LUX IN TENEBRAS - A LIGHT IN DARKNESS -

A Supplement for CTHULHU INVICTUS

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LUX IN TENEBRAS





LUX IN TENEBRAS

ROMAN SLANG - BY JUSTIN MANSFIELD WITH A BIT OF HELP FROM OSCAR RIOS VICTUS EST (OR, IT'S A LIVING) - BY OSCAR RIOS CRIME AND PUNISHMENT - BY CHAD BOWSER AND THEY'RE OFF! - BY OSCAR RIOS MISPLACED PURITY - BY SHOSHANA KESSOCK ON A LONELY ROAD - BY JEAN-PHILIPE "JP" CHAPLEAU VINEA PERVERSA - BY TOM LYNCH DREAMS OF ATLANTIS - BY SEAN FOSTER NAUFRACTUS, MYSTERY IN SARDINIA, AND THE DREAD IDOL - BY OSCAR RIOS THE HOUSE OF AUFIDIUS, 10 PRE-GENERATED INVESTIGATORS FOR CTHULHU INVICTUS - BY MATTHEW POOK THE OFFICIAL MISK ATONIC RIVER PRESS CHARACTER SHEET FOR CTHULHU INVICTUS - BY DEAN ENGELHARDT

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"Look, we've gone at this with sails and oars, but I am sure we're just hunting for boars in the ocean at this point," said the finder as he sat at the table, pouring himself a glass of watered-down wine.

The cloaked patrician cursed, pounding his fist into the table, "I should have known! That woman might poke the eyes out of a crow. I.... Well, the wolf in the story!" He glanced over at the Egyptian woman and her bodyguard slowly entering the tavern.

The finder whispered to his employer, "So, let's go tell that whore pressed in a basket that we know the scrolls she sold us are fakes."

The patrician smiled suddenly, "No. That would be driving a hatchet into our legs. Let's allow her to think we don't know for now. She thinks she's so smart, well, I say we cut her throat with her own sword."

The men nodded, finished their drinks, and rose to walk over to the Egyptian woman.

hat are they talking about? Romans had colorful expressions and slang terms that they used in everyday language, much as we do today. These can be useful to add color to your own campaign and help your investigators get into the mindset of the period better. Many of them may sound very familiar to our modern ears, which goes to show you that people are people, whether they lived today or nearly two millennia ago. Enjoy.

Punctim et caesim.

MISCELLANEA

"With point and edge," or "stabbing and slashing." This means "with every possible effort," equivalent to our "tooth and nail." The Romans famously preferred stabbing to cutting or slashing, but when you're backed into a corner, you can't be picky. Another way of saying this is *velis remisque*, "with sails and oars"—a Roman ship might use sails when it's windy and oars when it's not, but only in extremis would one be tempted to use both at once.

Gladium (alicui) dare qui se occidat.

"Give (someone) a sword so they will kill themselves" (cf., "give a man enough rope...").

Sibi gladio iugulare.

"To cut (someone's) throat with their own sword." When used reflexively ("He cut his own throat with his own sword"), it is equivalent to "hoist with his own petard." But it is also used non-reflexively ("We'll cut his throat with his own sword"), which is closer to "give him a taste of his own medicine."

Gladius plumbeus.

"A lead sword." The Romans used lead swords to train with—they're heavier than normal swords, so they helped build strength, but they also couldn't really hold an edge, making them less likely to cause serious harm. Lead weapons were often referred to metaphorically for easy or simplistic arguments that should give only amateurs trouble. Cicero even goes so far as *O plumbeum pugeonem*, "Oh, what a lead dagger!"—not even a lead sword! The phrase in *eburna vagina plumbeus gladius*, "in an ivory scabbard a lead sword," refers to someone who puts a lot of effort into their outside appearance but is less than impressive on the inside.

Asciam sibi in crus impingere.

"To drive a hatchet into one's own legs" (i.e., "to shoot yourself in the foot)".

Apros venari in mare.

"To hunt for boars in the sea" and conversely *piscari in aëre*, "to fish in the air" mean to be going about things totally wrong or to be looking in all the wrong places. Compare our "barking up the wrong tree."

Verberare lapidem.

"To beat a rock": working really hard to get nowhere, and probably hurting yourself in the process. More fully: *noli verberare lapidem ne perdas manum*, "don't beat a rock, or you might lose your hand."

Scortum quasillo pressum.

"A whore pressed in a basket" (i.e., "a two-bit whore"). This phrase actually originates in the art of cheese making! Once milk is curdled, it needs to be pressed in order to produce cheese, and the Romans sometimes used baskets for this purpose. Apparently the resulting product was considered cheap.

Cornicum oculos confixerit.

"(He) might poke out the eyes of crows" refers to someone so sneaky as to be able to fool even the most wary. The expression alludes to the crow's habit of going straight for the eyes. We might say something like "he could outfox a fox."

On the other hand, there is also the expression...

Cornix cornici nunquam effodit occelum.

"A crow never gouges out a crow's eyes," which refers, at least sometimes, to honor among thieves. But there are a number of expressions of this form: *canis caninam non est*, "a dog does not eat dog-meat;" *lupus lupum non mordet*, "wolf does not bite wolf." This last one is particularly poignant, because it is in direct contrast to a better known Latin expression: *homo homini lupus*, "man is a wolf to man."

This brings us to the subject of wolves. The Romans, perhaps unsurprisingly, had a very large number of proverbs about their national symbol:

Lupus in fabula.

"The wolf in the story!" (it is usually suggested that *fabula* here does not mean "story," but "speech") is exactly equivalent to our "speak of the devil!"

Vidistine lupum?

"Have you seen a wolf?" This means "why are you

strangely silent?" Roughly equivalent to "has the cat got your tongue?" There was a superstition in ancient Italy that if you saw a wolf after the wolf had already seen you, you would lose your ability to speak.

Lupum auribus tenere.

"To hold a wolf by the ears" means "to be in a precarious situation." The idea is that holding on to a wolf by its ears is not exactly a wise thing to do, but once you've gotten a hold of it, letting go might be even worse.

Ovem lupo committere.

"To entrust the sheep to the wolf" (i.e., "leave the fox guarding the henhouse").

Lupo agnum eripere postulare.

"To demand to snatch the lamb away from the wolf" (i.e., "to ask the impossible").



ISCELLANEA



Presented here are five new professions for *Cthulhu Invictus*. Investigators can now portray a lowly bath house attendant, a much-feared tax collector or his well-paid bodyguard. One might rather choose to play an official (or unofficial) courier or a profession near and dear to me personally, the writer.

Bathhouse Attendant

Every Roman town or city daring to call itself "civilized" has at least one bath house (with most having more than one). These are places where the rich and powerful mingle while forging alliances. These are also where the working class goes to unwind and clean up after a long day at their trade. Here the poor and attractive can find steady work, which is where you come in. You're an employee of such a place, a lowly bathhouse attendant. Many of your coworkers may be slaves owned by the bathhouse, but you are free. You hand out towels, help people in and out of the pools and saunas, give massages, and hopefully make a few tips. You overhear plenty of juicy things every day, as patrons tend to relax when at the bathhouse and maybe say more than they should. You swim well, are attractive (you wouldn't have been hired otherwise), and certainly are not a prostitute (although anything is negotiable for the right price).

Skills: Art (Masseuse), Bargain, Fast Talk, Insight, Listen, Persuade, Swim, and one other skill as personal specialty

Special: +2 to APP, -2 to EDU, +15 to Swim

Money: 1d4 x 50 sestertii

Yearly Income: 500 sestertii

Bodyguard

What is it about wealthy people that they always seem to have enemies? They get robbed, kidnapped and held for ransom, or have a knife stuck in their back. It's gotten so anyone with a few coins bouncing around in their purse can't walk the streets without needing someone to watch their back. All this suits you just fine. You make your living shadowing an employer, keeping an eye out for danger, and dealing with any possible threats to their welfare. You're skilled at moving quietly, blending into a crowd while keeping a sharp eye and keen ear out for anyone suspicious. When a situation does arise you'd rather deal with it with your fists, as bloodshed can be messy business. But if it comes to that, well, you're aren't a stranger to a blade or club. You're tough, well paid to ensure your loyalty, and live by your reputation. Slip up just once and your client ends up dead; just try getting hired after that.

Skills: Dodge, Fist/Punch, Grapple, Insight, Listen, Sneak, Spot Hidden, and one weapon skill of the player's choice

Special: +1 to CON, -1 to EDU

Money: 1d3 x 100 sestertii

Yearly Income: 700 sestertii

Courier

You make your living delivering messages from place to place, sometimes to the next village, sometimes to the next province and beyond. Racing along the Empire's fine system of roads you can cover between forty and sixty-five miles per day! Lining most of these routes are relay stations (called stationes) where you can get food and lodgings, fresh horses, and feed and blacksmith services for your mount. However, to use these roads requires you have the proper license from the government, called a diploma. You are either an honest courier who lives by your reputation, or one shrewd enough to realize that a skilled forgery often works in place of an expensive license. The person sending the message pays you. If you carry good news (e.g, a royal wedding or military victory), you'll often wear a laurel. But if you carry bad news (e.g., the death of a ruler or a military defeat), you'll carry a spear with a feather affixed to it. It's not an easy life; the roads are often unsafe, and you mostly travel them alone. Sometimes people don't want your letters to be delivered, forcing you to hide them on your person. If the message doesn't get delivered, you likely won't be hired again, or even paid at all.

Skills: Civics, Conceal, Empire, Fast Talk, Natural World, Ride, Art (Forgery) or Status, and one weapon skill as personal specialty

Special: +20 to Ride, couriers start with their own horse

Note — Unlicensed couriers must attempt a Luck roll when attempting to use stationes. If the courier fails they are asked by officials to present their license. The courier should then present their forged diploma. If the forgery fails they may be fined, detained, or even arrested.

Money (for licensed courier): 1d3 x 50 sestertii

Yearly Income: 900 sestertii

Money (for unlicensed courier): 1d3 x 100 sestertii

Yearly Income:1400 sestertii

Publican

Everyone wants a strong, well-supplied army, and new roads, bridges, and aqueducts built. All this takes careful organization, meticulous planning, and money (lots and lots of money). That's where you come in. You are a publican. You oversee and organize public works or handle the logistical needs of the military. You also collect the taxes needed to make all of these things a reality. You bid on contracts to collect taxes of an area or a port, paying the government what they estimate the tax revenues to be. You then go about collecting the taxes to recoup your investment. Your profit comes from collecting more taxes than you paid for the contract so it pays not to miss a single coin due to the Empire (because it'll end up coming out of your personal coffers). This doesn't make you a popular figure; everyone wants a smooth-running and well-maintained Empire, but nobody ever seems to like paying their taxes.

Skills: Accounting, Bargain, Civics, Empire, Insight, Library Use, Persuade, Status

Special: +10 to Accounting

Money: 1d3 x 100 sestertii + 1000 sestertii in uncollected taxes (collecting may be difficult)

Yearly Income: 2000 sestertii

Writer

"A room without books is like a body without a soul," wrote Cicero, and you couldn't agree more. You make your living, or at least you try to, by putting pen to page. Whether they're works of poetry or politics, histories or fiction, you're the author of books sold all over the Empire (if you're lucky that is). However, just because the bookseller is getting paid well doesn't mean you are. Often you'll read your works publicly in hopes of sparking people's interest in purchasing your work. Sometimes a wealthy supporter of your work will leave you a legacy, a portion of their estate after their death. Even better than that would be securing a living patron, a man of great wealth to support you as you pursue your art, such as Maecenas, a trusted friend of Emperor Augustus. Often such men like to have a writer they support as a member of their inner circle of advisors. However, such generous men are rare, and among writers the competition for such patrons is fierce. For many writers it is not coin alone that fuels them to create, but the pursuit of fame or even immortality.

Skills: Art (Poetry), Art (Writing), Bargain, Empire, Library Use, Persuade, Status, Write Language

Special: -1 to STR, -1 to CON, +2 to EDU, +10 to Art (Poetry) or Art (Writing)

Money: 1D8 x 50 sestertii

Yearly Income: 4D4 x 100 sestertii rolled annually



A LIGHT IN DARKNESS



R oman law, like most legal systems, is complex. It won't be possible to go into all the details and nuances here. Instead, readers will find a simplification of Roman litigation as practiced under what scholars call the *cognitio extraordinaria* system. Following that is a glossary of crimes, punishments, and legal terms that might arise in a *Cthulhu Invictus* game.

During the Empire, there are two main branches of Roman law, *ius privatum* and *ius publicum*. Ius privatum, private law, deals with civil and criminal law, property law, and crimes against people. Ius publicum, public law, handles the State and international dealings.

An important element of Roman law is its ubiquity. Many of the nations surrounding the Empire have adopted similar legal systems, and if a Roman citizen is arrested in a foreign land, the nation either sends the person back to Rome for trial or brings in a Roman judge to overhear the trial.

Roman Litigation

Like many aspects of Roman life, the legal system is well defined and regimented. The parties know what's expected of them and how to proceed. The reforms of the Republican legal system actually began during the Republic and were concluded by the leges Iuliae iudciariae, two reforms created by Augustus.

The legal process is divided up into four major steps: the summons, the preliminary hearing, the trial, and the execution.

The summons is where the plaintiff appears before a praetor and orally states his claim. The defendant is then summoned. The defendant can appear immediately or agree to appear on a specified date. If the defendant doesn't appear on the specified date, he is fined and the praetor can award the plaintiff the defendant's estate. If the plaintiff wants, he can invoke the right he had under the Republic to gather a group of men and forcibly drag the defendant to court if the man can be located. Both the plaintiff's and defendant's patrons can stand in for them at the hearing and later trial if they want. This is part of the *patrocinium*.

The preliminary hearing is where the details of the case and trial are worked out. The first step is the *nominatio*, or nomination of a judge. The judge can be chosen by the praetor, selected from the *album iudicum*, or list of judges, by the plaintiff and defendant, or the praetor can pull the name of a judge out of an urn.

Once the judge is selected, the *intentio*, or intention, commences. In this step the plaintiff states the grounds for his allegation. An example intentio could be, "If it appears that the horse belongs to Gaius Calpernicus Agrippa at civil law, ..."

The next part of that statement is the *condemnatio*, where the plaintiff gives the judge the authority to either find for the plaintiff what he asks for or absolve the defendant. An example of a condemnatio is, "... condemn Quintus Amatius Barbatus to pay 100 sestertii or absolve him."

The fourth element of the preliminary hearing is the *demonstratio*. This is only used in claims when the value can't be calculated. This is used when the plaintiff seeks other than financial compensation, such as punishment or exile of the defendant.

The next elements are the *exceptio* and *replicatio*. In this phase, the defendant can refute the claims of the plaintiff in the exceptio. The plaintiff uses the replicatio to invalidate the defense's exceptio. The defendant and plaintiff can continue filing these in turn until one is considered to have won. This should not be considered arguing a case in front of the court. Instead the exceptio and replicatio can be considered the filing of the written evidence that will be admitted in the trial.

The final element of the preliminary hearing is the *praescriptio*, where the plaintiff agrees that if the case goes to trial he will contain his case to the specific claim mentioned in the intentio and not bring in other claims he might have against the defendant.

In some cases, all that is required for judgment is the preliminary hearing. The plaintiff can challenge the defendant to an oath. If the defendant swears on the oath that he didn't commit the crime he wins. If he refuses to swear, the plaintiff wins. Alternatively, the defendant could request the plaintiff take the same oath. If the plaintiff agrees to take the oath, he wins. Otherwise the defendant wins. The plaintiff can't turn the oath back to the defendant a second time. Since oaths are made before the gods, they are taken very seriously and even hardened killers think twice before risking the punishment of the gods by stating a false oath. At the Keeper's discretion, any investigator who gives false testimony will have his Luck halved until he atones to the gods.

Once the trial commences, the cases are plead before the judge chosen in the nominatio. The trial is held in a public place, usually the Forum Romanum if it's in Rome. Under the Empire the plaintiff and defendant usually hire advocates, professional orators familiar with the legal system, to argue the case. In many cases, the patrons of the parties hire the advocates as part of fulfilling their duty as patron.

Witnesses can be summoned but are not required to appear. However, a witness who refuses to appear is considered untrustworthy and suffers a -20% to their Status score. The

value of a witness's testimony is often tied to his social status. A patrician's words carry more weight than a plebeian's, and a citizen is often considered more reliable than a foreigner. Slaves can testify but must be beaten beforehand to insure that the testimony provided is truthful.

Both sides can submit oral and written evidence, but written evidence is preferred. The burden of proof lies with the plaintiff.

Once both sides have argued, the judge takes everything into account, including the documentation from the exceptio and replicatio, and renders his verdict.

Once a verdict is handed down, the execution of the verdict commences. The loser must provide to the winner whatever was stipulated in the condemnatio or dictated by legal statute. The victor is required to collect the verdict without the court's assistance. If the guilty party doesn't pay, the winner must wait thirty days before requesting an *actio iudicati* from the praetor, giving the debtor one last chance to pay.

If payment is still not rendered, the creditor can request that the praetor send the loser's property into possession. In this case, the bankruptcy is publicized and other creditors can come forward with claims. Once the creditors are together, they select an executor to auction off the debtor's property. The debtor's entire estate goes to the bidder willing to pay the highest amount of the debt; it is not broken up piecemeal.

In criminal cases, the execution includes the sentence if the defendant is found guilty.

Punishment

Romans take a very punitive attitude toward criminals. The Empire has numerous punishments for different crimes. Punishments include fines (*damnum*), bonds (*vincula*), re-taliation (*talio*), infamy (*ignominia*), banishment (*exilium*), slavery (*servitus*), and death. There are many ways a man can be sentenced to death in the Empire. Some options include burning (*crematio*), maiming by animals (*damnatio ad bes-tias*), beheading (*percussio securi*), strangling (*strangulatio*), scourging (*flagello*), throwing the guilty from the Tarpeian rock (*dejectio e rupe Tarpeia*), crucifixion — only non-citizens are crucified (*in crucem actio*), and throwing the guilty into the river (*projectio in profluentem*). On some occasions, when a criminal is thrown into a river, he is placed in a sack with a rat, viper, or similar animal.

Legality in Roman Life

The Romans have laws regulating most facets of daily life. Below are a list of crimes, laws, punishments, and other legal terms that investigators are likely to either commit or suffer from. Where known, punishments are included.

Many of the laws and punishments included below had sub-laws and fine degrees of gradation. In an effort to keep this article succinct and useful in a gaming environment, some have been simplified with sub-laws rolled up into a single law.

As with all things, there are always exceptions and the

exceptions usually correlate to how powerful or wealthy the family is. The poor and the infamous, however, can expect little leeway.

Actio Servi Corrupti (Actions Corrupting a Slave)

If a Roman citizen convinces a slave to commit a crime, whether that slave was his own or not, the citizen is guilty of lessening the value of the slave. If convicted, the corruptor (*instigator*) must pay the difference between the slave's old value and his current value, as well as double any damages done by the slave.

Adoptio (Adoption)

Adoptio is the process by which one pater adopts the male son of another pater. The first step is the *mancipatio*, a ritualized sale of the son to his new pater. A mutually agreed up on sum of money changed hands. The second and final step is the *vindicatio*, whereby the new pater appears before a *iudex* and makes the case for the adoption. While a formality, it is considered to be ritually a very important step.

The son now falls under the *patria potestas*, of his new father and relinquishes all claim to his old household, including the right of inheritance. Legally, the adoptee is for all intents and purposes, born of his new father. The son, however, can maintain ties with his old family and call of them for familial support if necessary.

It is possible for adoption to transfer a son from the plebian to the patrician class or the other way.

Women, even *sui iuris* women, are not adopted and can't adopt a new son.

Advocatus (Advocate)

An *advocatus* serves as a person's legal representation. He can advise his cliens in legal matters and represent him at trial. While many plaintiffs ask their patrons to serve as their advocati, it isn't required. An advocatus expects payments for his service.

Alieni Iuris (Dependent)

Subject to another's control. Children, women, and slaves are all considered *alieni iuris* and have few legal rights of their own.

Confuga (Refugee)

A *confuga* is a person fleeing an enemy who takes refuge in an inviolate location, such as in a temple or under a statue of a reigning or dead emperor.

Corrumpere (To Bribe, To Forge)

This is to either bribe a judge, magistrate, or arbitrator; or to forge a document. Forging a testament or oath is *corrumpere tabulas testamenti*, to forge an account is *corrumpere rationes*, and to forge a promissory note is *corrumpere chirographum*. If a slave commits forgery, he is killed. If a citizen commits forgery, he is banished from the Empire and stripped of his citizenship. A forgery is called a *falsum*.

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A LIGHT IN DARKNESS

Damnatio Ad Bestias (Sentenced to the Beasts)

This is a form of punishment usually reserved for the plebeians. Someone sentenced *obicere bestiis*, to expose to the beasts, is tied to a stake in an arena. Once secured, wild beasts such as lions are released into the arena to attack.

Damnatio Ad Metallum (Sentenced to the Mines)

Analogous to a death sentence, the convicted is sentenced to work in a mining camp. Prior to deportation to the mine, the guilty is stripped of all his property and scourged. At the mine, the prisoners are usually chained together and forced to work long hours. Romans use this punishment in cases where the death sentence is usually handed out, but mitigating circumstances warrant a slightly reduced sentence.

Dolus Malus

Romans look to the intent behind crimes as well as the actual crime committed. *Dolus Malus* is the evil intent behind an action that causes injury, or the malicious intent behind not performing an action that should have been performed, such as a slave intentionally not closing a stable allowing his master's horses to escape. A person can be convicted of dolus malus in addition to the actual crime.

Exilium (Banishment)

If a citizen is sentenced to banishment, he and his family are stripped of their citizenship and forfeit their property. They are then forced to leave the region from which they've been banished. This can be a city, a province, or the entire Empire depending on the crime they were convicted of. Banishment can be for life or for a set period of time. If an exile returns to the region before it is supposed to end, the person can be killed with impunity by a citizen.

Familia

The central unit of Roman life. It should be considered a household instead of a family. It consists of a paterfamilias, or pater, his spouse, children, slaves, and any clientes.

Flagello (Whipping)

If a man is sentenced to death by whipping, he is first placed in a *furca*. While restrained, he is scourged to death.

Furca (Fork)

The furca is synonymous with a yoke. A criminal's head is lashed to the center and his arms are outstretched and attached to the ends. It is used in *flagello* or merely as a minor form of punishment. In the latter case, it's usually reserved for slaves who commit larceny. The slave must wear the furca everywhere he goes, signaling to others that he is a *furcifer*, someone not to be trusted. If an investigator becomes a furcifer, his Status is lowered 40%, to a minimum of 01%. The furca is removed after a term determined by the Keeper. It varied from Roman judge to judge. Once removed, furcifer's Status resumes its prior level.

Furtum (Theft)

Roman theft happens not only when a person takes something that isn't his, but also when using something that isn't his without or against the owner's consent, such as collecting a debt on behalf of someone who hasn't authorized it. An important aspect to thievery is that the item must be owned by someone. If the item isn't owned, such as money belonging to an inheritance that hasn't been claimed, it isn't considered stolen. However, given the nature of Roman society, free people, particularly wives and children, can be stolen because they are considered the property of the family's patriarch.

If a person is caught in the act of theft, the penalty is four times the value of the item stolen. The Romans consider a thief caught fleeing the scene or trying to dispose of the item on the same day it was stolen to be technically in the act.

If a thief is caught with the item after the fact, he is only liable for twice the value of the item. This means that if an investigator is caught in possession of a stolen item that he didn't personally steal, he could still be liable for twice its value.

Gerere Se (To Conduct Oneself)

Rome is a very class- and status-conscious society. It's not surprising that attempts at illegitimately rising above one's station are a serious crime with a severe punishment. Punishable impersonations include a citizen or a foreigner impersonating a member of the upper class, a slave pretending to be a freeman, or someone acting as a soldier who is not. This crime is punishable by death.

Homicidium (Murder)

Homicidium is killing someone who is not exempt from the law. Killing a slave is not considered homicidium. The penalty for killing someone without recognizable cause is death. The social status of the victim determines the execution method used. Higher status murderers were beheaded or strangled while low status murderers are either burned, thrown from the Tarpeian Rock, or condemned to the beasts.

Slaves can't be killed with impunity, unless the killer owns the slave. If a person kills someone else's slave, the owner of the slave can instigate a civil claim against the killer for monetary damages equal to the value of the slave.

Incendium (Arson, A Fire)

Arson, usually to prevent the spread of something horrific, is common in *Call of Cthulhu*. Regardless of the reason that an investigator burns down a building within Rome, the punishment is death by immolation. Setting fire to a country building bears lesser penalties, equal to four times the value of the property.

If a human life is lost in the fire, the *incendiarius* is also considered a murderer.

Taking items from a fire or receiving goods taken from a fire incurs a fine at four times the value of the item.

Infamia (Infamy)

This is not a written law. It is instead a practice that developed over time but was not codified. *Infamia* is the loss of certain public rights. It is usually a consequence for a woman committing adultery, a soldier being discharged from the army before his term of service is up, or a citizen committing dolus malus, furtum, *rapina*, and *injuria*.

It's also a consequence of practicing prostitution, appearing as an actor on a stage, or fighting wild beasts for money.

An *infame* becomes an *aerarius*, someone still subject to taxation but can't vote or hold public office. Once a person becomes an infame, they are for life.

In Cthulhu Invictus, an infame's maximum Status is 30%.

Injuria

Injuria is injury, either physical or social – striking a person with the hand or anything held in the hand, uttering abusive words, libeling someone, slandering, or soliciting a mater familias. A slave can't suffer an injuria, but his master can in his place.

Punishments varied. A libelous song might warrant capital punishment while a broken bone results in a settlement of 300 asses. In many cases, the plaintiff can sue for what he considers appropriate compensation. The iudex can award all, some, or none of the requested damages.

Iudex (Judge)

A *iudex* is the man chosen to preside over a trial. Citizens over the age of 18 who are financially solvent and in good standing can submit their names for inclusion on the album iudicum, a list of judges. When it comes time to select a judge, there are several ways. The praetor can appoint a judge, the plaintiff and defendant can go down the list until they find a name they both agree on, or the praetor can place each name in an urn and draw randomly until the plaintiff and defendant find one they agree on.

In situations where the plaintiff and defendant don't agree on the judge, they are bound to either take the last name on the list or the last name drawn from the urn.

A judge is not bound to serve on a case if he feels there is a conflict of interest, such as knowing one of the parties. In this case, the plaintiff and defendant have to choose a new judge.

In game terms, a man must have a Status of 40% or higher to serve as a judge.

Magia (Magic)

The Romans have a negative attitude toward the practice of magic. Magic with the intent of injuring or defrauding a citizen is punished by death for the practitioner and any associates. Magic is defined by the Romans as any action taken or item used to affect a supernatural outcome. Possession of magic books is forbidden and punishable by death. The books are burned in public.

Mancipation

The process of selling someone into slavery.

Pater

The head of the *familia*. The pater makes decisions for all the alieni iuris in his household. He has the right to kill any children under his guidance, but he is supposed to check with a council of family and friends before undertaking extreme punishments such as death or dismemberment.

The pater is also responsible for the actions of those under his supervision. If a slave, woman, or child commits a crime, the pater is responsible for the damages at court. He also has the option of surrendering the guilty party. To terminate the existing relationship, the pater must go through the formal process of mancipation. In the case of a son, the process must be repeated three times. It only had to be completed once for slaves or daughters.

Only the pater has rights under Roman law.

Anything given to a person who is under patria potestas became the legal property of the pater.

Patria Potestas

Patria potestas is the power of the father. By virtue of the common idea of patria potestas, the father has absolute control over his family in his role as pater.

Patria potestas is terminated when the pater dies. At that point, both sons and unmarried daughters become independent, *sui iuris*.

Peculium

A sum of money or property delegated to a son or slave by the pater to allow the person to carry out business. In theory, women were not entitled to this. In practice, many women have a *peculium* to draw from. In most cases a peculium is an allowance to be used as the recipient sees fit.

Periurium (Perjury)

Perjury is considered an offense against the gods, to be punished by them. As a result, there is no corporal punishment for perjury. However, a perjurer is considered dishonest and suffers a loss of 20 points of Status, to a minimum of 01%.

Pomerium

The *Pomerium* is considered the sacred boundary of the city of Rome. Any crime committed there is both a legal and a religious crime. The transgressor has committed blasphemy. According to Roman tradition, anything outside the Pomerium is not legally defined as Rome. The Pomerium wasn't encircled by walls; instead white *cippi* stones marked the boundaries. Purportedly first marked out by Romulus, the Pomerium grew over time. During the time of *Cthulhu Invictus*, Augustus, Claudius, and Nero all expanded the borders.

It's important to bear in mind that the Pomerium doesn't align with the physical city of Rome. Many buildings that are contiguous to the city aren't technically within the Pomerium. For example, during the late Republic, Pompey's Theatre wasn't within the sacred city. When Caesar was killed, his assassins only committed a legal crime, not a religious one.

As a sacred location, the Pomerium has numerous re-

strictions. These restrictions include a limit on the power of magistrates. A magistrate can have a person beaten but not executed within the Pomerium. When a soldier crosses into the Pomerium, he ceases being a soldier and is instead a citizen, losing special protections afforded to soldiers. No weapons are allowed within the sacred city, even lictors are required to remove the ax head from their fasces. Violation means death. In addition, it is illegal to bury the dead within the Pomerium.

Rapina

The forcible seizure of another's property. Punishable by infamia and monetary compensation.

Rupes Tarpeia (Tarpeian Rock)

The Tarpeian Rock is a popular place of execution, especially during the Republic. After the rise of the Empire, it fell into disuse, but still serves as a place of extrajudicial punishment. The rock, a steep cliff on the south side of the Capitoline Hill, overlooks the Forum Romanum. Traitors, perjurers, and murderers are tossed from the cliff to their death. Throughout the Republic and into the Empire, it is common for people to execute rivals outside of the legal system by dragging their foes to the top of the rock and throwing them off.

The Tarpeian Rock is also used to kill the mentally and physically disabled. Because people with disabilities are considered abandoned by the gods, they don't need to live. An investigator who suffers from temporary or permanent insanity must be weary when in Rome lest he be snatched up, taken to the cliff, and tossed to his death.

Sacrilegium (Sacrilege)

Sacrilegium is the theft of sacred or ritual items from a temple. A thief who steals from a temple and is caught is sentenced to death.

Sui Iuris (Independent)

A *sui iuris* person is independent. Typically, freeborn men, freedmen, and some women are considered sui iuris. They are allowed to bring court cases, serve as witnesses, and provided testimony. Illegitimate children are also sui iuris. Women whose husband and father are both deceased are considered sui iuris if she's free born and has born three or more children. If she's a freed woman, she must first bear four or more children to be considered sui iuris.

Talio (Like for Like)

In cases of injuria, a plaintiff can request what was done to him be visited upon the perpetrator of the crime. *Talio* was commonly invoked in cases of mutilation.

Tullianum (State Prison)

On the northeast slope of the Capitoline Hill is Rome's only true prison. It is located on the Forum Romanum, facing the Curia. Two levels are subterranean. Prisoners are kept on the lowest level in twelve-foot-high chambers. The prisoners are lowered by rope into the lower chamber where they stay while awaiting trial. The lower floor is connected to Rome's sewer system, the Cloaca Maxima, to allow for disposal of prisoners who die before their trial.

Incarceration isn't a punishment in ancient Rome. Instead, the Tullianum is used for detention of high-profile political prisoners, especially foreign leaders before trial, and for some executions.

Turba (A Riot)

No *Call of Cthulhu* game is complete without breaking and entering. In Imperial Rome, breaking and entering is dealt with severely. To qualify as *turba* and not *rapina*, robbery by force, more than four men must be involved in the break in. If the men enter the house armed (*turba cum telis*) and are caught, they are punished by death. Otherwise, they are forced to pay restitution and can be tortured.

Turba also means a riot or tumult in addition to its specific legal definition.

Veneficium (Murder by Poison)

Venefici are men and women who murder by poison, keep a cache of poisons, or trade in poisons. A person convicted of *veneficium* is sentenced to death. Lower-class citizens are thrown to the beasts, noncitizens are crucified, and the upper classes are beheaded or allowed to commit suicide.

If a person uses poison to induce an abortion, the guilty party is exiled if the woman is upper class or sent to the mines if the woman is lower class. If the woman dies, the criminal is sentenced to death.

Venenum (Poison)

There are three main categories of poisons. *Venenum malum* are poisons used to commit a crime. The penalty for either possessing or using one is death. *Venenum bonum* is a drug that has beneficial side effects, even though it is poisonous in some doses. *Venenum amatorium*, also known as *poculum* colloquially means "love potion." It's a poison used to induce an abortion.

Vis Armata (Force of Arms)

Violence committed with a weapon (*cum telis*), including clubs and stones (*fustis*), is a more serious crime than violence committed without weapons. The use of a weapon by a person in the commission of a crime guarantees a death sentence if convicted.

Even if the weapon is not used but merely carried, the person is guilty of *vis armata* because he caused *terror armorum* in his victim.

Vim Vi Repellere Licet (Force May Be Repelled by Force)

A common element in many *Call of Cthulhu* games are thieves and thugs sent to harass the investigators and usually the investigators fight back. In a court of law, the defendant can argue self-defense by force. Could a Roman investigator

do the same?

Under Roman law, self-defense is an allowable defense when someone is attacked. However, there are interesting facets to the law that could get investigators in trouble. If the investigator is attacked at night, he can kill the attacker and if taken into custody plead self-defense. The killing is considered *iure causes*, or justly caused. However, if the attack occurs during the day, the investigators can only claim selfdefense if the attacker is armed with a weapon. If the attacker is unarmed and the investigator kills him, the investigator could be guilty of homicidium, or murder, if the person he killed is a citizen. If the attacker is a slave, the investigator can be sued in civil court for damages by the slave owner.

Violatio Sepulcri (Grave Desecration, Tomb Robbing)

In Imperial Rome the law defines two reasons a criminal would open a grave. First, it is to rob the deceased of his valuables. Second, it is to add another body, presumably to hide the victim of another crime.

A minor infraction is punishable with a 100,000 sestertii fine and infamy. A major infraction, such as removing a corpse or committing the crime while armed, is a death sentence. This crime is considered an *actio popularis*, meaning that if the person wronged, the owner of the grave site, doesn't want to accuse someone of the crime, another Roman citizen can.

Women and the Law

There will be, and should be, female investigators. However, women legally held an unfortunate position in Roman law, so in a game trying to maintain a modicum of historical accuracy, few women could be investigators.

Under Roman Law, women are considered the property of men and can't undertake legal action on their own. They can only pursue a matter in the courts if their husband, father, or a guardian did so for them. Women can't provide testimony, serve as witnesses, or bring cases to the court. However, women can plead ignorance of the law as a defense. Women can't enter into contracts or wills. Only the six Vestal Virgins were exempt from these laws.

In the time of *Cthulhu Invictus*, sui iuris freeborn women who had borne three children and sui iuris freedwomen who'd borne four children can dispense with a guardian and undertake a measure of legal action on their own. Sui iuris women are considered the start and the end of their familia. She has no potestas over her children.

A sui iuris woman, although independent, is required to have a male guardian, usually an agnate. This guardian handles many financial and legal decisions for the woman.

Many sui iuris women seek employment because they have no pater to provide for them.

Traditionally, women, even sui iuris women, are handed over to their families for punishment. The punishment is left up to the pater. Typically, the pater went light. The only crime that regularly warranted the death penalty is adultery. But, the pater is obligated to also kill the adulterer. He can't legally kill one without killing the other.

Wives enjoy a somewhat elevated position. A pater can't kill his wife, or sell her into slavery. She is entitled to the same inheritance as the pater's children should he die. However, like other women under pater potestas, any property she is given during the course of her marriage becomes the property of her husband.

Women can't hold public or civil offices.

As you can see, there isn't a lot women can do. A Keeper looking to run a game close to historically accurate will want to take these strictures into account. Otherwise, the Keeper should feel free to ignore any and all of the rules that relegated women to a lower status than men, except as the plot dictates.



A LIGHT IN DARKNESS



eepers may find themselves with players choosing the exciting but dangerous profession of professional sports charioteer. It won't be long until those players are looking to win some glory, and some prize money, on the track of one of the Empire's many circuses (or venues). But what is a Keeper to do then? How can they role play a chariot race effectively? What mechanics should be used?

These simple rules for a competitive chariot race answer that dilemma. It tries to capture the tension and excitement, as well as the danger, of participating in a chariot race. One must be both skilled and lucky to not only win a race but to survive one.

Step One - The Competition

Keepers should have the charioteer investigator roll their Luck for each of the other participants in the race. This is to determine the Drive skill of the other charioteers they'll be racing against. If the player rolls less than half of their Luck, that particular charioteer has 1D12 percentage points less in their Drive skill than the investigator. If the player makes their Luck roll by more than half of their score, then the other driver is evenly matched, having the same Drive skill. However, if the player fails a Luck roll, then a rival driver is more skilled than they are, having 1D12 more points in their Drive skill than the player.

Step Two - Keeping Score

The race begins. There are seven rounds of play to mirror the seven circuits a racer must make of the track. Each round the investigator rolls Drive, and the Keeper (or other PCs assisting the Keeper) rolls for each of the other charioteers. Each round a charioteer's individual score is determined. Their score for that round equals the number of points they either passed or failed their Drive roll by.

For example: Jalal, a charioteer for the Reds, has a Drive skill of 60% and begins a race. He makes a Drive roll, succeeding with a roll of 40. His score for Round One of the race is +20.

His rival Marius, racing for the Blues, has a Drive of 70% and passes with a roll of 52. His score at the end of Round One is +18.

Another charioteer, a newcomer to the Greens called Rogh, has a Drive of 50% and fails with a roll of 75. At the end of Round One, his score is -25!

At the end of the first circuit, Jalal has a slight lead over Marius, and poor Rogh is lagging far behind both of them.

Racer	Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Jalal	Reds	20							
Marius	Blues	18							
Rogh	Greens	-25							

The score is kept for each round, adding or subtracting to the investigator's and their NPC competitors' overall score. However, should any driver roll a critical failure (96–00) or a critical success (01–05), they (or the Keeper, if the driver is an NPC competitor) must roll on either of the following two tables.

Critical Failures (96-00)

If a charioteer gets a critical failure on his Drive roll, they are in trouble. They immediately lose twice the number of points they normally would for that round, and must immediately make another Drive roll, with the chance reduced by half. If they succeed, they safely recover and continue the race. If they fail this second roll, the Keeper rolls 1D4 to determine what happens.

1. A Horse Is Injured — The charioteer continues the race with a 5% penalty per Drive roll. After the race the investigator makes a Luck roll, with a failure meaning the horse must be replaced (and possibly put down).

2. The Chariot Is Damaged — The charioteer continues the race with a 10% penalty per Drive roll. After the race the investigator makes a Luck roll, with a failure meaning the chariot cannot be repaired and must be replaced.

3. Minor Crash — The charioteer badly collides with something and suffers 1D4 points of damage. Their chariot is damaged and a horse is injured, they continue the race at a 15% penalty per Drive roll.

4. Wreck — The charioteer wrecks their team! They are out of the race. The charioteer must make a Dodge roll to cut the reins loose and dive free of the crashing chariot. If they succeed in their Dodge roll, they suffer 2D6 points of damage. If they fail this Dodge roll, they become entangled in the wreck and take 2D10 points of damage.

Critical Successes (01-05)

If a charioteer rolls a critical success on their Drive roll, they've had a very good round. They gain twice the number of points they normally would for that round, and must immediately make another Drive roll, with the chance reduced by half. If they fail, nothing happens, but if they succeed, the Keeper rolls 1D4 to determine what happens.

1. Block — The charioteer cuts off the charioteer behind them (who has the closest overall score below them). That

charioteer loses 1D10 points from their overall score. If a charioteer is in last place and rolls this critical success, nothing happens.

2. Pressure — The charioteer pressures the driver ahead of them (who has the closest overall score above them). That driver loses 1D10 points from their overall score. If a charioteer is in first place and rolls this critical success, nothing happens.

3. Attack — The charioteer can choose to make a whip attack on any driver whose score is within 30 points of their own. Their target immediately loses 1D20 Drive points. If the attack succeeds their opponent suffers normal whip damage.

4. Bump — The charioteer bumps the nearest driver (determined by overall score). That driver immediately suffers the effects of a critical failure. Their opponent loses no points but must roll 1D4 on the critical failure table to determine the effects of being bumped (see above).

Winning the Race

The driver with the highest total score at the end of seven rounds is the winner of the race. Keepers can award 1 point of Status to investigators who manage to come in first place. Keepers may also allow investigators who win a chariot race to roll a skill check to increase their skill. Those who roll higher than their current Drive skill number gain 1D3 additional points to their Drive skill.



A LIGHT IN DARKNESS

SCELLANEA



n investigator from a well-placed Roman family receives a message from a childhood friend. The missive is delivered by a young girl, a fetid street urchin, who gives her name as Nessa through rotten teeth. She was dispatched from the Temple of Vesta by Livia, one of the six holy Vestal Virgins. In the missive the priestess explains that she requires the investigators help and begs that they meet her at the slave's gate of the temple at nightfall on the eve of June 8.

This is highly unusual, as any Roman making a Know roll realizes, as the Vestal Virgins are the honored chaste priestesses of Vesta and kept secluded from the public. The investigator remembers Livia leaving her family at age ten to become a novitiate in the temple, something which brought their family much honor. Contact with Livia has been limited since then due to her office, yet she has sent gifts to her family in thanks for garnering her such a prized position. The kitchens of the House of the Virgins, where the priestesses live, employ extra help leading up to Vestalia (the holiday to Vesta on June 9th), and Nessa works there for scraps. The urchin asks for five sestertii to lead the group to Livia but settles for anything offered.

The round, columned Temple of Vesta is brightly lit even late in the evening. The area around the temple's east-facing gate is filled with people, merchants leading donkeys are haggling over the price of offerings, and slaves carry in bushes of sweet-smelling flowers. Nessa leads the investigators around behind the temple itself to the eastern edge of the Roman Forum. Here there is a lavish, three-story palace of stone. The warm glow of firelight can be seen burning within and the voice and laughter of women drifts out over the palace walls. Armed guards stand outside the main entrance, but the urchin leads investigators to a grove of trees just beside a small north-facing gate. As the sun sets, Nessa tells the investigators to wait and slips inside. Moments later, a cloaked figure exits and approaches the grove. This is Livia, a lovely twenty-sixyear-old woman, rapidly approaching the end of her term as a virginal priestess. She has the sculpted features of a Roman woman of noble birth.

Concealed by the grove of trees, Livia embraces her childhood friend warmly and thanks everyone for coming. She is in need of assistance from "those who can freely move through the city." She explains that a fellow priestess named Cassia has done the unthinkable: she's fallen in love with a young man and is considering running away from the temple. Livia explains: "Cassia is headstrong and a bit of a dreamer. She told me that while she was helping prepare for the upcoming festival, she was approached by a young man selling flowers. His name is Titus Attius Assina and it seems the two were childhood sweethearts before Cassia's family sent her to the temple. He used the excuse of selling flowers for the celebration to see her and professed his love for her. She admitted that, over the last two weeks, the two have snuck messages to one another and that he has convinced her to run away with him! Attius insists they were meant to marry and he knows this because he has dreamt of her."

Rather than reporting the incident, as is proper, Livia is trying to save the girl from punishment. Should Cassia violate her vows of chastity with the young man, he would be executed and she'd be buried alive for her transgression. Livia asks the investigators to speak with Titus Assina in the hopes of dissuading him from his course of action. She offers coins (two hundred sestertii) that investigators might bribe Titus Assina with if necessary. She begs that they hurry to a *caupona* (an inn) in the Aventine called the Three Heads, where he is staying. Should investigators convince Titus Assina to leave, they should return to the temple and report back to Livia that all is well. Otherwise, she may need to report Cassia to the other priestesses.

The Three Heads

The trip to the Three Heads is dangerous after dark, taking over an hour walking the unlit route. As investigators enter the Aventine, tenement buildings crowd in on either side of narrow roadways, and delivery wagons rush by without heed for pedestrians. The Three Heads, a warm one-room inn, smelling strongly of sweat and overcooked bread, occupies the ground floor of one such tenement. Patrons fill the tables, drinking and speaking noisily. Upon questioning the *caupo* (the innkeeper) and passing a Fast Talk or Persuade roll, the investigators are directed to a back table. Here sits a very handsome Roman man in his late twenties. When approached, he gives his name as Titus Assina. His manner is friendly and earnest as he offers to share a jug of wine and some bread and oil, as well as conversation, with the investigators.

Once Cassia is mentioned he seems crestfallen that his plan has been discovered. He claims to understand the dangers in the situation, yet has legitimate reason to pursue Cassia. He explains: "Before she was sent to the temple, her father and I entered into a contract for me to marry Cassia! Yet he went back on the deal when it became clear that she would garner more honors for her family's name as a priestess of Vesta. I tried for years to put Cassia out of my mind, but I could not forget her." He admits sheepishly that his affections for Cassia make him feel foolish, but he dreamt often of her. "She is my fate, and I hers." Attempts at bribery anger him, yet he makes a counteroffer. Assina offers to reward the

investigators handsomely for their help in getting Cassia out of Italia with him. He's recently inherited his father's estates in a far-off province and will take Cassia there, where they'll never be found. He offers the sum of five thousand sestertii for their help in spiriting Cassia away.

Should the investigators refuse to help him and push him to leave Rome without Cassia, he will finally give ground. He only asks that they help him see Cassia one last time to say goodbye. "I wish to tell her that when she is thirty, and able to leave her service at last, I will be there waiting for her!" In either case, should the investigators agree to return with him to the temple, Titus will go to his room to prepare to leave Rome at once. He returns, bringing a large waterskin and some travel belongings in a sack. In the case that the investigators refuse to bring him back to the temple and pressure him to leave Rome, Titus Assina will back down only when threatened with violence. If threatened, he will state that he wants no trouble and asks only that the investigators bring a message to Cassia, stating that he will wait for her. Upon their departure, however, he shadows them back to the temple and sneaks in behind them.

In the event that the investigators choose to attempt to harm Titus Assina instead, events will reveal that the lovestruck young man is no slouch in defending himself. He has also employed several of the local toughs from the Three Heads to back him up, should the investigators attempt to harm him. If pressed and in dire danger, Assina leaves the toughs to do his fighting for him and escape, only to then shadow the investigators once again. His main goal is within the Temple of Vesta, and he'll do anything to reach it.

Returning to the Temple

If Titus Assina is with the investigators, he will press them to return to the temple immediately. The return trip through the streets is equally dark, but Titus Assina shows no fear. With a Listen roll, faint footsteps can be heard from alleyways, where the toughs Titus hired shadow him to the temple. Upon approaching the temple, anyone making a Spot Hidden roll notes little Nessa, posted underneath the same grove of trees. She is nervous: "Livia rushed to the temple after the new priestess, the pretty girl with long blond hair." If he is with the investigators, Titus happily identifies Cassia from her description and asks that they go to the temple to her. The temple has one main entrance for the public, yet Nessa confides that there is a smaller entrance at the rear for use by the priestesses, hidden in a sacred grove of olive trees.

Inside the sacred grove, the scent of olive trees and wet grass fills the air. A Spot Hidden is required to discover a small door, tucked well behind an ancient gnarled tree. It is unbarred and opens easily into an impressively appointed room, lined with rich boxes full of sealed scrolls and clay tablets. With a successful Civics roll, investigators realize they've discovered the storehouse of the legal documents of the Roman Senate. Fragrant incense wafts through the curtain covering the door and brings with it the sound of angry female voices.

In the *cella* (main columned area) of the round temple, standing before a vast burning hearth fire, are the two priest-

esses Livia and Cassia. The younger priestess is in tears with Livia clinging to her arms upon the group's entry. Cassia's tears turn to joy at the appearance of Titus, who is either with the party or now appears, having snuck in behind the investigators. Livia shouts, "What is he doing here? This is not what we discussed!" The young priestess breaks away from Livia to head for Titus, who rushes to her side before the sacred hearth. "All shall be well," says Titus, his face transported in joy. "For here, before the fire, I promise you, Cassia, you will soon be made a whole woman!"

Tearing away from Cassia, Titus attempts to throw his waterskin into the sacred hearth. Should he be successful, the flame of the sacred hearth dampens and unless tended to goes out in two rounds. The priestesses begin to scream and Livia attacks Titus, clawing his face. He draws a concealed dagger as scraping footsteps sound from inside the store room behind the group. The hired thugs have entered behind him, prepared to back Titus in this fight, yet even they will hesitate should Titus harm or kill Livia. Indeed, Titus tries to kill anyone attempting to rekindle the dying sacred flame, shouting, "Flames could not keep him at bay for long, my love, and after tonight, no purity will hold Y'golonac away from Rome."

Should the flames go out, the Great Old One Y'golonac will be free to enter Rome, as the sacred fire that once protected the city from the lustful god's hunger is no more.

Titus Attius Assina, Love-struck and Deadly Cultist of Y'golonac

STR 16	CON 15	SIZ 13	INT 12	POW 13			
DEX 10	6 APP 15	EDU 14	SAN 0	HP 14			
Damag	e Bonus: +1D4						
Weapo	ns: Fist 80%, 1D3	3 + db					
Gra	pple 55%, dama	ge special					
Kic	Kick 45%, 1D6 + db						
Knife 80%, 1D4 + db							
Gladius 75%, 1D6+1 + db							
Armor: none.							

Spells: Ariadne's Twine, Cause Disease, Contact Y'golonac, Evil Eye.Skills: Conceal 40%, Dodge 60%, Fast Talk 65%, Hide 55%, Insight 60%, Listen 65%, Persuade 70%, Sneak 54%, Spot Hidden 44%, Throw 45%, Track 60%.

Hired Thugs from the Three Heads, Hired by Titus Assina (1D2 per investigator)

STR 15	CON 16	SIZ 12	INT 8	POW 10			
DEX 10	APP 9	EDU 10	SAN 50	HP 14			
Damage B	onus: +1D4						
Weapons:	Weapons: Fist/Punch 65%, 1D3 + db						
Grapp	le 60%, dama	age special					
Knife 7	70%, 1D4 + o	lb					
Club 60%, 1D6 + db							
Armor: no	one.						
Chiller Con	accel 650/ D	adaa 550/ L	1: do 550/ Sp	oal 650/ Spot			

Skills: Conceal 65%, Dodge 55%, Hide 55%, Sneak 65%, Spot Hidden 75%, Track 55%.

Sanity Awards

A LIGHT IN DARKNESS



This encounter can be set on any isolated stretch of road in the Empire. The investigators are travelling to deliver a message to a scholar named Durius. When investigators arrive at his dwelling, they discover the household to be in disarray. They learn that Durius, a respected astrologer, has been missing for a week.

His distraught wife Pulina believes he was taken by bandits along the road and blames the local tribune for this lack of safety. She begs the investigators to help locate her husband, clinging to the hope that he is still alive and being held prisoner. If investigators hesitate to search for her husband, Pulina offers them her gold bangles (worth 4000 sestertii) as a payment for searching for her beloved Durius.

Keeper's Information

A century ago, a mad Greek sorcerer named Keribos was expelled from Corinth for his practices. Keribos was obsessed with the dark chaos of He Who Is Not to Be Named. He spent a decade consecrating a group of stones dedicated to Hastur that allowed him to both summon and bind byakhee. Mounting such creatures, he made periodic visits to the dead city of Carcosa before local townsfolk discovered what he was up to and stoned him to death. However, the consecrated stones remain active and byakhee still appear on this stretch of road on nights when the star Aldebaran rises above the horizon. These creatures follow the conditions of the binding enchantment, transporting those within the immediate area of the consecrated stones to Carcosa. Whether these "passengers" are willing, or even alive, is of little consequence.

Starting the Investigation

The household has little more to add, but a successful Insight roll reveals they dislike talking about Durius' work. They confide that he had been "working very hard" the past few days. Before he left town, Durius purchased yellow paint and a spear. The merchant says that he seemed worried or tired. He refused to say what he was doing or where he was going.

The Study

Searching through his study, the investigators find a number of astrological charts. An Occult or Science (Astrology) roll reveals that the primary focus of his work was the star Palilicium (the Roman name for Aldebaran) and its movements. This star is believed to have a highly negative impact on the human mind, much like the full moon.

The scholar seems to have made a number of astrological

calculations, and although the final sections remain incomplete, it is obvious that he considered the work to be very important. Investigators making an Idea roll can determine that Palilicium's position just as the sun sets seemed to be significant. A successful Accounting, Library Use, or Occult roll by the investigators allows them to locate an old scroll written in Greek by a man named Keribos. Beside it is a Latin translation of the scroll written by Durius (see Boxed Text). An Empire or Other Kingdom (Greece) roll allows investigators to recall that Keribos was a magician, exiled from Corinth for his practices. He was killed and burned by fearful villagers not far from this very spot.

About Keribos

Locals are quite hesitant to talk about Keribos, and getting them to reveal the location of his final resting place will require a Persuade roll. However, those telling the investigators how to find where the mad magician was put down and buried also give them a stern warning: Get there early in the day and return to town long before sunset. The directions and warning are all the help the investigators receive, as locals steadfastly refuse to visit the place.

If questioned as to why they are so fearful of the region, the locals make a ceremonial gesture; those making a Know roll realize this is to ward off evil. Locals explain that the ghost of Keribos haunts the area at night, looking for victims to drag with him back to Hades. All who spend the night along that stretch of road vanish and are never seen again. While this story is untrue, it has become part of the local folklore.

The Magician's Stones

The site where Keribos was burned is about a league and a half (or 2 miles/3 km) outside of town. The road travels through a valley covered with thick foliage. Investigators making a search of the area, and making a successful Spot Hidden roll, discover four standing stones. The stones, which are about a Roman *pertica* (10 ft/3 m) high, seem out of place, with a successful Natural World roll confirming they are not naturally found in the area. The stones are placed one *actus* (120 ft/ 35.5m) from one another, in a rough square pattern. Each stone has an odd groove carved into it, which has been colored with a fresh coat of yellow paint. The figure is the abhorrent Yellow Sign, and investigators seeing one for the first time must make a Sanity roll for 0/1d6 Sanity points.

At the base of one of these stones is a patch of blackened earth where nothing grows. This is where the wizard Keribos was burned alive and later buried in a shallow grave. Nothing

has grown on this patch of earth since this happened, nearly a hundred years ago.

Durius' Campsite

Investigators searching this area can locate a fairly fresh campsite with a successful Spot Hidden roll. Some of Durius' personal possessions, including scrolls and notes in his handwriting, are found scattered about the camp. Investigators making a successful Track roll find signs of a violent struggle, while those who make a successful First Aid or Medicine roll easily realize more than

enough blood was shed for this to prove fatal to the victim.

The Curse of the Stones

Every evening when Aldebaran first appears in the sky, a byakhee is summoned for each human located within the square formed by the Yellow Sign–emblazoned stones. The square does not imprison the byakhee and they may freely operate beyond its boundaries.

The creatures land near the humans and wait for them to mount in order to carry them to Carcosa. Unless the rider has protection from the cold and vacuum, such a trip is fatal. If the human hesitates, attacks, or seems confused or afraid, the byakhee attacks. So long as the creature returns to Carcosa with a human body, the enchantment is satisfied, even if said body is dead. Durius panicked and tried to flee; his enraged would-be mount then flew home with his corpse.

Fighting the Byakhee

The byakhee arrive by dropping out of the night sky to land a few feet from each investigator. The creatures do not immediately attack, as they wait to see if their "passengers" approach them to mount. Should this not occur the frustrated byakhee attack the investigators. The creatures attempt to reduce their targets to unconsciousness or 0 STR and thereafter carry them off towards Carcosa. Unless the rider has protection from the cold and vacuum, such a trip is fatal. If investigators defeat all the byakhee, no further creatures arrive until the following evening.

Byakhee (1 per human present)

The Life of Keribos

Written in Greek upon Egyptian papyrus, the sheets of this book are loosely bound together with twine. It is an autobiographic account of the

sorcerer Keribos' life from after his exile from Corinth to just days before his

demise. The writing gets more fractured and chaotic as Keribos descends

into madness as he details his intention to travel to the stars to meet with

Sanity loss 1D3/1D6; Cthulhu Mythos +3 percentiles; average 15 weeks

to study and comprehend. Spells: Invoke Night's Furies (Summon/Bind

Durius' Latin version includes most of the history. Sanity loss 0/1; Cthulhu

Mythos +1 percentiles; 3 weeks to study and comprehend. Spells: none.

the god on Palilicium.

Byakhee), Sign of Madness (Yellow Sign)

	•	-	-			
	STR 17	CON 16	SIZ 20	INT 8	POW 7	
	DEX 13	Move 5/20	flying		HP 18	
	Damage Bonus: +1D6					
Weapons: Claw 35%, damage 1D6 + db						
	Bite 35%, damage 1D6 + 1D6 STR drain.					
	Armor: 2 p					

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6 Sanity points to see a byakhee.

Resolution

There are a number of ways investigators can break the curse on this stretch of lonely road. Investigators can deface the Yellow Sign carvings with hammers and chisels or place an active Elder Sign upon any one. Investigators may also topple over and haul one of the stones out of alignment with the others. This would require over 300 STR points (perhaps using draft animals or several dozen slaves). Should the stone be re-erected and returned to its proper position byakhee would once again begin arriving as before. Keepers may allow investigators to realize this danger with a successful Cthulhu Mythos roll.

Sanity Awards

For defeating the byakhee+1	D3
For destroying the stones upon the lonely road $\dots + 1$.	D4

A LIGHT IN DARKNESS



Petillius Mancinus always held some of the wildest parties in Italia, constantly pushing to new heights of luxury, novelty, and excitement. Lately, he's taken to adding fine wines from all over the known world. One rare vintage proved disastrous. Deadly violence shot through the Petillius estate, leaving seventeen dead and almost twice that number wounded. Now, the party-turned-bloodbath is under investigation, but everyone is puzzled as there seems to be no cause for the sudden violence. No one remembers what sparked it, only that suddenly it started and just as quickly it was over. Most of the participants were frequent guests, known to one another and on good terms. What in the name of Hades happened?

Keeper's Note

Petillius Mancinus purchased something he shouldn't have. His effort to provide his guests with an unforgettable event was fulfilled, but not quite in the way he had in mind. One of the wines served at the party was vinified by a cult of Shub-Niggurath, and mixed with the Outer God's milk, extracted from one of her dark young. Petillius unwittingly served it to his guests, and the combination of sexual energy and the essence of Shub-Niggurath exploded into a spree of deadly violence.

Talking to Petillius Mancinus

The patrician welcomes anyone looking to help understand what happened. This event has damaged his social standing, and he's looking to restore his lost reputation. He allows investigators full access to his household, granting them permission to question anyone and review all records of the event.

Talking to the Staff

The household staff members are utterly flabbergasted and have no idea what happened. The food had been out for some time, and they'd just started serving the course of exotic wines. The guests were enjoying the selections when pandemonium broke out. The servants confirm that the only different item served at this time was a single clay amphora supplied by the wine merchant Breno of Tarraco. All the other exotic wines had been offered to guests in the past; only the rare exotic wine changes from event to event.

Talking to Breno of Tarraco

Petillius Mancinus' wine merchant knows nothing about the violence that occurred at the party. He'll remark how tragic

it is and how badly he feels that it happened, but steadfastly proclaims none of it to be his fault. Yes, he sold Mancinus the wine. The man is a difficult patron to please but one willing to pay good coin for hard-to-find items. Breno works hard to locate something special whenever Mancinus puts in an order. When the merchant learned that one of his suppliers, named Geta, had acquired an amphora of wine from the mysterious Vinea Perversa ("Twisted Vineyard"), he promptly purchased it and turned it over to house of Petillius staff.

Talking to Geta

This lowly merchant and hustler acquired the supposedly rare amphora of wine from a man named Balbus. He only had the single amphora and purchased it because the man claimed it came from the wooded region near Asculum, which is known for its fine red wines. Balbus told Geta that if he wanted more he should leave an aureus (a coin worth 100 sestertii) in the fountain outside of the walled vineyard where he lives. He even gave Geta a map, which the merchant gladly turns over to investigators if threatened or bribed for 100 sestertii.

Vinea Perversa

The map leads to a strange, walled (three-feet-high) compound a better part of one day's overland travel to the opposite side of the peninsula. No matter what time of day the investigators approach the villa and outbuildings, the sky appears to darken as if before a storm, yet no clouds gather (SAN roll 0/1).

Guards approach anyone coming near the compound, asking them their business and explaining that this is private property and visitors are admitted by invitation only. Investigators must make a successful Status or Fast Talk roll, with a -20% penalty, to convince the guards to escort them inside the compound.

Breaking in at Night

At night the grounds are guarded by 6 armed men who patrol the property's perimeter. There is only a 30% chance that investigators are able to sneak in without alerting the patrolling guards. Otherwise Keepers must have the investigators make a successful Sneak check. Anyone failing this roll might be discovered should the guards make a successful Listen check.

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The Compound

This property holds several outbuildings containing very little of interest: harvesting tools, livestock equipment, etc. The walled villa overlooking the rest of the vineyard appears to house the main personnel and operations. It is a logical destination. To the west of the villa are several hundred acres of twisted grapevines.

The Villa

If approached during the day, investigators are escorted within by personnel, and the guards posted at the gate stand aside. If approached at night, the gate is closed and a guard posted in the tower above challenges all who approach. Inside this walled area are the main villa and wine presses, as well as a large barn.

The Owner

A daytime approach brings a noblewoman and her manservant running out the door of the villa to offer assistance. Once the situation and events are explained, the man suddenly pales and stammers some explanation about "... shouldn't have happened, Domina Ceres...should not have been available...don't understand how—" and the woman's eyes flash with poorly concealed rage.

If the investigators manage to construct a reasonable cover story, and can Fast Talk their way past the guards, they will still be greeted by Ceres and her manservant. They will explain that the vineyard is private and that they don't accept visitors, but they're willing to make an exception.

The woman introduces herself as Ceres, saying "Welcome to Vinea Perversa". She invites the investigators inside for some refreshment, ordering the man, which is her butler Balbus, to set up a light meal for her guests. She offers the investigators chilled wine, cheese, and bread, as well as a place to relax after their travels. All of the food is, of course, laced with a drug (POT 12) that will put them to sleep.

Random Thugs under the Sway of Decrius Neops (Twice the number of investigators)

STR 14	CON 13	SIZ 14	INT 10	POW 10		
DEX 10	APP 9	EDU 8	SAN 50	HP 14		
Damage Bo	onus: +1D4					
Weapons:	Fist/Punch 6	0%, 1D3+db				
Grapple	e 45%, dama	ge special				
Kick 35	Kick 35%, 1D6+db					
Knife 50%, 1D+db						
Armor: none.						
Skills: Conceal 45%, Hide 55%, Sneak 50%.						

Domina Ceres, Owner of Vinea Camura and Priestess of Shub-Niggurath, age 30 (appears 18)

STR 12	CON 14	SIZ 11	INT 16	POW 19	
DEX 15	APP 16	EDU 16	SAN 0	HP 13	
Damage Bonus: none.					
Weapons: Small Knife 60%, damage 1D4					
Armor: none.					

Skills: Fast Talk 45%, Persuade 60%.

Spells: Become Spectral, Call Shub-Niggurath, Scarlet Circles (Ritual Gate Spell), Summon/Bind Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath, Wrack.

Balbus, Manservant to Ceres and Acolyte of Shub-Niggurath, age 35

STR 13	CON 11	SIZ 14	INT 13	POW 16		
DEX 15	APP 8	EDU 13	SAN 0	HP 13		
Damage Bonus: +1D4						
Weapons: Gladius 50%, damage 1D6+1 + db						

Small Knife 40%, damage 1D4 + db

Spells: Call Shub-Niggurath, Summon/Bind Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath, Shriveling

Skills: Bargain 55%, Fast Talk 35%, Grovel in Front of Ceres 89%, Persuade 40%.

Attack of the Blessed

Investigators who do not eat, or resist the drug, are soon attacked by 1D6 gof'nn hupadgh Shub-Niggurath, or "blessed" of Shub-Niggurath. These creatures appear to be mythical satyrs but are very real, twisted, and deformed. They rush in, surprising the investigators, and set upon them. If possible Ceres, a priestess of Shub-Niggurath, orders these creatures to subdue everyone in order to offer them to the dark young she has in the windowless building on the compound.

Gof'nn Hupadgh Shub-Niggurath, Twisted Satyrs

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
STR	11	10	13	9	10	8
CON	17	16	17	15	16	15
SIZ	13	12	14	11	10	13
INT	8	10	9	13	10	11
POW	15	16	15	17	16	17
DEX	10	9	8	10	13	11
HP	15	14	16	13	13	14
MOV	8	8	8	8	8	8
DB	none	none	+1D4	none	none	none
Weapo	ns: Cla	w 30%, dan	nage 1D6	+ db		

Bite 30%, damage 1D4

Gore 20%, damage 1D6 + db

Small Knife 40%, damage 1D4 + db

Armor: none. Regenerates 1D6 hit points per round until dead.

Spells: Call Shub-Niggurath, Summon/Bind Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath, Body Warping, Become Spectral, Scarlet Circles (Ritual Gate Spell)

Skills: Hide 90%, Sneak 70%. **Sanity Loss:** 0/1D4.

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The Barn

Should investigators approach the main buildings at night, Keepers should have them make Listen rolls. If successful the investigators hear a rumbling, muted trumpeting coming from this windowless building. The building is guarded by the same 6 satyr-like gof'nn hupadgh Shub-Niggurath (see above), who occasionally wander in to check on the captive. If their number is reduced to two or less, they raise the general alarm, summoning the entire household. Exactly who or MISCELLANEA

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Armor: none.

what answers is left to the Keeper.

The barn houses an imprisoned dark young of Shub-Niggurath. It is firmly bound in irons, a cuff around each of its hooves and tentacles, chained to the floor and against the structure's support beams. If investigators do twenty five points of damage to either the chains, or the wooden areas of the barn they are attached to, this weakens the creatures bonds enough so that it frees itself in 1D4 rounds.

High Priestess Ceres has been extracting milk from the dark young. She has been experimenting with mixing the milk in with the wine produced here and is testing samples of the concoction on isolated communities. Her manservant Balbus, looking to make some money on the sly, sold a single amphora of the dangerous beverage to the merchant Geta in Rome. Undiluted and uncontrolled, the wine combined with the energy of the party goers, which resulted in a violent, bloody climax.

The Dark Young

The priestess and the gof'nn hupadgh Shub-Niggurath offer occasional travelers and intruders as sacrifices to the dark young and force the creature to do their bidding in return for the offering of flesh. If freed, the creature attempts to destroy the compound in a fit of pent-up rage, possibly killing the investigators if they get in its path. Fire could consume the compound but would set the creature free, having no affect on it.

Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath, Twisted, Tentacular Death

STR 43	CON 17	SIZ 38	INT 13	POW 14		
DEX 15	HP 14	Move 8		HP 28		
Damage Bonus: +4D6						

Weapons: Tentacle 80%, damage, db + 1D3 plus STR drain Trample 40%, damage 2D6 + db

Armor: dark young are made of non-terrene material, so missile weapons do minimum damage (with impales doubling that minimum), melee weapons do normal damage, but attacks dependent on heat, blast, corrosion, or poisoning have no effect. Spells: Any as decided by the Keeper.

Skills: Hide in Woods 80%, Sneak 60%.

Sanity Loss: 1D3/1D10

Sanity Awards

For defeating the gof'nn hupadgh

Shub-Niggurath+1D4
For defeating the Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath +1D10
For killing Balbus
For killing Ceres +1D3
For destroying the compound+1D4



LUX IN TENEBRAS

MISCELLANEA



The investigators find themselves guests at the seaside estate of Publius Clodius. This wealthy patrician owns a vast plantation in southern Sicily, which has been in his family since the days of the Republic. He occupies his time by collecting rare and unusual statuary from across the farthest reaches of the Empire. When he acquires a particularly interesting piece, Clodius throws a week-long party to unveil his new acquisition to his friends, clients, and associates.

Keeper's Information

Publius Clodius has added something quite dangerous to his collection. He has recently come into possession of a statue supposedly recovered from a shipwreck. In truth the statue, an animated fragment of the Great Old One Gloon, walked into a fisherman's net in an attempt to be drawn out of the depths and into the world of men. The statue's purpose is to spread madness and obsession, filling victims with a nearly suicidal desire to reach the sunken city of Atlantis.

Arrivals at the Villa

The villa and its attached garden is set upon a high cliff, which offers a wondrous view of the Mediterranean. The investigators, along with a half-dozen other guests, are greeted by Publius Clodius, along with his wife Lydia, and their three teenage children, Publianis, Felicia, and Claudia. The guests are then treated to a sumptuous welcome luncheon on a balcony overlooking the sea.

Investigators making a successful Spot Hidden roll realize that their host, his family, slaves, and servants all seem a bit stressed, tired, and distracted. If asked about this, those affected explain the cause to be due to the extensive preparations for this week's gathering. Clodius sites one such stress as being his efforts to secure the noted Greek poet Nikoli and a pair of Egyptian acrobats to provide entertainment for his guests.

After the midday meal, guests are shown to their rooms and told they may freely roam the villa's grounds, with the single exception being the garden. If asked why, servants explain that this is where Master Publius has chosen to display the newest addition to his collection. Publius Clodius does not plan to display it immediately to his guests, to allow their expectations to build a bit. Anyone attempting to enter the gardens before this time is stopped by a pair of slaves, who politely reiterate their master's instructions.

Fun and Frivolity

Investigators have ample time to relax and enjoy their host's hospitality. Transportation by litter to the nearby village of Tilverii can be arranged, where guests can enjoy a day of shopping. Guests are also welcome to visit an immaculately well-kept beach, owned by the house of Publius, the use of which is exclusively reserved for his family and guests. They are also offered tours of several of the House of Publius' plantations, where they can sample local wines, cheeses, fruits, and vegetables.

An Evening of Poems

Guests are required to attend the nightly dinners hosted by Publius Clodius. On the first night, the poet Nikoli entertains the diners with several new creations composed for this event. The poems are neither as elegant nor their delivery as skillful as one might expect, but they are very complimentary of Clodius, his house, and his fine statuary collection. Investigators making an Idea roll realize that the Greek poet also appears stressed, tired, and distracted.

His final poem stands out in particular, as it refers not to the collection or the host, but instead invokes the image of an ancient temple sunken beneath the sea. Investigators making a successful Spot Hidden roll notice that both Clodius and his son pale noticeably during the recitation of this poem. If later asked about this, they both pass it off as a result of how evocative the poet's words were.

The First Night

On the first evening spent in the villa, the investigators' dreams are invaded by images of a sunken city and an enormous dark basalt temple whose door and multitudinous windows emanate a faint violet glow. In the dream they feel an underlying calling to seek out this place, even as they feel their lungs filling with seawater. Upon awaking, those suffering this dream still feel the urge to travel to the sea and swim into its depths in order to find the city. This urge fades slowly over the next hour. Investigators experiencing this must make Sanity check for 0/1D3 Sanity points.

If the dreams are mentioned to their host, Clodius chuckles, remarking on the effects of Greek poetry on weary minds and full stomachs. However, a few of the other guests confess to the investigators that they had the exact same dream, once their host is out of earshot. Investigators who failed their Sanity roll feel tired, distracted, and slightly irritable for the remainder of the day.

The Second Evening

On the second night at the villa, guests are directed to the garden, which will be illuminated by several braziers. Various forms of exquisite statuary, from every corner and artistic style of the Roman Empire, are found in the collection. At the center of the gardens stands a ten-foot-tall

object draped in brown cloth. Clodius and his entire family are here as well, inviting their guests onto various couches for the first course of the evening's meal.

During the course of the meal the promised Egyptian acrobats perform, doing a variety of leaps and balancing acts for amusement of the guests. The stress, fatigue, and unfocused

manner present in the family and servants are much worse now. It is also visible in the other guests and any investigator who failed their Sanity rolls after suffering the



previous evening's nightmare. Once the entertainment and meal is complete, Clodius stands, says a few words of thanks to his guests and motions for his servants to remove the cloth covering the statue.

The Grip of Madness

Upon seeing the statue, investigators must match their POW against the statue's APP 18 on the Resistance Table. Those who fail lose 1D10 magic points as the dark power of the Great Old One Gloon that resides within the statue drains off a portion of their life essence. Should this loss reduce any investigators to 0 magic points, they are rendered unconscious and permanently lose 1 point of POW.

This is what happens to Clodius' son Publianis. The youth wails a terrible scream before fainting dead away. Those tending to him who successfully making either a First Aid or Medicine roll identify the cause of his collapse as exhaustion. Alarmed by this, Clodius brings the evening to an end and has his son taken away to recover. He asks his guests, including the investigators, to return to their rooms.

Dreams of the Sunken City

After seeing the statue of Gloon, the dreams of Atlantis intensify. The dream is the same, only more detailed and longer lasting. Those experiencing this dream must make a Sanity roll for 1/1D4. However, any Investigator who's lost magic points from first viewing the statue of Gloon loses an additional 1D3 magic points and must make a Sanity roll for 1D3/1D8. Likewise, the impulse to go to the ocean in order to seek out the sunken city,

temple, and the entity the statue depicts lasts for 1D3 hours. Those suffering this impulse can resist but realize that. should this



As you approach the statue in the garden, its head turns slowly towards you. You sense a swelling of dark malevolence behind its unchanging expression. With a deadly fluidity, it steps down from its pedestal, reaching out towards you with large powerful arms. continue, they might eventually be unable to stop from doing so. Anyone reduced to 0 Sanity points by the statue of Gloon does just that, obeying this call and drowning themselves in an effort to swim to Atlantis.

Investigating the Statue

By now investigators should be quite suspicious of Clodius' new statue. Should they question him, he explains that it was hauled out of the ocean in a fisherman's net. The fisherman claimed to have snagged it after dragging his net over an ancient shipwreck off the coast of old Carthage. The art dealer Clodius purchased it from claims the statue to be Phoenician in origin. Investigators making a successful Other Kingdoms (North Africa or Syria) or Cthulhu Mythos roll realize that the statue is far older than that.

Resolution

The only way to break the hold that the statue of Gloon has over Clodius, his household, his guests, and the investigators as well is to destroy it. Various tools, such as hammers, mallets, iron spikes, and chisels can easily be located in or around the villa. These items can deliver anywhere from 1D3 to 1D6 points of damage, as determined by the Keeper. Destroying the statue is much easier said than done, as it is able to animate and violently defends itself against anyone intending it harm.

The Statue of Gloon

This is a depiction of the beautiful form of the dreaded Great Old One Gloon, who sleeps in the sunken ruins of Atlantis. It contains a portion of his power and has been feeding on the life energies of those dwelling in the villa since its arrival a week ago. The dreams it sends grow worse each passing night, eventually compelling its victims to swim into the sea in a vain effort to reach its resting place.

In combat, the statue of Gloon can attack with either two punches or a punch and a grapple attack. Anyone grappled is grasped by the statue's large hand, which then grips with bone-crushing force, usually around a target's throat. Those grappled can only break free by making a Grapple roll and winning a STR vs. STR contest against the statue on the Resistance Table. The statue fights until destroyed, shattering into gravel and sweet-smelling smoke.

Animated Statue of Gloon

STR 17	CON 41	SIZ 20	INT 11	POW 17		
DEX 13	APP 18	Move 6		HP 31		
Damage Bonus: +1D6						
Weapons: Punch 70%, damage 1D4 + db						
Grapple 50%, 1D3 + db or special						
Armor: 4 points of marble and rubbery skin.						
Spells: Contact Gloon.						

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6 Sanity points.

Sanity Awards

For destroying the statue of Gloon+1D6

LUX IN TENEBRAS

MISCELLANEA

NAUFRACTUS THE PREQUEL TO THE LEGACY OF ARRIUS LURCO



BY OSCAR RIOS

Keeper's Information

A small passenger ship will soon sink after striking a reef just off shore a small unnamed island in the Mare Internum Nostrum, or Mediterranean Ocean. The island can be placed anywhere and the ship can be traveling between any two ports. While Keepers may create any specifics they wish, included here are details to run this scenario as a lead in to *The Legacy of Arrius Lurco* campaign.

The ship rescues two young women and a boy whom they find clinging to wreckage. They claim to be survivors from a ship which sank a few miles away and that others might be in need of rescue in that direction. The captain heads in that direction, which puts the vessel within the vicinity of this unnamed island, home to one or more sirens. The creature flies out to the ship, charm the crew with her enchanting song, and lures the vessel onto a reef where it sinks. The siren also flies the trio of "so-called" survivors to shore, as the three are in league with her (see **A Dark Partnership**).

The investigators survive the siren attack and ensuing shipwreck, but this is only the beginning of their ordeal. Investigators must deal with these creatures before any rescue can be successfully made. The siren feasts on the corpses of the drowned, leaving the investigators free to wander the island for a time. But as soon as her hunger returns, the creature begins hunting the investigators. The investigators have limited food, water, and time, as their vessel's sister ship begins searching for them once they fail to make port.

A Dark Partnership

The siren realizes she has a weakness; the effects of her song can be blocked. Should this happen she becomes quite vulnerable. The siren also relies on ships passing near her island to supply her with her food, the bodies of drowned passengers and sailors. The creature solved both of these problems by forging an alliance with her neighbors, a small band of deep ones dwelling in the coral reefs surrounding the unnamed island.

The deep ones come to the siren's aid should the creature sound out with a horn made of white deep one gold. In return the siren allows the deep ones to take the occasional surviving human captive for breeding purposes. These are often women, as they are immune to the effects of the siren's song and have better chances of swimming safely to shore during a shipwreck. Hybrid children spawned from such unions are raised on the island by the siren until they mature into full deep ones. These children help lure ships closer to the unnamed island, posing as survivors clinging to wreckage and persuading sailors to divert their course.

If the siren has trouble dealing with the investigators, she may call upon her hybrid charges and/or deep one allies for assistance.

The doomed ship, Crimson Dawn

This ship is owned by the Reds Racing Faction, one of the major chariot racing teams in the empire. The vessel is used

to carry passenger from one major circus, or race track, to another. Passengers are usually star racers, team owners and managers, or wealthy friends of the faction. It's a small ship, designed for comfort rather than speed, able to transport up to twenty passengers in relative luxury.

The Sister Ship, Pride of Epona

A larger ship, carrying teams of horses and chariots, follows the *Crimson Dawn*. This vessel, called *Pride of Epona*, usually lags 1D3 days behind the smaller passenger ship. When *Crimson Dawn* goes missing, *Pride of Epona* begins searching for her, doubling back over her course. This gives the investigators 2D4 days to clear the unnamed island of the siren. If they don't, the *Pride of Epona* is also sunk as it comes within sight of the unnamed island, and the investigators are doomed. No other ship approaches the island until the investigators starve, die of thirst, or are hunted down and killed by the siren and/or deep ones.

Involving the Investigators

The investigators can be guests of the faction, possibly fans traveling with the team. They may be additional passengers who paid the faction for transporting them to their next stop. Investigators with Status greater than 40% could be relatives of one of the faction's shareholder. Investigators with low Status scores could be servants or slaves of some of the wealthier passengers. The Keeper should also create a reason for the investigators to travel to wherever they are going, leading them to believe that the scenario begins after they arrive safely in port. Players knowing that *naufractus* is the Latin word for shipwrecked will likely see through this misdirection.

Part One - The Bait

Investigators enjoy several days aboard *Crimson Dawn*, heading towards their next destination. The ship outpaces its sister ship, *Pride of Epona*, so that its passengers can enjoy a day or two of leisure before the teams' horses and chariots arrive. All goes well until a sailor spots some people adrift, clinging to some floating wreckage.

Crimson Dawn, The Crew

The seven crewmen of the *Crimson Dawn* are quite skilled and dependable, having worked for the House of Arrius and the Reds Racing Faction for many years. They mostly hail from the city of Tarraco, in Hispania, and are a mix of Roman settlers and Romanized natives of Phoenician descent. Their captain, however, is from the city of Utica, in Africa Proconsularis. They are as follows: Captain Badis, Mus, Breno, Orestes, Celio, Jiao, and Sabinus.

Crimson Dawn, The Passengers

There are five passengers aboard the *Crimson Dawn*, all the entourage of Arrius Melito (see **Crimson Dawn, The VIP**). They are Cassius Falto and his wife Megallina, wealthy race fans and friends of Arrius Casca, Melito's older brother. Falto and Megallina are trying to get Melito more interested in the races, but so far they've been unsuccessful.

The other two passengers are slaves of House Arrius. They are Caewlin, Melito's Germanic bodyguard, and Vicana, a beautiful Celtic woman from Britannia. Both slaves were assigned by Melito's older brother Casca, the current manager of the Reds Racing Faction. The slaves are with Melito to keep him safe and make him look good in public. Vicana has been instructed to try and catch Melito's eye and make him appear more masculine, but so far has failed in both. Caewlin will soon fail in his duty as well.

Crimson Dawn, The VIP

Appius Arrius Melito is the son of Arrius Lurco, primary owner of the Reds Racing Faction. He is on this trip representing the family at an important race in one of the provinces (Keeper's choice which), but has no interest in chariot racing. He fancies himself a poet, keeps to himself, and politely deflects most attempts to engage him in conversation. Melito is happiest quietly composing epigrams on sheets of parchment. His body language screams discomfort with sea travel, conversation about chariot races, and the advances of stunning slave girl Vicana.

Plucked from the Sea

Just as dusk begins to fall, one of the crew spots someone signaling the ship. Captain Badis changes course and comes upon two young women and a boy. The trio clings to the broken mast of a ship floating along in the ocean currents. One of the women waves a white shawl, and all three are desperately calling out for help.

Sailors hurl ropes and dive into the water to enact a rescue. Investigators can assist with these efforts if they wish. Soon the three are taken on board the Crimson Dawn. The women are about fourteen, comely, half nude, and barefoot. Their wet tunicae, in the peplos style, cling closely to their curvaceous figures, leaving little to the imagination. The boy is perhaps seven, wide-eyed and shivering. They give their names as Libella, her brother Dulius, and their cousin Arvinia. All three wear fine silks, now ruined by the seawater, as well as various pieces of gold jewelry.

Their Story

The rescued trio gives everyone their deepest thanks. They weave a tale with the following points, being as truthful in places as they can:

- A ship went down not far from here (true).
- Many people drowned, but many others survived (true).
- The ship was owned by their family (true).
- They humbly beg this ship divert west, so they can be reunited with them (true).

- There will be a generous reward should they do so (true).
- They were attacked by pirates (offered by Libella false).
- They were attacked by a sea monster (offered by Dulius true).
- Their family faces starvation and madness unless this ship comes quickly (true).

While mostly true, their story is intentionally misleading. Their family was the humans lured to the nameless island, as well as the deep ones and their adopted mother, the siren. The reward they speak of will be given to them, items of jewelry for helping lure another ship into danger. Their family facing starvation and madness is what will happen if the siren and deep ones fail to attract a ship to the island. The only outright lie is the mention of pirates, which young Dulius counters with the truth.

Even if the investigators are suspicious, Captain Badis isn't. Distracted by the promise of reward from the seemingly wealthy trio, two of whom are lovely women; both he and the crew are easily convinced. Captain Badis asks Arrius Melito for permission to divert course to search for other survivors. Permission is granted and the crew busily begins turning the ship as the passengers chat excitedly about being suddenly thrust into a real adventure. Any counter suggestions or objections raised by the investigators are ignored; they are, after all, only along for the ride. This is Captain Badis' ship, owned by the House of Arrius, and both he and Arrius Melito are in agreement.

Search and Rescue

The trio plucked from the sea are given dry clothing, fresh water, and food. From the currents, the captain quickly surmises the direction the spar the survivors clung to must have traveled, and sets his heading accordingly. Soon the survivors fall asleep on deck, explaining that they want to be able to see their families as soon as they are spotted. All is well for several hours until after dark. Night falls, bringing an overcast, moonless sky.

One or more sirens attack the ship several hours after dark. The ship is lured onto jagged rocks and quickly sinks. Just what the investigators experience depends on where they are and what actions they take. Almost every NPC is lost, either drowning after being pulled under the waves by deep ones, or slain by the attacking siren. Only three NPCs survive the sinking of the *Crimson Dawn* to make it to the shores of the unnamed island alive.

Song of the Siren

A LIGHT IN DARKNESS

At about midnight those on deck hear a beautiful singing in the distance. The helmsman, bewitched by the sound, turns the ship towards it. All male NPCs hearing the song may be

ensnared by its beauty, standing enchanted by it or making every effort to follow it. Female investigators and NPCs are immune to these effects (see **Resisting the Siren's Song**).

Shortly after hearing the song, a dark, lonely island appears out of the darkness. It has a small forested area, with tall cliffs on its eastern end. As soon as the island appears, the *Crimson Dawn* strikes the jagged coral reef which rings most of the island. The ship's hull is torn open, and she begins to quickly sink.

The Accomplices

As the *Crimson Dawn* sinks, battered against the reef and broken apart, the trio of conspirators escapes back to the island. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, depending on the actions of the investigators. They can slip off the ship and into the ocean, where they are carried safely to shore by their deep one relatives. They could also be airlifted from the deck of the *Crimson Dawn* by the winged siren.

If confronted, Libella, Dulius, and Arvinia feign ignorance and offer no resistance. If so detained, the deep ones, siren, or possibly both come to the trio's aid. While Dulius can

Resisting the Siren's Song

The song of a siren is one of the most hauntingly beautiful sounds a mortal man can encounter. Unfortunately it is often the last thing they hear before drowning. However, for those with strong wills or quick wits, this need not be a death sentence. Investigators taking quick action have a chance to resist its preternatural allure.

To avoid being ensnared by a siren's song, investigators must actively offer resistance. Those who choose to listen for but a moment, even if hearing it while unconscious, fall victim to its power. Those ensnared do anything necessary to follow the haunting song. Those trying to resist the beautiful melody must make a POW check, with a successful roll granting them 5-12 (1D8+4) rounds of immunity to its effects. Investigators can quickly take steps to block their hearing, such as tightly covering their ears or stuffing their eardrums with wax, damp cloth, or grease. This allows investigators to make a POW x3 check to resist the siren's song. Lastly investigators may temporarily deafen themselves, by rupturing their eardrums with a small sharp object. Such desperate measures allow the investigator to make a POW x5 check to resist the song. However, the investigators doing so sustain 1 point of damage and suffer whatever further penalties Keepers wish to impose for their lack of hearing.

Female investigators are immune to the effects of the siren's song. Investigators who resist the call, or who are immune to it, can attempt to rescue those who are. By blocking their ears, deafening them, or inflicting at least 1 point of damage in distracting them, those ensnared by the siren's song are allowed another POW check. If the check is unsuccessful, the ensnared victim turns violent, viciously attacking his would-be saviors for attempting to distract him from the beautiful song. If the check is successful, the victim is freed from the song's effects for 2-5 (1D4+1) rounds.

offer little opposition, both Libella and Arvinia are trained in unarmed combat and use of the sling. When their allies arrive they spring into action, doing whatever is necessary to escape from the sinking ship and return to their home, the dark, unnamed island (see **Possible Combat**).

The Siren

If all goes according to plan, the siren keeps hidden. The creature is content to simply let the ocean, waves, and jagged coral reef do the work necessary. If investigators somehow resist the siren's song, or are naturally immune to it, the siren watches their actions from the concealing darkness. If the investigators seem to be taking proactive steps to save the *Crimson Dawn* from destruction, the creature takes direct actions to stop them.

The creature could allow the investigators to catch a brief glimpse of her horrific visage, in hopes to terrify them into inaction. The siren might fly onto the ships sails, cutting rigging lines with her teeth and claws, greatly hindering efforts to regain control of the ship. If these actions fail and the

investigators remain a threat, the siren directly attacks (see below).

Possible Combat

During the sinking of the *Crimson Dawn*, investigators may take actions which threaten the siren's plans. She will not allow this to go unchallenged, and those proving troublesome are attacked. The siren swoops in out of the darkness to deliver savage attacks from her claws and fearsome jaws. She won't engage in prolonged combat; she doesn't need to. The siren fights for only a few rounds, just long enough for the ship's hull to be smashed against the coral reef. Once she hears the sound of breaking timbers, the creature laughs and takes flight. However, if investigators put up stiff opposition, the siren may summon her deep one allies (see **Calling in the Deep Ones**).

Reaching Shore

Once the *Crimson Dawn* begins sinking, the investigators must make for shore. The investigators must endure 1D8 rounds of desperate swimming as they are battered by waves and tossed against the sharp coral reef. Investigators making a successful Swim check take 1D4 rounds to reach shore. The investigators suffer 1 point of damage for each round spent reaching shore. Investigators attempting to swim to shore hauling equipment, holding weapons or wearing cumbersome armor may drown in the attempt. Such investigators receive a -20% penalty to their Swim check and have the number of rounds needed to reach shore doubled (1D8 or 1D4 x2).

Part Three - The Island

The investigators reaching the unnamed island of the siren will be battered and exhausted. The night sky is impenetrably dark, without a moon or visible stars. When morning comes the sky is clear, the sun is shining, and the investigators face a number of challenges.

Challenge One, Finding One Another

Keepers can have the investigators become separated in the chaos of the previous night. The living and the dead have washed up all along the island's northwestern shoreline. While finding their fellow survivors isn't difficult it should add some tension to the investigators especially if they made it to shore alone. As investigators find one another, they may also stumble upon other challenges (see **Challenge Two, Getting Supplies, The Siren's Larder**).

Challenge Two, Getting Supplies

As investigators walk along the shore of the island they find various items from *Crimson Dawn* washed up on shore. Mostly this is wreckage, smashed timbers, lengths of tattered rope, or bits of torn sail. However, those making a Spot Hidden roll find something useful, such as a usable weapon, a chart, a flask of oil, or tinderbox. The last items the investigators find are the dead (see **The Siren's Larder**).

Most precious of these items are the edible ones, such as wheels of cheese, lengths of sausage, amphorae of wine, or the occasional cask of fresh water. Keepers should only have the investigators manage to recover enough food and water to sustain them for about 1D4+1 days. With rationing, this can be stretched to by an additional 2 days, but investigators will lose 1 CON per day growing weaker from hunger and thirst. All attempts at fishing and finding drinkable water fail, as the deep ones control the area fish stocks and the siren has made sure to destroy all sources of fresh water on the island save one (see **The Huts**).

The Siren's Larder

As investigators gather supplies and find one another upon the shore they encounter the dead. Washed up on shore or floating face down in the waves, most of the crew and passengers of *Crimson Dawn* drowned during the sinking. Their battered, waterlogged bodies are now little more than a larder for the siren.

Keepers should at some point have the investigators encounter the siren, dragging a body onto shore or feasting on one of the corpses. This requires a SAN check for seeing the creature. Sharp-eyed investigators notice the creature now wears a strange horn of white gold upon a chain across her body. Unless the investigators attack her, she ignores them after threatening them with an otherworldly screech. She knows there's time to deal with the survivors later but right now her sole concern is sating her hunger for human flesh. The siren defends herself if attacked (see **Fighting the Siren**).

Other Survivors, Megallina

While regrouping and gathering supplies the investigators eventually find three other survivors. The first is Megallina, crying over the drowned corpse of her husband Falto. She has been battered by the surf and coral but also has a blackened eye and split lip. They are obvious signs of having been beaten and if asked about how she sustained them, she explains that her husband beat her.

Megallina's Story

"The song was beautiful, but it had no power over me. I was trying to save him, trying to get him to swim towards shore. I grabbed him, pulled him, but he kept swimming out to sea towards the singing. I wrapped my arms around him; I bit him on the ear, trying to break whatever bewitchment had taken a hold of him. That's when he beat me, and broke away from me. If only I had been stronger . . . Look what's become of him . . . I'm sorry, I failed you my love."

Investigators must make a Persuade check to get Megallina to leave her husband's corpse. She is distraught and confused, unfocused and grieving. Unless the investigators take her with them the siren eventually finds her trying to defend her Falto's corpse with a bit of driftwood. The siren summons the deep ones who capture her and drag her off to their lair (see **The Deep Ones**).

Unlike helpless Megallina, the beautiful slave Vicana has been hard at work. As investigators approach her, she signals them with a flash of reflected light from a bit of polished steel she uses as a mirror. Vicana has found a simple hiding place just off the beach where she's gathered a few items. Here she has stashed some recovered food, a cask of water, some usable rope, and her unconscious owner. Arrius Melito is relatively unharmed and securely bound.

Vicana's Story

"Last night my master woke me as he arose from bed. He walked out on deck, towards the singing. All seemed ensnared by it, all except the women. I heard timbers snapping, Melito and I were knocked to the deck. He'd been hit with something in the dark, part of the ship coming apart. He was unconscious and suddenly we were in the water. I grabbed him and swam; my people live by a river and I'm a good swimmer. I got him to shore, and tied him up in case he awoke still ensorcelled. Something is out there, a winged evil beastie with the gift of magic song. I caught a glimpse of it in the night, when the clouds parted briefly as I swam to shore. This is its island, it called us here, and it wanted our ship to sink, I'm sure of it. I've gathered some food that's washed up, a little water ... I'm not sure what to do next ... "

When awoken, either by being roused or coming awake on his own, Arrius Melito asks why he is tied up and demands to be released. He remembers the call of the siren's song, but nothing after being struck by flying wreckage as *Crimson Dawn* splintered against the reef. Melito takes some time to think, obviously struggling not to give in to panic. When he composes himself, Melito explains the following:

Melito's Option

Melito's Solution

"The *Crimson Dawn* has a sister ship, *Pride of Epona*. She's larger and slower; my brother has her carry the horses, trainers, drivers, and chariots from race to race. She should make port soon and discover that *Crimson Dawn* isn't there waiting for her. Once the captain realizes that our ship has gone missing, I'm sure they'll start searching for us. This means we only need to wait, find a place we can spot *Pride of Epona* and devise a way to signal her when we do."

The Problem with Melito's Solution

The *Pride of Epona* arrives in the area 2D4 days after the investigators become stranded on the nameless isle. If the siren hasn't been slain before then, her crew is ensnared by her song. The creature then leads the ship onto the jagged coral reef on the island's northwestern edge where the *Pride of Epona* is torn apart. The ship, along with her crew and any hope of escaping the unnamed island, are lost.

Also, Melito is a wealthy patrician, a mediocre poet with no martial training whatsoever. He is unable to help the investigators in any useful way. Melito offers the investigators a handsome reward of 5,000 sestertii for protecting him and organizing his rescue. Arrius Melito then finds a place to hide and wait with Vicana. The slave guards him, ready to stop up his ears and tie him down should he fall victim to the siren's song.

If Megallina has been encountered and rescued, she can either remain with Melito and Vicana or assist the investigators. Megallina offers to help the investigators in any way possible, and while she possesses no martial training, as a woman she is immune to the siren's song. Keepers can portray her as help or hindrance, as a hero, victim, or as comic relief. Megallina fills whatever role Keepers feel helps drive the story forward.

The Nameless Isle

The isle of the siren is formed from a pair of extinct volcanoes. It is a dry place with almost no drinkable water. Other than seabirds which nest in the island's steep cliffs, there are very few animals living here. The nameless isle has a number of geographical zones, as well as a few important locations.

Nameless Isle, Geographic Zones

The Reef

This large reef rises to only a foot or so below the surface of the ocean. Huge waves break over it before reaching the shore. Dozens of ships have been torn apart on the jagged coral, which is home to tens of thousands of fish and a small band of deep ones (see **The Deep Ones Lair**).

The Beach

This beach of smooth white sand will have scattered wreckage from the recent sinking of *Crimson Dawn*. Investigators may find other survivors, salvageable supplies, corpses, strange tracks (deep ones and the siren) and the siren itself, feeding on the dead.

The Forest

The trees here are spiny, with waxy leaves and no edible fruit. Vines and thickets are everywhere, while trails are scarce, making travel through the forest quite difficult.

The Sinkhole

In the center of the forest is a deep sinkhole. It drops about 120 feet to a stagnant pool of sulfur-tainted water. There are multiple rocky crags here, some of which are well camouflaged from above. The siren uses these perches to sleep in safety when not roaming the island.

The Cliffs

These steep cliffs dominate most of the southern half of the island. They rise hundreds of feet in places and are home to thousands of sea birds. There is a very narrow path that leads up to Lookout Point. This path has a 50-yard stretch that has no support on its left side, with a sheer 200-foot drop to The Poison Lake (see below). This is part of Lookout Point's defenses (see **Assaulting Lookout Point**).

The Poison Lake

This lake was formed by captured rain water gathering in the crater of one of the island's two extinct volcanoes. The cliffs of the crater rise anywhere between 100–180 feet above the lake. The grayish, foul-smelling waters are shallow, ranging from 2–5 feet. The water is actually a mild sulfuric acid, as the rain has leached the sulfur out of the volcanic rock. Bathing in the water would cause a mild rash (-1 HP per hour). Those trying to drink the horrid-tasting fluid experience a burning sensation, and those actually ingesting it must make a CON check vs. a POT 6 poison.

Lookout Point

This is the highest point on the nameless isle, at 250 feet above sea level. It offers good views of the surrounding ocean and is ideal for spotting far-off ships. Lookout Point is occupied, and a large, well-made hut dominates this rise (see **The Hut**).



A LIGHT IN DARKNESS

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NAUFRACTUS

Nameless Isle, Specific Locations

The Hut

This spacious single-room structure is home to five hybrid children. Three of these the investigators have met, being Libella, Dulius, and Arvinia (see **Plucked from the Sea**). The remaining pair is a six-year-old girl named Verida and a one-year-old boy named Narses. Beside the hut is a pen with a dozen goats, racks with drying fish, and a reservoir well filled with drinkable water. The water is magically created by the siren via the single spell she knows, Create Water. The children are well provided for, having their choice of items from the cargoes of any wrecked vessels. Should investigators try to reach here, Libella and Arvina defend their homes (see **Assaulting Lookout Point**).

The Cave

This large open sea cave is used as a way station. When the hybrids raised here begin making the change into full deep ones, this is where they stay. The cave itself is damp and dark, foul smelling with the scent of fish, rot, and human waste. Other than some rags, bits of broken pottery, and a few fresh water skins, there is nothing of value here.

Three half-formed deep ones dwell within the cave. The two males and a female appear deformed and crippled with a combination of human and fishlike traits. They are half insane from the pain of their transformation, shuffling around and groping about in the darkness. Depending upon the number and bearing of those entering the cave, these pitiful creatures either attack or cower in the far corner of the cave.

Those Making the Change, Transforming Hybrids (3)

STR 12 CON 8 SIZ 13 INT10 POW 8 DEX 6 Move 8 HP 11 Damage Bonus: none. Weapons: Claws 25%, 1D4 Armor: none. Skills: Moan 50%, Sulk in Darkness 50%. Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 Sanity points to see Those Making the Change

The Deep Ones Lair

Under the vast coral reef is a network of water and air-filled chambers. This is used by a small band of deep ones, allies of the siren. The air-filled chambers are placed deep in the complex, at the extreme range of human endurance. Humans attempting to swim into or out of this complex drown. Only those dragged here swiftly by a deep one manage to survive the passage. This is where survivors are often dragged so they can be used as breeding stock by the deep ones.

These unfortunate souls aren't kept captive long, only until the female deep ones become certain they are all pregnant or the captive delivers a single hybrid child. Once this happens, the captive humans are eaten by the deep ones, the siren, or both. Children are raised on land by the siren and join the deep ones in the colony when they've fully matured and taken on the physical appearance of their inhuman parents.

Assaulting Lookout Point

Libella and Arvina are quite skilled with a single weapon, the sling. As investigators attempt to reach Lookout Point they must travel a 50-yard stretch with a dangerous drop on one side. The girls choose this moment to attack anyone approaching Lookout Point and The Hut.

The girls can each attack once per round and investigators must spend 6 rounds traveling the narrow trail while vulnerable to these attacks. The critical rounds are the 3rd, 4th and 5th round, where they must make DEX checks if successfully struck by a sling stone. The DEX check is modified by the amount of damage suffered from the attack (see below). Those who successfully make the check maintain their footing despite the damage. Those who fail the check fall off the trail.

Sling Damage	DEX Check Modifier
1 point	x5
2 points	x4
3 points	x3
4 points	x2

Keepers may allow falling investigators to catch themselves by making successful DEX x3 checks. If successful the investigator manages to grab onto the edge of the cliff. Investigators remain in this perilous position until rescued, they make a successful Climb check to haul themselves back onto the trail, or they fall. Investigators hanging onto the edge of the cliff are still subject to sling attacks by Libella and Arvina.

Libella and Arvina

STR 10	CON 14	SIZ10	INT14	POW 10	
DEX 14	APP 15	EDU 12	SAN 0	HP 12	
Damage Bonus: none.					
Weapons: Sling 50%, 1D4					
Fist 65%, 1D3					
Grapple 50%, damage special					
Kick 45%, 1D6					
Armor: none.					
Skills: Dodge 40%, Insight 40%, Potions 55%.					

Victory on Lookout Point

Once investigators reach Lookout Point, Libella and Arvina drop their slings and surrender. Dulius tries to be brave while Virida and Narses cry pitifully. All of the young hybrids beg for mercy. If possible they try to get back down to the beach to look for the siren and their deep one parents. Just what investigators do with these children is up to them. They are not human, but deep one hybrids who've helped in the sinking of dozens of ships. However, they are also unarmed children, pleading for their lives and had no choice in being born as what they are. The investigators must decide for themselves how to deal with them.

Once Lookout Point is secured, investigators are easily able to spot *Pride of Epona* when it arrives in the area. By lighting a bonfire, for light at night or smoke during the day, the investigators can signal the rescue ship. If the siren has already been slain, the ship safely anchors off shore (see **Rescued**). If not, the *Pride of Epona* falls prey to the siren; it's led onto the reef and sinks.

Part Four - Escape

To escape from the nameless isle, investigators must ultimately deal with the siren. While a dangerous foe armed with a potent natural ability to charm with her song, the creature is not invulnerable. The siren calls upon her deep one allies for assistance if seriously threatened by the investigators.

The Siren

This creature spends the days following the sinking of *Crimson Dawn* feasting upon the drowned bodies of her crew and passengers. The creature gorges herself before stretching out on a rock to sun herself. At the slightest indication that survivors from the wreck are anywhere nearby, the siren springs into action and begins singing.

In combat the siren tries to charm opponents with her song, luring them into the ocean to drown. If investigators are immune (i.e., female) or manage to resist the effects of her song, the siren becomes enraged and attacks. She slashes out with her razor-sharp claws and bites with her fearsome maw. The creature trusts in her thick leathery hide to keep her safe from harm. However, after a single point of damage is inflicted, she attempts to fly off and blow upon the horn she carries. The sound is deep and loud, a signal to the deep ones (see **Allies from the Deep**).

The Siren, Singer of Strange Songs

STR 11CON 13SIZ 11INT 24POW 35DEX 11Move 8/12 flyingHP 12Damage Bonus: none.Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, 1D3Bite 45%, 1D10Claw 35%, 1D4Armor: 4 Points of leathery hide.Spells: Create Water.Sanity Loss: 1/1D6 Sanity loss to see a siren.

Allies from the Deep

Once called upon, 2–5 deep ones (1D4+1) rush quickly to the siren's aid. They emerge from the surf 1D3 rounds after hearing the signal horn. Keepers can modify the response time depending on the distance between the siren and the coral reef.

The deep ones try to capture any living humans they encounter. The creatures throw nets and try to beat their opponents unconscious with balled fists. Those so captured are dragged into the waves and quickly swum out to the coral reef where they become breeding stock of the deep ones. Kindly keepers can continue on, allowing the captured persons to attempt escape or their companions to launch rescue attempts. However, for the purposes of this scenario, investigators or NPCs captured by the deep ones are considered lost.

Should capturing the shipwrecked humans prove difficult, or if any of the deep ones are injured, they switch tactics. The creatures then employ their deadly claws and try to kill their opponents as quickly as possible. If more than half of the deep ones are killed, the remaining members of their war party withdraw back to their reef. They may return later to stalk the investigators or simply wait for thirst and starvation to claim them.

The Deep Ones, Allies of the Siren (1D4+1)

- STR 14 CON 11 SIZ 16 INT 13 POW 11
- DEX 11 Move 8/10 swimming HP14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

- Weapons: Claws 25%, damage 1D6+db
- Net 25%, damage special (see below) **Armor:** 1 point of skin and scales.

Spells: none.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a deep one.

Net: On a successful attack, the victim is ensnared and must spend the next round cutting himself free. Trying to use any edged weapon other than a small knife halves the attack roll. If the victim wants to remove the net without damaging it, he must spend three rounds to do so.

Criteria for Rescue

The investigators must be perched atop Lookout Point on the day that *Pride of Epona* arrives in the area. The ship cannot be spotted at any other time or from any other vantage point. The investigators must also construct a way to signal the passing ship. Keepers should use their judgment in deciding if the method devised by the investigators successfully signals the passing ship. Keepers can call for Idea rolls if the investigators' signal method is inadequate or a Luck roll to allow it to work anyway (sometimes it's better to be lucky than smart).

Rescue, Siren still Active

If investigators spot and single the *Pride of Epona*, it changes course and heads towards the nameless isle. Unless the siren has been defeated, she flies out to meet the large ship and enchants the crew with her song. The creature leads the Pride of Epona onto the coral reef where the bottom of her hull is torn out. The bulk of her crew drowns, with others being slain by waiting deep ones. No other ships come to search for either lost vessel and the scenario ends in failure.

Rescue, Siren Eliminated

If the siren has been defeated, the *Pride of Epona* approaches the unnamed isle with caution. Her captain spots the coral reef and diverts course around it. Her crew finds a place to anchor off shore in safety, and launches a skiff which skirts the reef until a way around it is discovered. They land, pulling their small boat onto the beach, and rescue any survivors they find. By nightfall everyone is safely onboard the *Pride of Epona* and the nameless isle is many leagues behind them. The scenario ends in success.

Rewards

Arrius Melito is as good as his word, paying the investigators 5000 sestertii for saving his life. The slave girl Vicana is also rewarded for her part in saving Arrius Melito. She is given 1000 sestertii and her manumission. She becomes a cliens of the House of Arrius and is forever after known as Melita Vicana.

If Megallina still lives she likewise rewards the investigators. The widow has inherited her husband's business holding, a lucrative silver mine in Hispania. She is in a position to be generous and gives each investigator a small silver statue of Fortuna (worth 1000 sestertii) and a small silk bag containing a dozen aurei, gold coins worth 100 sestertii each (total value of 1200 sestertii).

A Good Friend to Have

Arrius Melito doesn't have many friends, but the investigators change that. He begins inviting them to parties, asking them to dinner and treating them to plays, concerts, and poetry readings. He also gets them invited to a private viewing box at the Circus Maximus in Rome, owned by the Reds Faction section, of course. In several weeks he comes to the investigators with a problem and asks for their help in a delicate matter regarding his father, Arrius Lurco.

Sanity Awards

For Defeating the deep ones	+1D6 SAN
For Defeating the siren	+1D6 SAN
For Each NPC saved	+1 point



LUX IN TENEBRAS

MYSTERY IN SARDINIA THE EPILOGUE TO THE LEGACY OF ARRIUS LURCO



BY OSCAR RIOS

Mission

Our story begins with investigators returning to the service of their old friend Appius Arrius Melito. The events begin about a year and a half after the death of Arrius Lurco. Investigators are invited to the House of Arrius as guests for a very special celebration, the marriage of Arrius Melito to Magnilla Vara. Keepers can role play the wedding, a lavish and traditional affair thrown by the paterfamilias of the House, Arrius Casca. However, the investigation into the Mystery in Sardinia takes place about a week later. Once again Arrius Melito invites the investigators to a day at the races, where he explains that he is having a problem that may require some specialized investigations.

Magnilla Vara and The Joining of Two Houses

Magnilla Vara is a plump, fourteen-year-old provincial Roman from Hispania. Her father is Vibius Magnus, a wealthy patrician and one of the area's most famous horse breeders. Magnilla's mother, Elisa, is only one generation removed from her Iberian heritage, a local tribe. This gives Arrius Melito's beautiful young wife a rather exotic look. She is bright and witty, yet respectful, the perfect complement to any well-placed man in society.

The marriage is of course a political one, which benefits both families. The provincial house of Magnus is enhanced by its joining to the more famous Italian house of Arrius, and the Reds Racing Faction will now have exclusive rights to some of the best horses in the empire. While Magnilla and Melito have no choice in the matter, in true Roman fashion, they've decided to make the best of it. Over the past few months, they've developed a friendship and certain understanding. At the wedding they seem genuinely happy and talk about starting a family as soon as possible. The reason behind this desire soon becomes clear.

A Meeting with the Newly Married Arrius Melito

Investigators are invited to a day watching the races at the box of House Arrius. Their hosts are Arrius Melito and his new wife Magnilla. The newlyweds seem happy, with Magnilla doing a good job of engaging the investigators in conversation and generally making her husband look good. She whispers to him constantly, with a smile and giggle, while actually feeding him constant information about the races. Magnilla's family is among the most rabid chariot racing fans in the Empire, and she is an expert on the sport, something her husband is not. She plays the silly young and devoted wife but it becomes obvious she is a very bright woman determined to help advance her husband's status. After several races she excuses herself, so that "You men can talk about my father's gift . . ."

The Problem

Melito explains that his father-in-law gave him a generous gift, a large parcel of prime farmland in the province of Sardinia. It was hinted that both Vibius Magnus and Arrius Casca would be happy to let the young couple reside there on a proper plantation after the birth of their first child. This would give both Melito and Magnilla something they desire, freedom from their controlling families. "My problem is twofold. I need to produce an heir and I need to start setting up this plantation. The heir I believe I can handle, the plantation . . . Well, there are some problems with the property that I need discreetly looked into."

Melito explains that he sent a team of men to the property to check on the property and report on what might be required to turn it into a working plantation. His representatives reported that the neighboring locals refused to work these lands. They then vanished while surveying the property. The patrician fears something unsavory may have happened to his representatives, possibly at the hands of locals seeking to prevent him from developing the property. He asks the investigators to lead a second survey team to the area, to learn the fate of his missing servants and the reason for the locals' refusal to work on his property. Melito is generous while negotiating terms to secure the investigators' cooperation in this matter.

The Patrician's Information

Melito knows very little about the property, Sardinia, or farming. He quickly shares what little information he has with the investigators:

- He obtained the deed to the property as a wedding gift from his father-in-law, Vibius Magnus.
- Magnilla learned that her father acquired it as part of a settlement on a defaulted loan from an impoverished patrician, whom he refuses to name out of decorum.
- The deed shows the property was confiscated four years earlier from a condemned prisoner named Nipius Clodian.
- Arrius Melito sent a servant to learn more about Nipius Clodian, but his agent was told no such person was ever imprisoned, tried, or executed.
- Melito has gathered a second team to investigate his Sardinian property. They are two laborers, an accountant, a plantation manager, and Valgus Milonius, a former legionary and engineer. They will survey the property, estimate its value, and write a report on what is required to get it up and running as a working plantation.

The Current Mission and Team

Melito gives the investigators a copy of the current deed, which lists him as the owner, as well as a map of the general area. He hands the investigators a note, to be given to a man named Evodius, a client of Nerva, who owns a modest merchant ship. The note instructs Evodius to take the investigators and their team to Sardinia at the earliest possible date after receiving this note. Lastly he gives the investigators a bag containing 300 sestertii for traveling expenses and to secure passage back from Sardinia at the conclusion of their investigation. After the races are over, Arrius Melito invites them back to his brother's house, where he introduces them to the second survey team.
The Team

Valgus Milonius — A retired legionary and engineer in the service of Melito

Suedius Betto — An accountant and property surveyor, who'll make an expense report for the development of the property

Latinius Hilario — An assistant manager of a plantation owned by Arrius Casca in Sicily, who may become the manager of this property once it is up and running

Opis and Piso — Slaves and brothers; loyal, sturdy, and skilled farmers

Keepers Info, The Secret in Sardinia

Nipius Clodian, the man who owned the property before his execution, was an alchemist and magician. His specialty was magical elixirs, powerful love potions being his best sellers. One such potion led to his arrest and execution after causing the wife of a powerful customer to go mad with lust. She snuck out and entered a brothel, where the woman offered herself to all takers free of charge. She was found and dragged out by her husband's men many hours later. When Clodian's involvement was discovered, he was arrested, tortured, and executed. All of his property was then seized, including lands he owned in Sardinia. The deed was passed around for several years before eventually coming to Arrius Melito.

The magician Clodian never cultivated the rich farming land, as he was happy to leave it as a fallow wilderness and its buildings in ruins. He knew the property's dark past and current blight. Long ago those who lived here were corrupted by generations of worship to the Great Old One Gol-goroth. They developed inhuman deformities, practiced inbreeding and ritual cannibalism. Carthaginians eventually wiped out the clan, but a handful escaped. The survivors were cursed by the gods and changed into striges, horrific flesh-eating owl-like creatures. Their descendants still dwell here in the remains of their shattered temple to Gol-goroth.

Clodian traveled to Sardinia with a few slaves once per year. He would have them make camp and treat them to a large meal. The food would be drugged, rendering the slaves unconscious and their flesh filled with toxins. He'd retreat to a safe distance and wait for morning. The striges would kill and eat the slaves that night before returning to their lair before sunrise. There the creatures succumbed to the same poisons the slaves ingested, falling into a deep sleep. Clodian then visited the sleeping creatures to pluck a few feathers from each strix, leaving them otherwise unmolested. Strix feathers are a main ingredient in the creation of love potions. Before leaving the area, the wizard animated the corpses of the dead slaves to guard against trespassers. They would already be skeletal, totally striped of flesh.

Locals know about the property's dark history of cannibalism and curses. They also lived in fear of the wizard, who cursed anyone crossing his path for decades. They won't readily talk about this to outsiders, thinking most won't believe their wild stories. They also know about the striges and won't go within 10 miles of the place. People in the region lock up their windows and doors, block their chimneys, and secure their livestock every night as a precaution. People neighboring the property maintain long-standing superstitions that protect them from the striges. They plant strawberry trees, whose leaves ward off the creatures, and leave out offerings of pork if an infant is present in a household.

The Court

Investigators can seek out information about the property's former owner, the magician Clodian, with the local courts. Once at the government building where Clodian was supposedly tried and executed, investigators encounter Tarino, a state-owned slave and clerk. Investigators must make a successful Fast Talk, Status, or Persuade roll to be allowed to peruse the official records. Once there investigators must make a Library Use check to attempt to locate records of the trial or execution of Clodian. If asked for help, Tarino apologizes and explains he is too busy to assist them in locating any records, which is the truth.

While no records of such an event are found, a successful check shows that the court cases before and after the time Clodian is supposed to have been tried are much longer than usual. Those making a successful Idea roll realize that the records of Clodian's trial have been removed, and the lengths of the cases before and after his were extended to cover the gap in time.

Investigators bringing this to the clerk's attention, or mentioning the trial and execution of Nipius Clodian, bring about a change in his demeanor. Tarino instantly becomes distracted, less willing to help the investigators, and tries to hurry them out of the office. Those making a successful Insight roll realize Tarino is very afraid. If investigators make a successful Fast Talk, Persuade, or Status check, the clerk confesses the following information.

Clerk's Recollection of the Magician Clodian

- Tarino was ordered to destroy the records of the trial and to never speak of it.
- This was part of a cover-up of a scandal involving a powerful man, who is now a provincial governor, and his wife.
- He says the destroyed records listed evidence of magic and the use of a love potion.
- The records claimed the man's wife went insane with lust and describes the incident at the brothel.
- Clodian was executed on charges of performing magic.
- During Clodian's imprisonment he attempted to escape. A guard died after Clodian spoke a verse of strange words while making gestures with his hands. Fellow guards broke the magician's hands and jaw in retaliation before his execution. No further escape attempts were made.
- Clodian was flayed alive.
- All records of the case were removed and destroyed.
- Clodian's considerable property was confiscated and auctioned off.

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Passage to (and from) Sardinia

Investigators can travel to Ostia, where they easily find Evodius. The man is deeply indebted to the House of Arrius and happy to ferry the investigators to Sardinia. His ship, while modest, is sound. Evodius and his crew, made up of a cousin, two sons, and a son-in-law, are capable sailors. The journey is smooth and uneventful unless Keepers wish to add an encounter to liven things up. Once landing in Sardinia, Evodius offers to remain in port for a week to ferry the investigators back, in the hopes of working off even more of his debt to his patron.

Traveling to the Property

Investigators land in southern Sardinia, at the city of Caralis. From there they must travel north, along a proper Roman road, to the city of Valentia. The property now owned by Arrius Melito is located about fifteen leagues, roughly twenty-three miles, northeast of Valentia. The conditions of the roads between Valentia and the property deteriorate, eventually becoming little more than an ancient, overgrown footpath.

Speaking to Locals at Valentia

Most Sardinians know nothing of Melito's new estate, until investigators arrive in the city of Valentia. Once here investigators can get directions to the estate, as well as gather some details about it, with a successful Luck roll. These details are:

- The estate has lain barren for more than a century.
- It's in the middle of prime wine country.
- It's owned by a Roman citizen, named Nipius Clodian, who used to visit there once or twice a year, but hasn't done so in quite some time.
- The estate is known as Clodian's Holding.

Neighboring Farmers

Investigators traveling to Melito's new property pass three large farms on the road there from Valentia. The first grows grain, while the other two are vineyards. Both are run mostly by slaves and nearly the size of a small village with over a hundred people living and working at each. The locals allow

travelers to stop and rest, offering them water and some food in return for news and gossip.

Local Superstitions

Investigators notice that every house in the region near Melito's new property is flanked on all four sides by large (30-foot-tall) well-tended strawberry trees, formally known as the arbutus plant. The trees, while lovely with white flowers, produce bland fruit. They appear to be decorative, as the trees are ringed by a circle of carved river stones. The carvings

Possible Local Sardinians

Himilco — A Sardinian freedman and grain farmer **Calvina** — A young woman, eldest daughter of widower farmer

Shafat — A master vintner overseeing slaves pruning young vines

Ursius Afer — A farmer uprooting stumps and removing rocks from a new field, with slaves

Habita — A slave woman who's nursing a child between doing batches of laundry

Cervidus — An aged farmer, doing household repairs while granddaughters make sure he doesn't hurt himself

are all prayers to various gods and goddesses, beseeching their protection.

Investigators also notice a woman nursing a newborn baby at some point. The new mother and the newborn both wear a garlands of dark leaves, made from the arbutus plant. Outside of the woman's home is an offering bowl on a waist-high stone dais. The bowl is inscribed with the same prayers as the stones ringing the strawberry trees and holds half rotted scraps of meat (pork). If asked about these things, locals simply shrug and say it's a local tradition to ward off evil. These traditions have been passed down to them for hundreds of years, and they no longer know exactly how or why they started.

Investigators wishing to purchase such garlands from the locals may do so for 2 sestertii. A bag with a half-dozen cut handfuls of raw pork can also be obtained for 1 sestertius. Anyone wishing to buy a river stone inscribed with prayers may do so for 1 sestertius, but unlike the pork and garlands, such items are completely useless.

Speaking to Neighbors

Investigators asking about Melito's property learn that locals call it "Clodian's Holding." Investigators are told that the closest farm to it is roughly a three-hour walk away, mainly due to the poor condition of the road. Locals hint that investigators shouldn't travel there as it's not an entirely safe place to visit. If pressed they'll say the place has a dark history and

The Province of Sardinia

Sardinia is the second largest island in the Mediterranean, at just over nine thousand square miles. It has several rivers and mountain chains, and stretches of long coastline with numerous deep bays and inlets. The island enjoys mild temperatures with an average of three hundred days of sunshine a year. Sardinia is a major supplier of grain and salt to the Empire. The province is also known for producing olives and wine.

Sardinia became a Roman province in 238 BCE at the end of the First Punic War. This ended two hundred and seventy-one years of Carthaginian influence on the island. While the native Sardinians occasionally offered resistance they adopted the Latin language and Roman culture. The island remained part of the Roman Empire for six hundred and ninety-four years, before falling to the Vandals in 456 CE.

LUX IN TENEBRAS

that "Old Clodian was never friendly to those poking around his lands." If told that Clodian is dead, locals seem relieved but maintain that the lands were dangerous long before the magician took ownership of them. Investigators wanting more information must make a successful Persuade check before locals offer the following rumors:

- The lands Clodian owned were cursed long before the coming of Rome to the island (false. The lands are not cursed, its residents were; see below).
- The people who once lived there were cursed by the gods for the crimes of incest (false) and cannibalism (true).
- Horrible winged creatures live there now. They hunger for human flesh and utter fearsome cries that steal a man's courage (true), and turn women barren (false) and children mute (false).
- Those who die on this land rise up to slay the living (true, sort of).
- Clodian was a magician, who knew of the land's dark history. He warned everyone to stay away from both him and his lands (true).
- Clodian traveled to the land every spring with several slaves. He would leave the region a day or two later, but always alone (true).
- They tried to warn a group of men some weeks earlier that were traveling to Clodian's Holding. The men seemed suspicious of their intentions and ignored the warnings. They were never seen again (true).

Lack of Magical Spells or Items

To destroy the striges on the property, investigators require spells or enchanted items. Teams without either can only ward off attacks with the garlands of strawberry tree leaves or placate them with hunks of pork. Keepers whose investigators lack the means to harm the striges can use either or both of the optional scenes. Both offer investigators the possibility of acquiring weapons able to harm the striges.

Option One, The Alchemist's Gamble

Just outside of Clodian's Holding, investigators see a line of smoke coming from a camp, hidden behind some hills. Should they travel to this camp they find two pavilion tents, a wagon, and some tethered horses. There are seven people in the camp, all of whom are very nervous. They draw weapons at the slightest sound of anyone approaching.

Six armed men have taken the seventh prisoner. The armed men are all professional hunters, normally hired to capture dangerous animals and bring them to gladiatorial arenas. Investigators with contacts in Numidia, or involved with gladiatorial games, will know of these men by reputation. They are some of the most skilled beast hunters in the empire. All of them are wounded, two of them badly so, sporting small but vicious bite marks. They are lead by a man named Winsen, who speaks passable Latin.

Their prisoner is named Philosir, a Carthaginian man who is currently tied to a tree after enduring a severe beating. Philosir claims to be an apothecary but is in fact an alchemist and magician, a former rival and competitor of the more competent Clodian.

Should the investigators approach, Philosir begs them to

rescue him, while Winsen warns them not to interfere. With some time and calm conversation, investigators can puzzle the details of the dispute between Philosir and Winsen's team of beast hunters.

- The hunters were hired by Philosir to capture an owl-like bird of prey living in this area. In return for the creature, he'd pay the hunters 10,000 sestertii.
- The creature's dreadful cries took the hunters by surprise and stole the courage of some.
- After tracking the creatures to a large barren hill, the hunters were viciously attacked by the creatures and found themselves fighting for their very lives.
- The hunters failed to capture a single creature.
- Two of the hunters died during the attack.
- Powerful spirits protect these creatures, as no weapon, save one, could harm them.
- The only weapon that harmed the creatures was the ax of Bassa, a larger Germanic hunter.
- Bassa boasted that the ax was created by dwarves in the forges of the earth and had been in his family for seventeen generations.
- Bassa fell to the creatures but his valiant effort is the only reason any of the survivors escaped.
- Bassa's ax should still be with his body, about a quarter mile beyond the property marker, just shy of the northern vineyards.
- The hunters blame his death and the failure of this hunt on Philosir. They are angry that he gave them no warning of the creature's invulnerabilities beforehand.
- Philosir says he warned the hunters not to underestimate the creatures.
- He is refusing to pay them anything because their agreement was payment upon receipt of a captured animal.
- He claims not to be responsible for the deaths of their members, as the men were supposed to be some of the best hunters in the empire.

The Great Ax of Bassa

The weapon is an enchanted great ax, having a 15% base chance to hit and doing 2D6 points of damage. The ax can harm the Striges and any other creature harmed only by enchanted weapons. Other than possessing an unusually sharp edge which never dulls, the weapon appears unremarkable.

Option One, Demands and Resolution

Winsen demands full payment from Philosir, as compensation for the death of his men and the injuries they sustained. Philosir refuses because the hunters failed in the task they were hired to accomplish, namely capturing a strix. Investigators may attempt to negotiate a settlement or leave the two parties to their dispute. Winsen wants his money and refuses to return to Clodian's Holding with his men. Philosir wants a live captured strix, so he can harvest its feathers. Failing a live specimen, he'll gladly purchase feathers or dead specimens for 1D8 x 200 sestertii. Keepers can make resolving this conflict as simple or difficult as they wish, with investigators possibly making Fast Talk, Persuade, and Bargain skill checks.

This provides investigators with a chance to recover the ax of the Germanic hunter Bassa. Winsen greatly wished to give Bassa a proper burial, but won't risk any more of his men's lives in an attempt to recover his body. If investigators promise to do so, Winsen rewards them with 100 sestertii. The flesh of the hunter's corpse is nearly stripped to the bone; viewing his remains requires investigators to make a Sanity check for 0/1D2. As Bassa has no son, Winsen has no issue with the investigators retaining the man's weapon for their trouble. The weapon lies in Bassa's cold dead hands.

Option Two, The Lonely Goatherd

High on the hills overlooking Clodian's Holding is a small and simple home. Investigators easily detect it by the line of smoke rising from a chimney and the well-used trail leading to it from the valley floor. This is the home of Kanmi, an old hermit who tends a small stand of olive trees and a herd of goats with his three dogs. His single room dwelling, which doubles as his home and barn, is ringed by a dozen large strawberry trees. The hermit brings his dogs and two dozen goats inside at night for safety. He is a loner, a bit unused to talking to people, but hesitantly welcomes the investigators.

Kanmi knows about the striges, the skeletons, and the dark history of the lands below him. He also knows of the magician Clodian, although he's unaware the wizard is dead. He stays here because his family's owned his small plot of land for generations. If he leaves no one will tend his ancestors' graves. Kanmi is unmarried with no living children. He almost never gets visitors, and most locals are totally unaware of his existence. Kanmi shares what he knows with investigators, while offering them cheese, milk, olives, and a bitter jam made from the fruit of the strawberry trees.

Investigators making a successful Insight roll against Kanmi realize he is trying to hide feelings of guilt and is keeping something from them. If pressed the hermit confesses to being a frequent trespasser into his neighbor's property, namely Clodian's Holding. He says he has no choice, because he needs access to water for his goats. If he learns that the investigators are representatives of the new owner he expresses his hopes that future access won't be restricted. Kanmi offers, "If some sort of arrangement can be worked out ... I don't have much, but I'm not a thief. I'm just a humble herdsman."

Option Two, Demands and Resolution

Investigators may notice the hermit carries an odd staff of wood. It is actually three small lengths of wood which seem to spiral around one another. It is made from the trunk of a strawberry tree that he carefully tended to grow in this manner. If asked about it, Kanmi tells the investigators that it helps him walk on uneven trails, but also defends him from the occasional strix attack. He proudly shows investigators three young trees growing into a similar shape. He explains that these are spares for his staff for when it wears out or if it becomes lost or damaged. Investigators making a successful Bargain and Persuade check may convince Kanmi to part with one or two of these unfinished staves. He won't willingly give up his own weapon or leave himself without an emergency replacement. The goatherd's price for each staff is 2D4 days of labor helping him make repairs to his roof, a rock wall, and his well. Multiple investigators working on these projects can cut the time; for example, 4 investigators working can do 4 days of labor in a single day's time. If the investigators pledge to negotiate granting him and his goats access to the watering hole he utilizes in Clodian's Holding, the amount of labor he requires is halved.

Option Two, A Strawberry Tree Staff

The staves produced by Kanmi function as an enchanted weapon against striges, due to the creatures' vulnerability to this plant. They are thinner than normal fighting staves, having only 10 HP instead of the standard 15. The power of these staves in harming a Strix is not permanent, lasting only between 5–7 (1D3+4) years before wearing off. Creating such a staff takes roughly four years of careful work and constant attention.

Clodian's Holding

This property of about five square miles could be a sizable plantation if ever restored. Currently it is little more than an overgrown wilderness. Whatever buildings that once stood on it are now little more than knee-high piles of stone. Its vineyards are overgrown plots of twisted wild-growing vines. What was an orchard of almond trees are now woodlands with various other varieties of trees growing amid the nut trees. It takes several days to see the entire property, if the investigators and their accompanying team have that long. The property is divided into four sections: The north and east vineyard, the orchards/woodlands, the ruins of the work buildings and master house (see "Areas to Explore").

The Survey Team

Upon arriving at the estate, Valgus Milonius and Suedius Betto get to work. With the help of Latinius Hilario and his slaves Opis and Piso, they get a firm grasp on the land's value. Given enough time they can figure out what must be done to get the lands restored, a projected cost of such repairs, and how long it might take. They can estimate how much the land may produce against the likely expenses running such a place will incur. If able to complete their work, which takes 5–10 days (1D6+4), they estimate the property to be well worth the expense of restoring it. However, this work cannot be safely accomplished before the threat of the striges is eliminated. Investigators attempting to conduct the survey while the striges are still active in the area are inviting tragedy.

A Deadly Property

However, Clodian's Holding can be a very dangerous place. Scattered across the property there are eight animated skeletons, in groups of two or three (1D2+1). Anyone stumbling within sixty feet of the remains triggers them to rise and attack any human other than the deceased magician Clodian until destroyed.

However, the most deadly thing here is a clutch of striges roosting in the property. These deadly owl-like horrors, which crave human flesh, emerge nightly to terrorize victims with their horrific cries before they viciously attack. While not large or overly deadly, the creatures can only be affected by magical attacks. Mundane weapons have no effect on a strix, so investigators without spells or enchanted weapons are at the mercy of these merciless creatures.

Attacks and Targets

Keepers should have the investigators, and the NPC members of the survey team, attacked by either animated skeletons or striges whenever they see fit. Keepers can have the NPCs act as fodder, vanishing or dying in gruesome ways, to drive the story and/or maintain tension. The creatures are indiscriminant in their attacks, reacting to whoever triggered their activation or seems an easy prey item.

Battling the Skeletons

The animated skeletons scattered across the property are a threat to anyone on the property. They are the remains of the slaves Clodian sacrificed to the striges, and each is armed with a stout iron-banded club. The undead guardians animated by Clodian are stronger than the standard animated skeletons, possessing a damage bonus and a better chance to hit in melee combat. The skeletons wear tattered rags and collars with faded lead tags reading, "I have run away. Property of Clodian. Return me for reward."

The chance to hit a skeleton with an impaling weapon is reduced by half and the creatures are immune to impale and critical hits. Animated skeletons can only be destroyed by shattering them. For every hit point of damage a skeleton suffers from an attack, there is a 4% chance to shatter the creature. For example — A skeleton is hit in the head by rocks while storming a castle to obtain the *Necronomicon*. The rocks do 10 points of damage, giving the attack a 40% chance of destroying the skeleton.

Human Skeletons, Animated Strix Victims (groups of 2-3, total of 8)

rolls	averages
5D6	17-18
n/a	n/a
2D6+6	13
3D6	10-11
1	1
3D6	10-11
	5D6 n/a 2D6+6 3D6 1

Move 7 HP n/a **Av. Damage Bonus:** +1D4 **Weapons:** Club 50%, 1d6 + db **Armor:** none.

Skills: Clatter Ominously 45%, Rise Unexpectedly 60%. Habitat: ruins, tombs, treasure chests, dungeons, sorcerers' keeps. Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see an animated skeleton.

Battling the Striges

The striges commonly attack at night in groups of 2-4(1d3+1). At least one strix howls (see below) each round the group is in combat. The creatures rend targets offering little resistance. Those in armor become targets for the striges' grapple and blood draining attacks. Investigators who prove particularly troublesome can be attacked by the creatures' single spell, Evil Eye (see "The Grimoire" section of the *Cthulhu Invictus* rule book), if Keepers chose to include this optional ability.

Investigators armed with magical weapons or possessing offensive magical spells may be able to defeat the striges outright. However, those without such items or abilities are not entirely helpless. Investigators who paid close attention to the local Sardinians living around Clodian's Holding may learn some methods for placating or warding off an attacking strix.

An attacking strix can be mollified with a palm-sized chunk of pork, causing it to depart after snatching the morsel up. The leaves of the strawberry tree can drive off a strix as well. An investigator swinging about a branch of the abutus plant (a.k.a. strawberry tree) or wearing a garland made from its leaves may drive the strix away. Such actions cause the creatures to make a POW x3 check or be driven off for 1D3 hours.

Strix, Foul Owl (8)

Char.	rolls	averages
STR	2D6	7
CON	3D6+3	13-14
SIZ	2D6	7
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6	10-11
Move 5/12	flying	

HP 10-11

Av. Damage Bonus :-1D4

Weapons: Grapple: 45%, damage special + blood drain (see below) Rend 45%, damage 1D6

Call 45%, damage 1D3 SAN

Armor: none, but striges are immune to non-magical attacks. **Spells:** any the Keeper desires; Evil Eye recommended. **Sanity Loss:** none to see a strix; 0/1D3 to hear a strix howl

Blood Drain: A strix that successfully grapples its foe is able to drain 1D6 STR each round from the victim. Once the victim's STR reaches 0, the strix drains CON at the rate of 1D6 points per round. When the victim's CON reaches 0, he is dead. Each point of STR and CON drained by the strix can be added to its POW or HP. If the victim escapes the strix before CON reaches 0, lost STR and CON regenerates at the rate of 1 point of STR or CON per day.

MYSTERY IN SARDINIA

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Areas to Explore

Property Marker

At the end of an old gravel-lined path, the investigators come to the property marker for Clodian's Holding. Here they find a weathered stone marker of about six feet tall. While beginning to fade, its carved message in Latin is still clearly visible. It reads "Do Not Enter. Property of Nipius Clodian. Trespassers will be eaten. You've been warned".

The North Vineyard

This tangled jumble of vines, bushes, and small trees stretches on for acres in every direction. It is the larger of the two fields, and dark grapes still grow in abundance here. While putting these fields in proper order would be a backbreaking and expensive task, the ground is fertile and the grapes growing here are ideal for wine making. The most notable thing about the north field is a large hive of aggressive honeybees.

The East Vineyard

This area is much like the larger northern field, a mass of twisted vines. However, this field has many thorny vines and bushes growing among the grape vines. This makes the grapes here scarce and difficult to reach. It is well worth the effort as they possess a delicious flavor and could produce a truly exceptional wine. This is also where the valley's spring-fed pond is located, which is often visited by Kanmi and his goats.

The Orchard

This dark and overgrown woodland was once a well-tended orchard of almond trees. There are still usable paths crisscrossing the area, which can be found with a successful Spot Hidden or Tracking roll. About 30% of the trees growing here are large old almond trees, and the nuts can be found littering the ground in abundance. Investigators searching this area locate the remains of a recent encampment.

The Camp

At the edge of the woodlands is a recently dug fire pit and a handful of shredded tents. Common camp items, simple weapons, farming and survey equipment are strewn about the area. In the camp itself are four human skeletons, less than a season old. A search of the surrounding area, coupled with a successful Spot Hidden roll, allow investigators to locate three more. They are the first survey team sent by Nerva, lying where they met their end at the claws and vicious beaks of the striges. Also found here are a dozen unusual items scattered here and there. They are tight balls of hair, buttons, buckles, coins, and other hard, indigestible items. These are owl pellets, regurgitated by the feeding striges. Realizing what these items truly are costs the investigators 0/1 Sanity points.

Ruins; Work Buildings and Master's House

This large open area in the center of the property is dominated by a tall, flat hill. This area is less overgrown, more barren, the closer one travels towards the top of the hill. Surrounding the hill are several piles of rubble, the remains of buildings where slaves were housed, livestock were kept, workshops were located, grapes were sorted and wine was produced, stored, and aged. These buildings have vanished under the passage of centuries but a careful search allows investigators to turn up artifacts of plantation life, such as rusty tools, old nails, and broken shards of pottery.

The hill itself is the most blighted location on the property. The grass growing here is low and brown. The young trees and bushes here grow into tortured, unnatural shapes. A chill hangs over the area, growing worse the closer one moves towards the top of the hill, with temperatures a full 15 degrees cooler at its summit. The area is deathly quiet, as no natural animal life comes anywhere near here.

Atop the hill are the nearly undetectable remains of an immense villa. Finding evidence of the building requires a Spot Hidden roll. If successful the investigators can walk the raised outline of half-buried stones and depressions to trace what was once a sprawling estate with a decorative garden and an artificial pond.

Apparitions on the Hilltop

Investigators who linger on the hilltop must make a POW x3 check. If successful the investigator gains a vision of the hilltop as it was centuries ago. There are no sounds to this phantom scene, only images, echoes of a long-past event. Investigators see a magnificent house, brightly painted, and which seems to shine in the sun. On the grounds outside, dozens of people are having a celebration. They are richly garbed in archaic Carthaginian styles of dress. The people share similar features and mannerisms, seeming to be members of an extended family.

As investigators take in the scene, they begin to notice that things are not quite right. The people have abnormally wide mouths, bulging eyes, and dramatically undersized arm. They also share an unusual deformity, a collection of fleshy growths sprouting from their chins. These growths range in length from a few inches in the oldest members of the family to nearly a foot in the younger ones. They partygoers are merrily gathered around a roasting spit, slicing cuts of succulent roasted meat off a large human corpse. In moments the vision ends, costing those who view it 1/1D2 sanity points.

Investigators making a successful Cthulhu Mythos check view a second vision immediately following the first. This one takes place at night, with the deformed family members gathered together near the artificial pond at the edge of the garden. They appear beaten and bloodied, soundlessly crying out in pain or begging for mercy. Soldiers, bearing the arms, armor, and uniforms of ancient Numidia and Carthage, surround them. They behead the loathsome family members one by one, kicking their headless corpses into the pond. Several of the youngest and most hideously deformed family members make a break for it. They escape past the soldiers and vanish into the night. A Numidian man with the soldiers, who is unarmed and dressed in robes, begins shouting and gesturing at the fleeing children. Investigators know that he is



A LIGHT IN DARKNESS

calling down a curse. Investigators viewing this second vision must make a Sanity check for 1/1D3 and gain +1 to their Cthulhu Mythos score.

The Well

Investigators making a successful Spot Hidden check find a cracked, open hole in the ground, partially hidden by some bushes. The hole appears to be the remains of an ancient well that may have been under the manor house. Those making a successful Idea check realize the bushes are cultivated here to intentionally conceal the opening. A wooden ladder, seeming to be only a decade old, leads from the rim of the well downwards thirty-five feet into darkness. This was placed here by Clodian who used it while gathering feathers from the drugged striges for use in his love potions. Using the ladder requires a successful DEX x4 check, as it is old and unstable. Those failing this check fall off the rickety ladder to the chamber below, suffering 1D6 points of damage. At the bottom of the well is a dank, foul-smelling cavern. This was once a temple dedicated to the Great Old One Gol-goroth, but is now the lair of the clutch of striges.

The Ancient Temple and The Dread Idol

The walls and floor of this ancient chamber are covered with filth. All valuables were looted from here long ago and only a single statue remains. It rests on its side and is broken into three large sections. Those making a successful Idea roll realize that it was once intentionally toppled over. It is an icon of dark malevolence and power once known as "The Dread Idol" by those who tried to destroy it.

Investigators entering this chamber, or even lingering overlong at its entrance, are attacked by any striges roosting here. The entire clutch will be resting here during daylight hours, unless they have already been dispatched by the investigators. The creatures can exit the chamber during daylight hours without any difficultly; they merely prefer moving about at night. The striges defend their lair to the death, as the chamber is both a home and holy site to their ancestors.

Investigators examining the remains of the statue get a good idea of what it must have looked like before it was shattered. When reassembled The Dread Idol appears to be a horrific bloated toad-like creature, with a wide mouth, wrinkled skin, and bulging eyes. It has no upper limbs, but instead a massive beard of long powerful-looking tentacles. The statue is caked with dirt, but if cleaned off the investigators see it is carved from a single massive block of bluish-hued marble shot with bands of purple and black. If so cleaned the investigators also notice a set of strange runes inscribed on the base of the statue. Investigators who make a successful INT x3 check realize it is actually a simple cipher written in Greek, which when decoded reads, "Our Most Glorious Hidden Master, The Great and Aged Gol-goroth, That Which Lurks Beyond All Darkness"

The fragments of The Dread Idol are cold to the touch. Anyone coming into contact with it must make a POW check. Those failing the check hear a chorus of low whispers playing inside of their minds, which costs them 1 Sanity point. Such investigators have drawn the attention of Gol-goroth, who may or may not send his worshipers to recover the idol and avenge the deaths of the defenders of one of its most ancient holy places.

The Dread Idol is the cause of the unnatural blight covering the center of the property and the periodic appearance of apparitions on the hilltop. If it is removed from the area, the hillside slowly recovers from its unwholesome effects over a period of seven years. Keepers are encouraged to create various difficulties for investigators attempting to handle the Idol. Removing the statue from the subterranean chamber, carting it away, and just what is ultimately done with it may be the focus of a future MRP *Cthulhu Invictus* scenario entitled "The Dread Idol."

Completing the Investigation

Investigators must protect Melito's team of experts and surveyors while they conduct their survey. Finding the remains of the missing men, originally sent to perform the survey, is also an important objective. However, completing these tasks only earns the investigators a partial success. To successfully complete the investigation, the following tasks must be completed:

- Destroy all animated skeletons (total of 8) from the property
- Destroy the clutch of striges (total of 8) on the property

If those goals are achieved, the property is made safe for development. It ceases to be referred to as "Clodian's Holding" and becomes known as "The Arrius Estate." Within two years it is one of the most prosperous plantations in all of Sardinia. Arrius Melito and his young wife Magnilla take well to the plantation life. Their lives are happy, productive, and fruitful, as the halls of the rebuilt manner house fill with the pitterpatter of little heirs.

Rewards

The investigators are monetarily compensated for their efforts with a payment of 1000 sestertii each. The couple further shows their gratitude with a generous gift, a letter granting them entry to the Reds Racing Faction's personal viewing booth for every circus in the Empire. As long as the Arrius family isn't using their booth for a private function, the investigators may join them. If the family is not personally attending a particular set of races, the investigators can use the letter to gain exclusive use of their viewing box.

Sanity Awards

For destroying the animated skeletons on the property+1D6 SAN For destroying the striges on the property+1D3 SAN

THE DREAD IDOL THE CONCLUSION TO MYSTERY IN SARDINIA



BY OSCAR RIOS

Introduction

A week has passed since the ridding of the loathsome striges from the ancient temple below the hill. The dark history of the property, from the days when it was called Clodian's Holding back to the days it was controlled by an abhorrent cult, is slowly being scrubbed away. While those who rid the area of its unnatural threats rest, others are quite busy. Valgus Milonius, the retired legionary and engineer, and Suedius Betto, an accountant and property surveyor, have quickly taken command now that the property has been made safe.

While your companions rest and heal in a spacious camp tent provided for your use, workers are pouring into the estate. Suedius Betto measures out lines and boundaries, drawing up plans for buildings and fields. Valgus Milonius directs slaves and freedmen workers in clearing growth, repairing roads, digging wells, and setting up an ever-growing camp. As more people and supplies arrive, Milonius' time in the legions becomes apparent. The efforts to turn the neglected lands back into a functioning plantation estate take on an organized and disciplined military feel. For once, it seems, others are doing the hard work and you are encouraged to sit back, relax and watch.

Keeper's Information

While the property is made habitable for humans again, there remains a grave Mythos threat, the Dread Idol. The three fragments of this statue, which when re-assembled stand about twelve feet tall, still lie in the remains of the underground temple of the Great Old One Gol-goroth. Investigators should realize the malevolent icon is a conduit to that dark god and that it is responsible for the blight and the appearance of apparitions around it. However, these are minor powers when compared to its true purpose, which soon becomes known.

The Great Old One Gol-goroth dwells in various subterranean temples and alien castles with extensions deep into the Earth. The Dread Idol and other items like it allow the

Great Old One and its chosen followers to travel between their centers of power. The temple on Arrius Melito's property was an entry point on the planet Earth for the minions of That Which Lurks.

Unbeknownst to all, this link is about to be reestablished. Soon Valgus Milonius will order his workers to haul the loathsome statue's fragments out of the temple so it can be carted away. During this effort three of the slaves working for Milonius hastily perform a ritual to re-activate the statue's power. The statue instantly repairs itself and fills the area with black and purple mists before transporting itself to another world where worshipers of Gol-goroth are eager to recover the sacred item.

However, the Dread Idol does not travel alone. Its strange mists move with intelligence and surround anyone with the Cthulhu Mythos skill. When the statue vanishes, those chosen and surrounded by its mists travel with it. Investigators find themselves in a very strange land ruled by the followers of Gol-goroth, a subterranean realm on the planet Venus.

Here they are put on trial for their crimes and sentenced to die by the Rite of Sacred Prey. This allows them a slim chance of escape, as the minions of That Which Lurks struggle to win the honor of killing them as a way to prove their worthiness to their god-king. Now, much like the ten thousand Greek mercenaries led by Clearchus the Spartan, who were abandoned in Persia in 400 BCE, investigators must fight to return home from deep in enemy territory.

Part One - The Lurking Mists

Keepers should allow the investigators ample time to heal physically (and possibly mentally). Valgus Milonius and Suedius Betto are both well-funded, competent men, long-time clients of the House of Arrius. They've been instructed by Arrius Melito to treat the investigators as members of the Arrius family. Both men go out of their way to ensure investigators receive every possible comfort. Investigators are loaned slaves, waited upon, well fed, and offered diversions. They are offered a day of hunting in the mountains; games such as races, wrestling, or javelin throwing; or even a religious ceremony offering thanks to whatever gods they choose. If pursued such activities allow investigators to recover a maximum of 1D3 Sanity points.

Unexpected Investigator Actions

Investigators may plan to remove the stone idol themselves. They may attempt to cover the well and keep knowledge of the Dread Idol secret. Investigators may call in contacts from Societas Cryptaegidis to consult with on how best to remove or destroy the statue. The possibilities are endless.

Keepers must ensure that Valgus Milonius and his men be the ones to attempt to remove the statue from beneath the hillside. He is a good man who is simply trying to help the investigators. The statue wants to be handled, so it can draw to itself minds weak enough to dominate into enacting its ritual of transportation. To begin the scenario, this ritual must occur, and the dark powers of Gol-goroth are fully focused on this happening.

A good way for Keepers to distract the players is with Valgus Milonius. Keepers should have the man consult with the investigators, asking them for advice on how to transport the icon off the property, where it should be taken, and ultimately, what should be done with it. As investigators look ahead, thinking of a long difficult road, they'll be less likely to see an almost immediate attack. What could go wrong at the very first stage of their well-planned mission to dispose of the Dread Idol?

Removing the Idol

Eventually Valgus Milonius and his team begin removing the Dread Idol from its underground resting place. The engineer Milonius sets up a system of ropes, block and tackle, and a wooden framework over the well. This allows for the three huge blocks of marble to be removed with minimal manpower, a half-dozen slaves at most. Whatever preparations the investigators have made for transporting the icon should be ready at this time, such as supplies, maps, wagons, and teams.

By now three of the slaves selected for this task have been dominated by the power of The Dread Idol. They act normally, biding their time until, even if closely watched by the investigators, they make their move. The ritual requires a human sacrifice, with either the life's blood to be spilled or the heart of the sacrifice to be placed on the stone idol. They happily give their lives or take the lives of others to ensure that this successfully happen. There are several possible ways to do this:

- Two slaves cut out the heart of the third and place it on one of the black stones
- One slave provides a distraction while the other two perform the sacrifice
- Two slaves provide a distraction while a third slits his own throat, spilling his life's blood onto the stone

Dominated Slaves of Valgus Milonius (3)

STR 15	CON 13	SIZ 14	INT 7	POW 9			
DEX 12	APP 8	EDU 11	SAN 0	HP 14			
Damage B	Damage Bonus: +1D4						
Weapons:	Weapons: Fist/Punch 65%, 1D3 + db						
Grappl	Grapple 45%, damage special						
Knife 6	Knife 65%, 1D4 + db						
Improvised Club 45%, 1D8 + db							
Armor: no	ne.						
Skills: Con	ceal 65%. Hi	de 65%. Snea	ak 65%.				

The Ritual

By the time investigators realize that followers of Gol-goroth are making a move, it should be too late. Keepers should allow investigators to witness the slaves complete the ritual. They lose 0/1D2 Sanity points if the ritual was completed with blood and 1/1D3 if done with a still-beating human heart.

Once the ritual is complete there is a loud thunder-like crash and the sky instantly darkens. In a flash the Dread Idol is fully restored, standing twelve-feet tall, depicting a monstrous hoofed-and winged-toad with a beard of tentacles. Purple and black mists pour from the base of the statue, filling the area and reaching out towards anyone with Cthulhu Mythos. Those targeted hear a chorus of dark menacing voices calling out in their minds in a language they cannot understand. Those viewing the statue and the mists, and hearing these voices, lose 1/1D3 Sanity points.

Almost instantly the mists surround the investigators, blinding them and blocking them from view by others. They are instantly gripped with agonizing pain as they feel their bodies disintegrate, only to be reformed a moment later. Both the Dread Idol and the investigators are simply gone, vanished off the face of the Earth. However, at the same moment the icon and investigators appear in the subterranean realm of Golgarek, below the surface of the planet Venus.

Welcome to Golgarek

Investigators reintegrate beside the statue in a very strange place. It is dim, with a strange pale glow coming from above them, cloaking the area in a constant twilight. They are beneath an enormous mushroom like growth, hanging with yellow, ropey moss. The air is thick and heavy and begins to burn their lungs the moment they try to draw breath. Within moments they drop to the floor helpless, asphyxiating on the alien atmosphere like fish trying to breathe upon dry land. The investigators black out, collapsing at the foot of the Dread Idol.

Alien Physicians

The investigators come awake, alone, naked, and strapped to tables, in a dimly lit stone chamber. They are surrounded by three strange creatures. They are hairless humanoids, pale white in color with smooth scaly skins, milky eyes, and heads which seem more at home on a snake than a man. These are albino serpent people, and viewing them costs investigators 0/1D6 Sanity points.

Investigators feel terrible, with scorched lungs making attempts to speak painful. The serpent people reach into a large jar and withdraw disgusting-looking slug-like creatures. They are brown with red zebra-like stripes and nearly a foot long, with groping feelers. The things are dropped onto the bound investigators, where they then burrow into their bodies. While initially agonizing, the pain soon fades.

As this occurs one of the serpent people begins speaking, its words completely alien. But as the pain fades, the words begin to become clearer. Soon the investigators can understand the creature's language. It says, "Be calm—don't fight it—just relax and let it happen. We are trying to help you. Can you understand me? What are you called? Tell me your name so we know that this is working."

If investigators answer, the albino serpent people understand them. They explain that the creatures inserted into their bodies, called vissi, will heal their lungs and allow them to communicate and breathe the atmosphere. The serpent people explain that they shall be well treated and completely healed. "You are our honored guests and we are very pleased to be your hosts. We welcome you to Golgarek, upon what you would call in your night sky Venus. Sleep now; let the vissi do their work. When you awaken you'll be reunited with your countrymen and you'll meet with your advocate who'll explain everything." Almost instantly the investigators fall asleep.

Part Two - Trial of the Godslayers

Investigators slowly awaken in a large chamber, with a single round, tightly sealed stone door. They've been laid out on comfortable beds of moss, and nearby stands a table with laden bread, oil, fruit, cool water, and bits of diced meat. Investigators feel very hungry and the food is all totally familiar to them. They are wearing their clothing, which has been washed and mended (if necessary), but their weapons, armor, and equipment are conspicuously absent. There is no way out of this room either, as it is a holding cell for highsecurity prisoners. However, investigators hear paper rustling nearby and realize they are not alone.

Meeting with Elovan Kennor, Jurisconsultus

Sitting quietly behind a desk in the corner of the room is a single albino serpent person. Dressed in greyish robes with a black diamond tattooed on the center of his forehead, the creature reviews the scrolls covering the desk. When investigators notice him, the creature smiles and nods a greeting. He says, "When you are ready—there is no rush. I am sure you are hungry, so please sate yourselves. My time is your time; I am at your service."

While investigators can rush this creature, delivering unarmed attacks, such is unwise. If they initiate combat, the serpent person makes attempts to dodge their attacks while imploring them to stop. He explains that he's their court-appointed lawyer, who's here to help them and the only chance they have of every returning to their home world.

Elovan Kennor, Serpent Person Lawyer

	· 1		,	
STR 12	CON 12	SIZ 13	INT 17	POW 14
DEX 13	APP 8	Move 8		HP 13
Damage I	Bonus: +1D4			
Weapons	: Bite 35%, 1I	08 + poison	(POT = COI)	N score)
Armor: 1	-point scales.			
Spells: 2D	06 spells of th	e Keeper's c	hoice.	
Sanity Lo	ss: 0/1D6 Poi	nts to see a	serpent perso	on.

When the investigators are ready to talk, the serpent person answers all their questions as best he can. He explains the following points:

- He is named Elovan Kennor, and he's pleased to have been appointed their jurisconsultus
- They are on the planet Venus, in the subterranean realm of Golgarek
- Golgarek is the Land of Shadows, one of the seven sacred domains of the Great Old One Gol-goroth, That Which Lucks in the Darkness
- They are being held by the administrative council awaiting trial
- They are charged with the desecration of a holy site and the murder of its sacred guardians

- He is confident he can have that charge reduced considerably, as ultimately the missing icon was recovered as a result of their actions
- The bigger problem is the more serious charge brought forth by another of their god-king's race
- The investigators are charged with the crime of godslaying, accused of destroying the Great Old One Eihort's material form and driving it from the earth for a period of one thousand moons

Elovan asks the investigators for their version of the story, recording everything they say and occasionally asking questions. He is particularly concerned with their actions against the cults of Eihort and the destruction of the strix guardians of the Dread Idol. He asks if there are any "extenuating circumstances" for their actions and if any worshippers of Eihort might be sympathetic to their cause. He explains there is a chance he could get them sentenced to execution by "Rite of Sacred Prey," which has at least a slim possibility of survival.

The Loophole

Elovan proudly states that he is the greatest defense lawyer of his people. He's identified a loop hole that if a ranking member of Eihort's faith speaks on their behalf, they won't be summarily executed. "You won't be burned, buried alive, fed to beasts, or drowned in acid.... They'll sentence you to die by Rite of Sacred Prey, which gives you at least a small chance at not only survival but returning to your homeland." (See boxed text, "Rite of Sacred Prey.")

The investigator's best chance lies with Caelia. If they recovered her dead body from the center of the Labyrinth of Messara and resurrected her, then somewhere on Earth she lives and might be willing to help them. If investigators murdered her in the temple of the Tenders cult, or left her dead body in Eihort's lair, then she cannot now come to speak on their behalf.

If Caelia's testimony is not an option in their defense, Elovan offers the possibility of earning the Rite of Sacred Prey by mass gladiatorial combat. "Luckily there is a group of Martians in the next wing awaiting execution. If you make an impassioned plea before the council, they might be merciful. The winners of the gladiatorial contest will then be granted the Rite of Sacred Prey."

The Rite of Sacred Prey

This is a form of execution reserved for the most honored enemies of Golgarek. Such prisoners are released and given a series of challenges, all the while being hunted by those wishing to win the honor of slaying such great adversaries. If the prisoners survive and overcome their challenges, they are then freed and returned to their homeland. The odds are very heavily weighted against prisoners, and in twenty-six thousand years no prisoners have ever won their freedom via the Rite of Sacred Prey.

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After the meeting Elovan informs the investigators to get plenty of rest because tomorrow their trial begins. If Caelia is an option, he tells them that he'll make every effort to secure her testimony before the start of the proceedings. As he leaves, a group of serpent-person guards stands ready to make sure the investigators make no attempt at escape.

Average Serpent-Person Guard

STR 14 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 13 POW 14 DEX 13 Move 8 HP 14 Damage Bonus: +1D4 Weapons: Bite 35%, 1D8 + poison (POT = CON score) Warhammer 45%, 1D4 + db Armor: 1-point scales. Spells: 2D3 spells of the Keeper's choice. Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Points to see a serpent person.

The Trial

The next morning investigators are taken to a semicircular chamber, down the hall from their cell. They are led there by their lawyer and escorted by a pair of guards per investigators (see boxed text). Here they stand before a panel of six wizened-looking albino serpent people in regal purple robes. Standing with the investigators are two serpent people, Elovan Kennor, the defense attorney, and Romlar Vasarii, the prosecuting attorney. The lawyers make their opening statements and present their cases. It becomes quickly apparent that as complicated as Roman law is, the legal system of Golgarek is incomprehensible.

Eventually the arguments cease and the lead judge asks if the investigators have anyone to speak on their behalf. If the investigators ended "A Second Theseus" with Caelia alive, Keepers should go to the "Option, Witness for the Defense" section. If they ended that scenario with Caelia still dead, they have no one to speak on their behalf. If this is the case, their lawyer motions that his clients be allowed to petition the court for the right to display their valor on the gladiatorial sands. He explains that if his clients win their combat against other enemies of the state, they will be granted the Rite of Sacred Prey.

The gathered serpent people all hiss excitedly at this prospect, causing the elder judge to slam a brass orb into a wooden block for order. "Let them then beg for our mercy, and for the right to die for our pleasure against the vile Martians." Investigators may then address the court, throwing themselves at their mercy and begging for the right to fight as a gladiator. This requires at least half of the investigators to make successful Persuade or Fast Talk rolls. If successful the investigators are returned to their cell to await the gladiatorial match. Should they fail, they are sentenced to die by crucifixion (see "Crucify Them").

Option, Witness for the Defense

If Caelia lives Elovan Kennor brings her to Venus to testify on the investigator's behalf. He proudly announces to the council, "Yes, the defendants do have someone to speak on their behalf: a woman who rose to the rank of high priestess in two different religious groups dedicated to the Great Old One Eihort."

A figure in a black hooded cloak enters the court room, stopping before the council. It removes the hood; it is Caelia, the former cultist of Eihort. She turns to the investigators with a smile, a wink, and runs her hands over a belly swollen with pregnancy. "Honored council, I petition, nay, I demand that the accused be granted the Rite of Sacred Prey. As the slayers of Eihort, they have earned an honorable death. Also, the heroes of Golgarek deserve the chance to prove themselves to their god-king. May I ask the council, has anyone ever been tried on the charges of godslaying?"

The elder serpent person replies, "They have not."

"So", she replies, "such a challenge has never before offered itself to your people. When might such a challenge ever present itself again? Will you deny your warriors the chance to win the honor of defeating the godslayers of Eihort? Surely you cannot think they are mighty enough to win their freedom? I have spoken."

There is much hissing and conversation among the council and the two lawyers. Meanwhile Caelia is allowed to speak with the investigators. She claims to be married, living in Gaul, and that her pregnancy is proceeding smoothly. Her husband runs a business started with her money, and they are comfortable. She doesn't give more details than this for her own security. Caelia, even among those she considers friends, remains a paranoid survivor. After a few moments, the council makes its decision known (see "The Rite is Granted").

Option, Gladiatorial Death Match

Investigators are led to a gladiatorial arena and pushed out onto the sands. The stands around them are filled with two thousand serpent-person spectators, as well as a box for the ruling council (the same individuals who passed judgment on the investigators). There, in a pile on the ground before them, are all of their weapons, items of armor, and equipment.

After a few moments, another group enters the sands from the opposite side of the arena. They are about the size of bears, brown in color with glistening wet leathery skins. The creatures have large dark eyes and V-shaped mouths that ooze saliva. Each one has numerous tentacles (1D6+2) and bodies that heave and pulsate. These are Martians, who quickly rush forward to take up their weapons, long blood-draining stilettos. Keepers should vary the number of Martians to better match the fighting abilities and numbers of the investigators, usually giving the investigators a 2 to 1 numerical advantage.

Martian Captives

STR 16	CON 7	SIZ 26	INT 16	POW 10	
DEX 16	Move4			HP 17	
Damage Bonus: +2D6					
Weapons: Martian Stiletto, 1 point + db					
Armor: none, but all physical weapons do only half damage.					
Sanity Los	s: 1/1D8 Sai	nity Points fo	or seeing a Ma	artian.	

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Combat begins and does not conclude until one side is completely destroyed. Anyone killed is returned to life should their side win victory. Members of the losing side are dragged away to be fed to beasts kept below the arena. If the investigators win the gladiatorial match against the Martians, the council makes an announcement before the gathered crowd.

The Rite is Granted

The elder serpent-person judge slams down the brass orb for order, all discussion falls silent. "Let the call go out to all worthy heroes of Golgarek. Tomorrow a quarry of unmatched worthiness shall be released. The Rite of Sacred Prey is granted." The investigators are returned to their rooms, fed, healed any damage they might have suffered, and allowed to sleep before being released the next day.

Crucify Them

If the investigators do not have Caelia testify on their behalf and fail to convince the courts to allow them to fight in the arena, they are sentenced to be crucified. They are led under guard to the road outside of the serpent-person city, where their places have been made ready. However, before they are tied down to their wooden-like crosses, every single one of their guards falls asleep and drops to the ground.

Stepping from the shadows are two serpent people, Elovan Kennor and Romlar Vasarii. Both lawyers approach the investigators, returning their weapons, armor, and equipment to them. Romlar appears to be happy with this arrangement, as the public really wanted to see the investigators be granted the Rite of Sacred Prey. They explain that serpent-person law states that if both lawyers agree to work together, they may engineer the escape of sentenced individuals without any repercussions. The incident gets classified as a training drill for the local militia. Romlar hisses happily and says, "Which in its own way grants you the Rite of Sacred Prey...." They then explain the challenge (see "The Rite of Sacred Prey Begins"), and warn them, "We must report this inside of an hour. You haven't much time". The investigators must evade or overcome the local militia (see "Release the Hounds, sort of").

Release the Hounds, sort of

The militia does not choose to hunt down the investigators, considering them too dangerous. They do release a number of Venusian death beasts, after giving them the investigators' scent. These creatures track the investigators down and rip them apart when catching up with them. Investigators must either elude these relentless predators or defeat them.

Venusian Death Beast (1 per 2 investigators)

STR 22	CON 11	SIZ 16	INT 5	POW 11		
DEX 17	Move 10			HP 14		
Damage B	Bonus: +1D6					
Weapons:	Bite 45%, 11	06 + db				
Armor: no	one.					
Skills: Track 35%.						
Sanity Los	ss: 0/1D3.					

These six-legged reptilian predators are tiger striped, low to the ground, and shaped like twelve-foot-long weasels. They constantly sniff the ground and the air, darting around nervously, blinking their four pairs of eyes. They also emit whistling calls when they pick up a scent or catch sight of their prey. They have the same physical statistics as a tiger on Earth does.

The Rite of Sacred Prey Begins

Investigators are rearmed, given their equipment along with provisions for three days, and released from the city. The rules are simple, they must survive and reach their objective. They are told to head west, towards the seashore, where they are to meet with a representative from their home world. "This is your ambassador from Earth, brought here long ago to speak for your people. You shall be tested by him, and if found worthy, told your next objective. The hunt begins in one hour. Run well, Earthlings, test our warriors, and die with honor. Good luck; if anyone ever had a chance of actually winning this rite, it is you."



Investigators are instructed to head west and seek out the ambassador from Earth. The terrain is quite foreign (see "The Land of Golgarek"). The seashore is fifteen Roman leagues (about twenty-three miles or thirty-seven kilometers) from where the investigators are released. Keepers should have the investigators attacked by a group of hunters (see "Attack of the Dregs") sometime before they reach the ambassador. If they successfully impress the ambassador (see "The Magical Leopluridon"), the investigators are given directions to the Castle Which Lurks, where a magical doorway exists that can lead them back to Earth.

The Land of Golgarek

This subterranean realm below the surface of Venus looks much like the surface of a planet at twilight. Dim light, which seems to come from above, bathes everything. Shadows are prevalent; dawn or full night never comes. There is no wind, no sound of birdsong, only the occasional croaking, howl, or scream. A constant smell of mustiness and decay fills the air. Local foliage is primarily fungal, with dozens of variety of mushrooms growing everywhere. Some reach the heights of the greatest forests trees on Earth. The temperature is hot, the air humid, and, even with the assistance of the symbiotic vissi, uncomfortable to breathe.

LUX IN TENEBRAS



A LIGHT IN DARKNESS

Towards the Sea

Investigators are placed on a road leading west towards the sea. If they travel upon it, they are attacked before they travel two leagues. Investigators following it from a distance and taking care to cover their tracks might avoid attack all the way to the sea.

A group of mounted pursuers races along the road in an attempt to pick up the investigators' trail (see "Attack of the Dregs"). If investigators have been covering their tracks and make successful Hide rolls, they can avoid the dregs at this time. However, the creatures then set up an ambush for the investigators just before they reach the sea. After all, the dregs know exactly where the investigators are heading.

Attack of the Dregs

At some point before meeting with the ambassador from Earth, the investigators encounter the dregs. In fact, this is one of the challenges of the Rite of Sacred Prey, and the ambassador won't appear until after the contest is decided. These creatures are descendants of humans who once lived in Sardinia and worshipped Gol-goroth, the original keepers of the Dread Idol. Today, tens of thousands of these creatures live in Golgarek. The dregs are mounted upon Venusian striders (see below), and their hunting party equals the investigators in number.

Mounted Dreg Hunting Party (1 per investigator)

STR 14	CON 15	SIZ 14	INT 8	POW 10
DEX 10	Move 8			HP 15
Damage B	Bonus: +1D4			
Weapons:	Punch 65%,	damage 1D	03 + db	
Spear	35%, 1D6 +	db		

Armor: 2 point Leather Jerkin, 1 point thick hide, small shield 30%, 20 HP

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 Points to see a dreg.

Venusian Strider (1 per Dreg)

STR 13	CON 11	SIZ 15	INT 4	POW 8				
DEX 13	Move 14		HP 13					
Damage B	Damage Bonus: +1D4							
Weapons:	Weapons: Bite 30%, 1D4							
Armor: none.								
Sanity Los	ss: 0/1D3.							

These two-legged creatures appear as large flightless birds. They have feathery scales and large heads. However their eyes are solid black orbs and their jaws are a collection of hard insect-like mandibles, which can deliver formidable bites. They are used as mounts on Golgarek as they can travel long distances at good speed and are slow to tire. They have roughly the same statistics as wolves do on Earth.

Reaching the Sea

The sea of Golgarek is quite different than oceans on Earth. There are no waves or winds, no seabirds or tides. The water is still and dark, feeling very thick due to the high salt content. Here the investigators are approached by the ambassador from Earth, which waits until they have defeated their dreg pursuers. The investigators are tested by the ambassador from Earth, the magical leopluradon.

The Magical Leopluradon

Millions of years ago, the albino serpent people of Venus wished to open diplomatic relations with Earth. The Great Old One Gol-goroth transported a life-form from that world to Venus, gave it intelligence and immortality, and altered it so it could survive in the seas of Golgarek. That Which Lurks chose the most powerful ocean predator it could find, a dinosaur known as a leopluradon, a titanic beast with four flippers, monstrous jaws, and a head nearly a third the length of its body.

The creature is quite wise and knows of a magical gate leading back to Earth, located in the castle of Gol-goroth. It shares this information with investigators who pass its test. If they cannot, it either departs or defends itself if attacked. The test is simple: stand your ground. When presenting itself the creature rushes forward out of the still waters, erupting onto the shoreline. It is a terrifying sight, as the enormous dinosaur hauls itself onto the shore.

The Magical Leopluradon, Earth's Ambassador to Venus

STR 75CON 63SIZ 85INT 18POW 20DEX 13Move 3 / 18 SwimmingHP 74Damage Bonus: +9D6Weapons: Bite 65%, 3D8 + dbArmor: 10-point skinSanity Loss: 0/1D6 points to see the magical leopuradon.

After emerging the creature takes no action, simply waiting to see how the investigators react. If they flee or attack, they fail its test. So long as a single investigator holds their ground, they pass, and the creature begins to communicate. It issues forth a rasping roar, which is only understood by those with more than 10% in Cthulhu Mythos. Those with less hear only incomprehensible bestial sounds.

If the investigators pass its test the creature is thrilled and quickly begins to fill them in on the following information:

- It is the ambassador from Earth, who was transported here over sixty million years ago by the Great Old One Gol-goroth
- It is pleased to meet Earth's newest dominant species
- It knows of a Gate which leads back to Earth but it is guarded. If they can fight their way to it and escape through it, they'll win the Rite of Sacred Prey
- They must cross the ocean and travel to the island of Golgaria
- Deep in the swamp of Golgaria is a palace, the Castle Which Lurks, residence of the god-king Gol-goroth
- If they can reach the castle they may present themselves to Golgoroth, who should then show them to the Gate ("Such is its own ancient laws...")
- The swamp is home to a people called the golgors, of which he is not allowed to speak more of. They will oppose their efforts to reach the god-king

If investigators ask how they can cross the sea to reach Golgaria, the creature turns its head and vomits up an

LUX IN TENEBRAS

Dregs, Lesser Servitor Race

Mythos cults all over the world have long sought to produce a perfect being, a chosen one, a child that is part god and part man. Such a being could bridge the gap between universes and realities, hastening the arrival of the End Times. This effort involves decades, even centuries, of slowly mixing a human bloodline with the genetic material from a Great Old One. Reproduction is carefully controlled by these cults in an effort to purify the Great Old One's essence. This nearly always leads to inbreeding and degeneracy among the cultists. Most efforts utterly fail, producing a population of deformed, mentally deficient sub-humans exhibiting physical traits and habits reflecting whatever Great Old One the cult venerates. These are the dregs.

Dregs are the genetic dead ends of breeding programs undertaken by Mythos cultists. While their appearances vary widely, they are universally deformed and hideous to behold. Mentally deficient, most groups of dregs live in squalor and seclusion. They might no longer be aware of how they came to be this way or the grand goals their cults once strove towards. Groups of dregs sometimes ambush travelers to rob and murder, or worse—for many resort to, or even relish in, cannibalism.

Typical groups of dregs are descended from cults worshipping entities with close connections to humanity, such as Hastur, Y'golonac, or Gol-goroth. The habits of dregs reflect the entity whose genetics they carry; for example those tainted by Y'golonac possess a deviant sexual nature, while those tainted by Hastur tend to create horrific artwork. Dregs' physical traits also reflect their bloodlines:

- Dregs of Hastur wrinkled, yellowish skin, toothed facial growths
- Dregs of Y'golonac obesity, mouth-like openings on palms, undersized heads
- Dregs of Gol-goroth small arms, wide mouths, bulging eyes, tentacled facial growths

ATTACKS: Dregs fight with whatever weapons are common to the era and area they live in. They tend to be adept at combat, having attack scores from +5 to +40 (5D8) percentiles higher than the weapon's base chance to hit. While physically deformed, dregs tend to be unnaturally strong and sturdy, with tough shark-like skins. They hide, sneak, and track well, all skills they use in hunting and laying ambushes. Lastly many are skilled in designing and concealing traps, especially the sort that disable mounts and vehicles or cause injuries which impede a person's movement.

Dregs, Deformed, Tainted Mutants

Diego,	Deronnie	a, rannea matanto	
Char. STR CON SIZ INT POW DEX Move 8	rolls 3D6+5 4D6+3 4D6+2 2D6+2 3D6 3D6 3D6	averages 15-16 17 16 7 10-11 10-11	
HP 17			
Av. DB +1	D4		
Weapons	Punch 65%	6, damage 1D3 + db	
Any we	eapon at bas	e +5D8 percentiles, damage as per weapon	
Armor: 1	-point unnatu	rally tough skin.	
Spells: n	one.		
Skills: Co	onceal 40%, I	Hide 50%, Listen 40%, Sneak 50%, Track 35%.	
Sanity L	oss: 0/1D4 \$	Sanity points to see a dreg.	

enormous shell. It is half of the shell of a titanic oyster the creature, devoured and it is able to float. The ambassador instructs them to get inside the shell. He explains that it will carry them to Golgaria, but after that they are on their own. The shell is covered with caustic digestive fluids and investigators might wish to clean it before climbing onboard, but otherwise it is harmless. Once investigators get into the shell, the leopluradon pushes it into the water and mutters the words of a spell. The shell begins moving across the still wa-

center. Some of the mushrooms here are huge, vanishing into mists which limit visibility to about one Roman actus (120 feet or 35.5 meters).

Attack of the Golgors

A LIGHT IN DARKNESS

Keepers should have investigators make Listen rolls when they get several leagues into the swamp. If successful they begin to detect pattern of cries amid the wildlife, which seem to

ters towards the island of Golgaria. The ambassador advises them to keep their hands and feet inside the shell at all times before bidding them farewell and good luck, and returning to the ocean's depths.

Part Four - The Swamp of Golgaria

The trip across the sea takes about twenty hours. Distance, speed, and time are impossible to judge due to the lack of wind, waves, any form of heavenly bodies, or landmarks. Strange shapes, some of them huge and threatening, occasionally follow the shell or even bump into it. Otherwise passage is uneventful, and eventually a land mass appears on the horizon. The shell steadily moves closer to it before beaching on the muddy coast of a fungal wetlands, the edge of the swamp of Golgaria.

The Swamp

This area is wet and muddy, with mists clinging everywhere. Passage is slow due to the thick growth where there is dry land and deep mud where there isn't. The fungal growth resembles an enormous mangrove swamp, steadily becoming more Amazon–like the deeper one travels towards its come from beyond the mists above them. It sounds like very powerful frog calls. This is a large party of golgors, coordinating a massive assault on the investigators. The creatures move through the trees, looking down on the investigators, knowing the Earthlings' eyes cannot penetrate the cloaking mists of the swamp. The golgors don't have this limitation, and when the time is right they attack.

The golgors of Venus, who dwell in the swamps of Golgaria, build sprawling settlements high in the forest canopy. Here they peer down through the mists, shadowing intruders before coordinating attacks. They have the duty to protect the Castle Which Lurks, home of their god-king Gol-goroth. When they attack they start with a volley of bolos before swooping in with their axes and claws. If they can capture anyone, they do so, binding them tightly before flying off with them for use as breeding stock. Otherwise they fight until either their raiding party or the investigators are destroyed. Should the investigators defeat the golgors, they can travel to the center of the swamp and the Castle Which Lurks.

Golgors (2 per investigator)

STR 14	CON 11	SIZ 16	INT 13	POW 10	
DEX 15	Move 8 / 8	Swimming	/ 12 Flying	HP 14	
Damage Bo	nus: +1D4				
Weapons: (Weapons: Claws 25%, 1D6 + db				
Ax (dola	Ax (dolabra) 30%, 1D6 + db				
Bolo (as Net) 15%, entangle					
Armor: 1-point skin and scales.					
Sanity Loss	: 0/1D6 for	points to se	e a golgor.		

Part Five - The Castle Which Lurks

The investigators reaching the center of the swamp of Golgaria stumble headlong onto an enormous alien castle. Unless they are within a Roman actus (120 feet or 35.5 meters) of it, they cannot see the castle. It is only visible when the

Golgors

Golgors are an offshoot race akin to deep ones, who serve the Great Old One Gol-goroth. They are more batrachian than ichthyic, appearing as large humanoid frogs. They are grey, green, and brown in color, with moist skins and large bulging eyes. A major difference between this offshoot and deep ones is the ability to fly, as golgors posses fully functioning wings. Statistically they are identical to deep ones, with the addition of flight as a movement option.

Golgors, Deep One Variant Species

Char. STR CON SIZ INT POW	rolls 4D6 3D6 3D6+6 2D6+6 3D6	
DEX	3D6	10-11
Move 8/8 3 HP 13-14	Swimming/12	? Flying
Av. Dam	age Bonus:	+1D4
Weapons	: Claw 25%,	, damage 1D6 + db
Ax (do	olabra) 30%,	1D6 + db
Bolo (a	as Net) 15%,	entangle
Armor: 1	-point skin ar	nd scales.
more		r's discretion, golgors with a POW 14 or st 1D4 spells. Spells known are always th.
	de in Water, I Spot Hidden 3	Mists or Canopy 25%, Listen 30%, Sneak 30%
Sanity L	oss: 0/1D6 f	or points to see a golgor.

investigators are nearly on top of it, seeming to shimmer into view as if having lurked in the shadows the entire time. Investigators suddenly seeing the alien castle appear must make a Sanity roll for 1/1D3 points.

The Lurking Castle

The castle is enormous, with entrances, doorways and pas-

sages suited for a being of massive (SIZ 45) dimensions. It is made of black stone, dimly lit by the same magical light found everywhere in Golgarek. Sound echoes eerily within the castle, which is otherwise silent and deserted. The investigators must pass through three chambers, which are the only ones to which access has been allowed. Otherwise they encounter massive closed doors.

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Random Swamp Monster, the Venusian Jawsnail

Keepers wishing to add a little extra danger to the swamp can have their investigators stumble into a local solitary ambush predator. This is the Venusian jawsnail, which lurks underwater until something comes near, when it delivers powerful bites. Its Earth counterpart would be the snapping turtle, which its statistics closely follow.

Venusian Jawsnail

 STR 16
 CON 11
 SIZ 15
 INT 4
 POW 7

 DEX 4
 Move 3
 HP 13
 HP 14
 HP 13
 <td

Chamber One, The Entry Hall

This long hallway contains thirty-two statues of Gol-goroth. Each of them has slight variations in depiction, artistic style, and type of stone. However, each has identical dimensions to the Dread Idol investigators found in the underground temple in Sardinia. The last statue in the hall is in fact that very same idol, placed here after it traveled to Venus with the investigators.

Chamber Two, The Audience Chamber

As investigators enter this chamber a huge stone door appears behind them, barring any exit. All lights extinguish, including any sources of illumination the investigators carried with them. Suddenly investigators are hit by a noxious stench and see two glowing eyes of greenish blue peering down at them from above. The sound of squishing movement, slithering, and a frog-like croak fill the chamber. A deep, slowly spoken voice sounds out:

"Slayers of Eihort . . . you have battled your way to my castle . . . survived the Rite of Sacred Prey. You have tested my less than worthy defenders. They are found wanting. Your success shall herald a century of suffering for many but will leave them stronger. Such is how a balance is maintained.

"Know that I could destroy you now; you do not possess some Yithian trinket. Do you wish to test yourselves against a god once more? Tell me it is so and such a challenge will be accepted." The voice chuckles and awaits a reply.

Challenge Respectfully Declined

If the investigators offer no challenge to Gol-goroth, it continues. "So be it." A door opens in the chamber across from the investigators. "Through that door is a hallway, at the end of which lies the icon which brought you here. Shed blood upon it and you shall all be returned home.

"Know that you will be returning the icon to Earth with you, so that I may once again have access to your world. My minions are waiting there to receive it but are ordered not to oppose you. Simply leave, go about your business, and no harm shall come to you. You have earned this.

"Go, leave my realm yet know this... should you ever oppose my will, harm my servants or reveal my secrets there is no place on any world, in any time, which you can hide. I lurk where darkness fills the void. I am everywhere." Keepers should now go to the final chamber of the castle.

Challenge Foolishly Accepted

If the investigators accept The Great Old One Gol-goroth's challenge, then the darkness parts and the room fills with dim light. The Great Old One stands before the investigators and moves to attack them mercilessly. It appears as an enormous winged toad-like creature without forearms but possessing a beard of long tentacles. Its rear legs end in hooves and the Great Old One has a wide maw filled with hundreds of shark-like teeth. Each round Gol-goroth can either make 1D4 tentacle attacks, one trample/kick/stomp with a hoof, or one bite. A victim grasped by a tentacle is automatically bitten the next round unless his or her player rolls STR or less on 1D100 to escape Gol-goroth's grasp. Investigators who manage to defeat Gol-goroth are instantly granted access to Chamber Three (see below).

Gol-goroth, The God of the Black Stone

STR 50	CON 65	SIZ 45	INT 17	POW 30
DEX 15	Move 6/9	stalking		HP 55
Damage B	onus: +6D6			

Weapons: 1D4 Tentacles 45%, damage 3D6 each or Grapple Hoof 50%, damage 3D6 + db

Bite 30% or automatic when Grappled, damage 1D6

- **Armor:** due to Gol-goroth's non-terrene nature all physical attacks do only minimum damage; Gol-goroth can not be impaled. The Great Old One is immune to cold damage but otherwise harmed by magic.
- **Spells:** Create Gate, plus those dealing with subterranean-dwelling races and entities; others as the Keeper desires.

Sanity Loss: 1D4/2D8 Sanity points to see Gol-goroth.

Chamber Three, The Hall to Earth

This hall leads to an octagonal room, at the center of which stands the very same statue which the investigators discovered. Just how it got here when moments earlier it stood at the end of the entry hall is a mystery. Against four of the eight walls, evenly spaced around the room, are four crucified humans. As the investigators enter this chamber, another stone door forms behind them.

The humans have strange dress and speak in foreign tongues, some of which sound vaguely of the barbarian languages. One man is a French knight of the Third Crusade, one man is an American soldier from the Korean War, one is an English librarian from the 1920s, and the last is a Russian cosmonaut. The four are nailed to wooden crosses and seem to have been here for some time. They moan in agony, as they struggle to free themselves and plead for help in their unknown languages.

If the investigators ignore them, they can complete the returning ritual (Keepers should then go to "The Return"). If the investigators make any move to help the captives something terrible happens. With a scream of agony all four men are instantly killed, as their bodies split open from their jaw to their loins. Two long black tentacles erupt from each fissure, which then attack anyone in the room. These are dark tentacles of the condemned, a living booby trap used by Gol-goroth and his worshippers. Those witnessing this must make a Sanity roll for 1/1D6.

Each tentacle attacks until either it kills someone, is destroyed, or no longer has a target within range. The tentacles can reach any point within the room. Once a tentacle scores a hit, it remains attached, constricting until it is destroyed or the investigator magically escapes (see below). Constricting tentacles automatically inflict 1D4 points of damage, ignoring any armor, per round until the investigator either escapes, destroys the tentacle, or dies. Should an investigator

shed some of their blood upon the stone, all of the investigators can escape back to Earth and avoid further attacks by these tentacles.

Dark Tentacles of the Condemned (8)

STR 15	CON 10	SIZ 15	INT 3	POW 10	
DEX 15	Move 0			HP 13	
Damage B	Bonus: +1D4				

Weapons: Tentacles 45%, damage 1D6 initially, automatic 1D4 each round thereafter

Armor: 2-points rubbery skin.

Sanity Points: 1/1D6 to see a dark tentacle of the condemned erupt and attack.

The Return

Once investigators shed blood on the idol, they are all magically transported away. They are disintegrated and then reintegrated back on the planet Earth. As they try to breathe, they discover they are unable to do so! Investigators spend three rounds gasping, choking, gagging, and struggling for breath. Suddenly they painfully start to vomit up the living symbiotic creatures, the vissi. These creatures writhe in agony and quickly die.

Once complete the investigators are able to function normally on Earth once more. They get their bearings, finding themselves on a hilltop, standing beside the same Dread Idol. It is night but the stars and moon are familiar. However, investigators immediately realize they are not alone. Surrounding them are possibly sixty hideously deformed dregs. They lurk in the darkness, many holding flickering torches, pitchforks, and other farming tools as weapons.

One of the creatures moves forward and speaks in Latin, saying "You have safe passage. Go." He points down the hill toward a trail, explaining, "Follow it for a day—never return." If the investigators depart, the dregs do not attack. If the investigators refuse or offer any provocative actions, the creatures move in, attempting to overwhelm them by force of numbers.

Dreg Mob (60)

STR 14	CON 15	SIZ 14	INT 8	POW 1
DEX 10	Move 8			HP 15
Damage l	Bonus: +1D4			

Weapons: Punch 65%, damage 1D3 + db Random Farm Implement 40%, 1D6

Armor: 1 point of unnaturally tough skin. **Sanity Loss:** 0/1D4 Points to see a dreg.

The Road between Savaria and Scarbantia, The End

Investigators following the trail soon find that it intersects a road. The road seems well traveled, running both north and south. Investigators following the road travel a few dozen leagues before reaching civilization. Those traveling north reach the city of Scarbantia, while those traveling south arrive in Savaria. This gives the investigators their bearings. The investigators have returned to the Empire and are currently in central Pannonia, in what one day becomes known as Hungary. The investigators have returned to Earth exactly one day *before* the incident in Sardinia that resulted in their traveling to Venus occurs. Learning this costs investigators +3 to their Cthulhu Mythos skills as well.

Sanity Awards

For successfully returning to I	Earth+1D8 SAN	1
For defeating Gol-goroth	+2D8 SAN	1



For generations now, the House of Aufidius has owned extensive olive groves around the town of Ocriculum, 44 miles North of Rome, where the family also has a villa. The fortunes of the House have waxed and waned over the years. Caeso Aufidius Horatius had a position in the senate during the reign of Domitian, but fell from favor for his supposedly Republican sympathies. The senator was imprisoned and the family estates confiscated. Only with the accession of Trajan was he freed and the family fortunes restored. The years of imprisonment took their toll on the senator and he retired to his estates.

The ex-senator's oldest son, Quintus Aufidius Varro took up his father's ambitions, but never achieved senatorial rank. He served in the legions in Trajan's campaigns against the Parthians in the East as a military engineer. Dissatisfied with the outcome, Quintus Aufidius Varro retired to the family estates, managing them until his death eighteen months ago.

The current head of the household is Quintus Aufidius Pollio, a patrician with aspirations to follow his grandfather into the senate. He conducts a varied social life and travels extensively. While unmarried, he brought home a Parthian mistress, Palasan, after visiting that Empire with his brother on business. Pollio is obsessed with chariot racing, a supporter of the Reds Racing Faction and never misses a race if possible. He recently hired Ahearne, a Briton who was an auxiliary in the legions, who is currently a charioteer trainer.

Pollio has two younger half siblings, the children of Quintus Aufidius Varro and his second wife, Claudia Urgulanilla. The oldest of these siblings is Caeso Aufidius Arvina, a jurisconsultus who specializes in contracts. He oversees the family business and manages relationships with other merchants and trading houses. Arvina enjoys both reading and composing literature and poetry, particularly Greek poetry.

Caeso Aufidius Arvina's younger sister is Claudella Varia. She returned to the family estates two years ago after the death of her husband, Spurius Maccius Canina. It was a marriage of convenience, arranged by her father to cement a shipping deal. She remained childless during this union and her interests follow those of her father – buildings and architecture as well as mathematics. Pollio lets her run the family estates and under her direction many of its buildings have been restored.

The other members of the Aufidius House include Kashta, a Kushite who trained as a gladiator capable of wielding a knife or short sword in each hand and is Quintus Aufidius Pollio's bodyguard; and the family physician, a Greek named Theodorus, who maintains a small potions room on the house estate. Both are owned by the household. Of late, Theodorus has had to attend to the bruises suffered by Quintus Aufidius Pollio during his chariot racing training. Pre-Generated Character Backgrounds for the Members of the House of Aufidius

Quintus Aufidius Pollio

As the head of the House of Aufidius, Quintus Aufidius Pollio wants to see the family return to senatorial rank. This means a varied social life away from the family estate in the town of Ocriculum, making the connections necessary for a life in Rome's politics. His younger half-brother, Caeso Aufidius Arvina, often travels with him, seeing to the task of running the family business when not composing or reading his terrible Greek poetry. His half-sister, Claudella Varia, not long a widow, maintains the family estate when not studying.

As a youth Pollio travelled extensively in the East of the Empire with his father, Quintus Aufidius Varro. He recently repeated these travels, picking up some of the local languages as well as acquiring a courtesan Palasan whilst in Parthia.

Pollio's passion is chariot racing, having been a fan of the Reds Racing Team since a boy. He loves to watch the races, bet on the races, and just talk about the races. He even dreams of becoming a charioteer, even though he knows it to be impossible for someone aspiring to senatorial rank. Still, this has not stopped him from hiring a trainer, Ahearne. More recently, Arvina has told him that he knows someone whose father is a major investor in the Reds Racing Team.

Caeso Aufidius Arvina

A LIGHT IN DARKNESS

While his older half-brother, Quintus Aufidius Pollio, pursues senatorial rank, Caeso Aufidius Arvina maintains the family business, the shipment of olives and pressed olive oil across the Empire from household estates in Ocriculum. Trained in the law, he manages the actual relationships with other merchants and trading houses, his specialty being contracts.

He is close to his younger sister, Claudella Varia, who not long a widow, has returned to the household. She runs and maintains the family estate when she does not have her head in some scroll or other.

When not working for the family business, Arvina is very fond of Greek poetry and literature, having been taught by a Greek slave as a boy. He also composes his own poetry, which the family tolerates. The same slave taught him to wrestle, Arvina's size being advantage enough to beat Quintus Aufidius Pollio.

Caeso Aufidius Arvina is friends with fellow amateur

poet, Arrius Melito, whose father is a major investor in the Reds Chariot Racing Team. This will be of great interest to Quintus Aufidius Pollio, a dedicated Reds Faction chariot racing fan.

Claudella Varia

Claudella Varia is the youngest child of Quintus Aufidius Varro and younger sister to Caeso Aufidius Arvina. She has recently returned to the household after the death of her husband, Spurius Maccius Canina. A marriage of convenience, arranged by her father to cement a shipping deal, there were no children as her husband was not interested. This allowed her to pursue her scholarly interests.

Her father, an engineer in the army, imparted a love of buildings and architecture to her and while the family's Greek tutors taught Arvina poetry and wrestling, they taught Claudella Varia the principles of architecture and the mathematics that she liked. Her late husband allowed Claudella Varia to continue her studies and hired tutors to teach her further.

Since returning to the family estates, she has not been able to study as much as she would like. Pollio lets her run the estate and even direct the repair of its buildings. Fortunately he lets his Parthian courtesan, Palasan, act as host at parties as Claudella Varia is uninterested in such matters. Still, Claudella Varia thinks that he wants to marry her off in another alliance, though hopefully not to another chariot racing obsessive like he is.

Palasan

A slave in the household of the House of Aufidius, Palasan is the permanent companion to its head, Quintus Aufidius Pollio. She provides him with companionship and serves as the host for the various dinners and parties he holds as part of his plans to be appointed to the Senate. Life in the Aufidius household is pleasant for Palasan who has some influence over its servants and slaves. Of course, she must put up with her master's obsession with chariot racing (though the races themselves can be exciting) and the woeful poetry of his brother, Caeso Aufidius Arvina. Her relationship with their sister, Claudella Varia, who runs and maintains the estates when not studying, is cordial.

Born free, Palasan is the daughter of a Roman legionary and a Parthian merchant's daughter. This means that she should have been a Roman citizen, but a rival of her grandfather's attacked her family, killing those who resisted and selling everyone else into slavery, including Palasan.

Before her mother was killed she began preparing Palasan for what she called her true calling. This included training in the use of the sword and shield and some hints as to the horrors that threaten mankind. Her mother never had the opportunity to explain further.

Kashta

Growing up a simple herder on the grasslands of Kush, Kashta never expected to find himself at the heart of the greatest civilization the world has ever known – Rome! Captured by slavers, he was purchased by a gladiatorial school in Alexandria and trained as an Arbelas, wielding a long and wickedly curved knife in each hand. This style required Kashta to be fast despite the armor and fight without a shield, the young gladiator learning to parry and attack with both weapons.

After five years in the arena, winning bouts across the provinces and even in Rome itself, Kashta was purchased by the House of Aufidius and appointed the bodyguard of its new head, Quintus Aufidius Pollio. The duty is easy. No one has attacked him despite the number of parties and dinners he attends. This leaves Kashta to glare at the other bodyguards and stare at the pretty house slaves, some of whom want to do more than stare back.

The change of lifestyle has meant that Kashta has put on weight, so he has begun exercising more. This includes training with two swords as well as the two knives he is never without. (The Arbelas style allows Kashta to parry or to attack a second time each round with the blade in his left hand and at half his DEX rank.)

Theodorus

Theodorus is the physician for the House of Aufidius, purchased three years ago by the late Quintus Aufidius Varro. Now the property of his eldest son, Quintus Aufidius Pollio, Theodorus' duties were relatively light until recently, mostly dealing with the occasional stomach upset or handing out a needed sleeping draught. His master's increased interest in chariot racing and desire to learn the art has meant that Theodorus has had to treat the injuries suffered in this pursuit.

Except for chariot racing, Pollio is not often an engaging conversationalist in comparison to his mistress, Palasan, or his younger brother, Caeso Aufidius Arvina. As an educated man, Theodorus is sometimes required to engage in conversation with his master's guests. Unfortunately being Greek means that Theodorus often has to discuss Greek poetry and literature with Caeso Aufidius Arvina, though he finds his poetry dreadful.

Born a slave in Corinth, Theodorus was educated and trained as a physician, adhering to the teachings of Hippocrates. He worships Asclepius, the Greek god of healing. He has a work room where he keeps his medicinal supplies and brews various potions and draughts here. Palasan has arranged a budget of 300 sesterces to spend on medicinal herbs.

Ahearne

A fool is always parted from his money and as far as Ahearne is concerned, that fool is Quintus Aufidius Pollio. This Roman patrician who has ambitions to race chariots, though not a bad pupil, can never really race – well, not race and become a senator. Plus he never has time to train properly.

Anyway, Ahearne is glad to take his money, eat his food, stare at his woman, and even put up with his brother's execrable poetry. As bad as the poetry is, the money is still good.

Originally from Durnovaria in Britannia and a member of the Durotriges tribe defeated by Vespasian, Ahearne gained his citizenship with ten years' hard service as an auxiliary. For the last ten years, he has been first a chariot driver, winning races in the provinces, and then a trainer. Last year the Greens released him from his contract, forcing Ahearne to find other employment. Training rich young fools is proving to be lucrative.

Falto

Falto grew up as a street urchin on the streets of Rome until the collegium of plumbers took him in. They fed him, housed him and in return, Falto did small jobs for them. He watched people and buildings for them; followed people and distracted others; and later he climbed into houses so that he could open front doors for them. By the time Falto was a teenager, he knew the true nature of his family. Not just the collegium of plumbers, but the Aventine criminal collegium.

For the past few years he has been doing more serious work for the collegium. From day-to-day, he works as a laborer, but also as an enforcer, a thief, and a bodyguard. Sometimes Falto works with the collegium's clients too, which has meant learning some manners and his letters so that he does not stand out as an uncultured clod.

Even so, Falto is as fond of his dice and cups as the next plumber. He usually takes orders from Gala, second-in-command to head of the collegium, Maelius Primus. Sometimes Maelius Primus gives him special tasks, which Falto hopes is a sign that he is being groomed for better things. His current assignment is to aid the House of Aufidius in eliminating a gang affiliated to the collegium.

Eryx

After years serving in Rome's armies as a Kataphraktoi, a heavily armored cavalryman, Eryx happily return home to his family's farm in Kandros. The village lies in the Kithairon Mountains between Athens and Thebes, where they grow barley, herd goats and make cheese. Although hard work, it is a simpler and safer life than being in the saddle, encased in armor, facing down the enemies of Rome.

Unfortunately, retirement has not turned out as Eryx wished. The lands around Kandros have been prey to degenerate, pig-like men who have been dubbed "the accursed of Circe." They have killed many villagers (some of whom are Eryx's relatives), stolen livestock and made much of the village's best lands unusable. The villagers say they first appeared following the visit of a great scientist known as the Scion of Vulcan.

The villagers are hardy, but none are warriors, and by now neither is Eryx really. Long past his prime he may be, the ex-Kataphraktoi would welcome the opportunity to ride into battle against the accursed of Circe. But he cannot do it alone, if only he had just a handful of others willing and able to handle themselves in battle.

Cassius

Cassius looks like a rough sailor, an ill-educated man who has travelled from one end of the Mare Nostrum to the other. He cares little for the nature of his cargo or his passengers. His clothing is simple and hard worn; his face weathered by both the sun and the wind, and his words peppered with the same oaths as his crewmates. All of this is true, but Cassius is no mere sailor.

His true name is "Vibius Cassius Lunarias" a Roman citizen of Equestrian birth. For the last few years he has followed a boyhood obsession with the legends that his nurse and mother told him. It was in this obsession that Cassius' father found him wanting. His father preferred that Cassius become a man of letters rather while his brother, Gaius Cassius Purpurio, was groomed for better things. Cassius rebelled despite his father's beatings, and fled the family home to the harbor.

For the last few years, Cassius interspersed his time as a sailor with investigations into the legends that he about learned as a boy. After each adventure ashore, he writes them down and sends them home to his mother, hoping to one day return and pen a great new work about these legends and fables. To date Cassius has seen many strange things and hopes to see many more.

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	Long Spear Long Sword	d <u>40 % ID8-db 1 touch 1 long yes yes no 20</u> Shield%	

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