

the
**A WORLD OF
ADEN™**



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DESIGN

Shane Lacy Hensley

DEVELOPMENT AND EDITING

Greg Farshtey

COVER DESIGN

Tim Bobko, Tom O'Neill

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Tim Bobko, Stephen Crane, Tom O'Neill

COVER ILLUSTRATION

Danilo Gonzalez

INTERIOR ILLUSTRATIONS

**Tim Bobko, Tom O'Neill, Brian Schomburg,
Mike Vilardi**

Publisher: Daniel Scott Palter • Associate Publisher/Treasurer: Denise Palter • Associate Publisher: Richard Hawran
Senior Editor: Greg Farshtey • Editors: Peter Schweighofer, Bill Smith, George Strayton, Paul Sudlow, Eric S. Trautmann
Art Director: Stephen Crane • Graphic Artists: Tim Bobko, Tom O'Neill, Brian Schomburg • Sales Manager: Jeff Kent
Licensing Manager: Ron Seiden • Warehouse Manager: Ed Hill • Accounting: Karen Bayly, Wendy Lord • Billing: Amy Giacobbe

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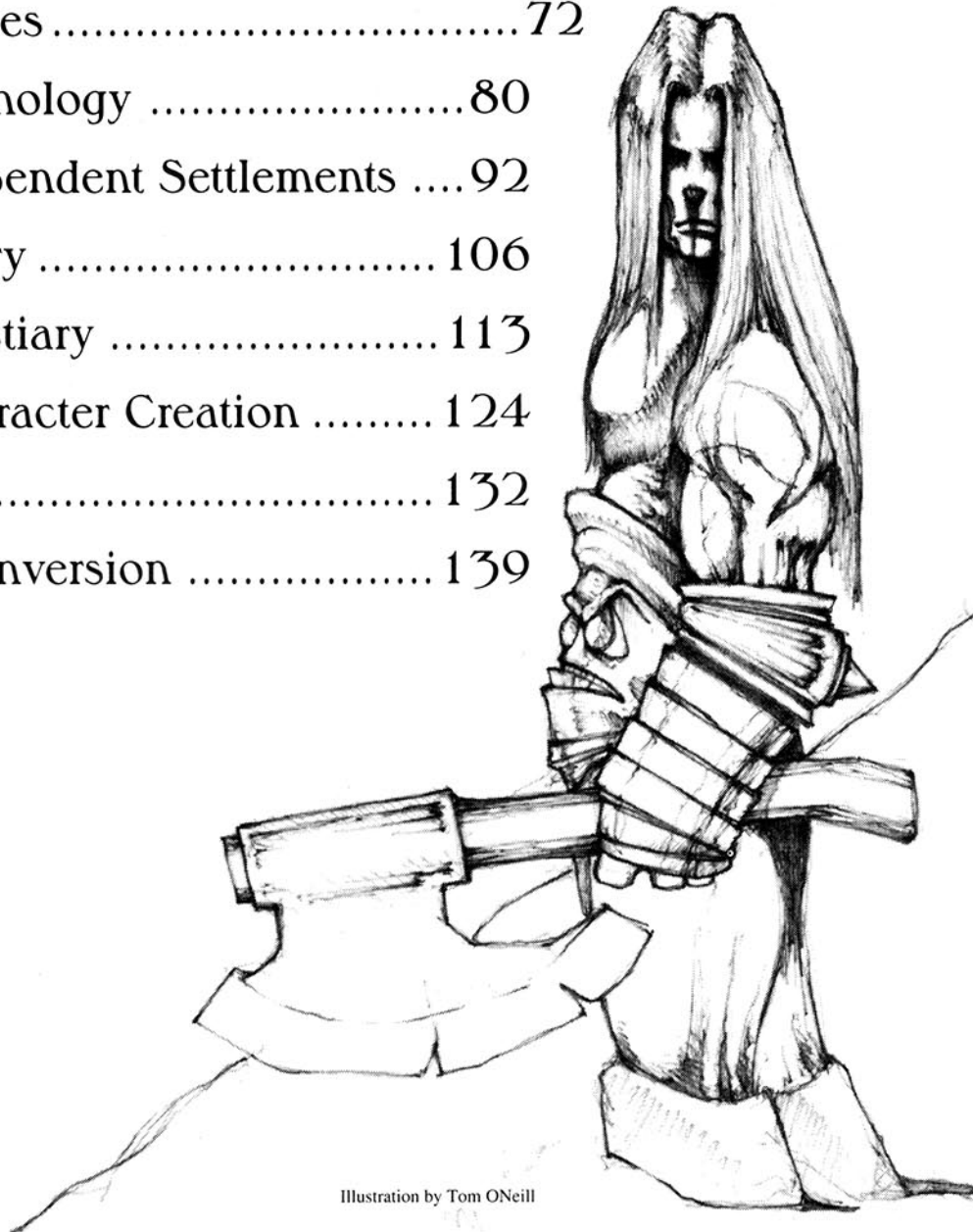


Illustration by Tom O'Neill



**"With a flash
of lightning,
the age of
thunder is
Born..."**

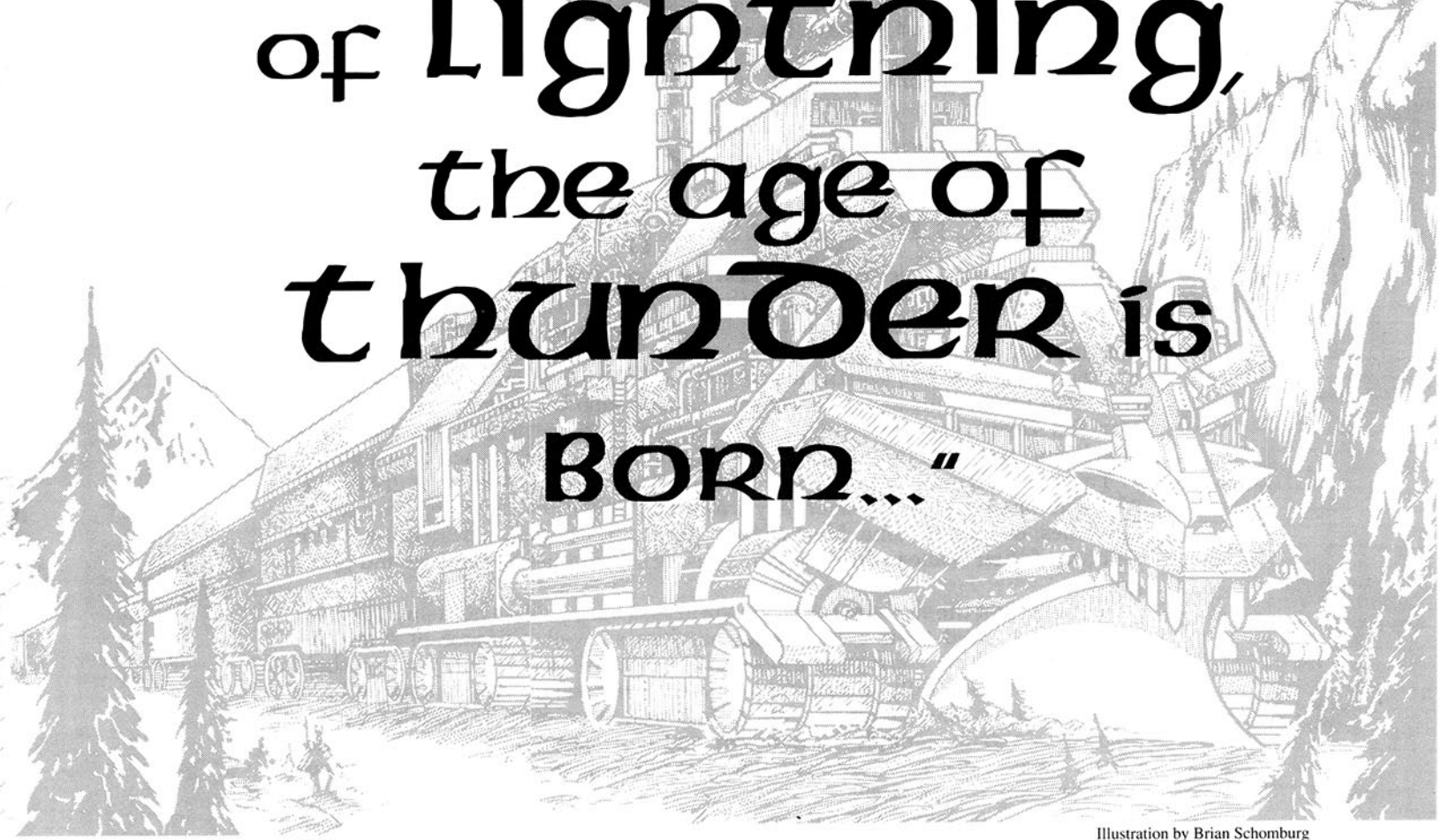


Illustration by Brian Schomburg

introduction

Darkfall.

I remember it well. Ten years ago seems like yesterday. Or a millennium. I was younger then. Not just in years, but in my mind. Now a decade of suffering and horror has wrinkled my face and made my eyes leery of the tiniest shadow. I was a carefree man before my hands were coated in the ichor of a thousand nocturnals.

Before the Darkfall: the first years

Our land is filled with the darkest fears of mankind given life. Undead shamble through the forests and feed their impossible cravings with those foolish enough to walk the dark paths. Nightmares come to life and fill men with insanity, urging them to turn on their brothers. Mutant warlords rage in the vast wastelands and plot to overthrow the last bastions of civilization. We call these creatures the nocturnals, for they were born in Aden's darkest moment — the Darkfall. Desperate individuals, such as myself, continue to fight this tidal wave of evil that washes over Aden, but our numbers shrink with each passing day.

Those settlements that have survived the invasion have done so at great cost. All towns have walls — whether they are formed from mystical wards, sharpened palisades, or honest stone. Most of the adults in these places bear arms in the defense of their homes while the rest eke out a living providing food and other goods.

It wasn't just the settlements of our world that built walls. The people that live here have formed their own private barriers as well. Citizens of Aden are renowned for their warmth and hospitality, but the fiends that prey on their kindness are gradually wearing down their compassion. Whole nations have even turned on their neighbors out of fear and ignorance. The dark realm of Urbana is a grim reminder of how fear and hopelessness can spawn internal decay. Wives' tales aren't used to frighten children anymore — stories told once too often tend to come true.

What the Darkfall is or why it occurred is a mystery. Those who search too hard for the truth often fall prey to its countless minions. The people of Aden know only that one day the world turned foul. Our most powerful mages cannot tell us the origins of this plague, and our prophets and seers vanished the day of the Darkfall.

It is a time of despair, of violence, and of dark sorcery. But it is also a time for courage and compassion. These are the virtues that will see us through this dismal age.

my story

My name is Grimplak. I am a warrior and a healer. This journal that you now read is my best account of the state of our world. I have traveled Aden for many years now, fighting the nocturnals and giving hope to those who have lost theirs. But I am not foolish enough to believe that I am immortal. Someday a nocturnal will gnaw my bones. My only wish is that another will find this work and use the knowledge within to carry on my crusade. Let me warn you, stranger, that it is a difficult path I tread. You will find it filled with heartache and misery. But it is your task to heal Aden's wounds, be it by soothing salves or cold iron. I have found most places need both.

Before the Darkfall, my companions and I traveled the land healing the sick, relieving the suffering, and aiding King Corben's people in the kingdom of Arasteen. We visited the Sundered Desert, the Ice Wastes, Yzeem, faraway Vanora, and even the mad horsemen of the High Steppes. We were warriors of Arasteen's vigilant protectors, the Radiant Order. It was our task to patrol the land and dispense compassion and justice wherever we found strife. Our members prefer to heal instead of harm, though we are certainly capable of the latter in times of dire need. Even our simple white uniforms mirror these ideals. The wraps we wear about our arms symbolize bandages and our skill in healing. Upon our chest is the image of the lighthouse, the home of the Radiant Order and a reminder that justice, tempered by compassion, is the beacon that will draw a troubled soul through the darkest of times. It is perhaps prophetic that the Darkfall is the antithesis of these ideals.

Kallon was our Paladin, the warrior and healer who best embodied all the principles we hold dear. I was a Knight in the Radiant Order then, one of a fortunate few assigned to the company of the most famous and beloved men in the land. Kallon and our band rode from the Green Sea to the Ocean of Serenity helping those in need, and there were days I'd swear my blistered bottom could not ride a mile further. Had I only known what the future held, I would never have made such petty complaints. I will speak more of the Radiant Order later, but I must begin this journal of my experiences with that horrible winter day ten years ago, when darkness fell and the sun faded away like a dying ember.

Our band was in Rose, a beautiful town on the northern border of Columbey. It was a brilliant, sunny day. The sun reflected off the new-fallen snow bright enough to blind a man. Most of us wore white cloaks and were nearly invisible against the



Mike Vilardi

rolling drifts. The sky was as blue as the eyes of Tirrian, the warrior king that first founded our order. We woke early that day and the Rosians brought us a wonderful breakfast. We ate hearty and then went amongst the townsfolk to heal the ailments of those grateful people. Fevers and simple injuries were the extent of the Rosians' predicaments in those glorious days.

After a few hours of this work, we encountered the Blind Seer of Rose. He was a local storyteller and something of a con man, I suspect, but most days the children who gathered about him were smiling and laughing at the old man's tales, even without silvers to fill his cup. That day, however, the Blind Seer sat against a bleak stone wall with his head in his hands. Kallon approached him gently, and I'll never forget the conversation that passed between them.

"It has returned," the Seer said.

Kallon placed his hand upon the man's shoulder and comforted him, "What?" he asked. "What has returned?"

"The Renegade," he whispered. "Night has fallen. We are doomed."

I presumed the Blind Seer mad, but Kallon sank to his knees in despair. Then, while the two of them

knelt there in their secret misery, a great black cloud settled over the sun. Only a few scant rays found their way to Aden, enough light to give our fears shape and form in the shadows. Kallon stared up at the cloud, as did the Seer, though he was blind as a stone.

Suddenly I heard screams all about me. From the shadows came creatures we had only imagined in our darkest dreams. Things never before seen in our fair land chased people into dark alleys and devoured them in relentless fury. From the cemeteries arose the dead, their flesh and bones ruined from years beneath the earth, yet now stalking among us like deranged shepherds turned on their flock. Demons, monsters, nightmares, and ghosts — all these horrors emerged from the dark corners of Aden that night. We would later dub them the nocturnals, those things that came out to hunt when the darkness fell.

I fought with all my might against the swarm of horrors that engulfed us, but in the end, there were simply too many. I fell amidst a band of other Knights, the sting of a filthy nocturnal's claws still burning my savaged throat. Whatever beast brought me down turned its attention to my comrades and I lay there for a time undisturbed. I could see Kallon and the Blind Seer imploring some unknown figure just out of my field of vision. I called



Mike Vilardi

to our leader, wondering why he had not joined our last stand. I must have blacked out for a moment then, because when next I opened my bloody eyes, both he and the prophet had disappeared.

Some time later, I awoke in the company of a ragged group of survivors. One of them had dragged my battered body into a stone basement. We lived there like frightened mice for days while I healed and my strength slowly returned. I cursed my luck for a time, wishing that I had fallen with my comrades instead of surviving to die a coward's death. But the men and women who had saved my life still carried a gleam of hope in their eyes, and it was this that eventually rekindled my own courage. The events of that week are disturbing to me even now, but suffice it to say, we eventually escaped our prison and fled to an enclave of resistance in the west.

As for Kallon, his disappearance is a mystery as great as the origin of the Darkfall itself. Even his family vanished that day, though they were leagues distant. Mylena, his wife, and Cassandra, his daughter, were initially among the survivors of Hammlish, but somehow disappeared from their enclosed barricade. These mysteries may never be solved, but some distrustful part of my soul suspects that Cassandra and Mylena's fates are inexplicably tied to Kallon's, and somehow, to the coming of the Darkfall itself.

nocturnals

When the sun was momentarily eclipsed almost ten years ago, thousands of creatures only rumored to exist in dreams and folk-tales came to life. The nocturnals now hunt our folk by day as well as night despite their name, so do not believe you are safe simply because the sun is in the sky. Nocturnals come in all shapes and sizes. Their only common trait is their evil souls. I will describe many of these fiends as this journal progresses, but even this long roll-call is but a sampling of the thousands of monstrous abominations that walk, crawl, slither, or fly over our land.

Some nocturnals are intelligent, scheming creatures who instigate and organize their less clever fellows into rampaging warbands. Others hide in the settlements and strike at us in silence. Still others are phantoms made of ghostly ether or even living energy. A few are truly bizarre, such as a lonely, living manse of stone or a patch of sentient blood-weed. It seems the Darkfall is capable of spawning most any nightmare it can dredge from the psyche of our terrified people.

the corrupted

It is a black stain upon Aden's history that some sentient beings have turned upon their fellows and submitted themselves to the Darkfall. We call these wicked, treacherous souls "the corrupted."

The vast majority of corrupted individuals have yet to prove their worth to the Darkfall. They spend most of their time performing heinous deeds to garner their unknown master's attention, hoping they will one day be rewarded with fantastic power for their blasphemous service.

The few corrupted that have proven themselves worthy of whatever test the Darkfall requires of them are granted incredible powers. These select few then become nocturnals, or more accurately, corrupted nocturnals. After the transformation, there is rarely any true difference between the two. From that point on, their bodies and minds become even more twisted than they might have been before, and everything they touch is corrupted to help spread the evil of the Darkfall.

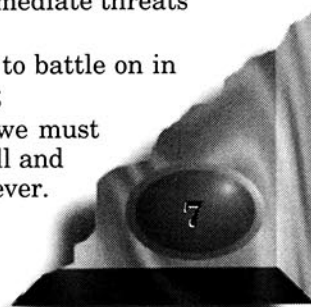
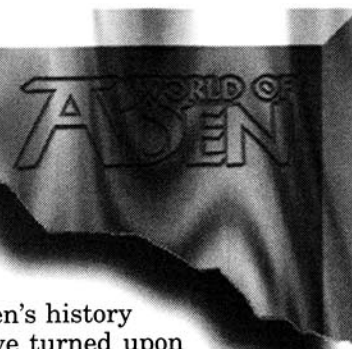
Most corrupteds are older than the Darkfall. Pure nocturnals entered the world sometime after the eclipse that heralded its arrival. It is for this reason that corrupteds tend to lead their lesser brothers in their campaign of evil. Because they were once one of us, they know our weaknesses and the best way to exploit them to our own ends.

our quest

The Darkfall is a malignant disease eating away at the very soul of our world. Only the tenacious spirits of our people have thus far held the infection in check. But each day, some new symptom of this plague threatens to eliminate hope and overwhelm the last bastions of civilization. Like the lighthouse that is the symbol of my order, it is our task to set an example that will inspire and empower the common folk to persevere in the fight against the Darkfall. If you are of courageous spirit, you must join me and hundreds of other champions in this crusade against the single greatest threat our world has ever faced.

Our quest is threefold.

- First, we must deal with the immediate threats posed to us by the nocturnals;
- Second, we must inspire others to battle on in the face of this overwhelming evil;
- Finally, and most importantly, we must determine the origin of the Darkfall and use that knowledge to destroy it forever.



Battling the nocturnals

To fight the nocturnals you will need a strong arm, a stronger mind, and trusted companions. Small groups of determined adventurers can cause the nocturnals no end of grief. Black powder muskets and pistols, bows, swords, wands, and other devices are sold throughout Aden and will aid you in combating the fiends you will meet in your travels. Learn to use these weapons well, but do not depend on them entirely. Nocturnals are strange and varied beasts, so you may find your usual methods of attack useless against them at times. If this is the case, your wits will prove to be your most valuable asset.

inspiration

We cannot all force our way into the tower of Scratch, nor can most of us single-handedly cleanse the Crystal Forest of the whisper-fiends that lurk there. But defeating a single cackler in the streets of your home can be just as important. These brave acts — deeds carried out by ordinary men and women — provide the tales and legends that inspire the masses and give them the strength to carry on. And every great now and then, such a deed will mark the birth of a new champion, a new hero or heroine who will live for all eternity in the songs of the great bards.

knowledge

The only way we will ever truly rid Aden of the Darkfall is to find out how it occurred. If we are successful, perhaps we can reverse the process and cleanse our land of its evil. I have never encountered a nocturnal that knew anything of the Darkfall. I have been misled by lies, and more than a few creatures betrayed their own beliefs before I was finished with them, but none of these tales has been borne out. It truly seems that even the grotesque children of the Darkfall are ignorant of their master and of their own creation. Some of these villains have even imagined century-long histories for themselves, even though they were only born some ten years prior!

As you battle the nocturnals, I implore you to learn all you can of their methods and their goals. Perhaps by assembling the tales of all who fight against them we can begin to shed some light onto the Darkfall's shadowy origin.

this volume

The World of Aden is designed for use with either the *MasterBook* or D6 rules systems. If using the former, you will need the *MasterBook* to play.

A *MasterBook*/D6 conversion system can be found in the back of this book.

Before you can attempt to understand the evils that afflict Aden today, you must first understand some of its history. Knowledge can often be a greater weapon than swords or pistols ...

the golden age

Chronicles speak of a time in Aden's history when scores of nomadic tribes roamed the land. These wanderers eventually began to settle, and inevitably came into conflict over borders and resources with other wanderers. At some point, a titanic war developed that lasted for decades. We call this the Great War, though it happened so long ago that no one remembers who fought it or even what started it. Fortunately, some wise leader, since lost to history, realized that the devastating war benefited no one. He or she then brought the leaders of the emerging nations together and managed to sign a treaty that has lasted for thousands of years. This was the Golden Age of Aden, from the signing of the Peace of Rose, over a thousand years ago, to the Age of Thunder.

the peace of rose

The Peace of Rose is still a sacred treaty among the nations and settlements of Aden. The promise of the pact is simple — if any nation should declare war on another, all the other nations will forcefully intervene and adjudicate whatever dispute sparked the conflict. The treaty is so sacred to the people of Aden that it has never been tested. There have been disputes among nations, but spies and embargoes have been the limit of their hostilities.

the age of thunder

In the centuries after the Peace of Rose, sorcerer-scientists around Aden developed black powder, steam powered machinery, and other wondrous inventions. The one development that continued to elude them, however, was the successful combination of this new science with tried and tested magical techniques. Metal does not retain sorcerous properties for any reasonable duration, and so devices powered both by magical and mechanical processes were impractical and rare. Then, less than two hundred years ago, a mage in Aramyst discovered a rare metal he would come to call manite. When properly refined, this precious alloy will retain enchantments for centuries. The mage's discovery did not long remain a secret, and soon, most nations were involved in obtaining, refining, and finding uses for the wondrous metal.

Sages across the land eventually agreed that a new era had begun, and termed it the Age of Thunder. Though it officially ended the Golden Age, I caution the reader not to assume that the birth of mechamancy ceased Aden's peace. It is true

the vanoran calendar

Each nation had its own calendar before the Peace of Rose. Afterwards, the leaders agreed to use the Vanoran system, which was simpler and more accurate than any other. The Vanorans, for their part, agreed to restart their calendar at Year One, in honor of their new allies.

Each year is divided into ten months of thirty-six days. A week is six days long, so there are six weeks in a month. The months are named after the ten beasts of Vanora:

Month	Season
Serpent	
Eagle	
Fox	Beginning of Spring
Wolf	
Ursax	Beginning of Summer
Shark	
Basilisk	
Drake	Beginning of Fall
Wail	
Dragon	Beginning of Winter

Year One was the start of the Peace of Rose. Any date before this period is simply noted as Before the Peace, or simply, BP. Here is a timeline of the ages and events I have already explained.

Year	Event
c.420 BP	The Great War
Year 1	The Peace of Rose
Year 1-845	The Golden Age
Year 845-1150	The Age of Thunder
Year 1111	Darkfall
1121	Today

that nations began to harbor secrets from one another, particularly in regard to their latest mechamagical discoveries, but in general, our world remained at peace.

At least until the coming of the Darkfall.

the Darkfall

It came without warning. The seers, prophets, and sages of Aden were all strangely oblivious to its arrival. The only harbinger of the cataclysm was a short but total eclipse of the sun. The nocturnals were born in this hour. A few thought the horrors might have come from some other world, but it is doubtful. Some of the nocturnals had lived in local legends for generations and others seem to have come from the most extreme fears of certain individuals. If these beings truly came from another place, it seems unlikely that they would so nearly match those things that lurked in our darkest psyches. It is much more likely that whatever sinister power

caused the Darkfall drew these things from our own minds and imbued them with unholy life.

aden today

Many changes have swept our land since the coming of the Darkfall. Mechamages who once focused on conveniences now toil day and night to make weapons of destruction. Nations that were once staunch allies now threaten war over the slightest provocation. With luck, this journal will remind those who read it that we must maintain our virtue, regardless of the Darkfall and its infernal minions. Here then, is an overview of our world and the changes I have noted in the last decade.

geography

The landscape of Aden is as varied as its people. In the north are great forests and vast plains. In the midlands are stark mountains of multicolored stone. In the south are trackless deserts and steaming

jungles. Those who travel the distance of our land are always amazed at the diversity it offers.

Broken Bay

The area between Mekanus of Urbana and Sea Reach of Arasteen is called the Broken Bay. You will know why if you sail this treacherous water. Mammoth stones jut from the surface of the bay while others lurk below, waiting to rend the hull of any vessel that strays from the charted lanes.

Broken Bay is home to the Gray Isles. Arasteen colonists had settled there shortly before the Darkfall, but were cut off and lost contact afterwards. When sailors from Arasteen finally reached the isles some years later, they found the colony of Grissom in ruins and all her founders missing. The word "Scratch" was found carved into a lonely oak. Most suspect the famous necromancer slew the colonists and added their corpses to his undead army.

Blue flows

The Green Sea takes on a turquoise hue in the far north. If the surface of the sea turns the color of cobalt and you begin to see icebergs, you can be sure you have entered the Blue Flows.

The icebergs of the Blue Flows are deadly obstacles to the ships that ply its waters. Arastinian fishers hug the southern shores to avoid the worst of them. Ionarans use ironclads fitted with cutting prows to forge through those chunks they cannot avoid.

the crawling jungle

Below Urbana is a vast, sprawling rain-forest called the Crawling Jungle. Insects of all varieties and sizes thrive within. Some are as dangerous as the dragons of Middle Wall, others are relatively harmless and used as beasts of burden by the Kyanites who live there.

Most of the jungle grows from the moist land at the foot of South Wall, especially along the Cold River. Some of it climbs the high mountains and quickly changes composition from jungle flora to hilly scrub.

The waterfalls in this section of the jungle provide some of the most breathtaking scenery I have ever laid eyes upon. The beauty of the region is broken only by the dismal face of war. Lord Urbane's men cut timber and mine ore from the jungle at an alarming rate. They spare little thought to replenishing what they have taken. This has brought them into bloody conflict with Kyan.

the crystal forest

In truth, the Crystal Forest is usually no different from any of the other vast arboretums in our



WORLD OF ADEN

land. It is only in the dead of winter that it transforms into a magical, mystical realm of wonder. The heavy rains from the Blue Flows constantly blanket the forest in moisture. In the middle of winter, the frigid temperatures freeze the rain on every branch, twig, and blade of grass in the woodland. The clear ice and the sunlight that sparkles through it makes the entire forest look as if it is made of crystal, thus the name. It is truly an awe-inspiring sight.

Trees that can bear this incredible weight are sturdy indeed. Bows made from crystal wood are the strongest in the land. Several companies have permission to cut timber and sell it abroad, but Governor Veronus of nearby Sylfanus watches over their activities closely lest powerful "crystal bows" wind up in the hands of Arasteen's enemies.

great moss lake

Aden's largest lake is also its most dangerous. These murky waters are home to a strain of near-sentient weed. Long strands of moss probe the decks of ships and pull sailors to their doom. More tenuous strands have been known to foul the hulls of ironclads and set them sinking. The moss existed long before the Darkfall, but seems to have gained a certain degree of cunning since.

The people of Mossburg in Aramyst have found a way to harvest the deadly plant for food. Ironclads fitted with electro-prods dangling into the water shock and stun the

weed. Then the sailors capture the paralyzed mass with metal nets. The ships' electrical generators then send current through the nets' cables and kill the weed, a process vengeful sailors joyously call "the burning."

green sea

The Green Sea reaches from Balaquim to Sea Reach. A strong trade wind from South Wall whips along Yzeem's coast and changes the nature of the ocean from Balaquim to the northwest. The border between the Serene Ocean and the Green Sea is not often clear. Sailors say they are in the former if they becalmed, and the latter if not.

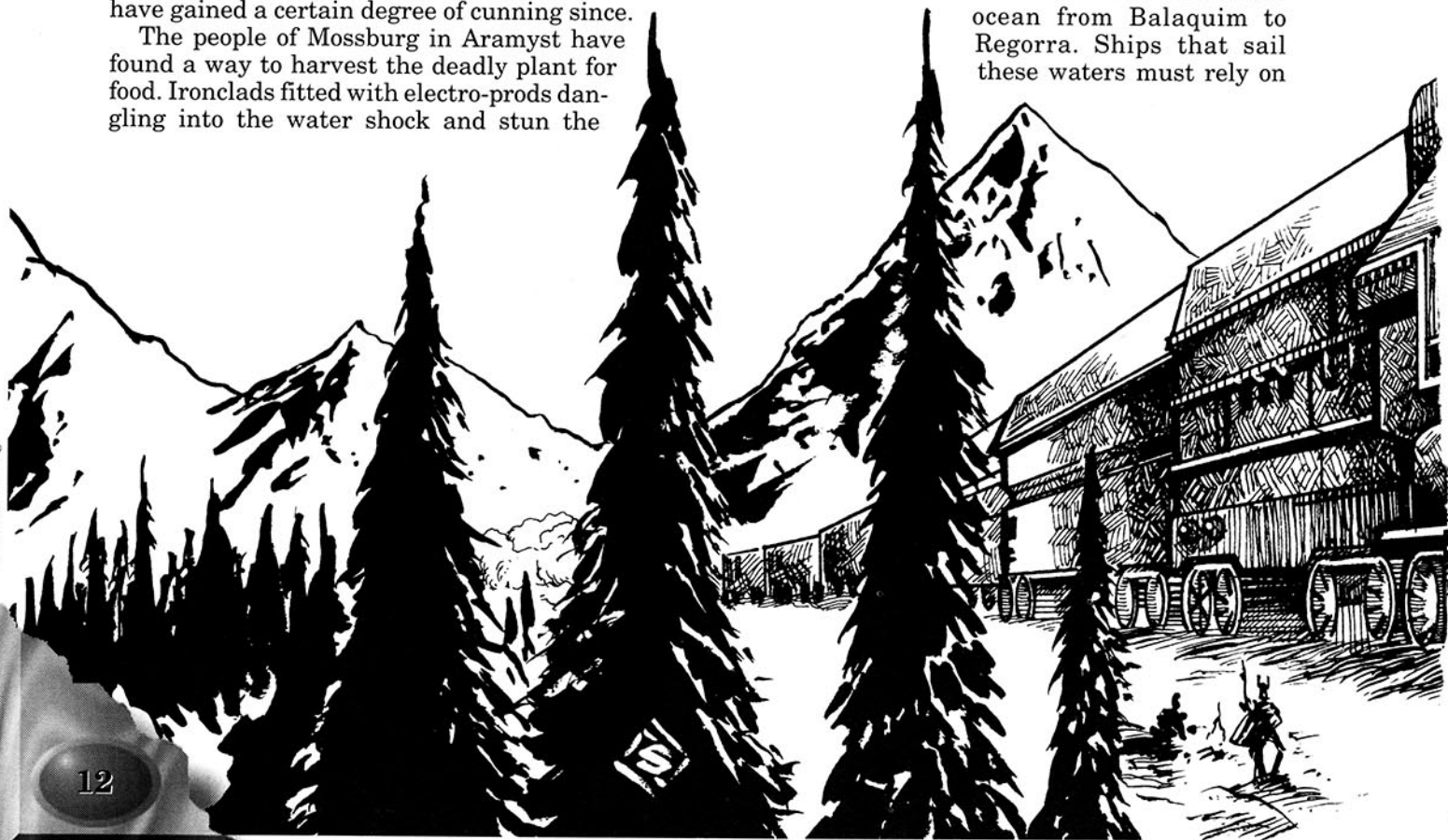
The Green Sea's waves pelt the northwestern coasts. I suspect this is why the islands and cliffs of Broken Bay are jagged and riddled with underwater caves.

ocean of serenity

The eastern waters of Aden lap lethargically at its shores. The Ocean of Serenity is also called the Serene Ocean, or just "the Serene." Vanorans of Tanto use the soothing rhythms of its waves to meditate on the way of their chosen beast. Sages suspect that it was their shamans who named the Serene.

There is little wind in the ocean from Balaquim to Regorra. Ships that sail these waters must rely on

Brian Schomburg



magic or steam. There are few of the latter. Yzeem has little industry and Vanorans generally frown upon the dirty smoke trails left by steamers.

skar

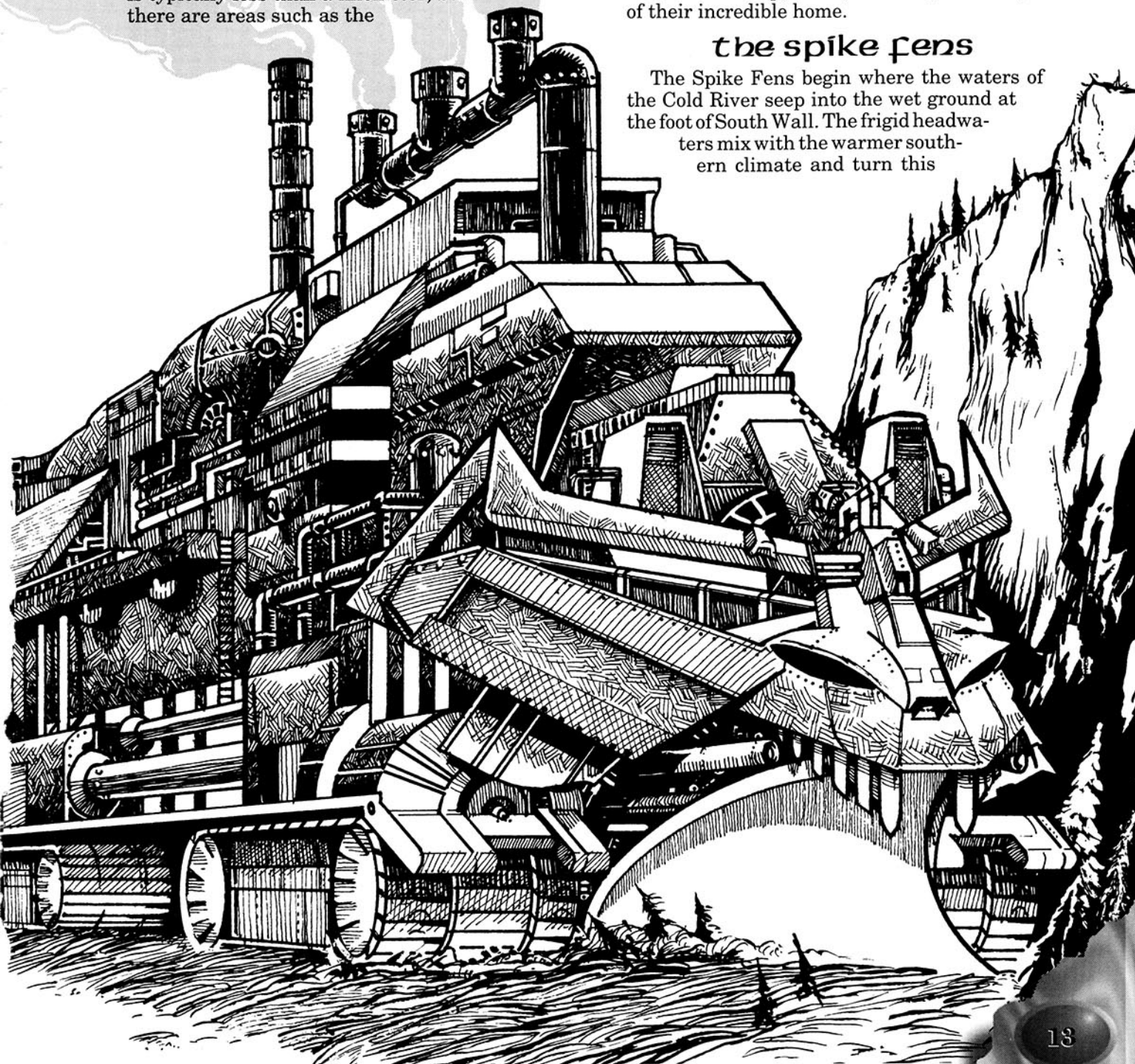
Skar is a giant crevasse in the middle of the Mud Plains. It is nearly 325 kilometers long and perhaps 40 kilometers across at its widest point. Its depth is typically less than a kilometer, but there are areas such as the

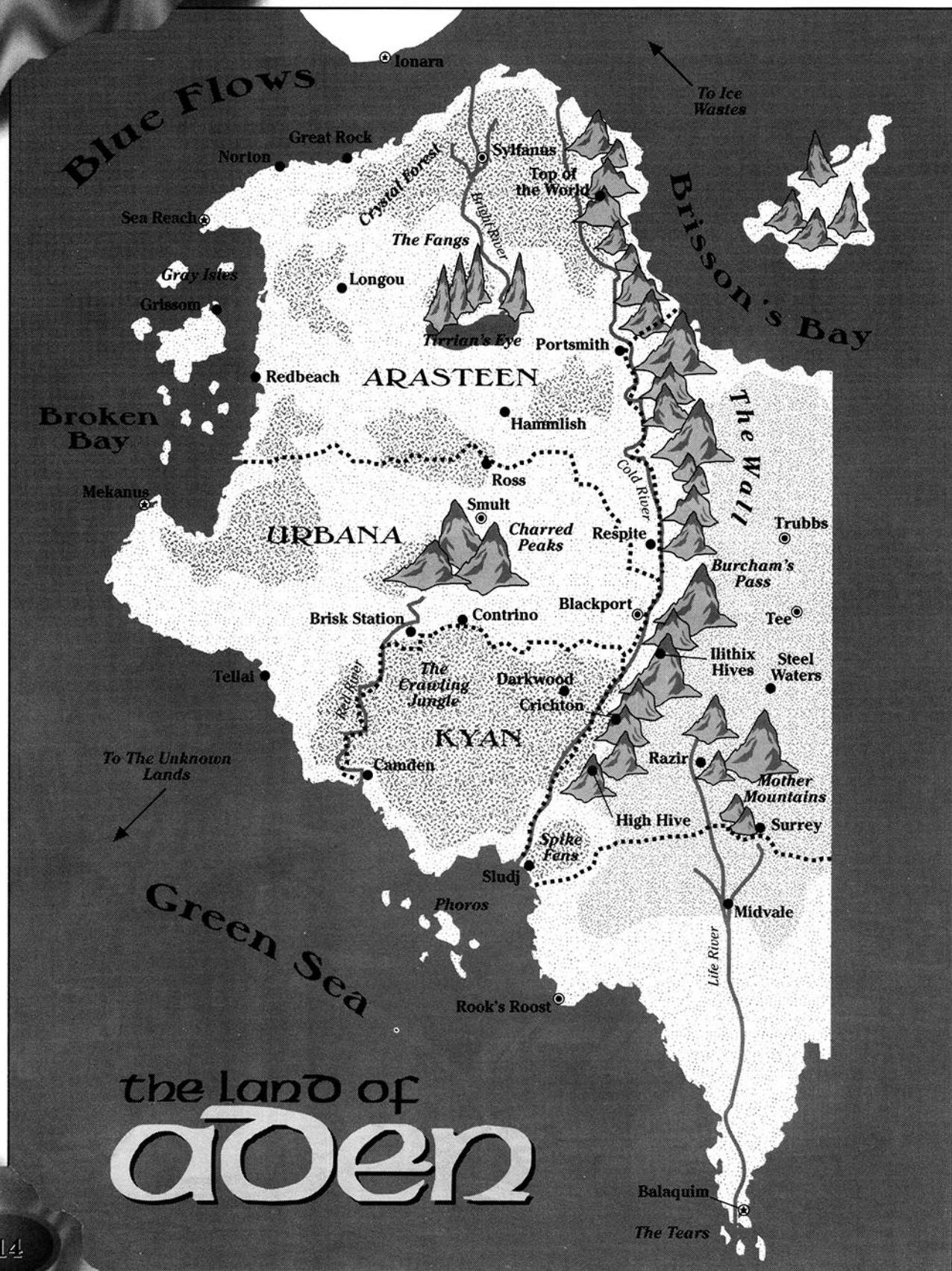
Black Depths that are said to reach five kilometers into the bowels of Aden.

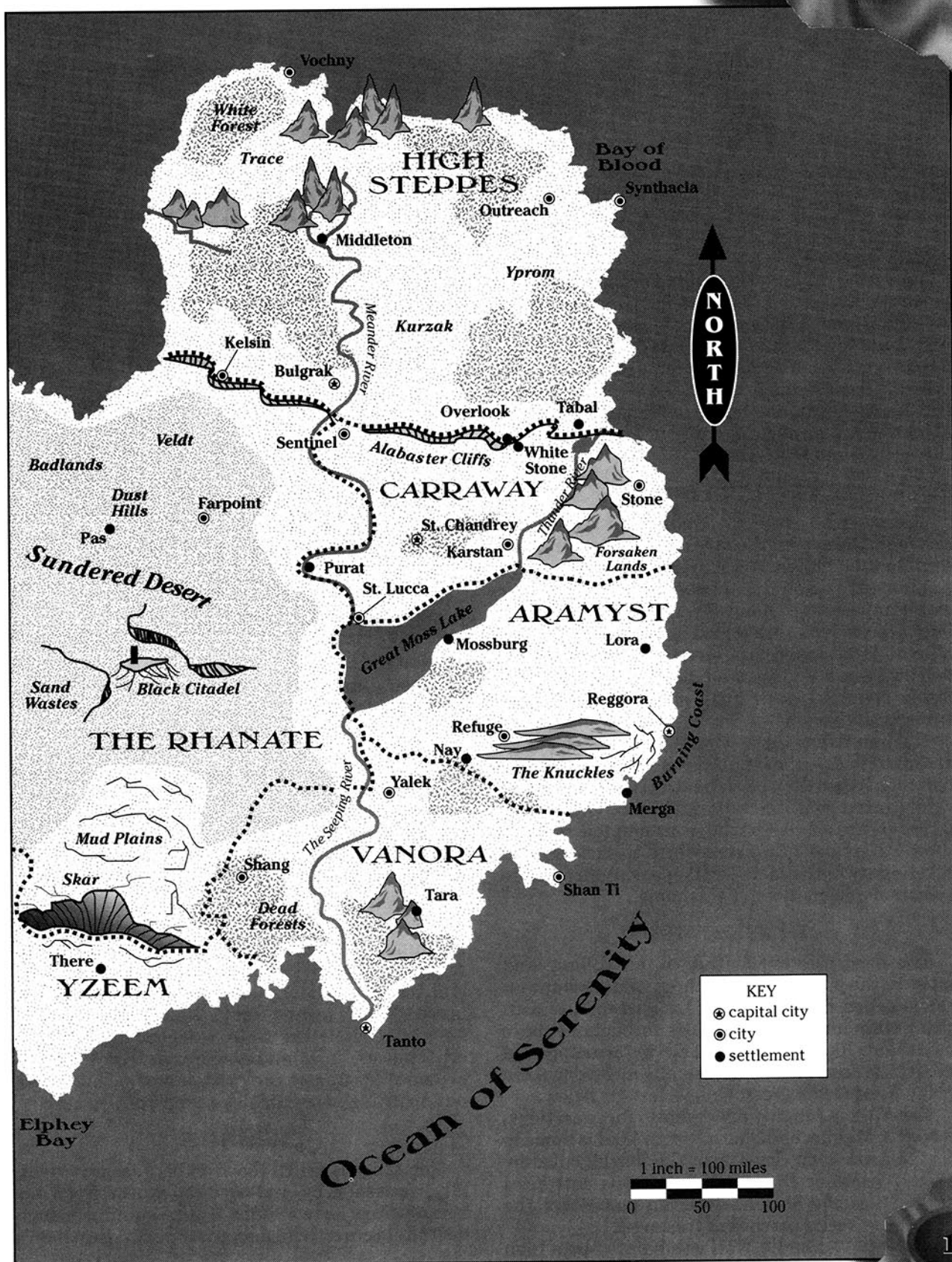
Numerous clans live within the cliffs, valleys, tunnels, and ledges of Skar. Most inhabitants are isolationists who refuse to ally with Yzeem or the Rhanate. One dwarven settlement is said to have a system of lifts and elevators that can move up, down, or through the canyons of their incredible home.

the spike fens

The Spike Fens begin where the waters of the Cold River seep into the wet ground at the foot of South Wall. The frigid headwaters mix with the warmer southern climate and turn this









area into a steamy swamp. The most common plant of the marsh is the thorn tree, a straight stalk covered with long thorns. These spiny trees cover most every acre of shallow water and give the swamp its name.

Traveling through the Spike Fens is dangerous business. Certain varieties of the thorn trees are poisonous, and the dreaded blood-seekers are clever imitators. These plants look just like thorn trees but are capable of whipping out at passers-by and drawing blood through their hollow barbs. Besides the deadly fauna, the fens are filled with snakes, nocturnals, and a curious mix of people who call themselves the Outcasts.

tirrian's eye

The clear blue waters of this lake are said to resemble the eyes of the Tirrian, the founder of my own Radiant Order. It is a magnificent pool, and I can honestly claim that I have never seen clearer water anywhere in Aden. Beneath the glassy surface are bizarre rock columns, salt arches, and alluvial fans of all colors, shapes, and sizes. Giant fish swim in full view of all, feasting on schools of lesser creatures with little place to hide in the transparent realm.

No man fishes these waters, however, for they are inhabited by the amphibious slurgithians. The fish-men live in deep caves beneath the surface and rarely interact in the affairs of man. Only when large groups of fishers have attempted to hunt their waters have they come forth to declare their sovereignty of the lake. I will speak more of these bizarre denizens later in this tome.

the wall

The most striking feature of our rolling land must be the purple peaks of the gigantic mountain range called the Wall. Stark crags combine with sheer cliffs and stepped towers throughout these mountains like giant teeth. The tips are capped in the purest snow, which continually melts down the rocky faces to the green valleys far, far below.

The Wall is roughly divided into three sections, North, Middle, and South. North Wall is home to the Arasteen city Top of the World, ruled by Governor Drummel. Numerous entrances to the ancient dwarven homes dot the rocky perches of this area.

Middle Wall is inhabited by a high



Tim Bobko

percentage of jurak and ferran clans. I have said that many juraks and goreaux have integrated into societies elsewhere, and this is true, but there are also many who have elected to live as their ancestors did in the more familiar surroundings of the high hills. These isolated groups live in barricaded caverns or enclosed perches high atop the windy peaks. Some have become desperate enough to raid their fellows for food, and a few have even struck at the thunder trains on occasion, so far without success.

South Wall is home to Kyan and New Columbey. This region is partially covered by the lush Crawling Jungle. The area is also home to the ilithix, a terrible species of insect-men. The people of Kyan and the Wind Riders live in constant fear of the brood's bloody sorties. South Wall is also said to be home to the Nether Gate, a legendary portal to other places, times, and even worlds. I have seen no evidence to support the existence of such a thing, but anything is possible in a land such as ours.

passes

The range is called the Wall because it is virtually impassable by land-borne creatures. Even airborne beings have a difficult time gaining enough altitude to cross these mammoth peaks. Burcham's

Pass, an independent settlement manned predominantly by juraks and rapacians, is the most well-known path through this mountainous barrier. It is the only known trail large enough to accommodate the thunder trains. Obviously, nocturnals and raiders who have set their sights on the trains are most common in this long stretch of the thunder trail.

Many know of lesser passes through the Wall. In the north, for instance, the Radiant Order maintains a small force to watch over Skellon's Pass. The canyon is guarded on one side by the Radiant Citadel, and on the other by Vanguard Keep. The ruins of Karegh-Konan, an ancient, ruined city of the deep dwarves, lies in the tunnels beneath these outposts. Nocturnals and other monsters from the ruins have kept the defenders of Skellon's Pass busy for several years. One day we will have to form an expedition to cleanse the under-earth of its evil denizens.

society

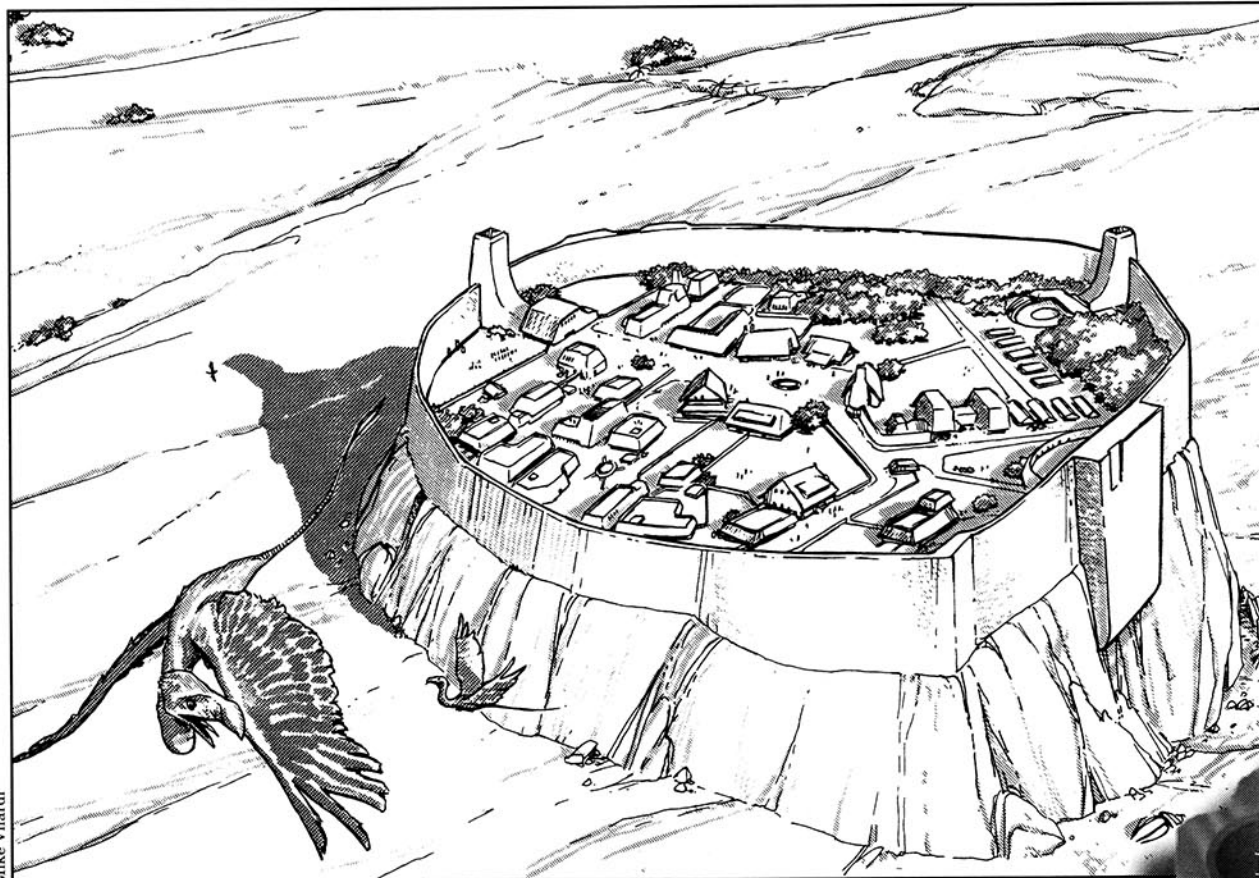
The people of Aden are as varied as the ingredients in hunter's stew. In some places, the folks still ask strangers into their home for dinner if they have the food to spare. Other communities aren't quite as likely to take a visitor into their confidence,

but once they do, they show him every kindness they can afford. A settlement's experience with local nocturnals, and especially the corrupted, will decide its temperament. To offer a stranger kindness takes the greatest of trust from those who are plagued by evil, but I am proud to say it is generally a tradition we have upheld.

Another change caused by the Darkfall is the nature of the outlying villages. Small settlements once sprawled over the land in a leisurely and uncrowded fashion. Now townsfolk must pull their homes close together, sealing themselves within palisades or magical barriers built to keep out the worst of the nocturnals. The minions of the Darkfall are legion, however, so walls of wood and even iron are minor obstacles to their rampaging desires.

government

Immediately after the Darkfall, the open nature of governments began to change. Insidious plots by the corrupted within the nations' courts have caused the various rulers to keep their affairs to themselves. Significant developments in information and particularly mechemagic have since become



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shrouded in secrecy, lest they fall into enemy hands. The exact method for creating Lord Urbane's thunder trains, for example, is a secret process that cannot be revealed by Urbanan law under penalty of death. Many forget that the Age of Thunder roared so loudly because the best and the brightest of Aden worked together to push the limits of mechamagic. Now isolated enclaves of mages pursue their own developments, jealously guarding each newfound discovery. This is one of the greatest tragedies of the Darkfall — that the Age of Thunder will end not with a rumble, but with a grinding halt.

trade and Commerce

Each of the major nations mints its own coins, stamped with the official crest of its government. The most common "crests" are stamped with the number "1," and are made out of whatever mineral is most common to the state. Copper, lead, and even stone coins are usually used as single crests. Five crest coins are often made of silver, while ten crest coins are made of gold. Platinum coins are stamped as fifty crests. Coins made from manite are worth one hundred crests. Only in Urbana is there any deviation from this system. The Lord of that realm has declared all foreign coins worth half their printed amount within Urbana's borders. Obviously, this has caused great turmoil in trade between the nations.

the thunder trail

All the nations' economies suffered severely for the first two years of the Darkfall. The danger of the nocturnals meant that farmers could not bring their crops to the market, merchants could not receive goods, and ships had no cargoes. A few caravans passed between neighboring lands, but their treks ended in disaster far more often than success.

Though Lord Urbane has many detractors today, it was he who first envisioned and created the thunder trains. The thunder trains are gigantic land ships that plow the outlands from one end of Aden to the other. Urbane's brilliant mechamages created these hulking, magical machines. To see one is to gasp in awe. Black clouds from their spiny smokestacks hover nearly 13 meters above the upper deck of the train, which is itself some 10 meters above the ground. Its huge wheels are like those of a wagon, but connected by metal belts to form tracks that roll through marshes, forests, and shifting

sands with ease. Internal engines powered by steam and magic turn the belts and pull the wheels along at a slow but constant pace.

The success of the thunder trains has spurred a dramatic comeback for the economies of Aden. Most merchants can now caravan to the nearest thunder stations and send their wares abroad. The thunder trains' success has even spurred similar progress in the rivers and along the coasts. Trading fleets escorted by metal-hulled Annihilators and other dreadnoughts once again ply the Green Sea, the Blue Flows, and the Ocean of Serenity. Gunboats armed with storm cannons serve a similar purpose in the major rivers, allowing local trade and logging.

Crests

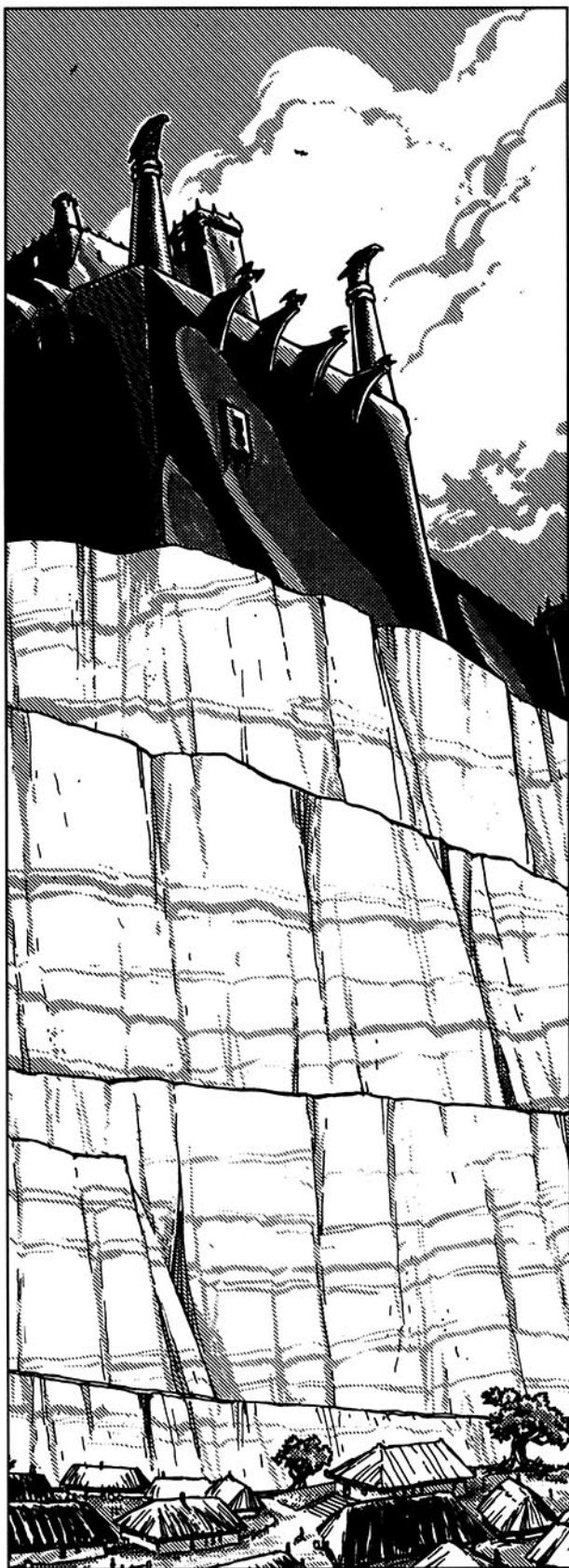
Coin	Value
Copper, lead	1
Silver	5
Gold	10
Platinum	50
Manite	100

magic

Moral strength is the strongest asset the people of Aden have against the nocturnals. Our second strongest is mastery of magic. Most townsfolk know a simple spell or two. Few can create a ball of fire large enough to slay even the weakest nocturnal, but the common man has often found himself thankful for a simple *light* spell or *water* cantrip. A clever wit and a strong will can often turn the most harmless spell into a life-saving tool.

Men and women use simple magic to clean their homes, to purify their water, and to make everyday life a little easier. Those who practice long enough can develop more spectacular results. Most towns have a local magician, often called a hedge wizard, who can cast spells of a little more power and importance. It is often they who rid crops of blight or infestation, defend their village against lesser nocturnals, and generally solve problems somewhat beyond the grasp of their neighbors.

True wizards are the men and women who have dedicated many years to mastering the arcane arts. Their spells are lethal enough to slay scores in a single casting, or powerful enough to level a tavern. Perhaps only one person in a thousand is diligent enough to become a wizard, though everyone has the potential. Those who do master the art are



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treated with respect and awe, and occasionally more than a little trepidation.

There are many different kinds of wizards: mechemages, healers, necromancers, conjurers, and prestidigitators just to name a few. The newest and the most controversial of the bunch are the mechemages. Most of them live in Urbana, where the lord of that province encourages them to create giant monstrosities of magical energy and iron.

the last of the prophets

Aden was home to a number of prophets, seers, and visionaries before the coming of the Darkfall. Why none of them foresaw this great cataclysm is a mystery as great as the eclipse itself.

Whatever the reason, their lack of precognitive sight was their own downfall, for no true seer survived the invasion. Aden has been without diviners for the last decade. Rumors of mechemagical surgery awakening a so-called "third eye" within certain individuals have circulated for some time, but I have never seen an individual so gifted.

religion

Organized religion is a scarcity in our land. Only in Carraway was there ever a large following who believed in deities and worshipped them regularly. Many Adenites look to orders or other cults to provide their communal needs. Some of these cults worship warriors, others believe in mages, and some in particular ideals, customs, or practices.

Some cults extend beyond national boundaries while others are very localized. You will not find chapters of Arasteen's Radiant Order in Urbana, for example, but there are sanctuaries for Urbana's Iron Guard in all of Aden's thunder stations. Sometimes orders are outlawed outside of their recognized boundaries. King Corben will not allow the Eye into Arasteen, and the followers of a pestilent being known as "the Pale" are outlawed everywhere. The general rule is that any organization is tolerated until it shows itself detrimental to those around it.

infernus

One pseudo-religious belief has become universally popular since the Darkfall. The city of Smult lies on the base of a great volcano. Vents located about the area are so hot that the famed smiths of that city use the heat to forge iron. Besides the constant threat of a volcanic eruption, the people of Smult's greatest concern is a race of cruel fire salamanders that

live within the fiery bowels of their mountain.

Over the years, a number of expeditions have sought to raid the salamander's home, which the knights have named Infernus. For obvious reasons, such sorties are rare. Besides the expense of magically protecting the warriors from the incredible heat, the salamanders have proven themselves organized and capable defenders.

Seven years ago, a lone survivor of one such failed expedition stumbled from the burning caves. Before he died, he swore that the cavernous depths of Infernus were populated with the spectral souls of those who had given themselves to the Darkfall. He claimed the piteous corrupted were chained in pools of molten lava, and believed it was their fate to suffer eternally for failing their unknown master.

No one has ever verified this story, and it is quite possible that the Baron of Smult simply concocted the tale as a warning to those who would barter their souls to the Darkfall. Regardless of its basis in truth, however, the legend has become a popular one. To "damn one to Infernus" is a curse heard often in the thick of battle against the corrupted.

technology

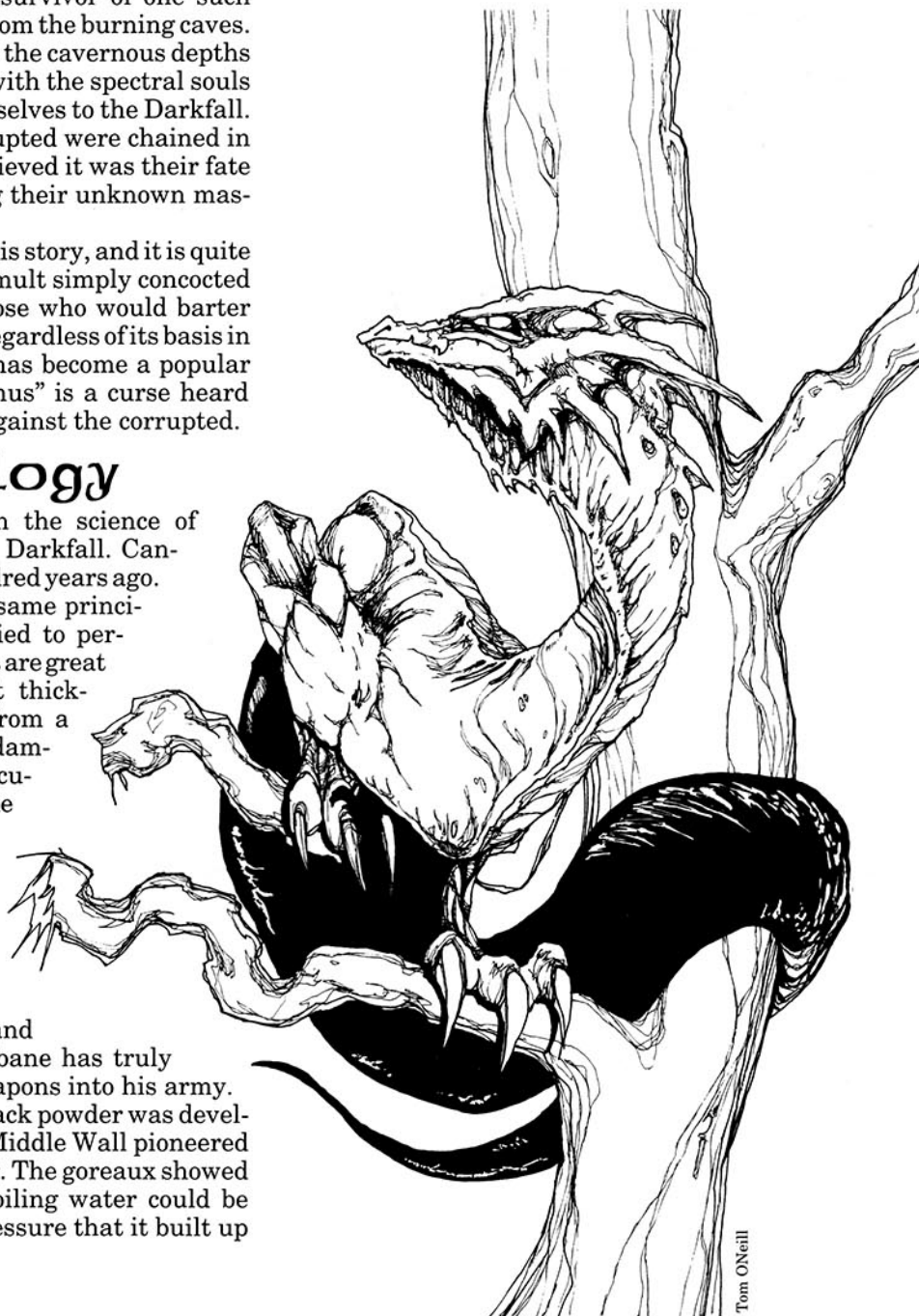
Aden saw great leaps in the science of mechemagic just before the Darkfall. Cannons were created some hundred years ago. It was only logical that the same principals would quickly be applied to personal arms. Wheel lock pistols are great openers for battles against thick-skinned nocturnals. Balls from a wheel lock can cause more damage than an arrow, though accuracy is sacrificed for effect. The wounds these projectiles can cause is horrible. Even an experienced healer such as myself has trouble mending the holes these infernal devices blast in human flesh. Most armies still prefer to use the more accurate and reliable bow. Only Lord Urbane has truly integrated black powder weapons into his army.

At about the same time black powder was developed, a group of goreaux in Middle Wall pioneered the concept of steam power. The goreaux showed that the steam from boiling water could be captured, and the pressure that it built up

used to power anything from a horseless carriage to a marvelous device that could cut wood. Lord Urbane's own wizards stole these ideas and later improved them when they integrated steam power with mechemagic.

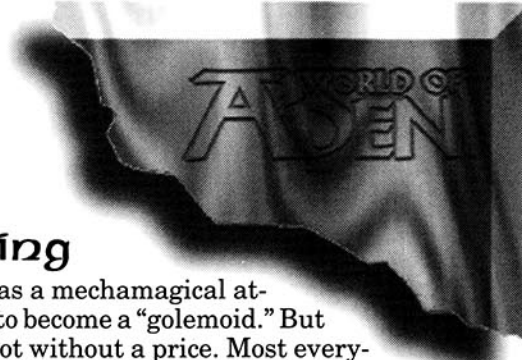
golemoids

Golemoids are by-products of our mechemagical age. A mercenary in Urbana once lost an arm in a fight against an outland warlord. It took the war-



rior far too long to acquire the services of a healer, however, and the delay made it extremely expensive to rejuvenate the missing limb. Undaunted, the warrior turned to a mechamage instead. The wizard could do little in the way of healing, so instead, he replaced the mercenary's arm with a magical limb of metal. The experiment was a complete success. The arm was even stronger than the one it replaced, giving the swordsman an edge in his deadly trade.

The mercenary's story spread quickly. Mechamages all over Aden tried similar experiments, some with success, and some with horrible failure. Now many warriors have mechanical claws protruding from their forearms, metal legs capable of short but amazing sprints, or skin armored with the infusion of manite particles. There seems no end to the incredible alterations golemoids have been able to imagine for themselves.



the wasting

Anyone who has a mechamagical attachment is said to become a "golemoid." But golemization is not without a price. Most everyone who undergoes mechamagical surgery contracts a bizarre, magical disease called the Wasting. This ailment eats away at the victim's mind, and in advanced cases, causes various forms of insanity. The more manite one adds to his or her body, the more his psyche deteriorates. Even the healers of my own Radiant Order have failed to find a cure for this strange malady.

Society at large is still uncertain in its appreciation of golemoids. Mercenary and most warrior circles think nothing of a golemized compatriot. Less militant circles are still somewhat suspect of those suffering from the Wasting since they may become deranged at any moment.

• one: aDen •



aramyst

It is difficult to decide whether Aramyst is a nation or a ruin. During the Darkfall, the land of Aramyst died. It didn't perish by revolution, plague, or even by the hand of a foreign conqueror. A vast portion of it simply burst into flame and continues to burn to this day. There is no central government, no ruler, and few settlements. Still, I have decided to list Aramyst as a nation as a tribute to its people, for they have suffered more than any other from our land's dismal fate, yet still they struggle on to rebuild their shattered homes.

the Burning Coast

Most of Aden was overwhelmed by the horrors we call nocturnals. A large portion of Aramyst, however, was enveloped in magical flame of sinister origin. The Burning Coast, that part of Aramyst that continues to burn, stretches from the village of Lore in the north to Merea in the south. The fires cannot surmount the peaks of the Knuckles to the west, though they boil the coastal waters of the Serene Ocean for some distance. The inferno is magical and never seems to die, even when sizzling rain falls from the sky overhead.

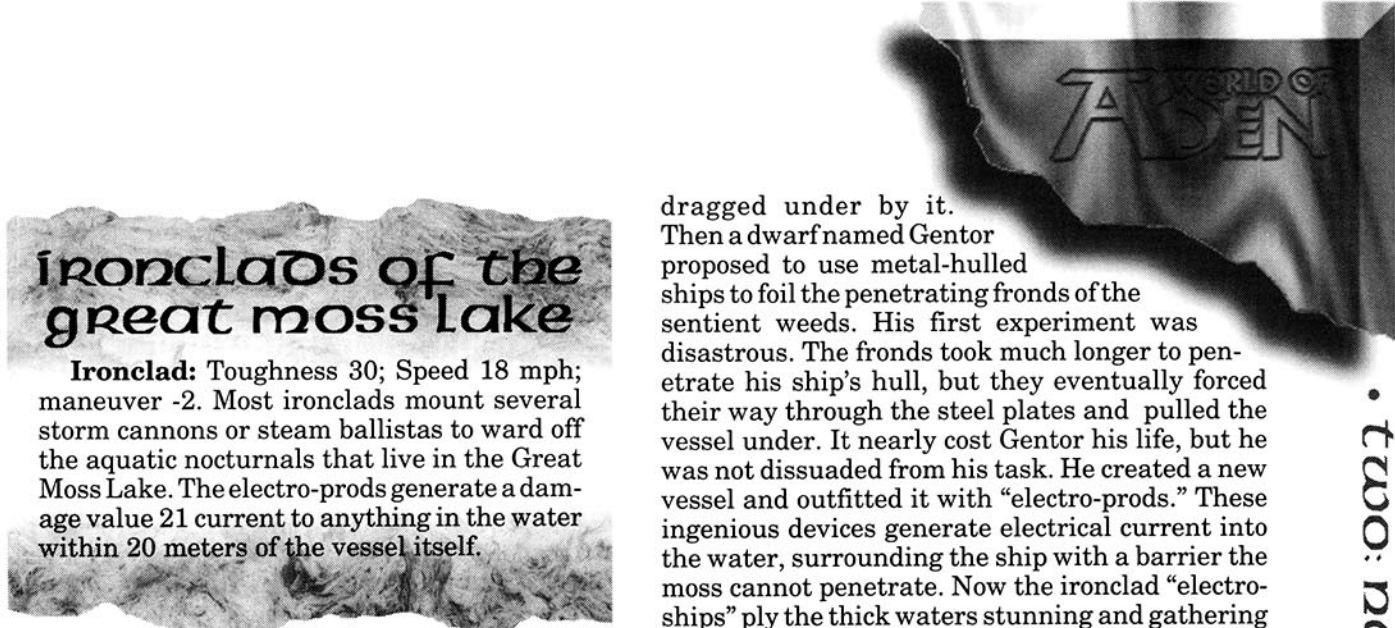
Creatures of flame are the only inhabitants of this area. Salamanders, drakes, and countless nocturnals of incendiary origin lurk within the swirling firestorms. The horrors lurking around the ruins of old Regora are said to be the worst.

The treasures of the abandoned Burning Coast are great, but only those with magical protection against the heat can even descend the slopes of the Knuckles to attempt salvage. Even then, the fiery denizens are not kind hosts. In fact, their infrequent contact with mortals causes them to savor their few opportunities for depraved cruelty.

Life in aramyst

Most of Aramyst's refugees fled over the Knuckles and founded a city appropriately dubbed Refuge. The rest huddled in independent enclaves at the northern and southern borders of the Conflagration. These settlements have little contact with one another, but many of Aramyst's traditions live on in surprising similarity.

Aramystans are collectively called Refugees, whether they are actually from Refuge, Lore, or Merea, for that is what they are. The title may seem glum, but in truth, it is not. The Refugees believe that their current state is temporary, and that one day they will recover their beloved nation. At that time, they will call themselves Aramystans once again.



Ironclads of the great moss lake

Ironclad: Toughness 30; Speed 18 mph; maneuver -2. Most ironclads mount several storm cannons or steam ballistas to ward off the aquatic nocturnals that live in the Great Moss Lake. The electro-prods generate a damage value 21 current to anything in the water within 20 meters of the vessel itself.

government

The Elders of the Celestial College were the rulers of old Aramyst. A Minister of State served some of the same functions a King or Queen might, but the real power lay with the Elders. The Refugees of Aramyst continue this tradition. The wisest wizards of the community make the decisions of the settlement, and it is up to the citizen militia to carry them out.

soldiers

Besides the militia, Aramyst has no "champions" such as the Radiant Order or the Judges of Carraway. To fill the void, bands of adventurers have flocked here in droves. The Elders of all Aramyst's settlements can always be counted on to hire able-bodied heroes for some quest or another. Sometimes they require items of power from the Burning Coast and outfit their questors with potions or spells that allow them to tolerate the heat. Other times they've needed exploration of the Great Moss Lake's western shores and granted ironclads to those who will do it. The Elders' tasks are an excellent training ground for young adventurers — if they have the mettle to survive them.

trade

The cramped Refugees have little room for gardens or livestock. Imports from Vanora and Carraway provide most of their food. Since no thunder trains as yet travel this region, more vulnerable caravans must be used to transport these goods. A warrior can make a fortune guarding these convoys, though whether he will survive to spend it is doubtful.

Seven years ago, an Urbanan trader greatly improved the Refugees' situation. Everyone knew that the living seaweed of the Great Moss Lake was edible, though dangerous to collect. Vessels that tried to reach the floating moss were inevitably

dragged under by it.

Then a dwarf named Gentor proposed to use metal-hulled ships to foil the penetrating fronds of the sentient weeds. His first experiment was disastrous. The fronds took much longer to penetrate his ship's hull, but they eventually forced their way through the steel plates and pulled the vessel under. It nearly cost Gentor his life, but he was not dissuaded from his task. He created a new vessel and outfitted it with "electro-prods." These ingenious devices generate electrical current into the water, surrounding the ship with a barrier the moss cannot penetrate. Now the ironclad "electro-ships" ply the thick waters stunning and gathering the deadly weed into great nets of metal cable. At the end of the day, a charge is run through the net that kills the struggling weeds. Sailors usually celebrate the "burning" with a toast, for they despise the deadly flora. Perhaps ironically, you will find few sailors who eat the stuff, though they make a decent living from those who do.

culture

The one day of the year that all Refugees hold sacred is the Day of Remembrance. On the anniversary of the Darkfall, the Aramystans light a giant bonfire to symbolize the inferno that still rages in the heart of their homeland. Each man, woman, and child is supposed to contribute some sentimental token to remember their loss. When they are finished, those who contributed to the fire may approach and pour a single cup of water upon it. If the bonfire is extinguished after all the cups are drained, the Refugees believe their nation will be reclaimed within the coming year. So far, the bonfire has remained spitefully alight.

warning of the red prophet

Rumors have surfaced that a mage named Aajek Karasynn, widely known as the Red Prophet, was the only visionary to foresee the coming of the Darkfall. It is likely that the Blind Seer of Arasteen had similar premonitions, but he did not frequent the circles of influence that Karasynn did.

A man named Jerek of Refuge claims that he served as a page for the Celestial College in Regora, the capital of Aramyst. According to him, the Red Prophet warned the Elders of this prestigious magical academy that a great cataclysm was to occur. What the revered Elders did about the warning Jerek cannot say, for he was not allowed to overhear any more of their discussions. All he knows for sure is that a great number of heroes from all the nations,

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including my own mentor, Kallon of Arasteen, came to the Celestial College some weeks later. They set out as if preparing for a great journey but never returned. A month later came the Darkfall.

arasteen

The reader will understand if this old warrior has a soft spot in his hardening heart for the gem of the northwest, Arasteen. As I have said, I was born there, and I can honestly say that I have seen no better kingdom in which to live in all my travels.

The cold winters cover our rolling hills in several feet of glistening snow. In summer, these same hills sprout tall grass while waterfalls race through the valleys in between. Our forests are home to tall, regal pines that remain green even through our harsh winters.

Life in arasteen

The people of Arasteen are a varied lot. The villages as well as the cities are racially diverse, though Sylfanus has a slightly higher proportion of elves than usual, while Top of the World is home to many dwarves. These places are the ancestral homes of the two races, though they are integrated with thousands of other citizens of all species.

government

Arasteen is ruled by our King and Queen. Our leaders are bred in the ranks of the Radiant Order, so there is little chance of a despot ascending to the throne. Our current liege is King Corben and his wife Queen Moriana, who was also a knight of our esteemed order.

Regions were once commanded by Barons and Dukes, but this changed several generations ago. Now all but the King's own home province are ruled by Governors. Governor Veronus watches over the Crystal Forest region, while Governor Drummel is the lord of North Wall.

Towns and villages typically elect a Mayor. Mayors often hold village meetings so that their constituents can express their opinions on community decisions.

king corben

In most other lands, a new king is simply the son or relative of the last. The lieges of Arasteen are culled from the heroic ranks of the Radiant Order, virtually guaranteeing that the new lord will be wise and just. The Radiant Order's devotion to compassion and justice is a proving ground for the pure of

heart. One who masters the tenets of the Radiant Order is named King or Queen when the former ruler feels that his or her time is past.

Corben grew to fame some twenty years ago. He was captured by a bandit king who thought to ransom the Knight from his fellows in the Radiant Order. Corben was locked in a cell deep within the bowels of their mountain home. While the bandits waited for a response from the Order, Corben slowly chiseled away the bars of his single window. When the portal was finally opened, Corben crawled outside and found himself on a precarious cliff high in the mountains of North Wall. Corben could have escaped, but instead he chose to climb higher and find the lair of the bandit king. He did so, defeated the villain with a captured sword, and then spirited him away before the rest of the thieves could block his escape. The Radiant Order, who had been searching for Corben for weeks, could hardly believe their eyes when he returned unharmed and with his captor in chains.

This stubborn act of bravery was merely the start of many more acts of devotion, compassion, and service to the Order. Only five years after that event, Corben was named Paladin. When the Darkfall struck, the old king was slain by a treacherous courtier, and Corben became the new King of Arasteen.

soldiers

The Militia: The militia of each town is unique. The force in Sea Reach mounts cannons on the city walls to deal with particularly large nocturnals. Sylfanus' army relies primarily on stealth and the crystal bow to pick off their enemies one by one. Governor Drummel at Top of the World rarely has any reason to take to the field. If some group of desperate creatures attacks his mountain fortress, the citizen-soldiers defend the walls with picks and spears. A few men are trained as artilleryists and rake approaching hordes with deadly storm cannons.

standard militia soldier

AGILITY 8

Dodge 9, melee combat 10, unarmed combat 9

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 9, missile weapons 9

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 7

Perception 8, tracking 9, trick 10

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 6

military ranks of arasteen

The Militia

Soldier
Corporal
Sergeant
Lieutenant
Captain

The Radiant Order

Hospitaler
Knight
Templar
Paladin

CHARISMA 6

Taunt 8

Life Points: 1-4

Equipment: Arasteen's militia is typically armed with long swords, damage value STR+6/20; long bows, damage value STR+6/20, range 3-25/75/150/300; and leather armor, value TOU+2/17.

(Standard Militia Soldier (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+2: Dodge 3D, firearms 3D, melee combat 3D+1, missile weapons 3D **STRENGTH 2D+2:** Brawling 3D **KNOWLEDGE 2D+1 TECHNICAL 2D+1 MECHANICAL 2D+1 PERCEPTION 2D:** Con 3D+1, investigation 2D+2, search 3D, taunt 2D+2. **Force Points:** 1-4. **Equipment:** Long sword, damage STR+2D; long bow, damage value STR+2D; leather armor, +2.)

The Radiant Order: The men and women who dedicate themselves to the Radiant Order believe in two things: compassion and justice. The two tenets are often very difficult to balance, so the ranks of the group are few, though the believers are many. Anyone can join the Order, regardless of their past or their standing. Once inducted into the ranks, however, a recruit who does not abide by the Order's rules will quickly find himself expelled.

Initiates of the order are termed Hospitalers. It is they who make up the bulk of the assemblage. Their duties are to learn the art of healing and assist older Knights during treatments. In their spare time, they are expected to practice with a weapon of their choice, usually against other young men and women in their group. Hospitalers spend most of their time attached to a Knight, learning

from his or her experiences and performing whatever minor duties the mentor requires.

Knights form the core of the Radiant Order. Hospitalers who meet certain goals in arms and healing are eligible to become Knights after their fifteenth birthday. Our thinning ranks have caused this age requirement to drop from twenty since the Darkfall.

Templars are those knights who have proven their wisdom, compassion, and sense of justice over a period of many years. Templars lead bands of the Radiant Order when combating evil or healing the sick. Knights of the order can only become Templars by nomination of another Templar, and must then be voted on by their peers.

The member of the order most enlightened in the ways of Tirrian is called the Paladin. The Paladin is equivalent to a prince in other lands, for it is he or she who will be pronounced King or Queen when the old ruler feels his time is past. My mentor, Kallon, was the Paladin until his disappearance at the beginning of the Darkfall. Four other men have since filled Kallon's shoes, but each has perished in this terrible war against the nocturnals. There is some talk that I, Grimlak, might replace our latest Paladin, now missing for some time. It would be an honor to lead the people of Arasteen, of course, but I am not envious of the heavy responsibilities that come with this position.

standard hospitaler

AGILITY 9

Beast riding: horse 11, dodge 10, maneuver 10, melee combat 11, unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 9, gunnery 9, missile weapons 9

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 8

Apportation 11, first aid 11, perception 9, science: xenology 9, tracking 10, trick 10

MIND 8

Conjuration 9, medicine 10, scholar: Darkfall 9

CONFIDENCE 9

Alteration 10, intimidation 11, willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Charm 10, persuasion 9

Life Points: 5-7

Equipment: The knights of the Radiant Order carry many different weapons. Most all wear chain mail beneath their white tunics, however (TOU+5/20.) The statistics above are for a Hospitaler. Templars have higher and more varied ability scores and

• two nations of aden •

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skills. Magical talents are usually kept at competent but not overwhelming minimums, with more devotion going towards skill in arms and the study of nocturnals (xenology.)

(Standard Hospitaler (D6): DEXTERITY 3D: Dodge 3D+1, firearms 3D, gunnery 3D maneuver 3D+1, melee combat 3D+2, missile weapons 3D
STRENGTH 3D: Brawling 3D+1 **KNOWLEDGE 2D+2:** Alteration 3D+1, apportionation 3D+2, conjuration 3D, Darkfall 3D, intimidation 3D+2, willpower 3D+1 **TECHNICAL 2D+2:** First aid 3D+2, medicine 3D+1 **MECHANICAL 2D+2:** Beast riding 3D+2, xenology 3D **PERCEPTION 3D:** Charm 3D+1, con 3D+1, investigation 3D, persuasion 3D, search 3D+1. **Force Points:** 5-7. **Equipment:** Chain mail, armor +1D+2.)

skill packages

Certain of Aden's orders and guilds are adept at teaching specific skills. These skills should be considered related for the purposes of purchasing the "Skill Bonus" Advantage from Columns I through III, and will be included near the entry for that order.

The Radiant Order was founded over a thousand years ago by King Tirrian, a wise and compassionate human who presided over Arasteen for over fifty years. At the beginning of his reign, Sea Reach was threatened by a terrible sorcerer and a vicious band of outcasts from the Gray Isles. The warband captured Sea Reach in a daring, surprise attack and put the city to the torch. Tirrian regrouped his knights, proclaimed them members of the Radiant Order, and tasked them and himself with reclaiming their capital. The knights were successful and the sorcerer's warband retreated back across the seas, though the cost in life was appalling. During the rebuilding, Tirrian realized that his knights were needed for more than just their sword-arms. From that day forth, all warriors of the Radiant Order were required to heal as well as fight, and to exemplify the principles of Compassion and Justice in all that they did.

the navy

Arastinian sailors have never enjoyed the largest ships in Aden. Our captains

radiant order skill package

*Alteration
First aid
Gunnery
Melee combat
Melee parry*

tend to emphasize speed and maneuverability over size and firepower. There is no true organization to our fleets, though the most senior captain's vessel is generally termed the flagship. The loose collection of ships under his or her command are manned by militia companies organized exactly as those on land. Sloops, gunships, galleys, and skiffs are all a part of our diverse fleet.

Skiff: Toughness 14; Speed 18 mph; maneuver +3. Skiffs are the lightest boats used in warfare, and cannot mount cannons or ballistas. They are more often used to deploy wizards, arsonists, or other specialty troops among enemy vessels or monstrous hordes.

Sloop: Toughness 18; Speed 18 mph; maneuver +1. Most sloops mount four 12-lb. cannons, two on either side. At least six men must man the rigging in addition to two men per gun for a total crew of 14-20.

Gunship: Toughness 34; Speed 10 mph; maneuver -4. Gunships are armored steam-boats mounting a turreted storm cannon on each end and a central steam ballista in the middle. A small crew of 8-15 can man an ironclad gunship.

Galleys: Toughness 24; Speed 25 mph; maneuver +0. Galleys require a crew of 30-40 men to man the rigging and their 10-20 12-lb. cannons.

the Dauntless

By far the most spectacular addition to our navy is a ship of a different sort. An old galleon dubbed the *Dauntless* was recently fixed to giant balloons that, believe it or not, allow it to fly! The amount of steam it takes to keep the ship aloft is incredible, so the *Dauntless* cannot remain in the air for long. Still, if we continue to develop these incredible airships, they will prove a valuable tool against any horde of nocturnals foolish enough to gather in the open.

The Dauntless (Airship): Galleys: Toughness 24; Speed 25 mph (flying); maneuver +0. The *Dauntless* mounts 8 cannons per side and has a turreted



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steam ballista atop the forecastle. The balloon that suspends the *Dauntless* is protected by a magical spell that grants it a Toughness of 18.

trade

The villages and towns have a high percentage of farmers and agricultural workers, and it is these hardworking people that provide Arasteen with its most valuable commodity. Ula, a sweet-tasting root, grows in short rows in the north, while werry and jume, thick wheats, are plentiful in the southeast. Livestock roams the plains between Sea Reach and Hammish and are protected from nocturnals by courageous plainsmen riding rumbler — massive, armored beasts that shake the ground as they run.

Farmers trade all these goods with Urbana and the western nations through the port at Sea Reach and Urbana's thunder trains. Lord Urbane has quietly referred to the Arastinian people as a "bunch of sheep herders and ula-pickers who couldn't stand up to a strong wind." If we were to cease exporting our wares, I wonder if the Iron Tyrant could feed his people with the manite ore he focuses his nation's attentions on?

Besides farming, Arasteen has a very rich trade in raw minerals from the mines at Top of the World. Gold, silver, platinum, and the occasional rare vein of manite are all sold at home as well as abroad via the thunder trains. Many not directly involved in mining are employed in underground smelting factories, iron-works, or some other industry related to the refinement of these metals.

The Blue Flows at the extreme north of Arasteen teem with fish of every size, color, and temperament. Vast schools of sadrac leap through the air and land like giant raindrops, and huge tandis drift lazily near the surface waiting for fishers with a net large enough to haul them in. These are the most common fish sold throughout Arasteen. More daring fishermen chase the deadly horn-sharks, bone-crunchers, and deep devils that live in these cold waters. The meat of these animals is expensive because of the danger involved in catching them, but fetch many crests at market.

Timber is the main industry in the Crystal Forest. "Crystal wood," as it is misleadingly called, grows even though it is coated by heavy ice for more than three months of the year. The strong wood the trees have developed in their quest for survival is valued by all of Aden for its resilience. The best houses, carts, and support timbers for mines are all made from crystal wood.

The Sylfanusians have an even better use for it. Young, green crystal wood

is fashioned into exceptionally strong bows, termed crystal bows for obvious reasons. As with the wood it comes from, there is really nothing crystalline about the weapon at all. Still, the crystal bow is one of the deadliest non-magical weapons in Aden. So deadly, in fact, that Governor Veronus has forbidden the export of these bows to other nations. This act surprised many, especially the bowyers who profited from their export. I am afraid that the true reason for this action is the veiled threats that have issued from the Ice Queen to the north and Lord Urbane to the south — Governor Veronus and King Corben want to keep this asset to themselves should war be the result of these hostilities.

culture

The people of Arasteen are a hardworking lot. There is usually little time for the pursuit of cultural interests, especially in the outlying villages where the threat of the nocturnals is constant. Still, the heart does not thrive under perpetual boredom, so most places have some sort of theater or celebration to show their defiance to the black forces of the Darkfall.

All of the cities contain amphitheaters for people to witness plays, public speakers, and other events. King Corben loves to go to the theater, which perhaps explains why the Star Theater in Sea Reach is the largest and most elaborate of them all.

CARRAWAY

Carraway is a land not unlike my own native Arasteen. It has leafy forests, green fields, rolling hills, and raging rivers. The people are a kind and compassionate lot, and the atmosphere is as free and open as one can expect in these dark days.

Carraway is the only theocracy of Aden. The people there believe that the spirits of Carraway's heroes linger on to protect the living from harm. These former champions are called Saints. The Church of All Saints is the official government of Carraway. Theocrat Telos, his priests, and most citizens pay tribute to the Saints through prayer and dedication to those principles they exemplified in life.

Life in CARRAWAY

Life in a theocracy revolves around religion, so I will begin my discussion of life in Carraway by explaining the Church of All Saints.

religion

The Church of All Saints, which is synonymous with the nation's governing body, is headed by an individual called the Theocrat. The current Theo-

religion in the world of aden

Though certain cults and the Church of All Saints worship beings or concepts, the world of Aden has no true gods. There is no *faith* skill in Aden, and no way to call upon higher powers for aid or intervention. This doesn't mean that many people do not have "faith," it simply means that faith means adhering to principles and ideals for their own sake rather than to please a deity.

crat is a feline ferran named Larra Telos. Beneath Theocrat Telos are the High Vicars of Sentinel, Karstan, and St. Lucca. These individuals are concerned with the administration of the cities. The rest of the holy officials are knights or local administrators.

Average citizens identify with one particular Saint that embodies some principle dear to his or her own heart. Many sew the symbol of their champion onto their clothing or work it into their personal coat of arms. Homes might have the Saint's emblem above their doors, and will most certainly have another above their hearths. Other Saints are revered and honored, but a person's patron Saint guides his or her lifestyle and beliefs.

The Church of All Saints was established to pay homage to the collective spirit of these great heroes. Devout All-Sainters revere all the Saints, though they celebrate only the canonization of their patron.

Here are a few of the most popular Saints and a brief recitation of the deeds that canonized them.

Albrecht, Saint of Justice: The fourth Theocrat of Carraway was Albrecht of Yuris. In those ancient days, Carraway was overrun with lawless bands of steppe raiders from the north. Albrecht, a dwarf, organized the knights to halt these threats. He and his newly created Justices and Judges single-handedly repelled the murderous hordes and restored order to the theocracy. His efforts consolidated the nation of Carraway, and he became the Saint of Justice upon his death.

Deighan, Saint of Wits: Jon Deighan and his family lived on a large farm northeast of Sentinel some fifty years before the Darkfall. Many cunning tales are ascribed to Deighan, though the most famous are his trials with Rhalak, a steppe raider. Rhalak was an infamous bandit king from the High Steppes who would spend his winters in Carraway's

farm belt. The farmers despised the crude thief and his raiders, but were powerless to refuse their demands. Only one, the dwarf Jon Deighan, claimed that he could rid his neighbors of the brigands. The farmer was not a warrior and so had to rely solely on his wits. The first year, he tainted all the farmer's wells with green dye and claimed the Pale One had passed through, spreading deadly plague. Another winter he claimed a posse of Judges from Sentinel was on the bandits' trail. A short distance away, a dust cloud supposedly signaled the posse's approach. In truth, however, Deighan's neighbors had tied large branches to the backs of their mounts and dragged them down a dirt road to frighten the bandits away. Each winter, the dwarf would concoct some clever scheme to repel the raiders. Some of "Deighan's Fables" are pure fiction, no doubt, but enough are true that one marvels at the dwarf's wit.

Deighan finally died two decades before the Darkfall. It is said that Rhalak himself attended the funeral. The bandit king did not long outlive his erstwhile adversary.

Enahs, Saint of Sacrifice: Enahs of Sentinel was a young human who perished during the Darkfall. When portions of the city fell to the nocturnals, Enahs and a band of his companions sacrificed themselves so that others could escape. His wife, Migeulia, and their son Caden, led the movement to have Enahs declared a Saint several months later. Migeulia has since gone on to become a renowned Magistrate in White Stone. Her son Caden is currently a Watchman there, and promises to be as stalwart as his parents.

Leera, Saint of Music: Leera Meloddan of St. Lucca was perhaps the most gifted bard of the Golden Age. The elf's eerie sonatas could chill one's bones, and her forlorn ballads could make the strongest man weep. Or so the legend goes. Leera was canonized only a few years before the Darkfall. Some debate surrounded her consecration as a Saint, however, for it was never truly verified that she died. Leera's bloodstained harp was found in a lonely glen a few miles north of St. Lucca, but Leera's body was never recovered.

government

The administrators of Carraway are collectively called the clergy. Theocrat Larra Telos heads this noble body. She is a just and wise ruler, and a staunch supporter of the Peace of Rose. Telos is a ferran with the ancestry of an owl running through her veins. She appears human for the most part, save for large eyes that can rotate independently of one another. She is a quiet, contemplative individual

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who has spent her entire life in the administrative priesthood. Her wisdom, perhaps a sign of her owlish heritage, helped her rise through the ranks quickly. In fact, she is the youngest Theocrat in Carraway's history.

Theocrat Telos realizes that she cannot be all things to all people, much as no one Saint can provide guidance in all things. To help her administer War, Security, and Faith, she has appointed Chancellors. Chancellors are drawn from the ranks of the High Vicars, Vicars and Master Arbiters, and are put in charge of those matters in which they have some knowledge and experience.

High Vicars represent Theocrat Telos in Sentinel, St. Lucca, and Karstan. There is no High Vicar in the Theocrat's home city of St. Chandrey. High Vicars may appoint Chancellor Generals to help them in their duties, but ultimate authority rests in their hands until countermanded by the Theocrat herself.

ranks of the clergy	
Clergy	Notes
Theocrat	Currently Larra Telos
Chancellors	
High Vicar	Cities
Vicar	Districts within cities
Magistrate	Villages
Chancellor General	

Vicars act as councilmen or elders in the various districts of Carraway's cities. They listen to the views of those they represent, and are then expected to make whatever official judgment is in the best interests of the community.

Magistrates are the spiritual and governmental leaders of towns and villages. They listen to the views of those they represent, and are then expected to make whatever official judgment is in the best interests of the community. They are also in charge of all knights and militia within their domain, though many appoint a Chancellor General to this task. Magistrates are technically equal in rank to Vicars, though the latter are closer to the High Vicars and generally enjoy more influence.

soldiers

Besides the common militia, the Theocracy relies on its holy knights to maintain order and fight the forces of the Darkfall. A young person who desires such a role may apply to the Magistrate of his local Church. If the initiate can demonstrate his virtue, wisdom, and strength at arms in the "Test of Symmetry," he will be accepted into the ranks as a sort of squire, called a Watchman. Watchmen perform their duties in their home area. In addition to serving in the town watch, from whence they get their name, they serve as foot troops for the knights in times of need. Watchmen wear the uniform of their local militia, if any, and must supply their own arms and armor.

standard militia soldier

AGILITY 8

Dodge 9, melee combat 10, unarmed combat 9

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 9, missile weapons 9

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 7

Perception 8, tracking 9, trick 10

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 6

CHARISMA 6

Taunt 8

Life Points: 1-5

Equipment: Watchmen carry all types of weapons, though short swords (damage value STR+4/19) and spears (STR+6/21) are most common. Most wear leather armor (TOU+2/17) when called upon.

(Standard Militia Soldier (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+2: Dodge 3D, firearms 3D, melee combat 3D+1, missile weapons 3D **STRENGTH 2D+2:** Brawling 3D **KNOWLEDGE 2D+1 TECHNICAL 2D+1 MECHANICAL 2D+1 PERCEPTION 2D:** Con 3D+1, investigation 2D+2, search 3D, taunt 2D+2. **Force Points: 1-5. Equipment:** Short swords, damage value STR+1D+1; spear, damage value STR+2D; leather armor, value +2.)

the arbiters

After a period of a year, a Watchman may apply for knighthood if he desires. If the warrior's superiors are impressed with his service, the applicant is knighted as an Arbiter. If not, the individual must remain a Watchman for another year. A new Arbiter is awarded an allowance with which to buy arms and armor, and is then assigned to a Magistrate's ward. The young knight then travels

to the ward and presents himself to his superior for duty. The Arbiter's task is to serve the Justices and Judges, usually as a reliable foot-troop against nocturnals, criminals, or raiders from the High Steppes. Their uniform is a tunic of blue emblazoned with a single circle stricken through with a white sword. Their coat-of-arms, if any, is most often adorned with the symbol of the Arbiter's patron Saint.

An Arbiter that proves himself worthy may rise to the rank of Justice. Justices command small squads of Arbiters in conflict, or entire companies of Watchmen or militia. A short blue riding cape signifies their promotion.

It is the Judges' duty to track down corrupteds and Carraway's most dangerous outlaws. In this regard they are something like the inquisitors of Urbana, though fortunately they do not abuse their power in the same way. Judges have a personal code that drives them to extremes at times. Some believe they focus on their quarry at the expense of those they should protect. Should a criminal ever escape their grasp, the Judges will stop at nothing to recapture them. Their uniform is identical to that of a Justice, though the emblem of the sword upon their tunic is black.

Most Judges carry a horrifying weapon called a Justice Sword. This wicked blade has a row of

sharp teeth all around the outside. The wounds it causes are hideous, though theoretically not fatal. A heavy crossbow capable of hobbling a fleeing criminal at three hundred meters rounds out their arsenal. Judges are given only slightly more authority than Justices, though their grim disposition often gives them a reputation that commands more respect. No one is simply promoted into this rank. An individual must petition his superiors for the appointment. If the local clergy feels the petitioner has the proper disposition, he is assigned to another Judge for evaluation. Only if the senior Judge approves the initiate will he receive the promotion. Few Arbiters desire to become Judges.

Wardens watch over the community's jails and conduct trials for lesser offenses. In those rare times when the militia must mobilize in force, Wardens command ten companies of militia organized into a single battalion. Next to Urbana, Carraway has the best organized army in Aden. Fortunately, they have rarely had to gather such huge forces.

There are only three High Arbiters — one in each city of Carraway. Should the nation ever be forced into war, it is their duty to gather the battalions from the outlying villages and assemble them into a legion. This has only happened once in recent years, in the retreat from the Forsaken Lands.



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standard arbiter

AGILITY 9

Beast riding 11, dodge 10, melee combat 11, unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 8

Missile weapons 11

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 9

Perception 10, tracking 13, trick 10

MIND 8

Scholar: Church of All Saints 10

CONFIDENCE 9

Interrogation 10, intimidation 10, survival: temperate 11

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10

Life Points: 3-7

Equipment: Most Arbiters carry a long sword (STR+6/21) and a heavy crossbow (damage STR+9/24, range 3-10/100/200/300.) Judges carry Justice Swords, barbed long swords that inflict STR+7/22 damage. Younger Arbiters wear chain mail (TOU+6/21), while Judges and Justices often wear plate and chain mix (TOU+8/23) or plate (TOU+10/25.)

(Standard Arbiter (D6): DEXTERITY 3D: Dodge 3D+1, melee combat 3D+2, missile weapons 3D+2 **STRENGTH 3D:** Brawling 3D+1 **KNOWLEDGE 3D:** Church of All Saints 3D+1, intimidation 3D+1, survival 3D+2 **TECHNICAL 3D MECHANICAL 2D+2:** Beast riding 3D+2 **PERCEPTION 3D:** Con 3D+1, interrogation 3D+1, investigation 3D+1, persuasion 3D+1, search 4D+1. **Force Points: 3-7. Equipment:** Long sword, damage value STR+2D; heavy crossbow, damage value STR+3D; Justice Sword, damage value STR+2D+1; chain mail, armor value +2D; chain mix, armor value +2D+2; plate, +3D+1.)

arbiter skill package

Deduction

Scholar: Carraway law

Tracking

knightly ranks

Knight

Master Arbiter

Warden

Judge

Justice

Arbiter

Watchman

clerics and paladins

Besides the official knights of the Clergy, there are independent heroes who roam Carraway in search of those in need. Those champions who do so because of their Saint are termed paladins or clerics. Unlike mercenaries or adventurers who usually fight for loot, clerics and paladins battle in the name of their patron Saint. These individuals receive no pay from the Church, they are simply philanthropic warriors and wizards who believe their Saint can best be served by battling the nocturnals.

Clerics tend to be spell-casters specializing in healing and protection magic. Do not underestimate their offensive capability, however, for few champions can survive the outlands without some method of attack. Paladins are champions with little or no spell-casting ability. They rely on heavy armor, sharp steel, and the blessing and virtues of their patron.

trade

Carraway was famous for its flooded riggola paddies and herds of moora. The nocturnals ruined the crops and slaughtered the livestock during the Darkfall, but the people eventually managed to restore some of their losses. A few months of determined resistance saw cordons erected around the farmlands of the river valleys. Simultaneously, shepherds patrolling from the backs of thundering buhumas managed to bring the moora herds back to strength. Today, Carraway's crops and livestock are plentiful enough to trade with Vanora and the Refugees of Aramyst. Theocrat Telos does not encourage trade with the High Steppes, however. She does not forbid it, but merchants find the temperamental steppe dwellers difficult to deal with anyway.

Carraway has little in the way of mechanized industry. Metal must be imported from Vanora or

as far away as Urbana. Wood is plentiful and provides lumber, paper, and weapon hafts to the nations of the east. The Alabaster Cliffs also provide quarries of valuable white stone.

Firearms and black powder are not common in Carraway. Only the Cathedrals tend to have storm cannons, and only truly wealthy knights carry firearms.

culture

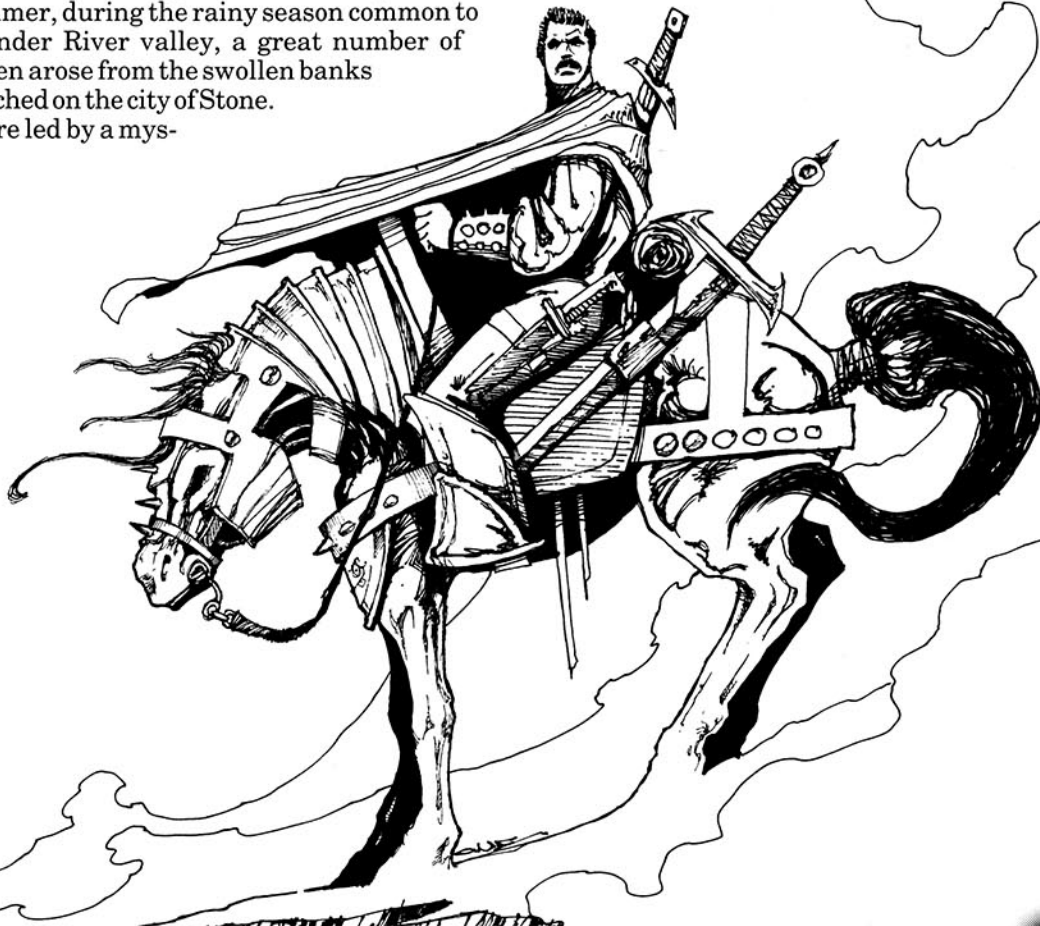
The Church of All Saints pervades Carraway's culture. Those dedicated to a particular patron engage in a feast on the day of his or her canonization. All the devout attend and contribute something to the celebration. Those who patronize another Saint politely bypass these commemorations in silent respect.

the forsaken lands

The single greatest memory in the minds of the people of Carraway is the Abandonment. Seven years ago, the knights across the Thunder River found themselves hard-pressed by nocturnals. The broken hills and valleys of the raging river seemed to spawn a never-ending horde of frothing horrors. One summer, during the rainy season common to the Thunder River valley, a great number of muck-men arose from the swollen banks and marched on the city of Stone. They were led by a mys-

terious sorcerer known only as the "Swamp Lord." Master Arbiter Hugh Lee assembled the Legion of Stone to fight the strange fiends, but the valiant defenders were eventually overwhelmed. Reluctantly, Lee sent word to the outlying villages that Stone would fall. His message also revealed that the survivors would attempt to break out of the siege and escape to Karstan. Thousands of civilians from the outlying villages streamed into the remains of the city to join the rout. Most were slain by the muck-men, but a few thousand villagers managed to join Master Arbiter Lee before the retreat. The "Karstan Death March," as it came to be called, was a testament to their bravery. The knights in particular fell by the scores in that long trek, desperately trying to protect the civilians under their care. Despite their losses, never once did the heroes shirk their duties as Carraway's sworn defenders.

Two months after the invasion began, the ragged refugees of Stone



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were welcomed into Karstan. More than half of the civilians survived the Death March, but only a handful of Arbiters, Justices, Judges, and Watchmen could be counted. Master Arbiter Lee collapsed as he entered the city and died several days later, his duty done.

Theocrat Telos commissioned a new order for those who survived Lee's Death March. Those who belong to the Order of Stone are toasted at dinner on the anniversary of the city's fall. Lee himself was canonized as a Saint of Fortitude shortly after his death.

high steppes

If Urbana is the grimmest realm of Aden, then the High Steppes is the most barbarous. Hordes of raiders roam its plains and nocturnals rampage through the outlands unchecked.

Before the Darkfall, the region was home to three lesser "territories" ostensibly ruled by local warlords, or "Kazans." Many of these bandit chiefs were slain by the nocturnals shortly after the invasion. Of those that survived, Kazans Mikal, Lilith, and Tovar managed to protect most of their isolated clans. Lilith, the Black Sorceress, used magic to communicate with her former rivals and offer a truce. Both Tovar and Mikal agreed to the arrangement. What wasn't agreed upon, however, was who would be the ultimate Kazan of the new realm. Lilith was content to lurk behind the throne of power, but neither Tovar nor Mikal were willing to submit to the other. Finally, Lilith suggested the two settle their differences according to the ancient way of the Kurzak raiders — by joust. Kazan Mikal is a jurak, while Kazan Tovar is human. Few gambled that Tovar, a stout but aging man, would best his larger, younger rival-but he did. With a crack "heard round the steppes," Kazan Tovar's thunder-lance, a device previously unseen in the High Steppes, knocked Mikal from his saddle. Tovar's victory made him the Grand Kazan for the next decade — a centennial.

That was nine years ago. Kazan Mikal, who ages more slowly than Tovar, now waits patiently for a rematch at the end of the centennial. Lilith remains uninvolved, content to continue whatever secret schemes she weaves in relative obscurity. As for Tovar, now sixty, his ruthless regime nears its end. Whether he will rule the next centennial or not is a subject of much debate and wagering.

Mikal has strength and vigor, but Tovar may have another surprise awaiting his rival.

the three provinces

Under Lilith's truce, the High Steppes was officially divided into three provinces: Trace, Yprom, and Kurzak.

Trace is the home of Kazan Mikal. As one might expect, this cold land is home to many dwarves, juraks, and even a few ice-elves. The capital of Trace is Vochny, located along the southern border of the White Forest.

Yprom is Lilith's domain. Its dark forests harbor numerous elves, ferrans, and faerkin. Its plains are home to jurak, human, and dwarven raiders. Her capital is Synthacia, overlooking the Bay of Blood, so named because it glows red with the setting sun.

Tovar's realm is Kurzak, home to most of the High Steppes' notorious raiders. These brigands have swept down the Causeway into Carraway for countless generations. Only in the last few centuries, with the fortification of Sentinel, have the raiders been checked. Tovar's capital at Bulgrak was once one of the primary hide-outs for these desperadoes.

Life in the high steppes

Regardless of the province one lives in, the High Steppes is an oppressive and dangerous place. The Kazans' legacy is one of violence. The strong make the rules and the weak must live by them. Fortunately, the people of Aden are resilient. The common folk of the steppes will do what they can to help their neighbors. Rarely will a person stand up to the forces of their Kazan, but a villager can count on his fellows to lend him aid immediately after their oppressors have left the scene. There is no organized "resistance" throughout the union, the people of each neighborhood simply come to the aid of their fellows once the immediate danger has passed.

government

Kazan Tovar is in nominal charge of the entire High Steppes. In truth, both Kazan Mikal and Kazan Lilith retain their autonomy. Tovar's authority is concentrated in two areas. His first responsibility is to coordinate the forces of the High Steppes in battle against the nocturnals. Tovar's second role is to negotiate alliances with other nations.

The Kazans are the ultimate authority in their capitals. In the few other cities that exist, a Minister appointed by the Kazan serves as his or her administrator.



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kazan tovar

The "Despot of the Steppes" dwells in the largest tower of his mysterious home. Kazan Tovar is a tall, thick man with black hair and a handlebar mustache like those favored by the region's horsemen. He was a ruthless bandit in his younger days. Even those who consider the steppe raiders romantic thought Tovar insane. Brigands who failed in their tasks were slain as were those victims who failed to submit when Tovar robbed them.

Tovar dictates the laws of Kurzak and his Bagyards are expected to enforce them. Some days the mad despot might declare wearing the color red is illegal and punishable by death. Other days he might order an entire voyetra burned because it has become "infested with evil." Tovar has also been known to declare his best knights corrupted and have them hunted down and killed by their companions.

How such a madman came to be the leader of such a mighty nation is beyond me. Fortunately, the despot will likely be replaced by Kazan Mikal at the end of his Centennial.

Bagyards

Streets or entire districts of a city are owned by wealthy families called Bagyards. All of the businesses in their "voyetra" must pay them some percentage of their profits. Residents must rent their homes from their Bagyard as well.

The wealthy and the powerful have local authority in towns and villages as well. All the land, the homes, fields, and resources upon a voyetra are the property of the Bagyard.

"Thralls," or common folk, always have the right to change Bagyards simply by requesting to move into a new voyetra. In truth, however, moving is a luxury most serfs cannot afford. Servitude to a Bagyard is nothing short of indentured servitude. Most masters mistreat and abuse their thralls when given the opportunity. The proud people of the High Steppes are prone to revolt and react with violence when pushed too far. These harsh lessons are slowly teaching the Bagyards to treat their servants with at least a modicum of respect.

the peace of rose

Every major nation belongs to the honorable tract called the Peace of Rose — except the High Steppes. The provincial union did not exist when the Peace was signed, and Tovar has made no attempt to sign it since his country's inception. Most believe that Tovar would side with Urbana in any

conflict that involved them. They also have cordial relations with the Rhanate. There are no diplomatic ties with Carraway, Kyan, Ionara, or Arasteen. Tovar is neutral to such lands as Aramyst, Vanora, or Yzeem.

CURRENCY

I have said previously that all the major nations of Aden mint their own coins, stamped with the crest of their homeland. The High Steppes are the exception. Kazan Tovar has made no attempt to create an official crest for the union, nor has he designed to create official coinage.

The most valuable crests in the realm are those from Urbana. Tovar, no doubt under Urbane's urging, has declared all Urbanan crests to be worth twice their printed value. Crests from Kyan are not honored here at all, another sign that Tovar is a puppet of the Iron Tyrant.

glossary of the high steppes

The people of the High Steppes speak the same language as the rest of Aden. Their peculiar society, however, has given rise to several terms that may not be familiar to you if you visit there. Here then are a few of the words you should know before traveling the High Steppes.

Bagyard: The owner of a section of city or village, called a voyetra.

Kazan: A warlord. Now accepted as the title of the provinces' leaders.

Thrall: The common folk who work in the Bagyard's districts.

Voyetra: A district owned and protected by a Bagyard.

Wachov: A mercenary employed by the Bagyard of a voyetra.

soldiers

The High Steppes have an unusual military system. The Kazans sponsor special orders, the Bagyards protect their own voyetras with their own individually organized forces, and the common folk are impressed into poorly armed and organized militias.

Provincial Orders: Each of the Kazans sponsor a group of champions organized into honorary orders. These warriors and wizards act only on their Kazan's command, and do not ordinarily act as policemen within their homelands. Only the greatest of nocturnals or corrupted merit their attention. Individual Bagyard's troops are expected to deal with all lesser threats.

In Kurzak, Tovar's champions are inducted into the Order of the Lance. Most are former steppe

raiders, whose passion for the thunder-lance gives the order its name. There are many wizards, druids, and other champions serving in the Order of the Lance, but the majority of its ranks are made up of heavily armored cavalymen.

Kazan Lilith's troops are less uniform. She prefers dark sorcerers, necromancers, and crafty rogues in her Dark Order. Lilith's champions are much more prone to investigate reports of nocturnals than their peers in Kurzak or Trace. I suspect their intervention has more to do with curiosity and their quest for dark knowledge than any real desire to aid their countrymen.

Kazan Mikal's Iron Order is perhaps the best organized force in the three provinces. Primitive juraks, savage ferrans, and vengeful humans, all throwbacks to earlier days, swell its ranks. The wild warriors' passion for martial combat make them eager for battle. Mikal sates their bloody appetite by allowing them to patrol the outlands. Mikal's champions are the best armed and armored knights in the High Steppes. Most wear heavy plate mail and carry arquebuses and thunderlances in addition to their arm of choice.

Wachovs: Each Bagyar employs his own champions to patrol and protect his voyetra. These individuals are called the wachovs, who are essentially mercenaries kept on semi-permanent retainers. They are rarely as deadly as those employed by directly by the Kazan, but there are exceptions. Their organization and composition varies widely. Some Bagyars favor scores of young wizards while others prefer heavily armored warriors. A few of the most powerful Bagyars have entire companies of arquebusiers, crossbowmen, cavalry, or even musketeers. Storm cannons, ballistas, and an occasional machine of mechamagic round out the arsenals they employ against the nocturnals — or occasionally their neighbors.

Wachovs are typically thralls who have proven their abilities in combat or through clever deeds. Others may be former adventurers, steppe raiders, or even outcasts or criminals from other nations. Surprisingly, this system is actually fairly effective at fighting back the majority of nocturnals. A voyetra's guardians are necessarily skilled and able fighters. The system only breaks down when a community is faced with particularly cunning or insidious nocturnals — usually corrupted. On these occasions, such localized groups have difficulty calling on the experience or ingenuity of a larger organization. The wachovs of one voyetra are always reluctant to call upon another. Foolish pride has left more than one community a smoldering ruin.

Militia: Only a very few of the most enlightened Bagyars train their thralls as militia. Most simply

impress their indentured servants into hastily formed companies when their own troops need a few more spears or bodies along their borders. Bagyars and their wachovs are notorious in their abuse of the militia, whom they regard with the utmost contempt. Thrall soldiers are regarded as "suicide" troops good only for delaying the savage attacks of nocturnals. In truth, the honest men and women of the High Steppes are capable warriors, even when armed with inferior wooden spears and no armor.

trade

Aniols are cultivated throughout the High Steppes. Riggola grows along the upper Meander of Kurzak just as it does the lower in Carraway. Giant pumpkins and death-gourds are common in Yprom. The latter are a treat despite their name, which comes from their skull-like appearance.

Most farms are owned by a Bagyar and worked by the people of his village. A Bagyar never dirties his own hands in the soil. The "share-croppers" work the fields and receive a portion of their yield. The rest is sold at market to support the Bagyar.

The High Steppes has little in the way of ore or metals. The only successful veins are found in the rugged mountains of Trace. Kazan Mikal oversees the export of ores personally. As one might expect, very little Tracian metal finds its way to Kazan Tovar, though Lilith's people are allowed to purchase as much as they wish. Carraway will not deal with their northern neighbors, but the Rhanate trades minerals and ore for aniols, gourds, and riggola.

Fishing and lumber are the prime industries of Yprom. The study of mechamagic and the devices that result from it are slowly becoming another resource in Synthacia. Lilith's personal mastery of iron sorcery has shown her people that great power, and profits, can be made from it.

Besides fishing the upper Meander, the people of Kurzak have little industry. The horsemen of the steppe prefer to remain free of the Bagyars by roaming and raiding. Kazan Tovar does little to stop the brigands, and perhaps even sponsors their occasional sorties against the rich caravans between Trace and Yprom. It is almost certain that those bands that strike into Carraway act under his behest. It can truly be said that the primary industry of Kurzak is mischief.

culture

The Bagyars learned long ago that a few celebrations go a long way towards keeping their thralls happy. Every voyetra celebrates the end of a harvest and the

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coming of spring. A birth or marriage in a Bagyar's family is always cause for a feast.

Most settlements have their own local customs and celebrations as well. In Overlook, for example, the thralls honor the memory of a great heroine who cleared the local caves of cliff-spiders. In Bulgrak, the birthday of Regas, "the greatest raider that ever roamed the steppes," is cause for three days of feasting, thieving, and imbibing of strong spirits.

BANDIT BARDS

The steppe raiders, and their leaders in particular, are vain scoundrels. Accordingly, most raiders are accompanied by bards who can sing their terrible tales to the masses. The brigands believe that if the minstrel is successful in spreading their misdeeds, local caravan masters are more likely to surrender than fight such notorious desperadoes.

steppe raiders

The steppe raiders are cherished by most thralls and hated by the Bagyars. The people of the steppes mistakenly believe the brigands are romantic heroes living outside the oppressive grip of the Bagyars. Many of the thralls' folk-tales revolve around dashing horsemen stealing from the rich and giving to the poor. If such altruistic raiders exist, I have never seen them. Their usual method of operation is to steal from the rich and give to themselves.

If you should ever have to track down a band of steppe raiders, I suggest you do so quietly. Most thralls will protect local bandits unless they have been personally wronged by them. The horsemen's greatest weakness is their incredible egos, however. The band's bard can lead you directly to their lair if you can properly coerce him to betray his companions.

standard steppe raider

AGILITY 11

Beast riding: horse 14, climbing 13, maneuver 13, melee combat 13, stealth 12, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 12, missile weapons 11

ENDURANCE 10

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 7

Perception 9, tracking 9, trick 10

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 13, survival: steppes 13, willpower 11

CHARISMA 6

Persuasion 9, taunt 9

Life Points: 3-5

Equipment: Lance, STR+10/25; pistol, damage value 19, range 3-5/10/20/50; horse bow STR+4/19, range 3-10/40/80/150 (ignore penalties for firing while on horseback.)

(Standard Steppe Raider (D6): DEXTERITY 3D+1: Firearms 4D, maneuver 4D+1, melee combat 4D+1, missile weapons 3D+2 **STRENGTH 3D+1:** Brawling 4D, climbing/jumping 4D+1 **KNOWLEDGE 2D+1:** Intimidation 4D+1, survival 4D+1, willpower 3D+2 **TECHNICAL 2D+1 MECHANICAL 2D+1:** Beast riding 4D+2 **PERCEPTION 2D+2:** Con 3D+1, investigation 3D, persuasion 3D, search 3D, sneak 4D, taunt 3D. **Force Points:** 3-5. **Equipment:** Lance, damage value STR+3D+1; pistol, damage value 4D+2; horsebow, STR+1D+1.)

the sanguine monks

The High Steppes are home to a number of strange individuals. Perhaps the strangest, as a group, are the Sanguine Monks.

Shortly after the Darkfall, a human champion named Ivar found himself surrounded by a horde of sloathes, horrible nocturnals that dwell in the trees of the White Forest. Ivar knew he was doomed, but swore that his current opponent would not down him. He killed the sloathe he was fighting, then battled another with the same result. Minutes later, Ivar awoke from a mad daze to find himself surrounded by a dozen slaughtered sloathes.

Ivar wandered about confused and wounded for several days, trying to figure out how he had cut his way out of that terrible press. Finally it occurred to him that he had lived because of his philosophy. He knew he was doomed, and so fought with reckless aggression. Yet he would not let any single foe finish him. Ivar was somehow able to induce the same mental state in subsequent battles, and over the years, became one of Aden's deadliest warriors.

Four years ago, Ivar discarded his armor in favor of lighter garb. He founded a cliff-top monastery on the western coast of Trace and began to teach his grim philosophy to others. His devotion and the blood of the nocturnals became the symbols of his order, and Ivar dubbed his followers the Sanguine Monks. He calls his trance-like fighting style the "red haze," because a true master of the method sees everything in frenetic scarlet. Few can master

the necessary mental state needed to become a Sanguine Monk. Those who can't do so after a year of training are dismissed from Ivar's monastery.

standard sanguine monk

AGILITY 11

Acrobatics 12, beast riding: buhuma 12, climbing 13, maneuver 13, melee combat 14, running 12, stealth 12, unarmed combat 13

DEXTERITY 10

Fire combat 11, missile weapons 11

ENDURANCE 10

Resist shock 11

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 12

INTELLECT 9

First aid 11, induce red haze 11, perception 11

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 13, willpower 11

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 11

Life Points: 4-8

Equipment: Hand axe, damage value STR+5/20; pistol, damage value 19, range 3-5/10/20/50.

(Standard Sanguine Monk (D6): **DEXTERITY 3D+2:** Acrobatics 4D, firearms 3D+2, maneuver 4D+1, melee combat 4D+2, missile weapons 3D+2, running 4D **STRENGTH 3D+1:** Brawling 4D+1, climbing/jumping 4D+1, stamina 3D+2 **KNOWLEDGE 3D:** Intimidation 4D+1, willpower 3D+2 **TECHNICAL 3D:** First aid 3D+2 **MECHANICAL 2D+2:** Beast riding 4D **PERCEPTION 3D:** Induce red haze 3D+2, investigation 3D+2, sneak 4D. **Force Points:** 4-8. **Equipment:** Hand axe, damage value STR+1D+2; pistol, damage value 4D+2.)

the red haze

In his more lucid moments, which are rare, Ivar theorizes that the red haze is the same state as that entered by a cornered or wounded animal. The warrior realizes he will not survive. His doomed mind shirks free of any inhibitions concerning style, skill, or even fear, and instead becomes a fluid killing machine. No effort is wasted and the mind is not distracted by looking for avenues of escape. Instead, the fighter's complete psyche is allowed to break free.

Madness or genius? It is for you to decide. It is difficult to achieve the red haze, but those



• two nations of aden •

who do are truly deadly opponents. The disadvantages to such a primal state are twofold. First, Sanguine Monks cannot contemplate complex plans once a battle has begun. If a cunning nocturnal can avoid melee with a monk, it can most likely trick or trap him easily enough. Second, those in the red haze will often mistake friends for foes. If you must fight beside one of these zealots, I suggest you give your reckless companion a great deal of space.

new skill: induce red haze

Sanguine monks have a special Intellect skill called *induce red haze*. To enter the "red haze," the character must achieve an *induce red haze* total of 20. If the character is already involved in melee, he receives a +5 bonus to his skill check.

When a character enters the red haze, he basically becomes berserk. All his attacks are made at +3 to the action total, shock damage is ignored, and he may ignore any negative modifiers due to wounding. The character is reckless, however, and will not stop attacking his foes regardless of the situation or his own impending doom. If there are no opponents visible, the character must generate a *will-power* total of 12 each round not to strike at the next closest target. Should this occur, the Sanguine Monk will not stop the attack unless the victim or another companion can achieve a *persuasion* total of 15. At this point the red haze is over.

Once the red haze has ended, the monk collapses for roughly 30 minutes or until someone makes a successful *first aid* roll. The character suffers normally from any damage incurred in the fight once the red haze has passed.

Player characters may start a campaign as Sanguine Monks. The skill *induce red haze* is a trained skill, and has no specializations. Finally, being a Sanguine Monk means that the character must shave his or her body hair, wear no armor, and conform to the ways of Ivar's order. Ivar himself may also call upon the hero or heroine to perform tasks for the order from time to time as well.

weapons and armor

Most Sanguine Monks wield one or two swords, scarallas, axes, or other edged weapon with which to shed the blood of nocturnals. Wheel locks are used for close fighting, but longer ranged weapons are shunned. Sanguine Monks need the press of melee to properly achieve the red haze.

All Sanguine Monks shave their heads and refuse to wear armor. This supposedly helps them gain the necessary mind-set they must acquire to practice Ivar's lethal art.

Ionara

Ionara is a majestic and wondrous place. Titanic icebergs loom treacherously overhead, icicles the length of galleons hang ominously from incredibly tall cliffs, and vast tundra stretches for hundreds of kilometers before being bordered by incredible white mountains. These are the sights that await you if you travel to the Ice Wastes.

Thousands of wild snowmads fight for survival in this unforgiving land. They would surely flock to the only populous settlement in the frigid region if Ice Queen Kryanix would allow it. Ionara is the nation and the city of the Ice Queen. Though it is small compared to most other nations, Ionara is easily as powerful and influential as Arasteen or Urbana.

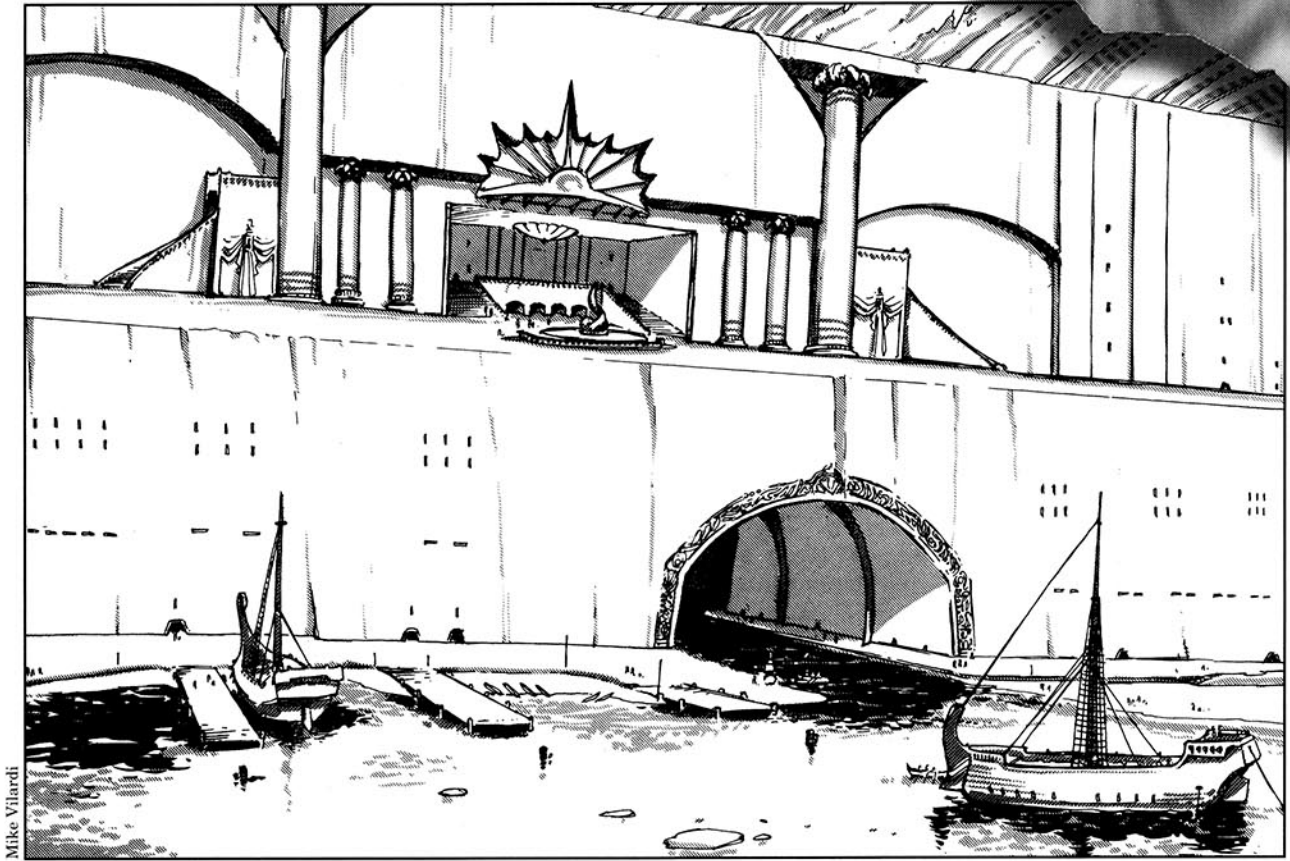
entering Ionara

No other nation is so naturally protected from the horrors of the world as Ionara. The city can only be reached via an underground river called the Tongue of the Child. The river received its unusual name thousands of years ago, when the founder of Ionara lost one of his two infant daughters in its freezing waters. The child perished, but there are those who claim a haunting cry still echoes from uncharted caverns on certain nights.

The Tongue of the Child flows lethargically through a maze of twisting ice-caverns. This labyrinth is called the Teeth for the jagged icebergs that lurk beneath its blue waters, waiting to grind wooden-hulled vessels to splinters. The people of Ionara forge their crafts of bone or plate their hulls in iron. Even a ship suitably outfitted for sailing the maze is doomed to failure without a map, for only a few select captains within the Ice Fleet are aware of the proper route through the maze-like caverns.

Besides these natural barriers, the Teeth are filled with nocturnals. Skiffs of the Ice Fleet patrol the area constantly, but it is impossible to truly control such a tremendous area.

Small groups of men and women may enter Ionara through smaller ice-caves that lead directly



Mike Vilardi

into the city. These are easily defended against any large body of foes, however, so any serious attack must come through the Teeth. Ionara is easily the most defensible city in Aden.

Life in Ionara

Ionara sits inside a great glacier, the size of which I doubt you would believe if you do not see it with your own eyes. By day, bright light penetrates the thin roof and casts the entire complex in a scintillating, shifting light that dazzles the eyes. By night the caverns undergo a drastic change. You will see little in the eerie glow, but you will hear quiet splashes from lurking nocturnals, the drip of melting ice, and the lethargic river gently lapping at Ionara's shores.

Ice elves

The elves that settled Ionara had a bluish tinge to their skin. Over time, their descendants became known as the ice-elves. The Ice Queen Kryanix is an ice-elf herself, and is the only surviving daughter of Ionara's founder. Her mother and father mastered enchantments of gentle, radiant heat that allowed them to live in the Ice Wastes. They

refined their knowledge for several hundred years before finally creating the hearth stones that allow the people of Ionara to live comfortably.

government

The source of Queen Kryanix's power is two-fold. The first is simply her icy will. I have seen men throw themselves into certain death at her behest.

Her second source of power is the Ionaran's need for cheap and efficient heat. Anyone who lives in the glacier must obtain a hearth stone to warm his or her home. The hearth stone is a rock that radiates gentle, penetrating heat. It lasts indefinitely and never needs recharging. Only Queen Kryanix herself can create these magical devices. A person can survive in heavy clothes or by aid of magic for several days or even weeks, but no one could actually settle in this hostile place without the succor of the hearth stone.

Since only the Queen can create hearth stones, she is able to keep a very tight rein on the people who settle in her realm. Those who are refused admittance often freeze to death as they wander the Ice Wastes, or are taken in by certain tribes of snowmads or arctic nocturnals.

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soldiers

Queen Kryanix's main army is called the Frost Guard.

These men and women are made up of nearly all the races, though a clear majority of the officers are ice-elves. In times of need, such as when the savage snowmad named Berig forged an alliance with the other snowmad clans, the common citizen is expected to report to the Ice Palace to serve as well.

The Frost Guard: All soldiers of the Ice Queen are trained with the crossbow, sword, and shield. I estimate that she has at least a thousand soldiers under arms at any one time — a huge percentage of Ionara's 15,000 citizens.

The Frost Guard uses the same ranking system as Arasteen's militia. Soldiers form squads of ten to twenty men and women, and are led by Corporals and Sergeants. Lieutenants lead companies of five to ten squads. Captains command two or more companies or detachments of Serpent Riders. Prince Frizier is the supreme commander of the Ionaran military.

standard soldier of the frost guard

AGILITY 8

Dodge 9, melee combat 10, unarmed combat 9

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 9, missile weapons 9

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 7

Perception 8, tracking 9, trick 10

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 6

CHARISMA 6

Taunt 8

Life Points: 1–6

Equipment: Long sword, damage value STR+6/21; medium crossbow, damage value STR+7/22, range 3–25/75/150/300; chain mail, damage value TOU+6/21; medium shield (*melee parry* +2.)

(Standard Soldier of the Frost Guard (D6):

DEXTERITY 2D+2: Dodge 3D, firearms 3D, melee combat 3D+1, missile weapons 3D **STRENGTH 2D+2:** Brawling 3D **KNOWLEDGE 2D+1 TECHNICAL 2D+1 MECHANICAL 2D+1 PERCEPTION 2D:** Con 3D+1, investigation 2D+2, search 3D, taunt 2D+2. **Force Points:** 1–6. **Equipment:**

Long sword, damage value STR+2D; medium crossbow, damage value STR+2D+1; chain mail, armor value +2D.

ranks of the frost guard

Rank	Command
Soldier	None
Corporal	Detachments
Sergeant	Squad
Lieutenant	Company
Captain	Companies

serpent riders

Decorated soldiers of the Frost Guard may sometimes be awarded a position in the Serpent Riders. This elite group is taught how to train an infant snow serpent and raise it to be a mount of war. It takes the serpent two years to reach maturity, and in this time the new rider must nurse and train the beast at least twelve hours a day. It is a very demanding task that only the most dedicated complete. When this "Time of Bonding" is over, the rider and his mount must undergo a further year as a cadet in the Serpent Riders. If they then meet the approval of the others, they are inducted into the ranks as a Captain and may join the Serpent Riders on sorties, or lead detachments of the Frost Guard. I have no idea what happens to those who are not approved by their peers, but knowing the Ice Queen, it is a cold fate.

standard serpent rider

AGILITY 10

Beast riding: snow serpent 13, dodge 12, maneuver 11, melee combat 14

DEXTERITY 9

Gunnery 9, missile weapons 14

ENDURANCE 10

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 8

First aid 11, perception 9, science: xenology 9, tracking 10, trick 10

MIND 8

Medicine 10

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 12, willpower 11

CHARISMA 9

Charm 10, persuasion 10

Life Points: 2–6

serpent rider skill package

Beast riding: snow serpent

Melee combat

Survival: arctic

Equipment: Serpent Riders use lances (damage value STR+10/25 when charging) and then fall back to maces (STR+4/19) or swords (STR+6/21). Heavy crossbows are their missile weapons of choice (STR+9/24, range 3-10/100/200/300). They wear plate and chain armor beneath heavy padded serpent furs (TOU+9/24).

(Standard Serpent Rider (D6): DEXTERITY 3D+1: Dodge 4D, gunnery 3D, maneuver 3D+2, melee combat 4D+2, missile weapons 4D+2 **STRENGTH 3D+1 KNOWLEDGE 2D+2:** Intimidation 4D, willpower 3D+2 **TECHNICAL 2D+2:** First aid 3D+2, medicine 3D+1 **MECHANICAL 2D+2:** Beast riding 4D+1, xenology 3D **PERCEPTION 3D:** Charm 3D+1, con 3D+1, investigation 3D, persuasion 3D+1, search 3D+1. **Force Points:** 2-6. **Equipment:** Lance, damage value STR+3D+1; mace, damage value STR+1D+1; sword, damage value STR+2D; heavy crossbow, damage value STR+3D; plate and chain armor, value +3D.)

the ice fleet

Kryanix's fleet is composed mostly of berg-cutters, fast attack ships featuring a slicing ram on their prow. These stout ships use the ram to break up icebergs that threaten their merchant convoys, or to ram and sink enemy ships. A berg-cutter is usually crewed by ten men, though the deck can hold another twenty for boarding or transport purposes.

The other ship used by Ionara is the berg-lobber. This is a slower, more fragile ship usually kept far in the back of an attack formation. From there the crews load huge chunks of ice into the ship's catapults and lob them into enemy craft. If the fleet isn't near a natural supply of icebergs for ammunition, they will often haul pre-cut chunks behind them.

Berg-Cutters: Toughness 20; speed 45 mph; maneuver +2. Damage from the berg-cutter's ram is equal to its speed value +10. Most berg-cutters mount several ballista or storm cannons as well (see Chapter Four).

Berg-Lobbers:

Toughness 20; speed 18 mph; maneuver -2. The berg lobber can hurl 500-pound icebergs (or other projectiles) for an attack with damage value 30 and range 15-30 / 90 / 240 / 500. The catapult on the back of the ship can be reloaded and ready to fire once every three rounds. Ammunition is virtually unlimited in the Blue Flows. Elsewhere, the berg-lobbers tow up to 10 icebergs via retractable guide-lines.

Finally, many of the ferrans living in Ionara claim lineage from seals, sea-lions, and even polar bears. Many of these form escort detachments that accompany the navy into action. Their job is usually to board enemy vessels or chip away at the hull from underneath.

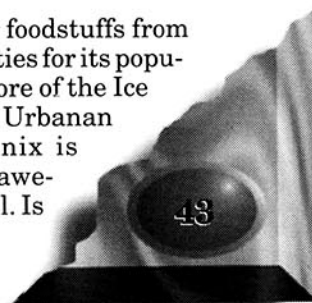
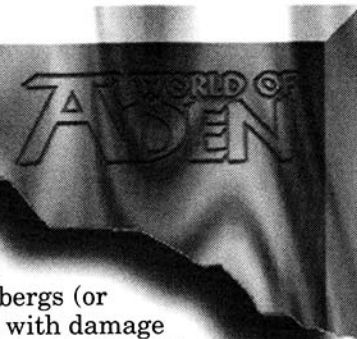
trade

The people of Ionara subsist mostly on seafood and anials. The latter are fat, fluffy vegetables that can be prepared in thousands of different ways, fried, steamed, boiled, baked, or mashed. It is good that anials are so flexible, for it is the only vegetable that grows naturally in the Ice Wastes. The rest of their diet must be rounded out by imports from Arasteen. Some men and women hunt ursax in the wastes, but this meat is expensive and a very rare part of the Ionaran diet.

Ionara is such a small nation there is little need for extensive trade. The one resource the Ice Wastes does have in abundance is diamonds. For some reason the terrific peaks of the north are rich in these valuable gems. As you well know, diamonds are valuable gemstones, but they are most prized for their ability to store magical energy. I wear a diamond signet ring for this purpose, and its small reserves have saved my life on several occasions.

Diamonds are very difficult to detect in a land of ice, so prospecting expeditions must be prepared for a lengthy stay in the freezing hills. Imagine trying to spot the sparkle of diamonds amongst glistening icicles! Besides sheer fatigue, prospectors must also be wary of snowmads, blizzards, avalanches, crumbling snow banks, and of course, nocturnals. By the very demands of the job, diamond hunters are a tough breed. If you ever have need of retainers in the Ice Wastes, no one will prove as valuable to you as these strong men and women.

Ionara imports grain and other foodstuffs from Arasteen in relatively large quantities for its population. Lately though, more and more of the Ice Queen's funds have gone toward Urbanan steel and manite. Queen Kryanix is using these metals to build an awesome fleet, though why I cannot tell. Is



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she planning to attack Arasteen's fleet? If so, for what purpose? Her realm cannot survive without our grain, and there is no hope of her small population actually invading our much larger nation. My only guess is that the Ice Queen has somehow been seduced into a dark alliance with Lord Urbane, who has more than enough men and materials to subjugate our land. If this is true, the invasion may not occur until we are most vulnerable — Urbane and Queen Kryanix are cold calculators.

culture

Ionarans celebrate seasonal holidays as well as special events such as victories against the snowmads or particularly dangerous nocturnals.

The Week of Waters is the beginning of spring. The surface ice begins to melt and drain down into the caves of Ionara. The cascading water forms fantastic stalactites and other bizarre formations for several days before it is finally through. During this time the people create ice statues and snowmen of incredible proportions and design, and have ski and sled races down the face of the southern slopes. Kryanix is always happiest at this time of year. She ventures out among her people and gazes at their creations with genuine admiration and wide-eyed wonder. The Week of Waters is truly a fantastic time to visit the otherwise placid city.

the city of ionara

Ionara is basically divided into two regions: the cliff and the shore. Businesses and residences of the cliff generally belong to wealthier citizens. Those buildings along the shore, near the harbor, are slightly less extravagant, though still elegant in comparison to similar areas in other nations.

The architecture of Ionara, as one might expect, uses ice and snow in its motif. Icicles hang from the eaves and glass windows are framed with frost. Wood is scarce in the Ice Wastes, so most structures are made from white stone imported from quarries elsewhere in the Teeth.

the ice palace

Queen Kryanix rules her frigid realm from this awe-inspiring castle of ice perched precariously on the Glistening Cliffs. Tall spires ringed with smooth icicles tower over clear walls of ice. Most wondrous of all is the ice garden, a maze of sculptures carved by Ionara's artisans. The incredible statues stand for only a few months before new artists are allowed to craft new images.

Queen Kryanix is an ice-elf of incredible beauty. Her raven black hair, shot

through with shocks of electric blue, frames her turquoise skin. Her white robes and crystalline jewelry complete the image of the Ice Queen.

Kryanix has no husband, but the Consorts, her elite personal bodyguards, are said to frequent her personal chambers. Kryanix has borne many children in the last hundred years, though she claims only Princes Frizier and Coldaron, those given her by her first husband, now deceased. After the death of her husband, she felt that any future children had no direct claim to the throne, and would only create fiction within her court.

Frizier is the oldest son of Queen Kryanix and the commander of the city's armed forces. For years he has tirelessly battled the snowmad raiders, ice-worms, and yoggoths that continually try to penetrate Ionara's defenses. Long ago, his brilliant maneuvers gained him the praise of his mother and the Ionarans he served, but the people have gradually grown tired of his exploits. The real celebrity in Ionara these days is Prince Coldaron, whose daring command of the navy has recaptured the attention of the realm.

kyan

Kyan is one Aden's stranger nations. Everything in Kyanite society is based around insects. The people live in hives, the warriors ride giant wasps, spiders, and other creatures, workers use mammoth beetles as beasts of burden, and even weapons, armor, and tools are made from the husks of dead insects.

The Kyanites have little choice in using insects in some aspects of their life, as the Crawling Jungle gets its name from the numerous species that live there. What isn't quite understood by outsiders is how insects have come to dominate every facet of Kyanite society. This way of life is so pervasive that even newcomers quickly forget their old ways and assimilate into the hive mentality of their fellows.

The nation of Kyan has only one settlement large enough to be called a city, Crichton, the capital. There are numerous villages scattered along South Wall or beneath the carpet of the Crawling Jungle, but no other cities.

Life in kyan

The client villages of Kyan are much like those anywhere else in Aden. Perhaps the only difference is their reliance on insects for food, tools, and medicines. Two of Kyan's settlements, Crichton and High Hive, are underground. Those who dwell there cannot easily build homes of wood, and so rely upon specialized insects to create their abodes. The most common dwelling is a simple cave bored into



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the side of the "hive" wall by rock-eaters — horse-sized termites that can chew through most anything.

Some tunnels are no less than "neighborhoods" that stretch for kilometers and provide homes for hundreds of citizens. For those who aren't fond of living in caves, another type of dwelling is made by smaller beetles that consume the carapace of other insects. Some of the shell is ingested as food, but most of it is worked into a thick, black paste which is used to build their homes, tall black towers with a single entrance at the top. Insect wranglers then extract the creatures from the tower and sell the structure on the open market. Caratects — men and women skilled in carving and chipping carapace — can then add more accessible doors, windows, or other decorations at the new owner's request.

government

Villages in the Crawling Jungle region can decide whether or not they wish to be part of Kyan. If they are, Selanna offers them protection, but they must pay taxes and send her a certain number of warriors when asked. If a settlement decides not to join the Queen's Court, Selanna puts them out of her mind completely. They will not receive her help under any circumstance. I was present once when a village deserted the Court and was later attacked by the deadly insectoids called ilithix. Queen Selanna heard of the massacre that was occurring there, but would not even listen to those who sent magical requests for aid.

soldiers

Queen Selanna has divided her soldiers into two forces: the Home Guard, and the Swarm.

The Home Guard: The Home Guard are basically militia men and women who must patrol the hive and the area around it two days out of each week. While on duty, they are armed with barbed spears made from the leg of great insects. For armor, the Home Guard wears leather covered by cloaks of mottled green or brown. These help conceal them while on patrols in the thick jungle. During times of distress, such as a major ilithix attack, every able man and woman in the hive is expected to join those members of the Home Guard already on duty.

standard home guard

AGILITY 8

Beast riding: giant insects 10, dodge 9, melee combat 10

DEXTERITY 8
ENDURANCE 8
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 9
INTELLECT 7
PERCEPTION 8
MIND 7
CONFIDENCE 7
Intimidation 8
CHARISMA 6
Taunt 8

Life Points: 1-5

Equipment: Carapace armor, value TOU+5/20; carapace spear, damage value STR+5/20.

(Standard Home Guard (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+2: Dodge 3D, melee combat 3D+1 STRENGTH 2D+2 KNOWLEDGE 2D+2: Intimidation 2D+2 TECHNICAL 2D+2 MECHANICAL 2D+1: Beast riding 3D+1 PERCEPTION 2D+1: Taunt 2D+2 Force Points: 1-5. Equipment: Carapace armor, value +1D+2; carapace spear, damage value STR+1D+2.)

Swarmers: Any citizen of Kyan may attempt to become a Swarmer. If the applicant can prove his skill at arms and riding several of the Kyanite war beasts, he is accepted into the Swarm as a Petitioner. After six months, the initiate is either excused or promoted to a full-fledged Swarmer. There are no ranks within this elite force. Leadership is based on personal initiative, and occasionally, seniority.

The Swarmers use giant spiders, water striders, and hornets in their attacks. If heavy support is needed, stompers are available for trampling fortifications or battling Urbana's deadly mechanical constructions.

The most recent targets of the Swarmers are Urbanan trade vessels from Blackport headed for sea via the Cold River.

swarmer

AGILITY 10

Beast riding: giant insects 13, climbing 11, dodge 11, maneuver 12, melee combat 13, melee parry 12, unarmed combat 11

DEXTERITY 9

Missile weapons 13

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 8

Camouflage 10, first aid 10, perception 10, science: entomology 10

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 12, willpower 11

CHARISMA 8

Charm 10, persuasion 9

Life Points: 5-7

Equipment: Swarms wear heavy carapace armor (TOU+6/21) and wield carapace lances (STR+8/23) or long swords of the same material (STR+5/20). For long ranged attacks, most Swarms rely on the horse bow so that they can fire from the back of their current mount (STR+4/19, range 3-10/40/80/150, no penalty for firing while mounted.) Many Swarms practice insect sorcery as well.

(Standard Swarmer (D6): DEXTERITY 3D+1: Dodge 3D+2, maneuver 4D, melee combat 4D+1, melee parry 4D, missile weapons 4D+1 **STRENGTH 3D:** Brawling 3D+2, climbing/jumping 3D+2 **KNOWLEDGE 2D+2:** Intimidation 4D, willpower 3D+2 **TECHNICAL 2D+2:** First aid 3D+1 **MECHANICAL 2D+2:** Beast riding 4D+1, entomology 3D+1 **PERCEPTION 3D:** Charm 3D+1, hide 3D+1, investigation 3D+1, persuasion 3D. **Force Points:** 5-7. **Equipment:** Heavy carapace armor, value TOU+2D; carapace lances, damage value STR+2D+2; long swords, damage value STR+1D+2; horse bows, damage value STR+1D+1.)

trade

Kyanites are primarily gatherers. Basket bugs are ridden out into the jungles where they instinctively stuff edible plants into compartments just below their thorax. Upon return, the riders take half of the insects' stash for themselves. The basket-bugs feed off the rest.

Meat is obtained from huge animals that dwell in the Crawling Jungle. Though grazers and tree-eaters are not as common as the many varieties of insects, there are still enough of the mammoth beasts to provide fresh meat for Kyan's relatively small demand. Queen Selanna does not officially import food from any other nation, but many private vendors sell produce from Arasteen, Urbana, and the east. Prices for these foods are often high, but they remain popular since few vegetables are harvested locally.

Most men and women in Kyan are involved in the military in some way or another. Hive Mother Selanna is not particularly belligerent, but the illithix and Lord Urbane's constant encroachment on the jungle present a great and ever-growing threat. Because of this, Kyanite industry is focused on creating weapons and armor, training young insects for war, or learning about new species and their potential uses. Other common professions are caratects, insect wranglers, and insectors.

Caratects fashion devices from the shells of dead insects. Their tools range from simple hammers and chisels to small, specialized insects capable of

chewing and regurgitating carapace.

Insect wranglers train the many utilitarian insects used in everyday life by the Kyanites. Basket bugs, rock eaters, and carrion beetles are just some of the creatures trained and rented out by the wranglers.

Though the Kyanites raise and use over forty different types of insects, there are literally hundreds more that could be used if someone simply understood each species' particular quirks. Such work is the realm of the insectors. A few insectors maintain private shops, but most have now enrolled in the Academia Entomologia.

Kyan does not trade with other nations. Individual citizens do, however, so one can find produce from Arasteen and strange contraptions from Urbana in Crichton's bazaars. Traveling through the realm as a private merchant is dangerous business, so don't expect to find any bargains here.

Besides foreign goods, the outlying villages of Kyan often bring their unique wares to Crichton for trade. Wound worms from High Hive and glow slugs from Darkwood are always in demand at the capital.

culture

Kyanites are a busy sort. They have little time or inclination for celebrations or the arts. Only through caratecture, which they consider work, does their creativity sometimes exhibit itself.

Insect Sorcery: Though I hesitate to call it culture, a great amount of a Kyanite sorcerer's time is consumed developing insect sorcery. Shops selling hot, honey-sweetened brews swell with wizards engaged in discussion around the dinner hour. They are concerned with insect conjuration, alteration, and enchantment of all sorts. Gatherings, covens, and public displays of their accomplishments are common. The development of a new magical school is difficult, but the busy minds of Kyanite mages have hastened its progress. Some of the great entomancers, as they call themselves, have perfected spells said to rival those of the iron sorcerers.

CRICHTON

The only settlement large enough to be called a city in Kyan is Crichton. Most of the city is within a mammoth, beehive-shaped cavern within the mountains of South Wall. Businesses and wealthier citizens occupy the central floor of the hive, while most others live in the myriad tunnels that branch off of its core. Within each tunnel can be found hundreds of families, all living in shallow caves covered only by ramshackle doorways of carapace or wood.

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Queen Selanna

Hive Mother Selanna lives in the highest cave of the central hive where she can look out over the city. Unlike most other rulers in Aden, she has no name for her quarters or the cavern that houses her throne room. In fact, the Hive Mother is there so infrequently that she often becomes lost in the twisting tunnels of her own home! Selanna prefers to rule her kingdom from the thick of battle.

Decisions made in her absence are carried out by her only relative, Nelesh. Many distrust Nelesh, and some of the decisions he has made in his sister's absence have been controversial. It is possible that Nelesh is even responsible for sparking the ilithix debacle. Only time will tell if the Queen's brother is corrupted, as some suspect, or merely incompetent.

I suppose it is only fitting that the ruler of a nation modeled after insects is a Queen. Selanna is a warrior as well as a leader, perhaps the best in the entire nation. She is also one of the most exquisite women I have ever seen. Her hair looks as if it were dipped in gold, and her eyes are dark as manite. The "Hive Mother," as Selanna is sometimes called, is far more muscular than I for her build, yet she can be soft and feminine when she wishes.

Selanna is a woman of few words. When she does speak, those around her listen in reverent silence. They do not kowtow to her merely because she is their Queen, but because her strength and wisdom have earned their respect.

In battle, the Hive Mother rides either a giant black widow she calls "Sister," or a huge hornet named "Rocbane," after its success against a giant roc some years ago. The Insect Queen, as she is sometimes called, wields a black spear made from the spiny leg of some gigantic creature. She can frequently be seen at the head of her elite Swarm, and is always the first to draw blood in a fray.

academia entomologia

Queen Selanna's brother, Nelesh, created a school for collecting data on insects and their uses three years ago. He calls his college the Academia Entomologia. The researchers there are mainly wranglers or mages who use magic to entice or alter the instincts or breeding of insects. Occasionally these experiments go awry, as some suspect happened with the ilithix.

A new school within the college has dedicated itself to "entomancy," or insect sorcery. The difference in focus is subtle to you and me, but worlds apart to the average insector. In short, insectors previously used alchemical and sorcerous means to alter the

evolution of new-born insects. Entomancers seek to create spells that create, alter, or enchant already existing insects. In the words of Nelesh, insectors seek to breed new species, while entomancers are concerned with the attributes of a single creature, or swarm of creatures.

insects of kyan

Below are a few of the insects commonly used and sold in Kyan.

Wound Worms: These 2.5-centimeter long green worms devour infected flesh around wounds. If a battered patient allows a wound worm to rest on his wound for at least 10 minutes once per day, he may make his normal healing rolls at +3. Price: 200 crests.

Glow Worm: These five-centimeter long worms emit a green iridescent glow when in dark places. This light is bright enough to read by in a 2.5-meter sphere, and diminishes rapidly thereafter. Price: 100 crests.

Giant Beetle: A wide variety of beetles are used by Kyanites. Relatively calm brown beetles are used as beasts of burden, while excitable horned beetles are used in war. Insect wranglers sell brown beetles for 300–400 crests, while horned beetles sell for upwards of 2000.

Brown/horned Beetle

AGILITY 5

Climbing 8, running 7, unarmed combat (horned beetle only) 10

DEXTERITY 2

ENDURANCE 10

STRENGTH 13

TOUGHNESS 8 (13)

INTELLECT 1

Perception 11 (vibrations)

MIND 1

CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation (horned beetle only) 11

CHARISMA 2

Life Points: None

Natural Tools: Armor +5/13, horn (horn beetle only) damage value STR+6/19.

(Brown/Horned Beetle (D6): DEXTERITY 1D+1 STRENGTH 4D KNOWLEDGE 1: Intimidation 3D+2 TECHNICAL 1 MECHANICAL 1 PERCEPTION 1D+2: Investigation 3D+2. Force Points: None. Natural Tools: Armor, +1D+2, horn, damage value STR+2D.)

Giant Hornet: Hornets are difficult creatures to ride, and so the giant hornet specialization of *beast riding* is considered a trained skill.

giant hornet

AGILITY 13

Dodge 16, flight 16, unarmed combat 15

DEXTERITY 1

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 8

INTELLECT 1

Perception 11

MIND 2

CONFIDENCE 11

Intimidation 13

CHARISMA 2

Life Points: None

Natural Tools: Stinger, damage value STR+5/14.

(Giant Hornet (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+1: Dodge 5D+1, flight 5D+1 **STRENGTH 3D:** Brawling 5D **KNOWLEDGE 1:** Intimidation 4D+1 **TECHNICAL 1 MECHANICAL 2 PERCEPTION 2D+1:** Investigation 3D+2. **Force Points:** None. **Natural Tools:** Stinger, damage value STR+1D+2.)

Giant Water Strider: Water striders are almost totally mindless and somewhat timid. As with giant hornets, mastering them is very difficult (the water strider specialization is considered a trained skill).

giant water strider

AGILITY 11

Dodge 12, swimming 14

DEXTERITY 2

ENDURANCE 5

STRENGTH 6

TOUGHNESS 5

INTELLECT 1

Perception 11 (vibrations)

MIND 1

CONFIDENCE 4

CHARISMA 2

Life Points: None

Natural Tools: None, water striders are completely harmless and quite timid.

(Giant Water Strider (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+1: Dodge 4D **STRENGTH 2D:** Swimming 4D+2 **KNOWLEDGE 1 TECHNICAL 1 MECHANICAL 1 PERCEPTION 1D:** Investigation 3D+2. **Force Points:** None. **Natural Tools:** None.)

the rhanate

The Sundered Desert isn't a nation in the usual sense of the word, though the Rhanate of the Black Citadel would tell you otherwise. The Rhanate,

who rumor has it was a notorious desert bandit before the Darkfall, imposes strict tolls on anyone that ventures through his lands. He claims his kingdom stretches from Brisson's Bay in the north to the borders of Yzeem in the south, and from the Wall in the west to the Veldt in the east. He also claims to control the odd bands of scavengers, nomads, and other hearty souls who somehow manage to live in this inhospitable wasteland, but many of these independent people will tell you otherwise.

the Sundered Desert

Before you can understand the scattered kingdom of the Rhanate, you must be familiar with its harsh geography. The Sundered Desert is as inhospitable as any land in Aden. The cold hills of the north gradually warm into the arid plains of the middle region, but only a few spots in between harbor any respectable amount of drinkable water. The natural division of its landscape divides the desert into three regions, each under the control of the Rhanate's lieutenants.

In the north, fantastic grottos are broken by high mesas, buttes, and winding gorges. The scintillating purple, yellow, and orange rocks of the lower desert are amazing and used in jewelry and architecture throughout Aden. This region is called the Badlands, and I can assure you that it has earned its name.

From Burcham's Pass south, the land is warmer and moisture is even more scarce. The middle desert, collectively called the Sand Wastes, is buried under rolling dunes of fine silt. Creatures of all varieties slither through these fluid hills and prey on those who seek its few oases.

The southern desert is filled with great salt lakes, stark hills, and lonely crags. The area is called the Mud Plains for the vast kilometers of cracked land that stretch across its trackless expanse. Once per year, during the southern rainy season, the mud plains are flooded and turn to thick muck. While the inhabitants of the region appreciate the water, the muck can run deep enough to drag a man to his doom. When the plains dry only a few weeks later, you will see the bones of many creatures jutting from the cracking surface.

Life in the rhanate

Desert dwellers respect strength and cunning. There is little sympathy for

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those who cannot fight their own battles or at least afford to pay someone else to fight for them. This is called the Right of the Strong, and it is the backbone of the Rhanate's kingdom.

Survival of the fittest is perhaps the most universal custom in the Sundered Desert. Even those tribes that despise the Rhanate observe the Right of the Strong. If a man should steal and get away with it, only the victim would begrudge him his ill-gotten goods. Should the thief be caught, however, the victim may take whatever action he deems appropriate as recompense.

While it sickens that part of me dedicated to the principle of compassion, I must admit that I understand life in the Sundered Desert is much more harsh than life in the green hills of Arasteen. I do not believe this excuses the desert dwellers' severe attitude, but I can certainly understand the ancient origins of the Right of the Strong. My advice to you is to show these people that those who are truly strong can afford to show benevolence to those who are not. Perhaps our example will one day affect a change in this cruel custom.

taking coup

The only act thoroughly forbidden by desert society is murder. Those who are truly mighty should be able to dominate their foes without killing them, according to their strange beliefs. There are exceptions, but in general, the idea that a person could take another's life and does not, is a sign of great strength. Sparing a life when it is "yours" for the taking is called "taking coup." If you have taken coup on someone, they are honor-bound to never trouble you again.

government

The Rhanate refers both to the man that rules the Sundered Desert, and to the nation. The Rhanate's people live in isolated villages, nomadic tribes, and in the deep reaches of Skar. Unlike most rulers, the Rhanate does not force the settlements in his lands to obey his laws, pay taxes, or even swear fealty to him. Instead, denizens of the desert may enlist the Rhanate's forces directly — if they can afford them. This eliminates the need for taxes, as well as reduces the Rhanate's responsibilities.

The nature of this realm, the role the soldiers take in defending its people, and the attitude of the desert dwellers themselves all combine to make the Rhanate more of a territory than a nation.

Still, the "Dust King" has as much influence as any other ruler in Aden, and I suppose deserves to be treated as such.

the time of wandering

The Rhanate established himself as the "Dust King" shortly after the Darkfall. His warband was the most powerful of all the nomadic tribes, so it was only natural that the scattered survivors of nocturnal attacks would eventually seek his protection. Soon, the Rhanate's band grew so large that he could not adequately provide them with food or water. Nor could he protect them from the thousands of horrid creatures that stalked them. The Dust King decided that the only way to save his followers was to find an oasis and turn it into the greatest fortress yet seen in the sandy wastes. These rugged individuals plowed the outlands for months but could find no suitable homeland. Scribes of the Rhanate's court call this the "Time of Wandering." Many of the nomads died during this arduous trek and hope began to wane. One day, the tribe spotted a nest of fledgling sand-drakes moaning over the body of their mother, no doubt killed by some horrid nocturnal. Kalib Ona, one of the Rhanate's closest companions, had ridden such beasts before. He carefully approached the drakes, fed them, and coaxed them into the nomads' fold. A few months later, some of the nomads took to the skies on the leathery backs of these fierce reptiles.

The power of flight and their savage mounts not only helped the wanderers survive, it eventually led them to a new homeland. The Rhanate had long lusted after the great treasure said to lie atop Terrotaxus' Tower, a gigantic mesa centered in the middle of Great Drift. His only problem was Terrotaxus himself, a great dragon. The creature was smaller and younger than the legendary Balustrus, but only by a few centuries.

What happened next is a mystery that the Dust King will not comment upon. All I know is that the Rhanate flew to the mesa alone and returned with one of the dragon's gigantic eyes. If there had been any doubt of the Dust King's power, the death of Terrotaxus ended the debate. Some believe that the sand dragon was already dead by the power of some sinister nocturnal and the Rhanate only claimed the kill, but it mattered very little at the time. His beleaguered followers were happy enough to be ferried to the top of the tower and away from the prowling beasts of the sand wastes. One can imagine their cries of gratitude when they saw that Terrotaxus had magically summoned a well of fresh water through the core of his tower.

the Dust king

The Rhanate is a very private man these days. Few may see him, and only his most trusted com-

panions know his true name. He is a swarthy man of average height and build. His most unusual feature is his stark white hair, an unusual trait for a desert dweller. He has no wife, though a score of women claim to have given him sons and daughters. If this is true, the Rhanate has chosen to ignore them, claiming that all people of the Sundered Desert are his children.

For all his faults, the Rhanate respects my own King Corben and despises Lord Urbane. The Dust King took a disliking to the oft-times arrogant captains of the thunder trains, and in response, charged them exorbitant tithes for crossing his lands. The Iron Tyrant was not pleased and the two bickered for some time. I believe that their now silent argument is a calm before a storm.

Rhan Stetch

Rhan Stetch rules Rhanland for his friend and liege. Stetch is an elfen earth elemental, and was one of those who helped sculpt the Dust King's citadel. His own fortress lies within the base of Terrotaxus' Tower. Many claim the elemental has tunneled all the way up to the Black Citadel, and that the mesa is riddled with his magical excavations. This may be true, for the last time I visited Stetch, a band of nervous Outriders entered the back of his fortress outfitted for just such an expedition. I suspect that the elemental was exploring the old lair of Terrotaxus himself, and perhaps found something within that he hadn't previously encountered.

Rhan Trestan

I have not met Rhan Trestan, but those who have say she has bronze skin with raven hair and eyes of green. Her veil is red, as called for by her rank. She usually wears a soft gown of black, pinned together with a jade brooch that she rarely removes. She carries a flat sword made of dark, jagged glass at her side. Her Outriders claim she took the blade from a corrupted during the Time of Wandering.

Jyra is a deadly woman as proficient in sun and water sorcery as she is in the art of sword play. Rumor has it that she belongs to an ancient cult of assassins called the Crimson Sisterhood. Some hint that she is even the leader of this stealthy coven. Like her cult, Jyra is ruthless when it comes to hunting down suspected corrupted. Her Outriders are always tasked with bringing these fiends to justice, whether they receive payment from those threatened by the corrupted or not. Perhaps her obsession with bringing these fiends to justice has clouded her eyes to compassion somewhat. She turns a blind eye to the many cruel but uncorrupted thugs that swell her streets.

Rhan Kalib Ona

The half-elfen Rhan of the Mud Plains is the Dust King's oldest and closest friend. He is a tall, bald man, with pale skin uncommon among the bronzed desert dwellers. His pointed ears, narrow eyes, and thin chin can sometimes make him look quite sinister. The principal of justice reminds us that no one should be judged solely by their looks, but I must admit this fellow makes me uneasy. It was he who originally captured young sand drakes and learned to train them as mounts. Without him, the Rhanate might never have founded the Black Citadel and united the people of the Sundered Desert.

Still, for all that Kalib Ona has done, he is a dark and mysterious figure. Some suspect that he is corrupted, but I have seen no proof of that. He is sometimes cruel, but I cannot fault him for a trait shared by most of his countrymen. In truth, Kalib Ona is more powerful than the Rhanate, and perhaps holds more influence over the people of the desert than his liege. Ona seems to prefer to be the power behind the throne, however, and weave his schemes from relative obscurity.

Soldiers

The Rhanate's army works differently than that of other kingdoms. Because the kingdom's boundaries are ill-defined and its people often transient, there are no taxes or tithes. Instead, the majority of the national revenue is generated by contracting the services of the army. The Outriders roam the desert wastes and offer their services to those who can afford them. Large settlements usually keep a garrison "on retainer" within their walls. Even the tiny mining villages of the Badlands keep a few of these independent-minded rogues, warriors, and wizards of the Rhanate on hand.

The Outriders: Whereas discipline and loyalty are the backbone of most armies, the measure of an Outrider is determined solely by his success. If a young soldier breaks ranks or disobeys orders, his superiors will weigh the success or failure of his action. If he fails, he is either demoted or "thrashed" out of the service. If he succeeds, he will receive a commendation or a promotion. If an Outrider disobeys orders and is successful in the eyes of those above him, the soldier's immediate superior may suffer for his apparent failure. In a sense, my dedication to justice and compassion finds something attractive in this system. A man is judged by the results of his actions, regardless of rules or regulations. On the other hand, my more practical side tells me that much of the Outriders' failures come



Mike Vilardi

Ranks and titles of the outriders

Red	Rhan (Leader)
Orange	Rowan (Tithe-Master)
Yellow	Amar (Captain)
Green	Wanderer
Turquoise	Nomad

from a lack of discipline among the common troops.

The rank of an Outrider is signified by the color of his or her veil. This system was inspired from the glittering banded mesas of the Badlands, in which the top most streaks are always red, the next orange, then yellow, green, and turquoise. Each color signifies a specific rank and carries a formal title.

Bands of Nomads are led by Wanderers. Most permanent settlements have at least

one Wanderer and ten to twenty Nomads at hand. These are called "roves." Amars lead two or more roves. Rowans are those Outriders charged with collecting the tithes collected by the Amars. They rarely take to the field, preferring to enjoy their promotion in relative safety. There is no doubt a great deal of corruption in this system, though the Rhanate seems to care very little as long as his few "official" expenses are maintained.

Perhaps because of the Right of the Strong, promotion beyond the rank of Amar is rarely sought. Most Outriders prefer to remain in the saddle, roaming the wastes and proving their mettle against the nocturnals with steel and slug. Only when an Outrider grows old and slow does he usually seek the title of Rowan.

The most powerful Outriders are the Rhans. There are three of these warlords, one each for the upper, middle, and lower desert. Jyra Trestan is the warrior-sorceress Rhan of the Badlands, an elemental named Stetch is Rhan of the Mud Plains, and Kalib Ona is the mysterious Rhan of the Sand Wastes.

outrider nomad

AGILITY 9

Beast riding: horse 11, dodge 10, maneuver 10, melee combat 11, melee parry 10, unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 10

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 8

First aid 11, perception 9, tracking 10, trick 10
MIND 8

Business 10, scholar: Rhan's law 11

CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 12, survival: desert 11, willpower 11

CHARISMA 6

Life Points: 3-6

Equipment: Nomads often use sabers (STR+3/18), muskets (damage value 19, range 3-10/40/80/150) and two pistols (damage value 19, range 3-5/10/20/50). Few wear armor due to the heat of the Sundered Desert.

(Standard Outrider Nomad (D6): **DEXTERITY 3D:** Dodge 3D+1, firearms 3D+1, maneuver 3D+1, melee combat 3D+2, melee parry 3D+1 **STRENGTH 3D:** Brawling 3D+1 **KNOWLEDGE 2D+2:** Business 3D+1, intimidation 4D, Rhan's law 3D+2, survival 3D+2, willpower 3D+2 **TECHNICAL 2D+2:** First aid 3D+2 **MECHANICAL 2D+2 PERCEPTION 2D+2:** Con 3D+1, investigation 3D, search 3D+1. **Force Points:** 3-6. **Equipment:** Saber, damage value STR+1D; musket, damage value 4D+2; two pistols, damage value 4D+2.)

All Outriders are required to prove their ability in the saddle, though whether their mount is a sturdy charger or a voracious lightning lizard is unimportant. The vast majority choose the latter, however, for they are fiercer and much better suited to the arid wastes.

Soldiers may use whatever weapons they choose, though most carry curved cavalry swords, lances, muskets, wheel lock pistols, and several knives. As you can see, Outriders are rarely under-armed.

Their garb is typical for the wastes. Sweeping beige or brown robes blend in with the earth, veils of the appropriate color keep dust and sand from their mouths and noses, and some even wear glass coverings across their eyes to help them see in the frequent windstorms. Few wear armor due to the heat, though some will strap on a metal chest plate when battle is imminent. Only Outriders in the northern reaches of the Badlands wear chain shirts on a regular basis.

Since soldiers are paid a portion of a settlement's

"contract," the best Outriders also tend to be the most wealthy. Jewelry of silver, turquoise, gold, jade, or copper is therefore a symbol of a warrior's success. Some troops even purchase jewelry for their mounts. If you are faced by an Amar riding a lightning lizard with a golden ring in its snout, I advise great caution.

Common fees

Assistance	Typical Fee
Arrest a thief	1/10 the value of recovered goods.
Arrest a murderer	1/5 the victim's estate
Slay a nocturnal	varies
Escort a caravan	1/5 the value of the sale

trade

As you might guess, there is little farming in the dry soil of the Sundered Desert. While there is no true cultivation that I know of, there are several plants that desert dwellers rely on to keep them alive.

The ala plant, a squat, spiny cactus, is by far the most common of these. You can find them in the northern and southern desert. If you squeeze its prickly surface you will find its juicy innards full of fresh water. Do not eat the ala, however, or you will find that it draws the moisture from your bones just as if does from the desert soil.

The rasan tree is another source of food and water in the Badlands and the Sand Wastes. It too is covered in spiny quills, though it has the peculiar ability to launch them at any creatures that pass by. Presumably, the tree's fibrous roots are able to snake through the soil and draw out the blood of its victims. If you can get close enough to these semi-sentient trees without becoming its prey, you will find its tiny berries contain life-saving water.

Desert dwellers will not appreciate it if you seriously harm the rare flora of their harsh land. It is considered common courtesy to leave food or water-bearing plants intact so that the next traveler may benefit from them. This can be difficult, especially if you are trying for the berries of a rasan tree, but its quills pale in comparison to the barbed scimitar of an angry nomad.

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The mining of precious ores and gemstones is the main industry of the Badlands. Prospecting camps can be found throughout this region. Most are ensconced in deep caves or surrounded by thick walls of stone or iron to keep out the ever-present nocturnals. If you are down on your luck, caravans to and from these encampments offer dangerous but lucrative work.

The upper desert is also home to large bands of nomads that raise lightning lizards for sale as mounts. Others use them to herd burzaks and shellas through the outlands. These animals are all predators and feed on lesser desert vermin. The nomads take milk from the horned burzaks and meat and hide from the spiny, armored shellas.

The middle of the desert is marked with miles and miles of rolling sand dunes. A few islands or valleys of stone and scattered oases are the only resources available for exploit. All known oases are surrounded by independent "entrepreneurs" who sell precious water by the cup. Their encampments, called "oastresses," are well funded and some of the best defended enclaves in the region.

In the cracked Mud Plains, there is no true industry to speak of. A few camps collect and sell salt from the dry lakes, but the cost of maintaining a camp so far out in the wastes keeps these ventures from becoming truly profitable. Perhaps the only real business suitable to these vast, flat tracts of land is raiding. Brigands in sail-carts roam the outlands looking for caravans or travelers roaming the "Thieves' Triangle." Some have even been bold enough to attack the thunder trains north of Yzeem, though the Iron Guard has so far proven more than a match for these disorganized bandits.

Sail cart: Toughness 13, speed 55 mph, maneuver +2.

standard Bandit (Rapacian)

AGILITY 10

Acrobatics 11, dodge 11, maneuver 12, melee combat 13, melee parry 12, running 11, stealth 11, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 11, missile weapons 10

ENDURANCE 10

Resist shock 12

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 7

Camouflage 10, first aid 8, navigation 8, perception 10, tracking 10, trick 10

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 12, survival: desert 13, willpower 11

CHARISMA 7

Taunt 9

Life Points: 2-5

Equipment: Desert raiders use a variety of weapons, but never wear armor due to the heat.

(Standard Bandit (Rapacian) (D6): DEXTERITY 3D+1: Acrobatics 3D+2, dodge 3D+2, firearms 3D+2, maneuver 4D, melee combat 4D+1, melee parry 4D, missile weapons 3D+1, running 3D+2 **STRENGTH 3D+1:** Brawling 4D, stamina 4D **KNOWLEDGE 2D+1:** Intimidation 4D, survival 4D+1, willpower 3D+2 **TECHNICAL 2D+1:** First aid 2D+2, navigation 2D+2 **MECHANICAL 2D+1 PERCEPTION 3D:** Con 3D+1, hide 3D+1, investigation 3D+1, search 3D+1, taunt 3D. **Force Points: 2-5.**)

culture

Once a year the Rhanate sponsors the Labyrinth Run. The Labyrinth is a natural maze of canyons in the lower Drift. The Rhanate's wizards create terrible traps, alter the paths with earth sorcery, and stock the inside with savage nocturnals. Hundreds of warriors attempt to run the gauntlet and find their way through the maze every year. The first one through receives great treasures or rewards. The prize for this year's run has not yet been announced, but it is rumored that the Rhanate is looking to "award" the winner the chance to help him conquer the Veldt and bring it into his kingdom.

Some adventurers make a fortune supplying the Rhanate with nocturnals for his deadly maze. If you are offered this opportunity, I beg you to decline. Nocturnals should not be captured and used for sport — they should be destroyed outright.

urBana

Of all the nations in Aden, Urbana has the darkest soul. It is not the people that make this place so foul, it is the will of their leader: Lord Urbane.

Lord Urbane believes that iron sorcery will make his nation strong, preferring to ignore the stout hearts and courageous will of his people. Most of Urbana's heavy taxes go toward financing his monstrous, mechemagical constructions, the rest go to the oppressive army he uses to police the actions of his citizens. My friend Spyre once told me what he felt was the true difference between Lord Urbane and King Corben of Arasteen. He said, "Corben maintains the army to watch over the people. Urbane's army watches the people."

Life in Urbana

Most citizens in the cities work in the appallingly gloomy manite mills and refineries. Villagers and townfolk are typically craftsmen, miners, or exporters of the magical metal. Lord Urbane's obsession with mechamagic means that most everyone is involved in this process in one way or another.

Most races are found in the settlements of Urbana, but humans, dwarves and goreaux are the backbone of the work force. The research and mechamagical experimentation especially appeals to the dwarves' and goreaux's tinkering nature.

Mekanus is this nation's gloomy capital. It may not be the geographic center of Urbana, but it is the dark heart that pumps life-blood to the rest of the nation. It is a foul-smelling, putrid city. Black smoke rises from the factories and hangs about Mekanus like a death shroud. The fetid clouds are so heavy that even the brisk breezes of the Green Sea cannot vanquish them. Their oily thickness is such that they drench the sea winds and shower the city in a constant, dirty rain.

government

Lord Urbane is the supreme ruler of all Urbana. The "Iron Tyrant's" will is enforced by Baron Volkanis in Smult and Baroness Lucretia in Blackport.

Lord Urbane's laws are many and the punishments for violating them are harsh. The most

important and overriding rule is called the "Law of Iron." The law is written in a large codex kept in the Tower of the Eye. The text essentially makes it a capital offense to buy, sell, or trade any mechamagical discoveries or devices not released to the general public. Thus box-fires, wheel locks, arquebuses, powered carriages, and similar inventions may be bought and sold on the open market. The technology used in the creation of the Sentinels, the thunder trains, or the manite cordons, are all "state secrets" that may not be revealed under penalty of death. As you might guess, the law's enforcement is often arbitrary and open to much interpretation.

LORD URBANE

The Iron Tyrant is a brooding, intense individual who rarely ventures out of his fortress in Mekanus. He is not a very personable ruler. I have heard of no close allies, lovers, or friends visiting his Palace of Rust. Where Urbane does excel is in inten-



Tim Bobko



Brian Schomburg

sity. No barrier has ever stopped the Iron Tyrant. When most sorcerer-scientists scoffed at the idea of mechemagical land-ships, Urbane unveiled the thunder trains. When sages laughed at the idea of sending these behemoths into the infested outlands, Urbane's Iron Guards were already wet with the ichor of a thousand nocturnals.

Urbane will never stop short of his goal. Many wonder if his ends justify his means, but the miracle of the thunder trains, the manite cordons, and other successes make it a difficult argument. It is said that Urbane considers his neighbors in Arasteen and Kyan too weak to fight the forces of the Darkfall. There are even rumors that he has a secret pact with the Ice Queen Kryanix to one day unite our region by conquering it. As you can see, though his goals are admirable, his methods are potentially catastrophic.

Baroness Lucretia

Baroness Lucretia is the lord and mistress of Blackport. Her love of cruelty and devious contraptions rivals even her master, Lord Urbane. She is slightly more accessible than he, but why anyone would want to hold court with the Shadow Mistress is beyond me. I have seen her at public games of violence or the unveiling of some new and terrible machine, and can tell you how she came by her nickname. Lucretia dresses in shiny black leather ringed by studded bands of manite. Her harsh face and sharp eyes are lined with black make-up, and further betray her cruel nature.

Baron Volkanis

Unfortunately, the ruler of Smult has little concern for environmental responsibilities. Baron Volkanis is rarely ever home to witness them. The ruler of Smult spends most of his time roaming the countryside with his elite cavalry, terrorizing common folk for the nefarious Eye. He is a large human with fiery red beard and long hair that well suits his name. His temper is volatile as well. Many nocturnals have suffered from the Baron's fury.

Volkanis is actually the most benevolent of Urbane's three rulers. I doubt this is due to any sincere compassion on his part. The Baron simply prefers fighting in the dangerous outlands to the myriad duties of administering a city. The denizens of Smult are silently thankful for his lack of interest in their affairs.

the salamanders

The Baron of Smult presides over an elite detachment of cavalry feared throughout Aden. They take their name from the city's age-old enemies, the fire salamanders of Infernus. The knights wear crimson armor highlighted with orange flame to

accentuate their frightful appearance. Their "signature" is to burn whatever has incurred their wrath, sometimes including whole villages or neighborhoods. The leader of this vicious group is the Baron Volkanis of Smult himself. As his name might suggest, the Baron has a fiery temper which is liable to explode at any moment.

standard salamander

AGILITY 9

Beast riding: horse 13, dodge 10, melee combat 13 (+3 if using Infernus lance), melee parry 11, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 12

ENDURANCE 11

Resist shock 13

STRENGTH 11

TOUGHNESS 12

INTELLECT 8

Perception 10, tracking 9, trick 10

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 13, willpower 11

CHARISMA 6

Persuasion 9, taunt 9

Life Points: 2-7

Equipment: Infernus lance, damage value STR+10/25; pistol, damage value 19, range 3-5/10/20/50; plate mail, armor value TOU+10/25; large shield (melee parry+3); warhorse.

(Standard Salamander (D6): DEXTERITY 3D: Dodge 3D+1, firearms 4D, melee combat 4D+1, melee parry 3D+2 STRENGTH 3D+2: Brawling 4D, stamina 4D+1 KNOWLEDGE 2D+2: Intimidation 4D+1, willpower 3D+2 TECHNICAL 2D+2 MECHANICAL 2D+1 PERCEPTION 2D+2: Con 3D+1, investigation 3D+1, persuasion 3D, search 3D, taunt 3D. Force Points: 2-7. Equipment: Infernus lance, damage value STR+3D+1; pistol, damage value 4D+2; plate mail, armor value +3D+1.)

soldiers

There are four main military forces in the kingdom of Urbane. Town or village militia units, the first force, are little different from the militia of Arasteen. The second force is known as the Shadow Army, and is the core of Urbane's military. The Iron Guard forms the third martial arm. It is used exclusively as an escort for the thunder trains. The last force at Lord

A WORLD OF ADEN

Urbane's disposal is the Eye, a fanatical group of priests tasked with finding nocturnals hidden amongst the citizens of Urbana.

The Militia: Every able-bodied person in Urbana is expected to turn out when the militia is called. There are many exceptions to this law, however, so most units are far smaller than one might otherwise guess. One exemption, for instance, applies to anyone who works in "critical" manite refinement. Since almost half the population of Urbana is somehow involved in this process, the ranks of the militia are thin.

Urbana's citizen soldiers carry out their duties with what scraps the Shadow Army cares to give them. Their lack of equipment and training is often of little consequence, however, since Urbane maintains a detachment of regular soldiers in every settlement. Still, the Urbanan militia is weak because it is expected to be. If the army or their King would ever treat the villagers with respect, I believe their militia would be as stout and effective as Arasteen's citizen-soldiers.

standard militia soldier

AGILITY 8

Beast riding: horse 9, dodge 9, melee combat 10, unarmed combat 9

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 9

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 7

Perception 8, tracking 9, trick 10

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 6

CHARISMA 6

Taunt 8

Life Points: 2-5

Equipment: Militia soldiers carry a wide variety of weapons, but most use pole-arms since they must pay for their weapons themselves.

(Standard Militia Member (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+2: Dodge 3D, firearms 3D, melee combat 3D+1 **STRENGTH 2D+2:** Brawling 3D **KNOWLEDGE 2D+1 TECHNICAL 2D+1 MECHANICAL 2D+1:** Beast riding 3D **PERCEPTION 2D:** Con 3D+1, investigation 2D+2, search 3D, taunt 2D+2. **Force Points:** 2-5.)

The Army of Shadow: Lord Urbane's ideas on how best to defeat the Darkfall court with disaster. He believes that the

only way to deal with the scourge of horrors roaming our land is to be as merciless and relentless as the nocturnals. There is certainly a degree of merit to this philosophy, but Urbane has taken the concept to the extreme. Perhaps in reference to his beliefs, he has named his large military the Army of Shadow, hinting that they are as black-hearted as the nocturnals they must battle.

The soldiers of the army are some of the nation's most valiant men and women in most lands. Urbana's martial ranks are filled with a very different breed. Lord Urbane's sheriffs recruit only the dregs of their nation to serve in their companies. Small-time thieves, debtors, and most anyone who cannot find work are hauled into the barracks at Mekanus, Smult, and Blackport. After a very cursory period of training with the sword, shield, and arquebus, the men and women are transported to various places around the kingdom as needed.

standard soldier

AGILITY 8

Beast riding: horse 9, dodge 9, melee combat 10, unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 10

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 7

Perception 8, tracking 9, trick 10

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 6

Intimidation 8

CHARISMA 6

Taunt 8

Life Points: 3-5

Equipment: Spear, damage value STR+6/21; arquebus, damage value 19, range 3-5/10/20/50; leather and breast plate, TOU+10/25 on torso, TOU+2/17 everywhere else.

(Standard Soldier (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+2: Dodge 3D, firearms 3D+1, melee combat 3D+1 **STRENGTH 2D+2:** Brawling 3D+1 **KNOWLEDGE 2D+1:** Intimidation 2D+2 **TECHNICAL 2D+1 MECHANICAL 2D+1:** Beast riding 3D **PERCEPTION 2D:** Con 3D+1, investigation 2D+2, search 3D, taunt 2D+2. **Force Points:** 3-5. **Equipment:** Spear, damage value STR+2D; arquebus, damage value 4D+2; leather and breast plate, armor value +3D+1 on torso, +2 everywhere else.)

The Shadow Army boasts heavy cavalry as well, but their numbers are few and their horsemanship is less than spectacular. What the cavalry lacks in skill, though, they make up for in sheer mass. Each man is dressed in thick plate mail of darkest iron.



Their weapons include a lance, a wheel lock pistol, and sword. The lance is hideously barbed, as is the hooked sword that they use to pull enemy cavalymen from their saddle. One man in five is also equipped with a "blast-saddle," two large-bore arquebuses that hang from each side of the saddle. The knight pulls a cord attached to his pommel as he charges and two deadly iron balls are fired, usually shattering an enemy formation before the horsemen ram home. Though the cavalry are volunteers from the "gentry" in Urbana, they are little better than the rabble that make up the infantry. I sense that the lack of respect for the people they are supposed to protect is an attitude that trickles down the ranks from the very highest level.

There are many good men in various arms of the Shadow Army of Urbana, but it is the miscreants who leave an indelible mark upon the people wherever they go. I have seen them burn homes, steal livestock, and abuse most every other privilege afforded them by their position. Urbane's officers claim that letting their soldiers "vent their steam" is better than letting them run free in the streets. It seems a convenient excuse.

Rusters: The most skillful soldiers of the Shadow Army may be asked to serve as Lord Urbane's

personal retinue. Most call these elite warriors the Rusters, because they serve in the Palace of Rust. Over the last few years, the soldiers have taken their nickname to heart and coated their blackened arms and armor in a thin layer of orange rust.

Ruster

AGILITY 8

Dodge 10, melee combat 13, melee parry 11, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 12

ENDURANCE 11

Resist shock 13

STRENGTH 11

TOUGHNESS 12

INTELLECT 8

Perception 10, tracking 9, trick 10

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 13, willpower 11

CHARISMA 6

Persuasion 9, taunt 9

Life Points: 3-6

Equipment: Great sword STR+9/24; plate mail TOU+10/25.

(Standard Ruster (D6): DEXTERITY 3D:

Dodge 3D+1, firearms 4D, melee combat 4D+1, melee parry

3D+2 **STRENGTH 3D+2:** Brawling 4D+1, stamina 4D+1 **KNOWLEDGE 2D+2:** Intimidation 4D+1, willpower 3D+2 **TECHNICAL 2D+2 MECHANICAL 2D+1 PERCEPTION 2D+2:** Con 3D+1, investigation 3D+1, persuasion 3D, search 3D, taunt 3D. **Force Points:** 3–6. **Equipment:** Great sword, damage value STR+3D; plate mail, armor value +3D+1.)

The Iron Guard: Wherever the thunder trains go, there are always monstrous creatures and desperate bandits who think they have the power to stop them. After almost losing his trains on several occasions, Urbane instituted the Iron Guard. Any man or woman who can defeat another member of this elite band in combat — mock or otherwise — may join. It doesn't matter whether a victory is won by sword or spell, only that one win.

iron guard

AGILITY 10

Acrobatics 11, beast riding: horse 11, climbing 11, dodge 13, long jumping 13, maneuver 13, melee combat 13, melee parry 13, stealth 13, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 13, gunnery 13, missile combat 12

ENDURANCE 10

Resist shock 10

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 8

Perception 10, tracking 9, trick 10

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 14, willpower 13

CHARISMA 6

Taunt 9

Life Points: 4–8

Equipment: Iron Guards use all types of equipment.

(Standard Iron Guard (D6): DEXTERITY 3D+1: Acrobatics 3D+2, dodge 4D+1, firearms 4D+1, gunnery 4D+1, maneuver 4D+1, melee combat 4D+1, melee parry 4D+1, missile combat 4D **STRENGTH 3D+1:** Brawling 4D, climbing/jumping 3D+2, stamina 3D+1 **KNOWLEDGE 2D+2:** Intimidation 4D+2, willpower 4D+1 **TECHNICAL 2D+2 MECHANICAL 2D+1 PERCEPTION 2D+2:** Con 3D+1, investigation 3D+1, search 3D, sneak 4D+1, taunt 2D+2. **Force Points:** 4–8.)

The Sentinels: Iron Guards are well paid by Lord Urbane, and I will not dispute their worth. Still, their liege has decided that even these elite warriors are sometimes insufficient to protect his thunder trains. Their ranks have recently been supplanted by the Sentinels, which are little more than improved versions of the goreaux men o'war created at Burcham's Pass. The Sentinels are housed in disguised compartments in the rear cars of a few select thunder trains. If the train is threatened, the golems are released to attack any enemies on the ground while Iron Guards defend from the roofs of the train cars.

I have heard some say that these mechanical warriors are not wholly made of metal. A bard in Rose whispered to me that she has seen inside one of these beings, and saw the moving bones of a warrior long since dead! Urbane proselytizes the wonders of metal, but are there other, darker sources of power beneath those iron husks?

standard sentinel

AGILITY 7

Melee combat 13, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 6

Fire combat 12

ENDURANCE 14

STRENGTH 16

TOUGHNESS 15 (25)

INTELLECT 3

Perception 6

MIND 3

CONFIDENCE 17

Intimidation 20

CHARISMA 2

Life Points: 1–3

Equipment: Great sword STR+9/24; plate mail TOU+10/25; some sentinels have internal steam ballistas.

(Standard Sentinel (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+1: Melee combat 4D+1 **STRENGTH 5D:** Brawling 4D **KNOWLEDGE 1D:** Intimidation 6D+2 **TECHNICAL 1D MECHANICAL 1D PERCEPTION 3D+1:** Investigation 2D. **Force Points:** 1–3. **Equipment:** Great sword, damage value STR+3D; plate mail, armor value +3D+1.)

the order of steel

Two years ago, a woman named Julith Carron and 49 other warriors and wizards of the Iron Guard withstood the attack of over 300 cacklers and at least a hundred mountain trolls. The attack took place in a pass through the Dust Hills of the Sundered Desert. The clever cacklers had followed the lumbering train for days, testing its defenses and speed in a series of feint attacks. Finally, the

horde disappeared and the train rambled on. A day later, the lead engine plowed up a high hill and carefully navigated its way through a narrow pass. Suddenly, an avalanche blocked the train's advance and trapped it in the canyon. Cacklers and mountain trolls appeared from atop the rock walls and leapt onto the train.

The battle raged for well over four hours in a series of bloody, hand-to-hand rushes. Carron took charge after her superiors were all slain and beautifully orchestrated the survivors in defending surviving cars. In the end, only she and nine other Iron Guards survived. Most of the thunder train's crew was also slain, but Carron managed to repair the worst of the damage and urged the wounded behemoth on.

For her actions, Lord Urbane created the Order of Steel. Any member of the Iron Guard who commits an especially heroic deed may be awarded admission into this hallowed legion.

the rat war

A few years after the Darkfall, Lord Urbane decided that the ratlings living beneath the sewers of his cities were in league with the nocturnals. His mages concocted a magic poison that could be poured into the sewers and, supposedly, wreak genocide. The poison, called arkana, did not work as planned. Instead, it mutated the ratlings. Many died, but some developed amazing and fantastic powers. Great strength, speed, the ability to spit arkanic venom, and any number of other mutations manifested in the stricken ratling populations of Mekanus, Blackport, and Smult. Lord Urbane realized his plan had failed a month later when bands of ratlings across Urbana rose from their underground lairs and rampaged through the streets. The Shadow Army was mobilized and fierce fighting took place for several months. Urbane's troops eventually slew the ratling leader and pushed the survivors back into their subterranean world. They were not able to give pursuit into the uncharted sewers, however. The campaign became known as the Rat War.

The ratlings occasionally prowl the streets at night looking for surface-worlders, whom they blame for their pathetic plight. Should they find another leader, it is likely they will rise from the sewers for a rematch.

the eye

The Eye sees all. That is the slogan of Lord Urbane's inquisitors. It is their job to seek out corrupted citizens suspected of dealing with or being possessed by nocturnals. Their methods are brutal and illogical, and I have sworn them an enemy of all I hold dear. They twist the very

concepts of justice and compassion to terrify the populace into submission for Lord Urbane's policies. Perhaps I should not be so judgmental in a volume meant to educate, but I cannot hide my disgust and revulsion at these fanatical priests and their bloody work.

Officially, the Eye was created after doppelgangers were discovered in Rose. These nocturnals were quickly found out and chased from the village by Lord Urbane's advisor, Gerrick Malanch. Malanch then reported to Urbane that such infiltration could be rampant throughout the land, and the King appointed him High Inquisitor of the Eye, a body of mages tasked with finding Urbane's corrupted.

The Eye watches the citizenry from three towers located in Mekanus, Blackport, and Smult. The highest ranking mage in each city is termed the High Inquisitor. The High Inquisitor of Mekanus is always first in the command structure, then the High Inquisitor of Blackport, then Smult.

The newest recruits of the Eye are termed Acolytes. They are attached to companies of the Shadow Army or posted as guards in thunder-stations and other points of entry and exit from the cities. Those Acolytes who prove themselves worthy may become Watchers of the Eye. Watchers are organized into ranks, as depicted on the symbol of a ladder they wear on their scarlet capes. The lowest are the Watchers of the First Rung, while the High Inquisitor himself is technically a Watcher of the Tenth Rung. Collectively, members of the Eye are termed inquisitors, but their formal titles should be used should you need to address them.

The inquisitors of the Eye are a barbaric and evil lot, and their blood has stained my sword on several occasions. Their victims are more often political opponents and deranged persons in need of assistance than corrupted nocturnals.

standard watcher of the first rung

AGILITY 7

Dodge 9, melee combat 10, melee parry 9

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 12

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 9

Apportation 10, perception 11, trick 10

MIND 9

Conjuration 10, medicine 10, scholar:
law 10, summoning 10

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CONFIDENCE 10

Alteration 11, interrogation 11, intimidation 13, willpower 11

CHARISMA 6

Persuasion 7, taunt 8

Life Points: 4-8

Equipment: Long sword STR+6/21; various spells.

(Standard Watcher of the First Rung (D6):
DEXTERITY 2D+2: Dodge 3D, firearms 4D, melee combat 3D+1, melee parry 3D **STRENGTH 2D+2 KNOWLEDGE 3D:** Alteration 3D+2, apportionment 3D+1, conjuration 3D+1, intimidation 4D+1, law 3D+1, summoning 3D+1, willpower 3D+2 **TECHNICAL 3D PERCEPTION 2D+2:** Con 3D+1, interrogation 3D+2, investigation 3D+2, persuasion 2D+1, taunt 2D+2. **Force Points:** 4-8. **Equipment:** Long sword, damage value STR+2D.)

trade

There is little true farming left in Urbana. Either the nation has suffered from a greater number of nocturnals than Arasteen or Lord Urbane has not been as successful in repelling them. Either way, it is almost impossible to work an open field in the region for fear of the dire creatures that watch from the nearest wood-line. Most towns and villages have a community crop that all may share, and many citizens maintain a private garden, but the days of mile-long rows of ula have passed in this realm. Roughly half of Urbana's food must be imported from Arasteen or the eastern nations.

Where Urbana does excel, of course, is in industry. Most of Mekanus, the capital, and the cities of Blackport and Smult are covered with sprawling factories dedicated to the refinement and smithing of ore. Manite is by far the single most important and valuable metal. Lord Urbane's prospecting teams travel the countryside looking for new veins, and it is a curse to locals when they discover it. Few volunteer to become miners. The hastily dug mines are prone to collapse, dust and dirt clog the lungs and eyes, and worst, the depths of the earth are home to as many nocturnals as the surface. Giant worms, basaltics, and rogue earth elementals are also commonly found in the manite mines.

Metal is also Urbana's primary export. Inferior grade manite and the less useful creations made with it are sold to buyers of other lands. Unfortunately, manite is not very common. The Charred Peaks near Smult are probably the largest

source in all Aden. Prisoners work around the clock hauling it from deep beneath the earth or scaling high cliffs to lower

watchers of the eye skill package

Alteration

Apportionment

Conjuration

Divination

Summoning

Scholar: Urbanan law

it down in rotating scoops. Other deposits have been found in the Crawling Jungle, outside Rose, and near Burcham's Pass. Some of these veins have been contested by the nations that should rightfully claim them. King Corben refused to become embroiled in the situation when Urbane turned a deaf ear to his protests, but Hive Mother Selanna of the Crawling Jungle and the warband at Burcham's Pass have raided the mines nearest them in retaliation.

Other metals make up the bulk of the nation's exports, however, for Lord Urbane is a miser when it comes to his precious manite. Still, some of the best iron armor and weapons come from the experienced smiths of Mekanus. Only the layered steel of Vanora and the handiwork of a few talented smiths in Arasteen make a stronger bond or a sharper blade.

Deep mines

Some prisoners in Urbana receive a special sentence — they are forced to work the deadly deep-mines. Most mines are safe enough, but some are so deep or in such disrepair that no free man will enter them willingly. But Urbane refuses to let even the smallest deposit go to waste. Political and criminal prisoners are all sent daily into these death-traps to bring forth what manite remains. I have heard abominable stories about the terrors they face.

thunder trains

More important to the rest of Aden than Urbane's manite production are the thunder trains. If the Iron Tyrant deserves criticism for his harsh treatment of dissidents and political opponents, he also deserves praise for the invention that makes trade and communication possible across the desolate outlands.

The thunder trains are mammoth land ships

forged of iron and manite and powered by steam and other, more secret, processes. Behind the engine-cars are any number of barges filled with goods. I have no idea how much cargo each of these giant cars can carry, but it must be at least equivalent to one of Arasteen's merchant galleys.

The engine of a thunder train is covered with fuming pipes that leave a trail of black smoke, visible for kilometers away. It is almost impossible to hide the train because of this, so the Iron Guards rely on strength rather than stealth. The speed of the trains is only that of a man running at a brisk pace, so outrunning most creatures or bandits is also out of the question.

The engine and barges have ballistas mounted on towers at each of the corners. The engine and rear-most barge often sport a storm cannon as well. When threatened, a half company (fifty soldiers) of Iron Guards climb to the car's roof. Every member carries an arquebus as his or her primary missile weapon. Soldiers with magical abilities cast spells instead.

If a hostile force is sighted, the Iron Guards fire their arquebuses or cast spells until the enemy gets within boarding range. At that point, half of the Iron Guards switch to shorter ranged wheel locks or long spears designed to keep enemies from gaining the roof. Remaining defenders carry swords and shields should the spearmen fail.

the thunder trail

The thunder trains generally follow a route that has come to be called the Thunder Trail. From Mekanus, the trains travel through Rose, and then on through Burcham's Pass to Tee, a trading post erected by the Rhanate. From Tee, the trains continue on to Balaquim. They end their voyage there, fill with goods of the east, and then return along their path back to Mekanus. The entire journey takes anywhere from two to three months, depending on weather and the countless bandit or nocturnal attacks that inevitably occur along the way.

In the last few years, Lord Urbane has kept his four trains traveling in a staggered fashion so that one would arrive back in Mekanus roughly every six weeks. Since last year, however, Lord Urbane has sent two of the thunder trains east to Carraway, and Bulgrak in the High Steppes. The trips have been profitable enough to warrant a return, so it seems that a route between these cities will soon be opened. More trains are even now under construction, which might explain a recent edict ordering all mines to produce more manite. I can imagine the overworked miners suffer greatly for the luxuries the rest of us enjoy.

Black-market mechamagic

Most any mechamagical device can be obtained in Mekanus if one knows where to look, has the money to pay for it, and is willing to take a risk. Most competent mechamages are employed by Lord Urbane and live in dormitories in restricted areas of the Smoketowns. Those who cannot find work in the factories often go into business churning out hastily made devices or selling poorly tested enchantments. There are three basic ways that mechamagic appears on the black market: in golem mills, artifact shops, and scrolls penned by mechamage scribes.

Golem mills might produce genuine golems of iron, glass, or other materials, but more often, their trade is golemization. Those who desire golemoid limbs, armor, or weapons may pay these sorcerer-scientists to integrate such devices into their flesh. The vast majority of souls who do so contract a disease called the Wasting, or at least find that their new "parts" malfunction under certain circumstances. The latter typically only occurs after the mechamage has obtained his fee and moved his shop elsewhere, of course.

Mechamagical artifacts purchased on the black market of Urbana are only slightly less risky than golemoid enhancements. I have seen arquebuses that reload themselves, swords capable of emitting an electrical shock to anyone pierced by their blade, and dozens of other wondrous devices for sale in these secluded stores. Most have been smuggled from Urbane's laboratories, but some were original creations designed by the attending mechamage or his partners. You may find incredible machines in these shops, but be cautioned, for most have bizarre side-effects that could cost you life or limb.

Scribes throughout Aden sell scrolls detailing spells and enchantments. Urbana is no different, but some scribes may carry more than they display to the common hedge-wizard. If you can gain a scribe's trust, he may well reveal powerful or experimental spells of iron sorcery to you. Their price will be high, but some of these enchantments are quite powerful.

culture

The people of Urbana seem eternally grim. There are few holidays and even fewer traveling artists, minstrels, or troubadours. Some towns have their own local celebrations, but Lord Urbane frowns upon it as a frivolous waste of time. The only official holiday in

• two nations of aden •

WORLD OF ADEN

Urbana is the Day of Invention. At the beginning of every summer, men and women across the land are encouraged to build mechanical or mehamagical constructs and display them to the people of their villages and cities. Urbane believes that new inventions may surface and he can later use these ideas in mining or in instruments of war. Most of the rusty contraptions displayed are works of art or simple labor-saving devices, but I have heard some of the technology used in the new Sentinels was spawned from this celebration.

Bloodsports

The newest rage to hit Urbana is bloodsport. These savage games do little to enlighten the masses, but in a land of public execution, I suppose they are tame fare. The fastest growing sport in the land is currently splat. The playing field of this wretched game is a maze of high catwalks, usually stretched between the smokestacks of Urbana's refineries. The object of the game is to capture a flag held in the opposing team's cage and return it to one's home area. Most of the players use tethers to protect them from the long fall to the cobblestones below, though such devices are more likely to snap a warrior's neck than save his life.

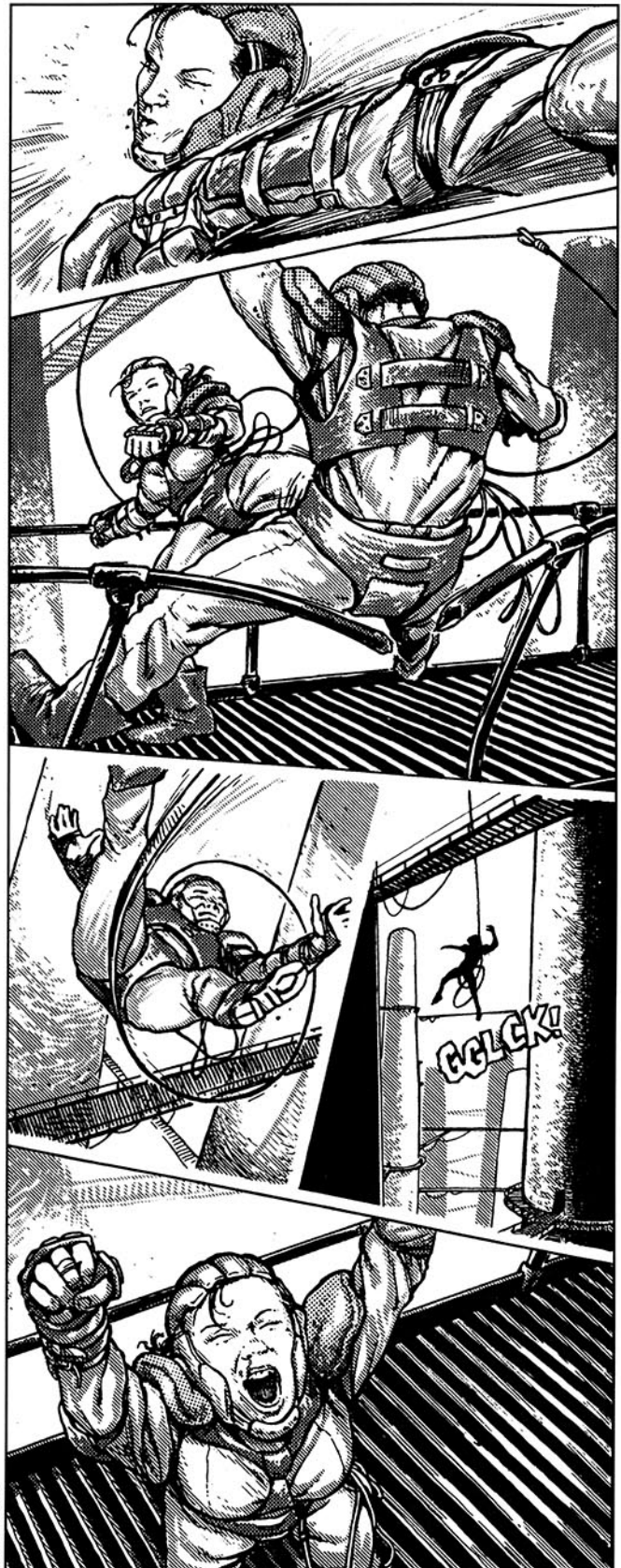
There are many other bloodsports in Urbana and new ones are being created almost monthly. The game of rayana is played by jousting from the back of large stingrays caught in the oily harbors of Mekanus. In Death-Maze, contestants run a deadly gauntlet of traps and captured shankers. I do not understand the appeal of such wanton violence when there is more than enough bloodshed all around us.

Vanora

Geographically, Vanora is a beautiful mix of majestic, snow-capped mountains and lush forests. In the central valley, the Seeping River gives rise to generous crops and strong timber. Rocky hills containing precious metals, a fuming volcano, and a vast plain round out Vanora's varied landscape.

the way of the ten Beasts

Vanoran society revolves around ten animals; the serpent, the eagle, the fox, the wolf, the ursax, the



shark, the basilisk, the drake, the wail, and the dragon. The "Ten Beasts" are far more than convenient names for Aden's ten months. In this proud land, each animal exemplifies a certain type of life style. Every Vanoran identifies with one of these creatures and models his behavior after them. This is called the "way." The truly devout will show their alignment in their dress, in the symbols they wear upon their person, or perhaps in their very features.

Common citizens typically walk the way of the serpent, the eagle, the fox, or the wolf. Rogues tend to emulate foxes or wolves. Warriors respect the wolf, the ursax and the shark. Wizards prefer the basilisk, drake, and wail. Everyone identifies with the dragon, who is the perfect combination of all other beasts. Only the Emperor and his soldiers are allowed to wear the emblem of the dragon upon their person, however. Note that the month a person is born in has nothing to do with the path they follow. The Ten Beasts were not officially added to the calendar until the Peace of Rose, long after Vanorans had studied their ways.

The Serpent: The serpent's venomous bite reminds Vanorans that even the weak can be deadly if antagonized. Those who follow the Way of the Serpent are rarely great warriors, but instead rely on wits and even treachery to equalize their martial shortcomings.

The Eagle: The eagle represents ferocity and wisdom. If faced by superior foes, the eagle will fly away and return to fight another day.

The Fox: Crafty rogues prefer the fox. They will outwit their foes, resorting to violence only when cornered.

The Wolf: The wolf represents not only individual strength, but that of the pack as well. Young warriors and bands of adventurers often follow the Way of the Wolf.

The Ursax: Great fighters full of pride don the image of the reptilian bear. Their blades are as sharp as their namesake's claws and their endurance as tough as ursax scales.

The Shark: Sharkists are ruthless and solitary hunters. Those who work for the good of Vanora wreak deadly havoc on the nocturnals. The few sharkists who turn against their countrymen are a scourge upon the land.

The Basilisk: The basilisk represents sorcery. Their ability to turn an opponent to stone with but a gaze appeals to mages who believe their own powers are similarly awesome.

The Drake: Vanoran drakes are great reptiles very similar to dragons in shape and appearance. They are tiny compared to their revered cousins, however, and have no spell-casting ability. Still, their cunning, ferocity, and supernatural powers

are an example to those who follow their way.

The Wail: These giant, moaning mammals of the Serene Ocean lure sailors to sleep with their eerie songs. Wizards who respect the power of sorcery as well as the importance of physical prowess often follow the way of the Wail.

The Dragon: Only the Emperor and his soldiers may follow the Way of the Dragon. In Vanoran myth, the dragon is the perfect culmination of all the other beasts' virtues. Truly, only the dragon combines the savage ferocity of the predator, the cunning of the skulker, and the sorcery of the supernatural. To walk the Way of the Dragon is to develop the entire self into something that is somehow more powerful than the sum of its parts.

Life in Vanora

Vanora is blessed with generous resources, a benevolent leader, and strong-willed citizens. You will see their prosperity as you walk the streets of Tanto, Shan 'Ti, or Yalek, or plod the dirt paths of Tara or Shang.

government

The Emperor reigns supreme in Vanora's capitol. Besides Tanto, there are two other cities that serve as centers of power — Yalek and Shan 'Ti. Each of these is administrated by a Darini, which literally means the "Eyes of the Dragon" in the old Vanoran tongue. Besides their home city, each Darini is also responsible for all the towns and villages in his province, as defined by the Emperor himself.

Proven leaders in towns and villages are nominated to lead their fellows by the closest Darini. The word "Sho" means "chosen by," so their position literally translates to "chosen by the Eyes of the Dragon." Most simply call them Sho. It is their duty to relay the concerns of their community to their superiors in the nearest city.

emperor Dyok, the young Dragon

Emperor Dyok is a dashing, pale-skinned elf with short raven-black hair. He is called the Young Dragon because he is only sixty — young for an elf — and because he rules in his father's stead. The elder Dyok has lain comatose these last ten years. His wounds were sustained in combat with a nocturnal able to drain the life of its foes. Emperor Dyok fell prey to its touch, but his son avenged him and sank his Tantoan sword deep into the fiend's heart. His father's still form now lies somewhere within

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Emperor Dyok's keni. Some of the Young Dragon's detractors say that he keeps his father unconscious so that he might retain his rule. Personally, I discount such gossip. Emperor Dyok would much rather ride into battle at the head of his troops than administrate a kingdom.

The Young Dragon is the first to admit that he does not have his father's wisdom. He is reckless, often leading expeditions against nocturnals at the head of his iron drakes. If Emperor Dyok's wits are sometimes questioned, his courage is not.

Darini Rage

The Darini of Yalek is a jurak who calls herself Rage. I doubt that this is her given name, but in truth I do not truly know. Her fur is black and one of her tusks is broken at the base. Rage is not an overly attractive person even by jurakian standards, but her wisdom and firm rule are respected by her subjects.

soldiers

There are two basic groups of soldiers in Vanora. The first group is the militia. The second is the Sons of the Dragon, made up of knights who fight directly for the Emperor. These legions are stationed in the cities or in outposts between smaller settlements.

The Militia: Every villager is expected to fight as militia in times of need. The Sons of the Dragon are usually more than enough to protect a town's walls. Service to one's home is a point of pride, however, so there are frequently far more defenders than needed to repel nocturnal assaults.

standard militia soldier

AGILITY 8

Dodge 9, melee combat 10, unarmed combat 9

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 9, missile weapons 9

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 7

Perception 8, tracking 9, trick 10

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 6

CHARISMA 6

Taunt 8

Life Points: 2-5

Equipment: Militia members supply their own weapons, and so use a variety of pole-arms, swords, muskets, and bows.

(Standard Militia Soldier (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+2: Dodge 3D, firearms 3D, melee combat 3D+1, missile weapons 3D **STRENGTH 2D+2:** Brawling 3D **KNOWLEDGE 2D+1:** Con 3D+1 **TECHNICAL 2D+1 MECHANICAL 2D+1 PERCEPTION 2D:** Con 3D+1, investigation 2D+2, search 3D, taunt 2D+2. **Force Points:** 2-5.)

Sons of the Dragons: The Emperor is served by several thousand knights dressed in gleaming armor and sitting astride ebony chargers. Their swords are the dreaded seven-folded brands of Tanto. All Dragons are expert in the long bow and the musket as well.

The Sons ranks are derived from an ancient legend concerning Shosa, a great dragon that dwells somewhere in the volcanoes of Vanora. According to ancient texts, Shosa's tail changes from silver (the color of most of his body), to gold, then black, red, blue, white, green, and yellow. The First Emperor chose to designate the rank of his warriors by these colors. Each Son displays a small, square pennant on a post attached to the back of his armor. This flag is the color of his rank and bears the symbol of his home province.

Yellow Dragons are the "squires" of the knights. They automatically progress to Green Dragons after one year of service. White Dragons are equivalent to the sergeants of Arasteen or Urbana. They command squads of ten to twenty Yellow or Green Dragons. Blue Dragons lead "Teeth," one hundred of their subordinates. Red Dragons command groups called "Claws," made up of ten Teeth (1000 men). Black Dragons are rarely called into the field. When they are, they group two Claws together into a "Battle." Gold Dragons are the Emperor's generals. They command all the Battles gathered from their province. The Silver Dragon is the Emperor himself. As you can see, Vanora's efficiency in management applies to its military as well.

Every village is given a detachment of Sons of the Dragon based upon their population. Large settlements have a Blue Dragon and a hundred lesser soldiers on hand. The rest of the Sons are garrisoned in Vanora's three cities or strategic keeps in the outlands.

standard yellow Dragon

AGILITY 9

Beast riding 11, dodge 10, melee combat 12, unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 12, missile weapons 12

ENDURANCE 9

Resist shock 11

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 10
INTELLECT 8

First aid 10, perception 9,
tracking 9, trick 10

MIND 8

Scholar: the Way of the
Ten Beasts 10

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 12, survival:
forest 10, willpower 11

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10

Life Points: 2-6

Equipment: Plate and chain
combination TOU+8/23; Seven-
Folded Brand of Tanto (longsword)
damage STR+8/23; long bow, dam-
age value STR+6/21, range 3-25/
75/150/300; or musket, damage
value 19, range 3-10/40/80/150.

(Standard Yellow Dragon

(D6): DEXTERITY 3D: Dodge
3D+1, firearms 4D, melee combat 4D,
missile weapons 4D

STRENGTH 3D: Brawling 3D+1, stamina 3D+2

KNOWLEDGE 2D+2: Intimidation 4D,
survival 3D+1, the Way of the Ten Beasts
3D+1, willpower 3D+2

TECHNICAL 2D+2: First aid 3D+1

MECHANICAL 2D+2

PERCEPTION 3D: Con 3D+1,

investigation 3D, persuasion 3D+1,

search 3D. **Force Points:** 2-6. **Equip-**

ment: Plate and chain combination, ar-

mor value +2D+2; Seven-Folded Brand of

Tanto, damage value STR+2D+2; long

bow, damage value STR+2D; musket,

damage value 4D+2.



iron Drakes

Emperor Dyok has an unusual penchant, for an elf. He is utterly fascinated with mechemagic. His people have always been gifted iron-smiths, but the elder Dyok distrusted mechemagic and so did not encourage its development. When the Young Dragon assumed the throne, he invested heavily in the new sorcerous science. His first act was to turn his palace's keni of the Fox into an academy for Vanoran mechemages. Three years later, un-

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der his direction, the keni developed the first of the iron drakes. These flying constructs have breath of steam, sharp claws and teeth, and the strength of their namesake. More importantly, the Vanoran mechemages somehow imbued the creations with limited intelligence. The automatons can respond to their masters' voices, though they cannot act without guidance.

The iron drakes led to similar machines of war modeled on ursax and wails. There are rumors that a team of mechemages was long ago drawn from the keni of the Fox to create an iron dragon for their Young Emperor. It is doubtful they could build such a tremendous creation without detection, but there are those who claim green smoke from the northern volcanoes is a tell-tale sign of their work.

Iron Drake

AGILITY 8

Dodge 9, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 5

Missile weapons 14

ENDURANCE 12

STRENGTH 15

TOUGHNESS 15/25

INTELLECT 5

Perception 8, tracking 9, trick 10

MIND 4

CONFIDENCE (20)

CHARISMA 3

Life Points: None

Natural Tools: Claws, damage value STR+5/20; steam breath, damage value 21 in a cone seven meters long and three meters wide at the terminus. Normal armor does not protect against this attack.

(Iron Drakes (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+1: Dodge 3D, missile weapons 4D+2 **STRENGTH 4D+1** **KNOWLEDGE 1D+2** **TECHNICAL 1D+2** **MECHANICAL 1D+1** **PERCEPTION 1D (3D+1):** Con 3D+1, investigation 2D+2, search 3D. **Force Points:** None. **Natural Tools:** Claws, damage value STR+1D+2; steam breath, damage value 3D+2.)

trade

The rainy valleys of the Sleeping River give rise to plentiful crops of wheat, riggola, and numerous other vegetables. No other farms in Aden produce the abundance or variety of the Vanoran river fields. It is good for the nations of the east that this is so, for the Refugees of Aramyst would be hard-pressed to survive without the import of Vanoran foods.

sons of the Dragon skill package

Beast riding: horse

Melee combat

Melee parry

Vanora's blacksmiths are renowned throughout Aden for their secret method of folding steel. Swords made by these masters are twice as strong as those made elsewhere. Only a blade of enchanted manite is stronger or maintains a sharper edge. Metal armor is also tougher and more durable. Do not try to penetrate Vanoran plate if you are not well armed. I have seen their corslets repel musket balls.

There is also a small lumber industry in Vanora even though the wood of the southern forests is rigid and brittle. The dark color of the goysan tree makes it an attractive material for the truly wealthy, but only an artisan with magical skills can properly craft the wood before it cracks. Because of this, Vanorans depend on less expensive lumber from Carraway for most of their building needs.

Hardwood lumbering is lucrative, but only for a select few. Fishing is by far Vanora's main industry. Fleets of trawlers dragging great nets plow the waters of the Serene Ocean for sadrac, blue-fin, and drums. Fish and riggola noodles, prepared in hundreds of different ways, are the most common Vanoran meal.

The dangers of the Serene have given rise to a secondary industry. Adventurers in crafts of all shapes and sizes patrol the coasts offering protection to trawlers in need. These individuals are collectively called the "coasters." Their philosophy is something like that of the Rhanate's Outriders, though in reverse. Coasters will assist any ship in need, but then expect payment for their aid. It is considered an insult not to do so. Coasters can make a handsome profit, provided they live long enough to collect their reward. Their most deadly adversary is the revered wail, a creature whose haunting song can put an entire crew to sleep in moments. It is forbidden to harm these creatures, so sailors and coasters must use stunning enchantments, nets, or other non-violent means to foil their attacks.

culture

The Way of the Ten Beasts gives rise to most of Vanora's arts and customs. Families celebrate the first day of each month with a private feast. Dragon month is a public affair marked by sumptuous feasts, street plays, and finally, fireworks. In Tanto, the capital of Vanora, the Emperor stages the city's grand celebration. This task is left up to the citizens in all other settlements.

Beast shamans

Some Vanorans are so fanatic in their devotion to the Way of Ten Beasts that they become shamans. These individuals use sorcery to emulate and mimic every facet of their chosen beast. They wear the skins of their patron, but like the rest of their countrymen, the shaman would not think of hunting one of the sacred ten beasts, so these hides are either created by magic or taken from the body of a fallen animal.

By and large, shamans strive to preserve the harmony of Vanora. At present, this means fighting the forces of the Darkfall. They typically wander the land as solitary champions, aiding those in need via their particular talents. Even the Dragons frequently draft shamans to accompany them into battle. Tanto's temple district is home to many of these cults.

standard Beast shaman

AGILITY 8

Beast riding 11, dodge 9, melee combat 9, unarmed combat 9

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 9, missile weapons 9

ENDURANCE 7

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 8

INTELLECT 9

Apportation 11, divination 12, first aid 11, perception 11, trick 12

MIND 10

Conjuration 13, scholar: Way of the Ten Beasts 15

CONFIDENCE 9

Alteration 12, intimidation 11, willpower 12

CHARISMA 7

Charm 9, disguise 8, persuasion 9, taunt 10

Life Points: 4-8

Equipment: Beast shamans rarely carry weapons, preferring to rely on spells, which they use savagely when pressed, as is the way of the creatures they revere.

(Standard Beast Sha-

man (D6): **DEXTERITY**

2D+2: Dodge 3D, firearms 3D,

melee combat 3D, missile weapons 3D

STRENGTH 2D+1: Brawling 3D **KNOWL-**

EDGE 3D: Alteration 4D, apportation 3D+2, con-

jururation 4D+1, divination 4D, intimidation 3D+2,

Way of the Ten Beasts 5D, willpower 4D **TECHNI-**

CAL 3D: First aid 3D+2 **MECHANICAL 3D+1**

PERCEPTION 2D+2: Charm 3D, con 4D+1, in-

vestigation 3D+2, persuasion 3D, taunt 3D+1.

Force Points: 4-8.)

yzeem

Yzeem is the beautiful gem of the south. Its glistening shores and amber dunes are a sight to behold. Great ships and dashing corsairs can be seen sliding along its rocky coasts while colorful caravans ply the fertile Valley of Life.

Most of Yzeem's population is centered in a narrow strip reaching from the upper Life to Balaquim. The rest live in the pirate's den of Rook's Roost, in isolated settlements, or in nomadic tribes in the Sand Wastes.

Life in yzeem

Yzeemites are a proud and appreciative people. They love their varied landscape and take satisfaction in their enlightened government.

government

Yzeem is ruled by the mysterious Council of Seven. Council members wear full veils so that no one will ever know their true identity. In earlier days, Counselors were bribed and threatened so often that they were little more than puppets of the corsair captains and caravan masters. A few hundred years ago, a young elven Counselor decided to purge the group of its outside influences. He disguised his identity with a full veil, thereby making it difficult for the pirate and bandit kings to approach him outside the Council Chambers where he was protected by guards and fellow Counselors.

The mysterious elf eventually urged all of his fellows to abdicate their seats and appoint a new and unknown official in their place. He became known as the "Green Counselor" for the emerald robe and veil he wore to Council meetings, but to this day has not revealed any more than his gender and race.

Most of the beleaguered Counselors were all too happy to follow the Green Counselor's example. Only a few were threatened by their former masters and forced to re-

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sist the reformation. It took several years to eventually weed the Council of these men and women, but eventually, it was done.

the council today

Now the Counselors all wear full veils and robes of differing colors during their meetings. Occasionally a Counselor has been caught accepting payment from the lingering pirate lords, but such instances are rare, and at least the Council is free from threat.

Each Counselor is in nominal charge of some aspect of Yzeem's administration. Three or more Counselors may censure any other's dictates if they feel an action is not in the best interests of the nation.

soldiers

Yzeem has two military arms: the People's Army and the People's Navy.

The People's Army: Yzeem's army is the province of the Black Counselor. She is a clever general and her army is a model from which all Aden should learn.

Soldiers rise through the ranks based on their merit. This is not only fair, but ensures the upper echelon of the People's Army is made up of the best Yzeem has to offer. Soldiers are highly respected in Yzeem, as their titles might indicate.

standard citizen

AGILITY 8

Dodge 9, melee combat 10, unarmed combat 9

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 9, missile weapons 9

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 7

Perception 8, tracking 9, trick 10

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 6

CHARISMA 6

Taunt 8

Life Points: 1-4

Equipment: Scimitar, damage value STR+6/21; arquebus, damage value 19, range 3-5/10/20/50; and leather armor, TOU+2/17.

(Standard Citizen (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+2:

Dodge 3D, firearms 3D, melee combat 3D+1, missile weapons 3D **STRENGTH 2D+2:**

Brawling 3D **KNOWLEDGE 2D+1 TECHNICAL 2D+1 MECHANICAL 2D+1**

rank of the people's army

Title	Command
Citizen	none
Defender	(5 Citizens)
Patriot	Squad (10 Citizens)
Champion	Company (5 Squads)
Hero	Neighborhood (10 Squads)
General	District (2-5 Neighborhoods)

PERCEPTION 2D: Con 3D+1, investigation 2D+2, search 3D, taunt 2D+2. **Force Points:** 1-4. **Equipment:** Scimitar, damage value STR+2D; arquebus, damage value 4D+2; leather armor, +2.)

yzeem's navy

The shipping trade thrives in Yzeem, particularly in the capital city of Balaquim. All the major trading houses employ marines aboard their ships. It is the government's job, however, to patrol the shipping lanes and sweep them of pirates. The navy is composed of numerous galleons and clipper, all served by veteran crews. The entire fleet is under the command of the Blue Counselor. Sailors follow the same ranking system as the People's Army.

Unfortunately, the pirate kings of Yzeem are far older than the Council of Seven. The mysterious thieves and their minions have infiltrated all of the trading houses, and it seems the People's Navy as well. Yzeem's sailors frequently complain that their foes know where they will strike before they do.

Clipper: Toughness 14; Speed 25 mph; maneuver +3. Clippers are long but light vessels mounting at most four 12-lb. cannons per side. They are frequently loaded with soldiers from the People's Army and rushed into boarding actions with outnumbered and less-enthusiastic pirates.

Galleys: Toughness 24; Speed 25 mph; maneuver +0. Galleys require a crew of 30-40 men to man the rigging and their 10-20 12-lb. cannons.

trade

The Valley of Life is Yzeem's only productive region. Fortunately, the entire nation can feed off its abundant yield. Aniols, ula, and riggola all grow in the fields on either side of the river. Mounted

Heroes of the People's Army and gunboats of the navy patrol the region in an attempt to sweep it clear of rampaging nocturnals. With the help of the farmers themselves, the fields are rarely ruined by the minions of the Darkfall. Isolated murders and savage attacks are more difficult to prevent, however. Farmers in the Valley of Life are necessarily a hardy breed. Many of them joke that their deadly homeland should be called the "Valley of Death."

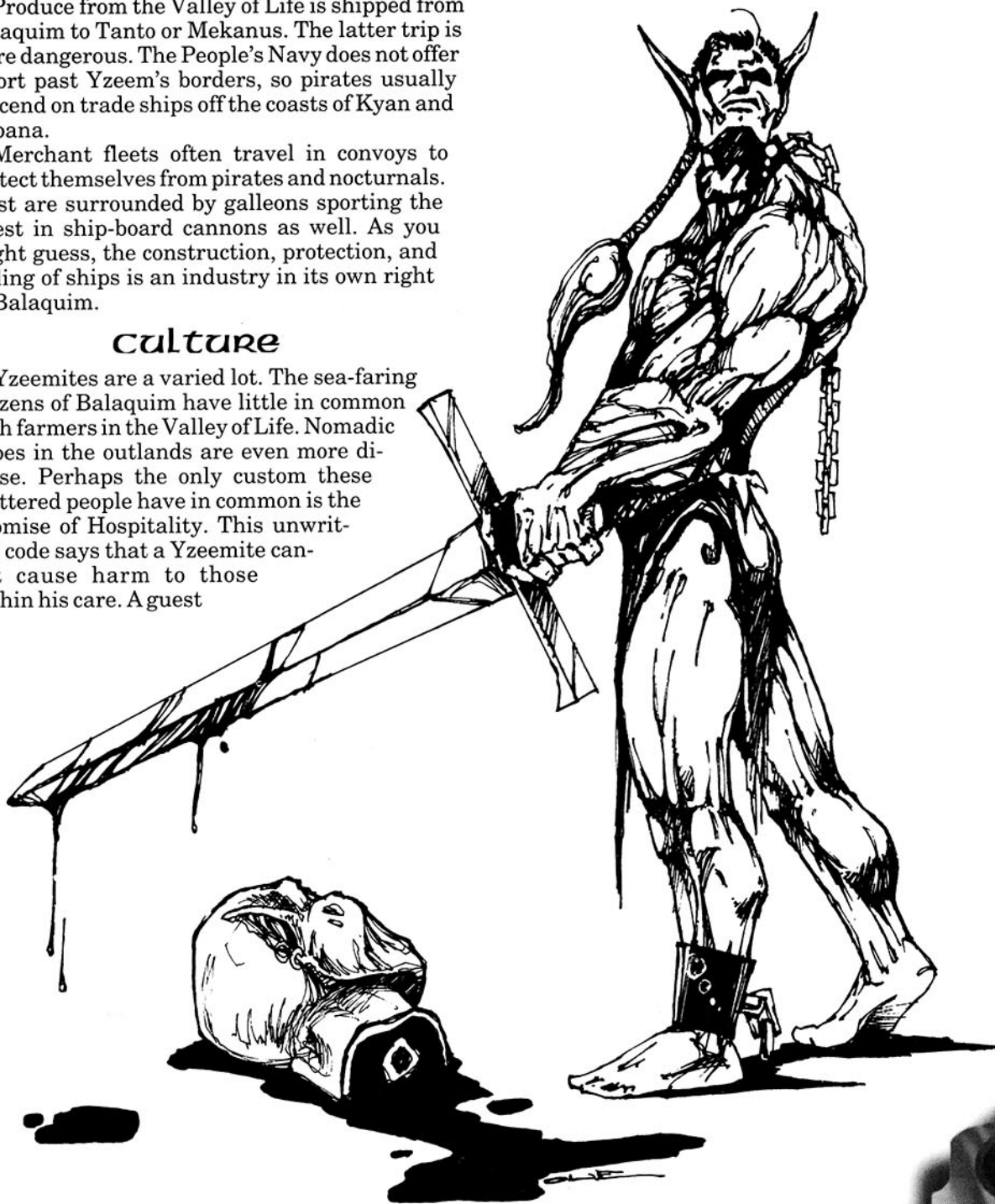
Produce from the Valley of Life is shipped from Balaquim to Tanto or Mekanus. The latter trip is more dangerous. The People's Navy does not offer escort past Yzeem's borders, so pirates usually descend on trade ships off the coasts of Kyan and Urbana.

Merchant fleets often travel in convoys to protect themselves from pirates and nocturnals. Most are surrounded by galleons sporting the latest in ship-board cannons as well. As you might guess, the construction, protection, and sailing of ships is an industry in its own right in Balaquim.

culture

Yzeemites are a varied lot. The sea-faring citizens of Balaquim have little in common with farmers in the Valley of Life. Nomadic tribes in the outlands are even more diverse. Perhaps the only custom these scattered people have in common is the Promise of Hospitality. This unwritten code says that a Yzeemite cannot cause harm to those within his care. A guest

or even a hapless victim in a Yzeemite's path are all considered wards of the host. Refusing aid or the reasonable request of a ward is a serious offense in Yzeem. There are no laws to enforce the Promise of Hospitality, there is only the threat of rejection by other Yzeemites.



• two nations of aden •

Tom O'Neill

Eight races dominate the sentient population of Aden. I'll try to explain my notion of what makes each of these races unique, but keep in mind that I am a human, so my ideas and beliefs are colored by my own ethnicity. Surely I cannot understand the dwarven love of the underearth, nor can I truly explain the bestial rage of the ferrans.

Also, while I may tell you that juraks always keep their word and faerkin are gifted in the arcane arts, keep in mind that these are simply the ideas that come to mind when a particular race is mentioned. Any individual you meet will have his own particular habits, gifts, and eccentricities. I have met dwarves who cannot stand the underearth and rapacians who nearly vomit at the thought of eating a living meal.

Dwarves

Typically one of the more secretive races, the dwarves are short and squat physically, but large in courage and fortitude. They have ruddy bronzed complexions, wide noses, and brawny muscles. Their hair is as coarse as bear's fur and comes in all colors, shapes, and sizes. Male and female dwarves tend to wear their hair in long braids, and the men wear beards from an early age.

Large groups of dwarves live in the mountain range called the Wall or in the underearth at the Skar, but a traveler will also find them in large numbers throughout other regions. Some have lived in the Ice Wastes long enough to develop bluish skin, though they are only called "ice-dwarves" by visitors to that cold place.

In ancient times the dwarves never walked the surface of the earth. Their entire civilization stayed below and carved out vast empires in the underearth. Then, a few thousand years ago, something changed and they began to construct caves and mines that led out into the sunlight. They built outposts to guard these entrances, and these outposts eventually became the mountain fortresses that many dwarves still favor today.

The move to the surface most likely caused significant schisms among their close-knit society. Some thought that the explorers had tunneled all the way to heaven and that the sun was an angry god. Those beliefs eventually changed for the most part, but the descendants of those superstitious people are today called the "deep dwarves." Deep dwarves have weak eyes and keen hearing and smell, much like many other subterranean creatures. Most of them also fear the sun because it hurts their weak eyes. There is something to their superstitious belief that "to look upon the gods will blind even the most pious." I'm sure the status of one's mortal soul has little to do with it, but it is hard to argue with deep dwarves.

Another subspecies are the desert dwarves of the Sundered Desert. Most of

Background notes: Dwarves

Advantages/Compensations

3CI, 2CIII

Mandatory A/C

Advantages: Special Abilities (CIII): Enhanced Senses, +3 to hearing-related skills; Special Abilities (CIII): Infravision/Ultravision

Compensations: Handicap (CI), +2 to the difficulty of vision-related skills when in light

Recommended A/C

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to scholar: mining

Compensations: Any

Restricted A/C

None

these people have dark skin and lean musculature — all signs of their life in the burning wastes. They are masters of camouflage, stealth, and simple mechanics. I have seen these ingenious fellows rush out from beneath concealed sand pits and complete an ambush of the Rhanate's caravans in a matter of minutes. Unlike the elves in the same area, they seem to be truly independent.

standard Dwarf

AGILITY 8

DEXTERITY 9

ENDURANCE 11

STRENGTH 11

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 8

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 9

CHARISMA 7

elves

I've spent extensive time with the elves. They are a noble looking people — tall, thin, and, with few exceptions, agile as cats. The tips of their ears are pointed and their eyes have a slight slant to them, almost like that of the men and women who live in faraway Vanora. Most have dark hair, but I have seen some with blond, red, and even silver locks. Whether these are natural or the result of some minor cantrip I cannot tell. Elves have a natural affinity for nature and magic if they choose to develop it. Most of them shun mechamagic and I have yet to see one rely entirely on black powder missile weapons. I suspect that their distrust of all things mechanical has something to do with their arboreal roots in the darkest heart of the forests.

Though there is really only one race of elves, there are certainly many ethnic groups within the racial whole. The ice-elves of Ionara, for instance, are identical to their southern cousins save for the environment they live in and the slight, bluish tinge their skin has gained from years in the frigid Ice Wastes. Sand-elves are yet another subculture. The harsh sun of the Sundered Desert bronzes their skin and keeps their frame lean. Many elven nomads of the Sundered Desert love to ride their lightning-lizards across the burning sands and compete in wild and often dangerous challenges. I'm told





Background notes: elves

Advantages/Compensations

3CI, 2CII, 1CIII

Mandatory A/C

None

Recommended A/C

Advantages: Additional Attribute Point (CIII), +1 to Agility; Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to an Agility-based skill

Compensations: Quirk (CI), a distrust of things mechanical

Restricted A/C

None

that most of them secretly swear allegiance to the Rhanate of that area, though they publicly maintain their independence. I suspect this arrangement makes it easy for the Rhanate to occasionally use the nomads against his neighbors without having to accept responsibility for them.

standard elf

AGILITY 12

DEXTERITY 10

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 9

MIND 9

CONFIDENCE 10

CHARISMA 9

faerkin

Faerkin are a cross between humans and rare faerie folk. They look much like small children, and it is only their pointed ears and streetwise countenance that betrays their true heritage. Most faerkin are only a meter or so high and quite lean. This makes them comparatively weak, though their agility and cunning more than make up for their lack of brute strength.

The faerie blood coursing through their small veins gives the faerkin a slight advantage when casting arcane magics. Some faerkin are able to cast simple cantrips from the day they are born. With such advantages, one would think that faerkin make the greatest mages in Aden, but for some reason, this isn't true. While there are many faerkin who know some magic, there are very few who attain significant levels of achievement. I believe the faerkin's tendency to become distracted by the wonders about them affects their ability to study and concentrate.

standard faerkin

AGILITY 10

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 6

STRENGTH 6

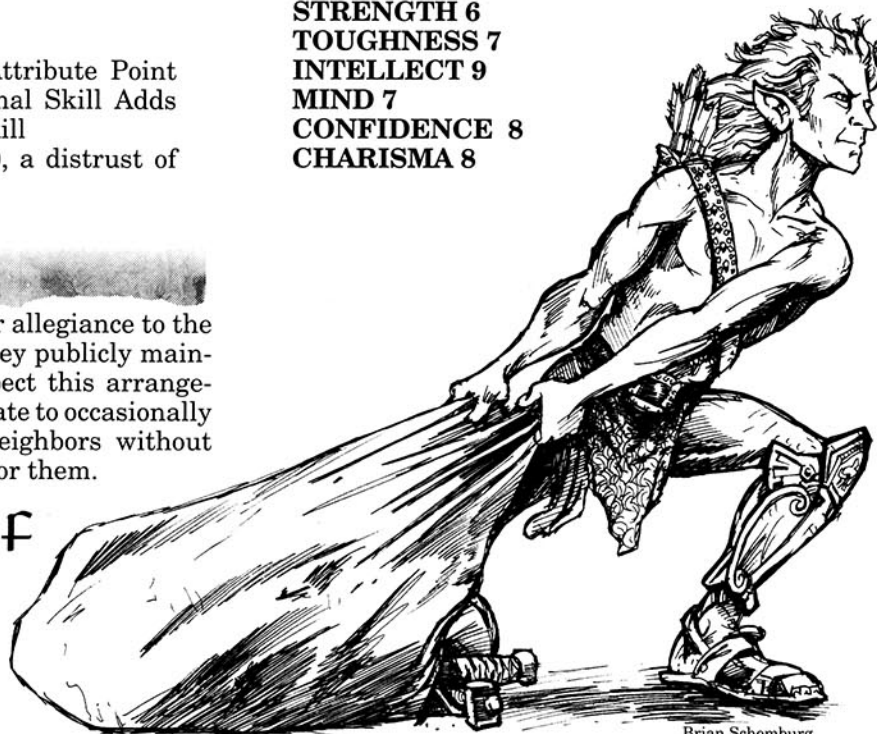
TOUGHNESS 7

INTELLECT 9

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 8

CHARISMA 8



Background notes: faerkin

Advantages/Compensations

4CI, 2CII

Mandatory A/C

Advantages: Skill Bonus (CI), +1 to the bonus of any magic skills

Compensations: None

Recommended A/C

Advantages: Any

Compensations: Learning Curve (Negative) (CII)

Restricted A/C

Faerkin should not take Advantages that enhance their Strength or Endurance.

ferrans

Some refer to ferrans as animen, for this race is half humanoid and half animal. I have seen dwarven-boars, elven-serpents, human-tigers, and countless other bizarre combinations of the major races and some common animal. To recount the race's history and its origin is to tell something of our world, so I will relate all that I know.

Before the Peace of Rose, sorcerers in Aramyst (now the Burning Coast) experimented in all manner of arcane arts. One day, one of their number created a magical elixir that could grant intelligence to a simple animal. Or so he thought. In truth, the elixir mutated animals and created a humanoid hybrid. A tiger gained a man's body but kept its ferocious head, claws, and musculature. A serpent grew the upper torso of a man but retained its lightning quick coils and poisonous bite.

The original test subjects were given serums concocted from the blood of humans, elves, and dwarves, and it is these three racial builds that have continued to form the non-animal side of the ferran population. Perhaps because of this lineage, ferran couples who wish to have a child must be of the same humanoid stock — elven-ferrans cannot mate successfully with human-ferrans and so forth. Also, a mated couple must be of the



Background notes: ferran

Advantages/Compensations

2CI, 2CII, 2CIII

Mandatory A/C

Advantages: None

Compensations: Quirk (CII), related to the animal heritage

Recommended A/C

Advantages: Any

Compensation: Any

Restricted A/C

None

There are no "standard" stats for ferrans because they are such a diverse people. When creating a ferran character, first determine its original race (human, elven, or dwarven,) then the type of animal that makes up its bestial half. Now decide which features of the two species the ferran has adopted. Does the character have the head, feet, and skin of a rhino while its arms, legs, and torso are generally human? If so, you will want to give the ferran great strength and natural armor. The creature's horn would be a Special Ability (CIII), "Natural Weaponry — Hand to Hand" with a damage value of STR+3. Once you've designed your ferran, show the character to your gamemaster and allow her to make any adjustments she feels are necessary.

When all is said and done, remember that your character is an individual and may act as you define him or her, but the animal blood coursing through his veins should manifest itself from time to time. A dwarven-rhino, for example, would be bull-headed and impetuous, and might even want to stamp out any fires he believes might endanger the surrounding area. A quick read of the animal's entry in any encyclopedia should give you some ideas as to animalistic personality of your character.

For a list of the Special Abilities available to characters in the Aden universe (particularly ferrans), see Chapter Eight, "Character Creation."

same basic genus to have offspring (so a mammalian animan cannot create a child with a reptilian aniwoman, for example). Finally, the particular animal species of a child is the same as its mother or its father, but never both.

Perhaps the only elements that ferrans have in common with any other outside its family are certain animalistic tendencies they retain from their bestial origin. Bull-men cannot stand the color of scarlet, snake-men prefer to strike at their opponents from the shadows, and lion-men are proud and savage in combat. Most ferrans are extremely dangerous when cornered. Their natural instincts turn them into savage beasts when trapped or wounded.

Remember that these generalizations will not apply to every ferran you meet, so do not act surprised if an individual breaks one of these "rules." Still, these are certainly the tendencies that come to mind when one thinks of this amazing race.

goreaux

Goreaux are short, squat individuals with oversized pointed ears and hawkish noses. Though proportioned much like dwarves, their heads are slightly larger and their frames much smaller. Their skin is olive green, and their hair is invariably black, though it may gray or whiten with age. Goreaux are calculating creatures. They are constantly appraising everything about them, studying anything and everything that might be turned to their advantage.

Goreaux are known for their mechanical aptitude. Many have blended this natural proficiency with magic, and it was a goreaux who first imagined the concept of mechamagic. Goreaux mechamages are now sought throughout Aden for their skill and creativity in inventing devices and weapons to fight the nocturnals.



Background notes: goreaux

Advantages/Compensations

3CI, 2CII, 1CIII

Mandatory A/C

None

Recommended A/C

Advantages: Skill Bonus (CI) or (CII) to *scholar, science* or investigatory skills

Compensations: Any

Restricted A/C

None

standard goreaux

AGILITY 8

DEXTERITY 9

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 10

MIND 10

CONFIDENCE 9

CHARISMA 7

humans

I believe that we humans are the most diverse breed in Aden, but I am sure there are those who would argue. Still, I know of no other race that sports so many different colors, attitudes, and behaviors. The humans of the west have a pale beige or dark brown flesh, both with a variety of hair colors. Those in Yzeem tend to have bronzed skin and black hair, but with just as many exceptions. Humans of the east, the Steppes and Vanora, have a slightly other complexion and narrow eyes — though the latter trait is common to all races that live in the sunbelt of the south.

Humans are generally harder than faerkin and elves, though weak compared to a dwarf, jurak, or certain ferrans. Dexterity, strength, intelligence, and most other attributes seem to fall somewhere between one race and another.

What humans do excel in is a little of everything and much of nothing. We are truly jacks of all trades. My dwarven and elven friends tell me that we are an intense race concerned with our own frail mortality. Truly we are the shortest lived of the races, but I know just as many devout scholars as carefree hermits. Perhaps my friends base their

Background notes: human

Advantages/Compensations

3CI, 2CII, 1CIII

Mandatory A/C

None

Recommended A/C

Any

Restricted A/C

Humans who choose "Special Abilities" may diverge from humankind and have to take Compensations that will take this into account.

opinions on my own grim example, much as I base my understanding of their races on them.

standard human

AGILITY 8

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 9

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 9

CHARISMA 9

Juraks

Juraks are huge creatures, unequaled among the sentient races in raw might. They have thick coarse hair of all colors, bushy eyebrows, and two long teeth that jut from their massive jaws like tusks. Some people have made the mistake of assuming that such a brawny species must be dim-witted as well. I assure you that this isn't true. Jurak battle-mages and strategists are renowned throughout Aden for their cunning and intelligence. If the juraks as a race have a weakness, it is in the area of diplomacy. Do not depend on the average jurak for tact. Honesty and directness are their custom, and the word of a jurak is as good as gold. If one makes you a promise, you can be sure that he will fulfill it or die trying.

Background notes: juraks

Advantages/Compensations

2C1, 1CII, 2CIII

Mandatory A/C

Additional Attribute Point (CIII), +1 to Strength

Recommended A/C

Advantages: Any

Compensations: Any

Restricted A/C

None

standard jurak

AGILITY 7

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 13

STRENGTH 14

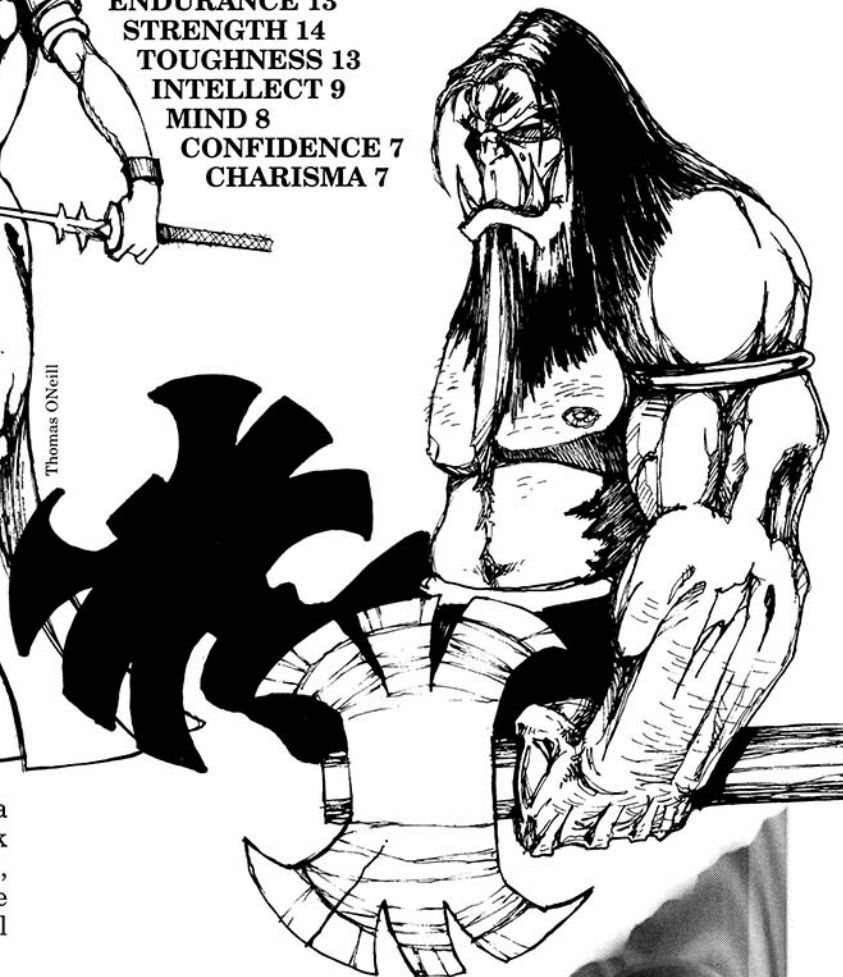
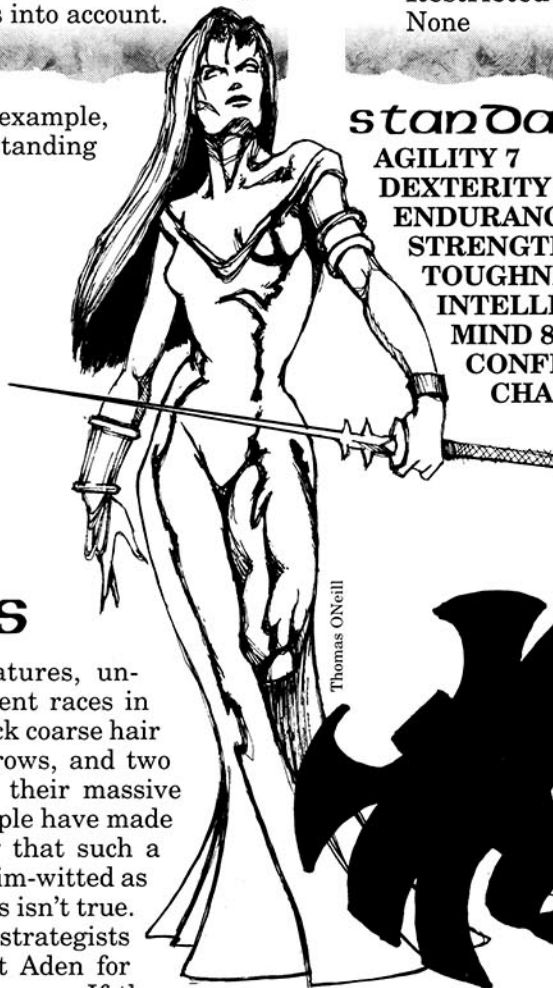
TOUGHNESS 13

INTELLECT 9

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 7

CHARISMA 7



Rapacians

Some have made the mistake of confusing the rapacians with the ferrans. The difference is that rapacians are humanoid lizards, while ferrans are a hybrid between an animal, sometimes including reptiles, and humanoids. Rapacians have their own distinct history, customs, and beliefs. When threatened or on a hunt, many of the lizard-men have a merciless nature that could only have come from their predatory ancestry. This is reflected in the way rapacians prefer to eat their meals — raw. Cooked meat is abhorrent to them.

Rapacians are roughly the same size as humans, though some are slightly taller and some shorter. There are many different sub-species that can be identified by color, crest, stripes and perhaps other features that only their reptilian senses can detect, but there are no societal differences due to this. I suspect that if one knew something of regular lizards and their behavior, it would be easier to predict how a particular rapacian would react in certain situations. For instance, I have personally noticed that those rapacians with a red crest tend to have sharper tempers than others. I caution the reader not to read too much into this, however, since any individual may always be an exception to a rule.

Rapacians are not cold-blooded like most lizards. Perhaps this is why they left their more primitive reptilian cousins in the evolutionary muck. Most rapacians still love to bask in the sun, but do not be led astray by those who claim it is done to warm their blood — rapacian warriors often sun themselves to harden their scaly hides for battle.

Finally, many rapacians still enjoy hunting as their forefathers did generations ago — as a relentless and cunning pack. I have seen small bands of rapacians herd their prey into devious death traps or natural cul-de-sacs where they attack

Background notes: Rapacians

Advantages/Compensations

2CI, 1CII, 2CIII

Mandatory A/C

Advantages: Special Abilities (CIII): Toughened Skin

Compensations: Quirk (CII), Rapacians' reptilian heritage lends them a ruthlessness in combat or when challenged in any way

Recommended A/C

Advantages: Special Abilities (CIII): Natural Weaponry — Ranged

Compensations: Any

Restricted A/C

None

with savage ferocity. Rapacian friends of mine have used this same feral ingenuity when hunting nocturnals.

(Some rapacians have the ability to spit venom into the eyes of their opponents. This requires a successful *missile weapons* attack versus the target's *dodge*. If the attack is successful, the target suffers no damage as such, but is blinded and is considered *setback* for the next round (he also suffers +10 to the difficulty of all sight-based actions). Each round thereafter, the target must generate an Endurance total — on a 15, he has succeeded in wiping the poison out of his eyes. Failure means the character remains blinded, and still suffers the penalty to sight-based actions though he is no longer *setback*. The venom ceases to function on its own after two hours.

Rapacian venom glands allow them to perform a spitting attack once every four hours. Range is roughly one meter.)

standard Rapacian

AGILITY 9

DEXTERITY 9

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 9

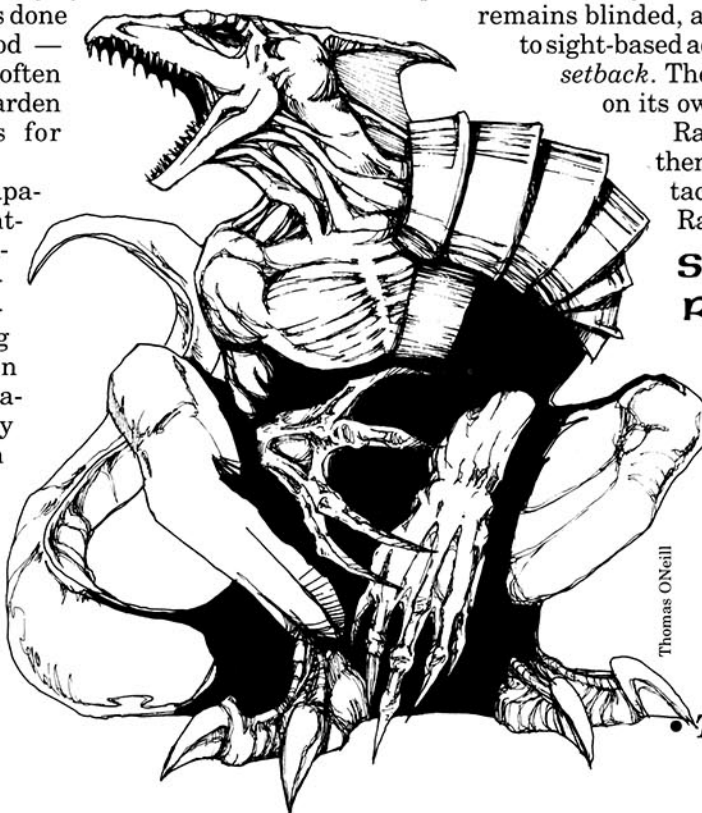
TOUGHNESS 10 (13)

INTELLECT 8

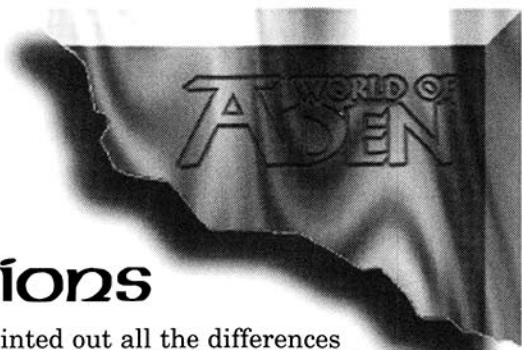
MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 8

CHARISMA 8



Thomas O'Neill

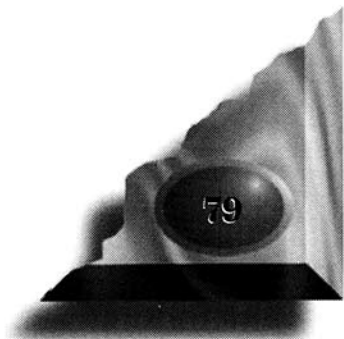


other sentient races relations

There are many other sentient races in Aden. I have chosen not to detail them because they do not commonly join our society in large numbers. Nagas, salamanders, and slurgithians all have complex societies, forge weapons, and struggle against the Darkfall like the rest of their estranged neighbors throughout Aden. For reasons of their own, however, these races have chosen not to mingle with the world at large. There are always exceptions, of course, so do not instantly assume you know a fellow being's behavior based solely on his race or origin.

Having just pointed out all the differences in the peoples of Aden, I would like to remind the reader of our similarities. Most men do not spend the majority of their day thinking about their race, nor how it should affect their actions. Instead, each individual considers himself a part of society, and, for the most part, strives to fulfill his obligations to every other elf, dwarf, faerkin, ferran, rapacian, jurak, goreaux, and human in his community. Only in the rarest occasions are matters of race ever even considered, and then only because one race may generally be better suited to a particular task than another.

• three: races •



Our world has changed much since the Darkfall. We had experienced something of a renaissance at the end of the Golden Age, but all our efforts were dedicated to improving the state of our world. Science and magic combined to improve medicine, transportation, and agriculture. Now our best and brightest search only for new ways to kill. It is true that we need new weapons to destroy the infernal nocturnals and wipe them from the face of Aden, but I can only wonder what our society might be like when we've finished. Will we truly turn our swords into plowshares? I have my doubts.

But now is not the time for such remorseful thoughts. Our attentions must focus on the nocturnals. In this chapter are a few of the devices, inventions, and discoveries Adenites have created to help deal with this scourge.

Bang sacks

These simple devices are attached to the head of blunt weapons, such as hammers or mauls. Most are soaked in sticky tree sap, so they can be attached relatively quickly. On impact, a rune of ignition detonates the black powder within, causing incredible damage to anything unfortunate enough to be its target. Obviously, bang sacks, a label given the devices by the street urchins who created them, are good for only a single blow.

Price: 100 crests

(A bang sack adds a +5 bonus to any *melee combat* attack with a damage value of 12 or more (the amount of force needed to detonate the bang sack). (D6: Bang sack adds 1D+2 to attacks doing damage value 4D or more.)

Blast saddle

Heavy cavalry in Lord Urbane's Army of Shadow use these ingenious devices to shatter enemy formations before they charge home. Two over-sized muskets are slung over either side of the horse and their triggers attached to a single cord. When the rider yanks the cord, both wheel locks fire their half-pound shells. Though highly inaccurate, anyone hit by one of these heavy rounds never fights again.

Price: Blast saddles are generally restricted to Urbane's military. Many mercenaries have created their own, however, and sell them for 800–1000 crests.

Blast saddles are simply two very powerful muskets with the following statistics: Damage value 25, ammo 2 (one shot per musket), range 3–10/15/ 50/ 150. (D6 damage value 6D+2)

Dragon gliders

Aden's folk have yearned to fly for generations. Only in the last few years have goreaux mechemages in Sea Reach made it possible. A pilot simply straps himself into the device, extends its collapsible, metal wings, and then starts the

implants and the wasting

Any character may purchase a golemoid implant. If the character is created as a golemoid, the player simply needs to take an Advantage great enough to pay the cost of the implant in crests. Note that most mechamages perform golemizations to support their "more important" work. Thus they are likely to charge even more outrageous prices than those listed below and perform shoddy work. Let the buyer beware.

Below are a few of the most common golemoid implants. The DN is the difficulty of adding the implant using a mechamage's *medicine* skill plus his *earth: metal* arcane knowledge adds. *Damage* is the level of wounding suffered for undergoing the crude surgery necessary for golemization. Most procedures take ten minutes times the difficulty number to perform. If the mechamage fails this roll, the patient takes the difference as damage in addition to the base damage of the procedure itself.

Implant	Effect	DN	Damage	Cost
Mechanical Arm	STR+1 to +5	18	Heavy	3000 crests per +1
Golemoid Claw	Replaces hand, damage value STR+4	18	Moderate	2000
Rune of Blasting	Electrical charge delivered by golemoid claw on mental command, damage value 18	15	None	6000 crests
Stilts	Telescopic legs that increase a character's height by 0.6–1.2 meters	18	Heavy	4000
Steam Legs	Increases Strength by +1 to +5 for any task that involves the legs or feet, doubles running speed, may be combined with stilts	20	Incapacitated	8000
Dark Eye	Allows character to see in all but pitch darkness	22	None	4000

Any time a character undergoes golemization, he must make an Endurance test versus a difficulty equal to 15 plus a bonus generated by the gamemaster (so the player never knows exactly what number he needs.) If the roll is failed, the character irreversibly contracts the Wasting.

Victims of the Wasting must generate an Endurance total at the beginning of every game month. This roll must exceed 15 plus a bonus generated by the gamemaster. If it does not, the character loses one point of Endurance. For every two points of Endurance lost, the character also loses one point of Mind and Intellect. Once Endurance reaches 2, the character falls into a coma, and at zero, he dies.

(D6: Characters must generate a Difficult Strength total at the start of each game month. Characters who fail this roll lose one pip of Strength (for example, someone with a Strength of 4D+1 would drop to 4D). For every two pips of Strength lost, the character also loses one pip of Knowledge, Technical and Mechanical. When Strength drops below 1D, the character goes into a coma and he dies at zero.)

Currently, there is no known cure for the Wasting. Some believe it is a by-product of the Darkfall. Others believe manite poisons the blood in all but the most resilient. Most likely, it is some combination of the two.

A WORLD OF ADEN

steam and magic powered motor to soar into the air like a bird. The glider's engines emit a great amount of smoke and steam, so many who first saw them believed they were far-away dragonets — hence the name.

Price: Few mechamages will sell these contraptions. Those who do often charge upwards of 15000 crests.

(Dragon gliders can move up to 48 kmh, have a Toughness of 9, a maneuver rating of 0, and carry a single passenger. The mechamagical steam boilers of the dragon gliders can hold enough water to power the contraption for one hour at maximum speed.)

eyenimals

An outcast mechamage named Retchus manufactures these macabre, but useful, "pets." The goreaux's creations are essentially golems in the shapes of animals, and can only be commanded by simple, verbal instructions. They are defenseless in an attack, have no intelligence of their own, and are truly useful only as spies or scouts.

Most eyenimals are manufactured in the form of common hounds, though I have also seen rats and crows from time to time. These creatures are fitted with organic eyes, taken from whatever species is represented by the golem. When a command word is spoken, the user can see through the creation's undead eyes as if it were under clairvoyance. No other senses are represented, though Retchus may implement them in future designs.

Price: 19000 crests or more.

(The range of an eyenimal's clairvoyance is 10 (100 meters.) While making use of this, the owner is unable to see through his own eyes.)

eyenimal

AGILITY 11

Dodge 12, unarmed combat 13

DEXTERITY 5

ENDURANCE 5

STRENGTH 5

TOUGHNESS 6 (12)

INTELLECT 3

MIND 3

CONFIDENCE 5

CHARISMA 2

Life Points: None

Natural Tools: Armor, value TOU+6; hounds, rats, and crows all have a bite attack that causes STR+3 damage.

(Eyenimal (D6): **DEXTERITY** 2D+2:
Dodge 4D **STRENGTH** 1D+2: Brawl-

ing 4D+1 **KNOWLEDGE** 1D **TECHNICAL** 1D
MECHANICAL 1D **PERCEPTION** 2D+1. **Force**
Points: None. **Natural Tools:** Armor, +2D; bite,
damage value STR+1D.)

golemoid implants

Many of Aden's warriors have artificial arms, legs, or eyes of enchanted manite. No two devices ever function the same, so I can only tell you that golemoid arms generally raise strength or might be topped with jagged claws, legs help a warrior run faster and jump farther, and eyes often allow him to see in the dark or even detect invisible creatures. Imprinting a spell upon a piece of machinery is relatively easy for a mechamage, the difficult part of golemization is attaching the limb to the flesh.

Unfortunately, many of those who become golemoids suffer from a disease called the Wasting. This debilitating condition weakens the spirit as well as the flesh, and eventually results in death. Perhaps half of those who have undergone even minor golemization contract the Wasting.

infernus lance

Baron Volkanis of Smult commands an elite group of heavy cavalry called the Salamanders. Besides their blast-saddles, their most feared weapon is the Infernus lance. These magical weapons burst into searing flame when a small crystal on their pommel is smashed. The fire of the lances is so hot that most can only survive three ignitions, thus there are only three such enchanted crystals along their pommel. The Salamanders are refitted with these expensive and deadly weapons several times a season.

Of course, Baron Volkanis would hunt down any warrior reported to wield one of his precious lances.

Price: 15,000 crests

(Damage value special, speed special. Infernus lances rely on the momentum of the wielder. A running warrior of at least Strength 11 can do STR+3 (D6: STR+1D). If used properly, from the back of a horse, thunder lizard, sail cart, dragon glider, or other conveyance, the lance inflicts STR+10 damage (D6: STR+3D+1). If the lance is set afire (by bursting one of the lance's enchanted crystals), the damage is increased by +5 (D6: +1D+2.)

men o' war

The goreaux of Burcham's Pass have created a small army of giant mechanical contraptions called "men o' war." The "men" are actually giant mechanical constructs powered by steam, gears, levers, and of course, magic. Inside each is a team of three men. One works the legs, one works the arms, and the third commands from the head. Each man o'war carries a giant axe or sword and can breathe

superheated steam in a long cone that boils a man's skin to liquid in seconds. The only drawback to the men o' war is that this same steam occasionally ruptures and turns the construct into a boiling death-trap.

Price: Burcham does not allow his bandit-mages to sell their creations, though a few have turned up in the bazaars of the Sundered Desert for 40,000 crests or more.

(A man o' war requires the *mechanical maneuver* skill to operate. It increases the user's Strength by +5, and acts as armor with a value of TOU+12. Agility is decreased by -3, however, and Dexterity is almost non-existent as large weapons are usually welded into the contraption's hands.)

Men o' war usually have a steam cannon or several muskets mounted on their shoulders, under the forearm, or even on the head. They are powered by a magical steam boiler that will only operate for one hour at a time before it must be refilled through an exterior hole. Unfortunately, if a setback ever occurs while a man o' war is in operation, its boiler explodes, destroying the machine and causing a damage value 35 explosion.)

(D6: Increases Strength by +1D+2, armor value +4D. Reduce Dexterity by -1D.)

manite

Manite is a natural metal essential in the creation of mechemagical devices. Iron and steel both seem to "warp" magical energies around them, much like two magnets will push themselves apart. Perhaps this is why most wizards refuse to wear metal armor or carry heavy metal weapons such as swords.

Manite seems effectively neutral in regard to magic. It is this single property that makes it so valuable to the mechemages. Besides its unique "attitude" towards magic, manite is a fairly durable and malleable metal perfect for use in armor and weapons. It is not quite as solid as iron, so a manite sword whose enchantments have faded is a relatively inferior weapon compared to one made of iron or even bronze.

Price: A sheet of pure manite 1.27 centimeters thick and 0.60 meters square costs about 1000 crests. Though the metal is abundant in Urbana, Lord Urbane's constant demand keeps the value inflated.

(Manite is the only metal that can retain an enchantment for longer than a few hours. See Chapter Six for more information on the use of manite in magical contraptions.)



Brian Schomburg

shadow armor

Rumors have abounded for years that Lord Urbane employs an elite squad of assassins. Exactly who they were meant to assassinate is a mystery, for there are few such occurrences even in the dark realm of Urbana. At any rate, a suit of midnight-hued leather armor occasionally surfaces on the black market at upwards of 2000 crests. The seller always claims his find was taken from one of these mysterious warriors. The suits I have seen look almost new, disproving their claim. My guess is that whoever makes the devices occasionally sells them to the public to supplement the salary paid him or her by Lord Urbane.

As you might guess, shadow armor is all black, though it is not simply stained that way. It actually seems to be made of tangible darkness, so that anyone wearing it may blend into the shadows as if he were one himself. Besides this magical ability, the suit contains scores of hidden pockets, concealed weapons, and other surprises that might help an assassin complete his deadly work.

Price: 2000+ crests

(Shadow armor adds +10 to a user's *stealth* skill. The armor is made of magical darkness, and does not function in bright sunlight or its equivalent.

Each time the user takes damage while wearing shadow armor, the player must make a mark on his character sheet. When 10 such marks have accumulated, the armor is destroyed. Because the armor is made of magical darkness, it cannot be repaired, only replaced.)

(D6: Adds +3D+1 to user's *sneak* skill.)

spring blades

Some daggers and spears are made with multiple blades. Should you see one of these, beware, for all but one of the blades is most likely resting on the end of a spring. When a hidden button on the pommel is pressed, a powerful spring extends and propels one or more of the additional blades forward. While their range is limited, their power is great and the surprise has caught many off-guard.

Price: Mechanics usually charge 300 crests for a blade the size of a dagger, and 600 crests for sword sized blades. This does not include the cost of the weapon the blade is to be set within.

(Spring blades do damage value 12 and have a range of 1-3/7/10/15. **D6:** Damage value 4D.)

steam Boilers

Mechamagic would not have grown to its current state if not for the perfection of manite steam boilers. The concept is simple: the metal case is inscribed with an *ever-heat* cantrip, boiling the water inside and channeling the resulting steam into power for whatever device is attached. Steam boilers are not a commodity to be bought upon the common market, but are manufactured for specific contraptions.

storm slugs

The balls fired from a musket or wheel lock are often enchanted to produce secondary effects. As if the devastating blow of a slug weren't terrible enough! Runes of fire, of ice, or most any other common spell can be carved onto the surface of common shot. On impact, the spell is enacted and the target suffers its effects. Smiths in most every city sell such ammunition, but the price is often high. I advise only the best marksman to carry any quantity of storm slugs, for they are an expensive loss should you miss your target.

(Inscribing a spell effect on a storm slug is difficult work. The effect is exactly as Grimlak describes — if the slug hits, the spell is activated with appropriate effects. Note that if the slug has penetrated the defender's armor (exceeded his Toughness with armor adds), damage-causing spells may ignore the armor when determining their result.)

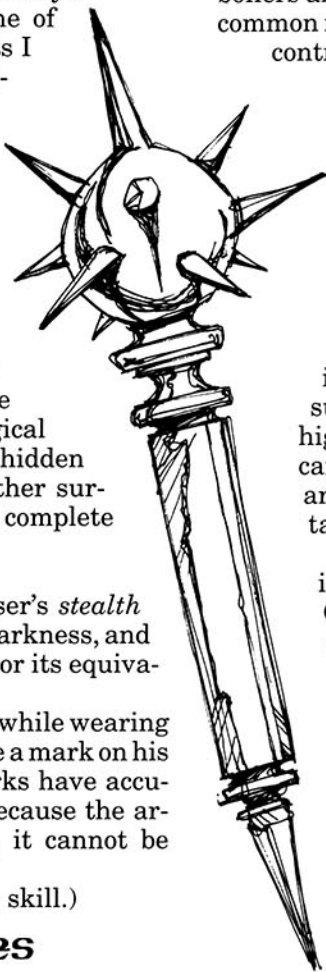
thunder Bows

A thunder bow is simply a very powerful, metal bow, wired with steel cable. Only juraks can wield them without cocking mechanisms, but the energy it puts into a normal bolt is fantastic. Standard bolts are not its usual ammunition, however. The increased power of the steel cable means that heavier bolts, often enchanted or rigged with bang sacks, can be fired at ranges comparable to crystal bows.

Price: 4000 crests.

Rune bolts, thunder bolts and other types of ammunition vary all over the realm. The most popular kinds are listed below.

Black Widows: This bolt is fitted with a special head that screws into a target on impact. It is often





Tim Bobko

attached to a thin but incredibly strong cable which cat-burglars use to climb to high, open windows. The cable reminds some of spider webbing, hence the name. Some fiendish warriors have begun to barb the heads of these bolts and use them as weapons. These missiles create gruesome holes in stone walls — I cannot imagine what their effect on flesh must be.

Price: 100 crests per bolt.

Grapplers: The militia in Sea Reach developed these unusual weapons to bring down fleeing opponents while presenting little danger to surrounding crowds. Trailing from the bolt's large, round head are three iron balls on meter long long, leather cords. On impact, the trailing iron balls fly forward and wrap about the opponent's legs, bringing him to a stumbling halt. The weapon works only at short ranges even when fired from a thunder bow, but is quite effective if used correctly.

Price: 50 crests per bolt.

Thunder Bolts: These bolts have rounded heads filled with powder. On impact, a rune of ignition detonates inside and causes a massive explosion. The ball-like head of the bolt shatters, filling the air with metal splinters and wounding most lightly armored opponents in a 10 meter area. They are quite useful for dispersing hordes of lesser nocturnals such as cacklers. Some warriors make their own "thunder bolts" by attaching bang sacks to the heads of blunted arrows.

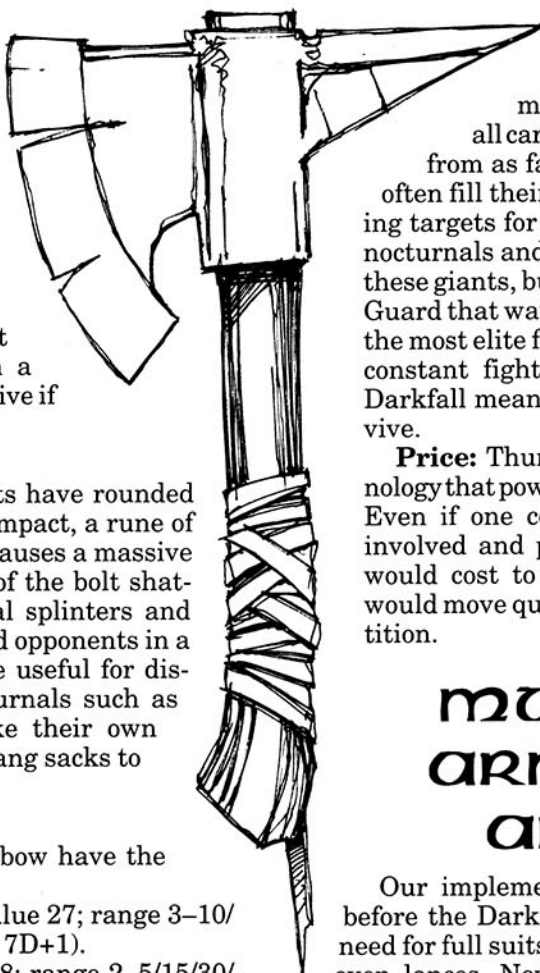
Price: 100 crests per bolt

Bolts fired from a thunder bow have the following effects:

Black Widows: Damage value 27; range 3-10/20/50/100. (D6: Damage value 7D+1).

Grapplers: Damage value 8; range 2-5/15/30/60. (D6: Damage value 1D). The firing character's missile weapons total is measured against the target's *dodge*. If successful, the target is ensnared and needs a Strength total of 11 to break loose (D6: Moderate Strength total).

Thunder bolts: Damage value 25; range 3-10/40/100/175. Burst radius is 0-3/8/15/30 (D6: Damage value 6D+2).



thunder trains

The thunder trains are the sole reason that the nations of Aden have been able to carry on trade through the nocturnal-infested outlands. These titanic contraptions of smoke and steel rumble across the land, pushing aside or crushing anything that gets in their way. Thunder trains are composed of six to eight barges, each one as long as a galleon, and pulled by an engine of similar size. Giant treads pull the barges along, allowing the caravan to ignore shifting sands or slippery mud.

Passage can be bought on a thunder train, though few appreciate riding in the cramped, deafening, and fume-filled quarters that are offered. Goods thus make up the vast majority of all cargo hauled by the trains. Items from as far away as the High Steppes often fill their iron hulls and make tempting targets for thieves and brigands. Many nocturnals and bandits have tried to topple these giants, but so far have failed. The Iron Guard that watches over the trains is one of the most elite forces in the land. Their near-constant fight with the creatures of the Darkfall mean that only the strongest survive.

Price: Thunder trains — and the technology that powers them — cannot be bought. Even if one could discover the processes involved and pay the millions of crests it would cost to produce one, Lord Urbane would move quickly to eliminate the competition.

mundane arms and armor

Our implements of war were unrefined before the Darkfall. There was simply little need for full suits of metal armor, ballistas, or even lances. Now the dangers of our world have caused a veritable deluge of new arms and armor. I have described some of the more obscure below so that you might choose your own weapon wisely.

melee weapons

Once the beast's at your throat, bows and muskets will do you little good. Below is a guide to the hand weapons carried by the warriors of Aden.

swords

The most common weapon carried by the warriors of Aden is the sword. You will find a plethora of lengths, weights, and designs. Many are forged with spikes, barbs, or saw-toothed edges to increase the damage they deal to the foul nocturnals.

Long swords are 0.9 to 1.2 meters in length and typically carried in one hand. Their thrusting point is just as deadly as their long, sharp edge.

Broadwords and scimitars are also 0.9 to 1.2 meters in length, but have a broader, flatter blade. They are designed primarily for hacking rather than thrusting. The weight of a broadsword forces most warriors to wield them with two hands.

Short swords are lightning quick and only slightly less deadly than long swords. Warriors of short stature, such as goreaux or dwarves, often favor such blades. Others prefer to use short-swords to parry while striking with a heavier weapon in their other hand.

Rapiers, sabers, and main gauches are light thrusting blades. They penetrate armor poorly, but are quick enough to strike at those places the armor does not cover. Faerkin and lightly armored rogues are frequently armed with fencing blades.

Two-handed or great swords are the heaviest and deadliest swords. They require great strength to swing with any reasonable speed.

Gaff swords are long blades ending in a hooked tip. Fishers first used similar tools to haul fish from the seas. Smiths modified the idea to create a blade that could pull an opponent off his feet while inflicting significant damage. Most fighters must use two hands when striking with this weapon.

axes

Great axes are the heaviest variety, and may have one or two blades. Falcon axes are double-bladed great axes. Their blades are "winged" like that of a falcon, creating a row of sharpened tips along the bottom. The damage they cause is incredible, though only the strongest warriors can swing them.

Hand axes are light weapons with one or two edges. They are quick and cause damage equal to a short sword. Scarallas are a rare varieties of hand axes with two blades, both set along the same side of the haft. The tips of the scarallas are spiked to give them some thrusting ability. Scarallas are almost always carried in pairs, allowing the wielder a flurry of light strikes.

clubs and flails

Few warriors carry clubs and flails in the outlands, for a blade is often needed to crack the armor of vile nocturnals. Still, they have their uses, especially flails-spiked iron balls connected to the weapon's haft by a short chain-which can easily wrap around an opponent's shield.

Blunt weapons never cause "bleeders."

pole arms

Like swords and axes, there are a great number of pole-arms used by the people of Aden. All are long poles tipped with some sort of blade or point.

Pikes gain a +3 bonus when used against a mounted opponent or a large, charging nocturnal.

missile weapons

I have heard some warriors scoff at bows, muskets, and other weapons used at range. They say that only cowards strike at their enemies from afar. This is a foolish notion. I doubt even the bravest swordsman would care to pit his steel against a flaming nocturnal, or one whose very touch is acidic death.

Bows

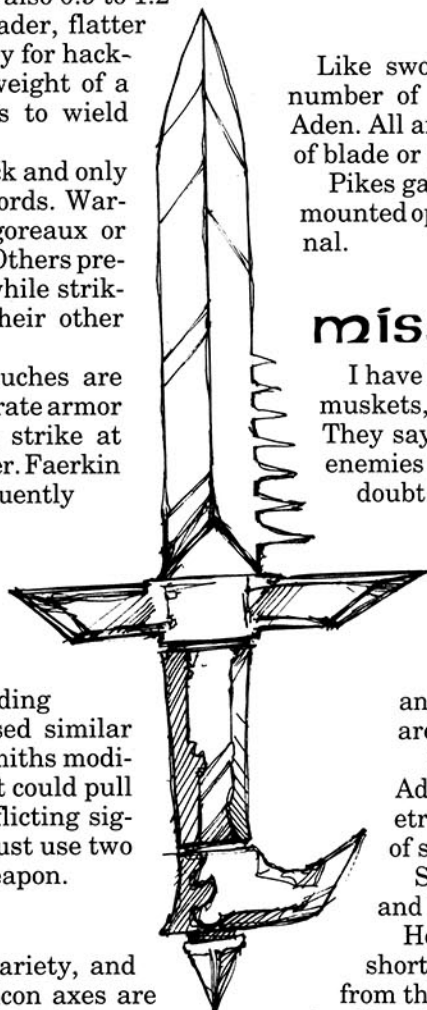
Bows come in many shapes, sizes, and strengths. The most common bows are long, short, horse, and crystal.

Long bows are made throughout Aden. They have the ability to penetrate chain mail and an average range of some 250 meters.

Short bows are inferior to long bows and have a range of only 100 meters.

Horse bows have the same power as short bows, but are designed to be fired from the backs of beasts. Raiders on lightning lizards in the Sundered Desert and the nomadic horsemen of the High Steppes are all proficient with these compact weapons.

Only certain bowyers in Sylfanus of Arasteen know how to properly warp the wood of the crystal forest into a proper weapon. I am told it is a difficult process and that shaping the bow can only be done during the freezing winter. The skill required to manufacture one of these weapons accounts for its expense, but you will find no better in all Aden. The strong wood of the crystal bow requires more strength than



most, but propels an arrow up to nearly 300 meters. Governor Veronus, who rules over the Crystal Forest region of Arasteen, does not allow his citizens to export these deadly arms. I suppose he sees them as one of our few advantages over our neighbors to the north and south.

CROSSBOWS

Crossbows come in four sizes: heavy, medium, light, and pistol. The first three weapons simply put increasingly greater force behind the bolt. The largest crossbows also require greater strength to cock and are therefore slower to use. Most warriors wield these like firearms, firing one deadly shot before closing into melee.

Medium crossbows are the most common. They are fairly quick to reload and can penetrate any armor short of full plate.

Light crossbows can be reloaded as fast as an arrow can be knocked. Their drawback is that they will rarely penetrate chain mail.

Pistol crossbows are favored by thieves and assassins. Their tiny bolts are rarely deadly unless coated with poison, but since they are collapsible, they are easily concealed.

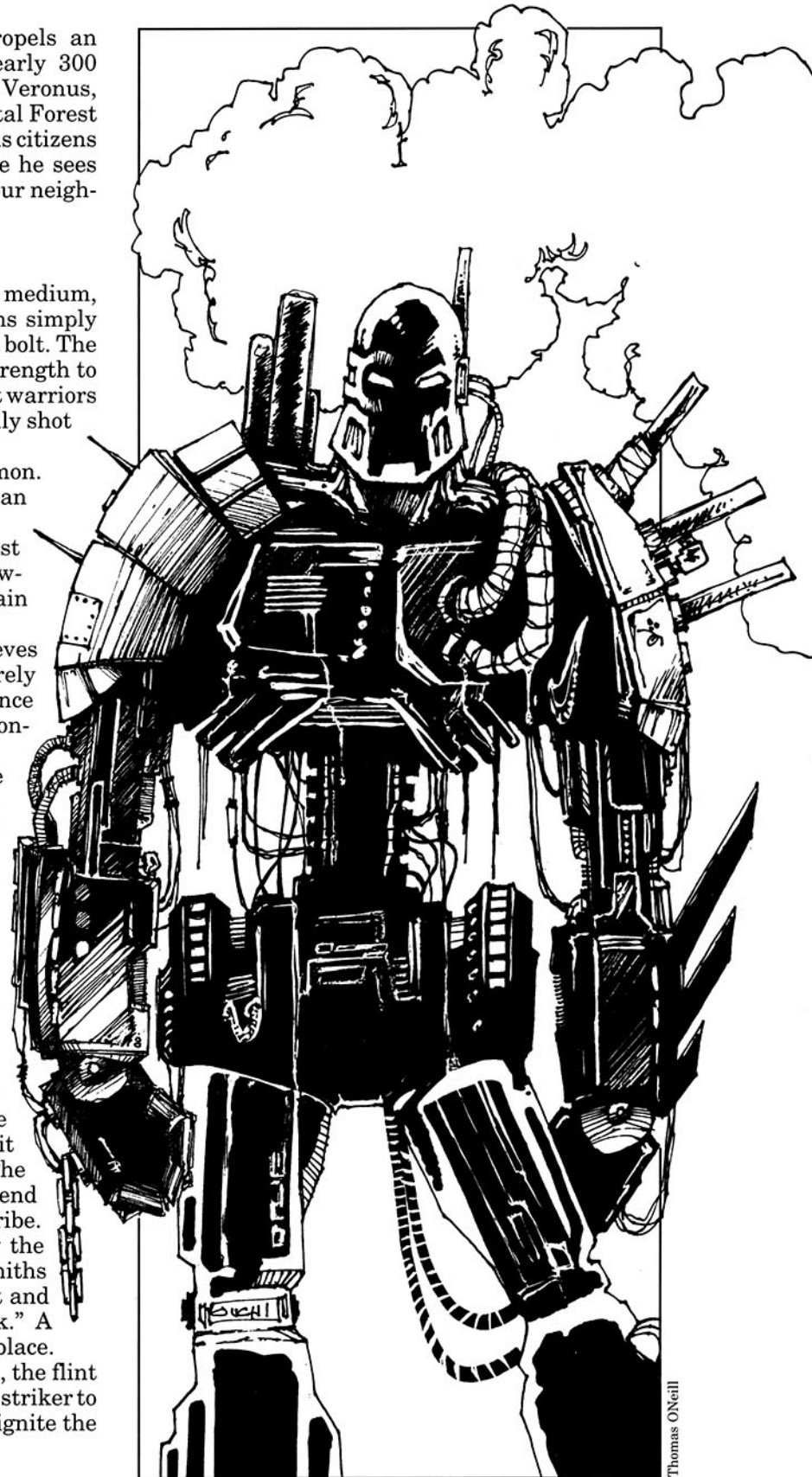
Pistol crossbows can be reloaded in one round, light crossbows take two rounds, medium crossbows take three rounds, and heavy crossbows take four rounds. Medium and heavy crossbows can be reloaded one round faster if the user has a Strength of 11 or more.

firearms

One of the first inventions of the Age of Thunder was the arquebus. It is a loud and powerful weapon some 1.5 meters in length. A metal ball is rammed down the barrel atop an airtight pocket of explosive powder. When the powder is ignited, it explodes and sends the ball flying forth. The pellet can crack the toughest armor and rend a man's flesh in ways I don't care to describe.

The first arquebuses were ignited by the insertion of a burning match. Later smiths improved the design by installing a flint and spring mechanism called a "wheel lock." A tight spring locks a piece of flint in place.

When the weapon's trigger is pulled, the flint is released and slides along a steel striker to produce sparks. These sparks ignite the



Thomas O'Neill

powder in the pan just as the old matchlocks once did.

The greatest problem with the arquebus is its terrible accuracy. A target only ten meters away is a difficult shot without magical runes carved on the barrel or the ball to compensate. One meamage found that engraving a simple cantrip that spun the pellet as it traveled greatly improved its accuracy. Common weaponsmiths, not to be outdone by a mage, then carved grooves along the inside of the barrel to produce the same effect. These new firearms are longer and far more expensive than arquebuses, but much more precise. We call them "muskets."

Eventually, wheel locks were streamlined and made small enough to fit a much smaller hand-gunne, called a pistol. I carry two wheel lock pistols myself. They are slow to reload, so one cannot hope to fire them more than once in an engagement. If your opponent is close enough, however, you can be sure a dual pistol shot will bring him down.

Armies of Aden have been slow to adapt the arquebus. Four aimed arrows can be released in the time it takes to fire a single pellet. Too, the range of an arrow is some two to three hundred meters, depending on the quality of the bow that

adventuring gear

Below are several mundane items characters may wish to buy. Base prices are listed, but the cost of goods varies widely from place to place depending on what is locally available. Also, remember that resources are scarce in a world that must live within walls, so prices for certain items (such as paper) may seem artificially high.

Item	Cost
Backpack	25
Buhuma	1500
Camp kit	100
(mess kit, bedroll, flint and steel)	
Clothing, fancy	50-400
Clothing, plain	25
Dried rations	10 crests per
one day's supply	
Flask of oil	10
Flint and steel	10
Grappling hook	75
Hammer and spikes	40 (+1 climbing)
Horse, riding	650
Horse, war	2000
Lantern	75
Lock picks	200 (+1 lock picking)
Lodging	40-100
(1 night, ritzy inn)	
Lodging	10
(1 night, standard inn)	
Meal, feast	30
Meal, standard	5
Parchment	5 per sheet
Rope, 50'	50
Saddle	150
Spyglass	100
Thunder lizard	2000
Tool kit, basic	100
Tool kit, complete	400

fires it. By contrast, an arquebusier is considered an expert if he can hit a target only fifty meters away. The greatest advantage of a firearm, besides the carnage it will wreak if it hits its mark, is psychological. Only nocturnals and madmen will charge at a rank of gunners whose weapons crack like thunder.

Arquebuses take a base four rounds to reload, muskets take six, and pistols take three. These rates can be reduced by one round if a successful *fire combat (black powder)* total of 12 or more is generated at any point in the reload process.

siege weapons

Though cannons and ballistas are called siege weapons, they are rarely employed in such a capacity. More often they are mounted atop the walls of a settlement or the lumbering cars of a thunder train to repel ravaging nocturnals.

Most cannons are found on the decks of ships where their long range can be brought to bear against massive seaborne nocturnals or enemy vessels. On land, storm cannons are more popular.

Governor Drummel's men at Top of the World created storm cannons to repel the cacklers that

sometimes attempt to gain the walls of their city. The cannon is a light field piece mounted on a tripod to cover a wide, sweeping arc. It is loaded with chunks of ore or scrap metal. When fired, the small shot scatters like rain and cuts a swath of destruction among unarmored nocturnals, such as cacklers. Their effectiveness caused their quick spread from the thunder trains to temple-fortresses of the High Steppes.

Ballistas come in two varieties: ordinary and steam. Ordinary ballistas are simply gigantic crossbows hurling a bolt some two meters long long and 11 centimeters thick. Steam ballistas fire the same size bolt but at nearly twice the range. The drawback of the latter is the expense and the need to keep an enchanted steam boiler nearby to power the device.

armor and shields

Aden's warriors use many types of armor to protect themselves from the claws of nocturnals and the blades of the corrupted. Below is a brief list of those most commonly worn by our land's valiant defenders.

armor chart

Armor	Bonus	Price	Notes
Quilted armor	TOU+1/16	50	
Soft leather armor	TOU+2/17	100	
Hardboiled leather armor	TOU+4/19	250	
Chainmail	TOU+6/21	1200	Fatigues; Stealth -1
Plate and chain mix	TOU+8/23	3000	Fatigues; Stealth -2
Plate mail	TOU+10/25	8000	Fatigues; Agility -2

Shield	Melee Parry Bonus	Price
Large shield	melee parry+3	400
Medium shield	melee parry+2	200
Small shield	melee parry +1	100

*Shields subtract -1 to -3 (depending on size) from certain Agility totals requiring mobility, such as *acrobatics*, *dodge*, and *maneuver*.

Fatigues: Whenever a "fatigue" result appears on the conflict line of the Drama Deck, the wearer suffers 3 shock instead of the usual 2.

equipment chart

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon	Damage	Price
Main gauche	STR+3/18	300 (<i>melee parry</i> +1)
Rapier	STR+2/17	300 (<i>melee parry</i> +2)
Saber	STR+3/18	300 (<i>melee parry</i> +1)
Short sword	STR+4/19	200
Long sword	STR+6/21	400
Broad sword	STR+7/22	450
Gaff sword	STR+6/21	500 (+1 trick when used to feint or ensnare)
Great sword	STR+9/25	1500
Scaralla	STR+4/19	400
Hand axe	STR+5/20	300
Falcon axe	STR+10/25	2500
Club	STR+2/17	0
Flail	STR+4/19	300 (Reduces opponent's shield bonus by -2.)
Mace	STR+4/19	300
Maul	STR+7/22	2000
Spear	STR+6/21	50
Glaive	STR+7/22	200
Pike	STR+6/21	150

MISSILE WEAPONS

Weapon	Damage/ Max. Value	Range	Price
Short bow	STR+4/19	0-3/10/40/100	150
Horse bow	STR+4/19	0-3/10/40/100	300 (no penalties for firing while on horseback)
Long bow	STR+6/21	0-3/10/100/250	800
Crystal bow	STR+8/23	3-50/100/200/400	10000
Pistol crossbow	STR+3/18	3-7/15/30/50	250
Light crossbow	STR+5/20	3-10/30/60/120	1400
Medium crossbow	STR+7/22	3-25/75/150/300	2500
Heavy crossbow	STR+9/24	3-10/100/200/300	3800

FIREARMS

Weapon	Damage	Range	Price
Pistol	19	3-5/10/20/50	400
Arquebus	19	3-5/10/20/50	200
Musket	19	3-10/40/80/150	2000

SIEGE WEAPONS

Weapon	Damage	Range	Price
Cannon, 6-lb.	27	3-50/200/800/1700	3000
Cannon, 12-lb.	32	3-50/150/500/100	4000
Cannon, 24-lb. mortar	28	3-50/100/200/400	6000
Storm cannon**	32	25/50/100/300	8000
Ballista	27	5-15/75/200/450	1000
Steam Ballista***	32	5-50/200/400/800	10000

*Mortars are used to lob explosive shells over walls and other fortifications. The burst radius for the shell is 0-5/15/40/50.

**The area affected by a storm cannon is a cone stretching from the weapon to an arc 50 meters wide at its maximum range.

***A steam-powered ballista can have as many as six barrels. Each barrel after the first adds another 1000 crests to the price. Up to 3 barrels may fire in a single round. Each barrel takes one round for one man to reload once fired. If a setback ever occurs in a round in which a steam ballista has fired, the device explodes, causing damage value 27 to everyone within 10 meters.

independent settlements

Not every pocket of civilization in the known lands of Aden is part of a kingdom or nation. Listed below are some of the more prominent independent settlements:

BURCHAM'S pass

Cradled in an almost unassailable niche of Middle Wall is an ancient fortress made of stone. No one knows who built it, but it is now inhabited by a band of rogues under the command of a jurak named Nob Burcham.

Burcham is actually a civilized and intelligent jurak who uses his image as a savage to make his fortune. When the first thunder train lumbered past his fortress some years ago, Burcham approached the captain and offered to keep the passes free of nocturnals year-round, thus ensuring that the Thunder Trail remained open. The captain haughtily dismissed the "savage" and said that she required no protection from an outlander. Burcham left peacefully, but it didn't take him long to figure out how to make the thunder train captain pay for her arrogance.

When the thunder train returned, the captain found the pass blocked by a wall of stone. Burcham stood atop the cliffs and offered to have his men clear the "avalanche" for a fee: twice the amount he had requested to protect the pass earlier.

Since that day, Burcham has controlled this section of the Thunder Trail, and every train that passes must pay him a hefty toll. Urbane uses this as an excuse to raise transport tithes charged to merchants. In truth, however, Burcham's men earn their pay in battle against hordes of scheming nocturnals, corrupted, and outlaws intent on blocking the pass.

standard outlaw

AGILITY 9

Acrobatics 10, beast riding 11, climbing 13, dodge 11, melee combat 12, melee parry 12, stealth 11

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 11, gunnery 11, missile weapons 11

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 7

Camouflage 9, perception 9, tracking 9, trick 10

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 11, survival: mountains 12, willpower 10

CHARISMA 7

Taunt 10

Life Points: 2-5

Equipment: Burcham's men use a variety of weapons, including firearms, bows, crossbows, pole-arms, and swords. A few are spell-casters as well.

(Standard Outlaw (D6): DEXTERITY 3D: Acrobatics 3D+1, dodge 3D+2, firearms 3D+2, gunnery 3D+2, melee combat 4D, melee parry 4D, missile weapons 3D+2 **STRENGTH 3D:** Climbing/jumping 4D+1 **KNOWLEDGE 2D+1:** Intimidation 3D+2, survival 4D, willpower 3D+1 **TECHNICAL 2D+1 MECHANICAL 2D+1:** Beast riding 3D+2 **PERCEPTION 2D+2:** Con 3D+1, hide 3D, investigation 3D, search 3D, taunt 3D+1. **Force Points:** 2-5.)

men o' war

There are several gifted dwarven and goresaux mechemages in Burcham's warband. Most are exiles from Urbana. Their greatest accomplishment is without a doubt the "men o' war," two huge golems of steam and iron. They are similar in appearance to Urbane's Sentinels, though without the latter's sinister origins.

The men o' war require pilots to sit inside their steaming chest cavities. A punctured boiler can burn an operator alive in seconds, so few of Burcham's men volunteer for the task. In an emergency, however, the steel titans can best most any nocturnal that threatens Burcham's fortress.

the ilithix hives

Ilithix are insectoids that lair in the hollow mountains of South Wall. They are not truly intelligent, but the ilithix are certainly clever.

There are at least five sub-species that I am aware of, and it is quite possible there are many more.

WARRIORS

The most common variety of ilithix are simply called warriors. They have mottled brown carapaces with strange ridges and spiny protrusions that seem to have no purpose other than to increase the horror of their already terrifying appearance. Their arms and legs are thin, but do not underestimate their strength — their claws are used to dig through stone. Ilithix heads are triangular with pincer-like mandibles. They are incredibly quick as well. The creatures



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cannot walk along the ceiling of a cavern like spiders, but they do seem fond of crawling along ledges or between tightly-packed walls above their prey.

If you are foolish enough to enter one of their hives, do not walk along the bottom of a dark crevasse or you will suffer a veritable rain of these mad horrors.

Warrior ilithix have a tail like that of the scorpions found in the Sundered Desert. The poison it injects is particularly vile and seems to have strengthened after the Darkfall. Once it enters the bloodstream, the venom causes paralysis and then necrosis of the nervous system. The victim's tissue dies and decays within minutes. It is very painful and extremely grotesque. The Kyanites have extracted an antidote from a rare insect immune to the ilithix venom, but it is expensive and difficult to obtain.

standard ilithix warrior

AGILITY 13

Acrobatics 14, climbing 16, dodge 16, long jumping 15, maneuver 15, stealth 15, unarmed combat 16, unarmed parry 14

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9 (13)

INTELLECT 3

Perception 8, tracking 13

MIND 3

CONFIDENCE 6

CHARISMA 3

Life Points: 1

Natural Tools: Mandibles, damage value STR+3/12; scorpion tail, damage value STR+5/13. Anyone taking even a single result point of damage from a tail strike must make an Endurance total of 15 or die in 1-10 rounds.

(Standard Ilithix Warrior (D6): DEXTERITY 3D+2: Acrobatics 4D+2, brawling parry 4D+2, dodge 5D+1, maneuver 5D **STRENGTH 2D+2:** Brawling 5D+1, climbing/jumping 5D+1 **KNOWLEDGE 1D TECHNICAL 1D MECHANICAL 1D PERCEPTION 1D+2:** Investigation 2d+2, search 4D+1, sneak 5D. **Force Points:** 1.)

archmages

Physically, archmages look much like warrior ilithix. The most striking difference is their purplish carapace. These creatures have the ability to conjure and hurl globes of glowing purple energy. The

energy seems to carry a hint of the ilithix venom, for it paralyzes those who are hit by it. If the victim should somehow survive, the spell's effects fade in only a few minutes. Of course, most victims have long since been devoured by then.

Archmages often lead swarms of warriors in an attack. I have seen them wedged between the high walls of a crevasse, casting spells while scores of warriors pour out of the darkness beneath them. The evil "grin" of an archmage, glowing in the blackness of the underearth, is a sight that remains in one's nightmares for years.

(Archmages have the same statistics as warriors but also have the ability to hurl globes or sparking, purplish mana. The globe has a range of 1-7/15/25/50, and the archmages have a missile weapons skill of 15. They may hurl a mana-globe every other round, but never take "feedback" damage from the spell. Anyone struck by a globe must make an Endurance total of 15 or higher or be paralyzed for 2d10 rounds.)

aquatic ilithix

I have only seen a few of these rare creatures, so I doubt if they exist in the same numbers as their land-bound siblings. Their husks are pale white and sometimes glisten pink in the light, like the shell of an oyster. Their claws are webbed and their bodies are more streamlined than others of their race. Their heads and tails are identical to the warriors. Aquatic ilithix live in the vast lakes and underground rivers found throughout the hollow hives. Do not venture into such a waterway if you can help it, for you will quickly be overwhelmed and dragged to your doom.

(Aquatic ilithix have the same statistics as regular ilithix warriors, but with the *swimming* skill at level 16. As a side note, regular ilithix cannot swim, and will drown if unable to struggle to safety.)

Breeders

Ant colonies function under the auspices of a single creature we refer to as their "queen." The ilithix have a similar creature called a breeder. I have only seen the long-dead husks of this species, but I would venture to guess they are terrifying to behold. Their size is huge — nearly four meters long from their black proboscis to their dark green abdomens. Breeders are much more insect-like than the creatures they give birth to. They have eight legs positioned upwards — presumably so that they can hang upside-down from the many web-lines that cross their lairs. Their ovular heads are covered in scores of tiny black eyes.

It seems the breeders spend most of their time in a crystalline cocoon created by another species of

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ilithix called the "caretakers." The cocoon is suspended in the upper reaches of an underground crevasse for safety from the few nocturnals or earthen predators that might threaten it. Eggs bearing various species of ilithix are laid and scattered throughout a vast tangle of web-lines underlying the cocoon.

standard Breeder

AGILITY 3

Unarmed combat (proboscis only) 14

DEXTERITY 2

ENDURANCE 14

STRENGTH 12

TOUGHNESS 13 (17)

INTELLECT 3

Perception 8

MIND 3

CONFIDENCE 8

CHARISMA 4

Life Points: 1

Natural Tools: Armor, TOU+4/17; proboscis, damage value STR+8/20.

(Standard Breeder (D6): **DEXTERITY 1D STRENGTH 4D+1:** Brawling 4D+2 **KNOWLEDGE 1D TECHNICAL 1D MECHANICAL 1D PERCEPTION 2D:** Investigation 2D+2. **Force Points:** 1. **Natural Tools:** Armor, value +1D+1; proboscis, damage value STR+2D+2.)

Caretakers

Caretakers are the servants and bodyguards of the breeders. They are the only strain of ilithix capable of secreting webbing. Unlike spiders' web, however, the webs of the caretakers crystallize after only a few moments contact with the air. The strands are not sticky but are difficult to cut without a heavy blade. Caretakers use their encrusted webbing to form hardened cocoons about the breeders, to form a maze of webs in the breeders' crevasses, and to raise and lower themselves through this vertical tangle.

Physically, the caretakers are larger and stronger than warriors. Their carapaces are deep red trimmed with black spines and mandibles. Companions of mine swear that even a heavy gaffsword cannot penetrate their stony shell. The arms of the caretakers are great scythes lined with spikes along the edges. Their tails act only to dispense webbing and carry no venom.

standard caretaker

AGILITY 13

Acrobatics 14, climbing 16, dodge 16, long jumping 15, maneuver 15, stealth 15, unarmed combat 16, unarmed parry 14

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 11

STRENGTH 12

TOUGHNESS 11 (15)

INTELLECT 3

Perception 8, tracking 13 (by pheromones)

MIND 3

CONFIDENCE 6

CHARISMA 2

Life Points: 1

Natural Tools: Scythe-like arms STR+6/18. Caretakers do not use their webbing offensively, but do use it to ascend and descend the great vertical rifts in their underground lairs at frightening speeds.

(Standard Caretaker (D6): **DEXTERITY 3D+2:** Acrobatics 4D+2, brawling parry 4D+2, dodge 5D+1, maneuver 5D **STRENGTH 4D:** Brawling 5D+1, climbing/jumping 5D+1 **KNOWLEDGE 1D TECHNICAL 1D MECHANICAL 1D PERCEPTION 1D+1:** Investigation 2D+2, search 4D+1. **Force Points:** 1. **Natural Tools:** Scythe-like arms, damage value STR+2D.)

the Brood mother

As I have mentioned, ilithix eggs are laid by a species we call breeders. But these great monsters are but mindless lieutenants of a much greater master, the Brood Mother. The true Queen of the ilithix is an ancient creature that dwells in the darkest depths of Hive Peak, the center of the ilithix lairs. The Queen resembles a breeder, though her jade husk is speckled with colored motes said to reflect the different strains she has produced through her lesser sisters.

The Brood Mother is mentally linked to every other ilithix in Aden. She can see through their eyes, hear through whatever passes for the insectoids' ears, and command their murderous desires from leagues away.

The Brood Mother learns about the outside world through prey brought to her by roving warriors. If she chooses, the Queen can pass on some of a victim's powers to future generations of ilithix. She does this by devouring the victim and giving birth to a new breeder capable of making the new subspecies. It seems the Queen herself takes on certain of her victim's abilities as well.

The archmages are a good example of the Brood Mother's amazing power. Historians of Kyan claim that a mage who frequently cast purplish bolts of energy ventured into the ilithix lairs and was never seen again. Shortly thereafter, the deadly archmages appeared. How the Brood Mother does this is unknown. I suspect that some price must be paid for the power, however; else she would have created many more ilithix strains in her millenniums-long rule.

the Corruption of the Brood Mother

Ilithix have always been dangerous to small groups of travelers, but they rarely attacked sentients. A few years after the Darkfall, however, the ilithix took on a more sinister and aggressive nature.

It is rumored that the brother of Queen Selanna of Kyan, Nelesh, is responsible for a drastic change in the ilithix, at least in part. Though many advised against it, Nelesh performed an experiment at the Academia Entomologia just after the Darkfall. He tried to instill intelligence into common insects. A few deadly subjects were created, and while not truly cognizant, did prove far more clever than most. When these caused the grisly deaths of several insectors, senior mages guessed that the Darkfall was somehow warping the creatures into nocturnals. Selanna ordered the experiments stopped. Recent evidence suggests that Nelesh continued his experiments elsewhere, perhaps in the company of deep dwarves looking for a weapon against the surface-worlders. It is possible that Nelesh's experiments were all too successful, for the Brood Mother suffered a major change shortly thereafter. A companion of mine guessed that one of Nelesh's experimental subjects escaped and was ingested by the Brood Mother, thus granting her greater intelligence. This sounds a likely explanation, for without true sentience, the Brood Mother could not have made the decision to give her ancient soul to the Darkfall. If she has passed this trait on to her breeders, it has not manifested itself yet. It is likely the Brood Mother will not imbue her children with intelligence since that might jeopardize her complete dominance of their minds.

Whether or not the theory of Nelesh's folly is true, the ilithix have developed a taste for flesh. They now raid the Kyanite hives with alarming frequency. I have heard horrible tales of men and women being chased through the warrens of Crichton by hungry ilithix. The Home Guard has so far been able to repel the insectoids attacks, but at great cost.

Kar- Unter

The deep dwarves live in the cavernous mountains of North Wall. There they fend off subterranean nocturnals and occasionally make forays against their hated brothers at Top of the World. Deep dwarves are intolerant of light. In fact, they believe that the sun is a god. Accordingly, they equate the surface world as a god's realm, and think that it is a blasphemy for mortals to live there. There are obvious holes in their logic. For instance, if living in the realm of the sun-god is so terrible, why doesn't the deity strike down those who do? Such gaps in the deep dwarves' theology have led many to defect into the surface world where they are welcomed with the open but occasionally suspicious arms of Top of the Worlders.

It is quite possible that the deep dwarves would relinquish their antiquated beliefs were it not for Adolwys the Belligerent (pronounced A-dol-wice). Adolwys is a mad theocrat who continually incites his fanatic legions to war with the surface dwellers. Captured deep dwarves swear that Adolwys has fantastic powers and abilities far beyond those of their greatest sorcerers, a fact that many believe mark him as corrupted.

Adolwys rules from Kar-Unter, or the "under fortress." It is curious that they call this place the "under" fortress, for is that not conceding that they live "below" the normal world? I assume that other cities deeper in the underearth are not so ironically named. Kar-Unter is a relatively recent outpost, perhaps only two hundred years old. I have no idea if the rest of the deep dwarven society is as similarly paranoid, for no one has made contact with deeper communities and returned to tell the tale.

standard Deep Dwarf warrior

AGILITY 8

Dodge 9, melee combat 10, melee parry 10, stealth 10

DEXTERITY 8

Missile weapons 10

ENDURANCE 10

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 7

Perception 8, science: engineering 11, trick 10

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 8

Intimidation 10

CHARISMA 6

Taunt 8

Life Points: 1-5

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Equipment: Deep dwarves usually carry picks (STR+5/14) and wear chain mail armor (TOU+4/14). A few have learned to use firearms in the last few decades, but most still rely on various size crossbows for ranged attacks.

(Standard Deep Dwarf Warrior (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+2: Dodge 3D, melee combat 3D+1, melee parry 3D+1, missile weapons 3D+1 **STRENGTH 3D+1 KNOWLEDGE 2D+1:** Intimidation 3D+1 **TECHNICAL 2D+1 MECHANICAL 2D+1:** Engineering 3D+2 **PERCEPTION 2D+1:** Con 3D+1, investigation 2D+2, sneak 3D+1, taunt 2D+2. **Force Points:** 1-5. **Equipment:** Picks, damage value STR+1D+2; chain mail, armor value +1D+1.)

adolwys

The deluded Adolwys sees Drummel as the leader of the blasphemous surface-dwellers. It was Adolwys who persuaded a tunnel vampire to infect Drummel's wife a few years ago. I learned this from a defecting Deep Dwarf some months ago. I cannot share the knowledge with Governor Drummel, however. Should he learn that Adolwys caused his grief, he will mobilize his army for a strike into the underearth, an expedition that would only distract us from our war against the nocturnals.

naga warrens

Nagas are intelligent creatures with the arms and torsos of humanoids and the heads and coils of snakes. They have a natural inclination towards dark sorcery, but as a whole cannot tolerate machinery or mechatronics.

The greatest congregation of nagas lives in a series of warrens deep in the Fangs, a range of small mountains north of Tirrian's Eye. The snake-people are known for their cruel streaks, but only after the Darkfall did most of them truly turn to evil.

A great number of nagas were united by a corrupted snake-ferran who now calls himself Mamba. How he managed this is a mystery, for his serpentine heritage granted him no special favor. Regardless, Mamba razed Longou, his former home, and led the victorious army of serpents to a new homeland in the Fangs. It is rumored that some of Lord Urbane's Iron Guards have slipped into Arastene and raided the nagas's eggs. What their purpose could be I cannot say, but I suspect Urbane is attempting to hatch the eggs and create an army of nagas loyal to himself.

standard naga

AGILITY 12

Acrobatics 14, dodge 14, maneuver 14, melee combat 15, melee parry 14, running 14, stealth 15, unarmed combat 14, unarmed parry 14

DEXTERITY 8

Missile weapons 11

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 9

Apportation 12, deduction 10, perception 11, tracking 10, trick 12

MIND 9

Conjuration 10, hypnotism 10

CONFIDENCE 11

Alteration 12, interrogation 13, intimidation 13, willpower 13

CHARISMA 7

Summoning 10, taunt 10

Life Points: 1-5

Equipment: Nagas rarely wear armor. They arm themselves with barbed swords (STR+6/14) and long bows (STR+6/14, range 3-25/75/150/300.) The bite of a naga has a damage value of STR+2/10. A character who takes at least 3 result points of damage must make an Endurance total of 15 or more or die in 1-10 rounds.

(Standard Naga (D6): DEXTERITY 3D+1: Acrobatics 4D+2, brawling parry 4D+2, dodge 4D+2, maneuver 4D+2, melee combat 5D, melee parry 4D+2, missile weapons 3D+2, running 4D+2 **STRENGTH 2D+2:** Brawling 4D+2 **KNOWLEDGE 3D:** Alteration 4D, apportation 4D, conjuration 3D+2, hypnotism 3D+1, intimidation 4D+1, summoning 3D+1, willpower 4D+1 **TECHNICAL 3D MECHANICAL 3D PERCEPTION 3D:** Con 4D, interrogation 4D+1, investigation 3D+2, search 3D+1, sneak 5D, taunt 3D+1. **Force Points:** 1-5. **Equipment:** Barbed sword, damage value STR+2D; long bow, damage value STR+2D; bite, damage value STR+2.)

new Columbey

High in South Wall is a small enclave of "disenchanted free-thinkers," as they call themselves. The rest of us call them the Wind Riders of Blustery Gorge. Their leader is a human named Frey, a former philosopher and mage of Columbey before it became Urbana. He and several others opposed Lord Urbane's ascension to power, though it soon became clear that they would not live to see their old age if they remained in the kingdom. After an arduous march across the outlands, Frey and his companions found a secluded niche high in the

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mountains of South Wall. They call their settlement "New Columbey," which I understand has caused their Urbanan neighbors to show them little sympathy.

New Columbey was founded eight years ago. Since then, Frey's eclectic community has attracted radical thinkers from all over Aden. A few of these fellows invented a contraption called a wind-rider, a device capable of carrying a man through the air as if he were a gliding bird. A few years' worth of research, and a few broken arms later, the inventors added magical "lifts" to the gliders—levitation and wind conjuration spells focused into flaps controlled by the pilots via levers. The gliders are fantastic creations. I have ridden them twice and cannot recall a more exhilarating experience than flying thousands of feet above the rugged canyons of Blustery Gorge!

(The gliders used by the Columbeyans can move up to 30 mph, have a Toughness of 8, a maneuver rating of +2, and can carry a single passenger. These contraptions rely upon the intense winds of the Wall, and so function at half speed outside this area.)

Some of Frey's admittedly radical companions have occasionally come into conflict with visitors from Urbana as well as Kyan. While the two states are on generally good terms, the Swarm has been known to skirmish playfully with any Wind Riders they happen by in the canyon's slipstream.

standard "free thinker"

AGILITY 8

Climbing 10, beast riding: giant birds 9, dodge 9, long jumping 10, mechanical maneuver: glider 11

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 11

ENDURANCE 7

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 8

INTELLECT 8

Deduction 10, divination 10, first aid 10, perception 10, science: mechanisms 10

MIND 8

Scholar: philosophy 10

CONFIDENCE 7

Survival: mountains 9

CHARISMA 7

Charm 8, persuasion 10

Life Points: 3-6

Equipment: Free thinkers are fond of muskets (damage value 19, range 3-

10/40/80/150) and spears (damage value STR+6/13). Few wear more than leather armor (TOU+2/10).

(Standard "Free Thinker" (D6): **DEXTERITY 2D+2:** Dodge 3D, firearms 3D+2 **STRENGTH 2D+1:** Climbing/jumping 3D+1 **KNOWLEDGE 2D+2:** Divination 3D+1, philosophy 3D+1, survival 3D **TECHNICAL 2D+2:** First aid 3D+1 **MECHANICAL 2D+2:** Beast riding 3D, glider operation 3D+2, mechanisms 3D+1 **PERCEPTION 2D+1:** Charm 2D+2, investigation 3D+1, persuasion 3D+1, search 3D+1. **Force Points:** 3-6. **Equipment:** Musket, damage value 4D+2; spear, damage value STR+2D.)

plains rovers

The Badlands of the northern Sundered Desert eventually turn into the scrub plains of the Veldt in the east. Drainage from the High Steppes makes this region less arid and therefore more tolerable for the nomads who dwell within it. Almost all of the "Plains Rovers" are horsemen, most likely descended from the steppe raiders of the north. The main difference between these nomads and most others is their adaptation of the musket. Plains Rovers raise fast ponies and trade them to Yzeem for muskets. In battle, they use the mobility of their horses and their accurate firearms to pick off nocturnals that wander too close to the rest of their tribe. Most believe the Plains Rovers will use these same tactics should the Rhanate's troops wander into their land.

standard plains rover

AGILITY 11

Beast riding: horse 14, maneuver 13, melee combat 13, melee parry 12, stealth 12

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 12

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 7

Perception 8, tracking 10, trick 10

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 11, survival: plains 13

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10, taunt 10

Life Points: 3-5

Equipment: Leather armor, armor value TOU+2/11; muskets, damage value 19, range 3-10/40/80/150; short swords, damage STR+4/12

(Standard Plains Rover (D6): **DEXTERITY 2D+2**: Firearms 4D, maneuver 4D+1, melee combat 4D+1, melee parry 4D **STRENGTH 2D+2** **KNOWLEDGE: 2D+1**: Intimidation 3D+2, survival 4D+1 **TECHNICAL 2D+1** **MECHANICAL 2D+1**: Beast riding 4D+2 **PERCEPTION 3D**: Con 3D+1, investigation 3D+1, persuasion 3D+1, search 3D+1, sneak 4D, taunt 3D+1. **Force Points**: 3-5. **Equipment**: Leather armor, armor value +2; musket, damage value 4D+2; short sword, damage value STR+1D+1.)

sludj

The only group insane enough to live in the Spike Fens is called the Outcasts by their neighbors in Kyan and Urbana. What they call themselves I've no idea, but the name of their only settlement is, appropriately "Sludj." I do not know the origin of the spelling, but its derogatory meaning is obvious.

Many of the Outcasts are corrupted, which probably explains how the community has survived against the overwhelming evil that surrounds them. This does not mean that the Spike Fen's nocturnals are their allies, however. A quick look at the pathetic Outcasts' ramshackle tree-houses and the vine-ways between them will tell you that they fear most everything that slithers in the swamp below.

standard outcast

AGILITY 9

Dodge 10, maneuver 10, melee combat 10, stealth 12, swimming 11, unarmed combat 11, unarmed parry 11

DEXTERITY 7

Thrown weapons 10

ENDURANCE 7

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 8

INTELLECT 5

Camouflage 8, perception 8, tracking 8, trick 9

MIND 4

CONFIDENCE 6

Survival: swamp 10

CHARISMA 3

Life Points: 1-4

Equipment: Crude spears, damage value STR+4/11

(Standard Outcast (D6): **DEXTERITY 2D+2**: Brawling parry 3D+2, dodge 3D+1, melee combat 3D+1, thrown weapons 3D+1 **STRENGTH 2D+1**: Brawling 3D+2, swimming 3D+2 **KNOWLEDGE 1D+2**: Survival 3D+1 **TECHNICAL 1D+2** **MECHANICAL 1D+1** **PERCEPTION 1D+2**: Con 3D, hide 2D+2, investigation 2D+2, search 2D+2,

sneak 4D. **Force Points**: 1-4. **Equipment**: Spears, damage value STR+1D+1.

the slurgithian warrens

The slurgithians (pronounced slur-jith-ee-ans) are an intelligent race of freshwater aquatic creatures. They live beneath the crystal clear waters of Tirrian's Eye in a maze of vertical and horizontal tunnels.

The slurgithians were caught at an awkward evolutionary moment by the Darkfall. They have their own language and are adept with water-based spells and simple machinery, but are basically a primitive people. Their favorite weapon is the gig, which is basically a trident with a smaller fork. They use these to catch the gigantic fish that live in Tirrian's Eye, and occasionally, to attack men and women who enter their domain. The latter stems from a fierce and inbred sense of territorialism which only a few have seemed able to overcome.

Not long ago, loggers at the outpost of Sutter's Ramp began to be attacked by the fish-men as they hauled crystal-wood logs from the water. Since the two races had never fought before, the Radiant Order was called in to settle the matter. I was the first to arrive, and decided to venture into the tunnels to decide if the fish-men were friend or foe. With the aid of a *water-breathing* spell, I entered the tunnels and encountered slurgithian guards. I asked them why they had suddenly turned on the men above, and they said that it was because of the silt-hunter. Of course I had no idea what kind of creature they were talking about, so the guards took me to their Spawn-Mother. This being was a gigantic, bloated slurgithian lying amongst a chamber of floating egg-pods. In no uncertain terms, she told me that a giant and aggressive flesh-eater had been let into the lake by the loggers above. I told her that it had not been an intentional act, but the Spawn-Mother didn't seem to care. She only knew that we had brought the thing into her realm, and that several of her children had died for it. Whether we had done so intentionally or not was of little consequence. It seemed there was only one thing left for me to do.

I told the Spawn-Mother to grant me an hour's clemency and I would bring her the head of the thing. She agreed, and even sent along several of her children to aid me in my quest. We searched the reefs and multi-

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colored kelp beds for three-quarters of an hour, but had no luck finding the mysterious predator. Finally, I struck upon an idea. I knew that sharks in the Green Sea could smell blood hundreds of meters away. Perhaps this man-eater had similar abilities. I cut a thin line into my arm with Evanor and waited. To my horror, the silty floor beneath me began to move! A giant, flat nocturnal with a broad mouth filled with razor-sharp teeth undulated toward me and my slurgithian escort! The thing was fast despite its huge size, and one of my companions suffered greatly before the rest of us were able to bring the beast down.

As I promised, the Spawn-Mother received the creature's grotesque head. The slurgithians have been uneasy allies with the men of Sutter's Ramp ever since.

standard slurgithian

AGILITY 8

Beast riding: giant fish 10, dodge 10, maneuver 10, melee combat 11, melee parry 10

DEXTERITY 8

Thrown weapons 9

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 4

Perception 8

MIND 4

CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 12, survival: aquatic 13, willpower 11

CHARISMA 3

Life Points: 2-5

Equipment: Gig, damage value STR+4/12

(Standard Slurgithian: DEXTERITY 2D+2:

Dodge 3D+1, maneuver 3D+1, melee combat 3D+2, melee parry 3D+1, thrown weapons 3D

STRENGTH 2D+2 KNOWLEDGE 1D+1: Intimidation 4D, survival 4D+1, willpower 3D+2

TECHNICAL 1D+1 MECHANICAL 1D+1: Beast riding 3D+1 PERCEPTION 2D+1. Force Points: 2-5.

Equipment: Gig, damage value STR+1D+1.)

snowmads

Snowmads are a loose collection of exiled warbands that live in the Ice Wastes. A few are ferrans with tolerance for the extreme cold, but most are criminals exiled from Ionara. Mortals cannot live for extended peri-

ods in the Ice Wastes, so the snowmads have gathered around the few hearth stones stolen from the citizens of the Ice Queen. Hearth stones are scarce, so snowmads tend to live in communal caves where they can share the precious heat.

I know of at least two separate clans within the collective population called the snowmad: the Leopards and Berig's Marauders, both led by corrupted madmen.

the leopard clan

The snowmads of the Leopard Clan are a primitive and savage lot. They choose to wear skins and pelts of snow leopards and use tools and weapons made from their razor-sharp claws. Some have spears made from whale bone or carry stolen weapons, but the latter are not common. All of the Leopards are relatively young warriors or shamans. Those who cannot contribute to hunting or fighting are usually sent off into the Ice Wastes to die. It is a harsh practice, but I suppose the scarcity of food and heat sources demands such brutal decisions.

The leader of the Leopard Clan is an ursax-ferran known as Gnasher. His giant claws and powerful jaws have been enhanced by his service to the Darkfall, and I am told that it turned his white coat as black as coal.

Berig's marauders

Berig's Marauders are slightly more "civilized" than the Leopard Clan. They have several hearth stones within their complex, allowing them to gather more than five hundred thieves, cutthroats, and pirates. Berig is a dwarf, as are some of his closest companions. Their skill in smithing has allowed the Marauders to manufacture a small flotilla of ships, sleighs, weapons, and armor. Rumor has it that their home rests on a deep vein of iron, and possibly even manite.

The Marauders detest the Ionarans who exiled them. Berig himself was a captain in Queen Kryanix's navy once, but was dismissed and exiled for reasons that remain unclear. The dwarven raider has since sworn to set Ionara to the torch. There are rumors that he has forged an alliance with the other clans and will soon stage an assault on his former home.

standard snowmad

AGILITY 8

Dodge 9, melee combat 10, unarmed combat 9

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 9, missile weapons 9

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8



TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 7

Perception 8, tracking 9, trick 10

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 6

CHARISMA 6

Taunt 8

Life Points: 1-3

Equipment: Snowmads use a variety of crude weapons, most of which do one or two points less damage than normal. Snowmads wear several layers of thick hides that acts as armor value TOU+3/12. A few are spell-casters as well.

(Standard Snowmad (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+2: Dodge 3D, firearms 3D, melee combat 3D+1, missile weapons 3D **STRENGTH 2D+2:** Brawling 3D **KNOWLEDGE 2D+1 TECHNICAL 2D+1 MECHANICAL 2D+1 PERCEPTION 2D:** Con 3D+1, investigation 2D+2, search 3D, taunt 2D+2. **Force Points:** 1-3. **Equipment:** Hides, armor value +1D.)

RUINS

Not every village or city in Aden survived the Darkfall. In fact, most did not. Countless treasures

and forgotten artifacts lie strewn about these ruins, but if you should think of scavenging, I beg you reconsider. The dark rubble and black husks of buildings hide creatures beyond your wildest imaginings and deepest fears. Only if you have dire need of some particular item lost in these forlorn places should you attempt to enter.

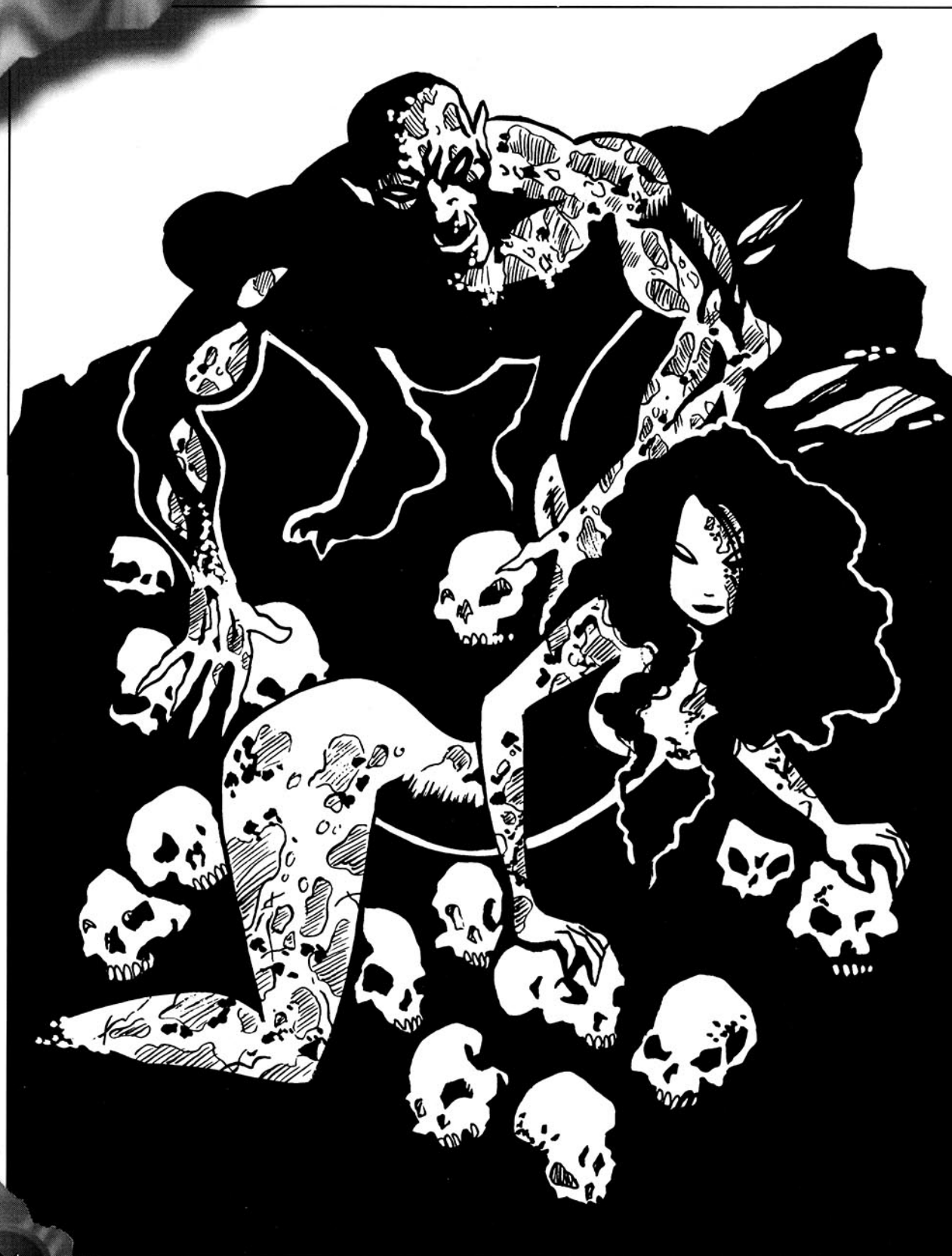
Sadly, there are far too many ruined settlements for me to detail. Here are a few I have visited or feel are important to the chronicle of the Darkfall.

Brisk station

Ore from the Charred Peaks used to be carted down to the Red River and put on barges at Brisk Station. From there the barge train would float downstream to Camden where they were finally dispatched to Arasteen or the far east. Lord Urbane ordered Brisk Station to be protected after the Darkfall but his army arrived too late. Rock trolls led by scheming nocturnals overran the place and massacred the few defenders.

Besides the fortress and grounds of the town, a deep mine had recently been opened at Brisk Station. Now the area and the tunnels beneath are filled with hideous ghouls, shadow lurkers, perimen, and other nocturnals.

• five: independent settlements •



Tim Bobko

Longou

Pronounced "lon-joo," this small city fell a year after the Darkfall. The former governor of the city is a ferra with the lower torso, eyes, and fangs of a snake. The Darkfall must have tempted him to change his allegiance by somehow offering him control of the nagas that had sacked Norton the year before. The governor consented, renamed himself Mamba, and vanished into the Fangs where it was rumored the nagas had established a new warren. With the power of the Darkfall behind him, he was able to best the nagas' champions and declare himself their master.

When Mamba returned to Longou, his intricate knowledge of the city's defenses allowed him and his new followers to overrun it within hours. I am told that those who did not die in the fighting were paralyzed and lay in the smoldering streets for days, helplessly waiting to be eaten alive by the terrible nagas. After that victory, the nagas seem to have accepted Mamba as one of their own.

Now the blackened city of Longou is but a breeding ground for undead, many of them nagas. Fantastic treasures can be bought in the forsaken city, but the price is always in blood.

Norton

Norton was formerly the center of Arasteen's fishing industry. Now giant trawlers and harpoon ships lie half sunk in its rotting ports. The streets and buildings of the inland have become a spawning ground for creatures too horrible to describe.

Survivors of Norton's fall say that it was assaulted by crab-like beings from the sea and nagas from the land. Each group was bent on destroying Norton, but were really only successful because of their combined, but coincidental, assault.

Arasteen's first iron-bottomed warship, the Behemoth, designed by Farrup of Redbeach, was scuttled when the city fell. With some work, the ship might be raised and taken to Sea Reach for refitting as a sky-ship.

the Chapel of Sorrow

My first visit to the haunted ruins of Norton was in search of the Dagger of Evisceration, a deadly device which I had heard Salicious the Infernal, a corrupted mage noted for his mastery of fire magics, was also looking for. I wanted to keep it from his evil hands, and so we met in the Chapel of Sorrow where the dagger was said to lie.

Salicious opened our fight with a deadly blast of super-heated lava. I countered with a scathing bolt of light. After a few such exchanges, we were both ready to close with honest steel. But just as my blade, Evanor, struck against his flaming axe, a band of skull-crackers burst into the chapel.

In such a dire position, Salicious and I were forced to fight together. His burning steel and my Evanor made bloody work of the screaming creatures, and soon they were limping back through the shattered windows of the Chapel of Sorrow. Salicious and I instantly resumed our battle. Since I am writing this account, I will leave you to surmise how our fight ended.

Regorra

Perhaps the most enlightened city in Aden was the first to fall to the forces of the Darkfall. Regorra was home to the Celestial College of Aramyst. During the eclipse that heralded the Darkfall, the entire city burst into flame. The fire did not stop at the city's borders. It soon spread up the coast to Lora and south to Merea. The inferno was so hot it even reached into the Ocean of Serenity, turning the normally tranquil waters into a bubbling cauldron. The Conflagration, as it has come to be called, continues to burn to this day. No one knows how or why, but the ruins of Regorra still stand within the heart of this magical inferno.

Those who have found a way to visit the sizzling city claim that Regorra's buildings are scorched but relatively intact, and that most of its treasures remain. I suspect the magical flames are designed to broil flesh and not material, thus luring more hapless adventurers into the Conflagration's deadly embrace.

Magic is critical to most of Aden's civilizations. Almost every village has a "hedge wizard" who can cast a number of useful spells for their neighbors, a healer who can magically cure common wounds and ailments, and a few other folks who know a handful of sorcerous skills. These individuals are not feared or held in particular esteem for their talent, but more often for their actual deeds. Knights of the Radiant Order, for example, are respected most everywhere, not for their ability to cast spells, but because of their compassion and dedication to using their spells to help others.

That said, the study of magic is a difficult endeavor. True sorcerers — those with more than a smattering of spells that function only half the time — spend most of their lives pursuing the secrets of magic.

magical skills

There are five basic magical skills in the world of Aden: *alteration*, *apportation*, *conjunction*, *divination*, and *summoning*. All spells use at least one of these skills in their casting.

Alteration (Confidence): *Alteration* is the skill of change. A sorcerer uses his alteration ability to change a person or object's basic structure, nature, or form.

Apportation (Intellect): *Apportation* is used to produce movement or mobility. Most offensive spells are based on the principles of apportation.

Conjunction (Mind): The use of a *conjunction* spell creates something from nothing. Sorcery that causes materials to appear out of thin air or imbues life into an inanimate object are all examples of conjunction.

Divination (Intellect): For reasons still unknown to this day, whatever sinister powers lurk behind the Darkfall consumed all of Aden's true seers. Some say it was mere chance that the world's few true visionaries fell along with thousands of other Adenites — but if this is true, others point out, why did the seers not see the coming of the Darkfall itself? At any rate, all of the great divination spells have been lost. Those that remain are still useful, but the future now comes one day at a time to the world of Aden.

Summoning (Charisma): A summoner does not create matter or energy, he simply transfers it from one place to another.

arcane knowledges

Arcane knowledges and the five magical skills form the basic building blocks of spells. To learn any enchantment, a sorcerer must first know the skill and arcane knowledge that make up the spell.

The 12 basic arcane knowledges are well known by all of Aden's mages. In recent centuries, however, mages have specialized in two particular arcane knowledges to create two entirely new "schools" of magic. These schools, insect sorcery and mechamagic, are actually no different from old magic, however: insect is simply a specialization of the *animal* arcane knowledge and metal is a specialization of *earth*. These two specializations are much more difficult to learn than broader arcane knowledges which have millennia of previous research and experimentation, however. Those who study these relatively obscure specializations are called insect sorcerers and mechamages because their pursuits take up so much of their time that other spells and arcane knowledges — so called old magic — must often be ignored. This does not mean that these mages do not cast spells generally associated with "old magic." In fact, most insect sorcerers and mechamages, by the very nature of their dedication to magical pursuits, are often masters of many arcane knowledges.

Arcane Specializations: *Animal: insect*, and *earth: metal*, are bought as if they were trained skills — meaning they are twice as expensive to improve as all other arcane knowledges.

Each of the 12 arcane knowledges, and what they represent to a spell-caster, are explained below.

Air: The winds, clouds, rain, and storms are the subject of the arcane knowledge of *air*.

Animal: Natural creatures of animal intelligence are targeted by the this arcane knowledge. A specific specialization, insects, is used in the school of magic called "insect sorcery." Note that the magical forces of Aden treat spiders as insects as well.

Darkness: Night, shadow, and the power of magical darkness are produced through the use of this arcane knowledge.

Death: Those who study this arcane knowledge too adamantly are often considered evil by their peers. Whether death is necessarily tainted with evil or the stigmata is purely societal is not known. It is certainly true that sorcerers who delve too deeply into its study are often corrupted by the Darkfall, but again, this may also be a side-effect of being shunned by "more enlightened" mages. Fairly or unfairly, many of Aden's orders and sorcerous guilds ban members with extensive knowledge of death.

Earth: Stone, dirt, gems, metal, and all that comes from the land are affected by earth. The specialization used by mechamages in the enchantment of their infernal contraptions is metal.

Entity: As a general rule of thumb, creatures that aren't animals or folk are considered entities. Will o' the wisps, faeries, and nocturnals are all affected by the *entity* arcane knowledge.

Fire: The arcane knowledge of *fire* fuels the most destructive spells. For obvious reasons, it is the knowledge most chosen by young mages yearning for vengeance against the nocturnals.

Folk: All intelligent life, from humans to trolls, are considered folk. Spells which use this arcane knowledge typically affect a sentient being's form or life functions.

Light: The power of the sun and all other sources of illumination is the subject of this arcane knowledge.

Magic: The study of magical forces and methods with which to harness it. Those who concentrate heavily on this arcane knowledge are archetypical "wizards," hiding themselves away in lonely towers where the raw power they tamper with can do little harm to those around them.

Plant: This arcane knowledge affects flora in all its forms, including intelligent and carnivorous plants. Plants created by the Darkfall, however, are considered entities.

Water: Water is a tricky arcane knowledge. It is at once gentle and forceful, cautious and extreme, lethargic and dynamic. Spells of healing are created from the arcane knowledge of water, as are deadly attacks that steal the water from one's very blood.

Creating a wizard

Casting spells in the *World of Aden* is somewhat different from other *MasterBook* settings. Here, the power of magic is common and most anyone can cast spells if they have the desire and commitment.

Players who wish to create wizard characters must purchase magical skills and arcane knowledges. The five magical skills (*alteration, apportionment, conjuration, divination, and summoning*) are bought just like any other skills. Arcane knowledges are purchased in the same manner as adds, though they do not

actually add to any existing skill until they are used. As with all initial skills, no more than three skill adds may be purchased during character creation. Most arcane knowledges do not have specializations. Characters may purchase specializations for those that do (*animal (insect)* and *earth (metal)*) normally.

Once a player has chosen his mage's skills and arcane knowledges, he must select his starting spells. A character may not have spells he cannot cast (he must have the necessary skill and arcane knowledge to do so.) He may choose a number of spells equal to the number of skill points he placed in sorcerous skills and arcane knowledges. Thus a character who placed three adds in *divination*, two in *folk*, and one in *death*, could choose up to six spells.

During play, a character may learn a new spell if he has the necessary skill and arcane knowledge. This costs one character point.

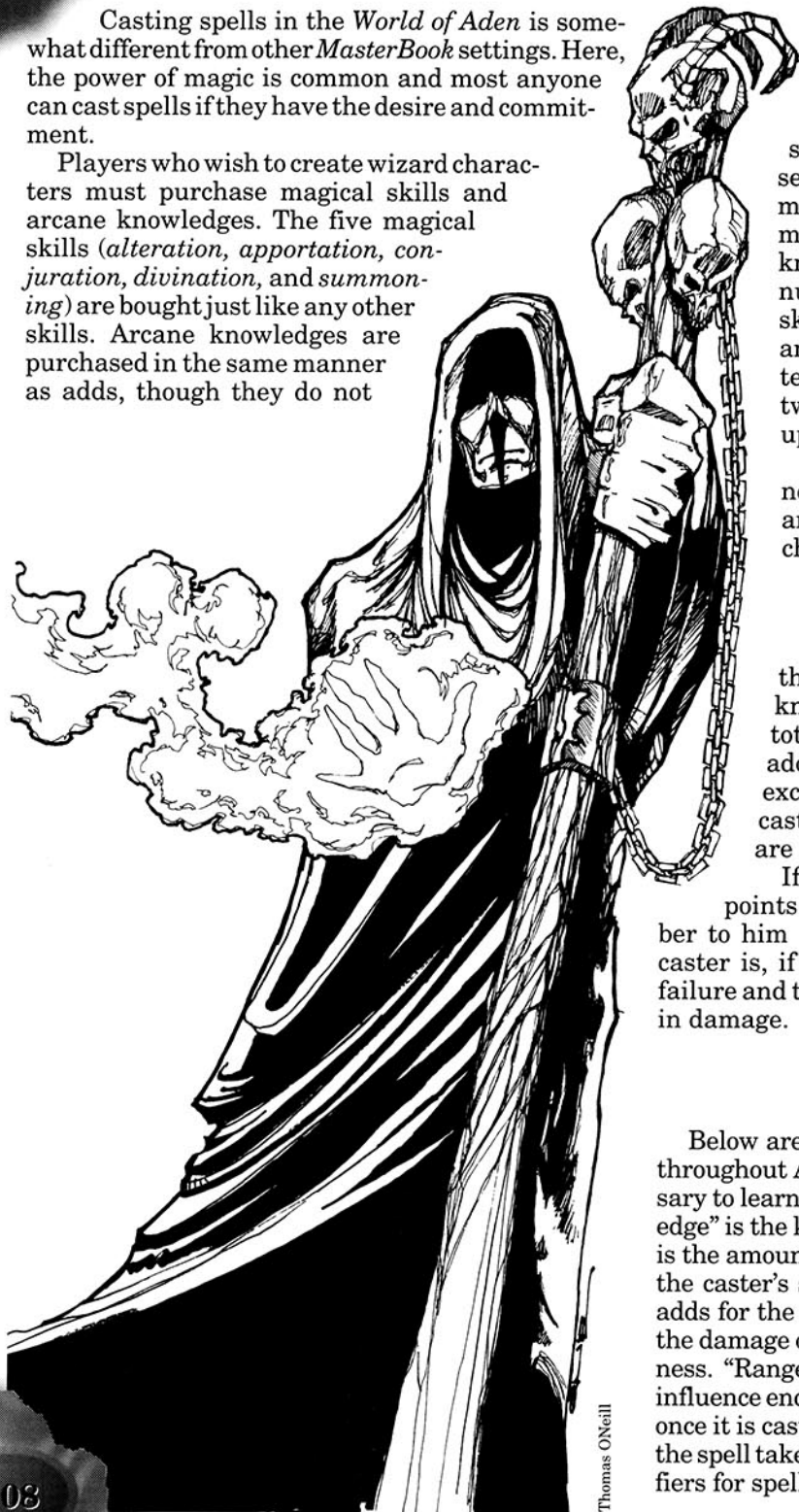
casting spells

To cast a spell, a sorcerer must have the appropriate magic skill and arcane knowledge. He generates a spell skill total, then adds his arcane knowledge adds to it. If the final figure equals or exceeds the spell's difficulty number, the cast is successful. Positive result points are added to the spell's effect value.

If the caster fails, apply the number of points by which he missed the difficulty number to him as damage. No matter how skilled a caster is, if double "1s" are rolled, the spell is a failure and the spellcaster suffers two shock points in damage.

spells

Below are a few of the most common spells used throughout Aden. "Skill" is the magical skill necessary to learn and cast the spell, and "Arcane Knowledge" is the knowledge needed. "Difficulty Number" is the amount that must be equalled or exceeded by the caster's spell skill total and arcane knowledge adds for the spell to be successful. "Effect Value" is the damage or other measure of the spell's effectiveness. "Range" is the distance at which the spell's influence ends. "Duration" is how long the spell lasts once it is cast. "Cast Time" is a measure of how long the spell takes to complete, and includes speed modifiers for spells that can be cast in a single round.



Thomas O'Neill

Communication

Skill: *Divination*

Arcane Knowledge: Varies (see below)

Difficulty Number: 15

Effect Value: 8

Range: 5 (10 meters)

Duration: 9 (1 minute)

Cast Time: 9 (1 minute)

This spell allows the mage to talk with the spirits of earth, metal, fire, water, and air, as well as entities, plants, animals, insects, and folk (who speak a different language.) The arcane knowledge used for the spell must match the type of spirit or being spoken to. If successful, the caster may communicate with the target for one minute. Even under magical influence, some spirits and creatures have little ability to communicate. An ant, for example, will know little more than it must search for food, protect the queen, and search for its pheromone trail.

Counterspell

Skill: *Alteration*

Arcane Knowledge: *Magic*

Difficulty Number: 15

Effect Value: 15

Range: 10 (100 meters)

Duration: Instant

Cast Time: 1 (One second)

Counterspell is used to negate enemy offensive spells. It is not used to dispel long-term enchantments. To counter a spell, the mage needs a spell total higher than the enemy spell total, though the minimum number for success is 15. If the countering mage wins the contest, the enemy wizard's spell is cast, but there is no effect. Countering enemy spells is often a contest of speed. If the enemy wizard acts before the countering mage, there is little the latter can do unless the cast time of the wizard's spell allows the mage to act in between the time the spell was started and the time it will take effect.

Counter poison

Skill: *Alteration*

Arcane Knowledge: *Water*

Difficulty Number: 12

Effect Value: 12

Range: 0 (touch)

Duration: Permanent

Cast Time: 4 (5 seconds)

This spell negates the effects of poison already ingested by a victim. The spell total must be greater than the effect value of the poison, with a minimum difficulty of 12.

Detonate

Skill: *Divination*

Arcane Knowledge: *Fire*

Difficulty Number: 15

Effect Value: 8

Range: 0

Duration: Permanent

Cast Time: 18 (1 hour)

This spell was developed by mechamages to detonate bang sacks and other explosive devices. The explosion of the *detonate* spell itself is relatively minor. Affixed to a bag of black powder or similar reactant, however, the results can be spectacular.

golem

Skill: *Conjuration*

Arcane Knowledge: *Earth (metal)*

Difficulty Number: 15

Effect Value: 25

Range: 0

Duration: 32 (one month)

Cast Time: 29 (1 week)

Creating a golem is an expensive but relatively simple process. The caster constructs a golem from manite and other materials over the course of a week, then recites a few incantations to complete what is essentially a scientific ritual. If the spell is successful, the golem awakens and will do its master's bidding for the next month. Golems are not particularly bright creatures, however, so mages must give them very explicit instructions. At the end of one month, the golem may be reenchanting. The cast time is cut to one hour, but all other spell requirements remain unchanged.

standard iron golem

AGILITY 6

Dodge 7, melee combat 8, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 5

ENDURANCE 11

STRENGTH 11

TOUGHNESS 12 (18)

INTELLECT 3

MIND 3

CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation (17)

CHARISMA 6

Life Points: None

Equipment: Golems may be equipped however the creator sees fit. Many mechamages install small storm cannons, internal wheel lock pistols, or even acid sprayers. The statistics above are for a standard golem made mostly of iron and manite. Much stron-

ger golems have been created, as well as some from other materials such as straw, glass, clay, wood, and even flesh. Obviously, these latter types are not the creations of mechamages, so appropriate arcane knowledges must be used for each type.

(Standard Iron Golem (D6): **DEXTERITY** 2D: Dodge 2D+1, melee combat 2D+2 **STRENGTH** 3D+2: Brawling 4D **KNOWLEDGE** 1D: Intimidation (5D+2) **TECHNICAL** 1D **MECHANICAL** 1D



PERCEPTION 2D+2. **Force Points:** None.)

healing

Skill: *Alteration*

Arcane Knowledge: *Water*

Difficulty Number: 15

Effect Value: 12

Range: 0 (touch)

Duration: Permanent

Cast Time: 15 (15 minutes)

This is the basic healing spell used by hedge wizards, clerics, and healers all over Aden. A minimal success heals all shock and KO, and each success level thereafter heals one level of wounding.

jinx

Skill: *Alteration*

Arcane Knowledge: *Earth (metal)*

Difficulty Number: Special

Effect Value: 12

Range: 7 (20 meters)

Duration: 10 (100 seconds)

Cast Time: 4 (5 seconds)



Tim Bobko



Brian Schomburg

Mechamages developed the *jinx* spell to cause temporary breakdowns in simple machinery made mostly of metal. The difficulty of the spell depends on the type of mechanical function the mechamage is attempting to jinx. Use the chart below as a guide:

Difficulty	DN	Description
Simple	8	watch, pulley, firearm
Average	12	steam boiler, cannon
Complex	15	golem, golemoid implant, giant clock, storm cannon
Intricate	18	one small part of a larger contraption, eyenimal

light

Skill: *Conjuration*

Arcane Knowledge: *Light*

Difficulty Number: 10

Effect Value: 0

Range: 7 (20 meters)

Duration: 18 (1 hour)

Cast Time: 1 (one second)

This spell creates a ball of softly glowing light encompassing a single item such as a coin, the point

of a sword, etc. It illuminates a sphere 20 meters in diameter. Light may be cast on a living being as well.

mana Bolt

Skill: *Apportation*

Arcane Knowledge: *Special*

Difficulty Number: 15

Effect Value: 15

Range: 10 (100 meters)

Duration: Instant

Cast Time: 4 (5 seconds)

Mana bolt is a basic magical projectile attack. The arcane knowledge required for mana bolt is special, as it may be fueled by *light*, *darkness*, *fire*, *magic*, or *air*. The visible effects always match the arcane knowledge, so that a mana bolt powered by magic might appear as a streak of green energy, while one powered by fire will be a scorching fireball.

metal storm

Skill: *Apportation*

Arcane Knowledge: *Earth (metal)*

Difficulty Number: 22

Effect Value: 20

Range: 9 (60 meters)

Duration: Instant
Cast Time: 4 (5 seconds)

This deadly spell turns metal debris into a deadly cone of swirling devastation. The metal fragments are not supplied by the spell, so there must be an abundance of such debris lying about, or the mage may carry small bags of pre-measured metal shards on his person (bullets work nicely.) Metal storm affects a cone that is 0.33 meters wide at the caster's hand and six meters wide at its terminus. The range may not be shortened, so metal storm spells cast inside small, stone areas (such as a dungeon) can be deadly to the caster and his friends as well as their foes.

spell Barrier

Skill: *Conjuration*
Arcane Knowledge: *Magic, earth (metal)*
Difficulty Number: 15
Effect Value: Special
Range: 0 (touch)
Duration: 32 (1 month)
Cast Time: 15 (15 minutes)

Spell barrier is an enchantment used to protect mechamagical machinery from jinx spells and the like. When a spell barrier is placed on a contraption, the mechamage should write down his spell total. This is the number any spell which directly affects the contraption must beat to have an effect. This does not protect the machinery from mana

bolts or other magical spells that hurl previously conjured energy at the contraption.

SWARM

Skill: *Summoning*
Arcane Knowledge: *Animal (insect)*
Difficulty Number: 16
Effect Value: 16
Range: 6 (15 meters)
Duration: 9 (1 minute)
Cast Time: 7 (20 seconds)

Swarm causes a cloud of insects to appear and attack targets within a 10 meter radius from the point they appear, which may be up to 15 meters distant from the caster. A caster may summon any general type of insect, such as bees and hornets, ants, or spiders. Insect swarms have no effect on undead, intangible, or non-living creatures.

Hornets, bees, and other stinging or biting insects cause one point of shock per round to anyone inside the cloud.

Spiders force every living creature within the area of effect to make an Endurance total every round. On any total less than 16, the victim's body reacts to the spiders' venom, causing two shock and +1 to the difficulty number of all Dexterity-related skill totals. A victim who rolls double "1s" while making his or her Endurance total has been bitten by a poisonous insect, and will die in 1d10 rounds unless someone generates a *medicine* total of 16 or casts a *counter poison* spell.

Bestiary

World of
ADEN

Below are listed some of the creatures you may encounter in the outlands between the cities. Those entries I have marked with a single skull are simple beasts. They cannot become nocturnals, though they may be under the control of one. An entry with two skulls marks a sentient species, whose members may become corrupted. You will have to judge any individual you meet on its own merits. Creatures listed with three skulls are pure nocturnals, born and bred of the Darkfall. If you should see these monstrosities, flee for your life. Or pull your sword and end their miserable existence forever.

Buhuma



The mount of choice for Carraway's shepherds is the buhuma. These burly beasts are six-legged mammals of a dark blue hue. They look something like giant bears or ursax, though their skin is scaly and draped with patches of stringy dark hair. Their great claws can shred chain armor and their blunt teeth can crush plate mail. Fortunately for the shepherds, the only meat these giants eat is fish slapped to shore from Carraway's cold streams.

Buhuma

AGILITY 7

Running 9, unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 4

ENDURANCE 13

STRENGTH 18

TOUGHNESS 15 (17)

INTELLECT 3

Perception 11

MIND 3

CONFIDENCE 11

Intimidation 13

CHARISMA 2

Life Points: None

Natural Tools: Armor +2/17; teeth STR+2/20; claws STR+3/21.

(Buhuma (D6): **DEXTERITY 2D**: Running 3D **STRENGTH 5D+1**: Brawling **KNOWLEDGE 1D**: Intimidation 4D+1 **TECHNICAL 1D MECHANICAL 1D PERCEPTION 2D+1**: Investigation 3D+2. **Force Points**: None. **Natural Tools**: Armor, value +2; claws, damage value STR+1D.)



Tim Bobko

Cackler



Cacklers are pink-skinned, skinny, hordelings who laugh incessantly as they bound in for an attack. The laugh is intended to unnerve their opponents. The Iron Guard, who fight these creatures often along the Thunder Trail, attest to the distracting nature of the cackler's maniacal laughter.

Cacklers never strike from ambush. They prefer to approach their victims from a distance. That way their unnerving laughter has the most effect. Cackler hordes suffer greatly from arquebuses and archers because of their maniacal tactics, but don't seem to mind the sacrifice.

Cackler

AGILITY 12

Acrobatics 15, climbing 14, dodge 14, long jumping 15, maneuver 14, running 13, stealth 14, swimming 15, unarmed combat 15, unarmed parry 14

DEXTERITY 12

Thrown weapons 15

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 8

Camouflage 10, perception 11, trick 13

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 9, willpower 11

CHARISMA 8

Taunt 15

Life Points: 1-5

Natural Tools: Claws STR+1/8. The cackler's laugh is reflected by its high *taunt* skill. A small horde (typically 10-100 creatures) cackles constantly. This acts as a "many on one" *taunt* attack versus every opponent, who may be affected every round. This does not count as a multi-action for the cacklers.

(Cackler (D6): DEXTERITY 4D: Acrobatics 5D, brawling parry 4D+2, dodge 4D+2, maneuver 4D+2, running 4D+1, thrown weapons 5D **STRENGTH 2D+2:** Brawling 5D, climbing/jumping 5D, swimming 5D **KNOWLEDGE 2D+2:** Intimidation 3D, willpower 3D+2 **TECHNICAL 2D+1 MECHANICAL 2D+1 PERCEPTION 2D+2:** Con 4D+1, hide 3D+1, investigation 3D+2, taunt 5D. **Force Points:** 1-5. **Natural Tools:** Claws, damage value STR+1.)

Dragon



True dragons are creatures that I shudder to write of. They are perhaps the oldest and wisest creatures in all of Aden. Many of the dragons were ancient when the dwarves first emerged from North Wall! Their size is not to be believed — a full-grown jurak is perhaps as large as a dragon's claw. I know of only three dragons currently living in Aden. One is Balustrus, who lives in a mammoth crag high in North Wall. Another is Vesuvix, who lives deep in the Skar. The last is Shosa, a silver-skinned dragon who lives in the volcanoes of Vanora. So far, none of the dragons seem corrupted by the Darkfall. If this should change, I wonder if even the combined power of all the nations could stop these massive titans.

Balustrus

AGILITY 11

Climbing 13, dodge 13, flight 14, unarmed combat 20, unarmed parry 16

DEXTERITY 5

Missile weapons 16

ENDURANCE 42

STRENGTH 45

TOUGHNESS 32 (40)

INTELLECT 18

Apportation 22, deduction 22, divination 21, navigation 20, perception 22, tracking 19, trick 22

MIND 17

Conjuration 19, language 19, scholar: Darkfall 18, scholar: Aden lore 22

CONFIDENCE 15

Alteration 18, intimidation 20, willpower 22

CHARISMA 14

Summoning 18, taunt 15

Life Points: 10

Natural Tools: Armor, value +8/40; teeth, damage value STR+15/60; claws, damage value STR+10/55; fiery breath, damage value 50, range 0-100/200/300/400.

(Balustrus (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+2: Brawling parry 5D+1, dodge 4D+1, flight 4D+2, missile weapons 5D+1 **STRENGTH 5D:** Brawling 6D+2* (see note) **KNOWLEDGE 3D+1:** Aden lore 7D+1, alteration 6D, apportation 7D+1, conjuration 6D+1, Darkfall 6D, divination 7D, intimidation 6D+2, languages 6D+1, navigation 6D+2, summoning 6D, willpower 7D+1 **TECHNICAL 3D+1 MECHANICAL 5D+2 PERCEPTION 5D:** Con 7D+1, investigation 7D+1, search 7D+1, taunt 5D. **Note:** Owing to his

A WORLD OF ADEN

large mass, Balustrus receives +9D to resist damage, +9D for purposes of lifting, and +9D to *brawling* damage. **Force Points:** 10. **Natural Tools:** Armor, +2D+2; teeth, damage value STR+5D; claws, damage value STR+3D+1; fiery breath, damage value 16+2.)

Dragonet



Dragonets are mere larva compared to true dragons, yet they are still as large as a house. The Wall, Skar, the Fangs, the Mother Mountains, and the Charred Peaks are all known to house their lairs. There are many different types, each categorized by color or some peculiar trait. All dragonets have some sort of breath weapon. Red dragonets breath fire, storm dragonets breath bolts of lightning, and lake dragonets are able to spew forth acidic bile, for example.

Unfortunately, dragonets have quick tempers, causing many of them to ally themselves with the Darkfall. Creatures of such power are rarely refused, so be wary should you spy one from a distance. If you should meet a dragonet up close, I suggest you find a way to escape at the earliest opportunity. And if you should ever fight a dragonet, I encourage you to kill it then and there. These vengeful reptiles have long memories.

Dragonet

AGILITY 10

Climbing 13, dodge 11, unarmed combat 17, unarmed parry 12

DEXTERITY 5

Missile weapon 13

ENDURANCE 14

STRENGTH 19

TOUGHNESS 16 (24)

INTELLECT 7

Camouflage 10, deduction 10, perception 12, tracking 9, trick 10

MIND 6

CONFIDENCE 14

Intimidation 16, willpower 15

CHARISMA 4

Life Points: 6-8

Natural Tools: Armor, value +8/24; teeth, damage value STR+5/24; typical breath, damage value 25.

(**Dragonet (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+2:** Brawling parry 4D, dodge 3D+2, missile weapons 4D+1 **STRENGTH 5D+1:**

Brawling 5D+2, climbing/jumping 4D+1, **KNOWLEDGE 2D+1:** Intimidation 5D+1, willpower 5D **TECHNICAL 2D+1 MECHANICAL 2D PERCEPTION 3D:** Con 3D+1 hide 3D+1, investigation 4D, search 3D+1. **Force Points:** 6-8. **Natural Tools:** Armor, value +2D+2; teeth, damage value STR+1D+2; typical breath, damage value 8D+1.)

giant maggot



I suppose that giant maggots were created by the Darkfall from our fear of rotting corpses. If you should stumble upon a body and see it twitch before you approach, stand back. The inside is most likely filled with these foot long worms. These hideous nocturnals grow large by consuming carrion from within. When another creature moves too near the corpse, the maggot bursts forth and attacks with its circular maw of spiny teeth.

giant maggot

AGILITY 11

Climbing 12, dodge 14, stealth 12, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 0

ENDURANCE 3

STRENGTH 3

TOUGHNESS 3

INTELLECT 3

Perception 11

MIND 3

CONFIDENCE 13

CHARISMA 1

Life Points: None

Natural Tools: The giant maggot's bite cannot penetrate armor of any sort. Unfortunately, the creatures are canny enough to strike at exposed flesh, where, if the creatures hit, their bite causes one point of shock damage per round. Worse, a typical human corpse can house up to 10 of these disgusting nocturnals.

(**Giant Maggot (D6): DEXTERITY 3D+2:** Dodge 4D+2 **STRENGTH 1D:** Brawling 4D, climbing/jumping 4D **KNOWLEDGE 1D TECHNICAL 1D MECHANICAL 1D PERCEPTION 2D+1:** Investigation 3D+2, sneak 4D. **Force Points:** None.)

grave worm



Grave worms lurk in the Crawling Jungle near the ruins of old Gis. Most of the time, the worms are

bloated, pinkish creatures lurking in tall grass or overgrown ruins. When they sense prey, they ooze into the remains of a skeletal corpse. The worms then merge with the bones and rise as grisly humanoids. The whole effect is to look like a skeleton with flesh and innards turned inside out.

Grave worms attack by grappling with prey and consuming them with their acidic flesh. I suppose this is why they need the support of the skeleton — to give their gelatinous carcasses the mobility to catch their victims. I have seen dozens of these creatures swarm campsites along the Cold River, usually with predictably grim results.

grave worm

AGILITY 7

Climbing 8, dodge 8, maneuver 9

DEXTERITY 6

ENDURANCE 7

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 7 (17)

INTELLECT 5

Camouflage 8, perception 11, trick 9

MIND 3

CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 13

CHARISMA 1

Life Points: None

Natural Tools: A grave worm attacks by grappling, which is a contest of *maneuver*. If the creature is successful, the result points are treated as damage value 15 (the base strength of the creature's acid.)

Armor protects, but loses

an add each time it is touched (until it is reduced to 0 and practically disintegrates.)

Normal attacks can damage the worms' skeletal frames, but the tenuous nature of their bodies can absorb much of the damage, hence the unusually high armor value (TOU+10.) Fire-based attacks may ignore this armor.

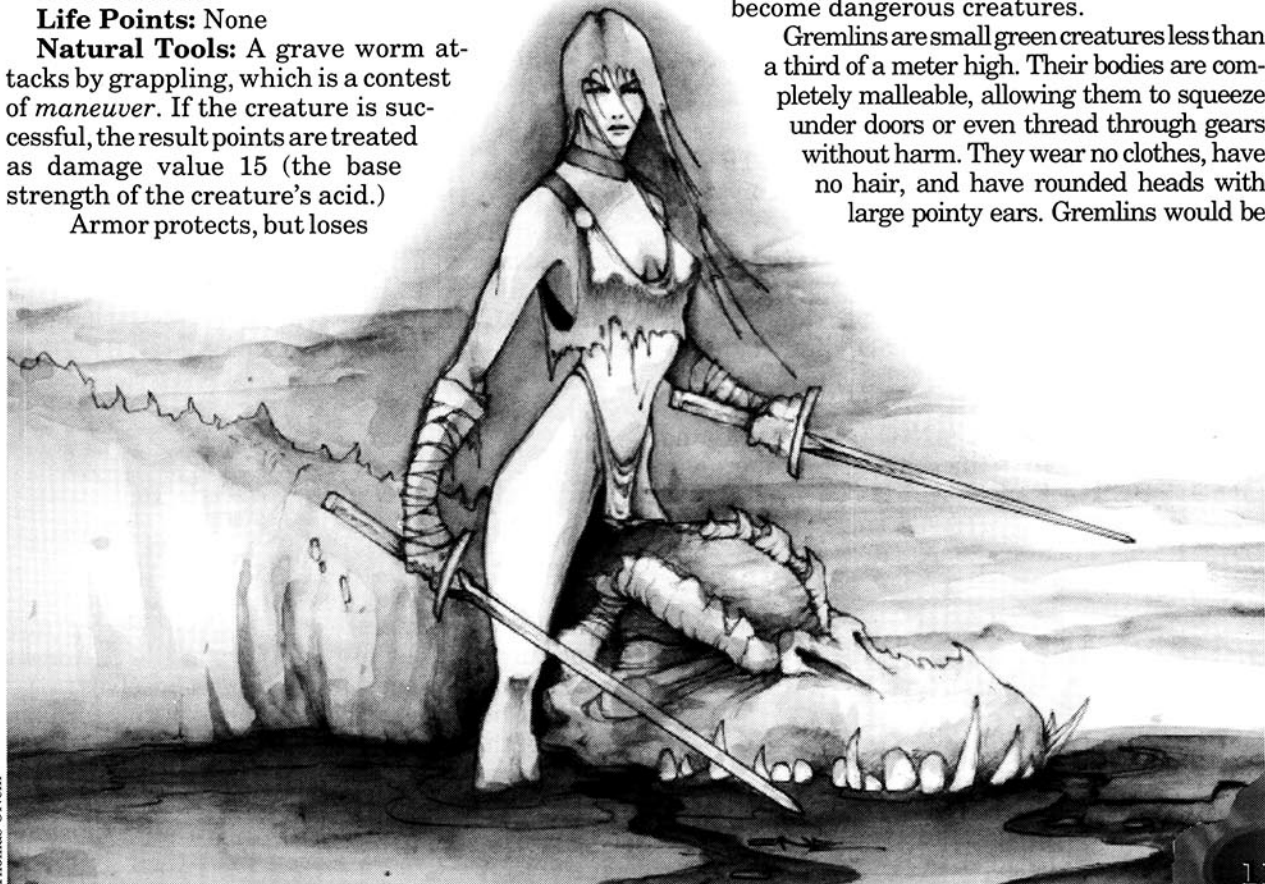
(**Grave Worm (D6):** DEXTERITY 2D+1: Dodge 2D+2, maneuver 3D **STRENGTH** 2D+1 (8D): Climbing/jumping 2D+2 **KNOWLEDGE** 1D+2: Intimidation 4D+1 **TECHNICAL** 1D+2 **MECHANICAL** 1D **PERCEPTION** 2D: Con 3D, hide 3D+2, investigation 3D+2. **Force Points:** None. **Natural Tools:** Acid, damage value 5D.)

gremlin



These malicious little demons existed well before the Darkfall, but their pranks were usually harmless or embarrassing — not fatal. With our increasing reliance on technology and the corrupting influence of the Darkfall, gremlins have become dangerous creatures.

Gremlins are small green creatures less than a third of a meter high. Their bodies are completely malleable, allowing them to squeeze under doors or even thread through gears without harm. They wear no clothes, have no hair, and have rounded heads with large pointy ears. Gremlins would be



Thomas O'Neill

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charming little creatures if their large mouths weren't filled with rows of dirty, jagged teeth.

Gremlins have the peculiar ability to jinx an item, causing it to fail or malfunction at the worst possible moment. Beware mechanical devices sold cheaply, for their owners are often aware that a gremlin resides within. Urbana is home to most gremlins, though the bazaars of the Rhanate also have large populations.

gremlin

AGILITY 14

Acrobatics 17, climbing 15, dodge 16, maneuver 16, running 15, stealth 17, unarmed combat 15

DEXTERITY 13

Fire combat 15, gunnery 15, lock picking 21, missile weapons 15, vehicle piloting 14

ENDURANCE 6

STRENGTH 4

TOUGHNESS 5

INTELLECT 14

Camouflage 15, deduction 15, demolitions 17, perception 17, science: mechemagic 15, science: mechanical 17, trick 15

MIND 10

CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 13, willpower 13

CHARISMA 10

Taunt 13

Life Points: 1-3

Natural Tools: Teeth, damage value STR+3/7.

Gremlins can cast the *Jinx* spell as listed on pages 110-111 at skill value 15.

(Gremlin (D6): DEXTERITY 4D+2: Acrobatics 5D+2, dodge 5D+1, firearms 5D, gunnery 5D, maneuver 5D+1, missile weapons 5D, running 5D+1 **STRENGTH 1D+2:** Brawling 5D, climbing/jumping 5D **KNOWLEDGE 4D+2:** Intimidation 4D+1, willpower 4D+1 **TECHNICAL 4D+2:** Demolitions 5D+2, security 7D **MECHANICAL 3D+1:** Ground vehicle operation 4D+2, mechemagic 5D, mechanical 5D+2 **PERCEPTION 3D+1:** Con 5D, hide 5D, investigation 5D+2, search 5D, sneak 5D+2, taunt 4D+1. **Force Points:** 1-3. **Natural Tools:** Teeth, damage value 1D.)

Lightning Lizard



The predators of the Sundered Desert must be quick to catch the few scurry-

ing game-animals left in that bleak land. Lightning lizards are one of the fastest. Their rows of sharp teeth and jagged claws can rend chain mail.

Lightning lizards are, on the whole, better mounts than regular horses. Unfortunately, they are cold-blooded and do not fare well outside the heat of the Sundered Desert.

Lightning Lizard

AGILITY 8

Acrobatics 9, climbing 10, dodge 10, long jumping 10, maneuver 10, running 11, unarmed combat 11

DEXTERITY 5

ENDURANCE 14

Resist shock 17

STRENGTH 15

TOUGHNESS 14 (17)

INTELLECT 3

Perception 11

MIND 3

CONFIDENCE 11

Intimidation 14

CHARISMA 2

Life Points: None

Natural Tools: Armor, value TOU+3/17; teeth, damage value STR+3/18; claws, damage value STR+4/19.

(Lightning Lizard (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+1: Acrobatics 3D, dodge 3D+1, maneuver 3D+1, running 3D+2 **STRENGTH 3D:** Brawling 3D+2*, climbing/jumping 3D+1*, stamina 5D+2 **KNOWLEDGE 1D:** Intimidation 4D+2 **TECHNICAL 1D MECHANICAL 1D PERCEPTION 2D+1:** Investigation 3D+2. Note: Lightning lizards receive +2D to *brawling* damage, *climbing/jumping* attempts, lifting and resisting damage. **Force Points:** None. **Natural Tools:** Armor, value +1D; teeth, damage value STR+1D; claws, damage value STR+1D+1.)

ogre



Ogre clans live in caves of the Wall, the Fangs, and other mountainous areas of Aden. Most ogres have changed little since the Darkfall. They continue to live by the creed of "might makes right" and generally stay out of the affairs of the nation in which they live. A few have given themselves to the Darkfall however and become corrupted nocturnals. Some of these are clever enough to persuade large numbers of their brothers to march on nearby settlements.

The ogre clans nearest Vanora are, for some reason, vastly more clever than their brothers



Mike Vilardi

elsewhere. Their mages and warlords have caused the Vanorans no end of trouble.

ogre

AGILITY 9

Climbing 10, dodge 10, maneuver 10, melee combat 10, melee parry 11, stealth 10, unarmed combat 10, unarmed parry 11

DEXTERITY 7

Fire combat 10

ENDURANCE 12

STRENGTH 14

TOUGHNESS 13

INTELLECT 5

Perception 8, tracking 8, trick 8

MIND 5

CONFIDENCE 8

Intimidation 10, survival: mountains 10

CHARISMA 5

Life Points: 2-4

Equipment: Club, damage value STR+3/17. Some ogres can cast spells as well.

(Ogre (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+2: Brawling parry 3D+2, dodge 3D+1, firearms 3D+1, maneuver 3D+1, melee combat 3D+1, melee parry 3D+2
STRENGTH 3D: Brawling 3D+1*, climbing/jump-

ing 3D+1* **KNOWLEDGE 1D+2:** Intimidation 3D+1, survival 3D+1 **TECHNICAL 1D+2 MECHANICAL 1D+2 PERCEPTION 2D+1:** Con 2D+2, investigation 2D+2, search 2D+2. **Force Points:** 2-4. **Note:** Ogres receive an additional 1D+2 for purposes of *brawling* damage, lifting, climbing/jumping checks and resisting damage.)

perimen



Perimen are nocturnals most likely conjured from our fear of the slug-like things that lurk in the oily waters of Urbana. Most live in the sea, but some have been spotted in salty estuaries or marshes. Perimen are humanoids with the skin of slugs. Their eyes sit upon slender stalks jutting from their wrinkled heads. Perimen wear mottled brown shells upon their backs. They can retract themselves within these shells for protection when needed. These nocturnals rarely wield weapons, though they have been known to hurl poisonous sea-urchins at unarmored foes on occasion. Their usual tactic in melee is to pull their heads inside their shells and ram their opponents to the ground. Then the

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horrible perimen pounce upon their victims and begin to devour them with mild acids secreted from somewhere within the interior of their shells.

periman

AGILITY 9

Climbing 11, dodge 10, maneuver 12, stealth 10, swimming 10, unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 5

Missile weapons 10

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9 (18)

INTELLECT 3

Perception 11

MIND 3

CONFIDENCE 7

CHARISMA 2

Life Points: None

Natural Tools: Armored shell +9/18 (covers back when upright, or the entire periman when prone, such as when atop a victim). Once a periman has knocked its opponent to the ground via a Good *maneuver* success or better, it begins to secrete a damage value 16 acid. Armor protects, but loses one point of protection each round until it is essentially destroyed.

(Periman (D6): **DEXTERITY 2D+1:** Dodge 3D+1, maneuver 4D, missile weapons 3D+1 **STRENGTH 2D+2:** Brawling 3D+1, climbing/jumping 3D+2, swimming 3D+1 **KNOWLEDGE 1D TECHNICAL 1D MECHANICAL 1D PERCEPTION 2D+1:** Investigation 3D+2, sneak 3D+1. **Force Points:** None. **Natural Tools:** Armor, value +3D.)

shanker



Shankers are mechamagical nocturnals that can assume the shape and form of any metal. They have infested the Urbanan capital of Mekanus, especially in the Lost Ghettoes where there is little concentrated effort to deal with them.

When they are moving or stalking prey, shankers are about the size and shape of small cats, though their heads are humanoid with jagged steel teeth. Their metallic "hides" are rusted and shoddy.

Shankers disguise themselves as rusty pipes or forgotten machinery to attack unsuspecting beings who wander by. Some of them entangle the victim with metal "cords" formed from their malleable bodies

while others savage their prey with jagged claws. After slaying their victims, shankers suck iron and other minerals from their body. The process is gruesome and leaves the corpse little more than a slimy pudding.

It is rumored that shankers have a sort of "queen," called the Progenitor, though no one has ever seen such a creature.

shanker

AGILITY 16

Acrobatics 19, climbing 18, dodge 18, stealth 19, unarmed combat 17, unarmed parry 18

DEXTERITY 18

Missile weapons 20

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 8 (12)

INTELLECT 7

Camouflage 11, perception 12, trick 12

MIND 5

CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 13, willpower 12

CHARISMA 3

Taunt 8

Life Points: None

Natural Tools: Armor +4/12; various tools STR+4/11. Shankers create metal spikes, spines, shanks, and other blades out of their bodies and debris lying about the streets of Mekanus. All of these cause STR+4 damage, though some may be hurled, shot, dropped, or formed directly from the shanker's own body.

(Shanker (D6): **DEXTERITY 5D+2:** Acrobatics 6D+1, brawling parry 6D, dodge 6D, missile weapons 6D+2 **STRENGTH 2D+2:** Brawling 5D+2, climbing/jumping 6D **KNOWLEDGE 2D+1:** Intimidation 4D+1, willpower 4D **TECHNICAL 2D+1 MECHANICAL 1D+2 PERCEPTION 2D+1:** Con 4D, hide 3D+2, investigation 4D. **Force Points:** None. **Natural Tools:** Armor, value +1D+1; various tools, damage value STR+1D+1.)

skeleton



In the Golden Age, those few skeletons and zombies created by necromancers were relatively weak, slow, and mindless. After the Darkfall, conjured undead became much more mischievous and cunning. They are faster and stronger as well, making dark wizards even more powerful than they were before.

If this were not bad enough, graveyards and battlefields may now give rise to undead without

the presence of a necromancer! I suspect that when a place of the dead is feared greatly enough, the Darkfall takes notice and imbues the corpses within with un-life. Villagers in Hammlish, who have faced this problem on two separate occasions, call these undead "erupters."

It is debatable whether undead summoned into Aden are nocturnals or not. Personally, I believe that the vast majority of them are. How the Darkfall picks and chooses its minions is a mystery that seems to have no pattern of reason, other than to do that which causes the most fear and mischief in our world.

skeleton

AGILITY 9

Dodge 10, melee combat 11, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 7

Fire combat 9, gunnery 8, missile weapons 9

ENDURANCE 10

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 4

Perception 7, trick 7

MIND 4

CONFIDENCE 10

CHARISMA 2

Life Points: None

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Natural Tools: Bony claws, damage value STR+3/12. "Mindless" undead cannot generally be *taunted* or *intimidated*. The skeleton listed above is a typical "erupter" made from an average human corpse. Skeletons created from other races as well as those of warriors, wizards, and the like should all be modified appropriately. Some skeletons created by the Darkfall are brought to life with full intelligence, the power of speech, and the ability to cast magical spells.

(Skeleton (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+2: Dodge 3D+1, firearms 3D, gunnery 2D+2, melee combat 3D+2, missile weapons 3D **STRENGTH 3D:** Brawling 4D **KNOWLEDGE 1D+1 TECHNICAL 1D+1 MIND 1D+1 PERCEPTION 2D:** Con 2D+1, investigation 2D+1. **Force Points:** None. **Natural Tools:** Claws, damage value STR+1D.)

snow serpent



Snow serpents are among the most vicious beasts in all the Ice Wastes. They are like other giant snakes except for two distinguishing features: their skin is covered with thick fur and their mouths hold hundreds of jagged fangs, not the two or four that is more common among serpents. Snow serpents do not inject their victims with poison, but their bite is at least as deadly as that of a great shark.

snow serpent

AGILITY 11

Acrobatics 12, climbing 16, dodge 12, maneuver 13, running 13, stealth 14, unarmed combat 16, unarmed parry 13

DEXTERITY 1

ENDURANCE 15

STRENGTH 15

TOUGHNESS 16 (18)

INTELLECT 3

Camouflage 14, perception 14

MIND 3

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 11

CHARISMA 4

Life Points: None.

Natural Tools: Armor, value +2/18; teeth, damage value STR+4/19.

(Snow Serpent (D6): DEXTERITY 2D: Acrobatics 4D, brawling parry 4D+1, dodge 4D, maneuver 4D+1, running 4D+1 **STRENGTH 5D:** Brawling 5D+1, climbing/jumping 5D+1 **KNOWLEDGE 1D:** Intimidation 3D+2 **TECHNICAL 1D MECHANICAL 1D PERCEPTION 2D+1:** Hide 4D+2, investigation 4D+2, sneak 4D+2. **Force Points:** None. **Natural Tools:** Armor, value +2; teeth, damage value STR+1D+1.)

URSAX



Ursax are blue-furred bears common to the Ice Wastes of the north. Another species has reddish fur and lives in the volcanic mountains of Vanora. They are massive animals with sharp claws and massive teeth. Ursax prefer to eat fish, but have been known to devour humanoids who ventured too close.

URSAX

AGILITY 8

Dodge 9, unarmed combat 16, unarmed parry 9

DEXTERITY 5

ENDURANCE 15

STRENGTH 15

TOUGHNESS 16

INTELLECT 3

Perception 11

MIND 3

CONFIDENCE 10



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Intimidation 13

CHARISMA 2

Life Points: None

Natural Tools: Teeth, damage value STR+2/17; claws, damage value STR+3/18.

(**Ursax (D6): DEXTERITY 2D+1:** Brawling parry 3D, dodge 3D **STRENGTH 5D:** Brawling 5D+1 **KNOWLEDGE 1D:** Intimidation 4D+1 **TECHNICAL 1D MECHANICAL 1D PERCEPTION 2D:** Investigation 3D+2. **Force Points:** None. **Natural Tools:** Teeth, damage value STR+2; claws, damage value STR+1D.)

whisper fiend



The deadliest creature, or creatures —for we have no idea how many there are— of the Crystal Forest are the whisper fiends. No one has ever seen these lurking nocturnals, but they have lured hundreds of Sylfanusian loggers to their deaths. The few who have resisted their call claim they hear whispering voices calling to them from the deep forest. The voices are sweet and no doubt magical, so few are able resist their pull. What happens next is anyone's guess. Those who are drawn into the darkness are found hanging from crystal trees, carefully eviscerated and skinned.

whisper fiend

AGILITY 9

Acrobatics 13, climbing 13, dodge 13, long jumping 11, maneuver 12, melee combat 12, melee parry 12, stealth 12 (18), unarmed combat 11, unarmed parry 11

DEXTERITY 8

Missile weapons 10

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 9

Camouflage 12, perception 12, tracking 11, trick 11

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 13, willpower 12

CHARISMA 7

Charm 16, taunt 10

Life Points: 1-5

Natural Tools/Equipment: Whisper fiends are actually a malignant and invisible race of humanoid predators. They cannot read minds, but their magical whispers seem to know a prey's deepest desires. These are the secrets the whisper fiends call to pull unwitting loggers to their doom. In game terms, the whisper fiends use their *charm* skill of 16 versus their prey's *willpower*. On a Good success or better, the prey will wander mindlessly away from his group and be savagely attacked by a dozen or more whisper fiends wielding spears made of crystal wood (STR+6/15.) Afterwards, the prey is skinned and left for others to find —presumably to spread fear and feed the powers of the Darkfall.

(**Whisper Fiend (D6): DEXTERITY 3D:** Acrobatics 4D+1, brawling parry 3D+2, dodge 4D+1, maneuver 4D, melee combat 4D, melee parry 4D, missile weapons 3D+1 **STRENGTH 3D:** Brawling 3D+2, climbing/jumping 4D **KNOWLEDGE 3D:** Intimidation 4D+1, willpower 4D **TECHNICAL 3D MECHANICAL 2D+2 PERCEPTION 3D:** Charm 5D+1, con 3D+2, hide 4D, investigation 4D, search 3D+2, taunt 3D+1. **Force Points:** 1-5. **Equipment:** Crystal spears, damage value STR+2D.)



Before beginning this chapter, you might want to look at Chapters One and Two of *MasterBook*, which detail character creation and the Background Advantages and Compensations system.

All Human characters in *The World of Aden* enjoy 3CI, 2CII and 1CIII Advantages and Compensations. Members of other races may have varying numbers of Background Options. Each of the races listed in Chapter Three have their Advantages and Compensations breakdown listed with them, along with “standard” stats. This isn’t necessarily an average — it’s a list of attributes and abilities that are most likely found in a member of this race. For example, a standard Human has an Agility of 8 — by no means do all Humans, or even most Humans, have an Agility of 8. But it’s a more likely attribute value than any other would be.

Unless otherwise noted, the attribute maximum is still 13, while the minimum is 5. Note that not all the races included in this book have 68 attribute points, but a character of that race would start with 68 if being used as a player character. Gamemasters can use the “Standard” values listed for quick-start gamemaster characters.

Building your Character

Once you’ve chosen a race for your character, go ahead and generate attributes and skill points normally. You should now make any adjustments to your character’s attributes due to race, then note any mandatory Advantages or Compensations.

The next step is to choose your character’s skills from the list below:

skill notes

Some skills in the *World of Aden* are used slightly differently than those used in other *MasterBook* worlds, or have different specializations. These are noted below under the individual skill descriptions.

agility

Beast riding

Many creatures are used as mounts in the world of Aden. The most common specializations are listed by their geographic locations below. If an area is not listed, then horses are still the most common animals used as mounts.



world of aden skill list

AGILITY

Acrobatics
Beast Riding*
Climbing
Dodge
Flight
Long Jumping
Maneuver
Mechanical Maneuver*
Melee Combat
Melee Parry
Running
Stealth
Swimming
Unarmed Combat
Unarmed Parry

DEXTERITY

Fire Combat
Gunnery*
Heavy Weapons*
Lock Picking
Missile Weapons
Prestidigitation
Thrown Weapons
Vehicle Piloting*

ENDURANCE

Resist Shock

STRENGTH

Lifting

INTELLECT

Apportation
Camouflage
Deduction
Demolitions
Divination
Forgery
First Aid
Induce Red Haze
Linguistics
Navigation
Perception
Science*
Teaching*
Tracking
Trick

MIND

Artist*
Business
Conjuration
Language*
Medicine
Scholar*

CONFIDENCE

Alteration
Con
Interrogation
Intimidation
Streetwise
Survival
Willpower

CHARISMA

Charm
Disguise
Persuasion
Summoning
Taunt

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Sundered Desert: Thunder Lizards

Ice Wastes: Snow Serpents

Kyan: Giant Insects

flight

Among player character races, only faerkins and certain ferrans can fly. This skill may be used *untrained* in *The World of Aden*.

mechanical maneuver

Mechamages have created all sorts of strange contraptions in Aden, some of which require the *mechanical maneuver* skill to operate. The only characters who should possess *mechanical maneuver* are those who work closely with Aden's sorcerer-scientists. Most of these are located in Urbana, Vanora, or the capitals of other lands. Since these devices are so rare, each particular piece of equipment is considered a specialization.

Dexterity

fire combat

The people of Aden use black-powder weapons for hunting and war. There are three specializations: muskets, arquebuses, and pistols. Chapter Four, "Technology," explains these different weapons in more detail.

gunnery

Most every settlement in Aden is protected by a wall of one kind or another. Atop these walls are often mounted fierce weapons designed to repel the largest horrors and sweep away hordes of lesser nocturnals. Thunder trains also rely on these kinds of weapons. There are only two specializations: cannons, and ballistas.

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vehicle piloting

Wagons, steam-powered contraptions, thunder trains, and sail carts are all used to travel the deadly outlands. Characters may specialize in any of these devices.

intellect science

Aside from the usual fields of steam engineering, chemistry, metallurgy, and the like, scientists in Aden also ponder three other fields of study:

Entomology: the study of insects and their behavior. This focus is typically studied only by long-time residents of the kingdom of Kyan.

Mechamagic: the study of integrating magical processes with mechanical ones.

Xenology: the study of nocturnals.

mind

language

Only one language is spoken by Aden's folk. Other creatures, such as the nagas or the slurgithians, have their own language, but many seem to speak Adenese as well.

advantages and compensations

Besides the standard Advantages and Compensations detailed in the *MasterBook* (pages 43–60), there are also a number of new advantages available to characters in *The World of Aden*. Many of these are designed for use by ferran characters.

column i advantages

authority (Cí)

This Advantage must be purchased by those characters who wish to belong to one of Aden's many orders, such as the Radiant Order, the Outriders, or the Sons of the Dragons. The level of the Advantage is based on the



Brian Schomburg

character's rank, duties, and power in his local "jurisdiction." In most orders, power varies by territory and specific duties, even among members of the same rank within the same order.

An "Authority (CI)" Advantage might belong to someone who, because of circumstance, does not have a lot of opportunity to use his authority or someone who is very low in rank. For example, a Red Dragon who has been tasked with wandering the rest of Aden to discover the secrets of the Darkfall for Emperor Dyok wouldn't get much chance to exercise his power.

Column II Advantages

authority (CII)

Same as "Authority (CI)," but the character has more influence, possibly commanding a small number of troops or being in charge of a small to mid-sized settlement.

Column III Advantages

authority (CIII)

Same as Authority (CI), except that the character has a great deal of power and influence. Most Red Dragons of Vanora, for example, must frequently command other Sons of the Dragon as well as members of the People's Army and Navy. Their authority is never questioned and they can decide the policies of entire villages if the situation warrants.

special abilities (CIII)

Many of the abilities below are of the sort that would be possessed by ferran characters. Nocturnals might well have more supernatural-based abilities. Note that the abilities listed below are *in addition* to those listed in the *MasterBook*.

Attribute Increase I: The character gains +1 to one Attribute of his choice. This +1 also affects the normal maximum (13) for the Attribute value. So, if a character had a 13 Strength (the normal max), this would increase the value to 14 and the maximum value for the character would also be 14.

Note: This Advantage is in addition to the "Additional Attribute Point" Advantages covered in *MasterBook*. It is included here because some ferrans may have Attributes higher than normal characters.

Enhanced Senses: One of the characters' five

senses is heightened to abnormal levels. The character receives a maximum of +3 bonus to relevant skill totals.

Environmental Tolerance: The character can survive comfortably at one environmental extreme — heat, cold, etc. — to a much greater extent than a normal person. For example, the person might be able to live in an arctic region unprotected or survive in the Sundered Desert beneath the broiling sun.

Glider Wings: The character can fly by drifting with air currents, provided there is sufficient wind (gamemaster's call). Characters with this Advantage will need the *flight* skill to control their passage.

Hardiness I: The character can take damage better than normal. Even though the character actually suffers the normal wound levels, the character acts as if he had suffered one wound less. For example, a character who is *moderately wounded* suffers +2 to the difficulty number of all physical actions while *moderately wounded*. If that character had "Hardiness I," he would still perform as if only *lightly wounded* (no penalty). This Advantage is also used when the character attempts to heal damage, in relation to his healing time and his healing DNs. However, a character who takes enough wounds to be *dead* is still dead, regardless of how hardy he is.

Long Life Span: The character is "virtually immortal." Often this Advantage has an Advantage Flaw attached that governs what the character must do to maintain his life. The character should gain peripheral bonuses during game play because of his "longer outlook."

Multiple Abilities I: A character might have multiple "minor" abilities that are increased by a special ability. For example, a character could have "eyestalks," giving him a +1 bonus to perception attempts that would negate surprise, the ability to focus his ears on particular types of noises (+1 bonus when listening for particular sounds), and fingers that are very sensitive to subdermal motion (+1 bonus to *lock picking*).

Omnivorousness: The character is capable of gaining nourishment from any organic substance (though he is not immune to poison).

Silence: The character is able to move in complete silence. He gains +5 to all *stealth* checks.

Speed: The character is extremely fast, adding +1 to one of his movement rates, increasing the MAX value by one as well.

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Uncanny Aptitude

I: This "Special Ability" is very similar to the "Skill Bonus" Advantage in that some sort of bizarre ability gives the character added bonuses to certain actions. However, instead of selecting a group of skills that the character gains a +1, +2, or +3 bonus to, the player and the game-master should work out circumstances where those abilities come into play.

column iv advantages

special abilities (civ)

Attribute Increase II: The same as "Attribute Increase I" save that the character may add +2 to one Attribute or +1 to two Attributes of his choice. The normal maximum for that Attribute is increased as well.

Fast Reactions: The character gains a +3 to his Agility or Confidence when determining initiative or, if the card deck is being used, he can choose to have a *haste* up to three times during the course of the adventure.

Flight: The character is able to fly, either by nature or by virtue of having wings. The character's movement rate is equal to his MRG (movement rate ground) +1, to a maximum of 11.

Hardiness II: The rules for this are the same as for "Hardiness I," except the character gains an "extra" wound level. If the

character would normally have just sustained a wound pushing him into the *dead* condition (but not further), the character slips into a coma. The character will not die unless he takes another wound, but he will not wake up without medical assistance or over time (he should be treated as if *mortally wounded* for the purposes of healing, etc. — but he does not die from accumulated shock damage, unlike other characters).

Multiple Abilities II: Similar to "Multiple Abilities I," save that the modifiers can now be in the +2 to +3 range (gamemaster's discretion).

world of aden advantage list

Column I

Additional Skill Adds	One add in a general skill, two adds in a specialization
Authority	Limited influence or low rank
Contacts	Character has a friend or friends who provide minor assistance
Cultures	Character gains knowledge of a foreign culture
Equipment	Character gains unusual equipment
Fame	Character has minor notoriety
Skill Bonus	+1 to a group of three related skills (modifier to bonus number only)
Wealth	Character is upper middle class



Thomas O'Neill



Thomas O'Neill

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Column II

Additional Skill Adds	Increase one general skill by two adds, or one specialization by three adds
Authority II Contacts	Middle ranking, more influence As Contacts I, but the friends are more influential or powerful
Cultures	The knowledge is more extensive than Culture I
Equipment	The equipment is more valuable than Equipment I
Fame	The character is better known than Fame I
Luck	The character can use certain card deck enhancements once per adventure
Skill Bonus	The character gains +1 to the bonus of 5 related skills
Trademark Specialization	The character gains +3 to the bonus number of any specialization, plus he is moderately famous for it (as Fame I)
Wealth	The character is from the upper class

Column III

Additional Skill Adds	Increase one general skill by three adds, or one specialization by four adds
Additional Attribute Point	Increase one Attribute by one point
Contacts	The friends are very influential or powerful
Cultures	The character has native knowledge of a culture other than his own
Equipment	The equipment is unique or artifactual in nature
Fame	The character is recognized almost everywhere
Learning Curve Positive adventuring	The character can improve certain skills at a cost of one skill point less after
Luck	The character can use certain card deck enhancements during an adventure
Skill Bonus	The character gains +2 to the bonus of 3 related skills

Special Abilities	Gain strange or unusual talent or ability
Trademark Specialization	The character gains +3 to the bonus number of any specialization, plus he is moderately famous for it (as Fame I)
Wealth	The character is very wealthy or can draw on near limitless resources

Column IV

Contacts	The contacts are royalty or incredibly powerful
Equipment	The character gains a legendary artifact or several extremely expensive items
Flight	Faerkin only
Luck	The character gains more use of his card deck enhancements
Special Abilities	More powerful than Special Abilities CIII

world of aden Compensations table

Column I

Advantage Flaw	There is a limitation or drawback to one of the character's Advantages
Age	The character is older or younger than his prime
Bad Luck	The character is unlucky; usually he is affected whenever he rolls a die total of "2."
Debt	Character owes a small debt to someone
Employed	Character has a job or obligation that takes away some of his freedom of choice
Enemy	The character has a minor enemy

Handicap	The character has a minor physical or mental handicap that adds +2 to the DN of 5 or more related skills
Infamy	The character has a bad reputation among certain people or within a nation other than his own
Poverty	The character has little money and cannot control his spending well
Price	There is a price to one of the character's Advantages
Quirk	The character suffers from a personality or physical quirk that makes his life a little more difficult

Column II

Advantage Flaw	There is a significant limitation to one of the character's Advantages
Age	The character is very old or very young
Bad Luck	The character is even more unlucky than Bad Luck I
Debt	The character owes a large debt to someone under dangerous circumstances
Employed	The character's freedom is virtually non-existent
Enemy	The enemy is very powerful or always around
Handicap	Choose one physical or two mental attributes and add +3 to the DN of all skill checks, except in very special circumstances
Infamy	The character is considered "evil" by some group or nation
Learning Curve Negative	The costs for learning skills are doubled
Price	There is a high price to be paid for one of the character's Advantages
Quirk	The character has a very serious personality flaw

Column III

Achilles Heel	The character has a vulnerability
Advantage Flaw	The flaw interferes with an advantage and provides an additional disadvantage as well
Bad Luck	The character will suffer periodic setbacks
Debt	The character owes everything he earns to another
Enemy	The character's enemy is very powerful
Quirk	The character has a severe personality disorder

Column IV

Advantage Flaw	The flaw interferes with or completely interrupts the use of an Advantage, in addition having several negative effects.
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starting wealth

Characters in the *World of Aden* start with 1000 crests (or 500 Urbanan crests, as Lord Urbane has declared his currency is worth twice as much as all other nations'.)

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CHARACTER SHEET

Character Name _____

Player Name _____

RACE	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	AGE	SEX
------	--------	--------	-----	-----

ATTRIBUTES ☐ AGILITY ☐ INTELLECT ☐ DEXTERITY ☐ MIND ☐ ENDURANCE ☐ CONFIDENCE ☐ STRENGTH ☐ CHARISMA		COMBAT BOX WOUND LEVEL ☐ <i>Light</i> ☐ <i>Moderate</i> ☐ <i>Heavy</i> ☐ <i>Incapacitated</i> ☐ <i>Mortal</i>	K O MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text	SHOCK CAPACITY SHOCK TAKEN
DERIVED ATTRIBUTES ☐ TOUGHNESS ☐ TOUGHNESS (w/armor) ☐ MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) ☐ MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) ☐ MRW (Movement Rate, Swimming) ☐ MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping)		LIFE POINTS	SKILL POINTS	

SKILLS

NAME	ATTRIBUTE/VALUE	SKILL ADDS	SPECIALIZATION/ADDS	MODIFIERS	SKILL VALUE

ADVANTAGES

COLUMN	NAME (game effect)

COMPENSATIONS

COLUMN	NAME (game effect)

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	+1	

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CHARACTER SHEET

ITEM	GAME EFFECT NOTES (ranges, etc.)
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[illegible][illegible]

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CHARACTER SHEET

Judge of Carraway

NAME	RACE Dwarf	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	AGE	SEX
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ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 7 Beast riding: horse 8, dodge 8, melee combat 8, melee parry 8 DEXTERITY 8 Missile weapons 11 ENDURANCE 11 Resist shock 12 STRENGTH 10 INTELLECT 7 Deduction 9, first aid 9, tracking 10, trick 8 MIND 7 Scholar: Carraway 9 CONFIDENCE 8 Intimidation 11 CHARISMA 8	DERIVED ATTRIBUTES 11 TOUGHNESS 17 TOUGHNESS (w/armor) 6 MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) 4 MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) 3 MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) 3 MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping)		COMBAT BOX WOUND LEVEL ☐ Light ☐ Moderate ☐ Heavy ☐ Incapacitated ☐ Mortal	K O MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text
	LIFE POINTS 5	SKILL POINTS	SHOCK CAPACITY	SHOCK TAKEN

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Authority (CIII): Judge of Carraway; Special Abilities (CIII): Enhanced Senses, +3 to hearing-related skill checks; Special Abilities (CIII): Infravision/ Ultravision, +3 to *perception* checks in darkness.

Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CII), you are hated and feared in some places because of your position; Enemy (CII), a corrupted, see below; Learning Curve (Negative) (CII); Quirk (CIII), relentless — you always get your man, regardless of the cost to yourself or those who choose to travel with you.

DESCRIPTION

You are one of the famed Judges of Carraway. You've left Aramyst to track an elusive criminal suspected of giving himself to the Darkfall. The corrupted is aware that you're after him, however, and every day that he eludes your relentless pursuit he grows in power that is both sinister and deadly. Should you defeat this fiend, you will need to return to Carraway to receive your next assignment.

EQUIPMENT

Justice Sword, damage value STR+7/17; heavy crossbow, damage value STR+9/19, range 3-10/100/200/300; chainmail, armor value TOU+6/17; camp kit; backpack; 10 days' dried rations; heavy warhorse; 50 Carraway Crests.



"I don't matter. You don't matter.
Only justice matters."

BONUS CHART

DIE	9 11																21 26 31 36 41								
ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	25	30	35	40	45	+5		
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	+1		

NAME	RACE Ferran (elven-ferret)	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	AGE	SEX
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ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 10 Acrobatics 11, climbing 11, dodge 12, maneuver 12, melee combat 13, melee parry 11 DEXTERITY 9 ENDURANCE 9 STRENGTH 9 INTELLECT 8 Induce red haze 11, perception 9, will-power 9 MIND 7 CONFIDENCE 8 Intimidation 10, survival: High Steppes 9 CHARISMA 8	DERIVED ATTRIBUTES 10 TOUGHNESS 10 TOUGHNESS (w/armor) 7 MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) 5 MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) 3 MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) 3 MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping)		COMBAT BOX WOUND LEVEL ☐ Light ☐ Moderate ☐ Heavy ☐ Incapacitated ☐ Mortal	K O MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text
	LIFE POINTS 5	SKILL POINTS	SHOCK CAPACITY	SHOCK TAKEN

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to *dodge*; Contacts (CI), Sanguine Monks; Cultures (CII), Sanguine Monks; Additional Attribute Point (CIII), +1 to Agility.

Compensations: Quirk (CI), intensely curious; Employed (CII), as a Sanguine Monk; Prejudice (CII), your ferran nature causes some to shy away from you; Quirk (CII), bloodthirsty — once engaged in combat, your animal side takes over and you become a relentless killing machine; Enemy (CIII), you have enraged a powerful nocturnal who seeks your death.

DESCRIPTION

You heard that Ivar's sanctuary in the High Steppes offered hope to one such as you, a ferran who could not control his bestial frenzy. Now you've learned Ivar's technique, and instead of controlling your feral nature, the "Mad Monk" has taught you how to use it to achieve the "red haze." Now you wander the Outlands, seeking to use your newfound ability to destroy the hated nocturnals and restore Aden to its former grandeur.

EQUIPMENT

Two scarallas, damage value STR+4/13; camp kit; backpack; 10 days' dried rations; 975 Aramystan Crests.



Illustration by Tim Bobko

"The red haze comes. Stand aside or die."

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5

NAME		RACE Jurak		HEIGHT	WEIGHT	AGE	SEX
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ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 8 Beast riding: horse 9, dodge 9, melee combat 11, melee parry 9 DEXTERITY 8 Fire combat 9, gunnery 9 ENDURANCE 11 STRENGTH 14 INTELLECT 8 First aid 10, perception 10, tracking 9 MIND 7 Conjurage 8, medicine 8, scholar: folklore 9 CONFIDENCE 8 Alteration 10, survival: temperate 9, willpower 9 CHARISMA 7 Charm 8	DERIVED ATTRIBUTES 12 TOUGHNESS 18 TOUGHNESS (w/armor) 7 MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) 5 MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) 3 MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) 3 MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping)		COMBAT BOX WOUND LEVEL ☐ Light ☐ Moderate ☐ Heavy ☐ Incapacitated ☐ Mortal	K O MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text
	LIFE POINTS 5	SKILL POINTS	SHOCK CAPACITY	SHOCK TAKEN

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Fame (CI), renowned throughout Arasteen; Authority (CII), you are a Hospitaller of the Radiant Order; Skill Bonus (CII): Knight of the Radiant Order skill package. +2 to *alteration, first aid, gunnery, melee parry, melee weapons*; Additional Attribute Point (CIII), +1 to Strength.

Compensations: Employed (CII), by the Radiant Order; Learning Curve (Negative) (CII); Burn-Out (CIII), should you violate the tenets of the Order, you will lose the "Authority (CII)" Advantage; Enemy (CIII), all Knights of the Radiant Order are considered dangerous outlaws in Urbana.

DESCRIPTION

You are one of the selfless Knights of the Radiant Order. You travel from Sea Reach to Respite, braving the deadly outlands to bring healing and protection to the good folk of Arasteen. Like many juraks, you are especially fond of fables and legends. You seek out these stories and love to recount them as you go from town to town.

Spells: *Healing, light.*

Arcane Knowledges: *Light 1, water 1.*

EQUIPMENT

Falcon axe, damage value STR+10/24; two pistols, damage value 19, range 3-5/10/20/50; chainmail, armor value TOU+6/18; horse; camp kit; backpack; 10 days' dried rations; 15 Arasteen Crests.



Illustration by Tim Bobko

"Your screams remind me of a story."

BONUS CHART

DIE																				9	11											21	26	31	36	41
ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	25	30	35	40	45	+5													
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	+1													

WORLD OF ADEN

CHARACTER SHEET

outrider

NAME	RACE Elven	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	AGE	SEX
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ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 13 Beast riding: thunder lizard 14, dodge 14, maneuver 14, melee combat 17, melee parry 15 DEXTERITY 11 Fire combat 13, vehicle piloting: sail cart 12 ENDURANCE 7 STRENGTH 8 INTELLECT 7 Perception 9, tracking 8, trick 9 MIND 7 CONFIDENCE 8 Alteration 9, intimidation 10, survival: Sundered Desert 9 CHARISMA 6 Taunt 8	DERIVED ATTRIBUTES 9 TOUGHNESS 9 TOUGHNESS (w/armor) 8 MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) 5 MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) 3 MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) 3 MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping)	
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BACKGROUND

Advantages: Authority (CI), you are a Nomad of the Rhanate's Outriders; Equipment (CII), thunder lizard; Additional Attribute Point (CIII), +1 to Agility; Additional Skill Adds (CIII), +3 to *melee combat*.

Compensations: Quirk (CI), Greedy — while you wish to defeat the forces of the Darkfall, the Rhanate's system of compensation for your services encourages a certain amount of greed. You are not above letting situations appear much worse than they are to jack up your protection fee; Quirk (CI), you distrust most things mechanical; Bigotry (CII), you are prejudiced against mechanages and other sorcerer-scientist types; Employed (CII), you are an Outrider; Enemy (CII), some villagers you saved from a menacing nocturnal have discovered the nocturnal wasn't all *that* menacing, and want their money back.

DESCRIPTION

You are what is commonly known as a "sand elf," having bronzed skin, piercing eyes and dusty-colored hair. You have lived in the Sundered Desert all your life. Nocturnals destroyed most of your village. You survived and staggered into the shadow of the Rhanate's Black Citadel where you eventually recovered and joined the Outriders. Though you have good intentions, you are somewhat haughty and greedy. You don't make friends easily and you prefer to accomplish your goals alone so that you will not have to share any possible rewards. Because of your fiercely competitive nature, few Nomads consider you a friend.

Spells: *Counterspell*.

Arcane Knowledges: *Magic 1*.

EQUIPMENT

Saber, damage value STR+3/11; musket, damage value 19, range 3-10/40/80/150; thunder lizard; camp kit; backpack; 10 days' dried rations; 25 Aramystan Crests.



Illustration by Tim Bobko

"Trouble. Bad trouble.
200 crests."

BONUS CHART

DIE																				9	11											21	26	31	36	41
ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	25	30	35	40	45	+5													
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	+1													

WORLD OF ADEN

CHARACTER SHEET

golemoid mechamage

NAME	RACE Goreaux	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	AGE	SEX
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ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 6 Mechanical maneuver 8 DEXTERITY 6 Fire combat 7, gunnery 7, vehicle piloting: wheeled 7 ENDURANCE 7 STRENGTH 5 (8) INTELLECT 12 Apportation 15, divination 14, first aid 14, perception 14, science: mechanisms 15 MIND 12 Conjuration 13, medicine 13 (golemoid surgery 14) CONFIDENCE 10 Alteration 13, willpower 11 CHARISMA 8 Summoning 9	DERIVED ATTRIBUTES 10 TOUGHNESS 10 TOUGHNESS (w/armor) 7 MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) 5 MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) 3 MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) 3 MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping) LIFE POINTS 5 SKILL POINTS	COMBAT BOX WOUND LEVEL ☐ Light ☐ Moderate ☐ Heavy ☐ Incapacitated ☐ Mortal MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text	K O SHOCK CAPACITY SHOCK TAKEN
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BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to *perception*; Wealth (CII); Equipment (CIII): Mechanical arm and claw; Skill Bonus (CIII), +2 to *medicine*, *science: mechanisms*, and *alteration*.

Compensations: Prejudice (CI), your mechemagical enhancements cause some to be wary of you; Quirk (CII), in your pursuit of knowledge you frequently take unnecessary risks; Bad Luck (CIII); Enemy (CIII), you stole technological secrets from one of Lord Urbane's sinister factories. Now you are wanted throughout Urbana by the watchful Eye.

DESCRIPTION

You lost your right arm when one of your mechemagical experiments went awry. Like the typical mechamage that you are, you simply invented a new arm for yourself. Since then you've added a mechanical claw to the golemoid limb, and now you are searching for a more devastating enchantment to add to it. You adventure to discover new technology and gain wealth to continue your experiments.

Spells: *Communicate with spirits of metal* (Communication with earth (metal) for arcane knowledge); *counterspell*; *golem*; *jinx*; *metal storm*; *spell barrier*.

Arcane Knowledges: Earth (metal) 3; folk 1; magic 1.

EQUIPMENT

Mechanical arm, damage value STR+3/8; claw, damage value STR+4/12; pistol, damage value 19, range 3-5/10/20/50; camp kit; backpack; 10 days' dried rations; 688 Urbanan Crests (worth double in most nations).



Illustration by Tim Bobko

"You would be wise to beware my steel."

BONUS CHART

DIE																				9	11											21	26	31	36	41
ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	25	30	35	40	45	+5													
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	+1													

West End Games MasterBook/D6 System Conversion

This system converts *MasterBook* characters and adventures to the *D6 System* rules (used in other roleplaying games produced by West End). Of course, since the conversion translates logarithmic values to linear values, you have to exercise good judgment. If something doesn't look right after you convert it, alter the value or die code to what seems more realistic.

The conversion involves one simple formula: divide the *MasterBook* value by three. The quotient becomes the *D6* die code and the remainder becomes the number of pips. For example, a *MasterBook* value of 14 becomes a *D6* code of 4D+2 ($14/3 = 4$, remainder 2). Using this equation allows you to convert statistics on the fly. You don't have to convert all the numbers in a particular adventure beforehand. For example, your characters encounter a thug who immediately opens fire. You convert the thug's *fire combat* skill value of 8 to a die code of 2D+2 and start rolling.

To convert from *D6* to *MasterBook*, simply multiply the die code by three and then add the pips. For example, a *D6 planetary systems* skill of 4D+2 has a *MasterBook* skill value of 14 ($3 * 4 + 2$).

The main sections of conversion are characters, difficulty numbers, modifiers, and damage values.

Characters

MasterBook and the *D6 System* have different character Attributes. The first task in translating a character, then, is mapping the Attributes from one system to the



other. The chart below shows the correlation between the two sets of Attributes.

Attribute Values/Die Codes

In instances where multiple Attributes in one system convert to a single Attribute in the other system, the Attributes are averaged. For example, the *MasterBook* Strength and Endurance Attributes translate to the *D6* Strength Attribute. To determine the *D6* Strength, first determine the average of the two *MasterBook* Attributes and then convert using the standard conversion formula.

Note that the *MasterBook* Intellect Attribute is used to determine the *D6* Knowledge and Technical Attributes.

To convert Attributes, divide the *MasterBook* Attribute value by three. The quotient represents the die code and the remainder represents the number of pips. For example, a *MasterBook* character with a Mind of 11 would have a *D6* Mechanical of 3D+2 ($11/3 = 3$, remainder 2).

Skills

There is no direct correlation between *MasterBook* skills and *D6 System* skills. First, try to find a skill with a similar name. For example, the *MasterBook energy weapons* skill would translate to the *D6 blasters* skill. If you can't find a match, just list that skill beneath whatever *D6* Attribute seems appropriate. For example, the *MasterBook archaeology* skill would fall under the *D6* Knowledge Attribute since the *D6 System* does not have a corresponding skill.

Example: Using the conversion formula, a *MasterBook espionage* skill of 10 becomes a *D6 espionage* skill of 3D+1.

Attribute Conversion

<u>MasterBook Attribute</u>	<u>D6 Attribute</u>
Average of Agility & Dexterity	Dexterity
Average of Strength & Endurance	Strength
Intellect	Knowledge
Intellect	Technical
Mind	Mechanical
Average of Confidence & Charisma	Perception

D6 System Damage Chart

FIREARMS Weapon	D6 Damage Value	7.62 "Chain Gun" GE Minigun M134	7D 7D+1
Holdout pistol (.22 caliber)	3D		
Small pistol (.25 caliber)	3D+1		
Light rifle (.22 long)	3D+2		
.38 Special	4D		
Ingram SMG	4D+1		
Colt .45	4D+2		
.44 Magnum Pistol	5D		
.30-.30 Lever Action Rifle	5D+1		
AK-47 Assault Rifle	5D+2		
M16 Assault Rifle, Grenade	6D		
7.62 HK21 Machinegun	6D+1		
7.62 Maremont Lightweight M60	6D+2		
		MELEE WEAPONS Weapon	D6 Damage Value
		Pocketknife	STR+1
		Small knife	STR+2
		Knife	STR+1D
		Dagger, Club	STR+1D+1
		Short sword, baseball bat	STR+1D+2
		Quarterstaff, rapier	STR+2D
		Light sword, warhammer	STR+2D+1
		Broadsword	STR+2D+2
		Morning-star, pike	STR+3D
		Two-handed sword, battle axe	STR+3D+1

MasterBook/D6 Skill Conversion

MasterBook Skill	D6 Skill Equivalent	MasterBook Skill	D6 Skill Equivalent
AGILITY		<i>Security</i>	<i>Security (Technical*)</i>
<i>Acrobatics</i>	<i>(Acrobatics /Dexterity*)</i>	<i>Thrown Weapons</i>	<i>Thrown Weapons, Grenade</i>
<i>Beast riding</i>	<i>Beast riding (Mechanical*)</i>	<i>Vehicle Piloting</i>	<i>Archaic Starship Piloting, Capital Ship Piloting, Ground Vehicle Operation, Hover Vehicle Operation, Repulsorlift Operation, Space Transports, Starfighter Piloting, Swoop Operation, Walker Operation</i>
<i>Climbing</i>	<i>Climbing/jumping (Strength*)</i>		
<i>Dance</i>	<i>(Dance/Dexterity*)</i>		
<i>Dodge</i>	<i>Dodge (Dexterity*)</i>		
<i>Escape Artist</i>	<i>(Escape Artist/Dexterity*)</i>		
<i>Flight</i>	<i>(Flight/Dexterity*)</i>		
<i>Improvised Weaponry</i>	<i>Melee Combat (Dexterity*)</i>		
<i>Long Jumping</i>	<i>Climbing/jumping (Strength*)</i>		
<i>Martial Arts</i>	<i>Brawling (Strength*)</i>		
<i>Maneuver</i>	<i>Maneuver (Dexterity*)</i>		
<i>Mechanical Maneuver</i>	<i>Powersuit Operation (Mechanical*)</i>		
		ENDURANCE	
		<i>Resist Pain</i>	<i>Stamina (Strength*)</i>
		<i>Resist Shock</i>	<i>Stamina (Strength*)</i>
		STRENGTH	
		<i>Lethal Strike</i>	<i>Strength*</i>
		<i>Lifting</i>	<i>Lifting</i>
		INTELLECT	
		<i>Apportation</i>	<i>(Apportation/Knowledge*)</i>
		<i>Camouflage</i>	<i>Hide (Perception*)</i>
		<i>Cantrips</i>	<i>(Cantrips/Knowledge*)</i>
		<i>Computer Hacking</i>	<i>Computer Programming/Repair (Technical*)</i>
			<i>Computer Programming/Repair (Technical*)</i>
		<i>Computer Ops</i>	<i>(Counterfeiting/Perception*)</i>
		<i>Counterfeiting</i>	<i>(Counter-Intelligence/Knowledge*)</i>
		<i>Counter-Intelligence</i>	<i>(Data Analysis/Knowledge*)</i>
			<i>Search (Perception*)</i>
		<i>Data Analysis</i>	<i>Demolitions (Technical*)</i>
		<i>Deduction</i>	<i>(Divination/Knowledge*)</i>
		<i>Demolitions</i>	<i>(Espionage/Knowledge*)</i>
		<i>Divination</i>	<i>First Aid (Technical*)</i>
		<i>Espionage</i>	
		<i>First Aid</i>	
DEXTERITY			
<i>Energy Weapons</i>	<i>Blaster</i>		
<i>Exotic Weapons</i>	<i>Lightsaber, Bowcaster</i>		
<i>Fire Combat</i>	<i>Archaic Guns, Firearms</i>		
<i>Gunnery</i>	<i>Vehicle Blasters, Capital Ship Gunnery, Starship Gunnery</i>		
	<i>Blaster Artillery</i>		
<i>Heavy Energy Weapons</i>	<i>(Heavy Weapons)</i>		
<i>Heavy Weapons</i>	<i>Security (Technical*)</i>		
<i>Lock Picking</i>	<i>Bows, Missile Weapons</i>		
<i>Missile Weapons</i>	<i>Pick Pocket</i>		
<i>Prestidigitation</i>			

RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon	D6 Damage Value
Small Rock	STR+1
Throwing stars	STR+2
Throwing knife	STR+1D
Small slingshot	STR+1D+1
Sling, short bow	STR+1D+2
Medium bow, throwing axe	STR+2D
Composite bow	STR+2D+1
Long bow	STR+2D+2
Light crossbow	STR+3D
Heavy crossbow	STR+3D+1
Compound bow	STR+3D+2

ARMOR

Type	D6 Armor Add
Heavy "adventurer's clothing"	+1
Heavy furs	+2
Heavy padding, metallic woven fabric	+1D
Leather armor	+1D+1
Leather armor with metal links	+1D+2
Chain link, "light" bulletproof armor	+2D
Light Kevlar	+2D+1
Plate & chain armor, flak jacket	+2D+2
Plate mail, standard Kevlar	+3D
Plate armor, Kevlar ceramic	+3D+1

MasterBook Skill**D6 Skill Equivalent**

<i>Forgery</i>	<i>Forgery (Perception*)</i>
<i>Inventor</i>	<i>(Inventor/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Journalism</i>	<i>(Journalism/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Linguistics</i>	<i>(Linguistics/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Navigation</i>	<i>Astrogation (Mechanical*)</i>
<i>Perception</i>	<i>Investigation (Perception*)</i>
<i>Performance Arts</i>	<i>(Performance Arts/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Photography</i>	<i>(Photography/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Psionic Manipulation</i>	<i>(Psionic Manipulation/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Radio Ops</i>	<i>Communications (Mechanical*)</i>
<i>Safe-Cracking</i>	<i>Security (Technical*)</i>
<i>Science</i>	<i>Sensors, Capital Ship Shields, Starship Shields, Computer Programming/Repair, Droid Programming, Droid Repair, Armor Repair, Blaster Repair, Capital Starship Weapon Repair, Starship Weapon Repair</i>
<i>Smuggling</i>	<i>Business (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Super-Science</i>	<i>(Super-Science/Technical*)</i>
<i>Teaching</i>	<i>(Teaching/Perception*)</i>
<i>Tracking</i>	<i>Search (Perception*)</i>
<i>Trick</i>	<i>Con (Perception*)</i>
<i>Vehicle Mechanic</i>	<i>Capital Starship Repair, Ground Vehicle Repair, Hover Vehicle Repair, Repulsorlift Repair, Space Transports Repair, Starfighter Repair, Walker Repair</i>

MasterBook Skill**D6 Skill Equivalent**

MIND	
<i>Artist</i>	<i>(Artist/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Bureaucracy</i>	<i>Bureaucracy (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Business</i>	<i>Business (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Conjuration</i>	<i>(Conjuration/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Hypnotism</i>	<i>(Hypnotism/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Language</i>	<i>Languages (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Medicine</i>	<i>Medicine (Technical*)</i>
<i>Research</i>	<i>(Research/Perception*)</i>
<i>Scholar</i>	<i>Alien Species, Cultures, Law Enforcement, Planetary Systems, Value (Knowledge*)</i>

CONFIDENCE

<i>Alteration</i>	<i>(Alteration/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Con</i>	<i>Con (Perception*)</i>
<i>Curse</i>	<i>(Curse/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Faith</i>	<i>(Faith/Perception*)</i>
<i>Interrogation</i>	<i>(Interrogation/Perception*)</i>
<i>Intimidation</i>	<i>Intimidation (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Psychology</i>	<i>(Psychology/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Streetwise</i>	<i>Streetwise (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Survival</i>	<i>Survival (Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Willpower</i>	<i>Willpower (Knowledge*)</i>

CHARISMA

<i>Charm</i>	<i>(Charm/Perception*)</i>
<i>Disguise</i>	<i>Con (Perception*)</i>
<i>Persuasion</i>	<i>Persuasion (Perception*)</i>
<i>Summoning</i>	<i>(Summoning/Knowledge*)</i>
<i>Taunt</i>	<i>(Taunt/Perception*)</i>

On the previous pages you'll find a list of the *MasterBook* skills and their *D6 System* equivalents. Where no *D6* skill matches, the skill and/or its base Attribute (if different from the *MasterBook* Attribute) are listed in parentheses. Skills placed under a different Attribute in *D6* than in *MasterBook* are indicated by an asterisk (*).

Miscellaneous Character Information

MasterBook Life Points equate to *D6* Force Points, and *MasterBook* Skill Points equate to *D6* Character Points. Bonuses or penalties resulting from *MasterBook* Advantages and Compensations can be converted using the standard conversion formula.

Difficulty Numbers

Since there is no linear formula that will accurately convert difficulty numbers, use the chart above to translate them between systems.

Modifiers

Divide the *MasterBook* modifier value by three. Treat the quotient as the die code and drop the remainder. For example, a *MasterBook* trick shot has a modifier of -4, which translates to a *D6* modifier of -1D (-4/3 = -1, remainder 1).



Difficulty Conversion

<i>MasterBook</i> Difficulty Level	<i>D6</i> Difficulty Level
Routine, Nearly Routine (1-2)	Very Easy (1-5)
Very Easy, Easy (3-5)	Easy (6-10)
Average, Complicated (6-10)	Moderate (11-15)
Difficult, Hard (11-13)	Difficult (16-20)
Very Hard, Extremely Hard (14-18)	Very Difficult (21-30)
Incredible, Nearly Impossible (19+)	Heroic (31+)

Damage Values

Since *MasterBook* damage values tend toward the high side, you must first subtract five from the *MasterBook* value and then apply the conversion formula. For example, a light rifle in *MasterBook* has a damage value of 16. In the *D6 System*, the damage value is 3D+2 ((16 - 5)/3 = 3, remainder 2).

Miscellaneous

Conversions for other areas of game play (vehicle and starship combat, magic, psionics, *et cetera*) are left to the gamemaster. In each case, the standard conversion formula should provide you with a basis for translation. For example, characters from the *Bloodshadows™* game who have magical spells at their disposal, may attempt to cast a spell by generating a skill total and comparing it to the spell's difficulty (the skill value and the difficulty number can both be converted using the guidelines presented above).

Refer to the previous two pages for charts of converted skills and damage values.

MasterBook Games

Bloodshadows™
Indiana Jones™
Necroscope™
Shatterzone™
Species™
Tales From The Crypt™
Tank Girl™
The World of Aden™

D6 System Games

Star Wars®,
the Roleplaying
Game

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MASTERBOOK™ **D6 SYSTEM**

Character Name: _____

Type: _____

Gender/Species: _____

Age: _____ Height: _____ Weight: _____

Physical Description: _____

Dexterity _____

Perception _____

Knowledge _____

Strength _____

Mechanical _____

Technical _____

Special Abilities

Move _____

Force Sensitive? _____

Force Points _____

Dark Side Points _____

Character Points _____

Wound Status

☐ Stunned

☐ Wounded

☐ Incapacitated

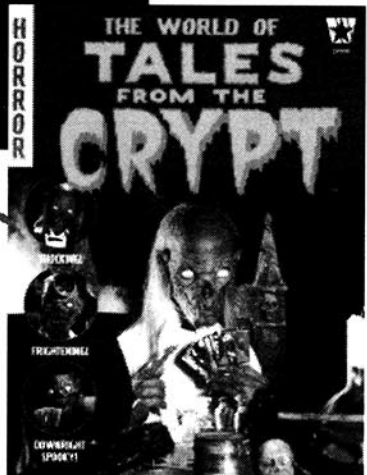
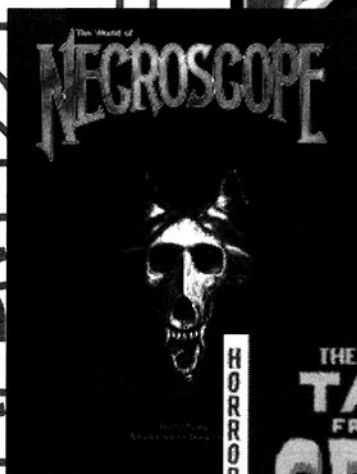
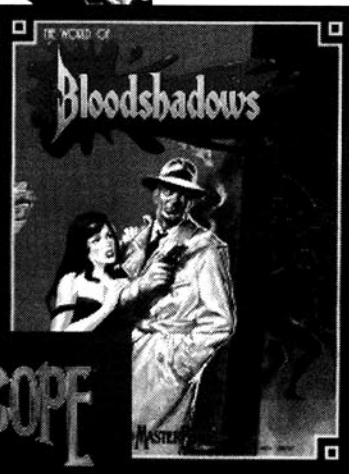
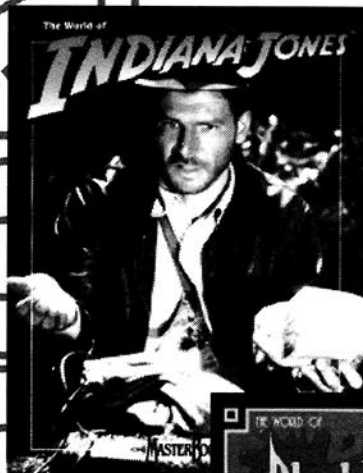
☐ Mortally Wounded

Equipment: _____

Equipment: _____

Equipment: _____

The MASTERBOOK System



MasterBook is a universal roleplaying game rules system — this means it is flexible enough to be used with virtually *any* game setting you can imagine! You might be a scout ship pilot exploring the outer reaches of space; a two-fisted adventurer battling angry natives to recover a lost treasure; a psychic battling demons from another dimension; or any one of a thousand other roles! You need the *MasterBook* to adventure in *The World of Necroscope*, as well as these other worlds, also available from West End:

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The World of Bloodshadows
The World of Indiana Jones
The World of Shatterzone
The World of Species
The World of Tales From The Crypt
The World of Tank Girl
 and many more to come!

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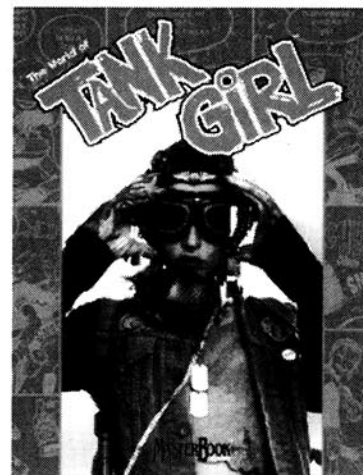
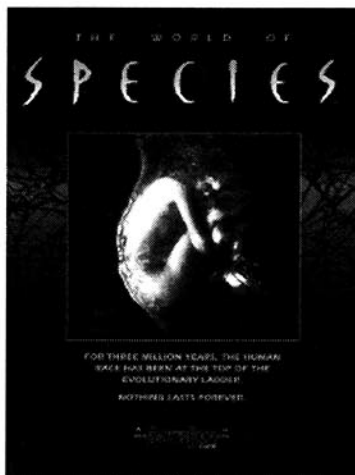
The MasterDeck

In this book, you will see references to the *MasterDeck*, cards that can be used to enhance your gameplay with this system. These are **optional**, and are not required for you to use the *MasterBook* system.

The *MasterDeck* is sold separately by West End Games. To order, send a check or money order for \$10 to:

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MASTERBOOK

the WORLD OF ADEN™

by Shane Lacy Hensley

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the Age of Thunder is born ...**

It is the time of the Darkfall in the world of Aden. This mysterious blight taints the land with its spawn, rampaging horrors known only as *nocturnals*. Great warriors ride across the scarred lands to battle these hordes. Powerful mechamages wield deadly contraptions of steam and magic, or fight the evil with incredible sorcery. But unless heroes are found ... and soon ... Aden *will* fall.

***The World of Aden* features everything you need to start a role-playing campaign in this exciting fantasy setting. You'll learn about the kingdoms of Aden, the Orders that serve them, and the hideous nocturnals that threaten their very existence. Delve into the secrets of mechamagic; ride on the awe-inspiring thunder trains; battle to save a world from overwhelming evil. Also included are character templates for use in the *World of Aden*, new equipment, spells and Background Options.**

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roleplaying
game series by**



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