. Every raise on his Fighting roll automatically inflicts one wound to his target.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from Shaken, no additional damage from called shots, does not suffer from wound modifiers, not subject to disease or poison
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness
- **Armored Body:** +8 Toughness
- **Zombie:** The undead Serevalac creates are permanent.
- **Weakness:** He has a weak spot on his shoulder engine. If it takes 4 wounds (independent of his own wounds; the spot requires a -6 roll to hit, and has Toughness 8) his entire body will be shut down.
- **Magic spells** (50 pp): Serevalac knows every spell available, and some that aren't. GMs may want to use the Fantasy Toolkit for ideas for surprising spells.

Vermithrax, the Dragon Golem

Abilities: Agility d8, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+9, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Notice d12, Shooting d12.

Pace: 8 (30 Flying); **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 26 (10).

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +10:** Scaly hide reinforced with plates of steel
- **Claws/Bite:** Str+d8
- **Fear -2:** Anyone who sees Vermithrax must make a Guts check at -2
- **Fiery Breath:** Breathes fire using the cone template. Every target in the cone may make an Agility roll at -2 to avoid the attack. Those who fail suffer 2d10 damage and must check to see if they catch fire. May not attack with claws or bite in the same round, and must wait 1 round between fire breath attacks.
- **Jet-boosted Flight:** Flying pace of 30", with a Climb of 10"
- **Hardy:** Does not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice
- **Huge:** Attackers add +4 to Fighting or Shooting when attacking Vermithrax
- **Improved Frenzy:** May make two fighting attacks with no penalty
- **Level-Headed:** Best of 2 cards for initiative
- **Size +8:** Vermithrax is over 50' long and weighs over 50,000 pounds.
- **Tail Lash:** Can sweep all opponents in its rear facing in a long 3" by 6" wide square. This is a standard Fighting attack, and damage is equal to Str-2.
- **Undead, Construct:** +2 to recover from Shaken, no called shots, no wound modifiers
- **Built-in Gizmos:** Audio Nullifier (silence in large burst template, 10 round duration), Molecular Destabilizer (creates hole in nonliving matter, 5 uses), Eye-beam Disintegrator (3d10, 4/8/16, ROF 1, 5 charges, anyone Incapacitated by it is instantly disintegrated).
- **Weakness:** All the machinery makes Vermithrax prone to sound and water damage. He takes an additional +1d6 from sonic, and totally malfunctions if submersed in water.

Upon defeating Serevalac, the vast army under the lake crumbles into mere bones, as do any of Serevalac's creations, including Vermithrax, if it still lives. The bugbears all flee. The characters can recover the Spark of Life from the Serevalac's lair, where it is connected to a machine that helped him breathe life into Vermithrax. Upon returning it to Queen Aldinae, the characters are reward with land, title, and a humble castle of their own, or a comparable remuneration from the palace treasury, not to mention the thanks and trust of Queen Aldinae. With Serevalac gone for good, she can finally go about the task of rebuilding the Tanashere.

The Stuff of Legend

The *Stuff of Legend* showcases Legendary (or at least more experienced) characters available as NPCs. This month we have some of the earliest characters from Shaintar, at their legendary best.

LEGENDS OF SHAINSTAR!

by Sean Patrick Fannon, art by Jason A. Engle



SIR KORIAS, Aevakar Paladin

"I have learned much since my early days. Much that I might not have chosen to learn, but I did learn it well. I know how best to slay a demon, how best to put down a lich lord, and what it means to watch good people die that a land may live.

"Most of all, I know what it means to serve.

"I have taken what gifts Archanon has chosen to bless me with, and I have used them to fight the Flame and turn back the Darkness. I have served his justice, and I have shown his mercy. I have done all I can do for the Light, and I have yet more that must be done. My service will not end, even in my death, for beyond the Veil, the wars continue ever on, and the Celestial Halls will need me just as much.

"I am honored to serve... if a tad... weary."

Legendary

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d12+2 (d10 Wild), Guts d10, Healing d6, Intimidation d10, Knowledge: Dark Creatures d6,

Knowledge: Flame Creatures d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 11 (15); **Toughness:** 6 (12); **Charisma:** +1

Hindrances: Dense (Limited Smarts), Weakness (+3 Damage from Black Iron/Blood Steel), Enemies (Shayakar and Childer), Light Frame (-1 Toughness), Vow: Tenets of Faith, Heroic, Loyal, Stubborn

Edges: Flight (12, "run" d10), Low Light Vision, Fae Beauty; Atypical, Improved Block, Charge, Improved Frenzy, Paladin of Light, Shield Expertise, Demon Slayer, Undead Slayer, Master (Fighting)

Gear: Enchanted White Silver Longsword [STR+d8; +2 to Hit, +2 Damage, AP 2; Light (permanent, at will), Bolt (d10 Skill, ESS 10)]; Enchanted Plate Armor [+6 Armor, -6 Coverage; Improved Arcane Resistance, Strong Willed]; Enchanted Large Shield [+3 Parry, +3 Armor vs Ranged Damage; Deflection (d10 Skill, ESS 5)]

THE VRRL

"I confuse you. That's OK. I confuse everyone, and I always have. Imagine how confused those first companions of mine must have been, when they originally encountered me as I fought off a band of Tor Mastak determined to return me to my Kalinesh masters?"

"A creature, looking much like a brinchie, but with the bulk and strength of an ogre. The colors of my fur are unnatural – purples, oranges, and deep shades of blues – and my eyes glow with a great inner fire. My fangs and my claws are impossibly long and sharper and stronger than dwarven steel."

"There has been no such creature like me. Ever. I am one of a kind. Alone."

"And yet, I have rarely been truly alone. I escaped the Blood Pits of the north, the arenas I was crafted from alchemy and thaumaturgy to fight in. I rejected all that I was bred to, and instead chose to serve Life. I was an ignorant savage in my earliest days, with no sense of manners or culture, but my heart sang to me of greater things. Those first friends I met in the Southern Kingdoms heard that song, and welcomed me to join them in saving a nation."

"The long life my creators granted me means most of those friends are gone now. I've made new ones along the way, and I have come to serve the Silver Unicorn directly in whatever way she requires. It is a good life. It is my life, as I have chosen to live it."

Legendary

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12+1

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d12+2 (d10 Wild), Healing d4, Intimidation d10, Knowledge: Cosmology d6, Knowledge History d4, Notice d6+2, Stealth d10, Survival d8, Swimming d6, Throwing d10, Tracking d6

Pace: 9 (d10); **Parry:** 13; **Toughness:** 9 (16);

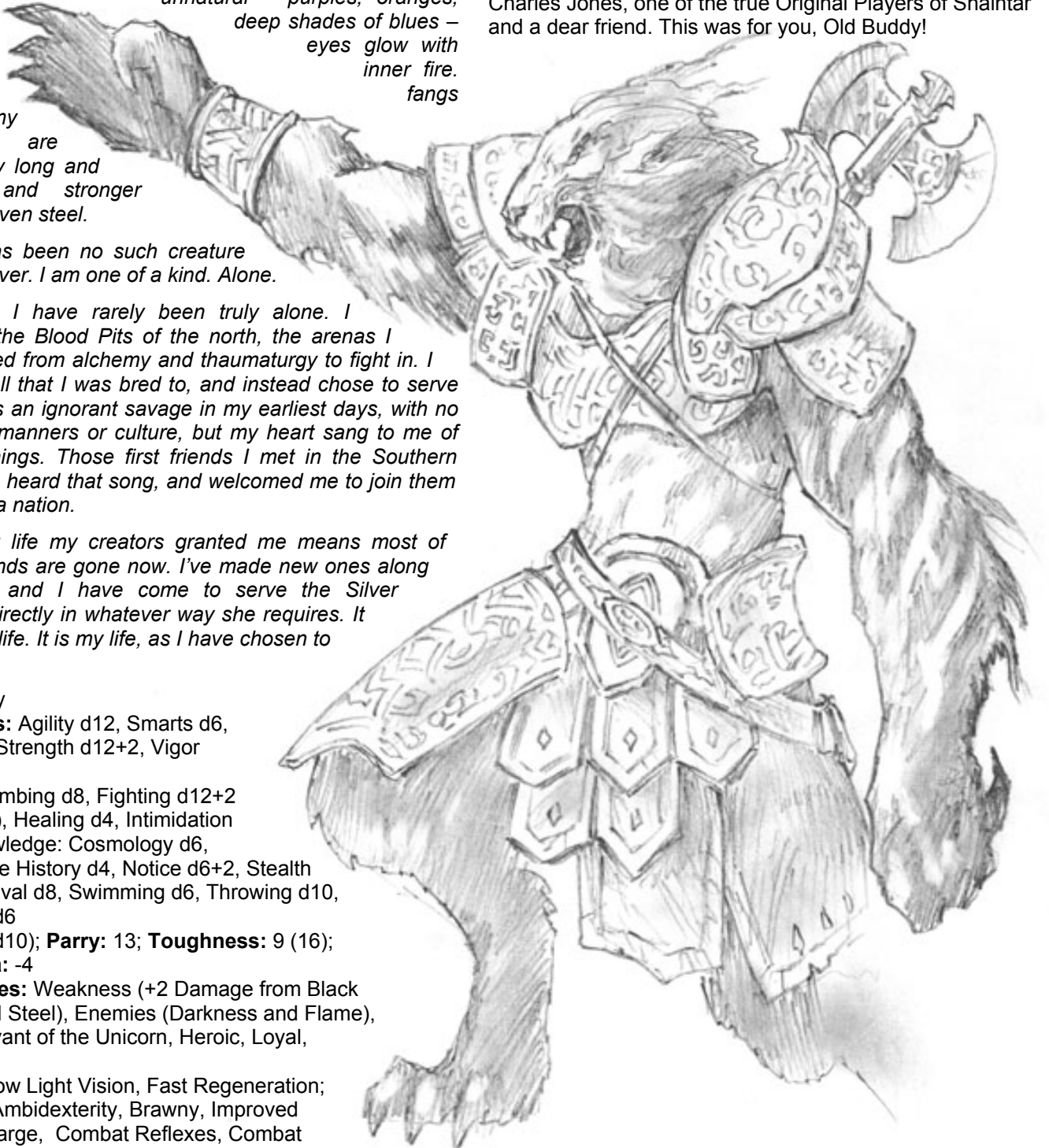
Charisma: -4

Hindrances: Weakness (+2 Damage from Black Iron/Blood Steel), Enemies (Darkness and Flame), Vow: Servant of the Unicorn, Heroic, Loyal, Outsider

Edges: Low Light Vision, Fast Regeneration; Acrobat, Ambidexterity, Brawny, Improved Block, Charge, Combat Reflexes, Combat Sense, Dodge, Improved Frenzy, Level Headed, Improved Nerves of Steel, Quick, Two-Fisted,

Improved Whirlwind, Master (Fighting), Weapon Master
Gear: Enchanted White Silver Great Axe [STR+d10; +3 to Damage, +1 Parry, AP 3; Heavy Weapon, Mighty Blow]; Enchanted Partial Dwarven Plate [+7 Armor, -3 Coverage; Fly (Permanent, at will, Pace in flight)]; Enchanted Throwing Spear [STR+d8; +2 to Hit, +2 Damage, 5/10/20]; The Unicorn's Favor – Bracelet [Demon Slayer, Undead Slayer, Soulguard]

Note – The Vrrll was created and played originally by Charles Jones, one of the true Original Players of Shaintar and a dear friend. This was for you, Old Buddy!



Campaign for my real friends

...and real pain for my players! Fully developed campaigns go here, and we're continuing Jon Ginsberg's epic Deadlands: Reloaded campaign with another incredible installment of...

Sticks, Stones, & Rail Wars

A serial Deadlands: Reloaded Plot Point

by Jon Ginsberg

Episode Three: Cloud of Fear

Well, Marshal, looks like your posse's doin' pretty well for themselves; they got the equipment they needed to recover, retrieved the first piece of the staff (though they still don't know its importance), and have put a dent in the plans of some kind of big bad evil thing. Good for them, but do really think we're gonna let things stay all hunky-dory? Until now, they've just been patsies for Brackneller's servants, but its become clear after their work in Deadwood that they have the potential to disrupt the manitou's plans, and that simply *cannot* be permitted. Not long after the posse leaves Deadwood, Brackneller sends word of them to Virginia, telling her that they *must* be eliminated, with extreme prejudice. Well, she knows just the man to deal with these heroic types. Knowing that they were working for her man Lancaster, she sends him a message, deriding him for his failure (remember, the posse wasn't actually supposed to defeat Iida and his men) and telling him to hire the heroes again, for a "special" job—their last.

Returning to Denver

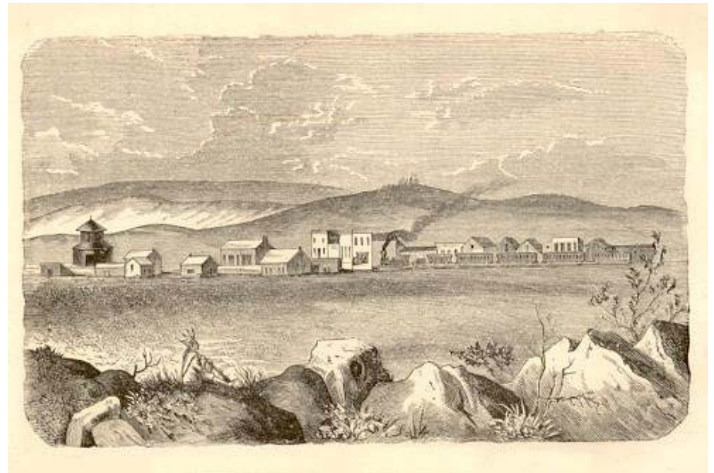
The return trip to Denver is another spot for you, Marshal, to add a couple of diversions. Have the journey back be as long or short as you like, but keep the posse's spirits and confidence high. In any case, as soon as they return to Denver, they'll probably be wanting to get to the Wasatch office right quick and get paid. Once they return, Lancaster immediately has some workers get the equipment packed up and ready to move to the head of the Wasatch line, thanking the posse for their hard work. He asks them to meet him in his office in a short while, to pay them and speak to them about another important matter. Anyone succeeding at a Notice (-4) roll, realizes that Lancaster isn't exactly thrilled at their return, and nervous around them, though he hides it well. When the get to his office for the meeting, read the following:

Lancaster motions for you to take seats, as he removes a picture from the wall. A wall safe is revealed and he begins turning the dial to open it. Taking out a large stack of bills, he hands them over, saying "Thank you all very much for your aid

in this matter. Rest assured, your hard work and dedication will be remembered both by myself and the Wasatch rail company." He lights a cigar takes a long drag, and says "Now, there is another reason I asked you all up here. It seems a town we use as a rail depot has recently been the victim of a particularly vicious band of outlaws, the Older gang. Not only are these desperadoes particularly cruel, they are unusually well equipped, using New Science devices like Gatling weapons and even, if reports are to be believed a couple of steam wagons. While I know you are obviously exhausted from your trying experience in Deadwood, I believe you are the perfect folks to deal with this."

Lancaster is mum on the issue of payment until it is raised, and allows the heroes to set their own price, negotiating somewhat to make sure they don't get suspicious. He has absolutely no plans on paying them at all; Virginia has assured him that he will never have to concern himself with the posse again. Once a price is settled upon, Lancaster supplies the heroes with tickets to Allsburg, on the first available train.

Allsburg, the Bandits, and Kent's Dirty Tricks



As mentioned above, Allsburg is used as a train depot by Wasatch. Located in south central Nebraska, it was just a run of the mill farming town before Wasatch came through. Overnight it turned into boomtown, but as the railhead moved further west, the boom died down. You can find out more about Allsburg in the article about it in this same issue. It's still fairly large and busy, though with the arrival of the Older gang, things have been hard. The bandits arrived only a few weeks ago, but have been very effective in shutting the town off from the outside world. The gang's actions are no different than the multitude of similar outlaw bands roaming the West, but what separates them from others is Stanley Kent. Kent is mad scientist who used to work for Smith & Robards, but was fired for trying to steal supplies from the company for his own purposes. Before leaving permanently, however, he was able to steal a fair number of their devices. On the run, he joined up with the Older gang, offering his knowledge and machinery to the

gang in exchange for protection, and aid in finding materials for his research; that was six years ago. Since then, he's learned a lot, including quite a bit about the Reckoning. He knows a bit about the powers of hucksters, shamans, and the Blessed, but suspects nothing about the true nature of mad science and ghost rock.

In his travels, he's crossed paths with Virginia, who found him to be capable, bloodthirsty, and completely insane; just the type of fella she likes to keep in touch with. Best of all, she knows exactly what he wants most—knowledge. After figuring that the supernatural is at play in the West, Kent has been desperate to not only find out more about it, but to harness this power for himself. And Virginia's found the mother lode for him; Hellstromme built one of his first fear laboratories here. Just like the ones he currently uses further along the Wasatch line, the laboratory is disguised as a roundhouse. While the good doctor is normally exceptionally good at keeping his more sinister works from prying eyes, this one somehow fell through the cracks. His demolition team didn't do a very good job, and left this "fearhouse" partially intact. A find like this is impossible for a madman like Kent to pass up, and he did everything he could to get the Older gang to Allsburg.

Now, Kent may be crazy, but he's no fool. He knew that he couldn't simply set up shop in Allsburg and study the fearhouse to his little black heart's content. He needed some way of making sure the townsfolk would stay out of his business, and he had just the way to do it. He discovered a formula some time ago that a former rival (emphasis on *former*) devised; the formula produces a substance that, when inhaled or imbibed, induces strong feelings of paranoia and suspicion. Since the town gets most of its water from a nearby spring, it was child's play for Kent to quickly infect the whole town with this concoction. By the time the heroes arrive here, the entire population is practically at each others' throats. The local farmers haven't been able to ship out much of their crops with the bandits practically holding the train line hostage, and think the local merchants are paying the gang so they can drive up prices. Feel free to change or add any other conspiracy theories you'd like to the mix, Marshal; the crazier they are, the better. The write up on the town should have a ton of ideas for you to use. Things are getting bad in Allsburg, with crazy conspiracy theories and bullets flying from every side; all making it very difficult to sort out the truth of what's going on.

Train Heist!

The posse arrives in Allsburg by train, their tickets provided by the "helpful" Mr. Lancaster. About ten or fifteen miles out from the town, call for Notice rolls. Anyone succeeding hears the sound of steam engines, but coming from behind them, towards the back of the train. The sound is a pair of well armed steam engines, and a few moments later, the pull up alongside the car the heroes are in, one on each side. Anyone looking outside can act, against the bandits. Each of the steam wagons has a gatling gun (use the stats

for the artillery piece DLR 52, but only one person is required to use it).



Enemies (on each steam wagon): 4 Outlaws (DLR 233; 2 with rifles, 2 with pistols), 1 driver (Outlaw with Driving d6)

After the first round of combat, one bandit on each wagon tosses an object on board the train. The objects hit the floor of the car and instantly start releasing a strange green gas. Allow the players to make Vigor rolls, but only the person rolling highest actually succeeds; everyone else is affected by the gas, though they won't feel the affects for a bit. Using that gas on the heroes is all the bandits are really here for, but they make a good show of attacking the train and have plenty of fun doing it. Once things start going downhill for them, they skedaddle it outta there fast as they can. Not long after, the train pulls into Allsburg Station. A thorough search shows that nothing at all was taken.

Now, Marshal, you're probably wondering what that gas is all about. Its the same stuff Kent used on Allsburg, except highly concentrated. By the time the posse is stepping off the train, it should start taking effect, turning all but the person who rolled highest on that Vigor check to succumb to feelings of mistrust of paranoia. Now, how you wanna handle this is up to you, but its intended to make your roleplaying experience here a bit more interesting. One idea is, as the heroes start talking to the townsfolk, to take your players aside and have them start siding with the various factions that are starting to form in the town. Make it appropriate to the characters' background if possible. Feel free to emphasize this as much or as little as you feel comfortable, and be sure to award Fate Chips for good role players. This is meant to be fun, and to make sure the players have at least a fair chance at the fights they'll be in later on. They'll be needing those chips in short order.

News & Allies

Now, onto what's *really* going on here in Allsburg. Just like in our last episode, add in plenty of red herrings; that should be easy enough to do, especially with everyone in town at each others throats. Here are some true tidbits to bury in amongst all the trash of delusion and mistrust. The Older gang occasionally raids the town itself, and always rides in from the south. In truth, that's where their camp is,

hidden in the hills. A lot of people have seen some strange things happening near the old roundhouse. Most aren't willing to spill, but with some good rolls and role playing, your heroes may hear about strange lights and weird noises coming from the old roundhouse, as well as crazy talk of walking corpses. A couple of people who frequent the seedier spots in Allsburg have spoken to a stranger, who's been asking a lot of questions, mainly about that old roundhouse. If they asked a lawman or bounty hunter type, or got a good roll, they might find out that he looked an awful lot like James Older, leader of the Older gang. Finally, a drunk old Indian's been poking arrived in town a week or so ago, looking for some folk matching the heroes' description. No one's been payin' him much mind, as he's spent most of his time holed up inside a bottle. If anyone heads to Nutt's Saloon No. 3, they'll probably find him passed out in a corner.

Should your heroes decide to investigate the roundhouse during the day, they find nothing unusual. It takes a Notice (-6) to find any sign of the fear laboratory components, and even then, there's no way they can figure out what the thing does, only that it's an infernal device of some kind. At night is another story, as Kent checks in on the place every few nights, slowly but surely repairing the danged thing. He always has a nice chunk of the gang along with him, just to make sure no one disturbs him (at least two or three outlaws per hero, along with at least one of the steam wagons). They don't really care about killing the posse, just making sure they don't interfere with their boss's work, weird and frightening as it may be. Don't worry, the heroes'll be getting a nice look at this place up running before too long. As for finding the Older gang's camp to the south, it only takes a couple of Tracking rolls to find it. Getting a close look is another story, as during the day the entire gang is there. There's six outlaws per hero in the gang as a whole, not mention their nicely armed steam wagons. One of those is crewed at all times.

As for the allies part of this section's title, the posse's got a couple folk willing to help them out a bit. The fella asking questions around town is James Older alright, in the flesh. See, he never really liked Kent much, but the resources he brought to the gang made him a valuable addition. But now he's starting to think that Kent bringing them here isn't worth the trouble, and he wants to know what's so important about that roundhouse. He's also rather curious as to how Kent knew about the arrival of the posse in advance; he's sure the crazy scientist's not spilling about something, and he doesn't feel like that something get him and his men killed. After hearing about the posse's skill in dealing with his men on the train, he's interested in enlisting their aid. He ain't one to take any chances though, and won't approach them unless he's sure word of it won't be getting back to Kent or the law. All he wants in return for their help is assurance that they won't call down the law on him after they get rid of Kent. Kent and the Older gang make formidable opponents, and a skilled gunman and leader like Older would make a formidable ally to the posse, if they can trust him and his men. The men from his

gang he's brought in on this don't number a large group; the whole group, not including Older himself, is as big as the posse.



The Indian is a fella by the name of Red Hat Bob. That wasn't the name his mama gave him, but it's what he's gone by for years. Bob's an old Cherokee shaman, and many years ago, just after the Reckoning began, he had a vision. He learned of the Staff of Hanaptala, of its power and some idea of where the pieces of this evil relic were buried. Knowing that should a servant of the Reckoners could never be allowed to find it, he took it upon himself to find and destroy the staff. As he journeyed across the West, he became incredibly arrogant, flaunting his shamanic powers and not keeping to the Old Ways. The nature spirits were appalled by this, and instantly stopped answering his calls. Since then, his life's gone from bad to worse, until he simply turned into just another drunk Indian wandering the West. That is, until about two weeks ago, when he had another vision. He hadn't had any sign the spirits favored him for years, but this vision was just as clear as his old ones. He saw this town Allsburg, and the posse, and a shadow cast over them all. He's been trying to find the heroes ever since, and if and when he does, will do anything he can to aid them. While he's ready and willing to help the posse get rid of the Older gang and Kent, he's not exactly the steadiest gun hand, and he still does not have access to his shamanic powers.

The Next Step

You're probably wonderin' what precisely to do next Marshal. You've got a lot going on in this burg: paranoid townsfolk ready to shoot each other, a marauding band of outlaws messing with infernal technology, a desperado willing to help out for a price, and a crazy old Indian so drunk he couldn't hit the ground with his hat in three throws. As for what happens next, we're leaving a lot of that in your hands. Get the posse involved some in the feuds between the townsfolk, have the Older gang come riding through town one day and shoot up the place, or maybe have something spooky and not quite dead awaken the posse one night. Until the final showdown with Kent at the roundhouse (details on that below) a lot of this tale is up to you Marshal. You know your players better than we do, you know what they'll have the most fun doing. Chances are they'll want to check out the Older gang's camp, and below you'll find plenty of details on that, as well as more info on James Older and Red Hat Bob. Remember Marshal, this does not have to play out as described here. If your posse comes up with their own way of doing this, that's fine; just use what's here for info and ideas.

First of all, lets make one thing clear - Bob and Older DO NOT get along. Older's never trusted Indians and thinks Custer should get a citizenship award, while Bob thinks Older's nothing but a low down dirty desperado (which he is). There is nothing wrong with your posse enlisting the aid of both these hombres, but be warned sparks will be flying. They won't be looking to draw down on each other for nothing, but Older isn't above having some of his men "see to" Bob when the lead's flying. Bob's a stubborn old Indian, and will be sure to argue against any plan of Older's even after it becomes clear the outlaw's got the right of it. Combined with the fact that the heroes themselves aren't in the most trusting mood thanks to Kent's paranoia gas, this should make working with both of these men rather interesting. Remember Marshal, your posse doesn't have to work with both; they could do this whole thing alone. But getting the aid of these men will go along way in helping them rid themselves of Kent and his boys.

Now the fun part. After meeting up with Older and agreeing to work with him, he tells the posse he's got a plan, but needs to straighten a couple things out first. The next day, one of his men contacts the posse, telling them to head over to a spot out to the north of town. There they'll find a small camp, set up by Older and his men. James Older's sitting on the ground talking his boys, drawing something in the dirt with a stick. As the posse arrives he looks up and greets them. Then read the following:

"Good ta see ya really did decide to stick with me and ma boys. I got a plan all ready ta go, this very night, have a looksee." He motions to the scratchings in the dirt before him. "This here's the layout of the camp. Now most of the goods we've acquired in our time here are in a lockbox in Kent's tent, here. Now, Kent's been sayin' fer the past

few days that his work down at that ol' roundhouse is jus 'bout done and he plans on turnin' the 'mechanism' on, whatever the hell that means. I've made sure to have all o' my boys here posted on watch at the camp, so the odds'll be a bit more in my-I mean our favor. You folk can come ridin' in and attack the camp, and once we've seen to Kent's boys, we can figure out what he's really up to. See, Kent's a smart man, but he can be a bit addle brained about things some times. He keeps a diary of everything, and I mean everything, that happens to him. I'm sure there's somethin' in there that'll clue us in as to what he's up ta. Sound good to ya?"

The heroes are free to offer their own input on the plan, and make demands on what happens to the gang's acquisitions. Older's willing to part with some of his gang's take, as long as he still gets his freedom at the end of the caper. He'll lie about turning over what the gang's taken if it means the posse will go along with the plan; he can just take it at gunpoint later.



The outlaw camp is rather empty, considering the full size of the Older gang. Only a token group of outlaws has been left behind to guard the gang's stolen goods, and if the posse's got Older and his men helping them, that number's even smaller. Most of the tents are simple affairs of wood and cheap canvas, able to hold two or three men, sleeping. Kent's is obviously well made, and considerably larger, big enough for about four men to stand inside. The camp is laid out at random, with barrels and crates of supplies scattered about and a large fire in the approximate center. An empty wagon is near the fire, and several horses are tied up right near it. Half of the men there are shootin' the breeze around the fire, the rest are scattered around the edge of the camp on watch. Neither steam wagon is there. Remember that this doesn't all have to unfold as we've described here; your posse may not join up with Older and his men, but still decide to check out the camp at night. Should that be the case, Older views the heroes as enemies first when the lead starts flying, though once most of the outlaws are down, he may consider parleying with the heroes to save his own skin. As for the other outlaws,

as you can probably expect, they're not the bravest cowpokes, and give up as soon as they realize they're in over their heads. Oh, and don't forget those Darkness penalties Marshall.

Enemies (allied with Older): Outlaws (DLR 233, 2 per hero).

Enemies (not allied with Older): Outlaws (DLR 233, 3 per hero), James Older (WC Veteran Gunman, DLR 231)

Allies: Outlaws (DLR 233, 1 per hero, if allied with Older), James Older (WC Veteran Gunman, DLR 231), Red Hat Bob (WC Indian Shaman with Habit (major, alcohol), can't use powers, DLR 232, if allied with him)

Once the fight's over, the heroes are free to search the camp. Other than some trail supplies and some ammo, most of the small tents are empty. Kent's tent is another matter. Two cots are set up, one used by Older and the other by Kent. A safe sits in the middle of the tent, containing about \$750 worth of various valuables, most stolen from the citizens of Allsburg. Assuming Older is with them, he makes sure no one from the posse even looks at the safe the wrong way. Initially, no sign of this journal Older talked about can be found, though a Notice roll finds a patch of dirt beneath Kent's cot that obviously conceals a buried item. Digging it up finds a small lock box, with a strange mechanical device attached. An appropriate Knowledge check lets the heroes realize that the device is a cunning explosive, triggered to blow if the lock is tampered with. A Repair(-4) roll can deactivate the device, and allow them to break into the box. The lock requires a Lockpicking(-2) to open successfully, or the heroes can try to bash it open (Toughness 8, any damage type). However, if the device is not disabled and the box opened by these means, it explodes in a Medium Burst Template, causing 2d6 damage to everyone affected and destroying most of the contents of the box. Allow the posse to search around for bits and pieces of Kent's journal so they can try to piece together some of what's going on. Now, if they happen to get past the device and the lock, the posse not only gets their hands on the journal, but also an antidote to Kent's paranoia concoction, enough for everyone in the posse.

The journal has several juicy details for the posse. Most of it is the inane ramblings of a madman, but buried in there is some very important information. First, Kent lays out explicitly his relationship with Virginia. He doesn't know her last name, but gives a very detailed description of her, as well as mentioning her abundant resources and knowledge of the supernatural. He also talks about how he's done work for her on occasion, and how he was hired to come here, hold the town of Allsburg hostage and to eliminate the posse when they arrived. These entries are dated before the posse was even hired for this job, and included detailed information on their exploits in Deadwood. You should probably let the heroes find enough fragments to piece this part together, Marshal. It'll make some of the news they get next episode that much more fun. The journal also talks about the old roundhouse, and while it

doesn't say anything specific about what that place really is, it does talk about it being a powerful infernal device, and that Kent plans to use it to "recruit the fallen." Any survivors of the fight can also be persuaded to talk, but only know that Kent took the rest of the gang to the roundhouse; he didn't say what he was doing. Red Hat Bob is ready to follow the posse anywhere, but, depending on what exactly the posse found and how the fight went, it may take some convincing to keep convince Older and his men to stick with the posse.

Showdown at the Roundhouse



At this point, if the posse found the journal intact, they'll probably be rip-roaring to get to the roundhouse and see what Kent's up to. It only takes a few minutes on horseback to get to the roundhouse, and once they get there, things are already underway. The building itself is rather dilapidated, with a few fair sized holes in the walls, and the tracks around the building are mostly torn up. Both of the gang's steam wagons are parked outside, unattended, and the rest of the gang is inside the building, with one man posted at each of the entrances of the roundhouse. Kent's got the machinery up and running, and weird noises and lights are coming from the roundhouse as the posse approaches. As stated in the town's details, Allsburg and surrounds usually has a Fear Level of 3, but with the "fearhouse" up and running, the entire place is just hopping with bad mojo and manitous, raising it to a 4. Have everyone roll Guts as they make their way towards the building; anyone failing is very disturbed by the wailings and ghostly lights, and suffers a -1 to all Trait rolls for the

rest of the encounter. Once they get close enough to see inside, read the following to them.

The rest of the Older gang is inside the dilapidated roundhouse, as is Kent. The mad scientist stands in front of some kind of strange control panel, operating all manner of switches and levers. You can hear the sound of gears turning, as well as the unearthly wailing of burning ghost rock. The shadows almost seem to shift around, and a moment later Kent's gaze darts over to you, and he shouts "INTRUDERS!!! GET 'EM NOW!!!"

The fight starts out simple enough, Kent's men against the posse and whatever allies they may have left. But don't worry Marshal, things'll be getting' a bit more interesting in no time.

Enemies: Outlaws (DLR 233, 3 per hero), Stanley Kent (WC Mad Scientist, DLR 232)

Allies: Whatever remains from fight at outlaw camp

While the fearhouse has only just started to turn on, its already doing plenty to mess with things around hear already. While the mechanisms aren't nearly strong enough to raise or lower the Fear Level, they do fling around enough fear to make the building plenty interesting for manitous, attracting them in droves. And with all this wonderful violence, there's no way they won't want a part of it. Unbeknownst to the people of Allsburg, this old roundhouse was built right on top of an old Indian burial site, giving the manitous plenty of toys to play with, if you follow, Marshal.



As the fight goes on, between the bodies of those who die in the fight, as well as the older ones buried right around here, plenty of Walkin' Dead (DLR 223) join the fray. Every round after the first, one or two corpses should rise up and start slugin' it out, continuing until the fearhouse is shut down. Kent will do everything in his power to see that this doesn't happen. As for the how of it, the fear laboratory's mechanisms can be shut down with a successful Repair roll by a hero using the console mentioned above (this takes a full round, no movement permitted). Alternatively, for the more destructive posses out there, should a fair amount of the building be destroyed, the fear laboratory

stops functioning, permanently. Any Walkin' Dead that are already around remain, but no new ones will rise.

Now, if for whatever reason the posse is delayed getting to the roundhouse after their firefight at the outlaw camp, have some Walkin' Dead already risen when they arrive. Obviously, the longer they took to get here, the more there should be. If they don't go there at all, or don't arrive for a substantial amount of time, Kent and his men, along with his "new recruits (3 Walkin' Dead per hero) rampage through Allsburg. That's sure to raise a huge commotion that'll attract the posse's attention, as long as they're somewhere nearby.

Aftermath in Allsburg

Once the heroes have dealt with Kent and his men, they'll probably want to destroy the fearhouse, and if Red Hat Bob is with them he insists. A search of Kent's body finds more of the antidote, enough to easily treat all of Allsburg. Once the antidote has been given to the town (it can simply be dumped in the town water supply), things return to normal fairly quickly, and the posse is lauded as heroes. The people still remember what happened, so anyone they crossed probably won't take too kindly to them, but by and large, the town is grateful for the posse's aid.

If Older and his men are still with them, they'll make their exit at this point. James Older reminds the posse of their bargain, making it clear that if he finds the law on his tail anytime soon, he'll be coming after them. He's not an ungrateful man, though, especially if the posse went out of their way to help him and his men in the fights that have ensued. If you feel it works, Marshal, he may actually thank the posse outright, and tell them to track him down if they ever need a hand (and there's money to be had).

Shortly after returning to town, if the heroes hadn't joined with him already, Red Hat Bob finds them, and confronts them. He says he can tell them about the staff they found, and will do so if they let him ride with them. He's stopped drinking recently, and there is a visible change over him since the last time the posse saw him. If they agree to allow the old Cherokee to join up, once they're away from prying ears he tells them the basic story of Hanaptala's staff, as well as his own sorry tale. Don't give the posse all the gory details, just the basics. He knows someone's after the pieces of the staff, and knows that nothing good can come of it ever being reunited. He swears to devote himself to the Old Ways, and the ways of the spirits, and to do all he can to aid the posse in stopping whoever's after the staff.

So the posse's made some new allies, found a place where they'll always be welcome (by most, at least), and learned a good deal about what's going on. There's still plenty more questions to be answered, especially concerning this Virginia woman, but at least now they know what questions to ask.

*Be sure to catch the next installment of **Sticks, Stones, & Rail Wars**, coming soon to Shark Bytes!*

Around the World

For those of you who have been following Jon Ginsberg's Campaign for the past few issues, Jon has graciously generated the town of Allsburg from this installment for insertion into your Deadlands world.

Allsburg

by Jon Ginsberg

Basic Info

Population: 350

Fear Level: 3

Type of Town: small commercial center, rail depot, former railhead

Town History

The town of Allsburg lies just on the western side of the Iowa-Nebraska border, along the main Wasatch rail line. The town was originally a railhead on the Wasatch line, during the early days of the Great Rail Wars. As the Wars progressed, though, and the head of the line moved further West, the boom that had accompanied the railroad died down. Unlike many other railroad towns, Allsburg didn't dry up; Wasatch began using the town as a depot for refitting and repairing its rolling stock. Combined with the numerous farms and ranches in the area, the town soon became a thriving community. While it hasn't grown much since the early days, it hasn't shrunk at all, and is fast becoming a major community in the area.

Notable Areas

Front Street

This street fronts the train tracks, hence its name. Most of the major saloons and entertainment houses are found on this street, as well as a fair number of small shops.

Main Street

The central retail street in town, most major shops are located here.

Smith Street

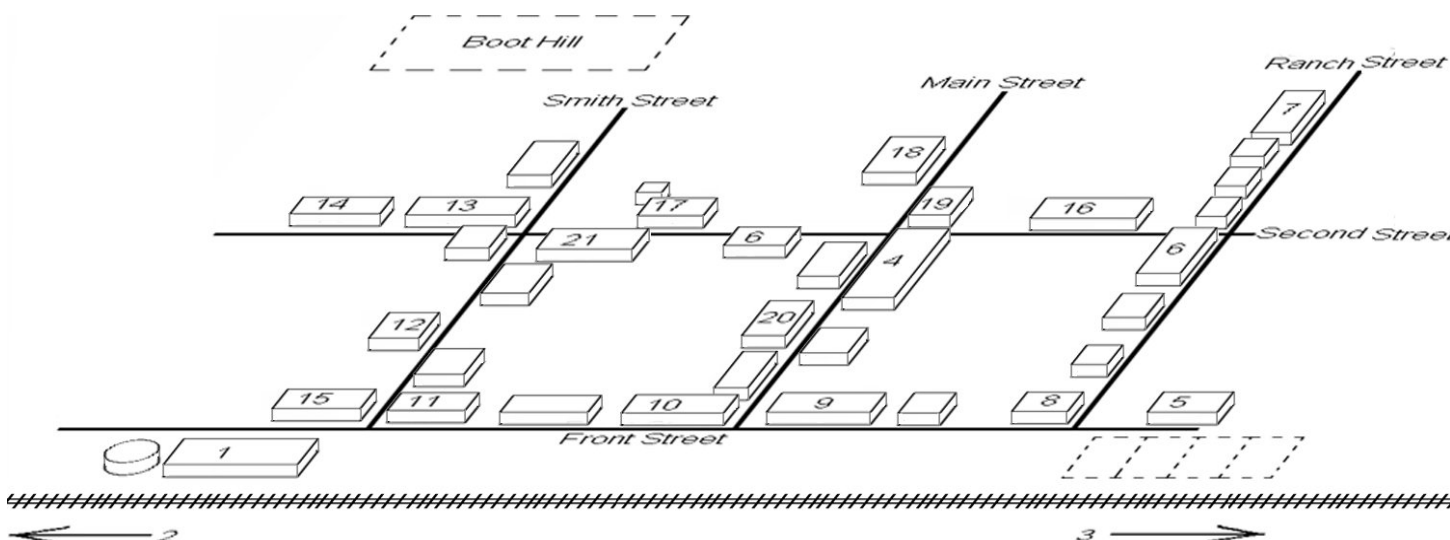
This street gets its name for the numerous small blacksmith shops here. They're employed mostly by the rail yard for fixing equipment. It is considered by most to be the seedier part of town.

Ranch Street

Most of the ranches around town are off to the east, and with the cattle pens and meat companies here, it quickly came to be known as Ranch Street. Most shops catering to cowboys and travelers are found here.

Town Layout

1. Wasatch Railroad Station
2. To Railyard & Depot
3. To Old Roundhouse
4. O'Hare's Dry Goods & General Store
5. Walton Beef Company
6. Miller's Livery & Stable
7. Stanton Meat Packing
8. Nutt's Saloon No. 3
9. The Oriental Gambling Parlor
10. Royal Saloon
11. McGreeley's Variety House
12. Robertson Guns
13. Grant's Smithy
14. Prairie Rose Saloon
15. Miss Devereaux's
16. Mayor's House
17. Marshal's Office & Lockup
18. Star Hardware
19. Wasatch Rail Company, Allsburg Office
20. Thomas Savings & Loan
21. Grand Western Hotel



Places in Town

Wasatch Railroad Station

This is just your typical train station; a ticket booth, platform, and water tower for refilling the engine's boiler. The train tends to run on time around here, thanks to there being a company office right I town.

Railyard & Depot

This is the biggest reason why people still care about Allsburg. An extensive railyard and depot for the maintenance and repair of Wasatch rolling stock employs a fair number of townfolk. Add to that the needs of those men (and women), and the attraction of almost always having well maintained trains coming through town, and you can easily see why this town's still on the map.

Old Roundhouse

Now, unlike the currently in use railyard, this old roundhouse, one of Wasatch's first when the Rail Wars began, is a dilapidated wreck. It's also the center of weirdness around here.

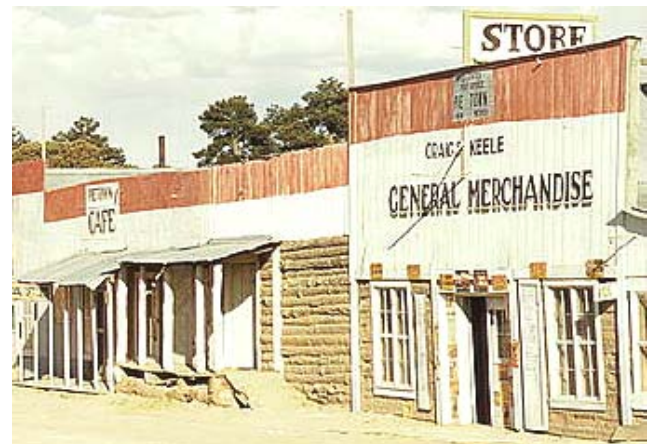
In addition to being one of the first roundhouses constructed by the company out West, it was also *the first* constructed as a fear laboratory by the good Dr. Hellstromme. While it wasn't too effective, the results Hellstromme got from his experiments here prompted him to refine the design. He ordered the "fearhouse" to be dismantled as the head of the line moved further west, and continued his experiments there. Unbeknownst to Hellstromme, the dismantling was not as complete as he would have liked, and much of the fear laboratory components remain, just waiting for someone with the infernal ingenuity to bring it to life again. The equipment on its own attracts a fair number of manitous, causing occasional random spikes in the local Fear Level.



And if you're not a fan of coincidences, you're gonna hate this one. Whether by accident or design, the roundhouse is built on an old Indian Burial site, its origins lost to history. There's very little sign of it being there, other than numerous small mounds, no more than a few inches high, covering the plains right around the roundhouse. They cover an area about twenty yards in diameter, with the roundhouse slightly off-center; so anyone up to some bad mojo around here gets plenty of bodies to work with.

O'Hare's Dry Goods & General Store

This notably large establishment was one of the first buildings constructed in Allsburg, and is now the largest, bar none. It's also by the most corrupt man in town: Tim O'Hare. An Irish immigrant, O'Hare started his business here as a meager general store, but once the railroad came through he started raking in dough like a madman. He made so much money in so short a time, he was even able to set up shop giving loans to people to improve their own businesses or to new arrivals looking start ones up.



And that's where the troubles began. O'Hare realized just about everyone in town owed him money, and he quickly bought up just about every lot he could. Any new businesses were soon paying him rent, as well as a "partnership percentage" for his aid in getting started up. The businesses he aids tend to be well kept and run, but the owners also tend to be amongst the poorest individuals in town.

A couple years ago, some of the business owners decided they were tired of this, and began making plans to run O'Hare out of town. He got wind of this, and arranged for a band of outlaws to rob the next train coming through town. The shop owners lost their shipments of goods to sell, and quickly got the message. O'Hare occasionally continues these raids, but only as a reminder to stay in line.

Walton Beef Company & Stanton Meat Packing

These aren't local business, just branches of larger meat companies that have set up shop here in Allsburg. Both are relatively new come to town, but the competition between them is hot already, to the delight of the local ranchers. While Walton is a fairly honest company, Stanton is anything but. They currently have a gang of rustlers raiding ranchers that do business with Walton, and either destroy the beeves they rustle or alter their brands have sell them to Stanton as a "free grazer" outfit. Walton's agent in town, Jeb Winford, has been quietly asking around about the rustling, and is very interested in any evidence that can be found linking Stanton Meat Packing to it.

Miller's Livery & Stable

At first glance, this is nothing but a run of the mill stable, run by an older gentleman by the name of Sam Miller. However, older lawmen and outlaws might recognize Mr.

Miller for who he really is: Charlie Jenkins, a notorious Texan horse thief and cattle rustler. While he's kept his real identity a secret to start a new life here, there have been a number of horses that have gone missing from his stable; nearly ten, all excellent stock, in the past five years.

Nutt's Saloon No. 3

This saloon is on the far eastern edge of town, and, being near to the cattle yards and meat companies, caters mostly to cowboys and ranch hands coming in with a herd. While it might seem that this would keep the other clientele away, the saloon is also the home of the Professor.



No one knows the man's real name, but they do know he's the best piano player for miles around, maybe even the best in the state. He's an older fellow, with a full head of white hair, but not nearly old enough to have gotten it the traditional way. He always wears the same old suit, covered in more trail dust than the cowboys who come by the joint, and keeps an ancient Colt Army pistol at his hip at all times. He's an excellent pianist, and actually plays much more than the normal Stephen Foster opus; from Mozart to Chopin, all seemingly from memory. The Professor's not one to tolerate critics though, many a drover's been fired on by the man. He's never hit anybody, but then again, no one's ever actually seen him draw either; all they see is the smoking gun in his hand.

The Oriental Gambling Parlor

Owned by Harold Sanders, the Oriental began its life as a saloon, but Sanders, with the help of his "partner" Tim O'Hare, eventually turned the place into a quality gambling parlor. Unlike most of the other shop owners who have been forced into business with O'Hare, Sanders doesn't pay the man anything, at least not directly. Instead, O'Hare's brother-in-law, Ned Driscoll, runs a faro game at the Oriental, free of charge, and shares the take with O'Hare. Because he doesn't have to deal directly with O'Hare, Sanders's become bolder than others, and has been on the lookout for anyone skilled enough, with cards or an iron, to get rid of Driscoll.

Royal Saloon

The Royal is the oldest saloon in Allsburg, built around the same time as most of the other original buildings in town. For a long time, it was the central meeting place in town,

and still is, to a degree. Trials were often held there, as well as emergency town meetings. Most of those take place at McGreeley's Variety House (see below) nowadays, since it has more room than the small saloon.

The place is owned by Mayor Ike Reedsworth, though he leaves the running of it to his two sons, Albert, the elder, and Robert. Just about everyone in town frequents the establishment, and the Reedsworths are very good at keeping the bad element out. Marshal Hanson tends to hang around here when he's not at his office, which also tends to discourage trouble makers.

McGreeley's Variety House

Robert McGreeley owns this variety theater, and keeps an excellent place. His own small troupe performs weekly, and he regularly brings in other acts of all types. Another shop owner that owes a lot to O'Hare, he's never been out to strike it rich, just own his own place and work a nice theater. His only vice is gossip; he's the biggest busybody in town, and knows everything that everybody's doing. Anyone who goes to McGreeley for information about local happenings gets a +2 on Streetwise rolls.

Robertson Guns

Known all around these parts, Harlin Robertson is an incredibly skilled gunsmith. His technical knowledge of firearms is incredible, and he can fix just about any gun known to man, including personal Gatling weapons. Robertson's also been known to do special modifications for the right people, at the right price. This is also perfectly mundane, no mad science going on here; just come up with some kind of small but useful benefit that fits the hero buying from Robertson.

Grant's Smithy

Up and down Black Street are small blacksmiths, but the biggest and best in town is Grant's Smithy. Samuel Grant is the archetypal blacksmith; big, strong, and tough. A former bounty hunter from the southwest, a job went bad some years ago and left him with a bad leg. He had worked as a smith before turning to bounty hunting, so he moved up here and started up again. While he makes good money, better than he ever did as a bounty hunter, he misses the excitement of the old days, and would be willing to hit the trails again for the right cause. A fair gunman, and an excellent tracker, he'd make an excellent ally for the posse.

Prairie Rose Saloon

Considered to be the beginning of the seedy part of Allsburg, the Prairie Rose is a known hangout of thieves, miscreants, and all other sorts of unsavory types. While just about everyone in town knows what goes on here, the outlaws who frequent the saloon keep things fairly under the table. Getting in touch with someone here to buy or sell stolen goods takes a Raise on a Streetwise roll. More Raises reduce the price somewhat, but regardless, anything valuable probably has an identifying mark of some kind that can be found with a Notice roll. Anything can be bought from these cutthroats (and we mean

anything), and at half the normal price. Just hope that no one comes looking for their stuff, partners.

Miss Devereaux's

This house of ill repute is owned by Miss Beulah Devereaux, a former slave turned soiled dove. A shrewd woman, she worked her way from the hog ranch to owning her own house, and makes sure that her girls don't have to deal with the things she did. She keeps several very large and skilled men on hand working as porters, and they always remind anyone coming to the house to treat the girls right, or else.

Miss Devereaux is also a skilled voodoo priestess, and while she doesn't advertise this, she has been known to aid strangers who come to town on occasion. Most think the strange travelers come for the ladies, but many hear of the woman's skill at parting the veil and ride in from miles around to hear their futures. For most of these, she simply plays parlor tricks, but for those she considers worthy, she may work some real mojo.

Mayor's House

This is the home of Mayor Ike Reedsworth. While it is a fair sized house, its nothing compared to what some of the more illustrious citizens out beyond the town proper. A modest man, the mayor regularly wines and dines the most influential men in the town, as well as having some of the not so influential ones over occasionally as well. He is truly a man of the people, and frequents just about every shop, restaurant, and saloon in town.

Marshal's Office & Lockup

Marshal Ted Hanson keeps a small office here, mainly as storage for several locked cabinets. One of them holds a fair number of rifles, used on the rare occasion a posse needs to be organized and armed. The other is a large lockbox, used to store weapons belonging to travelers. Most people who live in Allsburg either don't carry an iron, or are trusted by Hanson. Strangers are a totally different matter, however, and he is usually quick to confront any new blood in town to collect their weapons.



Out back is a small lockup. The building has three small cells and a solid wood construction, so no one will be trying to pull a door off with their horse. On the other hand, only a

single padlock on each door keeps them shut, which can be easily shot out.

Star Hardware

Owned by Mordechai Star, Morty to his friends, this is more than your typical hardware store. Originally ostracized because of his Jewish faith, the townsfolk of Allsburg quickly turned their opinions of Morty around when they realized the kinds of connections he had. No one's sure how he does it, but if you ask him to get you anything short of a steam wagon, in about two or three days, he'll have it. And while he may charge fifty percent more than the standard price, few people are willing to argue with the quality of what he gets.

Wasatch Rail Company, Allsburg Office

The local office in Allsburg is a modest affair, little more than a personal office for Samuel Winslowe, the local company representative. Winslowe runs the rail yards and depot, as well as helping to ensure the trains that operate in this region keep to their schedules. He's also in charge of the line repair crews for the surrounding counties, keeping a fair sized chunk of the main Wasatch line in good shape. All in all, it's a thankless job that only gets people's attention when something goes wrong.

Its not a surprise, then, to find that Winslowe is not an honest man. He constantly takes bribes from just about anyone, most notably O'Hare, to do just about anything you want; from obtaining secret information on train schedules to causing delays at prearranged times, even as far as outright sabotage on occasion. He's been very careful so far to make sure any problems he causes are minor and explainable, as he doesn't want the home office in Salt Lake City finding out about what he's doing.

Thomas Savings & Loan

One of the newest businesses in town, this is quickly becoming a major thorn in O'Hare's control of the town. Most of the major businesses are starting to work with him now, many of them trying to figure out a way to get out from under O'Hare's thumb by taking out loans from the bank. The owner, Frank Thomas, is completely unaware of O'Hare's operations, but is quickly figuring out that *someone* in town doesn't want an honest banker around here. There have already been a number of threats on his life, as well as his family's even, and he's been asking around, trying to figure out what precisely is going on here.

Grand Western Hotel

The Grand Western Hotel is the only one in town, but large enough to easily accommodate a large number of people. There are over a dozen individual rooms, as well as an attached bunkhouse that can fit as many as can cram into it. Like most others in town, the owner Stanley White, owes a lot to 'Hare, but is too stubborn and honest to seek outside assistance. His son Roger, on the other hand, is as hot tempered as his father is stubborn, and has been asking around recently for aid in taking down O'Hare. At first his talk went ignored by everyone, but lately he's been attracting O'Hare's attention.