

TRIBE 8 Companion



A Tribe 8 Sourcebook



Dream Pod 9



Children of Prophecy



Second Interlude

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Chapter one: Introduction

It is winter and you walk through virgin snow.

You are cold, tired, and alone.

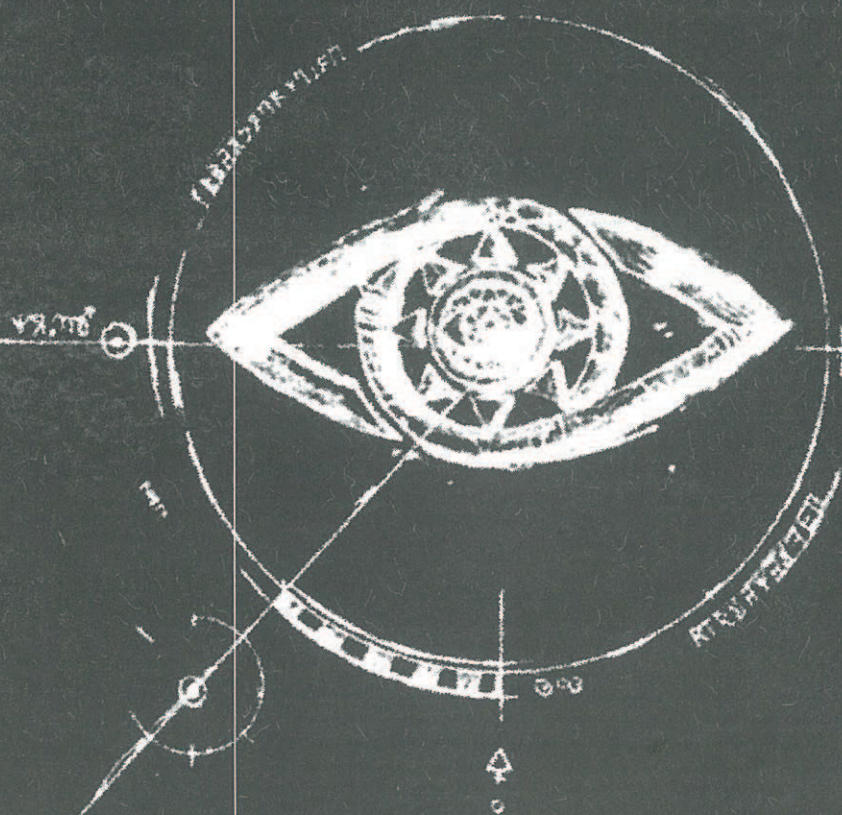
Where can you go?

The answer lies behind you, and if you but glance back,

Your steps will form a line showing where you have come from

And where you must go.

— Den-Hades the Guide



Winter has come early this year, and the cold wind blows all about us. The year of Lilith is over and the Eighth Tribe seems further than ever from its destiny. I look back at our foolishness over the last several seasons, and I cannot help but agree with Veruka. We Fallen, regardless of faction, are so anxious to embrace the future that we have forgotten all lessons of the past. Listen to me, I sound like a Yagan...

If Lilith taught us one thing it was that our roots are still important, that if we are to call ourselves the descendants of Joshua, we must know Him. We know now that Joshuan communities are hidden in the Outlands waiting for us. I remember the Joshuan Jacques well and I hope to see him again someday. Maybe it's because I was born an Agnite, but mention of Joshua always brings Mary the Forgiver to mind. She too is a lost Fatima and I wonder, if there are still Joshuans, why not Marians?

Of course, for many of us the past just means the Tribes and their oppression. But we must remember that they too have their heroes. The Joanites who sided with Lilith remind us all that there are still those who can fight the good fight in the Fatimas' Grace. Sometimes, I am jealous of them.

Finally, I see the Keepers as a sign of hope for us. They understand the past in ways even the Fatimas don't, and some of their number are willing to share that knowledge. If we are to build a solid future, their help will be essential. Our ally Acturius has told me he will soon bring secret records for us to examine; I'm almost giddy with excitement. Once an Agnite, I suppose.

That'll be enough writing tonight, I think. Deus is stirring and there are some needs that words just cannot satisfy.

— Altara Ven, member of the Eighth Tribe.



Tribe 8 Companion

This supplement is an extension of the material presented in the Tribe 8 Rulebook. Chapters Two, Three and Four expand on the narrative source material, providing details on the Lost Tribes of Joshua and Mary, the Quest Circles of the Seven Tribes, and the Keepers. Along with information in Chapter Seven, these chapters provide many new options for Players and Weavers. Chapters Five and Six are complete quests, one designed for a tribal Quest Circle, the other for a group of Fallen. Chapter Seven rounds out the Companion with a variety of resources for Weavers, including advice for using the new factions, details on the population and economics of Vimary, and advanced combat rules.

The events in this book occur after the Children of Lilith cycle, but do not form a key part of the "Children of Prophecy" storyline.



Chapter two: The Lost Tribes

Never forget those who have passed.

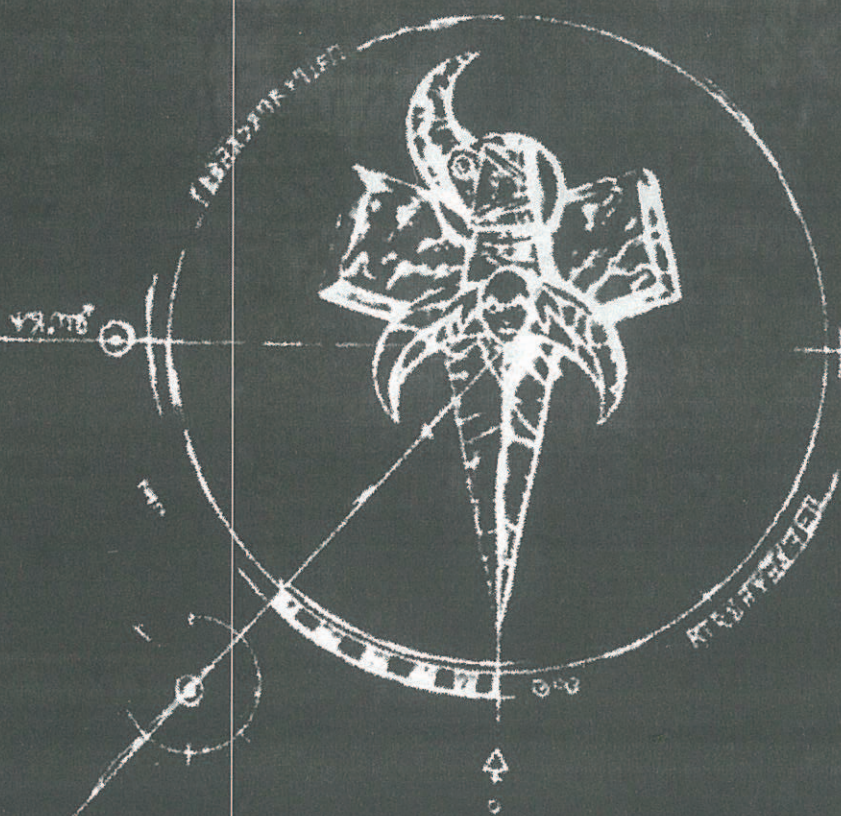
Joshua, the Ravager of Beasts, who died
so we could be free.

Mary, the Forgiver of Souls, who left
our world to prepare the next.

They died so we could live.

Never forget the debt we owe.

— The Yagan's Lesson



A Long Journey

From the recollections of Mahris the Wanderer, Dahlian:

I'd lost my way. Difficult to admit, but even a Dahlian can be tricked by the vastness of the Outlands. I was sent by sweet Dahlia to spread word of Lilith's coming to Joshua's tribe, or what remains of them, in the lands far to the north, past H'l Kar. I doubted that I'd find any, or that they would care, but this was prior to Lilith's death and the changes She brought, before I knew the story of Jericho, before I renounced the tribes.

I left in the summer, slipped past the Z'bri lands and wandered north. For months the wilderness revealed no secrets, only the thick forest that blankets the hills and valleys of the Northern Lands. Here ruins of the past punctured the landscape, small settlements and huge rusted-steel skeletons, but I found nothing of the Ravager or His children. Only the occasional glyph and the odd feeling that I was being watched enticed me further, deeper into the lands that even shadows forget — until I was lost.

It was now late autumn and already the winds had come, and with them the first signs of winter. Unprepared, I panicked, desperately trying to find my way — a trail or landmark that would take me home to Vimary. Then the snow came.

With each passing day I grew weaker, slowly entombed by the falling snow. Winter had come early and with it, I feared, my death. One night, as the blinding snow blew and I cowered beneath a tree, visited by hallucinations brought by hunger and cold, a towering shape appeared. He took me into his arms and carried me for what seemed like hours until we arrived at a simple log cabin. There he nursed me back to health, giving me food and warmth. Slowly my senses returned and I noticed the relics and weapons that hung on the walls. At first I thought the stranger, dark-skinned and bearded, to be a Squat, but his arms bore markings — those of Joshua's tribe.

Jericho Speaks

For days, he said nothing. Then, one night, as the blizzard raged outside, Jericho (for that is the name I've chosen for him, as he never told me what it really was) spoke; his words are forever etched into my memory.

"So, you've come from the island to speak to me, to my tribe; don't look surprised, for you are not the first — nor will you be the last. Your tribes live in ignorance of the world beyond, safe and isolated in Vimary, but your island is nothing more than a feeble candle struggling in the night. Why now, after summers of neglect and guilt, do you come for us, the Fatimas' dirty little secret? I guess you come for the truth...

"In the summer after Joshua's death we scattered, fled the island that caused us so much pain, and made the Outlands our home. We sacrificed more than our blood fighting the Z'bri. In the end, our Fatima was betrayed and we lost our place among the tribes — forgotten and spurned by those for whom we had shed life's blood. We fought because Joshua led us, but also because we chose to do battle for those who could not. We were avengers, speaking for those who died at the hands of the Z'bri. By forgetting us, the tribes forgot those who died alone and in horror."

And so Jericho spoke to me, in a small cabin lost in the wilderness of the Outlands.



Watchers in the Woods

"Just because we no longer live among the tribes does not mean we've become savages. After Joshua's death we were lost, but in time we found our way. With pride we took the mantle of Protectors of the Tribes, and began to scour the Outlands for Z'bri and other threats.

"Who do you think keeps the Squat war bands from storming Vimary? For summers we have battled the Warlord Boarhead, while the tribes live ignorant of the threat just beyond the River. What of the Outlander Z'bri? Do you think that all the Beasts agreed to surrender when Tibor, the Z'bri Overlord, died?

"No, my Dahlian friend, the dark woods of the Outlands hide dangers that even the Fatimas cannot fathom. And so, to this day we remain faithful to our duties. We will look over Vimary until the last Joshuan dies, battling the Z'bri and Squats as is our calling. But our most sacred task is protecting the roads that will one day lead the tribes beyond the island. As Joshua lay dying, before uttering His Prophecy, He turned to us, pointed to the Outlands and spoke:

Walk away from here,

But remember the paths, for in time others will follow.

Keep these trails open and safe,

For those who will take them will be inheritors of the future.

When they have left,

And silence returns to Vimary

So shall your task be done, and rest your reward.

"So, from the woods we watch, like guardians we protect as it was meant to be."

The Faithful

"We are a forgotten people, each summer our numbers fall and our memories of Joshua dull. For this reason, we gather by His relics, and worship them as we worship Him. Where once a whole Fatima stood, now all we have are fragments.

The warrior-priests of the **Vanguard** are descended of those once closest to Joshua. The Vanguard tend our temples and record all memories of Joshua, and when we are called to battle they are the ones who lead us. The **Ravagers**, those chosen by the Vanguard for their natural talents at war, are trained as shock troops and are our proudest fighters. Furies on the battlefield, all Ravagers continually subject themselves to pain and torture, helping them to better channel their rage and anger. Marked by their masked uniforms, few Ravagers live past their 20th summer. Finally, the **Outrunners** patrol the many roads and search for lost relics of Joshua. Gifted with the ability to fade into the wilderness they are superb trackers and scouts.

"Why am I alone? There are those known simply as **Lamentors** who live apart. Some do so to meditate on Joshua, while others, out of shame or dishonor, venture into the wilderness to atone. Death of old age is disgraceful to a Lamentor, so we all search for deaths that will either open us to Joshua or redeem our honor."

The Forgotten

I asked Jericho to tell me what happened after the Liberation, and a dark shadow clouded his face as he spoke...

"With Joshua dead and His body broken, its pieces scattered by His sisters or stolen by the Z'bri, we left Vimary in search of His relics, our only link to the Ravager. Some stayed behind, but even Joan lowered Her head and turned Her back on them. So we were alone, orphans; we traveled to the south and north, finding small ruins of the World Before where we made our homes. In time we found remnants of Joshua, and each settlement built a temple around it so that we may not forget the One who led us to victory, or the price He paid for it.

"The early times were hard, settlement fought settlement over the relics they possessed, and it was only when the Vanguard stepped in that the fighting stopped. We were broken, wrapped in despair, but they showed us the way. So instead of fighting, we went into the Outlands to find more relics and to fight the Z'bri. It was only then that we stopped mourning Joshua, and learned to worship Him once more. We had found our place. In the aftermath, three great settlements were formed, each given one of the relics found and attended by the warrior-priests of the Vanguard.

"The first was **Dead Peaks**, nestled between the shadows of two hills west of Vimary. Here is where we bury all Joshuans, although their souls are restless. The temple here houses the Hilt of Joshua's Sword. Of all our settlements, Dead Peaks is the most solemn and sacred. **Savior**, the largest, is far to the north, where the clouds touch the land. At its center lies Joshua's Banner, and its temple is where all members of the Vanguard are ordained. It is here we remember Joshua for the victor He was, the hero who saved us from the Z'bri.

"The last was **Mahgog**, but it is no longer, its temple desecrated and the Hammer of Joshua stolen by the Impostor, the one you call Lilith."



Joshua the Ravager

From the recollections of Mahris the Wanderer, Fallen Dahlian:

And so the snow fell, and for days Jericho would vanish, leaving me alone — alone with my thoughts and the relic of Joshua that rested on his altar.

What had the Ravager been like? This question burned in my mind as I looked at Jericho's shrine, upon which lay a finger of the great Fatima. Twisted, dulled with age and blood, the relic radiated rage and fury. I could only imagine what it must have been like to stand next the Joshua during the Revolts.

"No other Fatima was as dreadful as Joshua — not even Baba Yaga and Her death mask could compete with the Ravager. To us, He was not a gentle shepherd but an unforgiving and exacting master — no weakness was tolerated. Cruel, yes, but our role was to be avengers and reapers, not mothers or lovers. For too long the Z'bri committed crimes in the name of the One Goddess, and retribution was needed.

"When Joshua first appeared, it is said that it rained blood for seven days as He liberated His tribe. The first to come to His side was the Warrior Joan. Where He was rage and vengeance incarnate, She was noble and filled with purpose — the two forming a whole until that fateful night. Of His other Sisters, only Mary loved Joshua as much as Joan. It was She who came to Him each night and granted Him absolution for His acts, and for this we mourn Her death. The Three Fates stood aloof, knowing the part each of the Eight had to play, but Tera Sheba resented the Ravager. He would be one to lead the tribes to victory, and His sacrifice would pave the way for Tera Sheba to re-build the tribes. And Dahlia, like you, asked too many questions while the truth passed by unseen.

A Night of Fate


"We are a dying tribe, Mahris, and those guilty will pay for their crimes — in due time all will be set right. Remember that Joshua was one of the True Goddesses' avatars, and a reckoning will soon be at hand for His murder.

"What we know of that night only comes to us through our myths and tales, as the last survivors of the attack on Tibor died last summer. I see you are curious as to what happened to the husk of Joshua, but the truth is that we know little of that as well. By the tribes' lies it is said that we carried Joshua's body into the Outlands, to bury and remember Him — that we choose to live apart. This is not the case. We could have done so, and we wished to as well, but we were forced to retreat, leaving Him unburied. The other tribes called us back and for the last time we obeyed their orders. It is then that the Beasts scavenged Joshua's husk, and what pieces we have recovered, we have taken from the Z'bri in raids and hunts.

"What happened that night and why the body of Joshua was left for the Z'bri is a painful mystery."

Blessings

"We will be forgotten, Dahlian. Already the tribes speak of us as a legend — a footnote to the lies of Tera Sheba, which you call history. It saddens me, but even we are forgetting the love of Joshua. There are many born now, in this age, who have no connection to the River of Dream, and while they are of our tribe, the Vanguard insists they be put to death — for Joshua never brooked any weakness. With each generation our ties to Synthesis weaken, and many Joshuans only remember one of Joshua's gifts, that of **Vengeance** or **Force**. Some of the Vanguard can still use the aspect of **Rage**, which gives our anger a physical dimension."



Betrayers

"Although we may never return to Vimary and are cursed to wander the Outlands as outsiders and martyrs, the island will always be our home and the tribes our brothers and sisters.

"Of all the tribes, the **Joanites** must first learn from the past. We do not blame the noble warriors for their past actions — but their present course will decide if they are to be forgiven or punished. We once shared a kinship with the warriors, but they remained silent when Joshua died, hiding the truth so deep that most — even Joan — cannot see how easy absolution could be.

"Eva, **Baba Yaga** and **Magdalen** play with you like an adult plays with a child, but strangely their power has not blinded them — unlike **Tera Sheba**. It is no secret, and I fear nothing by telling you that there is no love between us and the Lawgiver. Ask yourself what it was She saw which forced Her to blindfold Herself; what She heard that caused Her deafness and what truths Her bound mouth prevents Her from saying.

"The Little Child, the one you call **Agnes**, is a stranger to us. Some of Her tribe have come looking for us, and their youthful spirits allow us to forget our pain — if only for a few hours. But like you, there is a darker side to the Child that we must be vigilant against — as with all **Fatimas**. Yes, even Joshua had a dark shadow, and this was His cruelty.

"And of **Mary** and Her tribe, well, She loved us like no other. Even when Joshua was gone, She offered to ease our pain and took a few of us into Her tribe. Those who did not accept Her as their **Fatima** always found a warm bed and food at the home of any **Marian**. You can imagine then, the pain we felt when we heard of Her death. It is as though the evil that brought Joshua down from behind claimed another victim. Not through betrayal this time, but from the burden of being unable to forgive. And hear another secret:

"When the blade cuts and we die, we cannot sleep; **Baba Yaga** forgets us, so we wander the chill night. Some are bitter and taint all they touch. Ever wonder why a certain wooded glade felt unwelcoming, or why the wind howled so? We are cursed to roam **Restless** until Vimary is silent once more. Some **Restless**, longing for eternal sleep, lash out against the tribes, hoping to silence them. Most, however, try to help, to guide from beyond like silent guardians. Few can see us, even fewer understand, but the **Marians** do. And so we help them, and they remember us.

"Of the Impostor and **Dahlia** I have nothing to say. Blasphemers they are — unwilling to honor the dead, they desecrate the graves of Joshua to teach a lesson. Everything the Trickster touches is tainted and dies. While **Tera Sheba** rules with an iron fist, **Dahlia** sows the seeds of chaos and destruction for no other reason than Her pleasure. Remember this when next you see Her.

"Yes, I've heard of the **Fallen**, the so-called Eighth Tribe. They call themselves the children of Joshua but they cannot be so, for if they were, rage and anger would consume them. No, they are not of Joshua, but rather they are the inheritors of Joshua's prophecy — a new hope. The One Goddess moves in mysterious ways, and She has seen fit to bestow upon each **Fallen** a sliver of Joshua. Alone they are weak and insignificant, but if they can be united then Joshua will live once more — not the Joshua of the past, but one for the future. Yet their glory will not be ours to share.

"It saddens me, but the **Vanguard of Dead Peaks** feel that the **Fallen** are unworthy inheritors of Joshua's Prophecy, especially after seeing how easily they were led astray by **Dahlia**. Like the tribes, even we grow divided over the Eighth Tribe. In the end, I hope we recognize what they are, and what they stand for, before all is lost. I have heard that the **Outrunner Erihka** argues for their cause, but too few listen to her words.

"And our enemies... we have many of those. The **Z'bri** exist in even greater numbers outside the island. Some of our **Outrunners** claim to have seen camps further south, and to the north near a place called **Capal**. Like everything in the Outlands, these **Outlander Z'bri** are not docile like their brethren closer to Vimary. No, some are ancient lords that escaped our scourge during the Liberation, while others are outcasts and malcontents unwilling to heed the Baron's wishes. They bear similar scars to ours and like relics of the past we fight the age-old battle — they to avenge **Tibor**, we to avenge Joshua.



Erihka the Troubled

Born only 18 summers ago in the Joshuan settlement of Dead Peaks, Erihka was marked from an early age by the brutal and savage existence of all Joshuans. To her the tribes are a myth, a legend, and this has made her curious about them. Gifted at tracking and finding her way in the Outlands, she was trained as an Outrunner, allowing her to explore the world of the tribes. She has already visited Vimary and is fascinated by the tribes, especially the Fallen; a fact her father, a member of the Vanguard disapproves of. More importantly, during her Bloodying she saw glimpses of a large settlement to the north, that other Outrunners call Capal. She hopes to one day travel there — hopefully with a few Fallen comrades.

Tribe: Joshuan (Outrunner)

Highlights: Stealthy, passionate, rash, coy

Eminence: Force

Attributes: AGI +2, FIT +1, INF +1, PER +2, STA 25, UD 5, AD 5

Skills: Archery 2/+2, Athletics 1/+2, Boating 1/+2, Camouflage 2/0, Combat Sense 2/+2, Dodge 2/+2, Hand-to-Hand 2/+2, Lore (Outlands) 2/0, Melee 2/+2, Navigation (Land) 2/0, Sneak 2/+2, Survival 2/0

"The Z'bri are not our only foes in the lands cursed by the One Goddess. Those Squats that respect us and the tribes are left alone, those that don't earn our wrath. The Squats here are nothing like their timid counterparts in Vimary; these Squats have no love for the One Goddess. They worship their own vile gods — some Z'bri, others Keeper in origin — with foul rites and sacrifices, and with each passing summer they grow stronger and more vicious. Warlord Boarhead has set his eyes on Vimary and there is little we can do to stop him if he decides to march in its direction. This is not to say that we will stand aside, but we are few compared to his numbers.

"The Keepers are more than they seem. Like us they are outsiders, and a strong bond has formed between our people. Already a number of my tribe have taken Keeper mates, and in some settlements east of Vimary the two peoples have joined as one.

"In the end, my Dahlian friend, we are relics of the past and only our stubbornness keeps us alive. Had we been faithful to the lies of the Fatimas we should have faded away when Joshua died, but we stuck around hoping that His end was not ours as well."

Journey Home

From the recollections of Mahris, Dahlian Wanderer:

As the snow started to lighten, I asked Jericho what he did each day that took him out into the blasted Outlands. He sat silently for the longest time before answering...

"There comes a time in every Joshuan's life when death becomes one's companion — our shadow not our own, but rather the specter of death ready to take us. Each of us, during our coming of age ceremony, travels to the threshold of death so that we can dominate our fear over it. Tied down, our bodies are cut hundreds of times and we slowly bleed to death. As our blood flows, each of us is granted the vision of our end. This way, when we enter a fight we know whether it is our time to die or not.

"My time is near, which is why I knew of your visit and where to find you in the storm. And so, each day I wander into the woods knowing that my death lies waiting, calling to me. I am not sad, nor do I fear it, but rather long for it."

That was the last time I saw Jericho.

The following morning I woke to find the cabin empty. Jericho was gone, and for the first time in days the sun shone, glittering off the white snow. As I packed my belongings, I heard a cry in the distance — a pained voice that rang through the mountains before vanishing forever — and I knew at once that it was Jericho's. I ran outside, tried to follow his footsteps in the snow, but there were none — it was as if Jericho had simply faded into the ground. Then, after hours of searching, I looked up and saw the outline of the Great Hill and Mortuary in the distance. I knew I could not return. Instead I left the cabin and the relic to the elements, Jericho's memories to the mountains, and I made my way to Hom.

Mary the Forgiver

Silent and with purpose I came,
The conscience of the One Goddess to heal and forgive,
To touch with kindness and be ever more.
An end awaits us all and when it comes
Our light will shine no more, except in the hearts of those we leave behind
And in the legacy of the future.
— From the Omens of Mary



Do Not Be Afraid



From the recollections of Micah Avek, Marian:

"Be not afraid..."

These were the words that pulled me from my sleep, my chamber empty and still as the words echoed through it. I stepped to my window, the motion dream-like, and pulled open the shutters. Below me the gardens of Xstasis were bathed in moonlight, their shadows adding to the solitude I felt. It was then that I saw Her, draped in a dark shawl, yet Her face shined like the very stars themselves. Hers was not a mortal's face — it possessed a tragic and timeless beauty, a fragile essence that seemed forever on the verge of shattering. There was something about the stranger that urged me forward, as if someone was calling me home after years of absence. And so I went.

The familiar rows of hedges and gardens became a maze to me. Everything seemed, in the moonlight, to be new, unknown to me; I was a stranger in my own home. The more I ran, the more lost I became, and the more desperate I was to find the visitor. When I did, She was waiting by a small fountain and I almost wished I hadn't come. This was the same place I last saw my love, Meagan, before she was banished. Where I held Meagan in my arms and whispered that we'd always be together, that I'd follow her to Hom. But I never kept my promise, and buried my guilt and fear deep inside as my love was branded a Fallen.

The visitor lingered there, Her reflection fleeting and precious in the water. She stood tall, yet Her flowing cloak hid Her from even the moon's shadow; Her face, soft, was delicate as if made of porcelain and stained by autumn's rain. She looked at me, into me, with eyes that could only belong to a Fatima, and then a tear rolled down Her cheek as if She knew the pain I carried. I reached for Her, to hold one that knew the torment I lived with, but She was gone. I collapsed, flooded by memories of Meagan and the visitor, when I heard a voice...

"You'll never find Her, Micah, for She is no more. She lives only in our memory, in the memory of *our* Tribe. She may be forgotten by others, but for us the Magnificent One still protects and guides..."

Confused, I stared blankly at the woman before me, Cana as I would later come to know my mentor; "Our Tribe? the magnificent?"

"Mary, Micah, Mary the Forgiver."



This is Who We Are

From the Recollections of Micah Avek, Marian:

That night Cana took me to her home and opened my eyes to the truth. I sat there as my world was turned in on itself. I learned that I and many others trace our roots to Mary's tribe, and though we were born into other tribes and followed their Fatimas, our true calling was to Mary. Since the time of Mary's death, the Marians have lived hidden among the tribes, keeping Her memory alive and protecting those in need. All my life I felt like I did not belong, that I was just going through the motions, and now I knew why. Cana explained that we all remember Mary and are plagued by visions of Her, taunting us until we are ready to accept the truth. This is what happened that night and I wanted to know more, but it was late, and Cana promised we'd start in the morning.

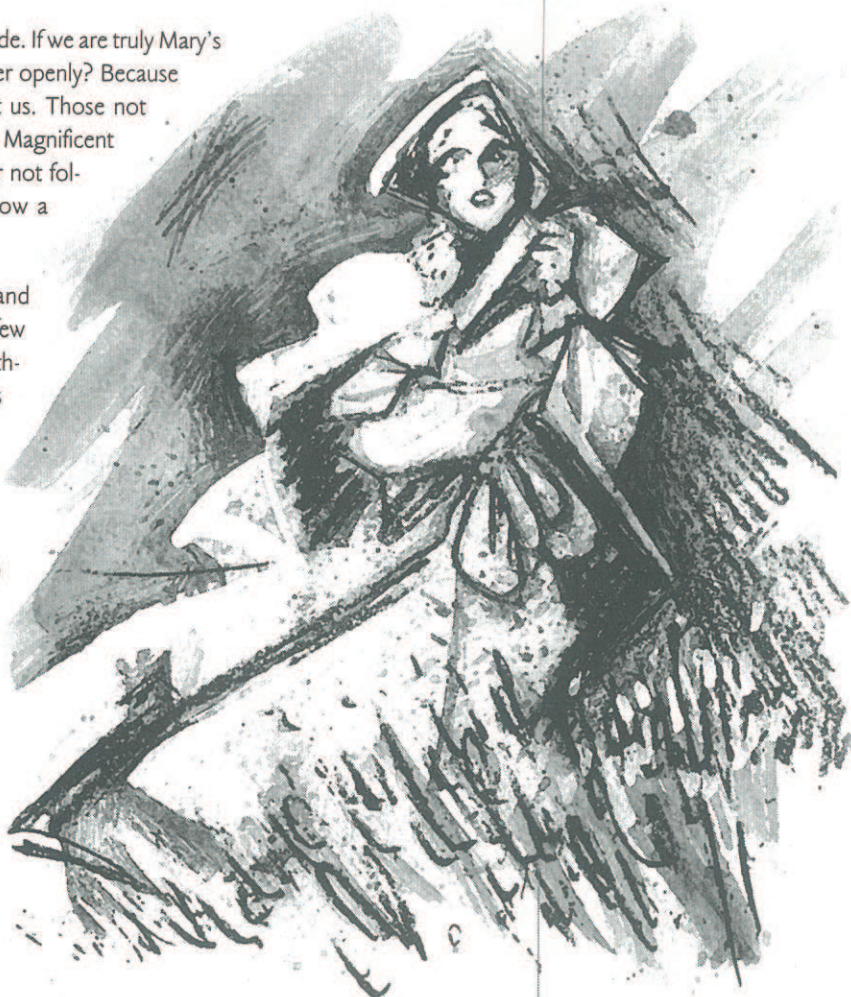
So, tired and confused, I went to sleep and dreamt of Mary.

From the teachings of Cana Nan'on, Marian Martyr:

We have always been and will always be Mary's children. She may have been called back by the One Goddess, but She has not forgotten us and we have not forgotten Her. True, to the world at large we no longer appear to be a tribe, but that does not mean we are no longer one. On the contrary — because of our secret we share a stronger bond than most tribes, knowing that we are the only ones to remember Mary. When we die, so too does the memory of the Magnificent One.

I see you wonder why we must hide. If we are truly Mary's children, then why not honor Her openly? Because the other tribes would not trust us. Those not understanding the legacy of the Magnificent One would brand us heretics for not following Agnes. Who would follow a dead Fatima? So we hide.

When Mary's husk grew cold and those who chose Agnes left, we few who still loved Mary knew that without a Fatima the other tribes would not accept us — our fate would be that of the Ravager's children. Instead, we gathered what remained of Mary, built a temple hidden from outside eyes, and took asylum among the other tribes. We were welcomed but never truly accepted. True, in time their apprehension faded, as our children grew and we adapted, but with each generation the memory of Mary became dull and fragmented and eventually, like you, few remembered the truth. And this is our first calling.



The First Calling

Cry not for me, for I will be evermore;

My memory passed down to you,

And from you to your First Born.

It is they that will remember me

And call me the Magnificent One.

— From the Omens of Mary

From the Teachings of Cana Nan'on, Marian Martyr:

There comes a time in every Marian's life when the truth weighs too heavily to be ignored, when the visions and memories can't be suppressed anymore. At this point they are brought into the fold, told the truths and indoctrinated into our mysteries. As Mary passed on, She instructed us to keep careful watch over Her children and their descendants. The first born of every Marian is blessed with memories of Mary, marked to one day return home, like you have. The other children belong to the Fatima of their adopted tribe, siblings in blood but not spirit.

So we live among the tribes, looking for the signs of a Marian remembering her past, keeping track of the first born, and teaching when the time comes. This is our first calling, to keep the tribe of Mary alive.

The Second Calling

Pardon and grant absolution to those,

Forgotten and claimed to be lost, for all are children of the One Goddess.

Judge not with laws or blind truths, but with Heart and open eyes;

For there is purpose to all and everything.

— From the Omens of Mary

The Magnificent One blessed and forgave — it was Her, and only Her, who welcomed the Lost Ones into Her tribe. No, not the Fallen, for back then there were none, but those that came from afar, from beyond Vimary. They claimed to have heard the call of the Fatimas and journeyed from the north, arriving as the Liberation ended. Few, however, were welcomed, and only Mary took them in. They lived apart from the tribes, plagued by powerful visions and omens, but Mary knew they had a purpose and so She defended them.

To this day, like Mary, we safeguard those ignored and forgotten, and this includes the Fallen, another reason why we must hide from the tribes. It was Mary who first prophesied that there would be Those Who Walk Alone, and without Her love She knew they would be cast out and tormented. And so, our Second Calling is to look after the Fallen. Heed not what Tera Sheba or Eva say, the Fallen are the Goddess' children and Mary knew this — She was the first to listen.

The Third Calling

Learn to Forgive, as I forgive,

Be not angry with me for leaving you.

But know that you, my children, have a role to play.

And when the signs are clear you will know

Your time has come and a new memory will be born.

— From the Omens of Mary

Mary was more than just a Forgiver or pardoner, for She was also a potent visionary. Like Tera Sheba, the past, present and future were one for Mary, but unlike the Stern Mother, Mary accepted all She saw, heard and knew. Instead of fighting the future, Mary set to guide and shape it, to teach it compassion and understanding — to heal the wounds of hate and pride.

And as Mary died She told us of things to come. Cryptic and fragmented, these Omens are signposts of the future, and our duty is to interpret them and act when the time is right. Some Omens are known to all, like the coming of the Fallen or our duty to help the Shebans temper their pride and learn forgiveness. And then there are those Omens known only to a few, so as not to affect the course of history. It is said that the greatest Marians are those who act without knowing the role they play in the greater scheme of things — free of pride, hubris and folly.

The Tribe of Mary

We are a small tribe, our numbers slowly decreasing as time passes. We are fewer than ten dozen, all told, living among the tribes and Fallen. Most continue to live with their adopted tribe, carrying out their surrogate duties, each doing their own little bit to keep the memory of Mary alive — a gentle word here, a kind act there. There are times, however, when subtle action must be taken, to steer the tribes in benevolent ways according to the Omens. This is where the Martyrs fit in.

We **Martyrs** are the favored of Mary; we were there when She left us. We communed with Her during Her final hours and gained insight into the Magnificent One and Her Omens. Some of us left to guide the Agnites, the joy and wonder of the Child dulling all but the most powerful memories of Mary. Those of us who stayed, however, carry on the somber duty of keeping Mary's tribe alive and together. We are few now, seven in all, and none have been born to carry on our duties — at least not yet.

Those who follow the Martyrs, like you will, are called **Wreathed**. They have accepted the truth with open hearts and minds, embracing the explanation for their feelings of distance and isolation. They continue to live among the tribes and Fallen, often taking on the duties of teacher and mentor. The Wreathed keep in constant, if concealed, contact with the Keepers, Fallen and Joshuans, forming a network of allies stretching across Vimary and beyond. They often aid fugitives of all sorts, providing both a safe haven and protected routes of travel into and out of Vimary.

The truth of a Marian's legacy can send some into deep depression — some recover while others do not. The **Black Marians** are unable to live with the pain of knowing their Fatima is no more. Many of them now serve among the Joanites and they take the sins of their brothers and sisters-in-arms upon their shoulders, hoping that their sacrifice will one day bring Mary back to us. Fanatics, the Black Marians are noble nonetheless, taken to absolving the guilty of their crimes by ritually flagellating themselves. The Black Marians are also the guardian watchers of the Fallen and other dispossessed and protectors of Mary's temples.

2. The Lost Tribes

The **Silent Ones** are not technically Marians (though they may be the siblings of a first-born in some cases) but those who have important roles in the Omens of Mary. Some are brought into the mysteries like normal Marians, others join after we absolved them of their sins. Silent Ones serve as assistants, scribes, contacts and even protectors, all noble to the point of death. A few go as far as taking vows of silence, or even cutting their own tongues, so as to never betray Mary or Her Children, giving rise to their moniker.

From the recollections of Micah Avek, Marian:

And so, for the next months Cana taught me about my past and my tribe. I learned how to recognize the others by the ivy tattoos that marked us as Marians and of our conclaves during the dark of the moon. Every day I'd return to Xstasis, for Cana told me that we must keep faithful to our adopted tribes — without them and their shelter, nothing of Mary would remain. For the first time, as I walked through Xstasis, a calmness of being washed over me. I could finally look out to Vimary and understand. I finally knew I belonged.

Even so, I still had questions, and my dreams were plagued by vivid images of Mary. I needed to know more about the Forgivee and this is when I met Angus Krum'on...

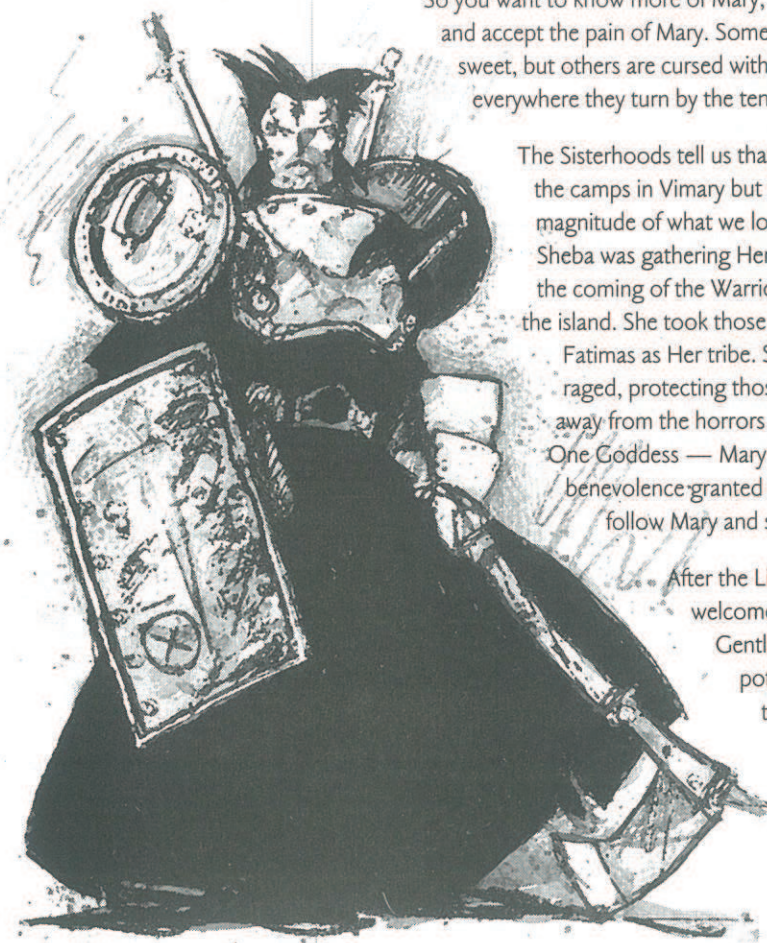
The Magnificent One

From the sermons of Angus Krum'on, Black Marian:

So you want to know more of Mary, do you? To be a Marian one must know and accept the pain of Mary. Some of us are lucky, our memories strong and sweet, but others are cursed with half-remembered fragments, taunted everywhere they turn by the tender face of Mary the Forgivee.

The Sisterhoods tell us that all the Fatimas were born from one of the camps in Vimary but this is not so. They lie to hide the magnitude of what we lost when Mary left us. Indeed, as Tera Sheba was gathering Her tribe and the Three Fates prepared for the coming of the Warrior and Ravager, Mary arrived from beyond the island. She took those discarded or left for dead by the other Fatimas as Her tribe. She searched the Camps as the Liberation raged, protecting those who could not fight, those who ran away from the horrors of war and those who lost all faith in the One Goddess — Mary extended Her love to them all. Her benevolence granted the lost a final chance and all swore to follow Mary and spread compassion to a broken world.

After the Liberation, Mary and Her Tribe were welcomed, for the other Fatimas loved their Gentle Sister: Baba Yaga, for Mary shared Her potent visions; Eva, because Mary and Her tribe knew how to heal the mind as well as the body. Magdalen, for Mary was pure and whole. Tera Sheba, because Mary absolved Her Judges and Executioners, and Dahlia loved Mary for not hiding behind masks. Finally, Joan loved Mary as she helped ease the pain of Joshua's death.



Mary's Sacrifice

But things were not well, and Mary knew this. Only She knows what caused Her to grow ill and fade from us. Near the end the Lost Ones came, and She took them to Her Temple and alone they discussed. That was the last time the Lost Ones ever came to us, and now only a few remain — most persecuted by the tribes. I believe that Mary grew sick because She saw this was not Her time, that the tribes were not ready to accept the Forgiveness of the One Goddess — or maybe that they did not deserve it. Saddened, Mary realized that a sacrifice was in order. By releasing Her spirit into the heart of Her tribe She could start paving the way for the future. She knew, as only a Fatima can know, what needed to be done and did it without hesitation.

From the teachings of Cana Nan'on, Marian Martyr:

Angus speaks the truth, but now that he is gone I can tell you more. She did not die and leave us, but somehow *became* us. I still remember that day, the end of Mary and Her old tribe. It was I who tended to Her, who wrote down her Omens. Feverish and pained, both by Her ailment and Joan's mourning, She spoke of terrible crimes, both past, present and future, of the coming of the Child, of the trial of the Judge, and saw the coming of another...

Yes, Mary is missed but She lives in our hearts and in the hope of the future.

Blessings

From the teachings of Cana Nan'on, Marian Martyr:

We are a tribe of tribes, our duties to remember Mary, to protect those who cannot do so for themselves and watch for signs of the Omens. There are Joanites and Evans among us, as well as Magdalites and Fallen — for Mary never had distinctions. When the time came to disperse, some tribes welcomed us with open arms while others did not. Some of us brought compassion and understanding to their new tribes, others their handiwork with stone or wood. Few tribes can rival us in our skill in masonry or carpentry because, to us, Mary lives in these elements. Mary's gift with Dream is also still with us, and Her blessings of **Purity** and **Recognition** are still ours. We practice our arts secretly, however, and the lost Aspect of **Clairvoyance** is taught only to the most trusted Wreathed.

Eva and Her Tribe always shared a close kinship with Mary, and the truth is that most Evans learned the healing arts from Marians. Most Marians joined Eva following the Sacrifice, Her tenants of empathy and life close to Mary's forgiveness.

The **Agnites** are our children; they may exist apart from us, but Agnes will one day accept Her path. When She does we must be ready to guide Her into maturity, for the Child will not always be young.

Mary was the **Crone's** favorite sister, and we are a painful reminder of Her loss. Baba Yaga is the only Fatima to know of us, but She is also jealous of us, for both our tribes weave fate's tapestry. At every juncture the Old Ones hinder us without knowing, and everywhere Baba Yaga tries limiting our power and influence. Only Her love for Mary prevents Her from destroying us outright. In time She may grow to love us, but for now be wary of the Mother of Death.

Although you may not think so, a fair number turned to **Joan** when Mary died, and since then they have tried to teach the warriors compassion and forgiveness — trying to mend their broken hearts.

It is said, according to one of the Omens, that only through forgiveness and understanding will **Tera Sheba** be able to remove Her blindfold and gag, and be able to hear the One Goddess once more. This is why, even at great danger of being discovered, we try to guide the Shebans and soothe their pain. If they fall, so too does the One Goddess's temple.

If **Dahlia** and Her tribe know about us they are not saying, but more than a few Marians have taken to joining Caravans in hopes of traveling outside of Vimary where Mary's message might reach new ears. But after Her deception, it is clear none can trust the Trickster, even Her fellow Sisters.

2. The Lost Tribes



Cana Nan'on

Cana is one of the oldest Marians and the de facto leader of the tribe. One of seven Martyrs, Cana carries her duties with a solemn heart, knowing that with each summer the memories of Mary fade, even for her. Since Mary's death, Cana has guided the Marians and through them the tribes. In the past this intervention has been secretive, and this is how Cana wants things to remain — but there are Marians who fear if no direct action is taken in these turbulent times, then all may be lost. Among the more vocal of those calling for the Martyrs to take matters into their own hands are the Black Marians, and the two groups are growing apart.

Tribe: Marian (Martyr)

Highlights: Visionary, prudent, solemn

Eminences: Purity, Recognition

Attributes: CRE +1, INF +1, KNO +2, PSY +2, WIL +1, STA 30, UD 3, AD 4

Skills: Animal Care 2/+2, Craft (bone crafting) 1/+1, Dreaming 2/+2, Healing 2/+2, Herbalism 2/+2, Human Perception 3/+2, Leadership 2/+1, Lore (Mary) 3/+2, Melee 1/0, Mythology 2/+2, Read/Write (tribal) 2/+2, Ritual 2/+2, Synthesis (Clairvoyance) 3

Lastly **Magdalen's** heart is pure, even if hot-blooded, and like Mary She is not a fighter. In time, and thanks to us, She will mature and realize the power She wields.

And so, Micah, we come to the **Fallen**, and I can see you are thinking of Meagan. Maybe you did not lie when you said that you'd be with her — maybe without knowing it you understood your future and knew that all are one in the end. The Fallen are growing strong and soon they will be able to take their first steps truly alone. Until then, we must look after them, help them heal in the aftermath of Liliith and the pain Dahlia brought.

I see you were puzzled about the **Lost Ones**, those who came from the north to commune with the Fatimas. I believe most call them Guides now, the few that remain, and they are potent visionaries. Personally, they unnerve me, and there are times when I wonder if it was not they who poisoned Mary. There are those among us, including one or two Black Marians, who blame the Guides for Mary's death. They claim that the Lost Ones were part of some conspiracy to kill the Fatimas. I believe the truth to be far darker than this.

We are all part of the One Goddess, She lives in everything, except the **Z'bri**. The Beasts are twisted with hate and rage, devoured from the inside by guilt stemming from their betrayal of the One Goddess. Can they be forgiven? I do not know, and in the end the judgment of the Z'bri is reserved for the One Goddess.

Hallowed Grounds

From the recollections of Micah Avek, Marian:

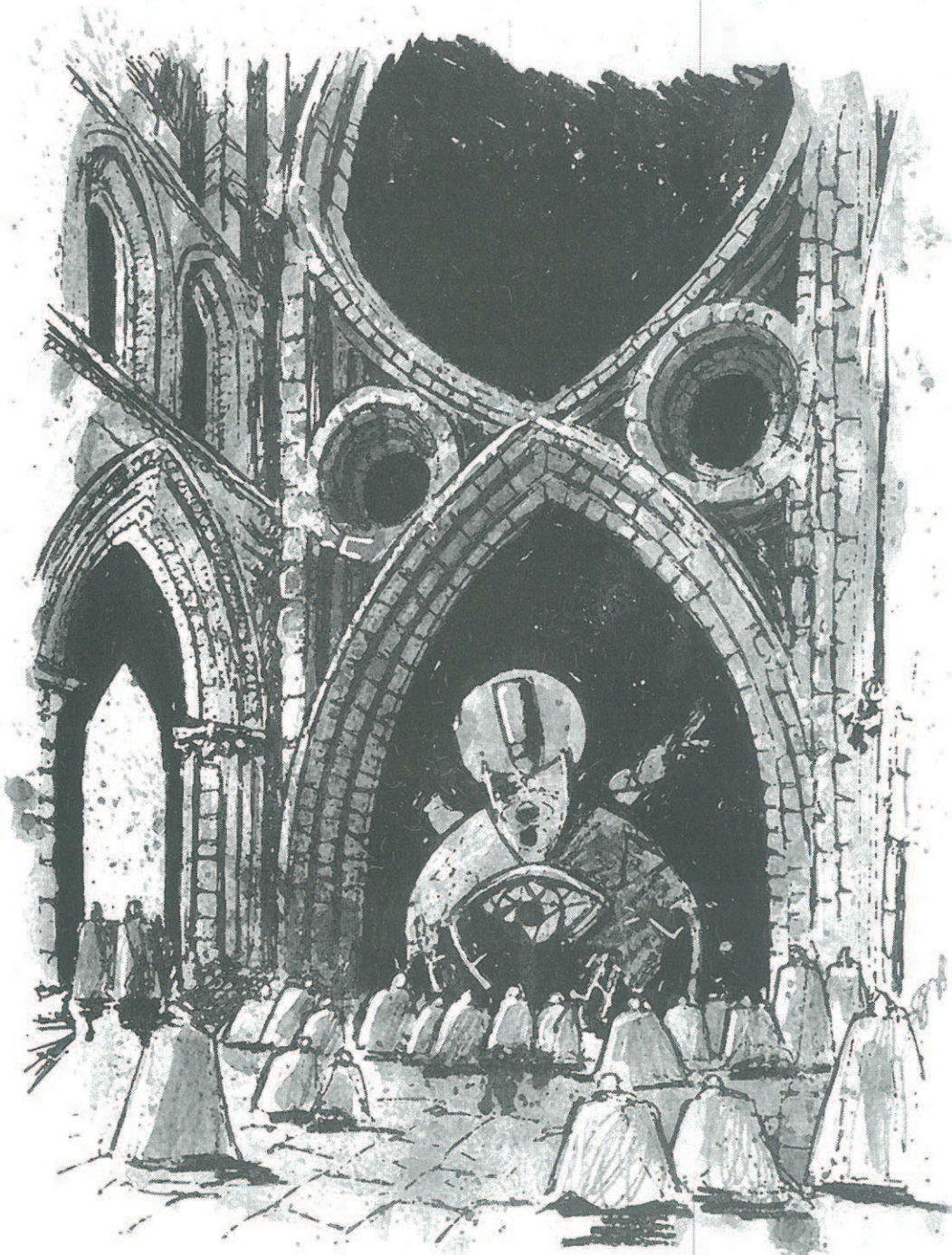
Months had passed since that night in the garden before Cana took me to the Temple of Mary. Carefully hidden amidst the dust and devastation of the Discarded Lands, and surrounded by ruins tall and old, the Temple is an oasis of salvation. It took me a while to notice it, as the temple itself was unimposing; a stone building capped with green metal work and small narrow windows of colored glass. Near the entrance, a cadre of Black Marians stood guard, nodding to Cana and myself as they opened the massive doors of the temple for us. Dressed in their dark tunics, the Black Marians seemed to know me, and without saying a word welcomed me to the resting-place of Mary.

Inside, the space was grand, the ceiling lost in a haze of shadow and incense smoke. Votive candles burnt at the feet of statues, which Cana later explained marked the graves of those Marians who took their lives when Mary died. Marian stonework adorned each wall, beautiful and delicate, and I understood why stone was our element — for it never fades or rusts, but lasts eternal.

We continued to walk towards the center, a huge space directly underneath a glass dome that let thick sunlight pour in. There, bathed in soft smoky light, stood the remains of Mary and at once the loss of Her hit me — devastated me. In the dreams that had come nightly since my vision in the garden Mary had been alive, full of hope, Her stone face delicately glowing with an inner light. The Mary that stood before me was cold and dark, even the sunlight seeming to be absorbed by Her marble features. She stood, broken and imperfect, Her face still and the stone stained by age. Her body was incomplete, a skeleton ravaged by Agnes as She was born. I reached, like I did that first night, and I touched Her frame and I felt how truly far Mary was from us.

I turned, saddened, and at once a dull rage took over me. All I wanted to do was punish those who took Mary from us. Did She sacrifice Herself? What crimes could She not forgive, and why did Baba Yaga always turn a cold shoulder to Mary when the Magnificent One confronted Tera Sheba? I wanted to drape myself with the dark cloaks of the Black Marians and lose myself to rage and fury. But then, as I walked alone towards the entrance, I caught a glimpse of a woman kneeling at an altar. Transfixed, I followed her as she left, her dark cowl hiding her from me... like Mary's had that night.

I raced after her, hoping that somehow Mary still lived, that somehow the Martyrs and Black Marians had been wrong. I followed her into the streets, but she kept ahead of me, always out of reach. Then, when all seemed lost, I vowed never to forget Mary and as I turned away I looked up to find Meagan standing in front of me.



Chapter three: Quest Circles

When one cannot stand alone

Then Her Sisters come to Her aid.

We are one nation.

We stand together.

Never shall we be torn asunder.

— The Oath of the Stone Circle



Introduction

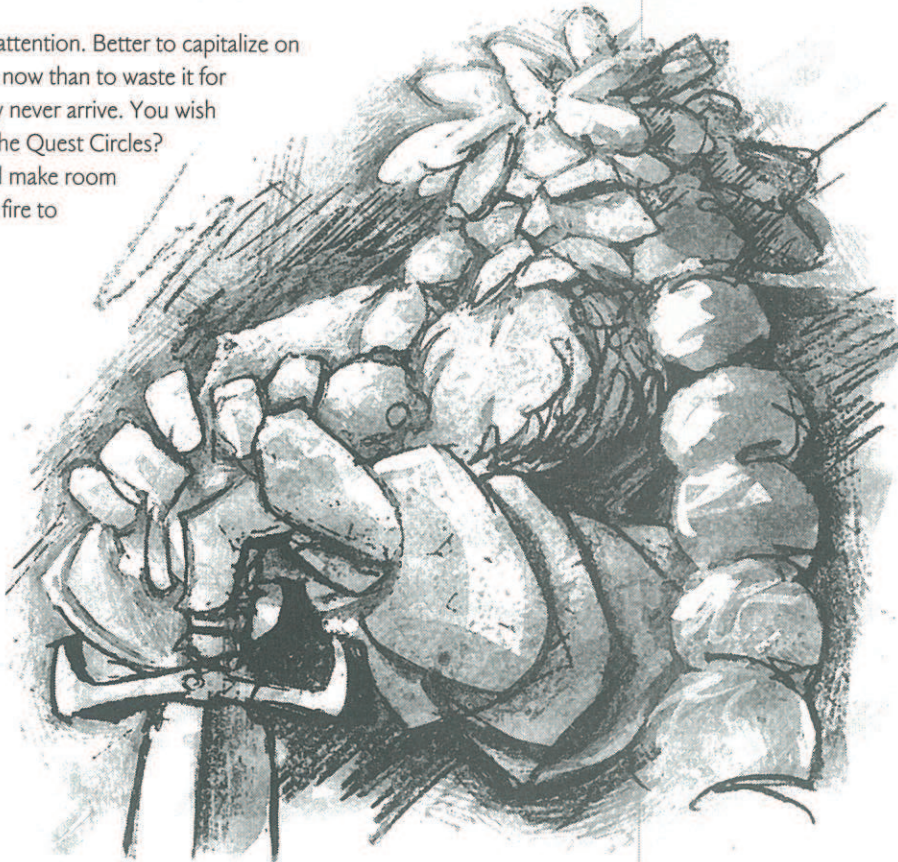
From the Tales of Awarnak Kil'on:

Stop wagging your tongues; you look like dogs on a hot summer's day. You dare speak to me of the Z'bri? You're no more intimate with them than I with your mother. My father was Kilborne. As Joan's shield and blade, he often fought Z'bri with nothing but will as his weapon. If he walked tonight in mortal dress, he would strike you down for your childish prattling. I, on the other hand, have a gentler touch with my words, and would prefer to see you educated rather than ignorant. At least educated, you die responsible for your own fate. Ignorant, the fault lies with me as your garrison leader for not teaching you better.

You talk of the Z'bri in past tense and joke of their fading strength. Fah! That's nothing but the babbling of juvenile boredom. I heard the stories of the camps on the broad knees of my father as he recounted what I was too young to remember. I saw the pain in his eyes and the Z'bri inflicted wounds that still bled on his corpse decades after his death. That kind of evil never fades away. Once created, it can only be destroyed. Still believe the Z'bri threaten only our memories? Then look to the Serf Lands and remind yourselves that those putrid domes are made from our ancestors, and house our enslaved brethren. Yes, we liberated ourselves from the camps, but we have not won the war against the Z'bri. Not yet.

We call ourselves warriors of Joan, yet we sit around defending a battlement that shouldn't even be here. We aren't defenders, we're custodians of a jail with one wall. There was a time, though, when we were all part of something greater. Our actions mattered then. It was when we first spoke the word "liberation," and dared to dream of defying the Z'bri. Then, we were all part of the same Quest Circle, a group united not by circumstance, but by goal. The Quest Circle is an important aspect of our heritage, for it marked the point where we went from victims to conquerors. With the Quest Circle, we learned to fight together when before, we hid our pain alone. The Z'bri were no longer the masters of our destiny; they were the first obstacle to surmount.

Aha, I see I have your attention. Better to capitalize on this rare good fortune now than to waste it for opportunities that may never arrive. You wish to know more about the Quest Circles? Good! Now move and make room for me. There's plenty fire to share.



The Stone Circle: The History of One is the History of All

Quests Circles unite us, no matter how many partake in the endeavor. When one person pursues the quest, we all become stronger for her sacrifice. When one person endures the quest, we all celebrate her struggle.

The first Quest Circle was symbolic, for it encompassed the breadth of the camps and created one tribe blessed by the Goddess. You will hear the tales of Y'beth-ah, Te'plem and Trah'zon, where we fought for our freedoms. But these were not eight separate struggles; they were part of one struggle, and we were one soldier fighting one enemy. We didn't call ourselves Quest Circles then, either. We were simply united.

Following the liberation, the newly formed Grand Council realized they represented the only form of cooperation between the tribes. Rather than lose the strength of unity created by our struggles, the Council sanctioned the formation of Quest Circles. By their very words on the steps of the council hall, they called out to the thousands gathered and declared in one voice:

A wall is not a wall when there is a hole in it. A chain is unworthy of its strength when one link betrays the whole. We won, we live and we remain united. The Goddess gave us freedom, but it is we who must protect it. We can only do so together. Seven tribes, one Mother. Gather the chosen of each Fatima and present them, for they are the force of our bonded word.

My father made my brother and I memorize that proclamation till we could recite it backwards. He then joined the newly-formed Stone Circle. All the members represented their tribe's strength, for from Mary's tribe came Enza Valeri'on the Clear-Seer; from Magdalen came Shera and Kara, the twin lovers; from Baba Yaga came the Mordred Faust Verkin; from Eva came Shaman Aaron Aria'on (son to Arianne, the Aria'on matriarch, and father of Griffentowne's Benjamin Aria'on); from Dahlia came Protean Wind; from Tera Sheba came Hamrark Slade'on (whom you now know as the Fisher King) and from Joan came my father.

The Stone Circle acted for the Grand Council and resolved matters troubling the tribes. They dealt with rogue Z'bri fleeing the Baron's purge, and fought those Chained suddenly freed from Tibor's control. Unfortunately, the Stone Circle lost its way slowly. Infighting amongst Council members tore the group in different directions and shattered the bonds of trust. Then Mary the Forgiver died and Enza Valeri'on, in grief, killed herself on her Fatima's remains. The Stone Circle discovered Dahlia herself was Protean Wind and Baba Yaga eventually chose Faust to sit on the Grand Council.

My father never spoke of why the Stone Circle finally broke, but I know his heart shared its fate. His quest was no more, but the Stone Circle was successful in inspiring others to greatness. My father took comfort in that alone.



The Quest Circles

Like the faces of Dahlia, Quest Circles are varied and diverse. Not everyone can be a member of a Sisterhood or take part in the Grand Council. For those who would still better the tribes, there are the Quest Circles. Sponsored by an individual of repute, circles embark on missions deemed important to the safety of the Fatimas and tribes. Before they can do so, however, the sponsor must ask the Grand Council to recognize the Quest Circle and its objectives. Some groups attempt recognition without the benefit of a sponsor, but the Council rarely grants them circle status. I hear say they fear that circles without sponsors will shatter like the Stone Circle did. Should a circle form without the Council's assent, they are branded illegal and subject to the full penalty of Tera Sheba's laws: corporal punishment, imprisonment and possible execution.

Quest Circles with immediate objectives, including the destruction of one foe or the recovery of an artifact, are called **Harvest Circles**. Brought together by a specific need, these groups rarely number more than ten members, and never last beyond five winters before fulfilling their quest (or falling to it). Those with far-reaching endeavors, such as the destruction of a Z'bri breed, ensuring the safety of a region or awaiting the fall of the Third Plague, are known as **Horizon Circles**. Their longevity depends on their will, but it is not uncommon for such groups to last for decades or change members regularly.

Quest Circles formed by the Fatimas alone are **Moon Circles**. I know little of them since their formation is secret to all but the Fatimas Themselves; it is not our place to question the Goddess' actions. Moon Circles appear to be Harvest Circles with short-term missions.

Regardless of their objective, Quest Circles recognized by the Grand Council or blessed with purpose by the Fatimas demand our praise and respect. They show the Goddess we deserve our freedom, and they bring honor to all. Those circles not recognized by either council or Goddess, however, are called **Shadow-Cast Circles**. Fah! They take a noble heritage and abuse its name for their own means. These groups pursue dark agendas that benefit themselves alone, and hide in the shadows like rats. Righteous action need never fear the light of truth.

The strength of the circle comes from blending of the different talents of each tribe. We berate the Magdalites for their sensuality and cunning, but we would be hard-pressed to duplicate their resourcefulness. The same holds for Joanite prowess, Sheban authority, Dahlian subterfuge and Yagan wisdom.

When a event concerns the tribes as a whole, or requires the touch of more than one Fatima's gift, a Quest Circle forms to deal with the problem. Generally this event must *threaten the quality of tribal life*, as said by Tera Sheba Herself, to require a circle's special attention; any action directed against a specific Fatima remains the providence of the individual Sisterhoods.

This said, however, there is another, more unfortunate reason why some Quest Circles exist. Sometimes, one tribe does not trust another over a certain matter. A circle is then brought together to ensure everyone's interests are represented. In this way, suspicion fuels the circle, which, in turn, does little to honor the tribes or their respective Fatimas. The Seven Expressions come to mind in this case.





Harvest Circles: The Seven Expressions

Ahh, The Seven Expressions are a prime example of a Harvest Circle formed for the wrong reasons. Their sponsor is none other than the Grand Council itself. The rise and fall of Lilith has brought about many questions; some ask these questions with open minds, while others have nothing to offer but fear. Fear and curiosity are the driving forces in this circle's path.

The Seven Expressions came into being shortly after Lilith vanished from the lands of the Fallen. They form the Grand Council's official and public response to the Lilith problem. We all know the Shebans ran an inquisition into the matter — some of you even marched on Hom with the Inquisitor Mezat Ever'on — but too many questions remain unanswered and members of the other tribes demanded an impartial inquiry be undertaken.

Officially, the Seven Expressions seek the truth behind the Fatima Lilith. Normally, I suspect, the Grand Council would themselves investigate, but Lilith, despite Her death, remains a dangerous enigma. If the new Fatima was not the threat the Council feared, then they've alienated themselves from the Goddesses' newly chosen child and dishonored Lilith's memory. The Seven Expressions, effectively, are scapegoats. Should Lilith prove genuine, then the Council can distance itself from the Seven Expressions, while if the reverse holds true, the Grand Council will emerge as heroes. I have even heard rumors that some in the Circle seek to hide certain parts of the truth — few have nothing to hide in the Lilith affair, I think.

*For more on Lilith the Liberator and Her fate, see **Children of Lilith**, on sale now.*

Current State

My father once said faith is a bright light that can either guide your journey, or blind you to impending obstacles. I fear The Seven Expressions are of the latter camp. They wander about Vimary and Hom, seeking answers to Lilith's arrival and bearing their status like a war banner. While people fear the Watch, The Seven Expressions incite irritation through badgering. Still, most individuals know the Seven Expressions' power rests within the hands of its parent, the Grand Council, and cooperate accordingly.

I wonder about the effectiveness of The Seven Expressions; they are too overbearing to carry out such a delicate assignment. Lilith's mysteries are written upon cobweb. It would take a gentle hand to unravel Her secrets, if the Goddess so deems. The Seven Expressions, however, is running in circles. They question the same people repeatedly, often forgetting answers already given. Many of the questions, I've heard, do not even pertain to Lilith, but to the Fallen. Frankly, The Seven Expressions have mistaken their quest for a blessing and believe they have power over others. Only because of their affiliation with the Grand Council are they tolerated at all.

Membership

I do not envy The Seven Expressions' position. Regardless of their success, they will make powerful enemies of somebody. Not a fate I would wish upon these children, for they are young. The Seven Expressions consist of seven members, only two of whom I know.

Gattera Medi'on: Nephew to councilwoman Iris Medi'on, Gattera, surprisingly, received the support of High Judge Cylix Seth'on to lead The Seven Expressions. Cylix and Iris, as you well know, are staunch rivals. Gattera realizes his assignment is due to his aunt's position, but it is no secret that he seeks stronger representation on the Grand Council than what his aunt offers. Cylix's support of Gattera may bring him closer to the bosom of the Medi'on clan. Still, I would not cross Gattera, who is as ruthless as a shark with new teeth. He advocates violence against the Fallen, and uses his quest to further this agenda.

Tagos Merakin: If ever there was a candidate for The Seven Expressions, Tagos would be it. Most of you remember Tagos from sparring drills at Joan's Watchtower. A bear in stature, with the disposition of one as well, he uses metal clubs called bats in combat. I suspect many here have broken bones from encounters with him, so I do not need to recount his brutality. There is no skill in his attacks. He simply pummels opponents till nothing remains but a mess of shattered bone and flesh. Unfortunately, that also describes his demeanor. He is the circle's enforcer.



Gattera Medi'on

Gattera, son of Bartholomew Medi'on and nephew of Iris Medi'on, is the black sheep of the Medi'on clan. While his family represents the more progressive elements within the Shebans, Gattera is rabidly conservative. He espouses the Watch's doctrines, and uses every opportunity to denigrate or attack the Fallen. Despite his strong views, Gattera is in fact a sheep and knows little beyond following orders. He is a perfect pawn for Cylix who has long opposed the Medi'on clan. Unbeknownst to all, Gattera is infatuated with Cylix, and his opinions stem from his unbridled attraction to the Crucible's leader. As his infatuation grows, Gattera will use more violence against the Fallen to better attract the High Judge's attention. Cylix is not interested in men, however, forcing Gattera to eventually confer with Magdalites on how to seduce the man of his dreams.

Tribe: Sheban (Lorekeeper)

Highlights: Driven, infatuated, zealous

Eminences: Tradition and Truth

Attributes: AGI +1, BLD +1, CRE -2, INF +1, PSY -1 STA 30, UD 5, AD 6

Skills: Dodge 2/+1, Hand to Hand 1/+1, Intimidate 2/+1, Leadership 2/+1, Melee 2/+1, Streetwise 1/+1



Horizon Circle: The Crescent-Chasers

I remember our early years well, for though I could barely stand, the winter burned its presence into my bones. Do you wonder why you sometimes shiver for no reason? It is a lingering memory of the harsh winter that accompanied the first Falling Plague. It was shortly following the Liberation, when the night sky burned like daylight and a star plunged from the heavens. Moments later, the ground shook in anger. Suddenly, night returned and lingered for two months. We huddled in the broken homes of the past, in what was later to become Bazaar, and waited for death's caul to lift. Sometimes the sky would cry flakes of snow and sometimes it would cry ash, but always, always it was colder than a Zom's soul.

At first we believed the Z'bri responsible, but they too perished by the hundreds beneath the filthy blankets of mud-snow. The Fatimas then said that for all to survive, a handful must perish. So a hundred of our number came forth. Touched by Baba Yaga, their souls shone like the hottest campfires, warming those around them, but aging these living sacrifices a day for every passing moment. By the light and heat of their fire-spirits, they enabled the tribes to survive. Eventually the black winter lifted and the Crescent-Chasers were born.

It was the Yagan Faust who sponsored the formation of the Crescent-Chasers, for his Fatima had revealed to him the coming of more plagues. Comprised of Evans, Yagans, Marians and Joanites, the Crescent-Chasers watched the heavens for signs of impending calamities. With the first plague had come the Black Disease, so it fell to the Evans to cure whatever ailment accompanied the next event. To the Yagans and Marians fell the responsibility of determining when the new plague would arrive, while the Joanites' duty was to craft a weapon from the wounded star.

As was hoped, the Crescent-Chasers foresaw the second plague by five nights, allowing the tribes to prepare for another winter. What they did not know, however, was that it would kill Mary, allowing for the birth of Agnes. Now some argue that the second plague was destined to strike down the Forgivee, while others say She sacrificed Herself to save the tribes from the plague. Regardless, it stole Mary the Forgivee from us and unleashed the yellow fevers. Hundreds perished, but the Evans saved many.

For a time, the tribes forgot the Crescent-Chasers, even though they never abandoned their quest. Even without Marians to count amongst them, they continued watching the heavens. Over time their membership changed, dropping to as low as three and rising as high as ten. Their perseverance eventually paid off, however. The third plague appeared, and though it never fell, it reminded the tribes they needed the Crescent-Chasers to watch the heavens for them.

Current State

The Crescent-Chasers are well-skilled in the art of star-gazing, a craft developed by those who use the heavens to navigate. Some say they are so proficient that they can determine a person's fate through the course of the stars. Faust still sponsors them, and after the fright of the third plague, few would contest his decision.

Originally, this silent circle made its home in the towers of Bazaar. Dahlian mischief makers, however, found it amusing to create the illusion of Falling Plagues in the form of plummeting cows and naked Magdalites. The Crescent-Chasers moved to Westholm, into a set of ruins just east of the community itself. The Dahlians there, I believe, are more respectful. Unfortunately, the Crescent-Chasers fraternize with Keepers who frequent the area. I hear they trade for knowledge, and offer the use of their Glass-Smith to make special lenses that peer deeper into the bosom of heaven. The Grand Council, despite their disapproval, stay mostly silent given the Crescent-Chasers' function and the importance of their duties.

Membership

I met the Crescent-Chasers recently when they sought a location for their new home. Two came to Seven Fingers to see the local ruins, but we are too close to the Serf Lands for their comfort. I did not meet the others, but I believe they number six in total.

Mordregga Sarrikin: The Yagans always lead the Crescent-Chasers, though they once shared this responsibility with the Marians. Mordregga is friend to Faust and has been the circle's overseer for more than eight summers. Physically, she does not strike me as a leader, but she speaks like one. I believe she is a Pellis Artisan. Her very skin is a celestial map cut in scars. She told me that when she dies, she wants to continue serving the Crescent-Chasers by giving her flesh to her Quest Circle.

Katrivar Merrick: Katrivar comes from a line of Joanite Glass-Smiths, and possesses such talent that I would call his skill art. He fashions special glasses that can see over long distances, and is currently teaching his craft to other Joanites. If these wondrous items are as potent as he claims, we may receive some Eagle Lenses for Seven Fingers next summer. I heard rumors he has even captured images on glass like ghosts trapped in water. I would truly like to see such a fragile thing.



Long-Strider Blade

When the second plague fell, half the Crescent-Chasers ventured into the Outlands to retrieve the grounded star. Out of the six who left, only one returned two moons later, a fragment of the celestial metal in hand. Known as Long-Strider, the Evan survivor recounted a horrific tale of plague-infested settlements and hordes of Chained beasts gathering where the star landed. The piece Long-Strider returned with was but a fragment of a larger whole. Using the strange metal, Joanite Weaponshapers fashioned a black sword, which they presented to Joan. Joan, in turn, lent the light-weight blade to her favorite warriors before they were to hunt powerful beasts. The weapon has proven highly efficient at slaying Z'bri. Despite the skill of the Weaponshapers, however, the blade's surface is rough and pitted, and the flat of the blade cuts like coral brushing against skin. It possesses the following qualities.

ACC +1, Parry +2, DM AD+15,
Close Combat, Value: Very High (7),
Wt. 1 kg

In addition, anyone holding the Long-Strider Blade can issue a battle-roar upon initiating combat.

The blade enhances the call, terrifying the foe (freeze opponent in place for MoS rounds on opposed WIL roll).



Moon Circles: The Dream Harrowers

From the Lessons of Morpheus Yaga-Kin:

Shhhhh! Thoughts carry through the River of Dreams like a possessed ripple. Do not look for me, for I am nothing but an echo bouncing off distant cities. Perhaps you can taste me on your tongue like mist, or feel my presence tickling your bones, but you still exist in the waking world. I do not. I am dead, you see, a spirit made by Baba Yaga Herself. She held me in Her arms when I killed myself, then brought me here, to meet the Dream Harrowers. Each of us died willingly so that we might better serve Her as Her ethereal vanguard.

The Harrowers patrol the Shores, where dreams and reality mix like sand and river. It is the same world you inhabit, only we see the hundreds who have died but refuse to enter the River of Dreams itself. We slip into your sleep, watching and learning your secrets. We stage plays in your dreams, appealing to your sense of guilt for past errors, or warning you of danger. We are the sense of ill-boding that wakens you with frightful premonitions. Our blood is the cold sweat you bleed in the night.

As a Mordred you should not fear death. It is a wondrous place. While you live upon the bosom of the Goddess, we live within Her blood. We have heard Her heartbeat and felt it ripple through us. Our job is not an easy one, for though we spy for the Fatima, we also deal with threats that come from the River of Dreams to touch upon your world. Already we have thwarted a dream plague and encountered Z'bri the likes of which you can never imagine. By the Fatima's wishes, however, we stay away from the main currents of the River of Dream itself, where our breathing sisters might encounter us and learn of our course. As it stands, those Dreaming may catch fleeting glimpses of us, but only true Dream Travelers can follow our trails.

Current State

The Harrowers have always served Baba Yaga without asking for rewards. Her trust in us is satisfaction enough. We sleep in Mortuary and speak to Her when all is tranquil, but we also patrol the Shores between Vimary and the Sea of the Lost. It is like a long beach, and we cannot protect it all the time. Whatever passes between realms, however, leaves spiritual footprints that we can track. For this reason our numbers include Joanite warriors and Evan hunters.

Yagans alone die for this duty. Baba Yaga, however, chooses souls of those who have already perished to serve the tribes in death. From these chosen come our Evan, Joanite, Dahlian and Magdalite compatriots. We serve for as many summers as we can endure. When it is time to leave, however, Baba Yaga takes us beyond the Fold. I myself was a Pellis Artisan when I joined. It was a hard choice, for it meant leaving my husband Seth to face his duty alone. Still, when he walks the Rust Wastes, I am with him, waiting for the day we are united again. Then we will retire and pass through the Fold together.

Membership

Our members are many, for our duty is long and difficult. But keep your wits about you, and you are sure to survive the long journey. These are the brightest souls of our circle.

Palas Pal'on: Once matriarch of the Pal'on clan, she died while giving birth to her daughter Tera Venkin Pal'on. Palas is a wise old woman who leads the Dream Harrowers. From what I understand, she is the first outside the Yagans to do so. Palas told me she will remain with us until her daughter passes away. Then she can finally embrace her child, a moment denied her from Tera's birth.

Misha, The Old Child: Little Misha was a small child when she watched her grandmother, Veruka the Wraith, flee from her own death ceremony. Veruka never realized Baba Yaga had chosen her to join the Dream Harrowers. It did not matter. Veruka's actions so filled Misha with shame that she leapt at the opportunity to be a Harrower. She sees her duty as returning honor to her clan. Although she denies it, I also know young Misha visits her grandmother, if only to see her from afar.

Now you have heard all I have to say; I have finished my lesson. Come, Baba Yaga awaits. She has a sacrifice to ask of you.



Harrower Ghosts

Ghosts are the spiritual remains of the living, a sort of ethereal chrysalis shed off at the moment of death. The River of Dream and Sea of the Lost are not conducive to their continued existence and many appear torn, wounded and ragged, while others are faceless, sexless forms — usually because they lack a direction, and as such, lose their identity. Dream Harrowers, unlike normal apparitions, are healthier and more solid in form, mostly due to Baba Yaga's influence. Members of this circle do not even bear their death marks, indicating a strong sense of self and purpose. Baba Yaga blesses the Dream Harrowers with Her touch, setting their eyes alight like floating embers in the dark, and enabling them to summon spirits. She also teaches them the Aspect of Dream Travel, allowing the Harrowers to plunge into the sleep of the living. If these seem like potent gifts, they are necessary; the Shores attract all manner of threats, both real and (worse yet) imagined.

Attributes: CRE +1, INF -1, KNO +1, PER +1, WIL +2, PSY +1, HEA +2, STA 40, UD 7

Skills: Combat Sense 1/+1, Dodge 2/+1, Dreaming 3/+1, Human Perception 2/+1, Intimidate 1/+2, Lore (River of Dreams) 2/+1, Melee 3/+1, Mythology 2/+1, Ritual 2/+1, Survival (Spiritual) 3/+1, Theatrics 2/-1

Abilities: Dream Travel (equivalent of level 4), Draw the Spider (by making an opposed WIL roll, they can force a spirit to appear by pulling on its tether. A failed roll alerts the spirit.)

The Shores

The Shores are a buffer realm between the Sea of the Lost and the Physical Orb. It is a barrier preventing ravenous spirits driven insane within the maddening Sea from freely entering the land of substance. Those who died violently or lived troubled lives often find their way here. They wander this corridor, too afraid of the amorphous River of Dream, and unable to express themselves in the physical world.

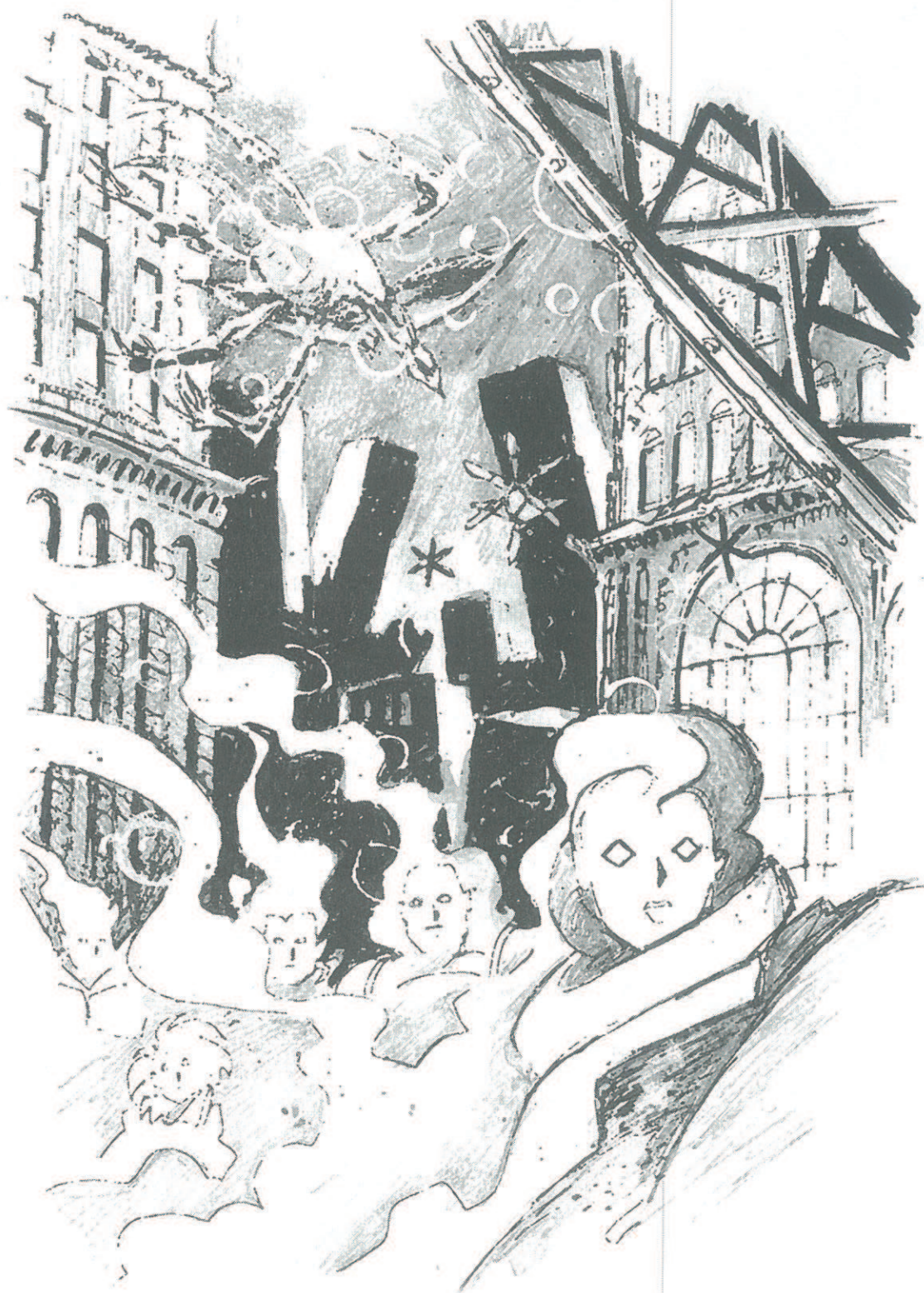
Unfortunately, by remaining along the Shores, ghosts risk anchoring themselves to one location. This is the cause of hauntings.

The Shores look like their physical surroundings, except colors are more vibrant and noises carry in echoes. Sometimes, images from the past flutter into view before dissolving into spent mist. These flashes are troubling sights, for they herald scenes of forgotten violence and remind the Harrowers that their ancestors once had faces.

Anything living, from humans to snails, possesses a multi-hued halo like St-Elmo's Fire. This is their spirit, and anything they touch leaves behind spider-thin tethers. Some tethers last for a few seconds, usually through coincidental contact, while others remain forever if whatever is touched bears some special significance to the individual who touched them. Ghosts use these lines to find their loved ones or items, though eventually the anchors constrict and harden to the point of becoming a leash. Then only the Fatimas, rare artifacts, or potent entities can sunder these chains. The other option is to destroy the real-world object or person binding the spirit.

While ghosts cannot enter the Physical Orb permanently, certain creatures, like the Ne'zark (see Vimary Sourcebook, p. 61) can pass through "holes" in the fabric of reality. These entry points manifest as gray patches in space. Although few, they attract all manner of creatures. In most cases, minor spirits manifest as apparitions and anomalies, while more powerful ones inhabit corpses, turning them into lumbering monstrosities sometimes called Zoms. The Dream Harrowers and Fatimas believe that they are the only ones aware of the portals and deal with them accordingly.

There are many spirits who can bypass the Shores. These are generally nature spirits who flow through the River of Dream and that dreamers may meet during their slumber. These spirits do sometimes journey through the Shores, but generally only when they need to travel into the depth of the Sea of the Lost.





From the words of the Warwitch Nimue, Evan Shaman:

For too long the balance has fallen to one extreme or the other. The Z'bri ruled the spheres and plunged them into guttural sensation. Now the Fatimas come, and in pulling us towards divinity, send us to the other extreme. We were not meant for either world. The tribes are the balance between torment and inspiration, rupture and rapture. The extremes exist because we tie them together. Without us, either side would have spun out of control, each a wayward star spiraling in opposite directions, lost and unaccounted. We give them purpose. Fatima and Z'bri; each displaced; each trying desperately to rule what they can never aspire to be... us.

Our shadow sisterhood began amongst the Dahlians. Dahlia, it is said, uses so many masks to fool and guile that She's forgotten Her real appearance. As such, She donned Her true form one day, thinking it illusion, and unknowingly revealed Her nature to Sarah Gebner, a Little Trickster. Affected by the revelation, Sarah fell between the cracks of foundation and discovered the Tribes' significance. Belittled by the Z'bri, betrayed by the Fatimas, we were their seeds of inspiration, their parents. They exist because we exist. Sarah, in her ecstatic revelation, danced to the heartbeat of the Goddess, and dragged Agnite Children, Yagan Crones and Evan Mothers along with her. So began our dance.

As revealed to her by the Goddess, Sarah showed us the truth. If the Fatimas were our daughters, then the Z'bri were our sons. What one was, the other was not. What one did, the other did not. To balance the disharmony created by both sides, we had to adopt the nature of both; accept the wisdom of both; learn the gifts of both; teach the same lessons to both. To teach, though, we first have to learn. Before we can guide either side, we have to understand what fires them to passion; what guides them to purpose. While we understood the Fatima gift of Synthesis, we lacked the understanding of its opposite, Sundering. So we ventured into the Serf Lands and came to know the Melanis. Deacon Vytor in particular accepted us with open arms. We sought his understanding as equals and he appreciated our quest for knowledge. Under Vytor's guidance, we have learned much of the Z'bri and their craft. We balance the Sundering with the Synthesis — one gift with another, striving for symmetry and equal vision. Sensuality with Assimilation, One Thought or Chaining with Capriciousness, Empathy and Shattering, Soul Stealing and Fate. . . the list continues according to interpretation.

The Fatimas claim Sundering corrupts, and perhaps like any wound left unattended, it does. By equal reasoning, however, Synthesis is equally destructive, for too much curative spoils you to reality's harshness. The Goddess exists in balance as should we. Does the rose not draw blood, does the pet not bite? To deny the Z'bri is to commit the same mistakes of our ancestors; to betray the Fatimas is equal folly.

Current State

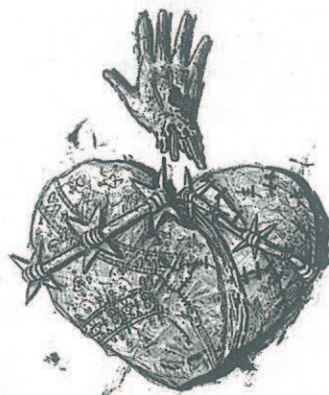
All good parents do what is needed, not what is wanted. Until we can emerge from the shadows and show the tribes the way, we wait and teach in whispers. Still, we are not idle. We excise the dis-balancing elements from the tribes and Z'bri. Call it assassination if you wish, the word does not bother me. We quietly eliminate those who might prove troublesome in the future, and ignore those who are well known, for they have enough enemies who will do our work for us. You may think me Fallen, but I am still loyal to the Fatimas as is any mother to her daughter. Unfortunately, distance and circumstances limit our relations with the Z'bri. For the sake of safety, we only teach a few of our best members the Sundering. Those who learn it, however, are forever changed and enlightened. They best appreciate the need for balance.

Membership

We are many, and in truth I am hard-pressed to remember all our numbers. Still, our membership is spread out amongst the Tribes, some Fallen and a growing number of Serfs, thanks to Deacon Vytor. We only gather as a group within his monastery at a predetermined time each summer. Otherwise, we rarely speak to one another when in Vimary, save through hand-codes and wall markings.

Sarah Gebner: Sarah still leads our circle. She shows no sign of surrendering her wisdom or exuberance to the old age slowly devouring her. Sarah remains in service to Dahlia as a Little Trickster, but her Caravan, The Red Raven, is part of Blood Silk. When in retreat at Deacon Vytor's monastery, the Red Ravens dance with Magdalite Ecstasies and unravel the illusions of the world. Together with the Flemis gift of One Thought, we join the dance spinning through the River of Dreams, creating eddies and whirlpools in the wake of our steps.

Hezra the Wicked: I've met many a strong Magdalite in my time, but none of them were as potent as Hezra. She is our best assassin. Her specialties are a garrote made from treated thorn-rope and a knife wrapped in barbed wire. Hezra acts as Sarah's hidden guardian. Indeed, Sarah's gifts of Illusion and Appeasement are formidable enough to hide Hezra's presence amongst the Red Ravens.



Synthesis & Sundering

The members of the Blood Silk undergo an arcane ritual developed by Sarah Gebner and Deacon Vytor that grants a limited ability in Sundering to a tribal devotee. This ritual is only performed during the circle's summer gatherings and entails the new initiate imbibing a rich concoction including (among other things) distilled Z'bri flesh.

The initiate must suppress one of her two tribal Eminences, but gains a single Z'bri Aspect with an effective Sundering Skill level of 1.

The effect lasts a full year, but causes a slow transformation of the mind. The Tribal becomes addicted to the rush of Sundering and slowly adopts personality traits similar to the Atmosphere associated with the Aspect she wields. The specifics of the process vary from individual to individual and so are left to the Weaver, but a very powerful healing ritual indeed would be needed to reverse the effects.

Chapter Four: The Keepers

Do you remember when the sky cried blood?

Do you remember when the fires raged?

Do you remember the warnings?

Do you know your past?

We do.

— The Keeper's Questions



Heart of the Keepers

From the lessons of Acturius the Keeper

It's time for a trade. Yes, an exchange of information. Deus and the rest of you have been so kind in telling me about your people, about the Fallen and even about the Seven Tribes, and I know I have not always been as forthcoming about my people, the Keepers. That is going to change tonight.

You should understand that not all Keepers would look kindly on me sharing our secrets. So far, I've told you all about Olympus, our greatest settlement. For the most part, I've toed the party line laid down by the Ancients there — I've presented the Keepers as largely united and powerful. That ends tonight.

Oh, don't think I've been lying to you thus far. No, Olympus is critical to all Keepers and those of us who call it home do work together. But we are also all individuals, with different opinions and agendas. I've told you about the Machine Monks who want to merge humanity with mechanisms, but they are not the only faction among us — although they are among the most terrifying.

What I'm trying to say is that we are like you Fallen: We huddle together against the Tribes, the Z'bri and the Rust, but we have a hard time agreeing on any long term action. In this whole Lilith affair, you've faced the greatest challenge to your idea of the Eighth Tribe and you've survived. The Ancients may not all agree, but I think you can learn from us and prosper.

I have here some of our records. Some are books and texts in our language — what you call Keepspeak — others are notes and records we've stolen from our enemies. You're not the only ones who have had Dahlian spies in your midst. I've also brought this device, we call it a tape-box. It captures the words of people and speaks them back. On it, I'll play you some of our conversations, so you can learn.

You think this is an odd way to learn? You want me to just tell you things? Well, that's not how we work. Keepers go through old records and discover the truth — if you want to learn about us, you'll have to do the same.

Here's your first text. Let me read it to you....



From the Time Before

From the texts of Jezebel Bernhardt, historian:

They used to call us crazy. I've seen the old books. Nerds. Survivalists. Atheists. Words which mean nothing now. But in the Time Before, they were a badge of shame. Then the horrors arrived and our world changed. Our ancestors saw it coming, even as the rest of humanity embraced the monsters. They laughed at us as we prepared. Even when the Z'bri were among us, most said we were cowards, paranoids, the damned. We didn't care. We kept building shelters, stockpiling food and weapons, moving into the wilds and digging our bunkers.

If it weren't so sad it'd be funny. When the Z'bri finally showed their true face, everyone knew we'd been right. As they fled the cities and begged to be let in to our compounds, they could hear their own words mocking them. Crazy. Foolish. Paranoid. But you're not paranoid if there really are monsters.

We didn't let anyone in. How could we? When the horrors could possess anyone, look like anyone, I ask you how could we? When the hordes pressed against our fences, tried to claw their way into our bunkers, what choice did we have but to keep them out?

The Tribals say our dependence on the machines and devices of the Time Before brought about our doom, that we relied on them so much that when we were faced with an enemy our technology couldn't fight, we didn't know what to do.

Nonsense. We built our machines with our hands and minds, to serve our purposes. And we all use machines. A sword is a machine; the Tribals seem happy enough to arm themselves. And many a Joanite covets our guns, putting the lie to the words of those they revere. We were born to build, to strive, to make tools and overcome our limitations. If we weren't, we'd still be sitting in caves, in the dark, wondering where our next meal was coming from.

While the rest of humanity was penned up like cattle, we kept a low profile. We lived in the basements and cellars and sewers and tunnels beneath Vimary. They were hard, dark years, despite our preparations. When we heard humanity had freed itself, we made our move, venturing to the surface. Many moved to Olympus, claiming it as their own. The rest of us chose to live elsewhere, among the ruins or even alongside the Tribals, gathering in groups and colonies of all sizes. Those were great days, full of hope and the promise of a new beginning. Vimary lay before us, a treasure-trove of technology, knowledge and resources. We dared to hope that we'd be able to start rebuilding straight away. With luck, we'd be able to get the big machines running. Then we'd show the Z'bri a thing or two about messing with humanity!

Even better, we soon discovered that some of us could, by dint of knowledge and will and a kind of lucid dreaming, restore function to devices which should have been irreparable. We call this "Technosmithing" and believe it to be our ancestors' legacy to us.



A Dream Dies

We started teaching the Tribals about their birthright — we wanted to share with them everything we'd struggled so hard to preserve. We should have known better. The Fatimas put an end to that dream soon enough. The Tribals have enslaved themselves to these monsters. They no longer dream of freedom, but rather, they pray for continued servitude. Salvation was within their grasp, but at the last moment they failed to seize it.

After only a few months, the Fatimas ordered an inquisition. We were driven from the Western end of Vimary and the Tribals who had learned the most from us were either exiled (many of whom came to live among us) or placed under house arrest. We were saddened, but we were used to being alone. Then something happened to our home. We still don't know what it was, but we suspect that the Fatimas caused it.

Everything died. Our gardens suddenly withered. The factories and machines began to crumble. Now nothing grows and the eastern end of Vimary is a wasteland of rust and decay. Our best chance to recover the knowledge of our ancestors was lost, destroyed before our very eyes.

Some say it was Technosmithing which caused the Fatimas to hate us. They taught their people that the ability to use the power of dream to shape reality was a gift they alone could give, but there we were using it to restore the works of man, works which predated their existence. After they expelled us, attitudes changed. Some Tribals, stronger-willed or more sensible than others, remembered our aid; some still do, and seek out our help and knowledge — often at great risk to themselves. But most simply bent to the will of their new masters and learned to despise us. Never mind that if more people had listened to us, the camps would never have happened in the first place. Then we saw the first outcasts, and at last we understood.

The Fatimas are just as bad as the Z'bri, or maybe worse. They too want to control humanity. Those who fall through the cracks of their society — or who are born outside of it — are to be destroyed at worst, ignored at best. Keepers, Outcasts, Squats: they hate or fear us all.

But there is hope yet. The outcasts are growing in number. They sometimes remind me of us Keepers, in our younger days. Labeled as rejects and ridiculed by a society not yet ready to face the truths they've uncovered, they too will be proved right one day.

And as always, we will be there in the hidden places, watching, waiting, reading, keeping the old knowledge and the old ways alive. And if they fail, we will carry the torch of humanity forward once more.



Madame Curie

Madame Curie is the oldest living Keeper and has (probably) their most powerful connection to the River of Dream. Her studies of advanced mathematics and physics led her to begin exploring the nature of reality. Eventually she came to understand that mankind's so-called "laws of nature" could not explain the entire universe, and she connected with the River of Dream. Since that fateful night several years ago she has become increasingly withdrawn from the politics of Olympus and has met (in dreams) Veruka the Wraith, with whom she quickly established a friendship. Mme. Curie has a band of followers who find that her teachings about the shortcomings of science and the perils of technology fill a void left untouched by the pragmatic lifestyle of most Keepers. She is also developing a number of powerful enemies who consider her teachings a threat to that lifestyle.

Faction: Keeper (Ancient)

Highlights: lively, witty, frail

Attributes: APP +1, BLD -2, CRE +2, FIT -2, INF +1, KNO +3, PER +1, PSY +2, STA 15, UD 1, AD 1

Skills: Dreaming 3/+2, Human Perception 2/+2, Investigation 2/+1, Leadership 2/+1, Mythology 2/+3, R/W (Keepspeak) 3/+3, Techlore (Computer, Medicine) 2/+3, Techlore (Physical Sciences) 3/+3, Technosmithing (all formulas) 3

A Society of Knowledge

From the journals of Ulysses Ventoux, Keeper of Knowledge:

The story of our past is well known. The story of our future is yet to be told. I will write today of our present. So that those of the future may know us better, I have decided to make a record of our way of life. We are the Keepers, those who search for knowledge and seek to restore to humanity the birthright that was stolen from us.

We have no formal titles or social classes, save for the Ancients, those who have proven by dint of age and cunning that their wisdom merits attention. On any issue, any Keeper who wishes to speak will be heard. Naturally, those with proven experience or expertise in the matter at hand will be taken more seriously. Once all have spoken, the Ancients confer (often asking knowledgeable Keepers for further information) and come to a decision. Questions of law are decided in a similar way. Punishments usually take the form of a period of service to the wronged party; Keepers never harm or exile each other. Our unity, despite our differences, is what kept us alive during our years in hiding, and we cannot afford to lose the skills and knowledge of any Keeper.

Every Keeper also helps defend his home. Depending on our needs, service might come for a few weeks each year or it might last for months. The Ancients (in consultation with those who devote all their time to our defense) decide how many are needed and names are chosen at random. There are no exemptions; all Keepers are expected to help when required until they are ready to join the Ancients. We patrol the streets around Olympus, maintain our traps and alarms and man our expeditions, stations and outposts across the island.

But of course there is more to a Keeper's life than simply manning our defenses and waiting to become an Ancient. Most Keepers spend their lives working on one or more major projects. Indeed, a Keeper is said to have come of age when her first project is complete.

A project may be almost anything, from a piece of research to an expedition to a demonstration of technical (or Technosmithing) skill; there is no set agenda or requirement, other than that the project contribute either to the running of our society, our understanding of the past, our relations with our neighbors or our knowledge of the lands surrounding Vimary. Some devote their lives to a single task, such as the teaching of our young, the maintenance of our machines or the defense of our holdings. Others complete project after project. Some live among the Fallen or the Tribals in an attempt to learn about our fellows; some conduct expeditions into the wilds, either in search of some particular place or artifact, or simply to explore. Still others conduct pure research into the academic disciplines of our ancestors. No learning is ever wasted, no information is ever trivial. This is our most sacred truth.

Other Ways

From the words of Claudia, Keeper:

"Keep your bloody head down! Do you want the Monks to come back? Dammit. Sit still, you're bleeding. No, don't worry. It doesn't look like it hit anything important. You guys from Olympus are getting soft. Don't give me that look — I've seen it before. At least I still know what it means to be a Keeper. Shut up. I'm gonna have to dig the bullet out *now*. Bite down on this and don't scream.

"Oh, I'm not saying Olympus isn't fantastic — we all admire the place. We? Yes, we. There are more of us out here than you think. We have bolt-holes and stashes of gear all over the place. Most of us are fine, but every now and then a Keeper or two — or even a whole bunker — goes crazy. Some get religion; some wander off to find the Monks, some just go nuts. Our Ancients say it's unavoidable. I guess they're right. We trade with the Squats and the other Keepers for the things we need. Food, mostly. Sometimes we go to Olympus, but the place makes me nervous. Don't get me wrong, your defenses are good, but all you've done is make yourselves a target. A great big pile of toys and treasure that the Fatimas or the Z'bri are gonna destroy one day. And they won't even realize what they've done.

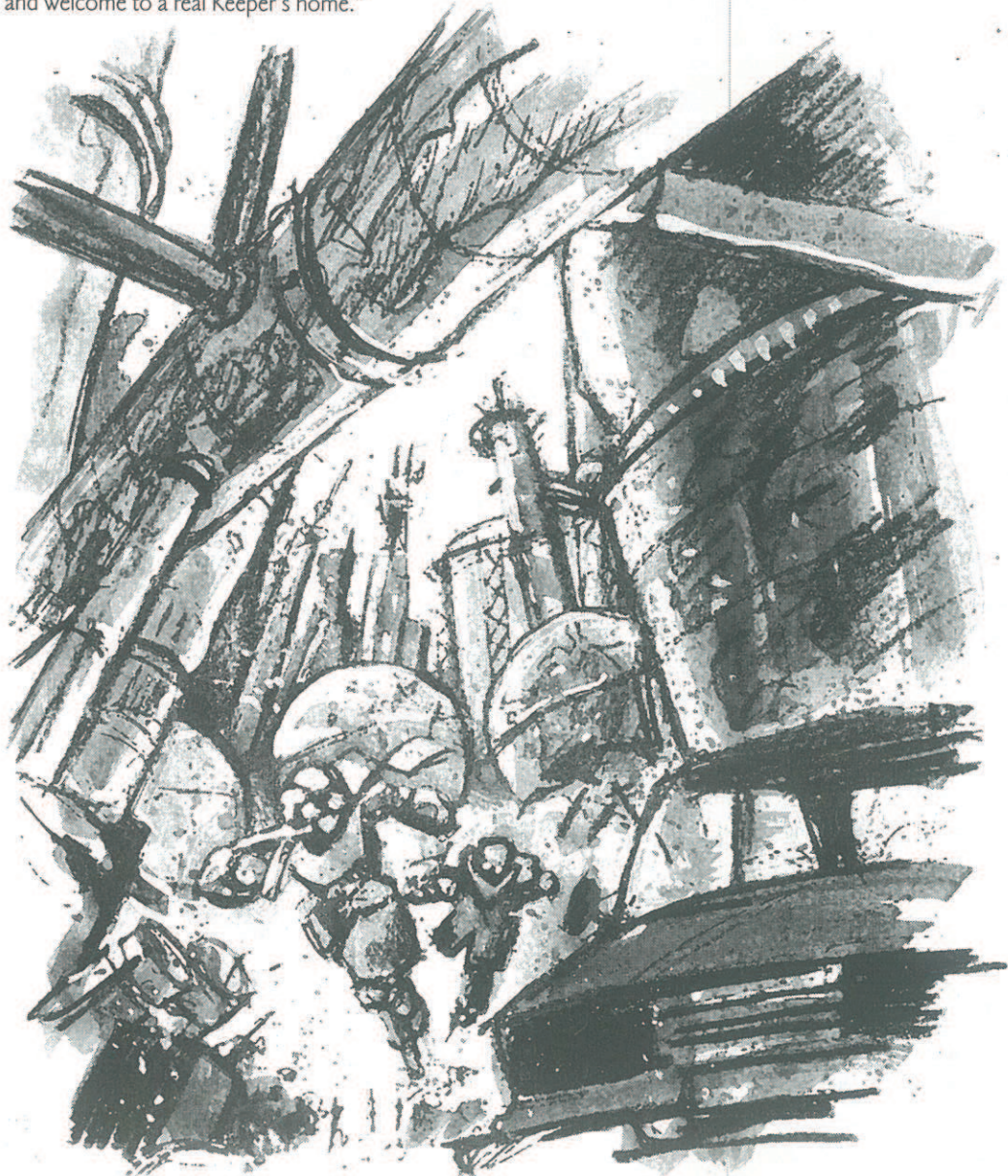
"That's got it. Take a look — it might even have your name on it. You're lucky their powder isn't too good or you'd be walking on one leg about now. Can you walk? Here, lean on me. There's a bolt-hole not far from here.

"Now where was I? Oh yeah — Olympus. Every time you light that place up you're flaunting your independence. The Z'bri hate us because they never caught us and the Fatimas hate us because we don't kiss their asses. The Tribes hate us because we weren't in the Camps with them. The Squats and the Outcasts aren't too bad, but how many of them are there? And there you are, night after night, showing everyone who hates you that you don't give a rat's ass about them. Do you really think they'll put up with that forever?

"Just wait a minute; I've got to reload... that should do it.

"What do we do out here? What the hell do you think we do? We're Keepers, aren't we? We search for the past, record the present, and take the future one day at a time.

"Here we are. Lean against that wall; I'll get the hatch. You'll have to watch the stairs until I close up after us — take this torch. Oh, and welcome to a real Keeper's home."



The Junkyard



John Paxton

John Paxton wants his war, and he wants it now. As a child he was brought up on stories of military glory, honor and sacrifice. A skilled hunter, he has tested his skills against all manner of prey. He has killed Z'bri, Tribals, Serfs, Outcasts and even — his darkest secret — a fellow Keeper. Paxton is an expert on weapons and has accumulated an impressive arsenal of military hardware. Much of it has been restored so well that it does not require Technosmithing to function. John has met with little success in his campaign to launch a preemptive strike on the Tribes. A charismatic leader with growing influence, he has begun considering going rogue, or enlisting the aid of the Junkyard. The Ancients of both the Junkyard and Olympus have observed his progress and they are currently debating what to do about Paxton, his ambitions and his followers.

Faction: Keeper

Highlights: Ruthless, cunning

Attributes: AGI +1, FIT +1, KNO +1, INF +1, PER +2, PSY -1, WIL +1, STA 25, ULD 5, AD 4

Skills: Camouflage 1/0, Combat Sense 3/+2, Demolition 2/+1, Dodge 2/+1, Firearms 2/+1, Hand-to-Hand 2/+1, Intimidate 2/0, Leadership 2/+1, Melee 1/+1, Notice 2/+2, Sneak 2/+1, Survival 1/0, Tactics 2/0, Techlore (Mechanics) 2/+1, Tinker 2/0

From an address by Boss Moz, Junkyard Keeper:

"All right, welcome to hell. What are your names? Right. Well, Phoebe and Nikki, I'm sure you think you're two tough little cookies but I don't care how long you've survived in the Wastes or how long you lived in Olympus. Now you've decided to join us, you do what I say when I say it.

"This is the Junkyard. We're on the edge of the Steel Maze, surrounded by Squats and Z'bri and Serfs and Outcasts and even a few renegade Keepers. Each and every one of them is out to kill you, understand? Everyone you meet is to be considered hostile. I see you've brought your guns with you; that's good. You'll need them.

"This fence is chain-link, two meters high. We can electrify it, but we prefer to save our power. The razor-wire on the top will cut up anyone who tries to climb it. You'll notice the killing zones we've cleared; our mortars and guns are ranged on all the approaches. We've filled in all the tunnels except our bolt-holes — I'll show you those later. We also have lookouts around the Yard. They've got walktalks and are in regular communication with base.

"Here's the yard proper. Big, isn't it? Don't stare, it makes you look stupid. This is where we bring everything we find. We do a sort and when we've got enough we call Olympus and they send some trucks to pick it all up. We trade with them for food and machines and anything else we need. Our workshops are pretty good but they're mostly for maintenance, not restoration. Besides, Olympus wouldn't be viable without the stuff we trade, so they're not going to cut us off anytime soon.

"The days when their trucks come are our only days off. We're all Keepers, and it's nice to party. Our stills are pretty good, but if you've never had a cold beer from Olympus' brewery, you've been missing out. Even so, we always make sure we leave enough guards on duty, just in case.

"The garage has a couple of buggies, a fork truck and any other vehicles we might bring or find. Behind it is the arsenal and the sleeping quarters. Every now and then something gets inside the wire and the crap hits the fan — so stay alert.

"That bunker behind the garage is our living area. It has kitchens, medical facilities, the archives and more. Everything we need to survive. You'll be assigned a room and allocated workshop and archive access time.

"You'll get plenty of time to work on your own projects, but everyone has to pull their own weight. That means sentry duty, scavenging parties, maintenance detail, cooking, cleaning, building and sewing — whatever's required. We're all in this together and we haven't got time for shirkers."

The Junkman Cometh

From Jethro the Junker's Greeting:

So, I see y'all've been introduced to the Yard. I'm Jethro, and it's time for me to fill y'all in on the history of this place.

We owe it all to the Junkman. The Junkman was one of the first to head to the surface when the news about the camps came. But he never trusted the Tribals or the Fatimas. Not even for a minute. So he stayed out here in the Wastes. Sure enough, this place used to be a junkyard. He figured it'd be a good place to start rebuilding.

In the early days the Junkman had big plans. He was gonna get a steel mill working so's we all could make boats and guns and all sorts of things. But then the Fatimas kicked everyone else out of their lands and the rust came and for a while, it looked like everything was gonna get bad again. But by then the Yard was a small community and we all could look after ourselves. Besides, the Junkman was smart. He started trading with the Squats — for dirt. Yep, dirt. Something started killing our crops and he figured it was the dirt. So we traded enough dirt to keep our crops growing, and now we trade for dirt and food and whatever else we need.

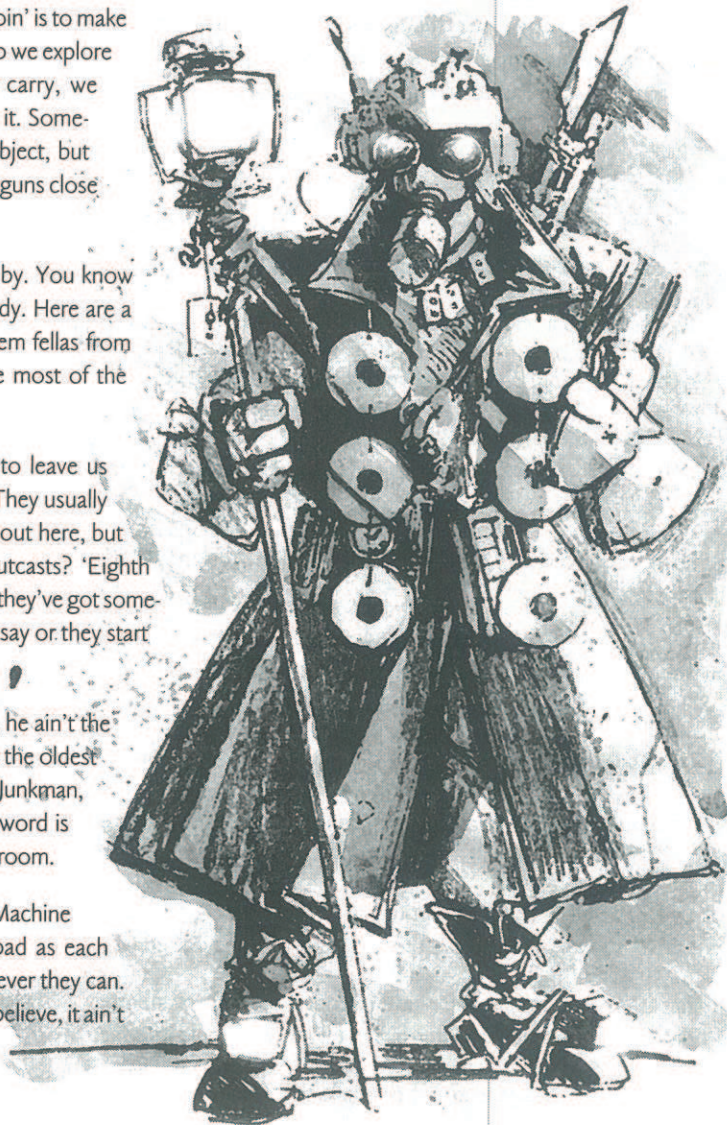
Of course, the way to keep the trade goin' is to make sure we all get to the good stuff first. So we explore and find things. Whatever we can't carry, we booby-trap so's no-one else can take it. Sometimes them that found it first might object, but that's okay. That's why we all keep our guns close by.

There's only a couple of rules we live by. You know the first — always keep your gun handy. Here are a couple more. Never trust anyone. Them fellas from Olympus are usually okay, and so are most of the Squats. But you never can be sure.

Derelicts usually have enough sense to leave us alone, but if they don't, give 'em hell. They usually deserve it. We don't see many Tribals out here, but the same goes for them. And the Outcasts? 'Eighth Tribe' or not, if they're on our land or if they've got something we want, they either do what we say or they start sufferin'.

Always do what the Junkman says. No, he ain't the original, and sometimes he's a she, but the oldest and wisest of our Ancients becomes the Junkman, and while he listens to the others, his word is law. He lives in the basement, our safest room.

Lastly, never, ever, ever let a Z'bri or a Machine Monk out of your sight. Them's as bad as each other. They kill, steal and kidnap whenever they can. Out here it's us or them. And y'all best believe, it ain't gonna be us.



The Shack

Report of Trina Jeste, Dahlian Spy:

"I have been to the Keeper hideout known as the Shack and infiltrated it as you asked, Trickster. It is a strange place deep in the Abyss, full of Keepers and their devices. I stayed there for a week, fooling them all — a grand trick indeed!

"The Shack is run by twins, Keepers named Julia and Jacqui. I think you'd like them — they wear many masks. Firstly, they are Keepers. Never before have I seen such a collection of working devices from the time before. The place was originally a workshop or store of some kind. They also act as information brokers, buying and selling information from the most trivial to the most secret. They have a device called a 'peecee' which allows them to keep records of all their information and draw the connections between people, events and places. Their discretion and political neutrality is legendary — it is even said that they'd sell information on their fellow Keepers if the price was right.

"Any Keeper is free to stay with them. The price may be service in their inn, information, goods or anything the sisters decide is sufficient.

"Their inn, also called the Shack, sees them wearing the masks of successful, bawdy innkeepers. The medium of exchange is information. A good secret might get you a meal and a bed, a promise of more might see you staying with them for a week. The place is renowned as neutral ground, where all manner of rogues may meet without scrutiny."

Other Stalk the Night

Conversation between Keepers Baldwin Carter and Aida Wong:

Aida: Hey, 'Dwin, pull up a seat. The sisters have uncorked a new brew; it's pretty good. So how's things?

Baldwin: Not bad. I just finished cleaning up that rifle I found last week. Tomorrow I'll take it out and see if I can get it to work.

Aida: Cool. That Yagan you were talking to earlier came around. Said she was looking for you. She wants to see you tonight.

Baldwin: She must be interested in those old knives. Silver, you know. Part of a set. She seems to think she can use them as part of a ceremony.

Aida: What's she offering?

Baldwin: Hmm? Oh, nothing much — just a couple of old books she found.

Aida: Just a couple of old books?

Baldwin: Well, you know what an avid reader I am... Tell me, did you have any luck locating information on that Z'bri Jayce spotted?

Aida: Not really. There's been stories about a Z'bri down here for ages. Everyone knows someone who claims to have seen it, but that's about it. Still, Jayce is pretty reliable — for a Carter.

Baldwin: Thanks. At least people don't have to count their fingers after they've shaken hands with us. But if there is a Z'bri here, we'll find it. And catch it. And interrogate it. Fatally, I should imagine.

Aida: We can't run the risk of having one on the loose. The Tribals are too witless to do anything about it, so as usual it's up to us.

Baldwin: You're being entirely unfair to our simple-minded brethren. All sheep need a shepherd. It's just a shame that they don't realize their 'shepherds' are actually wolves. Speaking of which, I met up with some Outcasts this morning. They want a Keeper to go with them on a trip to the Outlands. They claim they've got a lead on a settlement which is untouched.

Aida: Tempted?

Baldwin: Why do you think I'm spending so much time working on that rifle?

Aida: But can you trust them? What if they get you half a day out of town and kill you for your gun? The last Outcast I tried to deal with wanted to rob me. Fortunately, I had that cattle prod.

Baldwin: Oh, I'm always careful. Besides, do you think any of those primitives could figure out how to use a rifle? Even if they could, they couldn't keep it working. Besides, I've worked with these Outcasts before. I trust them — as much as I trust anyone. I'm more worried about any Squats we might encounter. They're usually too busy just trying to stay alive to be any threat, but every now and then a few of them band together under one of their noxious brethren and decide that banditry might be fun.

Aida: Hmph. Squats don't bother me — but then, I'm just a harmless trader, not a big, brave explorer like you. Bring me back something nice, eh?

Report of Trina Jeste, Dahlian spy:

In addition to the sisters, there are two families of Keepers who make The Shack their permanent home. The Wongs are an extended family devoted to gathering cultural artifacts from the time before. Their collection is fascinating — music, books, toys, games, clothes and tools, most of which I could not identify and many of which seem to work. They also support a number of Tribals who remember and continue the alliance between themselves and the Keepers. I believe their agenda is to insinuate themselves and their fascination for the past into Tribal life; a dangerous plan.

The Carters are explorers and historians; their knowledge in these areas is extensive. Their approach is aggressive and they have a reputation for direct action against those who thwart their plans; they are cunning rather than subtle. Nevertheless, their integrity is as respected as their retribution is feared.

I have heard reports that the Carters in particular bear the Z'bri no great love. One of their kin disappeared and was later found dead, bearing the signs of Sundering. I wonder how they would react should the rumors of the twins' dealings with the Z'bri prove true? I 'overheard' the sisters talking about someone named Tartarus. This bears further investigation; should this Tartarus be a Z'bri, I am sure the sisters would pay handsomely for that information to remain secret. As the Carters are so fond of saying, knowledge is power."

See the *Vimary Sourcebook*, p. 34, for more information on Tartarus.



Scott the Engineer

Scott the Engineer is a regular at the Shack, trading gossip and junk for a room. A frequent visitor to Bazaar, he sets up a stall and entices everyone with his strange tales and trinkets from the times before. Many Tribals have secretly bought from him, gaining glances of a world before which was so very different from their own. Scott is actually a researcher of great skill and dedication. He is fascinated by the Tribes and probably understands them better than any other Keeper. He is trying to understand their culture, specifically, why they follow the Fatimas. The next project he has in mind is to discover why the Z'bri came; should he learn of the existence of Tartarus he would definitely seek him out. Julia and Jacqui, however, are determined that their Z'bri contact should remain unknown and anonymous.

Faction: Keeper

Highlights: Amiable, inquisitive, determined

Attributes: BLD +1, CRE +2, INF +2, KNO +2, PSY +1, STA 30, UUD 4, AD 4

Skills: Etiquette 2/+2, Firearms 1/0, Hagglng 2/+2, Human Perception 2/+1, Investigation 1/0, Notice 1/0, Lore (Tribal) 1/+2, Read/Write (Tribal) 1/+2, Streetwise 1/+2, Tinker 2/+2, Trade 2/+2, Technsmithing (Remembrance) 2

Bunker 13

From the Lessons of Acturius the Keeper:

There's a rumor going around the Rust Wastes these days, that a new group of Keepers have arrived. You remember that many of our ancestors hid in underground fortresses when the Z'bri came? Well apparently a new fortress has just opened up and these new keepers have emerged with no real understanding of our world — but with much lost lore from the World Before.

I've heard that the years underground have not been good to them, that they are a paranoid and violent lot. Some say they are all corrupted by the Z'bri and others that they are all mad, but no one really knows. To survive sealed for so long, their must have been a state-of-the-art shelter, designed to protect and house many people. I've heard they have a generous arsenal, several vehicles, powerful generators and many other artifacts. For any Keepers who can locate it and gain the trust of its inhabitants, treasures unimaginable await.

Last Goodbye

Recording Taken From Ethan West, Captured by the Machine Monks:

Oh, Maria, we have spent so long underground. This new world above is so strange. The sounds! The smells! Our home has kept us safe, but there is another world out there! Yes, I was afraid when the doors finally opened. And the savages we've met are worrying. But this is our destiny!

You say I am a fool to leave our steel and concrete womb? Tut tut, woman, have you the heart of a lion or the heart of a sheep? When our ancestors came down into this shelter they knew they would be enclosed for some time. That's why it's so big. That's why both the Paquettes and the Wests came down. That's why we, their descendants, must now leave.

Yes, leave! This place is poison. It is like poison to us. It is causing us harm now. We have computers. We have hi-tech survival gear. We have the bikes and the tools. We have the guns and hatchets and knives. The world outside has collapsed! We can be strong, we can be leaders of men.

What? You say Maurice plots against me? Damn him and his inbred offspring! I know he and even some of my traitorous brood think we should stay and observe and study before we leave, but that fellow he brought in and then let go is sure to tell his friends! We cannot turn back the clock. We cannot seal the doors. The time to hide is over...

The recollections of Dieter, Magdalite Concubine:

I'll never go into the forest again. Never. We got lost. Those brainless Joanites lost the trail and the boy from Westholm was no help. So we settled for the night, hoping to find our way the next morning.

Then the noises started. Suddenly, we were surrounded by strange figures. They wore shiny clothes made of no fabric I'd ever seen. A noise like a hundred hammers filled the air and our guards were dead.

Then they took us to their lair. A shiny, round metal cave. They kept trying to talk to us but I could only make out a few words. They walked me around their underground home. It was made of steel and strange substances I can't describe. They had a huge garden underground, but it only took up one room! It's true, I tell you! One room was like winter inside, another had more of the strange riding devices. Then we went to a room full of blinking lights and I met the rest of their tribe. There were at least a dozen. Some of them seemed mad, others looked like they were inbred or stupid.

Eventually, they led me back to the surface — by another exit. I climbed a metal ladder up a round metal tunnel. They waved me good-bye. Some Evans found me a couple of days later. I know you all think I'm mad, but it's true! They're out there!"

The Derelicts

From the lessons of Acturius the Keeper:

The Derelicts are the third largest band of Keepers wandering Vimary. Despite this, their membership varies heavily from year to year. Sometimes they pass the Machine Monks in size, other times they are so few they seemingly vanish for months. Unlike the Ancients of Olympus, these Keepers see the tribes as intruders on their territory. They are the natural heirs to the World Before and argue Vimary is theirs by right. Since the Tribes will not leave, they raid and take what they believe naturally belongs to them.

Unlike the Ancients who remain within the Rust Wastes, the Derelicts prowl the ruins of Duskfall and the Discarded Lands, searching for technology to repair or replace their resources. If they are in a fair mood, they might trade with the Squats or a tribal community. More often than not, they swoop in on their smoke-belching vehicles, firing weapons and killing anyone who interferes. Its ironic that they call the tribes Squats, but it is they who act like them. Their camp, which lies in a ruined complex in Duskfall, is very much a shanty-town. It is run down, filthy and stinks of machine guts and human offal.

I have heard that the Derelicts have an alliance with your man Kyr, the Herite leader. Kyr uses them for weapons and ammunition, and the Derelicts would love nothing more than to watch him tear into the Tribes. They participated in the raid on Palis Hall last summer and helped destroy the building. That was the height of their extremist behavior. I've heard they got a new leader after that, one more interesting in heading off into the wilderness than fighting the tribes. There's more and more Keepers like that, you know, people who want to leave Vimary behind. The Derelicts ways are still extreme, though, and many among them still raid the tribes.

I for one will not be sorry to see them go.



Words of War



Edison Leichhardt

Ever since he was a child, Edison has felt the call of the unknown. His parents are successful traders, while his two sisters devote their time to their research project: a set of blueprints for a steamboat. He is a keen explorer and has made a number of successful expeditions and has many allies among the Keepers, including fellow explorer Felix Iago (Tribe 8, p. 85) and the adventurer Hagbard (Weaver's Assistant, p. 39). Edison is one of the growing minority among the Keepers who think that Vimary should be abandoned. They feel that, between the Tribes and the Z'bri, they will always be a weak third party or neutral power. Besides, the maps show a continent full of cities and factories. He has joined the Derelicts and is trying to move their attention toward the world outside Vimary. He hopes his sisters' project will help him mount a major expedition down river.

Faction: Keeper (Derelict)

Highlights: impetuous, ambitious, manipulative

Attributes: AGI +1, APP +1, CRE +1, FIT +2, INF +1, KNO +1, STA 30, UUD 4, AD 5

Skills: Athletics 1/+2, Combat Sense 1/0, Dodge 2/+1, Drive 2/+1, Firearms 2/+1, Melee 1/+1, Navigation (Land) 3/+1, Notice 2/0, Survival 3/+1, Swimming 2/+2, Techlore (Earth Sciences) 1/+1, Techlore (Mechanics) 2/+1, Technosmithing (Ignite) 1

The Derelict's Warning, as recounted by Tomas Cross:

You think your precious Fatimas will protect you now? You think they give a damn about you? Go on, call on them. Call for Joan, or Agnes, or Baba Yaga. They won't come. They don't care. They sacrifice you to the Z'bri, crush you with their laws, exile you if you dare think for yourself. And now we have you and they won't do a thing to save you.

This may surprise you, but we really don't want to hurt you. But we have a job to do and if you won't get out of our way, we'll go over you. We're not going to let a bunch of ignorant, cowardly fools prevent us from saving all we can of our birthright. You might have abandoned it, but we haven't.

We gave you a chance. We wanted to share. But no, the Fatimas said we were bad because we avoided the camps. And like fools, you believed them. They said we were bad because we wanted to teach you how to live and survive without help. And like fools, you believed them. They said we should be cast out because of our disobedience. And like fools, you believed them.

You could have given us what we wanted. You could have left us to our own devices. You have no use for the things we want. But you had to interfere. You had to try and stop us. You shouldn't have.

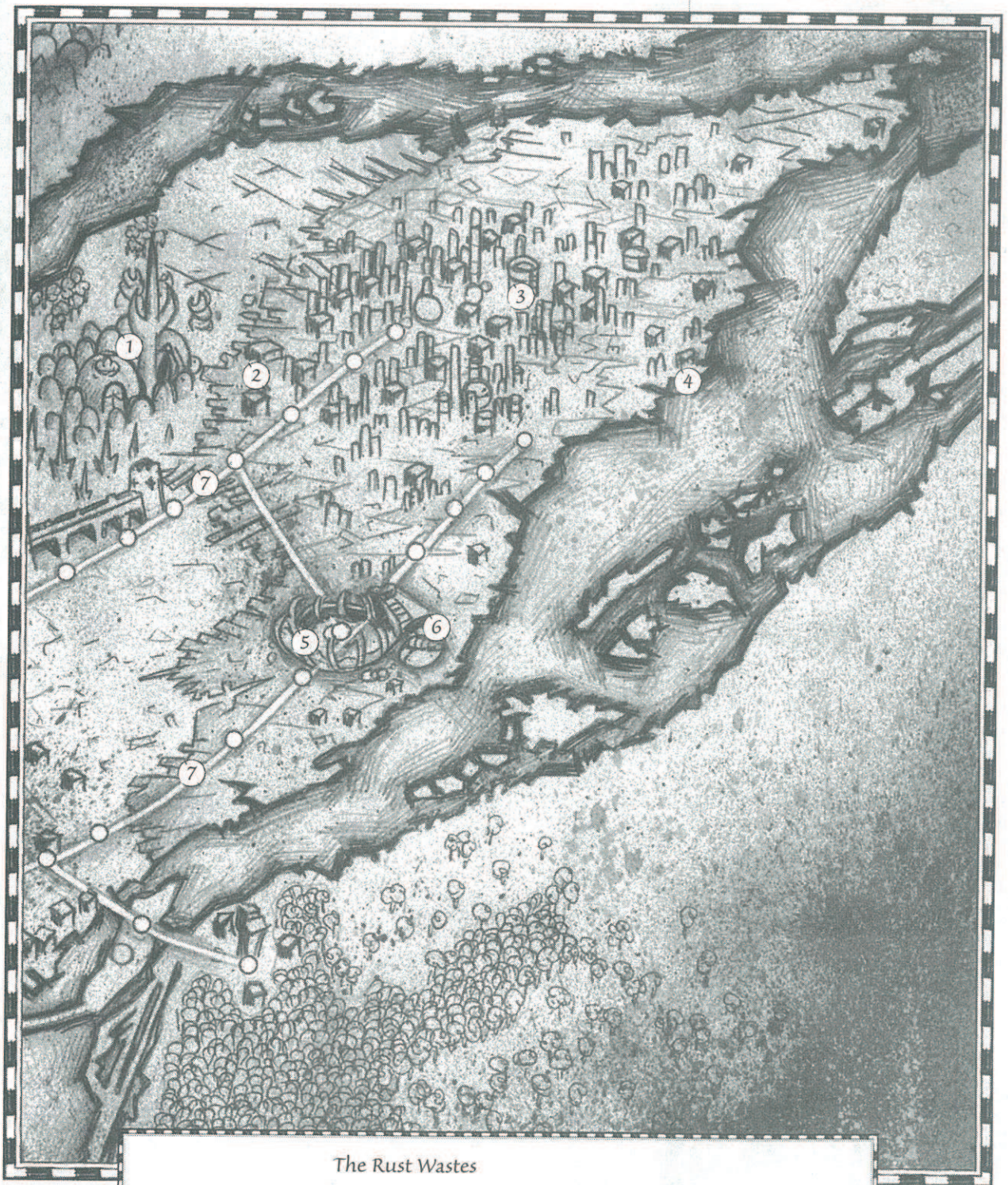
The supplication of Jon Falling Hawk, Evan Shaman:

We must act now! The time for talk is over! Again and again these Derelicts raid our lands. Again and again they murder and burn and pillage and destroy. How much longer must we suffer their kind to prey on us? Eva, hear me, you must help us, I beseech you!

It matters not whether they prey on the Fallen, the Squats or even the Z'bri. They prey on us! They have weapons and vehicles from the time before. Their raiding parties can move faster than the Joanite patrols. They can attack us beyond the range of our bows. We need your aid, your wisdom, I beseech you!

We have sent scouts to follow them, to try and find their base. They just don't seem to have one. They are always on the move, always preying on the Tribes, each other, whoever they meet. Their hearts are full of hatred for a world they think has cheated them of their birthright, so they seek to strike out at it. We have even heard reports of other Keepers clashing with these Derelicts. They are like maddened animals. Help us put them down, gentle Eva. Protect your children.

We know some of them are not so blind. We know some of them are more discerning in their hatred. But they are only discerning when it comes to those not of the Seven Tribes! We can show them no mercy, offer them no peace. Between us, there can only be war.



The Rust Wastes

- | | | | |
|---------|---------------------------|---------|-------------------|
| 1 | Abonom (Z'bri settlement) | 6 | Arc Harbor |
| 2 | The Junkyard | 7 | Sub-Terra Tunnels |
| 3 | The Machine Monastery | | |
| 4 | Bunker 13 | | |
| 5 | Olympus | | |

3 clicks (Keeper measure)



Chapter Five: St. Christopher

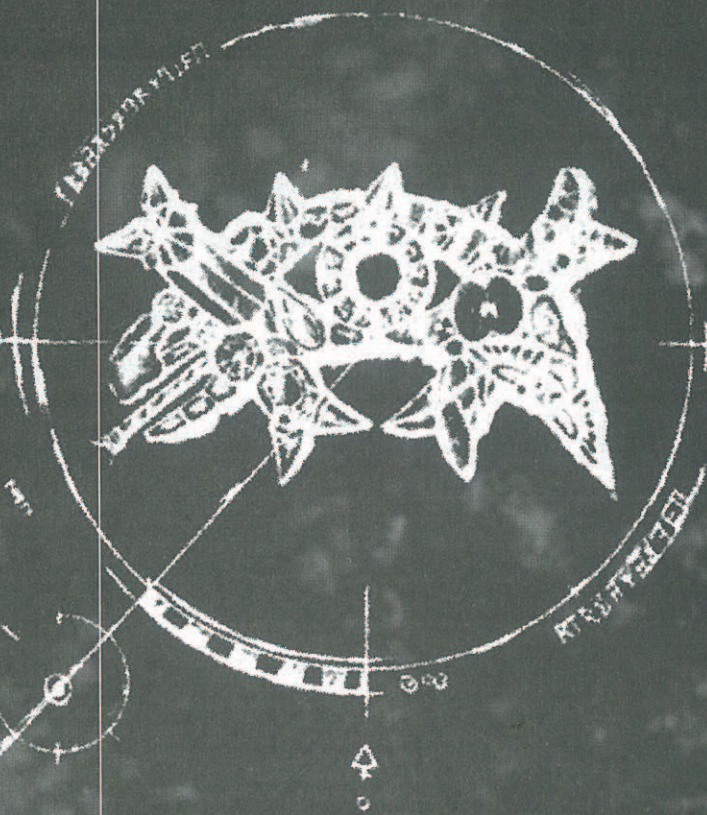
Do you hear the whispers in the wind?

A dark, powerful soul is crying in despair.

Soon the husk will die and the heart will be ready.

Its power will be mine, as is my right.

— Malachai the Rogue



QUEST BACKGROUND

Ahr'haabt the Unforgiving, a Z'bri Sky-Lord exiled from House Sangis, is dying. The death of a Z'bri Lord is a rare and terrible event, and Ahr'haabt's passing is a closely guarded secret. Ahr'haabt has many enemies in the H'I Kar and has no desire to see them take advantage of his passing. He decides to leave Vimary and journey deep into the Outlands where he can die in peace. Unfortunately, he has not guarded himself against the Fatimas — whom he has always underestimated — and the Seven Sisters have sensed his death-throes. They know that soon a new Heart Stone will form, one of significant power.

Heart Stones are harsh crystalline artifacts left in the wake of a dying Z'bri. These powerful artifacts encapsulate the entire essence of the Z'bri — who enters into a sort of spiritual hibernation that is their form of death. Those with the proper training can gain power and wisdom from these Heart Stones. Among humankind, only the holy freaks known as Guides have uncovered the secrets of tapping into these powers and of experiencing the hidden worlds locked within. The Fatimas also know of the power of Stones, looking on them with a mixture of revulsion and desire. Indeed, these Z'bri artifacts can be as corrupting as the Beasts themselves.

The Pillars of the Nation want the Stone so that they can exploit its power to enhance the stability of the Tribes. Through visions, they commission the services of Rochelle — a Fallen Joanite — to kidnap Lord Ahr'haabt, and take him somewhere he cannot easily be found until he dies. Once he is dead she is to bring the Lord's remains to the Pillars; her reward will be the return of Joan's love.

The consequences of the Z'bri's kidnapping result in circumstances so extraordinary that the Pillars call for the formation of a Harvest Circle to deal with it. They plan to solve two problems at once; rid themselves of Rochelle and her followers (whom they never intended to restore to the Tribes anyway); and retrieve either the Stone or the near-dead Z'bri.

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The Three Fates want the Stone denied to the Z'bri, but know that possession of an artifact of such power may have a corrupting effect on their militant sisters. They don't want its presence to upset the balance between the Tribes. While they agree to the Pillars' plan, they quietly set their own wheels in motion. The Fates arrange for an ambitious Guide from the Outlands named Malachai to accompany the Harvest Circle as, ironically, a wilderness guide. His secret commission is to ensure that the Stone, when found, never returns to either the Z'bri lands or anywhere near Vimary.

Malachai is a rogue and former apprentice to Halos (see **Tribe 8 Rulebook**, p. 82); this is his first big chance to make a reputation for himself. The corrupting influence of the Stone is already taking hold of him and he will use whatever means are available to him; should any of the Harvest Circle die as a result, then so be it. The Fates are well aware that he will eventually be destroyed by the Stone, but they believe he will take it with him, which would suit him just fine.

The Dancers also agree to the plan, which results from Dahlia's manipulations. She spied the Pillar's plans and brought Ahr'haabt's kidnapping (although not Rochelle's motivations for doing so) to the attention of the Fates. A Harvest Circle was then called for. Agnes is relatively peripheral to Quest, but dislikes the exploitation by the others of their current playthings, the Fallen.

Note that this quest assumes that the Player Characters remain in the grace of the Fatimas and will form the Harvest Circle called by the Pillars. This quest could be the Circle's first. Although the characters are assumed to have some earlier acquaintance, it is not critical that they do. This quest could also be run with Fallen characters, with some adjustment (the characters might be asked by Halos to retrieve the Stone, for example).



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ACT I: ECHOES OF THE PAST

One night, unbidden, the visions come. Sad, vivid dreams that blend so utterly with the waking world that no one is sure where one ends and the other begins. Many fear that there is no boundary, or if there is, it is a boundary that steadily weakens.

The visions are unique to each person, yet enigmatically common. People, long dead, watch the living so intently, with such pity in their ancient eyes. Some speak words that none understand, others in accents almost unintelligible. What questions do they ask? What forgiveness do they beg? What portents do they bring?

No one is spared this terrible experience, not even the PCs. Weavers should use the following vignettes as appropriate, and create others as desired:

- One of the PCs is awoken from sleep by the gentle voice of a loved one, only to recall when they wake that no one shares their bed. Standing next to their bed, eyes full of love and regret, a young woman looks at them. She is wearing a deep red dress. A PER test (Threshold 3) reveals that she is actually looking past them, not at them at all. Her voice is the softest whisper; she speaks with a strange accent, hard to understand: "I'm sorry, but you see, I have no choice... I've been here too long, and sometimes when we grow, we become something else... I'll never regret..." She wipes her hands down her dress and holds them out to the Player Character. Her hands are wet with the same blood in which her dress is soaked.

- A bitter drunken man, roughly dressed, bottle in hand, accosts the Player Character(s) in a narrow alley in Bazaar. "If it wasn't for your stinkin' kind, I'd still have a job and a life. But that's not good enough for you is it, with yer fuckin' new ways and yer fancy clothes. Well y'ain't gonna have t' worry much longer, no sir, 'cos I'm goin' to a better place. Somewhere the like o' you will never go! 'Cos yer shit! Yer nuthin'! Yer ..." He clutches his chest and suddenly looks frightened. "Oh sweet Christ... it's my heart... help me..." As he collapses to the filthy street, he fades, and is gone.

- In a building (once a restaurant in a time long ago), the PCs are interrupted by a polite voice, speaking a language he does not understand. On turning, the characters see a child, not more than twelve, dressed in bright and exotic costume, carrying a sheaf of large cards. On a PER test (Threshold 4), the PC realizes that the child is looking past them, at a couple who walks straight through them! As the man passes them, he looks back at the PCs, and says, quite clearly "If you don't know what you're after, you'll end up with something completely indigestible." As the woman passes through them, they notice that she has no back; from behind, she is hollow... They fade into the shadows.

- The PCs are in a quiet street, when they hear a muffled scream. They see a man carrying the figure of a woman over his shoulder. The woman has a bag over her head and her wrists are tied. Suddenly, she kicks out at her captor and he drops her to the ground, holding his knee in agony. The woman staggers to her feet and, despite her face being covered with the bag, runs

straight for the PCs as if knowing they are there. Meanwhile, her captor gets to his feet and draws a knife. The woman chooses a Player Character to hide behind; she grabs his arm and says, "Please, you must stop him. He'll kill me. I can't die here, do you understand?" Her captor runs at the group, wicked knife raised. He lunges at her, ignoring the PCs altogether. They try to stop him, but the man passes right through them and succeeds in stabbing the woman in the chest. The two figures fade into darkness. The echo of the woman's voice reverberates in the night. "I can't die here..."

In the light of day, most folks discuss their experiences with growing wonder and concern. Most believe it a manifestation of the River of Dreams. PCs who ask others about their experiences hear a strange and extraordinary variety of tales. Weavers are encouraged to create their own; here are a few examples:

- A dozen "painted men" moved silently through the grounds of a farmstead, and performed a silent ritual around an old, dead tree. The terrified Evan farmer and her family hid themselves, but in the morning they found no trace that anyone had been around the tree. It is now covered in faint, animal carvings.

- An undulating multi-legged red and gold beast danced down a street, bowing to an appreciative audience that only it could see. The fearsome, yet static, head bobbed and wove to some unheard rhythm, its feet moving with imperfect coordination.

- Just after midnight, a whole length of street in Vimary was bathed in light such as its inhabitants had never seen. Enclosed carriages silently glided past for an hour, while shadowy people thronged about the entrances to ghostly buildings. Then, within a single heartbeat, it faded into darkness.

- Hundreds of red-coated soldiers fired upon a deserted hilltop, some falling as unseen assailants attacked them. This battle lasted all night and the soldiers faded to nothing in the morning mist. By all reports, hundreds of men lay on the ground before the battle ended.

- An immense and imposing edifice appeared on an empty patch of ground. Bells rang out a message of joy from the soaring spires as a man in red robes led a procession down the steps. The specters vanished completely as they reached the foot of the stairs.

After a second, even more vivid night of visions, the people of Vimary and Hom start to call upon their leaders for answers: what do these visions mean? Is this some portent that the dark times have come again? Have the world of the living and the world of Dream begun to merge? Are the Fatimas responsible? Surely this is some filthy Z'bri trick!

In response to rumor and public will, the Grand Council convenes and looks to the Fatimas for Guidance.

Just after noon, Tera Sheba speaks on behalf of the Pillars of the Nation: they have Seen that the visions are a sending from some hitherto unsuspected malevolence. They summon the Player Characters' Quest Circle to attend them.

RESOURCES

People all across Vimary have similar visions; some disturbing, many frightening, but aside from those experienced by the PCs, none of the visions interact with the living; even indirectly. The PCs should discover that they are alone in this.

The Fatimas have received visions too... troubling, unasked visions that make them question Their power and Their place in the world. Are these visions a consequence of the course the Pillars have chosen to follow, or just something unexpected, and otherwise coincidental? Whatever the circumstances, the Pillars must know what is going on.

A CALL TO ARMS

Heralds bearing the mark of the Sisters are sent throughout Vimary with one task, to gather the Players' Harvest Circle to the heart of the land. Wherever the Player Characters may be, they are quickly found, and a similar ritual takes place:

The Herald strides toward them purposefully, bearing the ceremonial staff of the united tribes. She plants the staff in the ground with a resonant *crack!* and speaks these words:

In the name of Joan, who gives us Strength;

In the name of Tera Sheba, who keeps the Truth;

In the name of Baba Yaga, who sees our Fate;

In the name of Agnes, who brings us Hope;

In the name of Dahlia, who helps us See;

In the name of Eva, who makes us Whole;

In the name of Magdalen, who fosters Love;

In the name of the Seven Sisters,

In the name of the Council,

In the name of the Nation,

You are bid come!

Come to the Circle!

Their ritual reply is:

By the will of the Seven Sisters,

By the will of the Council,

By the will of the Nation,

For the undying memory of our ancestors,

I will follow you.

I join the Circle.

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Once the Player Characters are assembled in the Great Hall of the Council Ruins, the ancient and ornate Unity Horn is sounded to call the members of the Grand Council. While the members of the Circle wait for all their number to be assembled, they may converse with the advisers and spectators already present. This might prove an opportunity for Weavers to integrate or develop their own subplots outside this particular quest.

With the utmost gravity, the Grand Councilors enter the smoky, sun-dappled Hall, and take their places. Iris Medi'on, the Sheban representative, addresses the Player Characters and the assembled audience:

"For two nights, the Seven Tribes has been plagued by phantoms of the World Before. That the Sisters only dimly foresaw this event perplexes Them, and your Council, greatly. Blessed Tera Sheba says that Truth makes us Free and binds us together against the Darkness; and so we say these things to you, the Nation.

"The Sisters have summoned their most Beloved to this conclave, that they may be given a task of great import. Blessed members of the Circle, the Sisters bid you find that which is responsible for these terrible visions. If it is a thing, bring it unto the Pillars of the Nation, who shall see to its safe destruction. If it is a member of the Nation, bring them unto the Sisters that swift Justice may be meted out. If it is an Outcast, or Z'bri, it is a defiled thing; slay it and all who knowingly aid it!

This Quest you are given

In the name of the Seven Sisters,

In the name of the Council,

In the name of the Nation!"

Medi'on then summons the Heralds to take the Player Characters to the temples of their respective Fatimas; there they will be granted audience with their Fatima, and receive personal instruction.

A PRIVATE AUDIENCE

Each member of the Circle is escorted into their own Fatima's sanctum, where they are to receive the personal blessing and instruction from their living icon. What each member of the Circle is told depends on the Fatima whose Love they receive. Each Fatima conveys the information in a manner most befitting their nature.

All of the Player Characters receive this information:

"We have Seen that your path must take you against the River until you reach the wall. At croatan's end, you will find that which you seek."

Weavers should then briefly take each player aside, and give them their Fatima's personal blessings. The essence of each Sister's special instruction is summarized below:

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Joan: Joan does not speak; her message is imparted by Valerie Ben'on, a trusted Templar. "Find that which causes My beloved children pain, subdue it and bring it before the Pillars, that We may deal with it. If Heretics are involved, slay them. Show no mercy; give no quarter."

Tera Sheba: "Find that which causes the Nation pain, subdue it and bring it before Me, that I may deal with it according to My law. Let no one stop you in this act, in My name."

Baba Yaga: "That which threatens us concerns death, and something I cannot See. You must be My eyes, My ears, My hands. Find it, understand it, then return to Me."

Eva: "You are the Shield of the Nation; you must ensure that anything that may endanger my children is kept safely away. Let no dark influence be brought into Our refuge!"

Magdalen: "No matter the terrors you may face, you must confront them openly, and wholly. It is only through experience that you can truly find freedom. Ensure that all conflict is resolved peacefully, that the Circle remains whole and strong."

Dahlia: "We may be the masters of illusion, but others are adept in such arts as well. Do not be deceived by appearance; that which is hideous may conceal transcendent beauty; that which seems beautiful may conceal horrors beyond imagining. Do not be afraid of how a thing seems... be afraid of what it is."

Agnes: "Do what you want! If you find something pretty, give it to me as a present. If you find something ugly, you must make sure it's kept far from Playground. If you meet any Fallen, don't be mean... you have to help them!"

UNEXPECTED HELP

Following the audiences, the Player Characters are escorted back to the Council Hall, where they are met by the Three Fates' representatives, Faust Verkin (Yagan), Bethra Cov'on (Evan), and Dhara Ibenkin (Magdalite). The Fates have seen that they will need someone with knowledge of the River, and the wilderness, and in true fashion have found them a worthy guide: Malachai.

Malachai, cloaked and hooded, steps from the smoky shadows. He is a young man, with a ready smile and clear eyes. Perceptive Player Characters notice that he walks with a slight limp. (If asked, he explains with some modesty that he once narrowly won an argument with a wild Z'bri over ownership of his left leg.) He is happy to guide the Player Characters, as the Fates have asked, and he holds them in respect. His clothes are simply made up of soft robes in muted earth tones. A brown belt, intricately woven, hangs about his waist, and from it some simple tracking equipment. A bird feather hangs from each ear.

Normally a genial fellow, Malachai takes an immediate dislike to one PC of the Weaver's choice. No matter how hard this person tries to get Malachai on side, the tracker will have little to do with him. (This is part of Malachai's plan to misdirect any mistrust of him that the Player Characters may have.)

FIRST STEPS

The PCs' Circle must now work out where to go from here. The likelihood is that none of the Circle have ever traveled much further than the immediate confines of Vimary. Sources of reliable information regarding the outside world are traders, the Keepers, or the Fallen. Another, more exotic, source of information might be one or more of the Unmourned Dead who continue to plague their nights.

Traders: More adventurous traders in some of Vimary's Emporia can provide — for a price — information about the River and why risking its currents and rapids is better than the dangers of overland travel. The river may have its monsters, but with an experienced guide it is far safer to ply its waters than to cut through the thick growth that lines its banks.

• An Outlands trader just back from a trip into Squat country upriver says that they're even more suspicious and hostile than usual. Weird thing though; no Z'bri to be seen anywhere, not even the Chained.

• Three nights ago, Elis Ducham'ber was trapping along the Riche (a small river east of Vimary) when he looked up, and saw a great city of towers and lights soaring into the sky! He thought that the Z'bri had performed some terrible Sundering on the Nation; just before dawn, it faded away...

• Word is, a band of Jackers has been marauding through the southern wilds. Some say they're using Squat camps as refuges and splitting the booty; others claim that they're using Fallen sorcery to send everyone they come in contact with utterly mad!

Keepers: Enigmatic and suspicious as they can be, Keepers may seem the best source of information; after all, these visions seem to speak of the World Before, and who knows more about such things? The Harvest Circle must travel to Olympus, within the disturbing and desolate Rust Wastes, to seek their services. If they have other Keeper contacts, they may use them as well.

Within an hour of venturing into the Wastes, the Player Characters are caught in a dust storm. Within its convoluted paths and tangle of old streets and ruins, exhaustion and confusion slowly batter them down. Disoriented, they stumble toward where they last glimpsed the great skeletal dome of Olympus poking through the upper levels of the dust. Just when they think they cannot continue, a figure beckons them towards a shelter of sorts. He is a Keeper and carries a weapon. A KNO test (Threshold 4) reveals that the weapon is a gun. It is capable of hurting them from a long distance and is usually fatal.

The Keeper leads them to a shelter, warm and out of the winds. There are several doors leading elsewhere. They see someone go through one of the doors, but cannot see where it leads. Two other Keepers share this refuge.

If asked, their rescuer calls himself, "No-man." He makes it clear he only saved them to find out what they were doing in his lands. Unless they pique his interest by mentioning the visions and their purpose, they get no help from these people and are forcibly taken to the doors and thrown back out into the storm. How they fare is up to the Weaver.

Should the Player Characters threaten them with the power of their Fatimas, the Keepers will have a good laugh. "Where're your Fatimas gonna be when we kick you out on your asses, huh?"

If the Player Characters sate the Keepers' curiosity by mentioning the visions, the Keepers look at each other. "We'll help," they say, "We have someone you can talk to."

The Player Characters are then blindfolded and taken...elsewhere.

When the blindfolds are removed after some time and much walking, they find themselves in a room filled with paraphernalia — books, boxes, papers, plastic containers, and equipment with wires and... bits... sticking out of them. A man sits on the edge of a desk and with a wave of his hand, bids them sit on the floor. He is wearing glasses. He places a finger to an apparatus in his right ear and talks to... no one. "Yeah, I got 'em. I'm fine. Yeah, the code-word is 'ball-point'." He looks at the Player Characters, "All right," he says, "what the hell do you want from us?"

This Keeper explains that they too, have experienced visions these last nights. To gain his assistance, the Player Characters must tell the Keeper of their need to find a wall, or a place called "wall", somewhere upriver.

What is the Keeper's price? "Stop these bloody visions. Or at least tune them so we can get some good games around here! No, seriously, we want you to return here and tell us EVERYTHING that you see, hear and do..."

On being given their word, the Keeper produces a beaten-up, crumpled copy of an old map. The map shows that before the Change, there was a place called "Cornwall" upriver; this might be the location described by the Fatimas' seeing. He estimates that the journey will take at least 14 days overland, possibly more. The safest and fastest way to pursue is by boat, which should take 6 to 8 days.

Outcasts: The Fallen are unlikely to provide any kind of assistance to the Player Characters. In fact, they're more likely to provide misleading, "corrupting," or even dangerous information. Should any of the Player Characters actually have a contact amongst the Fallen, they may be able to acquire something that's useful:

- About six or seven nights ago, a Templar came into Hom in disguise; much money changed hands to guarantee that no one saw anything.

The evidence gathered suggests the need for an expedition upriver. The Council engages the services of a boatman and his crew. The boat is equipped with ten days worth of supplies, and will be ready to depart the following morning from a mooring within the Sunken City.



ACT II: UPRIVER

Early next morning, the Player Characters assemble among the towering ruins of the Sunken City. Here they are introduced to the boat's Captain, known only as The Captain (an affable drunk); the First Mate, Slaman (a competent fellow); and the Cabin Boy, Piefi (a feckless youth).

Their vessel, the *Pliant Maiden*, is a clinker-built, shallow-draft boat powered by both oar and sail. The Captain spends most of his time in a small below-deck section in the bow. He informs the Player Characters that they are expected to assist in the day-to-day running of the boat, including helping drag the "Maiden" overland past the rapids they'll encounter.

One of the Player Characters may notice that Piefi has an antique medallion around his neck. If asked about it, Piefi says it was his grandfather's and it's a medal of "SanChristof," the river spirit. Malachai nods, and adds that St. Christopher was the spirit who looked over all travelers in the World Before.

THE FIRST DAY

The day is peaceful, the water is calm, and their prospects are favorable. The Player Characters have a chance to talk with the crew and learn the ropes. Piefi talks with Malachai every so often, fascinated by his stories, asking him questions about the land and tracking. With one of the others minding the tiller for a while, Slaman fishes.

"My Grandfather used to say this river was poisoned from a terrible accident that occurred in the Old Times," he explains. "You couldn't drink the water and you couldn't eat the fish for decades. Now they're good to eat again."

In the fading light of the afternoon, while looking for a spot to pull in to shore, they see a mother and child on the bank, walking hand-in-hand. A fire is nearby. The child looks out to where the *Maiden* drifts quietly along. The mother takes the child's hand and they walk right *through* a rock to sit by their fire. A trick of the light maybe? These people do not respond if hailed.

Later at night, while the crew and passengers are sleeping on the beach around a small fire, they hear the sound of an ancient vessel. The ship is huge, 250 meters long and 20 meters across. Three short blasts of the whistle sound through the night. It comes, it turns and heads straight towards their shore. A Boating or PER test (Threshold 4) reveals that the ship will beach itself if it keeps on going.

It takes about one minute to reach the PCs. They notice its engines are on full as it plows into the beach. Should they run further up the beach to get away, they see it pass (disconcertingly) over and through their camp. It then fades and is gone. The fire continues to crackle pleasantly.

Piefi clings to Malachai; the tracker takes care of him and tells him not to worry.

THE SECOND DAY

By mid-morning, the *Maiden* and her crew reach the rapids the Captain warned them about. He explains that they will have to drag the boat up onto the bank and haul her up past the rapids until they can sail again. "Shouldn't take more than half a day," says Slaman.

Suddenly, a shape launches itself from the water like a bullet! As it reaches its arc, its body snaps open like a Swiss Army knife, displaying a deadly array of limbs and claws as it hurtles down toward the hapless crew with an ear-splitting shriek. Doubling over, Piefi clamps his hands over his ears. The creature takes a swipe at one of the Player Characters then disappears into the water again with a huge splash.

Malachai cries out, "Heads up! It's a Gek'roh!"

"Holy Mother of Pearl!" cries Slaman. "What the hell is a Gek'roh?"

"A Z'bri, you watery fool!" Malachai replies, angrily.

Piefi squats near the edge of the boat, terrified. He clutches his St. Christopher medallion, near to tears. Malachai comforts him with steady words.

The Captain huddles in his crawl space, and pulls hard on a bottle of whisky.

Suddenly, dark and sinewy arms appear *through* the deck behind Slaman, who is valiantly attempting to steer them to shore. The arms drag him *into* the wood, which turns almost to liquid around the helpless sailor.

He screams in horror. Should the Player Characters attempt to hold him and drag him back, a tug of war ensues. Roll ACI (Threshold 4) to grab Slaman. The tug of war is an opposed STR test with the Z'bri. Should these tests succeed, the Z'bri gives up. It lets him go; the deck immediately solidifies around the sailor. Slaman, still alive, screams in agony. He is stuck halfway in the deck, his flesh fused into the wood.

Piefi is yelling frantically, "Do something, do something!"

Malachai shakes his head. "There is nothing we can do for him. The best thing we can do is kill him, now."

If the PCs delay for more than a minute or so, Malachai walks over to Slaman and draws his knife. He takes Slaman's chin on one hand and meets his eyes. Slaman nods, between screams. Malachai slits his throat. Once dead, the only thing they can do for Slaman is put a blanket or... something over him.

Malachai warns them that this "Z'bri abomination" will come back, either because it's been deprived of its food or because it's just plain dogged. Getting above the rapids as soon as possible is their best chance for survival.

The Captain, slurring his words, instructs them to steer the boat to shore. He stays in his crawl space as long as he can. They drag the *Maiden* ashore and prepare to haul her past the rapids.

Once ashore, they have to dismantle the boat with Slaman still stuck in the wood. When they begin, they discover the chewed and bloody stumps of the remains of Slaman's legs. They drag the boat up the rough terrain. This takes them most of the day as the Captain is in shock and partly drunk, and Piefi is too small to carry much, though not through lack of trying. It is late afternoon before they reach a sandy embankment where they can again put the boat to water.

They stop here for the night to reassemble the boat, eat and rest. Once it is dark again the Captain takes out his bottle of whisky and begins to drink, not offering any to anyone else. Piefi sticks close to Malachai, who places a comforting hand on his shoulder.

As they sit around the fire, they hear the sound of the ancient vessel's whistle as, once more, the ghost ship heads towards shore and goes straight through them.

THE THIRD DAY

To continue upriver, the party must return to the water. For the morning, all is well. Then, around noon, the Z'bri returns, and attacks. On a PER test (Threshold 5), a PC notices a trail of bubbles streaking through the water toward them, giving them enough warning to brace for attack.

All remnants of the Gek'roh's intelligence were stripped away by the horrors of its bitterly toxic environment. It thinks of nothing but food, and the Player Characters seem like an excellent source. It may fight to the death (especially if enraged) or flee, at the Weaver's discretion.

The only place it cannot seem to get them is close to the mast, for its many appendages get caught in the ropes and sailcloth. The Player Characters can seek refuge here, but soon the Z'bri begins to drag the obstructions down through the deck as it did with Slaman. In a short while, there is nowhere to hide; they must fight. Malachai advises them to use fire to defeat this monster. He proffers up his firepot full of hot coals, though they'll need to find something to burn.

After the battle is over, Piefi, though still dependent on Malachai, shows greater confidence and competence — more so than the Captain, whose drunken stupor remains undiminished since Slaman's death. The rest of the day is uneventful; either occupied by traveling, or patching wounds, or both. That night the ancient ship returns and repeats its actions.

THE FOURTH DAY

Still recovering from the trials of the day before, they spend the day experiencing the call of strange visions. It becomes apparent that an impulse or call accompanies these visions. A PSY test (Threshold 3) allows them to notice the call, while a WIL test (Threshold 5) is required to resist it. The call fills their dreams and daytime hallucinations. The Player Characters experiencing this may:

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- Hear voices from the water or from upriver. Voices of loved ones, people from their village; even the shadowy call of their Fatimas. None are real.
- See people on the banks (strange people try to lure them into the waters, down, down...) Test PSY vs. Threshold 4 to resist this siren call.
- See images or hear sounds from the past, reflections in the water of someone behind them. They turn; no one is there.
- Become suspicious of each other, or overcome with the need to covet the source of this call for themselves.

This is the distress call of Ahr'haab the Unforgiving; it pulls the characters towards him, urging and manipulating. The call both exhilarates and terrifies. The lure of the call is addictive as the physical rush of being near such a powerful Z'bri inflames their senses, as well as the senses of Rochelle and her cadre. It has made them hyper-aware, irrational and extremely sensitive to their surroundings. Players may also suffer the effects of the Z'bri's Sangis Atmosphere as outlined on page 183 of the *Tribe 8 Rulebook*.

Just before sunset, while they are still on the river, the ancient ship appears again. On a PER or Boating Test (Threshold 4), the Player Characters notice that the ship leaves a wake as it moves. The mighty vessel is solid and is about to collide with the *Maiden*!

The *Pliant Maiden* cannot be steered to safety in time - they must abandon ship. The Captain yells, "Me first!" and dives overboard, doing a very bad dog-paddle towards shore. Suddenly, something fast and many-appendaged grabs him and pulls him down. The froth of his struggle turns a deep red.

Piefi was about to follow, but stops and turns pale green. They have little choice but to scramble aboard the approaching vessel by way of the grappling hook and rope that Malachai takes from his belt. Piefi stumbles; Malachai sweeps him up and hauls him onto his back. Seconds before the *Maiden* is smashed to matchwood, they all make it to the rope (assuming they pass an AGI or Acrobatics test against Threshold 5). Then they climb the five meters to the railing and fall on the hard deck in a wet, shivering heap.

CROATAN'S END

Once aboard, the Player Characters look around. They see two men having an argument on the deck in front of the wheelhouse nearby. One of these men is obviously the ship's Captain, the other appears to be its First Mate. The Mate is saying: "We can't just abandon ship. The drums - they're full of nuclear waste! We'll contaminate the whole system!"

"What the hell are you talking about? They're full of milk solids bound for Chicago!"

"I didn't know when I agreed... The money seemed good at the time!"

5. St. Christopher and the Croatan

The Captain notices the Player Characters. Without hesitation, he looks directly at them and says, "I don't know who you are, but you have to help me stop this madness, and you —" He turns to the First Mate "Are going straight to the brig! Somebody get him out of my sight."

The Captain introduces himself as Gerard Lemieux; his ship is called the *Croatan*. They are obviously of the World Before, any requests for the date give a time shortly after the upheavals that changed the world began.

Lemieux explains a group of terrorists called "Sons of the True North" have managed to lock themselves in the hold of the ship with a substantial amount of explosives. He doesn't know what they are doing exactly, but he lost rudder control as soon as the crew discovered the terrorists and the *Croatan* is now heading for shore; they will soon run aground.

Lemieux and an engineer will defuse the explosives, but can't fight these terrorists by themselves. The Player Characters have little choice but to help Lemieux and his engineer get to the explosives in safety. "It's either that or take your chances in the water, lads," Lemieux says.



The PCs accompany the Captain through the bridge and down into the cargo hold, which is overlooked by steel walkways. There are two men at the far end of the hold. The Player Characters have to hold these men off long enough for the Captain and the engineer to defuse the explosives. Once the Player Characters have successfully diverted the attention of the terrorists, the engineer cuts the main fuse. A light immediately begins flashing in the corner.

"It's booby-trapped! Everyone out!" The Captain screams. He helps with any wounded Player Characters as they make for the deck.

While on the stairs, they are jolted by a series of small explosions. An AGI test (Threshold 3) is required to avoid falling or toppling from the stairway. The hull has been blown out and they are taking on water in the aft hold. The radioactive sludge flows into the river...

The Captain yells, "You go ahead, I have to shut the door and seal off the forward compartments! Tell the others to abandon ship!" He goes back and is never seen again...

The Player Characters climb on deck in time to see the crew pointing madly toward shore. With a huge shuddering jolt, the *Croatan* runs aground, throwing everyone into the deck, the rails, the walls...

... then they are spitting grass and pulling twigs from their hair. The *Croatan* is gone. They are all lying on a large overgrown mound, which juts into the river.

It is night. All is quiet. They hear the echo of Lemieux's last words: "Abandon Ship!"...

RESOURCES

This event occurred long ago, part of the chaos that accompanied the arrival of the Z'bri and the Fall. The PCs should feel divided between the awe of seeing the World Before and the terror of reliving these events. Anyone injured or killed during the scene, is alive and well on the mound at the end, but bears ancient scars of their ordeal.

The terrorists are trying to blow the cargo holds; they have already destroyed the rudder and locked the engines to "Ahead Full". They originally wanted to travel further upriver to a large hydroelectric dam. Once there, the plan was to blow the hull of the *Croatan*, allowing the nuclear sludge to run through the plant, contaminating the river for miles. They would then blow the dam, destroying the plant's turbines and penstocks in the process. However, they were discovered by the crew of the *Croatan* and had to resort to sinking the ship before they reached their objective. There are enough explosives on board to blow a substantial dam twice over.

The terrorists have guns (treat as Shotguns, ACC 0, DM x28, Range 7), which fire and hurt just as if they were real. Use the statistics for the Squat archetype (see p. 112) with the Firearms Skill at level 1.

ACT III: HEARTS AND STONES

The Player Characters, Malachai, and the boy Piefi are now on a smallish, overgrown isle resting in the river not far from shore. This mound is in fact the ancient wreck of the *Croatan* and with a PER test (Threshold 4) the PCs will recognize the shape of the bridge they were next to where Lemieux and his men disappeared. On the horizon, the PCs see a great dark wall stretching across most of the river about 500 meters upstream. Weavers may wish to have the Fatimas' words come back to the PCs at this point: "We have Seen that your path must take you against the River until you reach the wall. At croatan's end, you will find that which you seek."

The corrupting call of Ahr'haabt's Atmosphere should be felt very strongly on this isle. The PCs may find strange urges bubbling to the surface, leading them to distrust each other. Warrior types may become convinced that a more mystical PC is "holding them back" and needs to be eliminated, while a Synthesis wielder may see warriors as "untrustworthy" and want them discarded. This corruption is felt much more strongly by Malachai, who is attuned to its call. The idea that the blood of a sentient being will help harness the power of the Z'bri when it dies works its way into Malachai's mind, along with the memory of the associated ritual. He knows that Piefi's innocent blood will have great power.

At some point during the exploration of the ruined *Croatan* Piefi wanders afield as young boys are wont to do. Once someone notices that he has disappeared, Malachai looks concerned, and offers to bring him back. He encourages the Player Characters to do as they must: "It seems that I have done as much as I can to see you to the end of your path," he says. "Now the glory is yours." He bows and slips quietly into the undergrowth. Once he finds the boy, the Guide draws a short, brutally functional blade across Piefi's throat. Bright arterial blood gushes from the wound. The boy's eyes fill with betrayal as their light fades. Malachai catches the rich liquor in an exotically carved bottle and snatches the St. Christopher medallion from the boy's neck. Both the blood and the medallion will add power to his ritual.

This event can occur at any time when the Players are likely not to notice. The best time is likely when the PCs go into the ruined bridge in search of their prize. Malachai conceals the child's body in a nook in the *Croatan*. He will tell the PCs the child is hiding safely, if asked.

THE FOREST FOR THE TREES

Inside, lying in wait on the bridge, is Kowalski, a member of Rochelle's company of Jackers. Kowalski is under instructions to act as lookout; she has set a trap for anyone who would come this way to get Ahr'haabt. Kowalski's plan is to lure the Player Characters into the aft hold by using herself as bait (the hold is the one Captain Lemieux sealed in a vain attempt to protect his ship). Once inside, her plan is to slam the hatch shut and blow the rear door with the explosives she set earlier, thus flooding the hold and drowning the unfortunate Player Characters.

After a short search, the Player Characters find the entry to the Croatan's bridge. There are two doors that provide access to the interior. One is rusted tight and cannot be opened without a lot of effort and noise. The other opens quite easily. A PER test (Threshold 5) or an appropriate Lore or Craft test (Threshold 4) will reveal that someone has forced this door open very recently. It is dark inside; they will need a torch to find their way.

The Croatan is now a rusting hulk and the creaks and groans as they set foot on the bridge belie its interior's instability. The place is hauntingly familiar. In a room off the bridge they find an abandoned bedroll and food, which seems to have been cooked within the last few hours. There is no sign of the owner, so the Player Characters must make their way below decks, as they did before. This time, the steel walkways are old and corroded; a ghostly echo of their recent Dream vision. PCs need to pass an AGI test (Threshold 3, 6 if running), to avoid falling through the rusted walkways. Give fellow PCs a chance to save the falling character or impose only mild damage from the fall (MoS x5). Soon enough, they reach the lower decks, where Kowalski awaits. To notice her, the characters must pass an opposed Notice test against her Sneak (Skill level 2). What happens next depends on the outcome of the test.

If the Player Characters don't spot Kowalski: They enter the lower hold. Behind them, Kowalski slams the heavy door shut, trapping them inside. Water begins to flood the hold. They'll have to break through the rusting deck above, punching through the layer of sod and clambering out as the water allows them to float to the surface. Heavy equipment such as metal armor will help drag them down and they should pass Swimming tests (Threshold 2) to stay afloat even without gear. Malachai is waiting on the deck and can help drag them to safety. Meanwhile, Kowalski gets away and heads for the wall (the old hydroelectric plant) to alert Rochelle who, with the rest of their band, holds the Z'bri prisoner there.

If the Player Characters spot Kowalski: As soon as she realizes she's been spotted, Kowalski fires her crossbow at the PCs and makes a tactical retreat. She swims the short distance to shore and then makes her way into the brush and toward the dam. The Player Characters can follow her tracks by passing a Notice test opposed by her Sneak. Malachai can and will help.

Either way, once out of the hold, the PCs find Malachai on top of the bridge mound. He's looking through a folding eyeglass, a relic of the World Before. He bids them look through it and points south. Near the far side of the river, there are steps and doors built into the top of the great dark wall. The call sent out by the dying Z'bri resonates through the PCs again when they look through the glass.

RESOURCES

Use the Jacker archetype (p. 112) for Kowalski, adding Archery 2/+1, Demolition 1/0, Sneak 3/+1, Swimming 2/+1, and a crossbow (ACC +1, DM x17, Range 6/12/24/48). She has had time to scout the ship and knows many hiding places.

ACTS OF WAR

If they wish to continue upriver to the wall, the Player Characters must either build their own raft from logs or use one of the *Croatan's* inflatable life rafts (the latter requires an appropriate Lore or Boating Test, Threshold 6). At least one of the rafts is still useable after all these years. The rafts are located in supply lockers on deck.

Once they reach the stairway on the far end of the dam wall, they must climb to reach the powerhouse. The powerhouse is situated within the dam walls; the Player Characters must traverse precarious hallways and walkways to get inside. Water thunders over the edge, cold and loud, spilling through the useless penstocks. It's the perfect place for an ambush. At the Weaver's discretion, PCs may notice ghostly watercraft milling around the base of the lock by the side of the power station, even during daylight hours. The people are sometimes very solid, sometimes very spectral.

Inside the powerhouse, the PCs find dripping walls and cold steel. Giant turbines lie dormant, the water's flow bypassing their blades, though they feel like they could spring to life any moment. Ever present in the background is the roar of falling water. The few dry areas are around the abandoned offices, near the top of this huge installation.

Hallucinations come thick and fast; the Player Characters *know* the source of the call is here — somewhere. Along certain routes, these visions become more real. Following them leads the Player Characters towards Ah'r'haabt, the source of their call... if they stray from the path, the visions cease.

The turbines scream into life, spinning with incredible fury. Oddly garbed workers perform incomprehensible tasks... it is like the world has split in two. Finally, they reach a long, dry corridor leading to the offices of the powerhouse. The corridor is lit with the lights of Before. It is suddenly warm. A man walks down the corridor, sipping tea and reading a folded paper. He looks at the Player Characters. "Be careful, it's slippery here."

TRAPPED!

The corridor has been trapped by the Jackers, something a successful Tactics test (Threshold 5) will reveal as likely. A Notice test (Threshold 5) will also reveal a tripwire strung across the corridor. Disarming the first trap, a makeshift mine activated by the wire, requires an appropriate Craft or Techlore (Mechanics) test (Threshold 4). Avoiding the tripwire once it has been seen is easy, however.

If triggered, the mine detonates, sending a shower of nails and other shrapnel into the corridor. The mine detonates right at the trip wire with a primary radius of only 1 meter, a secondary radius of 8 meters, and a damage multiplier of x15. Assume a Skill level of 2 for the grenade's attack, although who is in the attack radius depends exclusively on placement in the corridor.

For a moment, a shock wave of "reality" ripples across the corridor; the Player Characters see their world for a few seconds

before the illusion reasserts itself... Upon examination, they discover that the metal shards are, in fact, nails. The "mine" was hidden in the floor and set off by the tripwire. There are two other trapped areas along the corridors. Each must be disarmed or avoided to continue.

The second trap: A weakened section of floor, made difficult to discern due to the vision-overlay. Beneath the floor is a deadly array of jagged, rusted metal. Failing an AGI test (Threshold 5) when falling causes MoF x 10 damage to the hapless Player Character.

The third trap: Three powerful slingshots arrayed on either side of an four-way intersection; two on the left, one on the right. Each slingshot fires a steel quarrel at deadly speed, aimed at the point at which the tripwire crosses the corridor. The combined effect of the slingshots is an attack at Skill Level 1, with the following statistics: ACC +1, DM x15. The tripwire can be noticed and disarmed in the same way as the first trap.

MYTHS AND LEGENDS

Past these traps, it's only a short distance to the Player Character's quarry. The Jackers and their captive are holed up in a set of offices off the main turbine control room.

The scene that follows assumes that the Player Characters successfully evade all traps, and at least five of the Jackers remain active. If the Player Characters sprung any of the traps, three of the Jackers are lying in ambush in a corridor leading to their base. Should their ambush go badly, any surviving Jackers retreat to the offices. Otherwise, the Jackers suspect nothing. The Player Characters reach the office area, and have one round to do what they want before the Jackers can react.

Rochelle stands — sword drawn — with a hooded and bound figure at her feet. Her cell-mates O'Bannon and Sweep stand in front of her, weapons ready, while her other companions Rafe and Luge cover the two exits.

At this point, Malachai has backed off (after all he's just a tracker...) and hangs back in the corridor, observing. Malachai knows that Rochelle will recognize him for what he truly is, having seen him on Hom with his mentor Halos. He is just waiting to play his hand. Malachai only steps forward when she looks as though she will kill the Z'bri.

Meanwhile, the figure in the sack looks straight at the PCs, even though its head is still covered. "It's about time," it says, its voice a sibilant, contemptuous whisper, "What *have* you been doing, wretched fleshbags?! I've been calling you for days!"

Rochelle delivers a savage kick to the twisted body; the captive falls silent. A PER test (Threshold 5) reveals that Rochelle is extremely concerned that the captive's bindings and hood are secure; she's constantly checking.

Should the Player Characters identify themselves, Rochelle tells them who her group are, and her intentions — to hold the prisoner here until all of the weirdness outside passes, then to deliver it to the Fatimas as requested. (She is not aware that her

prisoner is the cause of these events.) She identifies the captive as "Lord Exsanguinator Ahr'haabt, the Unforgiving, of House Sangis... a butcher amongst Z'bri butchers."

At any point where Rochelle's and the Player Characters' groups may seem to reach an understanding, the Z'bri Lord takes every opportunity to pit them against each other. He is as irritating as he can possibly be, trying to force one of the parties to make a move.

The Player Characters must negotiate for the prisoner's release. Rochelle won't give him up and says she has a purpose. When pressed, Rochelle blurts out: "This Z'bri is a gift for Joan! You can't have it, it's not for you. We're staying here 'til the crap stops, and we're staying here 'til the bastard dies!"

At this, her comrades look very surprised. They think she's out for revenge — not for some grand plan. One of them (Weaver's choice) may even stammer out "...but Rochelle, you said we were going to pump it for information..." She shouts down her underling before they can go further.

The Z'bri hisses, "If you don't let me go, the dead will never cease to rise. I will plague you for the rest of your days! If you kill me - I will find you and turn your nights into a maze of screams."

Suddenly, Rochelle points an accusing finger at Malachai and cries: "And you can't have it, Guide. It's mine."

The Guide enters the room and approaches Ahr'haabt, who

thrashes fitfully in his bindings. "Do not give me to the Unclean One! The cripple wants my heart! I will be dead soon, and my Stone must not be allowed to fall into the hands of an infidel."

"Stone?" someone asks.

The Z'bri is about to explain: "My heart-stone. It's —"

Just then, Malachai plays his hand, realizing the jig is up. He places Piefi's medallion on Ahr'haabt. The medallion has been ritually prepared with the boy's Synthesis-enhanced blood and created a gush of carnal sensation in the Z'bri and all those present (save Malachai who is prepared for the effect). The PCs must pass a WIL test against Threshold 8 or be basically immobilized in the throws of carnality for MoF rounds. All the Jackers are affected for 3 rounds. In the confusion, despite the Player Characters' best efforts, Malachai escapes with Ahr'haabt.

RESOURCES

Game statistics for Malachai, Ahr'haabt, and Rochelle appear on pages 63, 64 and 65. Use the Jacker archetype (p. 112) for Rochelle's followers, although everyone has Swimming 1/+1.



5. St. Christopher and the Croatan

STONE FALL

The Player Characters must ally themselves with Rochelle's band (if they still live) and get the Z'bri back before it dies "...and its Stone falls." When pressed, Rochelle admits that not even she knows what this means. Her comrades are wary, weapons pointed, unsure and suddenly not trusting their leader...

It is entirely up to the Player Characters to negotiate with, or fight, the Fallen. They must consider the Harvest Circle objectives given them at the beginning, Rochelle's motivations and whether the Fallen are worthy. They also must decide if they can trust her enough to help them (and not steal Ahr'haabt and the Stone for herself) and how to capture and defeat Malachai.

This will all depend on the tribal affiliations and the special instructions given them when they were sent out on the quest. In any event, Rochelle does whatever it takes to recover Joan's love, including forsaking her companions to help the Player Characters.

To find Malachai, the group must make four successful Tracking tests. Rochelle has excellent tracking skills if no others are available in the group. Eventually, they track Malachai back to the corroding hulk that was once the *Croatan*. As they draw near to their quarry, they can hear Ahr'haabt threatening Malachai with dire consequences if it is not allowed to die naturally - admitting that it is near death. The Guide doesn't seem to care and is preparing the Z'bri for a ritual to take the Stone, claiming that with it, he can travel to where he's always wanted to go...

FINAL CONFLICT

When they confront Malachai, Ahr'haabt begs the Player Characters to ensure that "what I will become" is given into safe hands. The once mighty Z'bri is slipping away and the Player Characters must distract Malachai from his ritual through Synthesis use, combat, or both. Within five combat rounds, Ahr'haabt dies. In a swirl of light and a giant cloud of scintillating ice particles, the Z'bri's body desiccates and curls in on itself, like a corpse in a fire. As they approach the corpse, the huddled body convulses, shudders and, with unnatural strength and energy, hurls itself into the air - the concussive force is so great it knocks everyone off their feet. The Z'bri, and its Stone, is gone.

To fulfill their oaths, the surviving Player Characters must find the Z'bri; but where to look? For hours they search the surrounding forest in vain. The others who desire the Stone do the same.

As dusk approaches and hope dims, someone spots a ghostly figure standing in a glade (at the Weaver's discretion, this

requires a Notice test, Threshold 5). It is the shade of Piefi, caked in dirt and leaves. He points deeper into the forest. Following his lead, they eventually come upon a place where all feel an uneasy presence — the Stone lies near Piefi's partially exhumed, half-chewed corpse. It looks as if the final act of the Lord Exsanguniator was to drag the boy's body from its grave. Only Piefi's head and shoulders are exposed and it seems as if he were buried vertically. It's obvious, however, that his throat was cut. Ahr'haabt's withered husk is near the boy's body and his Stone lies within the shriveled carapace.

This is everyone's object of desire - the heart stone. Rochelle wants it for Joan (she finally realizes *this* is what Joan wants, not the corpse). Malachai wants it for his own purposes. The Player Characters want it for various reasons. What eventuates here is entirely in the hands of the players, and the Weaver. Do the characters fight, or just threaten each other to gain possession? What will their Fatimas think of their actions?

OUTCOMES

The journey home can be as easy or as troublesome as desired. The effects of close proximity to a Stone are not well understood; who can tell what might happen. In any event the Player Characters may eventually return home, with their prize. What will they do?

They can kill Malachai or take him back to the Fatimas. No one is comfortable about killing a Guide. The Fatimas will simply let him go; he leaves Vimary under cover of darkness, some kind of reward clutched in his hand. The Player Characters may have made themselves a powerful enemy.

If the Stone is delivered to the Pillars, the Player Characters are warmly and publicly praised (though the Stone is not mentioned, and the Player Characters are sworn to secrecy), and have the favor of these powerful Fatimas, at least for a time. The never see the Stone again.

If the Stone is given to the Fates, they will give it to Malachai anyway and he slips away a happy man. They earn the anger of the Pillars; their lives may never be the same again.

If they keep the Stone, they could be in for a lot of trouble as all the interested parties will want it back. The Sangis Lord, with naught but enemies among his kind, had kept his end a secret because he did not want his Stone falling into the hands of an enemy among the Z'bri. If the PCs keep the Stone just such a fiend may discover what they have and plague them.

MALACHAI, MURDEROUS GUIDE

Malachai was once an apprentice of Halos, the ancient and sometimes feared Guide of Hom. He cannot remember his former name, although he has been told that he was found washed up on the banks of the river as a child, his body broken by the fury of the water. The scars and pain he still carries from that are well hidden beneath his robes and masked by his synthesis. Some of the Fallen may remember Malachai, although he usually kept to himself and his studies. Those who knew him remember him for his skill in wilderness survival and the fact that he used to travel with Squats.

What few save Halos and his mate Den-Hades know, however, is that Malachai is fueled by a powerful desire for power. Constantly racked by pain, he feels the world owes him much. Halos had hoped to tame this desire, but failed to do so. He never allowed Malachai to manipulate a Stone alone, afraid that the dark powers within would seduce him. Unfortunately, even the limited contact in the company of his mentor was too much and Malachai wanted a stone for himself. He left Hom when Halos refused to supply him with one. The Fates approached him and promised him Ahr'haabt's heart stone if he acted as a scout in the current quest. They fully intend to honor their agreement because Baba Yaga has foreseen that Malachai's uncontrolled experimentation will rapidly destroy both the Stone and himself.

Faction: Guide (rogue)

Highlights: Power-hungry, aloof, reliable, corruptible

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	-2	APP	-2	BLD	0	CRE	+1	FIT	0
INF	0	KNO	+1	PER	+2	PSY	+2	WIL	0
STR	0	HEA	+1	STA	30	UD	3	AD	4

SKILLS

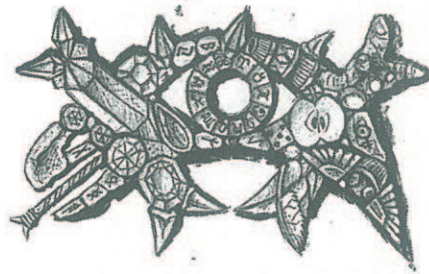
Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.
Boating	2	+2	Human Per.	2	+2	Notice (track)*	2	+2
Craft (Wood)	2	+1	Lore (Outlands)	3	+1	R/W (tribal)	2	+1
Dodge	1	-2	Lore (Z'br)	2	+1	Ritual	3	+1
Dreaming	3	+2	Melee	1	-2	Survival	2	+1

*specialization

SYNTHESIS

Synthesis Skill Rating	3
Eminences:	Shadows, Illusion
Aspects:	None

Equipment: Cloak, rugged clothing, knife (AD+5), traps, ritual implements, old maps.





AHR'HAABT THE UNFORGIVING

Ahr'haabt the Unforgiving, once Lord Exsanguniator and flayer of souls of House Sangis, is dying. He long ago had a falling out with the Baron and was displaced by more skilled Lords such as Count H'x (see *Vimary Sourcebook*, p. 117) and fled to the Skyrealms to become a Jo'han. The will necessary to remain vibrant in this world of flesh slowly drained from him and he began to die. Almost a decade ago, he became bound to a single host body and now he can feel himself dying — readying to enter the spiritual hibernation of a heart stone. His justifiable fear is that this eternal rest will be denied him by an enemy who will either destroy his heart stone or use it as a power source. Assuming this potential enemy to be Z'bri, Ahr'haabt decided to put as much distance as he could between himself and the H'l Kar and so fled west. Unfortunately his movements were spied by the Pillars, who sent the Fallen Rochelle to ambush him. His power is waning, less controllable than when he was in his prime. The only reason the Outcasts managed to capture him, however, was because at the end, he let them. Ahr'haabt foresaw that this course gave him best chance for safe passage to the next world. He doesn't realize that the Fatimas Tera Sheba and Joan created at least part of his vision. His powerful Atmosphere, however, has begun corrupting all those fighting for the Stone.

House: Sangis (Jo'han)

Highlights: Unknowable, terrifying, cruel, physically weak

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	0	APP	-2	BLD	0	CRE	+2	FIT	-4
INF	+3	KNO	+2	PER	0	PSY	0	WIL	+2
STR	0	HEA	-1	STA	20	UD	3	AD	3

SKILLS

Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.
Interrogation	3	+2	Lore (torture)	4	+2	Ritual	4	+2
Intimidate	4	0	Lore (Z'bri)	3	+2	Seduction	1	-2

SUNDERING

Sundering Skill Level:	4
Atmosphere:	Sangis*
Aspects:	Appeasement, Exsanguination

* Ahr'haabt's Sangis Atmosphere is enhanced in his death throes. It creates a seductive siren call drawing those who seek him to his side. Even at a distance, when this call is active, the characters must resist his Atmosphere (see *Tribe 8 Rulebook*, p. 183) as if they were in his presence. The desire brought to the surface by the Atmosphere, however, will always have to do with Ahr'haabt or the quest to find him and may include such things as urges to betray others in order to obtain the heart stone.

THE RIVER GEK'ROH

All limbs and claws, this chained Z'bri is only interested in one thing... food. It hunts the river upstream of Vimary, attacking travelers foolish enough to venture into its territory, by phasing them out of the safety of their watercraft into its tooth-filled maw. Unlike other Gek'roh, this beast has lost any and all sense of self. It lives only to feed.

Faction: Gek'roh (Chained Z'bri)

Highlights: Ravenous, swift, deadly, terrifying

Attributes: AGI +3, BLD +2, FIT +3, INS +3, STA 45, UD 6

Skills: Hand-to-Hand 2/+3, Dodge 3/+3, Swimming 4/+3

Special Abilities: Claws (UD+8), Tough Hide (AR 8), Water-Ghost: The Gek'roh may become immaterial underwater, allowing it to swim at speeds in excess of 50 meters/round. By making a successful Hand-to-Hand attack, it may drag a hapless passenger through the bottom of a vessel to her doom. To do so, the beast must first pass a PER test (Threshold 5) to locate the victim by the sound of her movements.

Note: All fire-based attacks do double normal damage and armor has no effect.



ROCHELLE

Rochelle was a Joanite warrior of some standing, now she is a Jacker. Rochelle was cast out when she openly questioned Joan's policy of not liberating the Z'bri's human serfs when the opportunity presented itself. Although she's convinced herself that her view was just, she has begun to regret the loss of the Fatima's love. Rochelle has assembled and trained a small band of Fallen with the sole purpose of freeing communities outside of Vimary from the yoke of Z'bri oppression. Until now, that is. Rochelle recently had a visitation from Joan herself. Joan offered her a return to her love, in return for proof of her faith. Rochelle has decided to take up the offer, but has not told her comrades the whole story.

Outlook: Jacker (Fallen Joanite)

Highlights: Driven, dedicated, responsible

Attributes: AGI +2, INF +1, PER +1, PSY -2, WIL +1, STA 25, UD 5, AD 6

Eminences: Courage and Fury

Skills: Archery 2/+2, Combat Sense 2/+1, Dodge 3/+2, Hand-to-Hand 2/+2, Leadership 2/+1, Melee 3/+2, Notice (tracking) 3/+1, Survival 2/0, Swimming 2/0

Equipment: Leather armor (AR 5), sword (AD+8), wilderness gear



Chapter Six: Sangreal

From me will the forgiver learn hate,
From me will the light learn dark,
From me will the upright fall.
My flesh shall heal even as it kills,
My blood shall grant life in death,
My bone shall be power to those who are pure.
To me I call the wind of revenge,
To me I call the dreamers,
To them I give their destiny.

— The Hidden Prophecy of Joshua



INTRODUCTION

Sangreal is a complete quest for **Tribe 8**. Unlike some of the other quests, however, it is not directly connected to the **Tribe 8** storyline. The events in this quest directly effect the characters involved, and while the personal ramifications for them may be great, the setting itself is not altered to any great extent.

Sangreal is intended as a digression from the main storyline, to be used in between quests and acts, and to provide a glimpse at some of the more mystical aspects of the **Tribe 8** world. It could easily be the beginning of a much larger cycle for your Players, however.

Sangreal covers the PCs' quest for a mysterious artifact hidden in the Outlands, one that is rumored to carry immense power. It takes place over the course of about a month, is broken up into three acts and contains details on new NPCs, locations and, of course, the artifact. Note that while this quest is presented as the follow-up to an event that occurred 10 years previously, it is possible to run this quest as the original instead, taking the pregenerated characters of the Avalon cell (see pp. 75-77) as PCs. Some reworking is, of course, necessary in this case. The theme of this variation emphasizes personal destiny, not the redemption of another.

PRELUDE: A FAIRY TALE

Once upon a time, a Marian refugee and her Keeper husband were cruelly butchered by a rampaging Z'bri. They left their baby son in the capable hands of his aunt and uncle, Keepers residing in Olympus. The boy grew, never knowing of his Tribal heritage.

His aunt had always had a fondness for the ancient tales of chivalry, and she raised her nephew John and her own son Brion with the same stories of knights and magic. John's most prized possession was a half-burned copy of an ancient book titled *Morte d'Arthur*.

Around his 20th birthday, John began to receive a series of strange visions. He told others of his dreams, and while the huge majority of Keepers decided that he was more than slightly cracked, two of his friends stuck by him, forming a tightly bound cell. The three vowed to follow John's visions of salvation, wherever they might lead, and took new names for themselves — names drawn from the pages of John's tattered book. Now, as Parcival Libre, Lana du Lac and Galad Pellas, they set off on a vision-quest to find the dream-artifact Parcival identified as the Holy Grail.

They traveled into the wilderness of the Outlands, but before they reached their goal, their quest was cut short. One night, as Galad sat watch, the small camp was attacked by a screaming horde of Z'bri monstrosities. Galad fell quickly, gutted with one swipe of a twisted claw. Lana flung herself into battle, screaming



for Parcival to run. She knew full well that he was no fighter, and gave her life to buy him time to get away. A blow caught Parcival across his leg, and he dragged himself clear of the camp. He collapsed, and let the darkness overtake him.

ACT I: ROMANZ DE PARCIVAL

Parcival awoke three weeks later, to find himself under the care of a Doomsayer named Cora. She could tell him nothing about the past events, saying only that friends of hers had brought him to her door. She had been caring for him these past two weeks, tending to his wounds. When Parcival looked down, he discovered that his left leg was gone, severed at his hip.

Parcival remained under Cora's care for a year, during which time he told her all of the stories of his visions and his quest. He was crushed with the weight of his failure, only barely comforted by Cora's assertions that others would come to succeed in his name. He returned to Olympus to undertake research on prosthetics, even going so far as to contact a Machine Monk for aid. He managed to construct a metal limb with one articulated joint, but does not wear it often, as many take it to be a sign of allegiance with the despised Monks.

SCENE ONE: REQUIEM

Galad, listen to me. I had that dream again. The night rose to meet me, and I slipped gladly into oblivion. At first, the darkness was all encompassing. Then fragments of color drifted into my vision, shards of broken pictures that I felt I should know. A castle in the forest, armored knights in battle, a hand thrusting upwards, breaking the surface of a still, quiet pond, my hands reaching out for something. The soft light permeated everything, and I felt a strange tug — an impulse, a need. I let myself go, floating up into the glorious light, and the promise of peace. This time was different than the others, though. At first, the visions faded with the morning, leaving me refreshed and clear-headed. I felt cleansed. But then the sensation of being called lasted for hours after waking, and now it stays with me all day, an unbearable bliss and agony. My dream-hands hold a cup now, and when I bend to drink I know that I will never be harmed again. Why do you look so startled? Ah.... I see. You dreamt it too.

— Lana du Lac, Keeper.

WEAVER'S TIPS

About a month ago, the PCs all began to receive strange visions and dreams. About a day after a PC mentions these visions to anyone outside the PC group, she receives a message from Veruka, the Doomsayer. The message asks the entire cell (even if the PC has only mentioned her own visions) to come visit her, as she has information that can help them, and someone she wants them to meet. If the PC originally confided in Veruka, then Veruka forgoes the message and asks the PC to bring her cell to the Sepulcher in three days time.

The meeting with Veruka takes place in the Sepulcher, and she introduces them to a Keeper named Parcival (see p. 75). Parcival is a frail man, with one leg missing at the hip. He looks at the PCs, and begins to describe their visions. While a few details may be off, he gets the main body of them exactly right. He then explains the history of his failed quest, and pleads with the PCs to complete what he could not. He asks them to meet him at the Sepulcher in a week.

RESOURCES

The dreams experienced by the Player Characters are the same that originally called to Parcival, Lana and Galad (see excerpt at the beginning of this scene). The finer details can be tailored to the character's circumstances, however. The promise of peace inherent in the dream could be tied to a recurring enemy, perhaps. Ambitious Weavers familiar with Arthurian lore could also attempt to tie the PCs to various characters in the story.

Information on Veruka the Wraith and the Sepulcher, her home, can be found on pp. 104 and 109 of the *Tribe 8 Rulebook*. Characters who have yet to meet Veruka should see this summons to her as momentous, because of the respect all Fallen seem to have for her. Information on Parcival appears on page 75.

If the Players decide they do not want anything to do with Parcival, the visions will continue. They may nevertheless meet Cora the Doomsayer in the next scene, who can provide some background, or they may uncover stories of his quest through their own means. Other soothsayers can and will interpret the PCs' visions, telling them they are dreaming of a powerful relic in the Outlands. If they do undertake the quest without Parcival's aid or blessing, the reactions of other characters may be different. They will not receive Parcival's shield in Act One, Scene 3 (see p. 69) and without it, the ghosts of Lana and Galad (see pp. 76-77) will not recognize the PCs as friends. They may treat them as a threat to the Grail. The Grail King and Grail Bearer (see p. 79) will recognize the PCs' roll in the destiny of the Grail, however, but may be less helpful. Whether or not Parcival is summoned to become the new Grail King in the quest's climax (see p. 74) is up to the Weaver.

SCENE TWO: LEGENDS ON THE WIND

You want to know what he was looking for? Well, there are lots of tales about it, to be sure. Most of them go something like this: Back when all the Fatimas were young and Mary still lived, a powerful artifact was created that had the power to turn men into gods and bring salvation to humankind. As the legends go, the Fatimas realized that the artifact would eclipse their power and bring an end to the dependence of the Tribes. They were unable to destroy it, and so they sent a group of Tribals out into the wilderness to keep it out of the hands of mankind. Now those stories all sound like nothing but poppycock to me, but Parcy found something down there, and lost a leg for it, too!

— Cora Moira'on, Doomsayer

WEAVER'S TIPS

The PCs should spend the next week gathering supplies for the quest. This scene only applies if they choose to do some digging for information on this Percival character. Any questions they ask will get the same response: they should go talk to Cora. Cora is a Doomsayer (ex-Yagan) who tells fortunes from her small, garishly-colored tent in Bazaar. She has made a point of collecting rumors and stories about a strange and powerful artifact that is supposedly stashed away down in Squat territory by a bunch of Tribals.

With some prodding, Cora reveals that she was a Marian before she was a Yagan. She was quite young when Mary died, but she was already one of Her favorites. She recalls a "bit of nothing" that Mary always carried around with Her, that may have been a piece of another Fatima. It vanished before Mary died, and Cora thinks that it may be the artifact of the stories. But who knows... maybe they're all just fiction...

RESOURCES

A collection of ribbons, scraps and sheets sewn together haphazardly, Cora's tent is one of the well-known sights in Bazaar. A hanging outside bears the image of a glass ball, and the scrawled message in Tribal speak: *Fortoones Tolled, Tscharms Miksed, Fyootures Seen*. More information on Cora appears on page 78.

SCENE THREE: SLINGS AND ARROWS

Galad leaned back, stretching. "You know what I miss?" he asked the empty air. "Sore muscles. It just isn't the same anymore." The spirit shook his ectoplasmic head ruefully, then loosed his control over his form. The glowing stuff began to dissipate, his body blurring like a view through a rain-slicked window.

Soft laughter floated on the wind as a second shape began to take form in the otherwise empty clearing. Galad watched with mild interest as a warm green glow grew brighter, gathering and coalescing into the form of a slender, dark-eyed woman. Lana du Lac thumbed her nose at him as her features solidified, her long, straight hair unruffled by the blowing wind.

"You can't be serious!" she laughed, her form wavering slightly. "Ten years, and you're still complaining? I certainly don't miss aches and pains and wounds and scars. I..." She cut off suddenly, as the sound of footsteps broke through the silence. The two specters faded from view, vanishing into nothingness as a heavy, dirt-encrusted grate swung open and a small group climbed out into the sunshine.

WEAVER'S TIPS

A week has passed, and the group collects at the Sepulcher. The PCs are met by Percival alone — he says that Veruka had other business to attend to. He is carrying a plain gray shield that is more than two-thirds of his height. After everyone has arrived, Percival takes them to a bolt-hole nearby, one that opens up into the network of Keeper tunnels.

The group travels through the Keeper tunnels, which spit them out at the northern tip of a peninsula across the Great River. Percival thanks them effusively, and says that he wants to give them a gift to aid them in their trials. He turns to the leader of the group, and hands her his shield. He then turns and vanishes back into the tunnels, unable to follow the Player Characters because of his missing leg. The PCs strike out, guided by their visions. In game terms, any character with any one of the Eminences of Fate, Wisdom or Mystery, the Aspect of Dream Travel, or the Skill of Dreaming can detect the Grail by rolling Dreaming, PSY or Synthesis. They begin with a Threshold of 6, but every five days that pass reduce the Threshold by 1. The MoS indicates the strength of the feeling, leading the cell deeper and deeper into the Southern Outlands. The following events can occur at the Weaver's discretion in the early days of their journeys:

- While traveling through the Keeper tunnels, the group runs into some antagonistic Keepers. They aren't too pleased that Percival has been showing outsiders the secret passages. The Keepers are on a hair trigger, and have very short tempers.
- Tripping merrily along their way, the group plummets into a Squat pit trap. Dug months back to catch animals for food, it seems to have been abandoned by its creator. Or has it?
- Luther Boarhead has heard rumors of a precious artifact in his territory, and he's determined to get his hands on it too. He's sent out patrols to follow and eavesdrop on the group, and once they get a good idea of where the PCs are headed, the Squats strike. See *Vimary Sourcebook*, p. 115, for more on Boarhead.
- Tot'lynd the Wretched, a minor Z'bri Lord, has set up a holding on Mt. Santhil in Squat territory. The visions are telling the PCs to go straight through the claimed lands. Going around would take weeks, and going through might be deadly. Even if they try to avoid these lands, a marauding group of Tot'lynd's monstrosities, led by a Gek'roh wolf, may jump the party as they walk through the dense forest. The creatures all bear Tot'lynd's seal (see p. 78) somewhere visible on their bodies.
- A PC who can detect spiritual or ghostly activity may catch a glance of Lana and Galad. Catapulted into the spirit realm, they chose to remain attached to the physical realm as ghosts. They are now bound to the power of the Grail, bolstering the Marians' fading energies when they can. They watch out for the PCs over the course of the adventure, and has a good chance of spotting them. If contacted, they will corroborate Percival's story, and encourage the PCs on their way. They have limited physical abilities, but will do what they can to aid the party.

6. Sangreal

Eventually, after as much hardship as the Weaver feels is appropriate, the cell will discover the resting place of the Grail. It is at the threshold of this simple shack that Act Two begins.

RESOURCES

The shield Parcival gives the PCs was a gift from Lana on his 20th birthday. The kite-shaped shield is made from aluminum, backed by wood. It is a solid matte gray, almost two thirds the height of a man, and does not reflect light. It's game statistics are as follows (see p. 102. for combat rules for shields):

ACC: -2, Parry: +3, AD +6, Bl, Shd (20), STR (-1).

There is one tunnel remaining to connect Horn and Vimary with the Outlands (see **Vimary Sourcebook**, p. 71). The Keepers are quite possessive, unwilling to let any others in on their secret entrance. Parcival may have put himself in grave danger by revealing its existence, but the prize is just too great a temptation. Use the Keeper archetype on page 112, if necessary.

If you stage an attack by Tot'lynd's monstrosities, use the Gek'roh and Monstrosity archetypes, p. 112, in numbers appropriate to the skill level of the group. See pp. 76-77 for game statistics and background for Lana and Galad.

ACT II: THE GRAIL KING

In which the questors find and lose the Grail.

WEAVER'S SECRETS: THE HOLY GRAIL

Besides Joan, Mary was the Fatima who cared the most for their Brother Joshua. She was stunned by His death, and as His body lay, broken and empty, She crept forward and took away a small portion of one of His ribs. She carried it from that point onward, and when anyone asked, would simply reply that it was a reminder that some things can never be forgiven.

Mary placed an illusion on the artifact, shielding its nature from prying eyes. As She began to grow weak, She bound the members of Solace — Her favorite Moon Circle (see p. 25) — into that illusion, using their life force to maintain the veil of obfuscation.

The Grail is a piece of Joshua, imbued with the essence of Mary. It is thought to be the only dual-Fatimal artifact in existence, and the only one to combine the essences of both Joshua and Mary. It has a vague intelligence, though no sentence. The Grail has a remarkable sense of self-preservation, and chooses its destined protectors carefully.

SCENE ONE: THE WISHING CUP

Galad's sword sliced cleanly through the last of the vines, and he sheathed it with a practiced movement. Parcival grabbed a handful of the green cords and pushed them aside, holding the curtain back for Galad and Lana to pass through. He followed them, emerging into an unnaturally bare clearing.

A small shack sat in the middle of the field, its ramshackle exterior not particularly welcoming. The trio stood for a moment in shock, each reliving the visions they had seen, visions which predicted this moment in perfect detail. With a cry of joy, Parcival dropped his heavy gear and shield and made a break for the door. Cursing a blue streak, Lana followed him, with Galad close behind.

WEAVER'S TIPS

The PCs should discover the Grail's resting place in much the same way their predecessors did a decade ago (see narrative, above). Upon entering the one-room shack, the PCs see the Grail. It rests on the altar at the far end of the room. It radiates immense power, and the closer the PCs get to it, the more distorted the scene seems to become. The light shining through the windows grows hazy, shapes change perspective slowly and time seems to warp, giving the scene a dreamlike feel. The Grail is a conduit between Dream and the physical world, and their proximity to it is drawing them partially into Dream as well. A Perceptive PC (PER Threshold 5) may notice two extra people present (Lana and Galad), who are only visible in peripheral vision.

There is a line etched on the stone floor, marking out a square around the altar. Upon close examination, it seems to be made up of tightly packed runes. Anyone trying to step across the line must make pass a WIL test against a Threshold of 6, or not be able to force themselves to cross. This roll may be repeated up to two times per PC, and after that the PC encounters what feels like a stone wall blocking their passage. Inanimate objects can cross the line without interference.

Once a PC touches the Grail, it vanishes. A PC connected to the spiritual realm may hear a faint howl of anguish, and the ghostly forms of Lana and Galad vanish. A search of the premises reveals no sign of the artifact, and any Dream searching will give only a faint indication of its location, some miles to the east.

RESOURCES

The interior room is large, much larger than the outside of the shack would indicate. It is a rectangular room, furnished with exquisitely carved wooden chairs. Tapestries hang along the walls, depicting scenes from the Liberation. A large stone altar sits at one end, with a cup-like object resting on its highly polished surface. All automatically identify this object as the Grail. (A PER test, Threshold 4, will identify the artifact as Fatimal, Threshold 6 to determine that it contains the essences of two Fatimas.) A lance and great-sword hang on the wall above the altar, crossing each other, with their points to the sky.

Solace Circle, the band of Marians who guard the Grail, were originally three strong, but the woman designated the Grail Maiden died five years ago, the victim of a strange fever. The other two are nearing death, and their weakening powers demand that the Grail be within very close proximity for their illusion-weaving to have any effect. See p. 70 for more details.

SCENE TWO: TO SLEEP...

"You touched the Grail? Well, it was only to be expected. It was not meant for the likes of you. Oh, you may have been called, your destiny intertwined with its needs, but you were not ready. You are not ready. It is a thing of purity and light, and your hands are stained with the blood of a thousand deaths.

How to take it, then? The Grail cannot be touched by any with impure hearts and minds, nor any with the stain of death. She saw to that when She created its power. I can give you what you need, I can grant you salvation. But think on this — do you truly deserve it?

— The Grail Bearer, Marian

WEAVER'S TIPS

Shortly after the Grail's disappearance, two figures in white robes rush in. They are the Grail King and Grail Bearer (see p. 79), the ones charged with protecting the Grail. They confront the PCs and demand to know what they've done. They say nothing until the PCs give them an explanation.

The Marians then explain that their strength was the power source for the illusions shielding the Grail from searchers. The Grail Bearer continues the story, stating that the blood on the PCs' hands has made them impure, and to be able to use the Grail, they need to be absolved. She has the power to purify them, if they accept. If not, they won't be able to touch the Grail without it vanishing again. The dialogue above is part of her address to the PCs.

Once the PCs have agreed, the Grail Bearer instructs the group to kneel before her. She uses the Marian Eminence of Purity (see p. 85) to absolve them. The Grail Bearer emphasizes that the absolution is not permanent — it merely wipes away the sins of their past. If any one of them should draw the blood of another — human, animal or Z'bri — that person will once again become tainted. The absolution ritual requires each character concerned to take an oath to do all in her power to return the Grail to the Bearer and King. If they breach this oath — i.e. by deciding to keep the Grail for themselves — they immediately become tainted again, and the Grail vanishes once more.

RESOURCES

The visions of the Grail and the meeting with such powerful, mythical characters as the Grail King and Grail Bearer, will probably be enough incentive for the Player Characters to go off in search of the holy artifact once more and return with it. If another reason is necessary, the Grail Bearer may imply (or say outright) that there will be great reward for the PCs if they return with the Grail. She is referring to the new Eminence they will receive (see p. 72).

SCENE THREE: ...PERCHANCE TO DREAM

Water, rushing water, speeding past me as I sit. I spin, swirled by the rushing tides, the white-tipped waves jumping to meet me as I pass through. The spray covers my face and I cannot see where the dancing water takes me now. The planks are rough beneath my knees and hands, the jagged splinters digging into my skin. I crawl forward.

* * *

A massive building, its spire reaching up to the heavens, beckons me as I walk up the path. The steps are stone, fractures glinting in the sunlight. Do they hide crystals, that they shine so? I see my hand, reaching out. The wooden doors swing open at my merest touch, colors flashing into my eyes as the sunlight falls on the shards of glass littering the floor. People surround me, parting to let me pass. I see cloaks, shapes, shadows in the shadows, no faces to distract me from my purpose. I step forward.

* * *

I cup the bowl in my quivering hands, and watch my blood stream down the sides to fill the cup with a shimmering, clear liquid. Water/notwater, I lift it to my lips and drink.

— Percival du Libre, from his early writings.

WEAVER'S TIPS

Once Percival and the PCs leave to find the Grail anew, the Marian's cleansing takes effect. Now pure, they are attuned to the Grail and receive visions and dreams indicating its new location (like the one above). The visions all indicate water travel, in an easterly direction. Heading east brings the group to the shore of a small lake, which feeds into a river. The PCs have to build themselves a craft of some kind, as no boat is readily available. The Weaver should take care to ensure that the feel of this journey is entirely different. Whereas the first leg of the journey was slow and uncertain, the group has now had a taste of the incredible power of the Grail, not to mention the fact that they have been completely absolved — in effect spiritually reborn. The Weaver should feel free to add many stages to this trip, including visions and encounters with spirits who can sense the purity of the characters. Following are some possible events:

6. Sangreal

- A storm blows up, sending the raft spinning off in all directions. Can the PCs stay together, and find their bearings again after it all blows over?
- About halfway down the river, the banks close in to narrow it to about half its previous width, and rocks on the bottom churn the river into raging rapids.
- As they move away from Santhil Mountain, a group of Z'bri monstrosities erupt from the river. They all bear the insignia of Tot'lynd's creatures. Use the Monstrosity archetype, p. 112.
- After they leave the river, a Squat clan attacks. They're part of the force that's been tailing the PCs for weeks, and they're getting frustrated and hungry. They're afraid of disobeying Boarhead, but they need the group's supplies and don't believe in the existence of any powerful artifact.

ACT III: LE MAITRE DE L'ASCENSION

In which the Grail is retrieved and the new Grail King is chosen.

The Grail is now in the possession of a group of Joshuans known as the Revanche Cell (see pp. 80-81). The three members — Claude, Marc and Anne — live in Savior most of the year, but have come down to the south shore of the Great River to teach Claude's son, François, about real wilderness survival. They also plan to travel to the ruins of Mahgog, to show the boy some of the realities of their never-ending war.

About a week ago, the Joshuans began receiving visions that contain strange and eerie portents. These visions are the same as those received by the PC group. Anne dove into Dream, and led her fellows to the source of the power: an old church.

The church corresponded with their visions exactly, and they entered with awe. The Grail rested on the altar, and radiated immense power. Marc recognized it not only as a Fatimal artifact, but as a Joshuan artifact. Claude reached out to touch it in reverence, but Anne blocked his path. She recalled a Joshuan prophecy (see p. 66), which hinted at disaster if the artifact is used by one who is not meant to wield it. Claude withdrew his hand and called for the cell to set up camp in the church and see what would happen next. There they stay until the PCs' arrival.

SCENE ONE: MERLIN'S SIGN

Then there entered into the hall the Holy Grail covered with white samite, but there was none might see it, nor who bare it. And there was all the hall fulfilled with good odours, and every knight had such meats and drinks as he best loved in this world. And when the Holy Grail had been borne through the hall, then the holy vessel departed suddenly, that they wist not where it became: then had they all breath to speak. And then the king yielded thankings to God, of His good grace that he had sent them. Certes, said the king, we ought to thank our Lord Jesu greatly for that he hath shewed us this day, at the reverence of this high feast of Pentecost.

Now, said Sir Gawaine, we have been served this day of what meats and drinks we thought on; but one thing beguiled us, we might not see the Holy Grail, it was so precious covered. Wherefore I will make here avow, that to-morn, without longer abiding, I shall labour in the quest of the Sangreal, that I shall hold me out a twelvemonth and a day, or more if need be, and never shall I return again unto the court till I have seen it more openly

— Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte d'Arthur*

WEAVER'S TIPS

The trail leads the party right to the ancient building from their visions. The spires are overgrown with ivy and high arching windows line the walls, their glass long gone. Stone steps lead up to a pair of huge wooden doors. A PER test (Threshold 4) reveals that there are scrape marks in the dirt on the stairs, and with a MoS of 2, the PC sees that they're footprints — and they're fresh. Someone has been here very recently.

The huge doors scrape on the stone as the PCs push them open, the sound echoing in the huge chamber beyond. The group's eyes take a moment to adjust, and when they can see clearly in the gloom, there are four armed warriors standing, tensed for battle, at the other end of the hall. At this point, there are a number of possible actions and consequences.

If they choose to fight the Joshuans, the group must remember that, to use the Grail, at least one person must remain "pure." Assuming the PCs win, (which will *not* be easy; see Joshuan statistics, pp. 80-81), the Grail is gone! There is a quiet scuffling sound coming from behind the altar. It's a young boy, (François, see p. 81) his face wet with tears. He screams when they come near him, hugging the Grail close to his chest. If the PCs can get him to talk, they find out that they just slaughtered his family. The Weaver should try to nudge them towards not killing the boy, as he is obviously pure enough to use and carry the artifact. Once the PCs have the Grail, continue on to Scene Two.

If they parlay with the Joshuans, the PCs find out that they too received visions of the Grail, but the visions didn't begin until after the Grail vanished from the shack. After some discussion, the Joshuans agree to let the PCs take the Grail, as long as Revanche can accompany them back to the shack. Their destinies are now intertwined, and they want to see this play out.

RESOURCES

Once a purified PC picks up the Grail, it fills halfway with a clear, sweet liquid. This liquid never spills or runs out. Every character who drinks from the Grail feels a surge of bliss, power and energy. At this point, each one of them gains one of the Joshuan or Marian Eminences (see pp. 85-86) in addition to their previous ones. No matter how many times a PC may drink, they only receive one additional Eminence each. Do not be too quick to reveal this to the Players. Which Eminence they receive is at the Weaver's discretion, and the PCs should simply notice strange things happening when they exert Synthesis.

SCENE TWO: MORDRED'S BLADE

Parcival's eyes snapped open. He lay there in the pitch blackness for a moment, trying to recover his bearings. Soft voices outside, the glow of a candle under the door, a small room.... ah. He was at Cora's. What had woken him? everything seemed to be as it should. He sat up, swinging his leg over the edge of the narrow bed. He closed his eyes for a moment, casting his mind back.

There. It had not been the addition of a stimulus which had woken him, but the lack of one. The steady ache which had accompanied his every living moment for ten years was gone. The loss and guilt no longer pierced his heart with every breath. The Grail had been found.

WEAVER'S TIPS

As the Player Characters (and possibly the Joshuans) journey back to the resting place of the Grail King and Bearer, their enemies attack. The illusions masking the Grail are falling rapidly, leaving the cell vulnerable. One or the other of these encounters should be chosen at this point, unless the cell is strong enough to deal with the overkill of both.

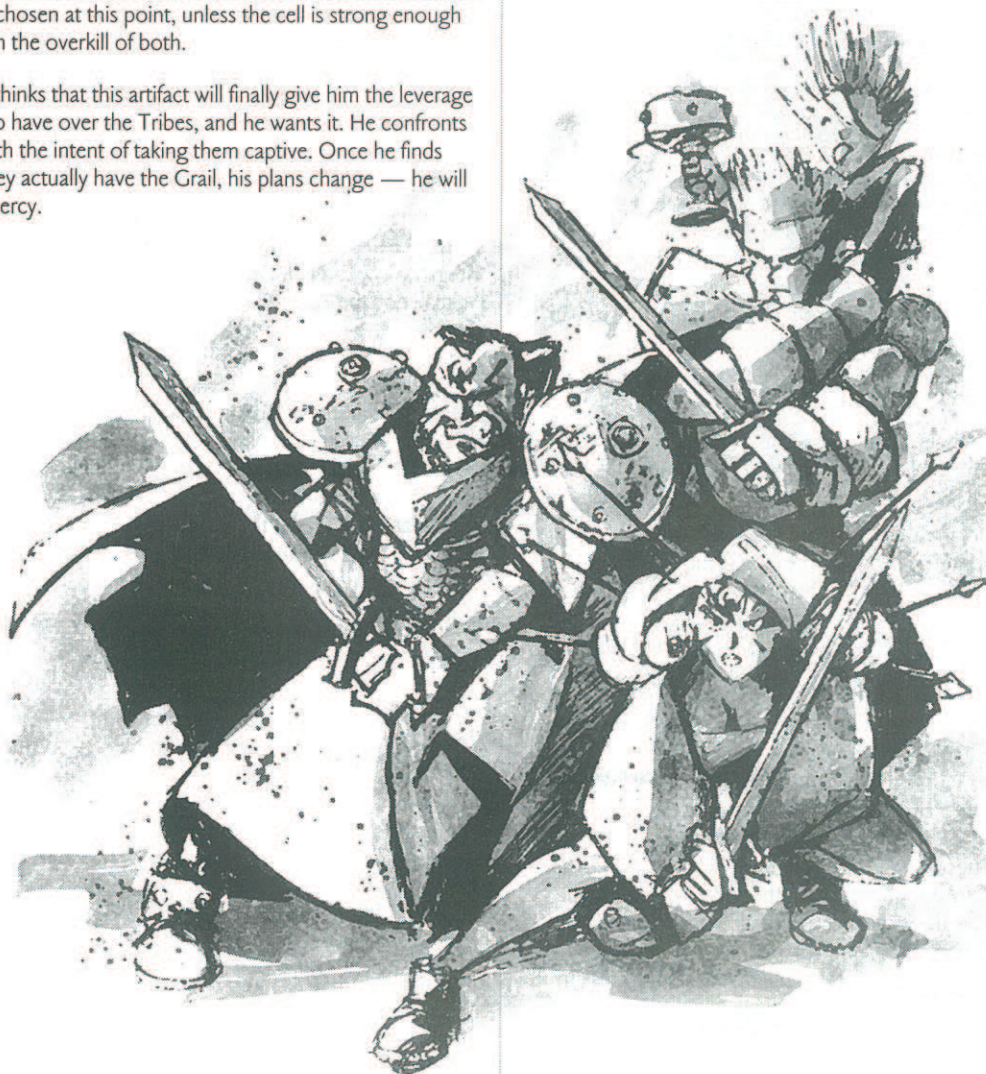
Boarhead thinks that this artifact will finally give him the leverage he needs to have over the Tribes, and he wants it. He confronts the PCs with the intent of taking them captive. Once he finds out that they actually have the Grail, his plans change — he will grant no mercy.

Tot'lynd has felt the ripples in Dream as the protections on the Grail degrade with the failing powers of the Marians. He knows that the PCs have the Grail, and is willing to do anything to get it. The PCs have wiped out most of his monstrosities, however, so he's pretty much reduced to sending mutated serfs... and if they fail, he'll go himself.

RESOURCES

Tot'lynd the Wretched left H'l Kar years ago, creating his tower in the Outlands as a personal refuge. He has been aware of the Grail for some time, and once the veil of illusion was ripped away he sent his troops out to retrieve it. See stats, p. 78. For Tot'lynd's serf troops, use the Serf archetype, p. 112, with Melee 2/0, Combat Sense 1/0, Dodge 1/0 and Hand-to-Hand 2/0.

For Luther Boarhead's troops, use the Squat archetype, p. 112. They are accompanied by a commander, using the Joanite Warrior archetype, p. 112, with an armor rating of 5.



SCENE THREE: MORGANA'S ISLE

Galad perched on the roof, basking in the sun. He sighed, looking up at the blue sky. It just wasn't right, not feeling the warmth. He rolled over, dangling his head over the edge as the door opened and an elderly woman stepped out. He grinned disarmingly at her, and she glanced up and laughed. "You feel it too, Galad? They're on their way back."

He released his hold over his body and coalesced on the ground in front of the Grail Bearer. "And it's about time! Begging your pardon, milady, but I'm more than a bit tired of being tied to that thing. Ten years is more than enough."

Her smile faded slightly, and her eyes lost their sparkle. When she spoke next, her voice was quiet and resigned. "You should try being bound to it for more than fifty."

Galad lost his trademark smile, and he drew on all his energy, forcing his 'body' into a completely solid form. He drew her into his arms, and dropped a kiss on the top of her head. "But it will all be over soon. And then we all can rest."

WEAVER'S TIPS

The group finally arrives back in the clearing. The shack is still there, but now there is no ivy to be seen. It stands in the middle of the grassy area, the front door slightly ajar. The Grail King lies on the couch, and he can barely open his eyes to look at the group when they walk in. He is skeletal, his skin seemingly draped across his bare bones. His white robe is stained and tattered, and the wrinkles on his face look to have been etched there with acid. The Grail Bearer takes the Grail and bathes the Grail King's face with the water from it, and then gives it to him to drink. When the water touches his face the wrinkles melt away, and when he swallows, the group can see the flesh returning to his bones.

The Grail King speaks to the entire group, emphasizing the importance of safeguarding the Grail. Finally, the Grail King comes to the point. The Grail has been keeping him alive for years, waiting for the one who would succeed him. Now the time has come, and he can rest. The King then raises his hands and speaks softly, calling on 'the heroes of the past' to come forward to gain their reward. At that, Lana and Galad seem to fade into reality, becoming more solid as the King speaks.

Galad comes forward and, if the PCs have not encountered them already, introduces himself and Lana. He requests that the PC who is carrying it give him Parcival's shield. If the shield has been lost or the PCs refuse to hand it over, Galad will ask the PCs to describe Parcival as they saw him last. At this, the Grail begins to glow, adding its light to the aura that already surrounds the two spirits. They close their eyes and link hands. A vague outline of a person appears in the middle of the room, and it slowly solidifies into Parcival himself. He looks around, astonished and speechless, until his eyes fall on the two ghosts. He falls to his knee in shock, tears running down his face.

If the Joshuans are there, the King dubs them the Knights of the

Grail. A soft glow surrounds them for a moment, then fades away. The King hands the Grail to Parcival. He holds it up to the sky, and then drinks from it. As he does so, his face takes on the smooth and unmarked quality of the King's. The King and Bearer fall, their bodies crumbling to dust before they hit the floor.

Parcival makes a speech about owing his life and the fulfillment of his destiny to the PCs, and how he and his friends are now in their debt. He promises that he will come to aid them in the time of their greatest need.

They make their good-byes, and step away from the PCs. The shack, Joshuans, Avalon cell and Grail all vanish, slowly fading away into nothing. The quest is over, and the PCs make their slow return to Horn.

RESOURCES: OUTCOMES

PCs who drank from the Grail will find their new Eminence fading over the next few weeks. At the Weaver's discretion, PCs may elect to keep their new Eminence and lose an old one. This may also be a good opportunity to raise their Synthesis Skill.

Along with new Synthesis powers, the PCs have a debt owed to them by Parcival, a powerful ally. The PCs may call upon him once to aid them in battle, or to answer a question, or to help them solve a problem. Once they have called in the favor, Parcival will vanish and not respond to a PC's call — unless it directly relates to the Grail. Also, Parcival may well appear and call in the PCs to aid him in some venture, in exchange for another favor. It is also possible that Marians operating secretly within the Tribes and Fallen will detect the aura of their lost Fatima upon the Player Characters. Some Black Marians may see this as an affront and seek their deaths, but the Martyrs who lead the hidden tribe will likely look upon the PCs as potential allies. They could even be introduced to the mysteries of Mary even if they have no Marian heritage. If this quest occurs during or after the **Children of Lilith** cycle, the Children may also sense the Joshuan essence on the PCs and recruit them, as might some Joshuans in the wilderness. See pp.14-21 for information on the Marians, pp. 7-13 on the Joshuans, and the **Children of Lilith** cycle supplement for the Children.

PARCIVAL LIBRE, KEEPER

Parcival, originally named John Ewans, is a Marian, the oldest son of an oldest daughter. He has no knowledge of his origins, as his parents died when he was very young. He is single-minded and obsessive, seizing on a goal and focusing on it to the exclusion of all else, including meals and personal grooming. This has made him extremely good at resurrecting devices of the past, but tends to somewhat hamper his social interactions. He also tends to expound, describing his ideas at length to anyone who'll listen. He keeps bolt-holes and hideouts across Vimary and Hom. He is crushed by guilt stemming from the failure of his quest and the deaths of his friends, and is waiting for the day when someone will come forward to help him fulfill his destiny and correct his sins.

Faction: Keeper

Highlights: Obsessive, distracted, manic

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	0	APP	-2	BLD	0	CRE	+2	FIT	-1
INF	-2	KNO	+2	PER	+1	PSY	-2	WIL	+2
STR	0	HEA	0	STA	25	UD	3	AD	3

SKILLS

Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.
Combat Sense	1	+1	Melee	1	0	R/W (Tribal)	1	+2
Dreaming	1	-2	Mythology	3	+2	Survival	2	+2
Leadership	2	-2	R/W (Keeper)	3	+2	T-lore (Earth Sc.)	2	+2

TECHNOSMITHING

Technosmithing Skill Rating:	2
Formulas:	Remembrance

Equipment: Staff, metal leg (articulated knee), dagger (AD +3), miscellaneous technological items.





LANA DU LAC, KEEPER GHOST

Born Terry Chapman, she soon discovered that her greatest joy lay in discovering and rebuilding new and old forms of weaponry. She assembled an immense arsenal over the years, and constantly researched modifications. This Grail thing sounded like fun — she just hoped that she could convince Percival to let her take it apart to figure out how it works. After the Z'bri attack she found herself drifting through Dream, rootless. She gathered her mental strength and brought herself back to the physical realm, where she remains as a spirit. Lana knows that Percival will be back to find his destiny, and she plans to wait around until he gets his act together.

Lana's dry wit and practical approach to things has not lessened with her death, and she still insists, as she always has, on "doing things proper." She eschews shortcuts, and throws herself into tasks with single-minded devotion.

Faction: Keeper (ghost)

Highlights: Dead, pragmatic, beautiful

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	+1	APP	+1	BLD	-1/+2	CRE	+1	FIT	0/+1
INF	+1	KNO	0	PER	+2	PSY	+1	WIL	+2
STR	0/+2	HEA	+1/+2	STA	30/40	UD	0	AD	4/7

When two Attributes appear, those after the slash refer to Lana's ghostly form (Physical Attributes are only equivalents in case of spiritual combat).

SKILLS

Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.
Archery	2	+1	Firearms	2	+1	R/W (Keeper)	1	0
Combat Sense	2	+2	Melee	2	+1	T-lore (Mech.)	2	0
Dodge	2	+1	Mythology	1	0			

TECHNOSMITHING

Technosmithing Skill Rating:	3
Formulas:	Jury Rig

GALAD PELLAS, KEEPER GHOST

Brion Torren always felt responsible for his younger cousin, and when John decided to form a cell, it was only natural that Brion would go along. It didn't hurt that Terry (a.k.a. Lana) had joined up — he had been carrying a torch for her for years. He took the name Galad, but still used his birth name when dealing with folks outside of the cell. Galad is easygoing, never taking anything to heart. He was used to his cousin's strangeness, and made it his responsibility to keep Parcival calm, fed and out of danger. He blames himself for the wound Parcival took during the battle, and has never quite believed that he's actually deceased. After all, he's still here, isn't he?

Faction: Keeper (ghost)

Highlights: light-hearted, friendly, wistful

ATTRIBUTES

ACI	+1/0	APP	0	BLD	+2/+1	CRE	0	FIT	+1
INF	0	KNO	0	PER	+1	PSY	+1	WIL	-1/+1
STR	+1	HEA	0/+1	STA	35	UD	7/5	AD	6/5

When two Attributes appear, those after the slash refer to Galad's ghostly form (Physical Attributes are only equivalents in case of spiritual combat).

SKILLS

Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.
Combat Sense	2	+1	Intimidate	2	+2/+1	Nav. (Land)	1	0
Firearms	1	0	Melee	2	0	Techlore (Elec.)	3	0
Hand-to-Hand	1	0	Mythology	1	0	Tinker	2	0

TECHNOSMITHING

Technosmithing Skill Rating:	2
Formulas:	Jury Rig





CORA MOIRA'ON, DOOMSAYER

Far older than she looks, Cora was one of Mary's favorites. When her Fatima died, Cora followed her family into the Tribe of Baba Yaga. She never adjusted to the change, however, and worshipped Mary in secret for years. Her daughter uncovered her secret and turned Cora in. She now lives in Hom, telling fortunes out of her brightly-colored tent. She is pragmatic and staid, her blunt and forthright nature garnering her as many enemies as friends. If she thinks someone's full of it, she lets them know. Loudly. She treasures her memories of her first Fatima, and she gathers stories and tales of Her. Many of Cora's memories center around a strange artifact that Mary used to carry. Funny how it vanished, and no one seemed to notice. Cora is well acquainted with Veruka the Wraith, and the two keep in contact regularly.

Outlook: Doomsayer (Fallen Marian/Yagan)

Highlights: Blunt, friendly, strident

Eminences: Mystery and Fate

Attributes: AGI -1, BLD +1, FIT -2, KNO +2, PER +1, PSY -1, WIL +2, STA 30, UD 4, AD 4

Skills: Dreaming 1/-1, Gambling 2/+1, Hagglng 2/0, Lore (Grail) 2/+2, Ritual 1/+2, Trade 2/+2, Synthesis (Dream Travel) 2



TOT'LYND THE WRETCHED

Tot'lynd fled the H'l Kar years ago when his poorly thought out rebellion went horribly awry. Abandoned by his allies, he took to the hills of the Outlands, swearing vengeance on all who stood in the way of his bid for power. Tot'lynd has spent the intervening years building his power base, and fully intends to make another strike on the Baron — once he's strong enough. He has felt the stirrings of a great source of energy and spiritual power in the Outlands recently, and has become determined to lay his hands on what may be his best hope for success. Paranoid to the extreme, he places his personal seal on the bodies of all of his servants, making them easily identifiable, even from a great distance.

House: Melanis (Joh'an)

Highlights: paranoid, grasping, desperate

Atmosphere: Melanis

Attributes: AGI +1, CRE +1, FIT +2, INF +1, KNO +1, PER +3, PSY +1, WIL +2, STA 35, UD 5, AD 5

Skills: Combat Sense 2/+3, Hand-to-Hand 1/+1, Human Perception 3/+1, Leadership 2/+1, Melee 1/+1, Notice 3/+3, Seduction 2/0, Sundering (Animation, Chaining) 2.

THE GRAIL KING

Summoned by Mary to carry out her most demanding task, the man who would become the Grail King left his family and everything he knew to go into the wilderness to fulfill his destiny. Now old and frail, he gladly awaits the day when his chosen successor will come to set him free from his duties.

Faction: Marian

Highlights: wise, venerable, spiritual

Eminences: Purity and Recognition

Attributes: AGI -2, APP +2, BLD -2, FIT -3, INF +3, KNO +2, PER +2, PSY +2, WIL +3, STR -2, STA 20, UD 1, AD 1

Skills: Dreaming 3/+2, Human Perception 1/+2, Lore (Mary/Grail) 3/+2, Mythology 2/+2, Ritual 2/+2, Read/Write (Tribal) 2/+2, Synthesis 3.



THE GRAIL BEARER, MARIAN

When her compatriots answered Mary's call, the young woman now known as the Grail Bearer saw no other choice but to go along. She never fully overcame her longing for her long-gone home, and eagerly anticipates the end of her long bondage. Her loneliness was lessened about ten years ago, when two spirits in turn became bound to the Grail. She formed a tight friendship with the two, and speaks more openly with them than her partner.

Faction: Marian

Highlights: Wise, spiritual, sad

Eminences: Purity and Recognition

Attributes: AGI -1, APP +1, FIT -1, INF +2, KNO +2, PER +2, PSY +2, WIL +3, STA 35, UD 3, AD 3

Skills: Dreaming 3/+3, Healing 2/+2, Herbalism 1/+2, Lore (Mary/Grail) 3/+2, Mythology 2/+2, Ritual 2/+2, Read/Write (Tribal) 1/+2, Synthesis 3.





CLAUDE, JOSHUAN VANGUARD

The leader of the Revanche cell, Claude is a skilled warrior with a cool demeanor. Nothing surprises him anymore, not even the sudden appearance of a mystical object of powerful origin. Claude has always prided himself on his control of any situation. While presenting a front of cool detachment to the world at large, he is intensely devoted to his children, especially his oldest son François, and his friends know full well that it is best not to be anywhere nearby when someone threatens any of his youngsters.

Tribe: Joshuan (Vanguard)

Highlights: Passionate, macho, volatile

Eminence: Vengeance

Attributes: AGI +1, BLD +1, CRE +1, FIT +1, WIL +1, STA 35, AD 8, UD 7

Skills: Combat Sense 2/0, Dodge 1/+1, Hand-to-Hand 2/+1, Leadership 2/0, Lore (Joshuan) 2/0, Melee 3/+1, Survival 2/+1, Tactics 1/+1

Equipment: Longsword (AD +10), Leather Armor (AR 5), Survival Gear



ANNE, JOSHUAN VANGUARD

Anne has spent her entire life researching and examining the prophecies of Joshua and the theories of Synthesis and Dream. She is convinced that there is a pattern and logic to the world, and that with careful examination and study everything can be made clear. She has a great deal of interest in the Fallen, as they pose the most interesting conflict with her current theories. Insular and introverted, she sends her lover, Marc, out to do the first-hand research while she remains in Savior.

Tribe: Joshuan (Vanguard)

Highlights: intense, logical, scholarly

Eminence: Force

Attributes: AGI +2, CRE +2, FIT +1, INF +1, KNO +2, PER +1, WIL +1, STA 30, UD 5, AD 5

Skills: Combat Sense 1/+1, Hand-to-Hand 2/0, Lore (Joshua) 3/+2, Lore (Fallen) 2/+2, Melee 2/0, Notice 1/+1, Read/Write (tribal) 1/+2, Survival 1/+2, Synthesis 2

Equipment: Notepad & stylus, Machete (AD +8), Leather Armor (AR 5), minimal Survival Gear

MARC, JOSHUAN OUTRUNNER

While Marc shares Anne's lust for knowledge and understanding, he cannot imagine anything worse than a life spent with his nose buried in sheaves of paper. He glories in nature, and has braved blizzards and ice storms for the sight of a perfect sunset from the top of a mountain. He considers himself Anne's partner, and her perfect compliment. While she remains with her diagrams and theories, he travels through Hom and Vimary, gathering information on and tales about the Tribes and Fallen. He has an immense network of contacts throughout the islands, none of whom know his true identity.

Tribe: Joshuan (Outrunner)

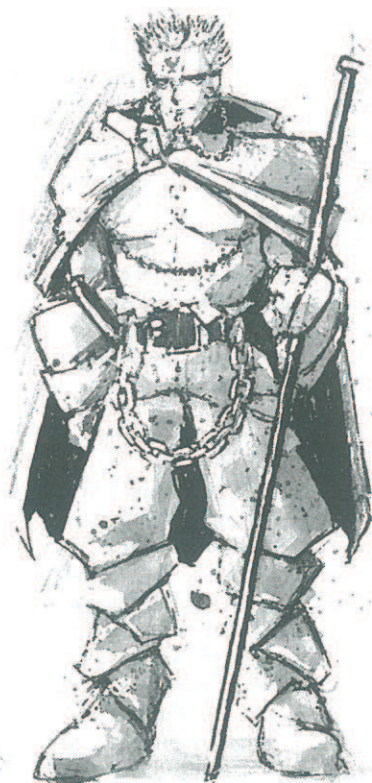
Highlights: curious, animated, involved

Eminence: Force

Attributes: AGI +1, CRE +1, FIT +1, PER +2, PSY +1, WIL +2, STA 30, UD 4, AD 4

Skills: Combat Sense 2/+2, Disguise 1/+1, Hand-to-Hand 1/+1, Investigation 3/+2, Lore (Fallen) 1/0, Lore (Joshua) 2/0, Melee 1/+1, Notice 2/+2, Read/Write (Tribal) 2/0, Survival 2/+1, Synthesis (Rage) 2

Equipment: Metal quarterstaff (AD +11), Soft Armor (AR 3), Survival Gear, Keeper tape-box and four voice-capture cartridges.



FRANÇOIS, JOSHUAN BOY

Relatively cynical for his nine years, François is still trying to figure everything out. He understands that his life will be one of running, always trying to keep three steps ahead of both the Fatimas and the Z'bri. He has no love for the Fatimas and Tribals, and doesn't know what to make of the Fallen. He thinks Keepers are great fun, though, and the one time that he was permitted to tag along with Marc on a visit to Olympus remains the high point of his short life.

Tribe: Joshuan

Highlights: young, cynical (demeanor only), innocent

Eminence: none

Attributes: AGI +1, BLD -2, CRE +1, KNO -1, PER +2, WIL +1, STA 15, UD 1, AD 1

Skills: Athletics 2/+1, Dodge 1/+1, Hand-to-Hand 1/+1, Notice 2/+2, Sneak 2/+1

Equipment: Soft Armor (AR 3), Sling (DM 5), Bola (DM 7)



WEAVING THE LOST TRIBES

Legends and myths, these are all the Lost Tribes are to many in Vimary. Even the survivors of the camps remember little of the Forgivee or the Ravager and their children, and most of what remains is now mingled with lies and half-truths. While Mary and Joshua exist in the myths of the Seven Tribes, their tribes have been forgotten. Why this is, none can say. Maybe it is a form of collective guilt stemming from the time they turned their backs on the children of the Ravager and Forgivee. Maybe after years of enslavement and pain in the camps, the fledgling tribes didn't want to mourn any longer. And so the Joshuans and Marians faded, bled into the landscape, and the Tribes marched forward, occasionally whispering about the Lost Tribes and wondering if the tales about them were true.

And they are... at least some of them, that is.

As a Weaver, the Lost Tribes present you with a unique element to add to your cycles, either as Player Characters, NPCs, or even just as plot devices. Like the Fallen and Keepers, the Lost Tribes are outsiders, one out of necessity, and the other out of choice. But unlike the Eighth Tribe or the Keepers, Marians and Joshuans consider themselves *part* of the Tribes, and carry on their duties in secret and beyond the eyes of the Shebans and the others. The Lost Tribes are not rebels or insurgents, but peoples who refuse to forget their Fatimas and their place in the greater scheme of things; the Lost Tribes stayed true to their Fatimas, becoming martyrs in the end.

Using Joshuans and Marians in a cycle requires some careful thought and planning, because the thing that makes these tribes unique is their mythical essence. Yes, Marians and Joshuans exist, but they do so in the cracks between the tribes, in that nebulous space between legend and reality. For the Lost Tribes to achieve their full potential in your cycle you must weave them in carefully. This section will help you do so.

THEMES

While the Joshuans and Marians are very different tribes, they share a number of themes by nature of their "mythic" status. Most of these themes are self-explanatory, but translating them into your quests and cycles can be a little difficult. As with any aspect of Weaving, any time and effort invested is usually rewarded ten-fold.

MYSTERY

This is a key theme for any quest/cycle involving the Lost Tribes, because once the Player Characters discover too much about the Lost Tribes, they cease being fantastic and become mundane. There are a number of ways to keep the Marians or Joshuans unknown and mysterious:

Settings: Encounters with the Lost Tribes should take place in locations that reflect their mythic qualities. A misty crag in the

Outlands where the trees are tall and ancient could serve as a backdrop for a meeting with Joshuans, and a smoky temple filled with books and candles, where everyone wears hoods and whispers in raspy voices, likewise makes an excellent setting for Marians.

Senses: When describing the Lost Tribes, try to describe them with reference to senses other than sight, or limit just how much you do describe. There are times when less is more, and this is one of them. Instead of going into a lengthy discussion of the Black Marian's tunic and all its accoutrements, maybe just describe the garment's dark color and how it seems to absorb light.

Coincidences: As Weaver you can take all manner of liberties to enhance your games, and "coincidences" are one of them. Around the Marians and Joshuans things just seem to happen. The Marian mentor always appears at dusk, and dark clouds and rain always announce a Joshuan Outrunner. Crowds get in the way if the Player cell is chasing a Joshuan, or a book describing a Marian Omen just happens to fall into the character's possession. The key here is to be subtle, not outlandish.

Even if the characters come from one of the Lost Tribes, it is important to maintain the sense of mystery about their tribes. This does not mean you keep your Players forever in the dark, but for every question answered, another three appear.

FATE/PREDESTINATION

The Lost Tribes define themselves according to their "fates," and for both the Marians and Joshuans a sense of prophecy is key. To these tribes, events do not occur randomly, but because of a predetermined order — the invisible hand of the One Goddess at work. As a result, they are far more fatalistic than the other tribes. This fatalistic attitude is both a strength and a weakness for the Lost Tribes, and you should convey both aspects when dealing with Marians and Joshuans. Here some tips involving Fate and Predestination:

Sacrifice: Both the Joshuans and Marians share a certain sense of martyrdom (though for different reasons), and are willing to do whatever it takes to remain faithful to their Fatimas and their duties. Lost Tribe PCs or NPCs should always feel that a greater cost than their lives hangs in the balance, that invisible forces are always at work. Foreshadowing is a tool that could be employed to great effect to highlight this sense of sacrifice among Marian and Joshuan characters.

Tragic Flaw: Prophecies and omens can make individuals lose sight of their own identities and purpose, forcing them to define themselves according to their fate. Instead of opening the character's eyes, prophecies have the potential to blind — a hindrance more than a blessing. Macbeth and Hamlet were victims of this and so, to an extent, are the Lost Tribes. When dealing with Lost Tribe characters, each should manifest this flaw in some form, even if minor: A Joshuan might take unnecessary risks, and a Marian might not let anyone get close to her.

LOST TRIBE CYCLES

Cycles with Joshuan or Marian PCs (or both) open a whole new set of possibilities for you as Weaver, giving you a new perspective of Vimary and the Seven Tribes to present to your Player Circle. Lost Tribe cycles work best as a break from a typical **Tribe 8** cycle, though if you are willing to put in the extra work they could easily work as long-lived cycles in their own right. By virtue of their natures Joshuan and Marian cycles will differ in content and style, but below are a number of ways to set them up as stand-alones or integrated into existing **Tribe 8** cycles:

Parallel Cycles: Potentially the most rewarding, parallel cycles involve running a traditional cycle alongside a Lost Tribe one and switching from one to the other during play. This can be done with two separate Player Circles or with one playing both normal and Lost Tribe characters. These types of cycles work extremely well with the Lost Tribes because of their outside and secretive nature. For example, a Fallen cell might be looking for a temple of Joshua somewhere in the Outlands, while Joshuan PCs work to recapture this temple from the Z'bri before the Fallen characters arrive. Pacing is important with parallel cycles, and Weavers can add a lot of tension by "fading to" at the right moment.

One-offs: Like typical **Tribe 8** cycles, a One-off would have the Player Circle design Lost Tribe characters and play with these. Such cycles are different than Fallen or tribal cycles and should be tailored to take advantage of the unique character of the Lost Tribes. For more information on One-offs see *Joshuan Cycles* and *Marian Cycles*, below.

Flashbacks: Flashbacks are essentially mini-quests that take place during the course of a traditional cycle, giving the Player Circle an eyewitness perspective of events that have happened or will happen. The Lost Tribes make excellent protagonists, given the insider information they have. After the events in *Children of Lilith*, a cell of Fallen may want to save Mahgog. A flashback could set the characters as the defenders of Mahgog during its final hour, or as members of the Vanguard trying to stop the Joshuans from fighting each other after they left Vimary and established the settlement of Mahgog. Lost Tribe flashbacks (or flashforwards) could also serve as prologues and epilogues, helping you establish the background or outcomes of your **Tribe 8** cycles.

Spin-offs: Just because your Player Circle completed your cycle, it doesn't mean their adventures end there. Spin-offs use the events of the preceding cycle as a jumping board to involve new characters. Spin-offs serve to give the Player Circle a break from their normal characters and a chance to try something new, and what better way than to use the Lost Tribes.

JOSHUAN CYCLES

The silent guards of Vimary, the Joshuans travel the wild Outlands keeping them safe. They know, as Joshua told them, that one day the tribes will leave Vimary and venture far from their cradle. Joshuan cycles give you an opportunity to let your hair down, as they tend to be more action-oriented. Instead of the complicated intrigues of the Fallen and the Tribes, Joshuan cycles focus on more immediate goals — e.g. the destruction of a Z'bri lord in the Outlands, trying to stop Warlord Boarhead from moving closer to Vimary, or searching for relics of Joshua. This is not to say that Joshuan cycles cannot have symbolic power or narrative depth. On the contrary, given the central role of the prophecy of Joshua has for the Fallen, Joshuan cycles could help shed light on the Fatimas and the current state of the tribes.

Take care, however, not to paint the Joshuans as one-dimensional (and here the theme of mystery must be reinforced). Yes, they are fighters and martyrs, but not all of them charge into battle wanting death. Some feel responsible for the unrest in Vimary and want to return to set things "straight" once more. Others, (including some of the Vanguard) feel the Eighth Tribe are impostors and not worthy of Joshua's Prophecy. Just like no two Evans are alike, neither are two Joshuans.

Potential Setups: Vanguard initiates sent to determine if the Eighth Tribe are indeed worthy of Joshua's Prophecy. Outrunner explorers charged with discovering new roads leading away from Vimary. A Z'bri-hunting party sent to free a Keeper village from a Melanis overlord. Veterans of the Liberation trying to discover what really happened to Joshua.

Potential Quests: Recovering the pieces of Joshua that Dahlia stole. Making contact with the Eighth Tribe. Exploring the River to the north. Resettling Mahgog. Avenging Joshua.

Potential Themes: Revenge, Honor, Duty, Exploration, Horror.

Potential Settings: Mahgog, Savior, Dead Peaks. The Outlands, the H'I Kar, Hom.

Potential NPCs: The Fallen, Squats, the Marians.

Potential Antagonists: The Z'bri, the Shebans, the Fallen (especially the Doomsayers), Dahlia.

MARIAN CYCLES

Tribal equivalents of Freemasons or Knights Templar, the Marians share more in common with secret societies than the tribes. The smallest of the Lost Tribes (of all the tribes, for that matter), the Marians live in the shadows of Vimary, looking out for manifestations of the Omens of Mary and trying to steer the tribes away from their destructive course. But unlike the Yagans or Shebans, the Marians accept what happens and do not feel the need to fight the changes that lay ahead. Instead, like silent shepherds they guide and teach, and if none listen then so be it, but as long as at least one person hears their teachings then their duty is done.

7. Weaver Resources

Setting up a Marian cycle can be extremely rewarding. Their secretive and cult-like nature makes them an excellent choice for Player Characters and the quests you could weave are almost endless in possibility. Marian cycles are well suited for conspiracies and shadow plays, allowing the Player Circle to gain a rare look at the Tribes and their myths. At the same time, Marians could be involved in tribal politics like protecting the Fallen or, an interesting variation, helping the Joshuans.

Conspiracies, omens and prophecies are tricky to pull off, but not impossible. All it takes is a little work beforehand, some improvisation and good Players. When setting up a Marian cycle dealing with these topics, it is best to choose something simple — don't get too complicated, or you'll lose yourself and the Players. Reinforcing themes and establishing a mood goes a long way, as does foreshadowing. One of the keys in running such a game is to prepare a flow chart listing clues, NPCs (including their goals, information and secrets, and how they relate to each other) and potential scenes or quests. Having this "cheat sheet" will allow you to remain consistent and on top of things.

Potential Setups: Tribals or Fallen characters led or manipulated by a Marian Martyr into fulfilling an Omen (and then discovering they were in fact Marians themselves). Silent Ones trying to solve the murder of a Marian they were charged to protect. Marians trying to bridge the gap between their tribe and Baba Yaga. Wreathed charged with protecting an innocent tribal slated to be executed.

Potential Quests: Dealing with a Branded One who still remembers. Trying to save Cylix Seth'on (see *Vimary Sourcebook*, p. 95). Comforting the Children of Lilith. Helping the Joshuans recover the relics of Joshua. Smuggling someone into or out of Vimary or Hom.

Potential Themes: Secrets, Fate, Destiny, Loss and Sacrifice.

Potential Settings: The Discarded Lands, Bazaar and Hom.

Potential NPCs: The Shebans, the Fallen, Joshuans.

Potential Antagonists: The Yagans, the Shebans, some Herites.

LOST TRIBE CHARACTERS

Designing Lost Tribe characters follows the same process as outlined in the *Tribe 8 Rulebook*, except for a few things you should keep in mind — Joshuans and Marians are outcasts and exiles in the truest sense of the word. Not only did the tribes of Mary and Joshua lose their Fatimas, but their place among the tribes. Whatever accomplishments the tribes (and Fallen) achieve in the years to come will not be shared by the Lost Tribes. Instead, even as they continue their sacred duties, history will forget them and they'll vanish forever.

When designing a Lost Tribe Character keep the following questions in mind:

- What connection do you still have with your Fatima?

- Who do you blame for the loss/betrayal of your Fatima and why?
- Do you believe what the tribes have to say about Joshua or Mary? What about your own tribe's take on things?
- How accepting are you of your tribes' status as a Lost Tribe?
- Do you accept your tribe's "fate?"
- What does it mean to you to be a Marian or Joshuan?
- How do you cope with the death of Mary or Joshua?

THE LOSS OF MARY AND JOSHUA

All Lost Tribe characters are profoundly marked by their Fatima's death. In the case of the Joshuans, the Ravager's betrayal and death shocked the tribe to its core. They fought for the Liberation of all the tribes, and in their moment of triumph their Fatima was taken from them. Each react to Joshua's death differently; some lose themselves in violence and death, exacting their vengeance on the Z'bri or the tribes, while others become reclusive, leading simple lives in the dark Outlands. Most Joshuans, however, honor Joshua by carrying the mantle of protector and avengers, but all possess a volatile personality.

Mary's children regard Her death as both a beginning and an end. Slightly more stoic in nature, the Marians believe that as long as they honor Mary She will continue to live in their hearts. At the same time, beneath this façade, the Marians are filled with doubt. Most are able to hide it, to bury it deep inside, but they all wonder at some point if Mary still remembers them.

GAME MECHANICS

In general, you should follow the same process as for Fallen characters when choosing Attributes, Skills and other game statistics for Joshuan or Marian PCs (see *Tribe 8 Rulebook*, pp. 119-121). Use the same number of Character and Skill Points. The only major difference comes when choosing Eminences and Synthesis.

Synthesis for Joshuans: Joshuans feel the loss of their Fatima very acutely and their connection to the River of Dream is tenuous. Joshuans who successfully go through the Bloodying (see p. 12) emerge with one Eminence only, instead of the two usually possessed by tribal characters. Players should choose either Force or Vengeance. Joshuans can have the Synthesis Skill, although it is rarer than among Tribals. The Aspects of Rage and Magnum are rarer still. The Synthesis Skill and Aspects have the standard costs (see *Tribe 8 Rulebook*, p. 121), but the Weaver should make sure the Players can justify their characters being so blessed. Joshuan Eminences and Aspects are detailed on page 85.

Synthesis for Marians: When they awake to their true heritage, Marians go through a spiritual rebirth similar to that which the Fallen endure. Before their initiation. Marians have both Eminences from the tribe they were raised among (as do almost

all members of that tribe). When initiated, a Marian loses one of these Eminences and replaces it with one of the two Marian Eminences — Purity and Recognition. The Synthesis Skill and the Marian Aspects of Blessing and Clairvoyance are generally reserved for Martyrs and advanced Wreathed, although the SP costs are not modified. Note that Silent Ones are not full Marians and so have no Marian Eminence. Marian Eminences and Aspects are detailed on this and the following page.

Suggested Perks and Flaws for Joshuan Characters: Authority, Night Vision, Sense of Direction, Thick-Skinned, Bloodlust, Code of Honor, Dedicated, Nemesis, Spiritual Unbalance.

Suggested Perks and Flaws for Marian Characters: Acute Sense, Connections, Fake Identity, Favor, Perfect Memory, Spiritual Balance, Subordinates, Age, Amnesia, Beliefs, Dependent, Flashbacks, Obligation, Paranoid, Secret.

SYNTHESIS AND THE LOST TRIBES

The following Eminences and Aspects are the spiritual echoes of Joshua and Mary through what remains of their tribes. When the Fatimas lived other Aspects were used, but these have now been all but lost. Note that Joshuans may also have the Eminence of Vengeance (see *Tribe 8 Rulebook*, p. 169) and Marians may have Recognition (see *Tribe 8 Rulebook*, p. 170).

FORCE (JOSHUAN EMINENCE)

Driven by the ravaging will of their Fatima, Joshua's tribe understood raw power like no other and the Children of Lilith echo this insight. This Eminence traditionally covers physical applications of force, including strength and electrical force, but also grants insight into the power of will and spirit. Possible Conjunctional effects include:

- Determining who among a crowd is the most powerful, either physically, spiritually or even politically (PER, Threshold 4)
- Adding deadly force behind a physical blow (FIT, Threshold 5, MoS added to MoS of next physical attack – in this round or next)
- Channeling electrical current (or summoning lightning) to strike an opponent (WIL, Opposed by AGI, min. Threshold 6 to 9, victim suffers an electrical attack at Intensity of channeled charge). Note that the threshold depends on conditions (6 for channeling a current from a live wire the dreamer is holding, 9 for summoning lightning from a cloudless sky). The dreamer may augment the Intensity (multiply by MoS), but suffers an attack herself at the base Intensity.

RAGE (JOSHUAN ASPECT; WIL, THRESHOLD 3)

Rage augments the dreamer's body, especially against Z'bri Sundering. The dreamer can call upon this Aspect when combating any supernatural forces (others using Synthesis and Z'bri) or at a time when wounded by any assailant. If the roll fails (MoF 1+), the dreamer enters a berserk rage where her STR and HEA are increased by 1, all wound penalties are ignored and she will attack anyone who is supernatural or armed, unless she rolls WIL with a threshold of 6. If the initial roll is successful, the Rage MoS is added to STR (and thus Damage) and HEA attributes (Stamina and System Shock), for a number of minutes equal to MoS. It also offsets any wound penalties and effects. For example, an MoS of 3 would reduce wound penalties of -4 to just -1 for that time.

If attacked by a Sundering Aspect (Animation for example), the Fallen strikes back automatically. The Z'bri receives an electrical attack (see *Tribe 8 Rulebook*, pp. 153-154) at an Intensity double the Rage MoS. For purposes of damage, this counts as an electrical weapon attack. Rage may be activated in response to Z'bri Sundering before any damage or Z'bri controlled action is applied (say from Exsanguination) to the dreamer. If the Z'bri is injured, penalties apply immediately to this Sundering attack, before any effect or damage is applied.

PURITY (MARIAN EMINENCE)

Mary taught Her children not only to forgive, but to abandon all immorality and corruption. This Eminence comes into play whenever trying to overcome, resist or detect physical, spiritual or moral corruption and malaise. Possible Conjunctional effects include:

- Sensing the presence of a hidden or disguised Z'bri (PER or PSY, Threshold 4)
- Purifying a poisonous or contagious substance (BLD, Threshold 6, Potency, Contagion, and Virulence reduced by MoS x5).
- Lifting from a warrior the guilt and spiritual erosion from a life of bloodshed (WIL, Min. Threshold 6, Opposed by WIL if target unwilling).

CLAIRVOYANCE (MARIAN ASPECT: PER: THRESHOLD 4)

By purifying themselves, Marians can attune their perception to the River of Dream and see over great distances to spy upon an individual they are concentrating on. Clairvoyance requires the use of a dedicated seeing pool and some sort of ritual link to the person or object being seen, but can benefit from the bonuses for group rituals listed on page 165 of the *Tribe 8 Rulebook* (only the ritual leader need have the Aspect). Clairvoyance Fumbles automatically cause separation (see *Lost Equilibrium*, *T8 Rulebook*, p. 166). The MoS of the roll determines distance and clarity of the vision (the dreamer may split her MoS between the two as she sees fit).

CLAIRVOYANCE GUIDELINES

MoS	Distance	Clarity
0	Within the same village	Blurred vision, muffled sounds
1	Within a few days travel	Shapes and actions are recognizable
2	Within a few weeks travel	Speech is recognizable, voices aren't
3	Within a few months travel	Most visual clues and voice tones are recognizable
4	Effectively Limitless	Detailed, lifelike rendition

WEAVING QUEST CIRCLES

The *Tribe 8 Rulebook* presents rules and advice for creating Fallen Player Characters and cycles. The idea of tribal Quest Circles, introduced in chapter 3 of this book (pp. 22-35), gives you a framework on which to hang a cycle occurring in the grace of the Fatimas. Characters need not be outcasts from the Seven Tribes searching for their new destiny, rather they are heroes of the tribes and their destiny has become manifest.

FORMING A QUEST CIRCLE

It is not uncommon for tribal members to fraternize with individuals outside their sects. What the Fatimas frown upon, however, is continued social interaction or problem-solving between members of different tribes. The Fatimas rely on the Sisterhoods to solve matters, and would prefer their children focus on devotion to tribe, devotion to role and devotion to Fatima. To do otherwise is to risk being ostracized, or worse, banished. The Quest Circle, however, is a way to circumvent these risks while still serving the Fatimas.

The Terasheban have laws for almost everything, including the formation of Quest Circles. Fortunately, these laws are rather vague, and state: *Quest Circles can be called into being when an event, whether driven by man, beast or circumstance, threatens tribal standards of living. When such an occurrence arises, it then falls to the Grand Council to recognize the Quest Circle, and name them as such for the purpose of their new duty. Henceforth, all prior obligations are secondary to the quest.*

Naturally, along with stated law comes a number of unstated requirements that most people are expected to know. The event threatening tribal life should endanger two or more tribes. Otherwise, the Sisterhood of the concerned tribe deals with the problem. Secondly, only individuals of repute or influence within tribal life can act as sponsor. They petition the Grand Council for Quest Circle status, and in doing so, accept responsibility for the actions of their knights. The Grand Council instituted this rule to deal with the barrage of nonsensical quests dreamed up by jealous lovers and opportunistic individuals.

Once a Quest Circle is born, the Grand Council frees its members from their tribal obligations, allowing them to complete their quest within reasonable time. Horizon and Moon Circles have an indefinite time-frame in which to pursue their goals, while Harvest Circles are normally given one to three summers to complete their task. To extend a deadline, a circle's sponsor may petition the Grand Council for more time. Some groups have become Shadow-Cast simply because they refused to abandon their quests after the Council denied their petition.

THE CONCENTRIC CIRCLES

A goal fashions the face and form of the Quest Circle. While groups are as unique as the individuals within them, there are set properties and qualities to Quest Circles that categorize them into four basic groups.

HARVEST CIRCLES

Harvest Circles deal with immediate problems, most of which are born from an event directly affecting one or all members of the circle. It is rare for a sponsor to initiate such a group; rather this Quest Circle seeks the understanding and sponsorship of a notable individual. Also common to this style of circle are close ties amongst its members. Whether they fought together in the past or simply grew up as friends, the members of a Harvest Circle are tight in the bonds of camaraderie.

While Weaving stories for this type of circle, the Weaver should make the situations and adventures far more intense than normal. This reflects the hectic and often distilled nature of a Harvest Circle quest (the objective is limited by a time-frame). Harvest Circles imply a high level of action and interaction since the characters are effectively racing against the clock.

Two basic examples of a Harvest Circle include Seeker and Promise-related Quests. In the case of the former, the circle seeks to uncover a person or relic of importance. The Grand Council validates these groups when the goal benefits more than one tribe. Often times, these Quest Circles form because more than one tribe is interested in the quest. Rather than create friction between the sects, the Quest Circle represents the interested parties and acts on their behalf. When the quest uncovers said artifact/person, the Grand Council takes custody of it and allows all involved in the circle (whether directly or by proxy) access to it. If the quest benefits nobody but love-struck fools or glorified grave-robbars, then the council denies the quest petition.

With Promise-Keeper style quests, someone important to the characters wants the group to either complete an unfinished task or fulfill a death-bed wish. Whether the characters partake in the quest to satisfy the unfulfilled wishes of ancestral spirits or the sponsor is simply too old to complete the journey, the group has a short-term objective in mind. This is one of the few instances where the Grand Council will validate a Quest Circle for personal reasons. Fulfilling a quest for the memory of another is revered practice within the tribes. With only a few generations of accepted history (essentially anything since liberation) to show for their struggles, the tribes are fiercely protective of what little history they can be proud of.

HORIZON CIRCLES

Horizon Circles come into being following a major event or discovery that could have far-reaching implications for the tribes. It is rare for members of this circle to know one another prior to the event, but it is not impossible. In this instance, the sponsor is the catalyst who not only brings the group together, but usually obtains the Grand Council's assent before even forming the circle. Horizon Circles serve a higher authority. Regardless of whether the call to duty stems from loyalty, friendship, fear or responsibility, the characters are the eyes, ears and arms of their sponsor. They follow her orders and abide by her decisions.

The advantage of Horizon Circles is that if the group does not self-destruct within two years, subsequent events and common purpose will eventually forge the bonds necessary to tether the group together. Friendships and alliances form as a result, creating relationships that can last beyond death. Long-term members of Horizon Circles earn respect that surpasses their tribal stereotypes.

Horizon Circles offer a framework in which a Player can build her character. Better yet, the Quest Circle comes to define the character and her relationship with her friends. This allows for more roleplaying and personal development, since the duration of the quest is sure to carry recurring moral dilemmas and interpersonal conflicts over long stretches of time. The circle also provides a sense of cycle continuity, a group whose history follows the rise and ebb of the tribes.

MOON CIRCLES

The tribes see Moon Circles as the most noble of Quest Circles, for their participants fulfill their duties without hope of recognition or reward. The Fatimas choose circle members from the ranks of their most devout disciples, who in turn simply vanish from tribal life because their duty is so great. Whether the party is pro-active and must prevent an event from occurring, or they are to wait for the event to unfold before reacting, the Quest Circle is important enough to witness prophesy. Groups of this stature will never be the same once summoned, for destiny guides them and the Fatimas watch over them.

In this quest style, Moon Circles offer an unusual chance for roleplaying, wherein the characters must rediscover themselves or lose their identities to the wishes of the Goddess. While the

characters truly believe the Fatimas deserve admiration and respect, do they deserve it so much for the character to risk the loss of self? On the other hand, Moon Circles initiate the characters to deeper levels of mystery, enabling the Weaver to utilize such techniques as foreshadowing and symbolism within the story arcs.

While Harvest and Horizon Circles offer the opportunity of character development, Moon Circles offer spiritual growth and character enlightenment. This style of quest opens places like the River of Dreams, and forces characters to face some of their worst foes, themselves. More so than any other style of quest, Moon Circles fall under the influence of the Fatimas, and as such are highly spiritual in nature.

SHADOW-CAST CIRCLES

Most Shadow-Cast circles follow quests of questionable ethics, and are normally given over to self-destruction or capture. A prime example of a Shadow-Cast Circle is the destructive revenge quest. Fueled by hatred or anger, members turn on one another when the fires of their retribution can find no enemy to sate their need for vengeance. These groups are typically short-lived unless they share a common need for revenge, as found amongst the survivors of the same slaughter or blood-related siblings avenging family members. Regardless of intention, these groups are short-lived. Many are Shadow-Cast because the Grand-Council does not validate personal vendettas (unless, of course, the sponsor can prove to the Grand Council that the object of the revenge is a real danger to the tribes).

The most dangerous of Shadow-Cast Circles are those who believe their actions are justified regardless of the Grand Council's ruling. Zealots and martyrs, often driven by false visions or personal failures, pursue their quests with little heed to the safety of individuals or the tribes. Essentially, the ends justify the means, even if the means include robbery, torture and murder.

This does not mean all Shadow-Cast circles pursue evil, for sometimes one must do good despite what others say. Families sometimes form Shadow-Cast Circles to save captured relatives from H'I Kar; other times the tribes refuse to react to a situation that may in fact endanger them (it is said the Jackers trace their origins to a Quest Circle banished for attacking Z'bri).

QUEST CIRCLE CHARACTERS

Before planning the quest, the Weaver must define the goal and theme clearly. Next, the Weaver should look at the party and decide what dynamic brings them together. Harvest and Shadow-Cast Circles are easy, for they allow a pre-existing party to try the quest mantle for a brief period — essentially a quest within a quest. When designing Horizon and Moon Circles, however, it is assumed the characters, who are from different and unrelated backgrounds, come together because of the quest. In this case, the Players should design their characters together, taking into account each other's capabilities. The best way to ensure each person has a place within Horizon and

Moon Circles is to allow each character one sphere of influence or specialization that nobody else can match. As such, one person is the group's tracker, another the herbalist/healer, another the front-line fighter, the diplomat, etc. On a side note, the Weaver should be careful about allowing the lone-wolf/enigmatic character in such quest parties. These individuals do more alone, thereby detracting from the party's game time, and robbing Players of their opportunity to interact with their peers.

During the character creation, the Weaver should be aware of a character's role within the group and find a way to involve them through their history or even through upcoming events. The quest should never focus on one character, or else all the other Players are superfluous and they will notice this. The catalyst for the quest should be an experience shared by the entire party, as should the need to complete the journey. The best way to do this is to use a common event or enemy between all the characters as a galvanizing force. Regardless of whether the reasons are different, each character should have a vested interest in the achieving the goal.

GAME MECHANICS

Attributes, Skill and other characteristics for Quest Circle characters are generated just like Fallen PCs (see **Tribe 8 Rulebook**, pp. 119-121), with a few modifications. Generally, Weavers should use 30 Character Points and 40 Skill Points as usual, but if you wish to run a truly epic cycle focusing on semi-mythological heroes of the Tribes, these numbers could be raised. 50 CPs and 60 SPs could be used to generate PCs in such a "high-power" game. Note that these elevated levels are best used for short-term, high-action cycles, though. Other special considerations follow.

Eminences: Tribal characters automatically have the two Eminences associated with their Tribe (see **Tribe 8 Rulebook**, p. 115). In *extremely rare* cases a few tribal characters may have a different combination at the Weaver's discretion.

Synthesis & Aspects: The point costs of the Synthesis Skill and Aspects are unchanged. Among tribals, Synthesis is clearly understood as the favor of the Fatimas. As such, only members of a Sisterhood or a specialized guild (Yagan Mordreds, for example) are likely to have Synthesis above Level 1, and even that may be rare. Aspects usually come from the character's birth tribe, but a PC may have an Aspect from another tribe if she has somehow gained that Fatima's favor as well — this is rare, but not unheard of.

Equipment: Unless Shadow-Cast, the characters are acting with the authority of the Grand Council and may have access to good equipment. Members of Moon Circles often carry minor (or even major) Fatimal artifacts and relics.

Possible Perks & Flaws: Authority, Connections, Prestige, Code of Honor, Debt (to the Circle's sponsor), Dedicated, Obligation, Secret (Shadow-Cast, especially). Note that many of these Perks & Flaws may be common to all characters and inherent in the cycle set-up. If so, the Weaver can simply assign them without worrying about point cost.

SPONSORS

As in any other cycle, the Weaver should give serious thought to the major Non-Player Characters of the cycle at this stage. The nature of Quest Circles, however, makes one NPC — the Circle's sponsor — especially critical. The sponsor is a prominent tribal who either creates the Circle in the first place or obtains the Grand Council's sanction for it to operate. This NPC is in some ways the glue that holds the Circle together. Because of this it's important to have a good idea of the character before creating the PCs. It's critical, however, to "tweak" the sponsor character during and after the PCs are generated so that the connections between the characters are strong and they all work together well. During actual play, however, the Weaver should be careful to keep the PCs instrumental to the plot and not have the sponsor do everything. Players in an NPC-driven quest may feel extraneous, and will get frustrated as they realize that they are simply along for the ride.

Remember, also, that it is not uncommon for Quest Circles to "earn" their sponsor's Perks and Flaws. For example, the sponsor's Allies might help the group under certain conditions, but the party might be obligated to follow the sponsor's personal Code of Honor. They may even incur the wrath of her Nemesis.

Weavers can design a sponsor however they see fit. They can generate complete game statistics (using PC level points or more) or just decide on basic game statistics. The character's personality, connections and goals will be more important than anything else. One option is to use one of the prominent tribals detailed in the **Tribe 8 Rulebook** or **Vimary Sourcebook**.

QUEST STRUCTURE

By their very nature Quest Circles are highly goal-oriented and some care must be taken when designing quests and the cycle as a whole. It can be easy to fall into a repetitious pattern of "missions" assigned by the sponsor. This quickly becomes a rut where all the enemies, challenges, solutions and plots are alike. The key is to introduce as much variety as possible, without ignoring the Circle's reason for being. Here are some suggestions:

- Allow each character/player his moment of glory within the scenario. Whether through a roleplaying exchange or the discovery of an important fact, each character should feel some level of accomplishment or they are likelier to ignore or sabotage the quest.
- Use character subplots to demonstrate that characters have lives and concerns beyond their central quest. You can use this to create a conflict of loyalties, add emotional depth to character relationships, or shine the spotlight on a character who hasn't gotten enough attention.
- Every so often, highlight one of the characters and their importance to the quest itself. The best way is to incorporate a piece of their history into the adventure. Do not repeat characters until everyone has had their time in the spotlight.

- Diversify. Every three to four adventures, run a non-quest oriented scenario to invigorate the party.
- Introduce the characters to various **Tribe 8** celebrities and famous locations during the quest, but do not make the mistake of turning it into a cavalcade of stars.
- Never, ever let the situation devolve to the point where the NPCs have to save the characters from a situation. By doing so, the Weaver devaluates everything the Players have striven to accomplish thus far.
- Have fun and experiment. Try new story-telling techniques, use music to heighten ambiance, switch gaming locations to avoid the trappings of familiarity, tell the players the title of the adventure and even give them a sneak-preview of the next session.

WEAVING THE KEEPERS

Like the Fallen and the Lost Tribes, Keepers are outsiders who live on the fringe of tribal society. Unlike those other two groups, however, they claim no heritage from the Seven Tribes and have a radically different outlook. To them, tribals are backward and superstitious (which, ironically, is just how many tribals look upon them). Keepers have their own hopes, beliefs and society, which can exist utterly outside the tribal life of Vimary. Keeper cycles can therefore have little or nothing to do with the main players in **Tribe 8**. On the other hand, the Keepers can provide a different point of view on these key groups. In the case of the Fallen, Keepers even cooperate with established cells and some join them as equal members.

THEMES

As noted in the *Weaver's Assistant* (p. 4), a theme is what a cycle is "about." Every effort should be made for a cycle featuring Keepers to be "about" something unique to their experience of the world. This goes beyond mere technology and artifact-hunting. What makes the Keepers unique and interesting is their relationship to the past. In a world in which humanity either shuns the past as the cause of all present misery (the Tribals) or is so focused on the future that little else matters (the Fallen), only the Keepers are interested in learning the lessons of history. The great danger is that their obsession with the past will interfere with their ability to live in the present and plan for the future. In the case of cycles where Keepers are the protagonists, whatever other themes are used, this challenge should always be present. In other campaigns, Keepers can be used to evoke this theme. Following are some suggested themes for a Keeper cycle which incorporate various aspects of this idea:

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Why did humanity fall? One possible answer is that the society of the past was so spiritually barren that when the Z'bri arrived, humankind jumped at the chance for spiritual growth they seemed to present. Many Keepers are focused only on the technology or history or culture of the past; only a few explore the spirit or psyche of the past, but without this knowledge it is likely that the same mistakes will be made again.

COMPASSION AND FORGIVENESS

The Keepers' disdain for most other occupants of Vimary is a powerful theme for a cycle. The Keepers never experienced the camps, and so are unable to truly comprehend their horror and the damage they did to the survivors. Regarding the Tribals as weak-minded fools is convenient, but it ignores the human cost of the camps and the legacy of suffering they have left behind. Some Keepers and Tribals have managed to overcome their mutual suspicion and work together to help each other; Players involved in a cycle focusing on the healing which must be built by both sides of this divide would have the opportunity to build a better future for both the Tribes and the Keepers.

THE VALUE OF KNOWLEDGE

At what cost understanding? Knowledge is a precious commodity (especially for the Keepers), but is it more precious than human life? To what extremes ought man go in the quest for knowledge? Any game which focuses on the characters and their relationships with others will have a powerful emotional resonance. Which is more important, a (unique) human life or a unique artifact from the past? If Players are faced with such dilemmas, they will have the opportunity to decide for themselves. Many Keepers would not hesitate to kill for a piece of the past they considered important. Is this right? If they place machines and knowledge above their humanity, what have they become?

KEEPER CYCLES

When setting up a cycle featuring Keeper Player Characters, a number of unique considerations must be kept in mind. You should first consider the kind of stories you want to tell; every Keeper is different and their activities run the gamut from sedentary "academic" research to exploration to search-and-destroy missions against their enemies. This variety of backgrounds means that Keeper cycles can be quite varied and exist separately from mainstream **Tribe 8** cycles. The various special techniques outlined for the Lost Tribes (see p. 83) can be very rewarding in a Keeper cycle, however, and allow continuity with a Fallen campaign. Consideration of the theme and mood of your cycle can help you to refine your ideas; see the respective sections below for more on these.

Once you have a clear idea of the kind of cycle you want to create, give some thought to its setting (that is, its principal

7. Weaver Resources

locations) and the kind of characters which will be suitable. These decisions will have a great impact on the kind of stories you can tell; a game set in the Wastes is more likely to be a desperate struggle for survival than one set in Olympus or Bazaar. Of course, intrigue in Olympus or survival in Bazaar are also great ideas for stories.

In terms of characters, it is (as always) good to encourage Players to take a mix of personalities and abilities. The only danger lies in consistently creating stories in which some Players cannot take part. If you want to run an action-only game with lots of combat, it might be better to discourage Players from taking physically frail researchers. By mixing up the kind of stories you tell, however, you can ensure that all players get an equal chance to contribute.

Potential Setups: Researchers dedicated to recovering lost documents from across Vimary. Tribal orphans raised by the Keepers in Olympus. Olympian Keepers hunting down the Machine Monks. Keepers who maintain the tunnels under Vimary and Hom. Keepers setting out to find a new home.

Potential Quests: Uncovering an underground library deep in the H'l Kar. Rescuing a fellow Keeper forced to stand trial before Tera Sheba. Fighting a Z'bri incursion into the Rust Wastes. Recruiting Fallen allies on Hom.

Potential Settings: Olympus, Hom, Sub-Terra (Vimary's underground), the Steel Maze, Outlands ruins, the Institute (see *Children of Lilith*, pp. 81-83).

Potential NPCs: Pox the Yagan (see *Vimary Sourcebook*, p. 101), Machine Monks, Ghosts of the World Before, Tribal traders, Deus and the Lightbringers, Tartarus (see *Vimary Sourcebook*, p. 34).

Potential Antagonists: Sheban inquisitors, Squats (and Warlord Boarhead), Evans, Z'bri.

NOTES ON ATMOSPHERE

In terms of atmosphere, there are a number of things you can do to give a Keeper cycle a unique feel. The mood of your game, of course, will largely be determined by your setup and themes, but when it comes to translating these into play a different set of skills is needed. Some suggested atmospheres particularly well-suited to Keeper cycles include:

Survival: If the Keepers are anything, they are survivors. In a survival story the Players will be faced with many hard choices. Anything from a dangerous quest to find a vital piece of machinery to a simple trading mission can be used to highlight their precarious existence.

Intrigue: Keeper society is rife with rivalry and politics. Whenever a small group of people are competing for a limited resource, there will be intrigue. Keepers are often single-minded, paranoid and secretive about their work — a sure recipe for trouble.

Adventure: It should not be forgotten that the Keepers are the most ardent explorers of the world of *Tribe 8*. Expeditions into the

Wastes or the wilds, daring raids into Tribal or Z'bri lands and explorations of the mysteries of the past all have a place here.

Horror: Lastly, don't forget the potential for a good horror story in a Keeper game. Going beyond the obvious, it should be remembered that the most horrific monsters are men and women who have left their humanity behind in pursuit of a goal (noble or otherwise). Many Keepers tread this fine line.

KEEPERS IN OTHER CYCLES

Although many remain hidden in the Rust Wastes, Keepers are inquisitive and adventurous. Because of this, they can appear in almost any *Tribe 8* cycle, even the most spiritual. They have very different outlooks on the world than Vimary's other inhabitants, and can act as allies or enemies. More often, they exist somewhere between these two extremities.

KEEPERS AS ALLIES

If you are planning to use the Keepers as allies for the characters in your cycle, give some thought as to why they would seek out or accept help from others when they pride themselves on their self-reliance. While it is true that they are more open-minded about the Fallen than they are about the Tribals, they are nevertheless fiercely independent and very wary of strangers. They don't like depending on others for anything; as a result, while they may be willing to join forces with others, they will always want to maintain some independence of decision-making and resources. This is not to say that they're unwilling to be part of a team, more that they won't obey the orders of anyone they don't trust and respect.

You can also use Keepers to remind your Players that humanity has suffered a terrible blow and that they are desperately trying to pick up the pieces. The Keepers are the chroniclers of humanity's history and they devote themselves to recovering as much information about the past as they can. These are noble goals and if you can involve your Players in them, your game will be richer for it. More to the point, most Outcasts focus on the future but don't think too much about the past. The Keepers have much to teach mankind and despite their bitterness, most would jump at the chance to share their knowledge, once a relationship of trust has been built.

KEEPERS AS ENEMIES

When using Keepers as antagonists, keep in mind that the main source of conflict between them and other groups is their culture. That is, the values of Keeper culture (independence, knowledge, individualism) are antithetical to those of Tribal culture (which values dependence on the Fatimas, ignorance of the past and conformity). It is for this reason that the Keepers are more ready to accept the Fallen as allies or even friends; they share similar values. This does not mean, however, that the Fallen and the Keepers get along all the time. Most Outcasts are as uninterested in the past as the Tribals, preferring to focus on mankind's future.

Thus, whatever the immediate cause of conflict, it should find its roots in these basic philosophical differences. For example, the PCs may run afoul of Keepers who want a useful artifact they've found. The Keepers want it because it will tell them something about the past, the PCs want it because it helps them live in the present. If you wanted to make this conflict more meaningful, give the Players a chance to discover why the artifact is of such great value to the Keepers (perhaps it has components needed to complete a larger work, or it's particularly rare) and you'll not only give your antagonists more depth but you'll also give your Players an alternative way to resolve the conflict (perhaps by finding the needed part elsewhere).

KEEPERS AS NEUTRALS

Most Keepers prefer to keep to themselves, working with Outcasts (or in some cases, Tribals) on a project-by-project or one-on-one basis. In this role they make excellent additions to your cycle. Remember that they have their own agenda and are wary of just about everyone they meet; a Keeper is unlikely to offer items or useful information in trade simply because someone asks. It is more likely that the Keeper would want to know why their assistance was being sought and how it would be used.

In this way, you may use Keepers to remind Players about humanity's past and give yourself an opportunity to incorporate some of the themes mentioned above into your cycle. If the Keepers in your cycle remain ambiguous then your players will be encouraged to consider these themes and, by watching (or helping, or hindering) the Keepers, will have a chance to resolve or at least consider them. For example, in a story revolving around a conflict between a group of Keepers and some Tribals, Players should have a chance to witness and interact with both sides and can be given the opportunity to act as mediators if they so desire.

Again, the cultural differences mentioned above should be kept in mind. Keepers can be used to demonstrate that many different views on humanity's future exist and that the best way forward is one which is informed by the lessons of the past, not one which ignores them.

KEEPER CHARACTERS

As with any character, when designing a Keeper, the first step is to come up with a clear concept. Probably the most important questions to answer for a Keeper character is this: what aspect of the past interests her? Some Keepers are only (or mostly) interested in technology, but many are also interested in the history, culture and life of their ancestors. Another vital question is what the character thinks of the tribals. Again, most Keepers disdain their tribal neighbors, but there are those who consider them simply misguided or deceived. Most Keepers are open-minded when it comes to the Fallen; the Z'bri are generally hated and the Squats are regarded as useful but potentially dangerous. Creating and playing a character who flaunts these conventions can be a rewarding challenge.

Beyond these questions lie many more: Is the character more interested in research and study, or in to getting out into the field to rescue the knowledge and artifacts which have survived before they are lost? Where is the Keeper from? There is a big difference between a Keeper raised by a family living in Olympus and one raised by a band living in the Rust Wastes, for example.

Lastly, spare a thought for the character's ultimate desires and motives. Is the past interesting because knowledge of it will help defeat the Z'bri, build a better future or simply restore man's birthright? Is the character's goal, ultimately, to build or to destroy?

Keeper characters, because of their generally friendly relations with the Fallen, sometimes join Fallen cells and so become PCs in standard **Tribe 8** cycles. In this case, the most important question to answer is just what makes the Keeper and Fallen cooperate so closely. The Keeper is essentially part of a Fallen family and solid bonds have to be built between PCs to overcome the mistrust of other Keepers and Fallen.

GAME MECHANICS

Keeper PCs are built with the standard 30 Character Points and 40 Skill Points and follow the same basic rules laid out on pages 119 to 121 of the **Tribe 8 Rulebook**. The non-tribal background of Keepers should be kept in mind.

Attributes: There are no limits to Attribute choice, but above average CRE and KNO are almost *de rigeur*. Good FIT is also common for Keepers who spend much time in the wilds or the Wastes.

Skills: Each Keeper should have at least one primary skill (at level 2 or 3) chosen from the Keeper skill list, and preferably several. Virtually anything about the World Before is a valid field of study or interest, so exercise some imagination. While it's true that most Keepers are pretty handy with technology, there are many whose interest in the past is more academic.

Equipment: It is entirely appropriate for a Keeper to have some artifacts from the time before, but caution must be exercised whenever a character has some major technological item; the first consideration must be whether a Keeper would put the item at risk of theft or damage by carrying it around in the first place. Some new Keeper weapons are listed on page 107.

Technosmithing: This is the Keeper equivalent of the Synthesis Skill and represents a special, semi-intuitive understanding of technology. It is a tapping into the River of Dream through a sort of communal memory of the World Before. Technosmithing costs the same number of Skill Points as Synthesis (see **Tribe 8 Rulebook**, p. 121), although Formulas work differently than Aspects. Characters with any level of Technosmithing gain one Formula at no cost. Additional Formulas cost 7 SPs each. See **Tribe 8 Rulebook**, p. 175 for more on the formulas.

Eminences: Keepers have no Eminences. Their access to technology and science (and related Skills) compensates for this.

7. Weaver Resources

Potential Perks and Flaws: Connections, Machine-Touch, Night Vision, Property (various technological items), Quick Learner, Strong Immune System, Animal Antipathy, Inept with Plants, Sick (Rust Plague), Social Stigma

THE POPULATION OF VIMARY

This essay is designed as an aid for Weavers, giving them a large scale view of just how many people make their home among the various tribes and other parts of Vimary. Numbers and notes on reproduction rates are all provided as reference, so Weavers can better understand what a "bustling" tribal community is or just how many relatives a Player Character is likely to have. These numbers are all averages, however. Individuals can have whatever background the Weavers sees fit to give them.

Despite being built on the ruins of a city that held over two million people, Vimary and the islands surrounding it are home to less than 45,000. The majority of the residents, nearly 40,000, are members of the Seven Tribes. The rest are split between the Fallen, Keepers and Squats. No one is quite sure how many Z'bri or Serfs reside on Vimary, nor do most people want to know.

THE SEVEN TRIBES

The Seven Tribes have prospered since their liberation. Each year, they expand slowly outward as their population grows, a situation that has led to the foundation of new settlements such as Griffentowne and Westholm.

One factor in this growth is the fact that twin births are quite common among the tribals. Around one in ten pregnancies results in twins, usually fraternal. This can be traced back to the Z'bri selecting women likely to have multiple births to be breeders in their camps, and to the blessing of Eva the Mother.

AGNITES

The Agnites increase their numbers not only through their Breeders but also by the adoption of children left with them. One would think that this would make the Agnites the most numerous of the Seven Tribes, but the reverse is actually true. The Agnites never number more than about 1,100, with about 700 of them living at Playground at any one time. While a few Agnites no doubt perish in deadly games within Playground, many leave on missions of discovery or special quests for Agnes or her "favorites" and never return. It is whispered that Agnites are the favorite prey of the Z'bri, who desire them because of their innocence.

DAHLIANS

The Dahlians treat mating as part performance and part game. Dahlian courtship can alternately resemble a dance, a play, a game of chance or a business negotiation, depending on the participants. The average Dahlian woman bears three children over an extended period of time, not always by the same man.

Of the nearly 5,200 Dahlians, almost 4,800 live in caravans roaming the land in an endless dance of performances and trade. The rest have settled down either to run establishments, mostly in Bazaar, or to join the distant community of Westholm.

EVANS

The followers of Eva the Mother are eager to bear children. As a result, Evans have the highest birth rate of any tribe. The average Evan woman bears six or seven children during her life, which has allowed the Evans to grow much larger than the other tribes.

The nearly 13,000 Evans have overflowed their homelands, and have started to expand outward into farming homesteads and the new settlements of Griffentowne and Westholm. This outward expansion has exposed them to greater threats from the north and more Evans are dying to Squat and Z'bri attacks each year. It remains to be seen whether the Evans can keep up their growth or if the dangers of the frontiers will finally curtail their expansion.

JOANITES

The Joanites must keep their numbers high in order to defend the tribes effectively. Joanite women consider it their duty to bear children early in life before fate has a chance to stop them from becoming mothers. They often marry early, and married couples are given ample opportunity to conceive children. The average Joanite woman bears four children early in her life.

When pregnancy makes it difficult for a Joanite woman to fight, she retreats to a safe location to give birth. When the child is born, the mother is expected to leave the infant in the care of an elder family member or an old mentor. These older Joanites raise the child for the parents and train them. Evan volunteers often act as wet-nurses until the child is weaned. Twins born one female and one male are separated at birth and raised apart by Joanite tradition. Shebans have been getting more involved in the care of children born to Joanites in the Watch.

There are more than 6,100 Joanites. They are spread between the Watch, patrol camps throughout the tribal lands, several dozen towers, the Templar settlement supporting Joan's Watchtower and the Seven Fingers.

MAGDALITES

Most Magdalites consider children a liability. Magdalen's prohibition against sexual interaction with children has been extended by the Sirens to include most other interactions. Most Magdalite relationships have a very sexual subtext, and so many choose to stay far away from children except on the most basic level. When Magdalites have children, they frequently leave the children to play freely in the fields outside Xstasis, providing little parental oversight. It is common to find Evans among the children, providing care and teaching throughout their early life.

The Magdalites are protected from unwanted pregnancies until they marry, and they normally have their children later in life. The average Magdalite woman bears only two or three children so their population has grown slowly, leveling off at about 2,600. The majority of them live at Xstasis, in Dahlian caravans, or in Bazaar.

SHEBANS

Shebans have children spaced further apart than most other tribals to allow them time to properly educate each child. The average Sheban woman bears three children during her life, usually with several years passing between pregnancies. These children are heavily tutored in the law by their parents and other relatives throughout their early lives.

Of the roughly 3,900 Shebans on Vimary, nearly 2,500 live near the Sunken City. The remaining Shebans live with the Watch or operate as traveling Judges.

YAGANS

The Yagans tend to have many children. To have death, one must first have life. Before submitting to Baba Yaga's embrace, the average Yagan woman bears four children.

The Yagans have grown to number more than 7,500. Most live among the cemeteries surrounding Mortuary, tending food animals in pastures alongside the remains of the dead. They are expanding slowly into outlying communities, but because of their relative isolation, few know their true numbers.

THE FALLEN

The population of Fallen comes primarily from the outcasts of the Seven Tribes, though children are now being born to long-time Fallen. Most reasonable estimates place their numbers near 1,000 and a majority of them live on Hom.

KEEPERS

The Keepers hide their numbers and their families, so not even the Keepers themselves know how many of their kind live on Vimary. Estimates of more than 1,000 are common, with rumors

of a few large settlements deep inside the Rust Wastes in addition to Olympus. It is possible that more Keepers live deep under the Rust Wastes or just beyond Vimary.

SQUATS

The Squats make frequent incursions into the rich lands of Vimary, particularly in the cold winter months, looking for food and useful items. Others live on Vimary permanently and are tolerated in some areas. There are at least a few hundred Squats always living in the tribal lands, with perhaps more than 1,000 living there in times of hardship.

POPULATION SUMMARY

Tribe/Faction	Est. Population	Avg. # of Children
Agnites	1,100	variable
Dahlians	5,200	3
Evans	13,000	6-7
Joanites	6,100	4
Magdalites	2,600	2-3
Shebans	3,900	3
Yagans	7,500	4
Fallen	1,000	unknown
Keepers	1,000	unknown
Squats (on Vimary)	1,000	unknown

TRIBAL ECONOMICS

Like the population essay (on this and the previous page), the following overview of economics of Vimary is here to help Weavers better manage their cycles. This essay is not intended to provide a complete economic analysis of the Seven Tribes, but to provide you with a concrete idea of just what each tribe produces and desires, and how trade works in Vimary. When creating a "wealthy Evan" NPC, you'll be able to say just what that means.

The economics of Vimary are a strange combination of ancient and modern, with farmers tilling the soil with machine manufactured relics and warriors using weapons forged from exotic metal remains from the World Before. The basics of life (food, clothing, and shelter) remain the most important things to most while the abundant food provided by the Fatimas gives many the luxury of trading for less practical goods.

Two lists of goods accompany most of the group descriptions below. One is a list of items that members of the group commonly have to trade. The other is a list of items that members of the group are known to want in return. These lists represent only the most commonly traded goods and do not cover every possible item that a member of a group might consider trading. See the *Tribe 8 Rulebook*, p. 134, for an explanation of the Value column.

THE SEVEN TRIBES

While it is rare for anyone to go hungry for long periods of time in the tribal lands, many groups need to maintain a constant trade for food because they do not create enough on their own. The Dahlians, Magdalites, and Shebans gather very little food and the Agnites and Joanites depend on handouts to supplement the food they gather themselves. The foodstuffs gathered by various tribes tend to be limited in scope, and it is also common to see a Joanite trading a haunch of meat to an Evan in exchange for a basket of fresh fruits and vegetables.

The Evans and Yagans are the primary food generators in the tribal lands and they wield a lot of economic power. While both engage in trade with the other Tribes, it is not strictly necessary for them to do so. They use their generosity with the Dahlians, Magdalites, Shebans and others as influence to cement their dominance over various aspects of tribal life. No tribal would deny an Evan midwife a role in a birth, nor would they deny a Yagan access to their dead.

AGNITES

The Agnites grow and gather some food on their own, and receive additional food and clothing supplies primarily from the Evans, who expect the Agnites to listen to some motherly advice in return. While some Agnites find this an intolerable price, most wash up for meals and pretend to listen patiently when other Agnites are not making them laugh. The food that the Barren grow above Playground primarily goes to feed the young in the Crèche, who are too young to complain about boiled and mashed vegetables. Older Agnites collect nuts, berries and honey from the woods during the warmer months.

Agnite children are avid scavengers, always searching for interesting new things to play with. As a result, they find some of the best relics and are sought out by Keepers who hope to take advantage of them. Agnites rarely understand the true value of the relics that they find and value them simply for their intriguing flashes, beeps and moving parts.

Agnites trade for sweet foods and items they can play with or use. Sweet foods can be cakes, jams, or candies made by the different tribal groups including the Dahlians and Evans. Keepers will sometimes trade them relic sweets and drinks found in the Rust Wastes. Agnites usually consume such foods in bonding rituals with close friends during secret meetings. They often invite an unpopular child to test an unknown item to make sure that it is safe for the others.

Agnites consider anything with good play value or prestige potential as valuable. Play value depends on the number of moving parts and interesting functions while prestige potential depends on how much attention they think the item will bring them, which is usually a matter of novelty or flashiness. Plush toys are always desirable, and they are given as gifts to Agnes who has lined several chambers in Playground with them. Any one of the desirable factors makes a toy interesting, while multiple factors make it very interesting indeed.

AGNITE TRADE GOODS

Item	Quantity	Value
HAVES		
Berries	1 bucket	Low (4)
Honey	1 cup	Low (4)
Nuts	1 bucket	Low (3)
Relic, boring	1 item	Low (6)
Relic, interesting	1 item	High (7)
WANTS		
Sweets, relic	1 item	High (8)
Sweets, tribal	1 cup or 1 item	Low (4)
Toys, boring	1 item	Low (3)
Toys, interesting	1 item	Average (5)
Toys, very interesting	1 item	High (7)

DAHLIANS

Dahlian caravans constantly stage performances and receive support for this service, but their influential economic role is as traveling traders. The Dahlians carry goods between settlements while taking a cut for themselves, and having control over the movement of valuables pleases Dahlia. Dahlians are willing to trade for just about anything they think someone else will want.

Dahlians often make improvements to items that they trade, turning simple cloth into clothing, turning fruits into jams, curing meats so that they will last, and adding artistic images to plain items — such as embroidery on clothing, carvings on wooden items and etching on metal items. They usually weave stories and hidden messages into the images they create.

Dahlian caravans always visit at least one Evan settlement during the year, and usually trade heavily with Yagans. They preserve Yagan meats in the summer and move them raw in winter (though some caravans keep ice wagons that stay cold well into the early summer). Caravans that trade with Keepers invariably also trade with the Agnites, often being a better judge than either of them what the other group wants. They trade metal pieces and cured leather to Joanites for furs and wild animal hides. They trade food and other goods to Shebans in return for fish and, according to rumors, protection against the Watch.

The Dahlians who trade with the Magdalites consider it a challenge to return with more than just a smile on their face. They trade the Magdalites food and comfortable quilts, pillows and other furnishings for potions, incense and herbs. Some Dahlians take Magdalites along to travel with them. These groups write and perform teasing, erotic plays and dances, and use the Magdalites to satisfy the desires that they create.

Dahlian Trade Goods: No table is provided because the Dahlians potentially have any item. The value is usually similar to the normal value, and artistic improvements usually increase the value of an item to the next higher level. Similarly, they will trade for any items that they can trade again or improve at near the normal trade value. They trade aggressively, though they are careful not to leave lasting bad impressions.

EVANS

Most Evans engage in food and textile production, making them the most economically powerful tribe. They grow corn (maize), oats, rice, vegetables, fruits, herbs and some flax for making cloth. They gather wood from the forests, raise sheep for wool and raise cows for milk and meat. From these items they produce a variety of processed food items, cloth, wood products and healing potions.

They trade for things that they do not produce, such as game meats, furs, leather, nuts, berries and trinkets. They have little interest in relics, except for trinkets with artistic merit. The Evans give away food to the Agnites, Joanites and Shebans, and trade generously with the Dahlians and Magdalites. Some Evans trade their goods directly in Bazaar while others trade with Dahlian caravans.

The Evans donate food to mark new births. After every tribal birth, the Evans hold a feast to honor the event and give food to the new parents to feed their families for several months. These feasts guarantee that the other tribes involve Evan midwives in their births.

They will trade for most food items that they do not make themselves at a bit above the normal trade value. They are also interested in:

EVAN TRADE GOODS

Item	Quantity	Value
HAVES		
Backpack	1 item	Low (3)
Blanket, wool	2 paces square	Average (4)
Bread	1 loaf	Low (2)
Butter	1 cup	Low (4)
Cake	1 item	Low (5)
Canteen, gourd	1 item	Low (3)
Cheese	1 stone	Low (4)
Cloth, linen	2 paces square	Low (3)
Clothing, summer	1 set	Low (3)
Clothing, heavy	1 set	Average (4)
Flour	1 bucket	Average (3)
Fruit	1 bucket	Average (3)
Furniture, bed	1 item	High (5)
Furniture, chair	1 item	Average (4)
Furniture, large table	1 item	High (5)
Furniture, small table	1 item	Average (4)
Furniture, stool	1 item	Low (3)
Grain (corn, oats, rice)	1 bucket	Low (2)
Hammock	1 item	Low (4)
Herbs	1 cup	Low (4)
Milk	1 bucket	Low (3)
Pie	1 item	Low (5)
Pillow	1 item	Low (4)

7. Weaver Resources

Item	Quantity	Value
Potion, healing (Healer)	1 dose	Average (4)
Quilt	2 paces square	Average (5)
Rope, tribal	50 paces	Average (5)
Sack	1 item	Very Low (2)
Sleeping Roll	1 item	Low (3)
Thread, plain	10 paces	Very Low (3)
Thread, colored	10 paces	Low (4)
Vegetables	1 bucket	Low (2)
Wood, pole	5 pace	Average (4)
Wood, firewood	1 sack	Low (3)
WANTS		
Fur, large	1 hide	High (4)
Fur, small	1 hide	Low (3)
Herbs	1 cup	Low (4)
Leather	1 hide	Average (4)
Trinket	1 item	Average (6)

JOANITES

The Joanites produce furs and wild animal hides from their hunting and manufacture weapons and armor. They use hunts to train the young and maintain the skills of the old, as well as to generate meat, furs and hides which they use themselves and trade. Joanites also manufacture weapons, armor and even metal tools. The Joanites are interested in items that can be turned into weapons, relic weapons and trinket items for jewelry and decoration. The Evans and Yagans provide them with some food, though the Watch has been complaining that they are not getting enough.

JOANITE TRADE GOODS

Item	Quantity	Value
HAVES		
Farming Tool	1 item	Average (3)
Fur, large	1 hide	High (4)
Fur, small	1 hide	Low (3)
Hide, wild animal	1 hide	Low (3)
Lantern	1 item	Average (3)
Tent	4 paces square	High (3)
WANTS		
Blanket, wool	2 paces square	Average (4)
Clothing, heavy	1 set	Average (4)
Leather	1 hide	Average (4)
Metal Fragments/Wire	1 bucket	Low (4)
Metal Plate	1 item	Low (4)
Trinket	1 item	Average (6)
Wood, pole	5 pace	Average (4)

The Joanites also have a wide variety of non-relic weapons, armor and tools to trade (see **Tribe 8 Rulebook**, pp. 140-141). They will trade for most food items and muscle-powered relic weapons at near the normal trade value.

MAGDALITES

The Magdalites prefer to trade their services as diplomats and pleasure makers. They also trade in the things that they produce, including potions, incense and herbs, and allow Evans to harvest the stalks of plants that they grow as an intoxicant in return for food. The Evans extract fibers from the stalks to make cloth and rope. The Magdalites trade for food, clothing and comfortable furnishings. All of the tribes use Magdalite pleasure services to some degree. The Evans and Yagans trade generously with the Magdalites, either as a favor to the Third Fate or as a way to make Her dependent on Her two sisters — depending on whom you talk to.

MAGDALITE TRADE GOODS

Item	Quantity	Value
HAVES		
Herbs	1 cup	Low (4)
Incense, light sedative (Lib)	1 dose	Low (3)
Pleasure Services, quick	1 hour	Low (2)
Pleasure Services, slow	1 day	Average (4)
Potion, hallucinogen (Hazer)	1 dose	High (5)
Potion, light sedative (Lib)	1 dose	Low (3)
Potion, heavy sedative (Lib)	1 dose	Average (3)
Potion, stimulant (Hypes)	1 dose	Average (4)
WANTS		
Blanket, wool	2 paces square	Average (4)
Clothing, summer	1 set	Low (3)
Pillow	1 item	Low (4)
Quilt	2 paces square	Average (5)

They will also trade for most food items at near the normal trade value. They will generally trade for other items at a higher value if they are embroidered or otherwise attractively decorated.

SHEBANS

The Shebans produce few goods of their own and rely on the Evans, Yagans and other tribes for many of their needs. They traditionally receive food and goods for their services from the other tribes while acting as Judges. This dependency on the other tribes bothers the Shebans, and they have begun to fish, trap birds, collect eggs and grow vegetables in small garden plots in an effort to become more self-sufficient. As a result, the Shebans have been increasing their ability to trade for goods that they want. They are always interested in trading for food and sometimes need wooden poles for their Stilt-Walkers. They have also taken an interest in Dahlian embroidered clothing and other goods depicting various aspects of tribal law.

SHEBAN TRADE GOODS

Item	Quantity	Value
HAVES		
Eggs, bird	1 bucket	Average (4)
Fish	1 stone	Low (4)
Fishing Line	10 paces	Average (3)
Fishing Net, large	1 item	Very High (5)
Fishing Net, personal	1 item	High (3)
Vegetables	1 bucket	Low (2)
WANTS		
Clothing, embroidered	1 item	Average (4)
Wood, pole	5 paces	Average (4)

They will trade for most food items at near the normal trade value.

YAGANS

The Yagans raise and slaughter domestic meat animals. They pasture animals in their fields, and grow vegetables and hay. They produce meat, leather items, soap, feathers and other products from the animals they slaughter. They usually trade in raw meats in the winter months and smoked meats during the summer months.

They give away some food to the Joanites and Shebans and trade with the Agnites, Evans and Magdalites. They trade heavily with the Dahlians because it spares them from having to trade directly with the other tribes, though some Yagans prefer to trade their goods themselves in Bazaar. They trade for foods that they do not have and for wild animal hides and furs which they work into their leather goods.

The Yagans donate food to mark a death in a family. When a tribal dies, the Yagans hold a meat-heavy feast to honor the deceased and give enough food to the family of the deceased to feed them for a month or more. These feasts guarantee that the other tribes involve Yagans in their death ceremonies.

YAGAN TRADE GOODS

Item	Quantity	Value
HAVES		
Boots, leather	1 pair	Low (3)
Candle	1 item	Low (2)
Clothing, leather	1 set	Average (4)
Comb, bone	1 item	Average (4)
Divinatory Bones	1 set	High (4)
Eggs, chicken	1 bucket	Average (4)
Feathers	1 sack	Low (3)
Glue	1 cup	High (5)
Hay	1 sack	Low (2)
Leather	1 hide	Average (4)
Meat, fresh	1 stone	Low (3)
Meat, preserved	1 stone	Average (4)
Sewing Needle, bone	1 item	Low (4)
Soap	1 cup	Low (3)
Vegetables	1 bucket	Low (2)
WANTS		
Fur, large	1 hide	High (4)
Fur, small	1 hide	Low (3)
Hide, wild animal	1 hide	Low (3)

They will trade for most food items that they do not make themselves at a bit above the normal trade value.

THE FALLEN

The Fallen are most interested in trading for food, since they lack the food production resources of the tribal lands — although the recent raising of Haven with its fertile fields has eased their need somewhat (see *Children of Lilith*). Clothing is their second priority. Other items are a luxury that only wealthy or lucky Fallen can afford to trade for. Their resources consist of scrounged relics and the occasional hide or fur from what they can catch. Unfortunately for them, most are no better than Agnites at determining the value of the relics that they find and the Squats compete with them, trading in many of the same goods.

FALLEN TRADE GOODS

Item	Quantity	Value
HAVES		
Fur, large	1 hide	High (4)
Fur, small	1 hide	Low (3)
Hide, wild animal	1 hide	Low (3)
Relic, boring	1 item	Low (6)
Relic, interesting	1 item	High (7)

They will trade for most food or clothing items at near or above the normal trade value. Their interest in other items varies from individual to individual, and may reflect their previous tribal affiliation.

KEEPERS

The Keepers are primarily interested in trading for relics. In return, they trade food, trinkets and relic items that are unimportant to them, including relic clothing. The more complex and functional the relic, the more likely it is to interest a Keeper. The most valuable relics are those in working condition. Good relic tools also interest them.

KEEPER TRADE GOODS

Item	Quantity	Value
HAVES		
Boots, heavy relic	1 pair	Average (5)
Canteen, relic	1 item	Low (3)
Compass, relic	1 item	High (5)
Gas Mask, relic	1 item	High (5)
Goggles, relic	1 pair	Low (6)
Fruit	1 bucket	Average (3)
Latex Wear, relic	1 set	Average (6)
Meat, preserved	1 stone	Average (4)
Minor Relic (CD, etc.)	1 item	Average (6)
Rope, relic	100 paces	High (7)
Sleeping Bag, relic	1 item	High (5)
Toy, relic	1 item	Low (5)
Trench Coat, relic	1 item	Average (6)
Trinket	1 item	Average (6)
Vegetables	1 bucket	Low (2)
WANTS		
Relic, simple	1 item	High (6)
Relic, complex	1 item	Very High (6)
Relic, working	1 item	Very High (6)
Tool, relic electric	1 item	Average (6)
Tool, relic mechanical	1 item	Average (5)
Toolbox, relic	1 item	High (5)

SQUATS

The Squats want food but have little to trade in return, so they will usually labor for food if they are offered work. Squats do sometimes try to trade relics, but they are usually even less sophisticated than the Agnites or Fallen, considering all relics pretty much equal in value.

7. Weaver Resources

SQUAT TRADE GOODS

Item	Quantity	Value
HAVES		
Fur, large	1 hide	High (4)
Fur, small	1 hide	Low (3)
Hide, wild animal	1 hide	Low (3)
Relic, any	1 item	Average (7)

They will trade for most food or clothing items at near or above the normal trade value. Their interest in other items varies widely from individual to individual.

HINTS ON BARTER

Barter is largely a matter of finding a person who has a desired item and finding out what they want in return for it. A Streetwise, Trade or Lore test (depending on the approach) against the Threshold number listed with the value of each item can be used to find a person willing to trade an item. The Threshold for finding an item should be raised by 2 or more if the character is looking where the item is not commonly found. Failure indicates that a day was spent looking for the item without finding it. The Margin of Success (MoS) determines how long it took to find the item (see table, below). People will usually not trade for large quantities of any item, so the Weaver should require that multiple buyers be found to trade away large quantities of items.

Once the traders have found each other, they must make a deal. Characters can use the Trade Skill to evaluate item values (Threshold 4 for most items) and use the Haggling Skill to negotiate an exchange (see *Tribe 8 Rulebook*, p. 130). A failure on a Haggling test means that the haggler is offered a bad deal. The Weaver must determine the nature of the bad deal and the Player must decide whether or not to accept the bad deal anyway. The higher the margin of failure, the worse the deal should be. A Fumble on a Haggling check might indicate being forced into a bad deal without a choice, encountering refusal to bargain further, or even accusations of theft. Trades often involve a main item along with less valuable items to sweeten the deal.

Medallions are small items given by the tribal Sisterhoods to individuals, clans and families to show status and favor with the Fatimas (See *Vimary Sourcebook*, p. 131). These items are considered valuable and can be traded for goods and services, primarily in Bazaar and among the Dahlians and Magdalites. The value of Medallions ranges from Low (a simple icon) to High (a minor Fatimal artifact).

In addition to items, labor may be exchanged for goods. The value of the labor is based primarily on the work being done (see table, below). Appropriate tests should be made to see if the character finds work and to see how well the character performs the labor. A failure or fumble doing Risky or Very Risky labor may result in wounds or death. The Weaver should play out Risky and Very Risky tasks whenever possible.

FINDING BARTER GOODS

MoS	Time Spent
0	Full Day
1	Half Day
2	Two Hours
3+	A Few Minutes

LABOR VALUES

Task	Value
Unskilled Labor, 2 hours	Very Low (4)
Unskilled Labor, 2 days	Low (5)
Skilled Labor, 1 day	Average (4)
Risky Labor, 1 day	Average (6)
Specialized Labor, 1 day	High (7)
Very Risky Labor, 1 day	Very High (8)

MEASUREMENT

The tribes have lost the measurement systems from the World Before and have reverted to crude measurements based on containers and body parts for most of their trades. Below is a table of common trading measurements and their rough equivalents in the Metric and English systems. The exact measurements will vary. Keepers use an old system from the World Before that they call "Metric". Some are also familiar with a different, older system used with a few items.

TRIBAL MEASUREMENTS

Name	Measurement	Approximate Equivalent
pebble	weight of a small pebble	50 g or 1 1/2 oz.
stone	weight of a large stone	1 kg or 2 lb.
spoon	volume contained by a spoon	15 ml or 1/2 oz.
cup	volume contained by a mug or relic can	350 ml or 12 oz.
bucket	volume contained by a bucket	15 l or 16 qt.
sack	volume contained by a sack	45 l or 48 qt.
finger	width of a finger	2 cm or 3/4 in.
span	width of a spread hand	24 cm or 9 in.
pace	length of a long step	1 m or 1 yd.
click	length of about 1000 paces	1 km or 5/8 mi.

ADVANCED COMBAT OPTIONS

Pages 147 and 148 of the *Tribe 8 Rulebook* provide several optional rules to cover combat in special situations (such as surprise attacks or using improvised weaponry). The following rules are yet more options Weavers can use to add variety — and a certain complexity — to combat situations. These rules are largely modular, so feel free to pick and choose the ones you wish to use. Always remember that combat should be a dramatic, exciting and somewhat frightening undertaking.

ARMOR AND ENCUMBRANCE

Heavy forms of body armor can be a double edged sword. Although they place heavy metal scales or chain between attacks and the bearer's vulnerable flesh, they can slow down the bearer enough to actually make her *more* vulnerable to attack. The effect of armor bulk and weight is represented by its **Encumbrance** (see *Tribe 8 Rulebook*, p. 141). Those with very good training or who are especially strong, however, can escape the encumbering effects of armor — if only for the duration of combat.

Characters with a positive STR Attribute (+1 or greater) can ignore one point of armor Encumbrance. Those using a combat Skill in which they have level 3 or greater can also ignore a point of armor Encumbrance. Both these bonuses can be combined, but in no case can Encumbrance ever be less than zero. These reductions also apply only to combat Skills (Archery, Dodge, Hand-to-Hand, Melee, Throwing, etc.). Other AGI-based Skills suffers from full encumbrance penalties. Note that Encumbrance from armor and shields is cumulative, so even strong skilled fighters will be weighed down by heavy armor and large shields.

ATTACK TYPES

The basic combat rules do not distinguish between attack types. In terms of final effect, it matters little if a combatant is wounded by a bullet that drives through her organs, a blade that slashes her side, or a fist that breaks her nose. What matters is that she is in pain (i.e. the Action Penalty) and that she will need to heal.

A few of the advanced rules and options that follow, however, are influenced by the type of attack. When necessary, attacks can be considered to be one of three types below. Note that the Weaver is the final arbiter of what attack type a weapons does, although she should keep in mind that bladed weapons can usually do both hacking and piercing damage, depending on how they are used.

Blunt damage uses the kinetic force of a blunt object to do damage. Hand-to-Hand combat does crushing damage, just like maces, clubs and staffs. For simplicity's sake attacks that use small spikes or studs to augment blunt damage (like many maces) are still considered blunt. Blunt attacks can do Stun maneuvers (see *Combat Maneuvers*, below). **Hacking** damage is done by blades. Axes do hacking damage, as do swords and knives if they are swung. Hacking attacks have no special rules associated with them. **Piercing** damage does damage by concentrating the force of a blow into a sharp point with the intent of thrusting deep into (or through) flesh. Sword thrusts and spears do piercing damage. Most ranged attacks, such as arrows, throwing knives, and all firearm attack (including shotguns), do piercing damage. Piercing damage is important mostly in that it can get through shields (see *Shields*, p. 102).

ENTANGLING

Some weapons, like whips and nets, can entangle an opponent or their weapon. Not all attacks made with an entangling weapon will successfully entangle, however. These weapons have the **Ent (X)** characteristic listed in their description. X is a number representing the necessary minimum MoS to successfully entangle an opponent. So a net, with Ent (1), will entangle an opponent on any successful attack; a bullwhip with Ent (2) will only entangle with a MoS of 2 or more. Wielders of weapons with an Ent rating of 2 or more can choose not to entangle at all.

An entangled defender is effectively immobilized (all actions that require movement are at -3) as long as she does not free herself and the attacker maintains tension on the weapon. Maintaining tension past the first round requires an action but no roll. To free herself, the defender must pass an AGI or STR test (her choice) opposed by the attacker's Melee Skill. Some entangling weapons (like a thrown net or a bola) are not held by the attacker. In this case the defender remains entangled until she frees herself by passing an AGI or STR test (her choice) against a Threshold of 4.

Some entangling weapons also cause damage. This damage occurs separately from the entanglement and a weapon can well fail to wound someone and still entangle or wound someone and fail to entangle. Entangling weapons are also effective at immobilizing weapons. They all receive a +1 bonus to attempts to establish or maintain a Weapon Catch maneuver (see *Combat Maneuvers*, below).

HIT LOCATIONS

The basic combat rules in *Tribe 8* assume that opponents are simply trying to strike an opponent and will take the easiest shot they can. Ranged and piercing attacks are assumed to be aimed at the torso, while swinging attacks (be they blunt or hacking) are assumed to hit the upper arm/shoulder area. Tribal warriors tend to armor the chest and shoulders for this reason. It is possible to aim at other areas however, with differing effects. Note that the rules for Hit Location discussed under *Aiming* on p. 147 of the *Tribe 8 Rulebook* should be used for ranged combat. The following guidelines are used for close combat.

HIT LOCATION PENALTIES

Aiming For	Penalty to Hit
Large Body Part (arm, leg, stomach, default area for other attack type)	-1
Small Area (hand, foot, head, groin)	-2
Minute Area (eye, nerve center)	-3

HIT LOCATION AND DAMAGE

Different areas handle damage in different ways. Note that if a limb is incapacitated it *cannot* be used in combat in any way.

Arms and Legs: An arm or leg can only take a certain amount of damage until it is incapacitated. Two Flesh Wounds or a single Deep Wound will render a limb useless (in addition to the standard Action Penalties). An Instant Kill result is considered a Deep Wound, but should be noted for permanent injury purposes (see below). Ignore any additional damage aimed at an incapacitated limb.

Hands or Feet: An hand or foot can only take a bit of damage until it is incapacitated. A single Flesh Wound or Deep Wound will render a limb useless (in addition to the standard Action Penalties). An Instant Kill result is considered a Deep Wound, but should be noted for permanent injury purposes (see below). Ignore any additional damage aimed at an incapacitated limb.

Head or Vitals: A hit to the head or other sensitive area (groin, throat, etc.) can be painful indeed. The defenders Wound Thresholds are halved (round up) for the purposes of these attacks. Armor still has its full effect, if it covers that area. Characters who receive a Deep Wound aimed at the head should take a note of it for permanent injury purposes (see below). Weavers should note that some vital areas are easier to hit than others (the head, groin or throat is -2, an eye or nerve center is -3). Hits to these smaller areas cause no more damage, however. Combatants should keep in mind that shots aimed for head or vitals, unless designed to get around armor, are rarely worth it in combat — standard hits will usually do more damage.

HIT LOCATION AND PERMANENT INJURIES

Hit location only affects permanent injuries in the case of especially grave wounds: "Instant Kill" results aimed at limbs or extremities, and Deep Wounds aimed at the head. For full rules on Permanent Injuries, see *Tribe 8 Rulebook*, p. 151. If the character must roll on the Permanent Injury Table (result greater than 6), resolve head injuries first, then Instant Kills to limbs, then any other injuries. Each injury counts as a roll on the table, so a character who suffered head blows and "Instant Kills" to the limbs might escape ever dealing with some of them.

PERMANENT INJURY PRIORITY AND RESULTS

Priority	Injury Type	Effect
1	Head Injuries	Roll as normal, except that both 5 and 6 result in Brain Damage.
2	Instant Kills to Limbs	The result is automatically "limb maimed beyond use." The limb is either smashed or severed.
3	Other Injuries	If there are still rolls to be made on the table, do so normally.

MOVEMENT DURING CLOSE COMBAT

The Offensive Modifiers table on p. 146 of the *Tribe 8 Rulebook* impose severe penalties on attackers who walk, jog or run during combat. These penalties work well for ranged combat, where attackers should stay still in order to take aim. In close combat, however, a strict interpretation of these modifiers can lead to bizarre results. A warrior charging into combat could suffer a -3 penalty, for example. Fights may end up with combatants staying stock still in a parody of real combat. This is hardly dramatic or credible.

Real close combat is very fluid, with participants constantly moving both to avoid or parry blows and to deliver them. This movement should not be considered for the purposes of Offensive Modifiers in close combat. Only large scale movements such as running for cover should matter. Note that charges are a special combat maneuver and are not affected by movement penalties (see *Combat Maneuvers*, below).

While the to and fro of close combat is not sufficient to impose a penalty on Hand-to-Hand and Melee attacks, it is enough to make the combatants less than easy targets. Unless there is a reason otherwise (e.g. they are entangled) those fighting in close combat are considered to be walking for *defensive purposes* and so have a +0 Defensive Modifier (and not the -1 modifier for being Stationary).

To put it more simply, do not consider movement modifiers for close combat unless a character is either immobilized or actively trying to cover ground.

PARTIAL ARMOR

The basic armor rules (*T8 Rulebook*, p. 141) assume that combatants are wearing a fairly uniform suit of armor that protects all key areas of the body. In actuality, however, tribal warriors often wear patchwork armors. Leather or mail tunics worn with metal shoulder and neck guards are especially popular among Joanites and Jackers. Breastplates and helms are also common.

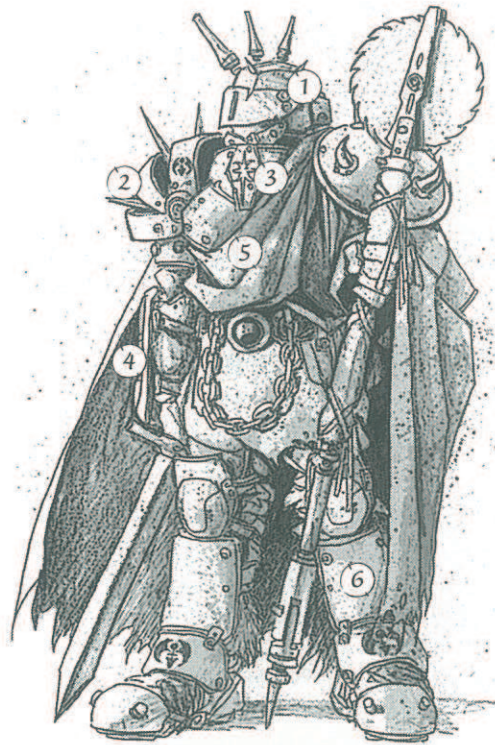
In most cases these armor pieces can be worn over a lighter armor (soft, leather or chain) and provide additional protection in the locations they cover. Use the covering piece's Armor Rating with the following bonuses based on under-armor: +1 for soft armor, +2 for leather, +3 for studded or boiled leather, and +4 for chain. Encumbrance from basic armor and added pieces is cumulative. Armor parts marked with an asterisk (*) under Encumbrance cause no Encumbrance alone. Three elements like this worn together will cause -1 Encumbrance and six will cause -2. Items meant to be worn as a pair (gauntlets, shoulder pads, etc.) count as one element per pair.

The specific make of each item is left up to the imagination. Most items have a light form (relic sport pads, reinforced leather, light metal) and a heavy form (heavy plates). Some items impose special Skill modifiers, listed in their descriptions (penalties to the same Skill are *not* cumulative).

ARMOR PIECES

This warrior of the Joante Watch is wearing heavy armor, made up a variety of pieces.

1	Full Helm
2	Heavy Shoulder Plates
3	Heavy Gorget
4	Heavy Vembraces
5	Breast Plate (hidden by cloak)
6	Heavy Greaves



ARMOR PIECES

Name	AR	Coverage	Enc.	Conceal.	Mass.	Value	Notes
Helm (light)	8	head	*	no	1	Average (4)	-
Helm (full)	14	head/face	*	no	1.5	High (4)	-1 Notice
Relic Helmet (light)	9	head	0	no	1	High (6)	-
Relic Helmet (heavy)	15	head/face	*	no	1	Very High (7)	-
Gorget (light)	5	neck	0	some	0.5	Average (3)	-
Gorget (heavy)	14	neck	*	no	1	High (4)	-
Shoulder Plates (light)	10	shoulders	*	no	1	Average (3)	-
Shoulder Plates (heavy)	14	shoulders	*	no	1.5	High (5)	-1 Stealth
Vembraces (light)	7	forearms	0	some	0.5	Average (3)	-
Vembraces (heavy)	12	forearms	*	no	1	High (5)	-
Gauntlets	8	hands	*	no	1	Average (4)	-1 AGI (fine dexterity only)
Vest (leather)	8	chest	*	yes	1	Average (4)	-
Vest (mail)	10	chest	*	some	1.5	High (5)	-1 Stealth
Vest (relic)	12	chest	0	some	0.5	Very High (8)	-
Shirt (leather)	8	chest/shoulders	*	yes	1	High (4)	-
Shirt (mail)	10	chest	*	some	1.5	Very High (5)	-1 Stealth
Breast Plate (light)	10	chest	*	some	1	Average (3)	-1 Stealth
Breast Plate (heavy)	14	chest	*	no	2	High (5)	-1 Stealth
Tunic (leather)	8	chest/shoul./hips	*	some	1.5	High (3)	-
Tunic (mail)	10	chest/shoul./hips	-1	some	2	Very High (5)	-1 Stealth
Tunic (relic)	15	chest/shoul./hips	-1	no	2	Very High (7)	-
Skirt or Cuisse (light)	5	hips	0	some	0.5	Average (3)	-
Skirt or Cuisse (heavy)	10	hips	*	no	1	High (5)	-1 Stealth
Greaves (light)	7	lower legs	0	some	0.5	Average (3)	-
Greaves (heavy)	12	lower legs	*	no	1	High (5)	-

SHIELDS

Warriors of many sorts use shields to defend against attacks. In **Tribe 8**, shields are used just like any other weapon and have the same basic statistics. They have very low Accuracy and Damage Multipliers, however, because they are relatively ineffective as offensive weapons. Shields also have an Encumbrance rating that functions exactly the same as armor Encumbrance (see *Armor and Encumbrance*, below). Only very large and cumbersome shields suffer from this problem, making them only effective in the hands of very strong or skilled characters. These shields can, however, provide full coverage (see *Full Coverage*, below). The following special rules also apply to shields:

Paired Weapons: The Accuracy of a shield is considered zero for the purposes of paired weapon penalties (see *Paired Weapons*, below). This means that a shield will not reduce the Accuracy of a weapon used in conjunction with it unless that Accuracy is higher than zero. Encumbrance from a heavy shield, however, can effectively reduce the final attack roll.

Thrusting Damage: Thrusting damage (and ballistic attacks, see below) can pierce a weak shield and hurt the defender despite a successful parry. If the attack's MoF is equal to or less than the shield's parry bonus, the attack is considered to have struck the shield and may pierce it. The defender suffers the attack as if it had a MoS of 1, but can add the shield's Resistance as if it were armor.

Ranged Attacks: Shields can provide cover against ranged attacks and add their Parry bonus to the defender's Dodge roll. On a successful attack, the attack gets past the shield. If the attack is thrusting in nature (an arrow, spear or bullet, but not a stone or bola), it may pierce the shield (see *Thrusting Damage*, above).

Destroying a Shield: Shields can be destroyed by especially powerful hacking or crushing attacks. If the attack's MoF is equal to or less than the shield's parry bonus, the attack is considered to have struck the shield and may destroy it. If the base damage of the attack (at MoS 1) is greater than twice the shield's Armor Rating, it is considered destroyed.

Full Coverage: Tower Shields or other very large shields (with the **Twr** characteristic) can provide full coverage against ranged attacks. This happens when the defender hunkers down behind her shield, covering her entire body thanks to its very large size. Ranged attacks against such a target count as being against a stationary target, but have a maximum MoS of 1 and the shield's resistance counts as armor for the defender.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Combat can occur in a variety of constraining or dangerous situations. Weavers may choose to use the following rules to reflect the added difficulty.

Close Quarters: When fighting in a small space or one full of inconvenient obstacles (e.g. in a tight corridor or a dense forest), powerful blows that involve large weapons are more difficult. Weavers should impose a flat -1 ACC penalty to attacks with weapons larger than a short sword or club. Note that the Heavy Blow maneuver (see *Combat Maneuvers*, p. 103) automatically suffers this penalty unless it is used unarmed. Weavers may rule that some weapons are so cumbersome that they either cannot be used or deserve a higher penalty (e.g. a bull-whip).

Fighting In Water: Characters fighting in water above their heads use the lowest of the appropriate combat Skill and their Swimming Skill. All attacks are also at -1 because of the Action required to stay afloat, unless the character is using some sort of flotation device or is unconcerned about drowning (e.g. because of a special ability). Weavers may impose further penalties if wearing heavy armor or carrying other weighty equipment (-1 or -2). Characters in water deeper than their hips but not above their shoulders, suffer a flat -1 penalty to AGI Skills. Deeper water requires Swimming or imposes a -2 penalty as appropriate; shallower water imposes no AGI penalty, but halves movement speeds.

Multiple Attackers: When several people are attacking a single defendant, that defendant gets penalties to her Dodge and Parry rolls. The defender suffers a -1 penalty for all attacks from a second attacker, -2 for those from a third attacker, and -3 for those from any additional attackers. A single attacker who takes multiple actions in a round *does not* count as two attackers for these purposes.

STRENGTH AND WEAPONS

Many large weapons require a certain amount of physical strength to use with any precision. The minimum STR required is listed in a weapon's description (see *Revised Weapon Table*, pp. 106-107). Weaker characters can use these weapons but suffer a penalty equal to the difference between weapon's minimum STR and their own STR.

In the case of bows, the minimum STR is the strength for which the bow was designed. Those with that STR (or higher), use the listed characteristics. Those with a lower STR may still use the bow, but the difference between their STR and the minimum STR is deducted from the weapon's ACC, Damage Multiplier, and Short Range. Medium, Long and Extreme Ranges would then be recalculated based on that reduction (equal to two, four, and eight times Short Range, respectively). Crossbows have two minimum STRs listed, in the format STR (X/X). The first is the STR needed to draw the string back into position to load the weapon and operates like the minimum STR for traditional bows (a shortfall affects ACC, Damage, and Range). The second STR is the minimum to properly wield the loaded crossbow and works like the minimum STR for any other weapon (affecting ACC). A character who is weaker than both minimums suffers only the greater ACC penalty. Most crossbows can be fitted with a device to aid loading; this device (usually called a goatsfoot) increase the loader effective STR by 2, but adds one round to loading time.

TWO-HANDED AND PAIRED WEAPONS

The basic combat rules in the **Tribe 8 Rulebook** assume, for simplicity's sake, that combatants will use their weapons in the way they were intended. They wield one-handed swords with their good hand, and use two handed weapons with both hands. Weavers who want to add some extra options to combat can use the following rules:

Two-Handed Weapons: Melee weapons either require one or two hands to use. Those marked as two-handed are just too bulky or too heavy to use effectively with a single hand. Generous Weavers might allow this to be done in exceptional circumstances, imposing a -3 + STR penalty. Some weapons can be used either one or two-handed with only slight changes. These weapons are identified in their description.

Off-Hands: One-handed weapons can be used, if necessary with a character's "off hand" (e.g. her left hand if she is right handed). The off hand is typically weaker and less coordinated, making any attack with it less effective. Most trained fighters, however, learn to use their off hand in defensive blocks. Characters using their off hand suffer a -2 penalty to hit, but none to parry. Characters who are Ambidextrous (see **Tribe 8 Rulebook**, p. 196) have no off-hand.

Paired Weapons: It is perfectly possible to use two one-handed weapons, one in each hand. It is best to do so with two light weapons, however, because the character must deal with both their bulk. In game terms, the lowest of the two weapons' Accuracies is applied to any attack made with either weapon. The character cannot make multiple attacks (except by declaring extra Actions) and the second weapon suffers the standard penalties for off-handed use (see above). There are some advantages to paired weapons, however. Parries use the highest of the two Parry modifiers, and there are several combat maneuvers that require paired weapons (see *Combat Maneuvers*, below). Also paired weapons makes it possible to do a Weapon Catch maneuver (see *Combat Maneuvers*, below) and attack with the other weapon, although this requires an additional action.

COMBAT MANEUVERS

Close combat in **Tribe 8** is usually a fairly simple and brutal conflict. Characters hack, slash and smash at each other until one or the other falls. Skilled combatants, however, can and do use a variety of special combat maneuvers to either achieve special effects or maximize the effect of each blow. Weavers who want to run more varied combats can use these maneuvers in their games.

Anyone can use these maneuvers (with the exception of Nerve Strike), although they will rarely be effective unless a fighter is skilled. Each maneuver has several attributes:

Accuracy (ACC): Apply this modifier to the maneuver's attack roll.

Initiative (Init): Apply this modifier to your Initiative roll *next* round.

Dodge: Apply this modifier to your *next* defense roll if it is a dodge (or the current roll, if the maneuver is a dodge). The modifier cannot apply to a defense roll more than one round after the maneuver is executed.

Parry: Apply this modifier to your *next* defense roll if it is a parry (or the current roll, if the maneuver is a parry). The modifier cannot apply to a defense roll more than one round after the maneuver is executed.

Damage (Dam): If a modifier, apply it to the base damage multiplier of the attack (before multiplying by the MoS). If a DM formula (e.g. AD+3) use that as the base damage of the attack. If a MoS formula, modify the MoS of the Attack for damage purposes only.

* A special case, refer to the notes associated with the maneuver.



COMBAT MANEUVERS

Maneuver	ACC	Init	Dodge	Parry	Dam	Notes
All-Out Dodge	n/a	0	+2	n/a	n/a	No other actions possible save movement. Surprise attacks are treated like normal attacks.
Butt/Hilt strike	-1	0	0	0	AD+3	Can be combined with a Stun with a total ACC penalty of only -1.
Charge	0	+1	-1	-1	MoS+1	Must be able to run at defender; no movement penalties
Crush	+1	-1	-1	-1	UD+1	Can only be performed while holding a Grapple.
Defensive Blows	n/a	-2	-4	+1	1/2*	Cannot attack, but can cause damage by parrying. Damage equal to DM x Attacker's MoF x 1/2.
Disarm	-2*	0	0	-1	n/a	Defender adds STR to her Defense roll. Success sends defender's weapon flying. Additional -1 ACC penalties apply if attacker is unarmed or the defender is using a two-handed weapon. Add a +1 ACC bonus if immediately trying to catch a successfully parried weapon.
Feint	-1	0/-2*	0/-2*	-1/-2	0*	Attack does no damage, but a MoS of 0 or more allows a free second attack that round at +1 ACC. A failed first attack imposes penalties after the slash.
Gain Advantage	n/a	+1	0	0	n/a	No attack this round; +1 ACC/round to next attack. Max bonus is Skill level.
Grapple	-1/-3*	-1	-2	0	1/2	Success pins the opponent. Maintaining the hold past this round requires an action. Breaking the hold requires passing an opposed HtH test, modified by STR for both opponents. A Trip/Flip or Throw can be performed by someone maintain a hold with a +1 ACC bonus. Unarmed combat only. -3 ACC against armed combatants
Head Butt	+1/-1	-1	-1	-1	UD+3	+1 ACC if aimed at Head (total modified -1), -1 if aimed at other location. Hand-to-Hand combat only. Attacker suffers damage equal to MoF x (base attack damage + defender's armor) on Fumble.
Keep at Bay	0	0	0	0	*	A MoS of 1 keeps an enemy back several feet, giving them a -2 penalty to attack. Requires a long weapon (long sword or longer). Damage is calculated as if MoS were 1.
Kick/Heavy Blow	0	-2	-1	-1	+3	In armed attacks, this requires a full swing or very heavy thrust, so is impossible in close quarters (see <i>Special Situations</i> , above).
Paired Parry	n/a	0	-1	+1	n/a	Weapon Resistance is doubled for damage purposes. If defender immediately responds with a Weapon Catch or Disarm maneuver, she does so with a +1 bonus to ACC. Requires paired weapons.
Reduce Damage	0	0	0	0	*	Final MoS may be reduced by attackers Skill level. Requires Skill level 2 and should be declared after MoS is calculated, but before final damage is calculated.
Riposte	*	0	0	0	0	Attack immediately after a successful parry with ACC bonus equal to the parried attack's MoF - 2.
Stun	-1	0	0	0	*	A Light Wound result causes no lasting wound, but imposes a -2 Action Penalty for MoS rounds. Deep Wounds are treated normally. Crushing attacks only.
Throw	-1	-1	-1	-1	*	Opponent ends up on the ground MoS meters away if attack is successful. Damage is attacker's UD + defender's BLD. Defender may choose to roll Acrobatics or Athletics instead of Dodge. Until the opponent gets up (one action), she suffers -2 to all close combat skills. Hand-to-Hand combat only. This maneuver suffers an additional -1 ACC for each full 3 levels of BLD the defender has greater than the attacker.
Trip/Flip	-1*	-1	-1	-1	1/2	Opponent ends up on the ground if attack is successful. Defender may choose to roll Acrobatics or Athletics instead of Dodge. Until the opponent gets up (one action), she suffers -2 to all close combat skills. No bladed weapons. This maneuver suffers an additional -1 ACC for each full 3 levels of BLD the defender has greater than the attacker.
Weapon Catch	-2*	-1	-1	0	n/a	Success immobilizes both combatants' weapons. Maintaining the hold past the first round or breaking it requires an opposed Melee Skill roll, modified by both STR and AGI. Additional -1 ACC penalties apply if attacker is unarmed or the defender is using a two-handed weapon. Add a +1 ACC bonus if immediately trying to catch a successfully parried weapon.

COMBAT MANEUVER DESCRIPTIONS

All-Out Dodge: This is an all out attempt to avoid being hit, sacrificing everything to avoid damage. It is part of the basic combat system and included here for reference purposes. See *Tribe 8 Rulebook*, p. 148.

Butt/Hilt strike: An attacker can choose to strike an opponent with the hilt of a sword, the flat of the blade or the butt of an ax in order to minimize damage. Few weapons are designed for this purpose, so this attack is not terribly ineffective.

Charge: By running at an opponent an attacker can close ground quickly and put some extra momentum (hence extra

damage) behind her blow. A charge also provides a psychological advantage, slowing down the response time of enemies.

Crush: Once an opponent has been Grappled, she can be hurt by applying constricting pressure on various sensitive areas. This maneuver represents such attacks.

Defensive Blows: A character using a weapon to parry can choose to barrage her opponent with light blows to keep her at bay. These attacks are generally ineffective, but they make the character hard to hit. This tactic is often used when retreating to holding ground against superior numbers. The character is very vulnerable to ranged attacks, however.

Disarm: A skilled fighter can strip an opponent of her weapon with a well-placed blow. This strike will generally make the

defender lose her grip on the weapon without causing any real damage. Combatants who still have an action this round and who just parried and attack successfully can choose to use that action to immediately perform a Disarm (ignore standard initiative) at a +1 ACC bonus (total modifier -1). Note that shields, because they are well secured, cannot be targeted by a Disarm maneuver.

Feint: By making a false move, an attacker can force an opponent to create another opening. A feint allows an attacker to make two attacks (not necessarily with the same weapon) one right after the other without declaring extra actions or paying an extra-action penalty. The first blow (the actual feint) does no damage, while the second blow gains a bonus to hit. If the first blow fails (MoF 1+), however, the attacker opens herself to a deadly riposte.

Gain Advantage: By taking time and waiting to attack, a combatant can study her opponent and find the best way to attack. Combatants can Gain Advantage for several consecutive rounds, building a cumulative ACC bonus for their next attack. The maximum ACC bonus is equal to their Skill level (in Hand-to-Hand for brawling or Melee for armed combat). This is the close combat equivalent to aiming (see **T8 Rulebook**, p. 147).

Grapple: Grappling is unarmed combat focusing on holds. The point is to pin an opponent, making it impossible for them to do anything save try to escape the hold. Once a hold is achieved, maintaining it only requires an action per round (no roll is necessary).

Head Butt: A staple of rough and tumble brawling, a head butt can be very effective if done properly, focusing serious damage at an opponent's cranium. If done unsuccessfully, however, it can result in serious injury to the attacker. A Head Butt is usually aimed at the head (-2 to hit).

Keep at Bay: By using a long weapon (at least a long sword), an attacker can force an opponent to keep her distance. That enemy can still attack, but at a -2 penalty (representing the need to get around the swinging weapon). The attack does little damage, however.

Kick/Heavy Blow: This is any of a variety of strikes that sacrifice finesse in order to inflict extra damage, such as a kicking rather than punching, or pulling back into a large swing with a sword. This slows down the attacker, makes her vulnerable to ripostes, and is difficult in close quarters.

Paired Parry: Characters using paired weapons can use the two in conjunction (typically by forming an X shape with two swords) to create a very effective block. A skilled combatant can also use this move to set up a Weapon Catch. Note that a Paired Parry is not possible when using a shield.

Riposte: Characters who still have an action this round can spend it immediately to respond to a successfully parried attack. The ACC modifier is the parried attack's MoF - 2 (which can be negative). A riposte cannot be done with a shield.

Stun: By striking the head, solar plexus, groin or other sensitive area with a lighter blow, the attacker can faze her opponent

without causing permanent damage. If too heavy a blow is applied, however, serious damage will result. Apply Hit Location penalties only if the attacker aims for a specific weak point (e.g. an unarmored head) and use only the largest penalty in that case.

Throw: This is any attack designed to send the opponent flying, using her own size against her. A defender who ends up down must spend an action to get up (no roll). Until she does she suffers a -2 penalty to all close-combat Skills (Hand-to-Hand, Melee, Dodge). This maneuver is difficult against people trained to take a fall or very large characters

Trip/Flip: This is any of a variety of attacks designed to send the opponent sprawling. A defender who ends up down must spend an action to get up (no roll). Until she does she suffers a -2 penalty to all close-combat Skills (Hand-to-Hand, Melee, Dodge). This maneuver is difficult against people trained to take a fall or very large characters

Weapon Catch: A skilled combatant can immobilize an opponent's weapon with her own, usually by pinning it down. This move effectively renders both weapons useless, but is difficult to maintain. An opposed Skill test occurs whenever the defenders tries to break free *and* when the attacker tries to maintain it for another round. Combatants who still have an action this round and who just parried and attack successfully can choose to use that action to immediately perform a Weapon Catch (ignore standard initiative) at a +1 ACC bonus (total modifier -1). This maneuver must be performed with the weapon used to parry and be aimed at the weapon that was successfully parried. This counts as an action.

COMBINING MANEUVERS

It is possible to combine close combat maneuvers into a single attack; simply combine all the modifiers. Consider all combinations possible unless the methods or results of each maneuver are either redundant or mutually exclusive.

NEW AND REVISED WEAPONS

The weapons listed in the next two pages replace those listed on page 140 of the **Tribe 8 Rulebook**. In addition to correcting and expanding statistics for weapons already provided, these tables give many new weapons, most of which should be self-explanatory. The new bows may require some definition, however. The **Self Bow** (sometime called a short bow) is made of a single short piece of wood, straight when unstrung. A **Long Bow** is taller than a person and may have more bend and recurve (see below) than a self bow. A **Recurve Bow** is a small bow that has been treated so the ends recurve (i.e. point away from the archer), giving it additional power. A **Composite Bow** is made of two materials (one pulling the bow straight from the outside, the other pushing it straight from the inside) for extra power and is heavily recurved (tribal and relic versions exist). A **Compound Bow** is a relic that uses pulleys to multiply power.

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon	ACC	Parry	DM	Range	ROF	Ammo	Value	Wt.	Notes
STICKS AND CLUBS									
Club	0	-1	AD+3	close combat	-	-	Very Low (2)	1	Bl
Mace	0	0	AD+7	close combat	-	-	Very Low (2)	2	Bl, STR (-1)
Fighting Stick	0	+1	AD+4	close combat	-	-	Low (4)	1	Bl, STR (-1)
Quarterstaff, wood	0	+1	AD+5	close combat	-	-	Low (3)	2.5	Bl, 2H, STR (-1)
Quarterstaff, metal	0	+1	AD+7	close combat	-	-	Average (5)	4	Bl, 2H, STR (0)
Sledgehammer	-1	-2	AD+16	close combat	-	-	Low (4)	3	Bl, 2H, STR (+1)
Warhammer	0	0	AD+9	close combat	-	-	Low (4)	2	Bl, STR (0)
BLADES AND KNIVES									
Dagger	0	-1	AD+3	Throw (STR+1)	-	-	Low (4)	0.25	Ha, Pr
Throwing Knife/Spike	0	-1	AD+3	Throw (STR+4)	-	-	Average (5)	0.25	Pr
Hunting Knife	0	-1	AD+5	Throw (STR+3)	-	-	Low (4)	0.5	Ha, Pr
Arm Blade	0	0	AD+4	close combat	-	-	Low (4)	1	Ha, Pr
Sickle	0	-2	AD+3	close combat	-	-	Low (4)	0.5	Ha, STR (-1)
Machete (relic)	0	0	AD+8	close combat	-	-	Average (4)	1	Ha, Pr, STR (-1)
SWORDS AND AXES									
Short Sword	0	+1	AD+8	close combat	-	-	Average (5)	1	Ha, Pr, STR (-1)
Broadsword	0	0	AD+9	close combat	-	-	High (6)	1.5	Ha, Pr, STR (-1)
Long Sword	0	-1	AD+11	close combat	-	-	High (6)	1.5	Ha, Pr, STR (-1)
Katana (relic)*	0	+1	AD+9/13	close combat	-	-	Very High (7)	1.5	Ha, Pr, (can be used one-handed, use reduced damage) STR (-1)
Chainsaw (relic)	-1	-2	AD+15	close combat	-	-	Very High (7)	1.25	Ha, 2H, STR (+1)
Bastard Sword	0	0/-1	AD+11/13	close combat	-	-	Very High (7)	2	Ha, Pr, (can be used one-handed, use reduced damage), STR(0/-1)
Great Sword	-1	-1	AD+18	close combat	-	-	Very High (7)	5	Ha, Pr, 2H, STR (+1)
Hatchet	0	0	AD+7	Throw (STR+3)	-	-	Low (3)	1.5	Ha, STR (-1)
Battle-ax	0	-1	AD+13	close combat	-	-	Average (3)	2	Ha, 2H, STR (0)
Pick Ax	-1	-1	AD+14	close combat	-	-	Average (3)	4	Pr, 2H, STR (-1)
SPEARS AND HALBERDS									
Short Spear/Javelin	0	+1	AD+6/8	Throw (STR+6)	-	-	Average (4)	1.5	Pr, 1H/2H, STR (-1)
Long Spear	-1	+1	AD+12	Throw (STR)	-	-	High (4)	3	Pr, 2H, STR (0)
Poleax	-1	+1	AD+15	close combat	-	-	Average (4)	2.5	Ha, 2H, STR (0)
Scythe	-1	-1	AD+14	close combat	-	-	Average (3)	2.5	HA, 2H, STR (-1)
WHIPS AND FLAILS									
Bullwhip	0	-2	AD+3	close combat	-	-	Average (4)	3	Ha, Ent (2)
Chain	-1	-2	AD+6	close combat	-	-	Very Low (2)	1	Bl, Ent (2)
Flail	-1	-2	AD+10	close combat	-	-	Low (3)	2	Bl, Ent (3), STR (-1)
Grain Flail	-1	-1	AD+11	close combat	-	-	Low (4)	2.5	Bl, 2H, STR (-1)
Net	0	-3	-	Throw (STR+2)	-	-	High (3)	-	Ent (1)
SHIELDS AND BRACERS									
Buckler	-1	+1	AD+1	close combat	-	-	Low (3)	0.5	Bl, Shd (13)
Light Shield, Leather	-2	+2	AD	close combat	-	-	Low (2)	0.5	Bl, Shd (8)
Light Shield, Wood	-2	+2	AD+2	close combat	-	-	Low (4)	1	Bl, Shd (14)
Light Shield, Metal	-2	+2	AD+4	close combat	-	-	High (4)	2.5	Bl, Shd (17), STR (-1)
Large Shield, Wood	-3	+3	AD+3	close combat	-	-	Average (4)	2	Bl, Shd (14), Enc. -1, STR (-1)
Large Shield, Metal	-3	+3	AD+5	close combat	-	-	High (5)	3	Bl, Shd (17), Enc. -1, STR (-1)
Large Shield, Relic	-2	+3	AD+5	close combat	-	-	Very High (6)	2.5	Bl, Shd (20), STR (-1)
Tower Shield	-4	+3	AD+5	close combat	-	-	Average (5)	3.5	Bl, Shd (17), Enc. -2, Twr, STR (0)
Heavy Bracer	0	+1	AD+1	close combat	-	-	Low (3)	1	Bl, Shd (10, no ranged dodge bonus)
Armored Arm	-1	+1	AD+3	close combat	-	-	Average (4)	2	Bl, Shd (14, no ranged dodge bonus)

RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon	ACC	Fumble	DM	Range	ROF	Ammo	Value	Wt	Notes
RANGED WEAPONS, TRIBAL									
Self Bow	0	Low	7	5/10/20/40	0/1	1	Average (3)	0.5	Pr, 2H, STR (0)
Longbow	0	Low	10	9/18/36/72	0/1	1	High (4)	1	Pr, 2H, STR (+1)
Recurve Bow	0	Low	8	8/16/32/64	0/1	1	High (5)	1	Pr, 2H, STR (0)
Composite Bow	0	Low	9	9/18/36/72	0/1	1	High (5)	1	Pr, 2H, STR (0)
Composite Bow (relic)	+1	Medium	15	7/14/28/56	0/1	1	Very High (5)	3	Pr, 2H, STR (0)
Compound Bow (relic)	+1	Medium	16	8/16/32/64	0/1	1	Very High (6)	3	Pr, 2H, STR (0)
Yagan Bone Bow	+1	Low	9	8/16/32/64	0/1	1	Very High (6)	1	Pr, 2H, STR (0)
Hand Crossbow	0	Medium	6	4/8/16/32	0/1	1	Average (5)	1	Pr, 2H (to load), STR (-1/-)
Crossbow	+1	Low	17	6/12/24/48	0/3	1	High (5)	3	Pr, 2H, STR (+1/-1)
Repeating Crossbow	-1	Medium	7	7/14/28/56	0	6	High (5)	3	Pr, 2H, STR (0/-1)
Sling	+1	Low	5	4/8/16/32	0	1	Low (2)	0.5	Bl, 2H (to load)
Bola	0	Low	7	6/12/24/48	0	1	Low (2)	1	Bl, Ent(1), 2H (to load)
RANGED WEAPONS, KEEPERS									
Zip-Gun	-2	High	8	4/8/16/32	0/2	1	Average (6)	0.5	Mtn (2)
Pistol (black powder)	-1	High	15	6/12/24/48	0/1	1	High (4)	1	Mtn (3)
Pistol (jury-rigged)	-1	High	14	4/8/16/32	0	6	High (6)	1	Mtn (3)
Pistol	0	High	15	5/10/20/40	0	6	Very High (5)	1	Mtn (2)
Machine Pistol	0	High	15	5/10/20/40	+1	20	Very High (7)	1	Mtn (3)
Submachinegun	0	High	15	5/10/20/40	+1	50	Very High (9)	1	Mtn (3)
Musket	0	High	24	10/20/30/40	0/1	1	Very High (5)	4	Mtn (3)
Rifle (jury rigged)	-1	High	20	7/14/28/56	0	1	High (6)	3	Mtn (3)
Rifle	0	High	25	25/50/100/200	0	10	Very High (6)	4	Mtn (2)
Heavy Rifle	0	High	30	35/70/140/280	0	10	Very High (7)	4	Mtn (2)
Assault Rifle	0	High	25	25/50/100/200	+1	30	Very High (8)	4	Mtn (3)
Shotgun	0	High	28	7/14/28/56	0	8	Very High (5)	3	Mtn (2)
EXPLOSIVES									
Weapon	ACC	Fumble	DM	Range	Radius	Ammo	Value	Wt	Notes
Concussion Grenade (relic)	0	High	30	Throw (STR+3)	9	-	Very High (6)	1	Mtn (4)
Dynamite Stick (relic)	-1	High	30	Throw (STR+3)	10	-	Very High (5)	1	Mtn (4)
Pitch Smoke Bomb	1	High	5/smoke	Throw (STR+3)	2/20	-	Average (4)	1.5	Mtn (3)

NEW WEAPON CHARACTERISTICS

2H: This weapon is designed to be used two-handed.

1H/2H: This weapon may be used one-handed or two-handed, use the stats before the slash if one-handed.

STR (X): This weapon has a minimum strength (X).

Ha: This weapon does hacking damage.

Bl: This weapon does blunt damage.

Pr: This weapon does piercing damage.

Ent (X): This weapon may entangle opponents. X is the minimum MoS to do so.

Mtn (X): Ranged weapons with this characteristic have their Fumble level reduced by one level if used and maintained by a

person with skill level X in either the attack skill or Techlore (Mechanics).

Shd (X): This weapon is subject to the special rules for shields. X is the shield's Armor Rating.

Twr: This shield can be used for full coverage.

TRIBE 8 RULEBOOK ERRATA

A few mistakes unfortunately slipped into the first printing of the *Tribe 8 Rulebook* (DP9-801). The following corrections should help resolve a few confusing points:

Page 100: In the character sidebar on Den-Hades:

Replace all references to "Helios" with "Halos." This is the Guide profiled on page 82.

Page 104: In the character sidebar on Veruka the Wraith:

Veruka should have both the Dream Travel and Curse of Dream Aspects.

Page 107: In the character sidebar on Altara Ven:

Altara's Eminences should be Unity and Inspiration.

Page 140: In the *Weapon Statistics* table:

Several small errors crept in. Use the expanded and corrected weapon tables on pages 106-107 of this book.

Page 141: The *Personal Armor* table should read:

PERSONAL ARMOR

Armor	Armor Rating	Encumbrance	Concealable	Mass	Value
Soft	3	0	yes	2	Low (3)
Leather	5	0	somewhat	4	High (4)
Studded Leather	8	0	somewhat	6	High (5)
Lt. scale/chain	10	-1	somewhat	7	Very High (5)
Hvy scale/chain	14	-2	no	10	Very High (6)
Flak Jacket	16	0	yes	2.5	Very High (7)

Page 165: The second to last paragraph under *Conjunctional Synthesis* should read:

When *Conjunctional Synthesis* is used to augment a person, the Margin of Success is added to the desired Attribute or Secondary Trait (3 x MoS in the case of STA, UD or AD). The augmentation lasts for a length of time determined by the MoS (see *Basic Margin of Success Equivalencies*, below). A character can benefit from several augmentations in a scene (simultaneous or not) only if they fall within very different domains (i.e. physical, spiritual, or sensory). Cumulative or permanent effects are never possible.

Page 171: The description for *Metamorphosis* should read:

Metamorphosis allows the dreamer to transform an object or others' perception of it. Changing perceptions essentially creates an illusion and can render an actual object invisible or conjure an illusory object from thin air. The MoS indicates the number of senses affected by the illusion. Observers will believe these stable illusions until they are given a real reason to disbelieve it — hearing the sound of an invisible cart, being hurt by an illusory dagger, noticing that an illusory cloak makes no

sound. In these cases the observer rolls WIL against a Threshold equal to 3 + the MoS of the illusion. The Weaver is the final arbiter as to when such a test is appropriate. Illusory damage vanishes as soon as it is disbelieved.

Illusory attacks have a Damage Multiplier equal to the *lowest* of either the imitated weapon's DM or the dreamer's Synthesis Skill +10. If a character is hurt by an illusory attack and does not successfully disbelieve it, treat the damage as normal. Those who "die" from such an attack actually suffer Disconnection as if they had lost Equilibrium (see p. 166). Note that illusory weapons do not create illusory wounds unless the dreamer creates them with another *Metamorphosis* use. A victim will hence likely disbelieve the pain she is feeling as soon as she (or a healer) notices her stomach does not have a gaping hole in it.

When transforming a physical object, the MoS determines the duration of the transformation (see *Basic MoS Equivalencies*, p. 165). The roll may suffer penalties based on the complexity of the change and the size of the object (choose the highest applicable penalty in each column and add the two together). Failed rolls while transforming a physical object prevent the dreamer from using Synthesis for MoF hours.

METAMORPHOSIS PENALTIES

Penalty	Size	Complexity
0	a dagger	change color, add design (e.g. make an object glow)
-1	a sack of grain	radically change its aspect (e.g. turn a tree into a stone wall)
-2	a person	radically alter its size (e.g. make a dagger a broadsword)
-3	a horse	alter its function completely (e.g. turn a cloak into a staff or bow)
-4	a building	completely unrecognizable (e.g. make a house into a flock of birds)

Page 172: The description for *Anima* should read:

Anima allows the acceleration of the flow of life. If used to heal, the Threshold is 4 plus the *highest* penalty from the victim's wounds (+1 if she only has Flesh Wounds, +2 if she has any Deep Wounds, +3 if she is near death). Heavier wounds get healed first and "cost" a specific number of MoS points: 3 for Fatal Wounds, 2 for Deep Wounds, 1 for Flesh Wounds. A wound can also be downgraded (one level per MoS). *Anima* can be used on an individual only once per day. Note that *Anima* is also part of normal healing with *Dedicated Care* (see *Recovery from Injuries*, pp. 150-151). Assuming a target had one Deep Wound and multiple Flesh Wounds, a MoS of 3 would heal the Deep Wound and one Flesh Wound, a MoS of 2 would heal the Deep Wound, and a MoS of 1 would downgrade the Deep Wound to a Flesh Wound. The Threshold would be 6.

SYNTHESIS FAQ

The loose nature of dream magic has meant that some parts of the Synthesis are somewhat unclear. The following questions and answers should resolve some pressing questions and prepare Weavers to deal with others. Some of these answers are extrapolations of the existing rules, others are clarifications.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

The Thresholds are quite high. How do I ever get a high MoS?

Synthesis is a mercurial dream-magic, generally ill suited for use directly in combat or for earth-shaking effects. For Conjunctive Synthesis perception effects are much more likely to succeed. Use of longer rituals or group ceremonies will also give you significant bonuses and allow for higher MoS. Aspects benefit from fewer bonuses, one reason they are only available to people with Synthesis Skill Level 2 or more. Hallucinogenic drugs (known as Hazers) can be used to provide a bonus to all Synthesis rolls.

Weavers who wish to make Synthesis more potent can do so in any number of ways. They can reduce the SP cost of Synthesis Skill to that of a Complex Skill, allow Dreamer Modifiers to be applied to Aspects as well as Conjunctive Effects, or even rule that in Synthesis rolls both extra 5s and 6s count as +1 (rolling two 5s would result in a 6, 5 and 6 in a 7).

What constitutes a ritual (in terms of the Synthesis rules)?

A ritual is a ceremonial event that a Synthesis wielder performs in order to reach the dream like trance necessary to manipulate the River of Dream. In the case of the Ritual Skill, these are set ceremonies passed down from one dreamer to another. In the case of the Synthesis Skill, these ceremonies are much more personal and intuitive — one dreamer might spin like a dervish, another might recite secret mantras, another might use drugs or sex. Generally the longer a ritual the more powerful its effects (hence the bonuses and penalties for longer or shorter ceremonies). Weavers can ask Players with the Synthesis Skill to define the general type of ritual their characters use.

Rituals almost always have some sort of externally noticeable component — e.g. incantations or hand-movements. Some situations may prevent a dreamer from using her habitual rituals (a gag, tied hands, being bound, etc.). Those with the Synthesis Skill can still use it, though, because they have an intuitive connection to Dream that is not strictly dependent on any one type of ritual; Weavers would be well within their rights to impose a -1 or even a -2 penalty in this situation, however. Solely being deprived of ritual implements — charms, knives, etc. — would not cause this penalty, it would only deprive the dreamer of the +1 bonus for using such implements.

Do I roll Combat Sense to use Synthesis in combat?

Only if you are beginning or ending your ritual trance this round, in which case you roll Combat Sense to determine initiative (and hence whether the ritual successfully begins this round or when it takes effect). If you are going to be continuing a ritual throughout this round, you may not need to roll Combat Sense (although the Weaver may ask you to just to keep track of everyone). This roll does not count as an action.

How do I learn Synthesis, learn a new Aspect or raise my Synthesis Skill?

Experience Point costs are dealt with on page 155 of the **Tribe 8 Rulebook**, but they are not the only requirements. Any form of new knowledge of Synthesis requires some form of enlightenment or improved understanding of spirit and dream. This new knowledge can come from a variety of sources: long seasons of study, a quest for an ancient artifact, a confrontation with a Fatima, a journey into the H'I Kar or River of Dream, etc. The specifics are very much up to the Weaver, but in general the quest should involve danger for the hero and a meeting (or confrontation) with some entity powerful in spirit. The new ability might even be granted by or stolen from that entity. This process is made much easier (and less dangerous) by the presence of a tutor. Not only can this reduce Experience Point costs (see **Tribe 8 Rulebook**, pp. 155-156), but these mentors can provide guidance and warning before and during quests for enlightenment. Aspects require a tutor unless they are granted by a spiritual entity.

Note that Tribal characters usually receive Aspects or increased Synthesis as a direct gift from their Fatima.

How do Synthesis and Sundering interact?

Synthesis and Sundering are essentially opposites (Synthesis melds the physical and spiritual, Sundering rips them apart). This is what makes using Synthesis against Z'bri or in Z'bri lands more difficult. The personal connection to the River of Dream is very difficult to achieve in an area influenced by the Z'bri (hence the -1 penalty in Z'bri lands or when outnumbered by Z'bri) and using the power of the river directly against a Z'bri or Serf is equally difficult because they are not actually connected to the river (-1 penalty for this situation). These problems can be offset by attacking in large numbers or by using Synthesis on objects that are then used against the Z'bri rather than affecting them directly. The Fatimas, Sisterhoods and the hidden Marians know rituals to consecrate ground so as to purge it of Z'bri influence — hence when led by a Fatima, tribals are rarely considered to be in Z'bri lands.

Another important defense against Sundering is to deprive a Z'bri of the emotional reactions they depend on. Conjunctive effects using Devotion, Bravery, Conviction, Inspiration, or Unity can be used to suppress an individual's or a group's fear, pain or pleasure. This causes a lack of sensation for the Z'bri, imposing a -2 penalty on Sundering. Sundering used in lands consecrated by the Fatimas (e.g. their temples) also suffers a -2 penalty.

EMINENCES

How many Eminences (and which ones) do tribal characters have?

Tribal characters (i.e. those still in the grace of their Fatima) have both of the Eminences of their tribe. They develop these Eminences in childhood and will have both by the time of their coming of age ceremony (Agnites develop both very rapidly).

When do you gain a Fallen Eminence?

Fallen lose one tribal Eminence during their banishment ceremony. They gain their new Fallen Eminence soon thereafter. The exact interval varies greatly (running from mere seconds to weeks) and depends on context. A character angry and outraged and wanting to strike back at the world that has made her suffer might gain Vengeance immediately, and only later find herself gravitating toward the Jackers. A more timid outcast might interact with various groups of Fallen for weeks before finding the Lightbringers she feels comfortable — acquiring Conviction as her confidence grows. If this comes up in play, the exact moment is up to the Weaver.

How do you use Eminences if you don't have the Synthesis Skill?

Conjunctural Synthesis and Aspect use are *impossible* without the Synthesis Skill. Eminences can be used, however, as a sort of specialized luck, allowing a +2 bonus or a rerolled Fumble once a session (see **Tribe 8 Rulebook**, p. 164). Eminence is also used with Ritual Synthesis (using the Ritual Skill) as explained on page 174 of the **Tribe 8 Rulebook**.

Can I get more Eminences?

The short answer is no. There may be exception circumstances — such as drinking from the Grail in the *Sangreal* quest (see p. 72) — that grant an additional Eminence for a certain amount of time, but these are extremely rare instances.

How do I decide what fits (or doesn't fit) in my Eminence?

There are no hard and fast rules for deciding just what Conjunctural effects or simple actions fall within one Eminence or another. This is part of the flexible, loose nature of Synthesis and each Player Circle will reach a different consensus. When dealing with the more subtle Eminences it is generally best to ask what the goal of the action is. For example jumping across a wide chasm evidently falls within the Eminence of Motion, but depending on motivation it could also fall within Bravery (jumping into an enemy camp), Capriciousness (tricking a pursuer), Freedom (escaping from that same camp), or Fury/Vengeance (jumping to pursue an enemy).

When dealing with the +2 bonus to a roll, Weavers should be liberal in their interpretation. The Player can only use this once a session, so let them use it when they want as long as it's not patently ridiculous. Weavers can be more demanding for Conjunctural Synthesis, but should still be flexible. A good option is to impose a -1 penalty in a borderline situation.

CONJUNCTIONAL EFFECTS

How do I use Conjunctural Synthesis as a weapon? What's the attack procedure? What does a Conjunctural Synthesis attack look like?

If the circumstances fall within a dreamer's Eminence, she can use Synthesis as a powerful weapon through a direct Conjunctural effect. Joanites with Fury can do so with ease, channeling their anger into physical pain and damage, but other Eminences may be appropriate depending on the circumstance. A Dahlian could push an enemy with great force (using Motion), a Jacker could strike at an enemy who has hurt her (using Vengeance), a Joshuan could channel energy into an opponent (using Force), or a Yagan could cause organs to wither (using Death). These are only some possibilities.

The attack procedure is basically the same in all cases and assumes the dreamer must touch her opponent: roll Synthesis + AGI against the opponent's Dodge + AGI (with a minimum Threshold of 7, for affecting another person). Use the MoS as you would in any other attack, with a Damage Multiplier equal to 10 + Synthesis Skill. Creating an attack at a distance can be possible at the Weaver's discretion, although the Threshold should be 8 or 9.

The visuals of each attack depend on the Eminence and the dreamer. Joanite "Fury blows" generally look like martial arts moves.

Page 165 gives MoS equivalencies. Do I get everything at a certain MoS or do I buy effects with an MoS pool?

The MoS equivalencies are intended as guidelines and dreamers get all the benefits of that MoS unless it simply does not apply or makes no sense. So a MoS of 3 could give a +3 bonus to STR that would last for an entire scene. The durations listed apply only for effects that are prolonged. If using a Conjunctural effect to leap a chasm, the MoS does not determine how long the jump lasts.

Is performing a ritual considered an action? What happens if I take other actions?

Yes, performing a ritual of any type (be it for an Aspect, Conjunctural Synthesis, or Ritual Synthesis) is considered an action. If in a combat situation, any other actions performed are at -1 and the final Synthesis (or Ritual) roll is also at -1. In the case of a multi-round ceremony, it counts as an action every round, although the actual Skill roll occurs only when the ritual is complete. That skill roll is penalized -1 if an additional action was taken in one or more of the rounds during which the ritual was being performed, and another -1 for being unable to concentrate. If two additional actions are taken in one or more rounds than the total penalty rises to -3. Weavers can rule, however, that certain actions are impossible while continuing a ritual — say yelling a warning when reciting an incantation. Normal Dodging is not considered an action but does ruin concentration. All-Out Dodging is impossible when performing a ritual.

Can I "enchant" an object with a Conjunctional effect?

Yes, but creating a permanent "magic object" is very difficult and something generally reserved for the Fatimas and other powerful entities. More feasible are small charms and medallions that grant small aid in specific circumstances (generally a +1 bonus to the appropriate Attribute or Secondary Trait, or +3 to the DM of a weapon). The Thresholds to create these permanent charms are quite high, however: 11 to affect the wearer's senses, 12 to affect her mind, 13 to affect her body. Weavers can rule that failed rolls cause cursed charms that either impose a penalty or bring very bad luck. An MoS higher than 1 is generally lost, although the Weaver can decide the charm is especially powerful (gaining a +2 bonus or being able to affect several people at once).

Even successful charms rarely work in a mechanical, entirely reliable fashion. Generally, they create a surplus of the desired effect that manifests itself in other part's of the bearer's life. For example, a hunter wearing a charm that increases her senses for stalking may not be able to sleep because of the "roar" of her mate's breathing; or a warrior with a battle charm may develop an extremely short temper and violent behavior. These effects can be lessened (but not eliminated) by refraining from wearing them in everyday life. The most common charms in Vimary are Fatimal medallions produced by the various Sisterhoods (see *Vimary Sourcebook*, p. 131).

If you want a temporary "enchantment," it is generally best to use Conjunctional Synthesis as normal to directly augment another's senses, mind or body (see *Tribe 8 Rulebook*, p. 165).

ASPECTS

Are there only two Aspects per tribe?

There are two common Aspects per tribe, but the Sisterhoods and various guilds know more. Additional Aspects will appear in various sourcebooks, especially the Wordbooks focusing on the individual tribes.

Can a character have Aspects not from her Fatima?

Yes, although it isn't common. For tribals this represents a special gift from the other Fatima — such as the Evan Storm Cry (see *Vimary Sourcebook*, p. 91) who has the Sheban Aspect of Truthsaying. Fallen can learn Aspects from any tribe as long as someone can teach it to them and/or they undergo an appropriate ordeal.

How do Dream Travel and the Dreaming Skill differ?

Basically, Dreaming allows a character to act in dreams, while Dream Travel allows her to move through dream and spirit. The Dreaming Skill allows a character to better interact with the River of Dream and its spirits once she has entered it — generally by falling asleep. She can deal with dangers more skillfully than an untrained Dreamer and even fight spirits if she must. Dream Travel allows a character to separate her spirit from her body, and travel great distances. She may travel through the physical

world as an invisible ghost — essentially moving through the Shores (see p. 32) — she may enter the dreamscape of a nearby individual, or she may travel through the vast River of Dream like a powerful spirit. Dreaming is still used to accomplish actions while in this form, however.

OTHER

Ritual Synthesis (*Tribe 8 Rulebook*, p. 174) seems weak. Why the -2 penalty? Wouldn't I be better off spending my points in Synthesis Skill?

Ritual Synthesis (the use of the Ritual Skill) is intended to be a poor-man's Synthesis, the more formulaic and less potent version of Conjunctional Synthesis used by elder tribals not blessed by the Fatimas. Family heads use it to get luck for newlyweds or for the coming harvest. The -2 penalty basically represents the fact that Ritual generally requires more participants and ritual implements. This penalty can be overcome with very lengthy rituals (one lasting a little over two-and-a-half days — 64 hours — would gain a +5 bonus), although these are understandably rare. In terms of spending points, Conjunctional Synthesis is generally more potent. Remember, however, that Ritual Synthesis is only modified by the KNO Attribute, so by raising that Attribute at the expense of others, potent rituals are possible.

Note that "Ritual Synthesis" (which uses the Ritual Skill) is not the same as the rituals used in Conjunctional Synthesis (which uses the Synthesis Skill). Conjunctional Synthesis uses much less complex ceremonies (or rituals) to focus the dreamer's mind and they can provide useful bonuses to rolls (see *Tribe 8 Rulebook*, p. 165). The ceremonial requirements in Ritual Synthesis are greater (hence the longer time): The details of these ceremonies are left to the Weaver, but they generally require ceremonial action (e.g. a dance, an incantation, sexual intercourse), a physical focus (e.g. an effigy of the target), and some form of sacrifice by the ritualist (e.g. blood or a gift).



WEAVER'S AID: GENERIC GAME STATISTICS

The following table provide a quick-and-dirty summary of major game statistics for standard character types. Much more complete generic archetypes appear on pages 40-47 of the **Weaver's Assistant**. The table below summarizes those, some types from the **Tribe 8 Rulebook**, and some other types that might prove useful. Note that these statistics are intentionally on the low end of the spectrum of ability and meant to represent somewhat everyday people. Talented NPCs will have higher stats.

GENERIC ARCHETYPE REFERENCE TABLE

Name	Attributes	Skills	Notes	Page
TRIBALS				
Agnite Barren	PSY -1, WIL +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 4	Hum Per 1/-1, Melee 1/0, Nav. 1/-1, Survival 1/0	dagger (AD-3)	WSA, p. 40
Dahlian Dancer	AGI +2, APP +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	Acrobatics 1/-2, Dance 2/+2, Seduction 2/+1	-	WSA, p. 40
Evan Nurse	KNO -1, PSY +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	Healing 1/+1, Herb. 1/-1, Mythology 2/+1	medicinal herbs	WSA, p. 41
Joanite Warrior	BLD +1, FIT +1, PER +1, STA 30, UD 7, AD 7	Com. Sense 2/+1, Dodge 1/0, HTH 2/0, Melee 2/0	sword (AD-8), armor (AR 10)	WSA, p. 41
Magdalite Concubine	APP +2, INF +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	Grooming 2/+2, Seduction 2/+2, Streetwise 1/+1	-	-
Magdalite Diplomat	CRE +2, PER +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	Disguise 1/+2, Etiquette 2/0, Hum Per 2/0, Notice 2/+1	dagger (AD-3)	WSA, p. 44
Pellis Artisan	CRE +1, KNO +2, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	Craft (skin) 2/+1, Melee 2/0, Ritual 2/+2	skinning knife (Acc 1, AD-3)	WSA, p. 45
Sheban Advocate	KNO +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	Interrogation 1/0, Law 2/+1	-	WSA, p. 46
Weaponslayer	BLD +2, KNO +1 STA 35, UD 6, AD 7	Craft (weapons) 3/0, Lore (weapons) 2/+1, Melee 1/0	any weapon	WSA, p. 43
Yagan Mordred	PSY +1, WIL +2, STA 30, UD 3, AD 3	Dreaming 2/+1, Ritual 2/0, Synthesis (Curse) 2	ritual implements	-
FALLEN				
Child of Lith	PSY +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 4	Lore (Lith) 2/0, Melee 1/0	Sword of Lith (Acc +1, AD +13)	-
Doomsayer	KNO +1, PSY +2, STA 30, UD 3, AD 3	Dreaming 2/+2, Lore (Joshua) 1/+1, Ritual 2/+1	-	-
Herite	AGI +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 5	Com Sense 1/0, Dodge 1/+1, Melee 2/+1, Sneak 2/+1	Sword (AD -8)	-
Jacker	AGI +1, FIT +1, STA 25, UD 4, AD 5	Com Sense 2/0, Dodge 1/-1, HTH 1/-1, Lore (Z'bn) 1/0, Melee 2/+1	Sword (AD -8), Armor (AR 10)	-
Lightbringer	INF +1, WIL +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	Etiquette 1/0, Leadership 2/+1, Theatrics 1/0	-	-
Z'BRI				
Flemis iv chet	BLD +4, WIL +2, STA 50, UD 9, AD 9	Speak (tribal) 2/0, Lore (Ancient Z'bn) 1/0, Sundering (One Thought) 2	Hide (AR 5)	T8, p. 178
Koleris iv chet	AGI +3, BLD +2, WIL +2, STA 40, UD 10, AD 10	Com Sense 2/0, Dodge 2/+3, HTH 3/+3, Melee 3/+3, Sundering (Shattering) 2	Bone blades (AD +10), Hide (AR 15)	T8, p. 178
Melanis iv chet	KNO -2, WIL +2 STA 30, UD 3, AD 3	Dreaming 2/0, Lore (spirit) 2/+2, Ritual 3/+2, Sundering (Animation) 2	books	T8, p. 178
Sangis iv chet	APP +2, CRE +1, WIL +2, STA 30, UD 3, AD 4	Leadership 1/0, Melee 1/0, Seduction 3/+2	bone rapier (AD-8)	T8, p. 178
Serf	PSY -1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	various mental skills	-	WSA, p. 47
Gek'roh (Chained)	AGI +2, BLD +2, INS +2, PER +2, STA 40, UD 6	Com. Sense 2/+2, HTH 3/+2, Sneak 2/+2	Claws (UD +10), hide (AR 10)	WSA, p. 41
Monstrosity	BLD +2, PSY +2 STA 30, UD 8, AD 7	Com Sense 2/0, HTH 2/0, Melee 1/0	Claws (UD+5), hide (AR 5)	WSA p. 47
OTHERS				
Keeper	KNO +2, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	Firearms 2/0, T-smithing (any) 2/+2, Tinker 2/0	handgun (DM x15)	-
Merchant	INF +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	Haggling 2/+1, Streetwise 1/-1, Trade 2/0	-	WSA, p. 44
Squat	FIT +1, STA 25, UD 5, AD 4	Archery 2/0, Com Sense 1/0, HTH 2/0, Melee 1/0, Survival 2/0	Short bow (DM x7)	WSA, p. 45
Thief	AGI +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	Dodge 2/+1, Sleight-of-hand 2/+1, Streetwise 2/0	-	WSA, p. 46

A Tribe 8 Sourcebook

TRIBE 8 Companion

"We are a dying tribe and those guilty will pay for their crimes — in due time all will be set right. Remember that Joshua was one of the True Goddesses' avatars, and a reckoning will soon be at hand for His murder."

— Jericho, Lamentor of Joshua

The Tribe 8 Companion is a major supplement to the Tribe 8 game line, providing new source material, Weaving advice, advanced rules, and quests. It includes:

- Information on the tribes of Joshua and Mary, including Player Character creation guidelines and new Synthesis abilities;
- Details on Quest Circles, along with rules and advice for running tribal (as opposed to Fallen) cycles using Circles;
- Expanded information and PC generation rules for the Keepers;
- Two complete quests, one involving a dying Z'bri and the other an ancient relic of Mary and Joshua;
- Overviews of the populations and economics of all tribes;
- Expanded combat rules, covering shields, paired weapons and special maneuvers;
- New weapons, including automatic weapons and partial armor;
- Clarifications of the Synthesis magic system.

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