

EARTHDAWN

INFECTED™



FASA
CORPORATION

AN EARTHDAWN ADVENTURE BY ROBIN D. LAWS

INFECTED



FASA CORPORATION

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A FARAWAY SILENCE: A Prologue

CHARBOYYA THE DWARF paced through his suite of rooms for what felt like the thousandth time, listening absently to the busy chatter that drifted up from the floor below. He owned the finest trading house in Bartertown—by the Passions, he did. A fine house, for which he'd sacrificed much and sweated hard. But just now, he found it worth less to him than a mouthful of stale bread after a long day's journey. Had he fewer worries, Charboyya might have laughed at the irony.

"The very finest fabric in the house, my dear Marchesi!" boomed a voice from below, momentarily drowning out the rest. Charboyya smiled briefly as he recognized the bass rumble of his most enthusiastic salesman. Lanteer was a t'skrang wanderer who every month seemed to have a new explanation for why he made his home so far from the Serpent River. But the lizard-man loved nothing more than driving a good bargain, and Lanteer was the closest thing to a true friend Charboyya had known since leaving his village many long years ago.

Thinking of his village reminded Charboyya of his worries. He forced himself to stop his restless pacing and buried his hands in his bushy, red hair, pressing his bare toes against the thick, soft carpet that covered the floor of his sleeping room. How different the carpet felt from the hard, unyielding soil of the savanna that surrounded Hanto, one of the countless tiny villages that dotted the lowlands like fleas on a dog. Much like a dog, the land seemed determined to shake off the villagers, or so Charboyya often thought. But for almost a century, folk like Charboyya's family and their fellow villagers struggled, driven by an indomitable determination to survive. Eventually they had beaten the land into a stalemate, if not submission.

Charboyya felt a rush of pride remembering his people's quiet courage, but he also suffered a creeping sense of shame. How little he had understood his fellow villagers, and what scant value he had given their love and concern for him. As one of the first generation born above ground, he had believed the elders of Hanto permanently scarred by their time in the kaers, their vision forever stunted by the terrors they had experienced. They had

longed so much to restore the simple life of their ancestors that, once freed, they approved of no other way of life.

Charboyya cared nothing for farming, however. He had heard that beyond the walls of Hanto lay a whole world for the taking, a new world full of endless possibilities. But most of the villagers followed the lead of the elders and shunned the new, the exciting, the different. They preferred to waste time striving to recreate a way of life that had probably never existed except in the desperate dreams of their kaer-bound grandparents. Charboyya had scorned such faint-heartedness, forgetting the harsh realities that fostered the elders' fears. Like all of Barsaive's small settlements, Hanto faced the constant threat of attack by bandits, scorchers, slavers—even Horrors. Its people had good reason to fear the unfamiliar. Young and brimming over with his own wisdom, Charboyya had judged them hardhearted and narrow-minded. He had left them in anger, believing they ridiculed his ambition to make his fortune in the new Barsaive. He had been too angry and too proud to see the truth.

Wisdom gleaned during the passage of years gave Charboyya new eyes, however, and now he saw that his family and friends had not scorned him. They had feared for his safety, feared that chasing foolish dreams would bring him only disillusionment. His success had proved their concerns unfounded. Happy in his new vocation, Charboyya had long ago forgiven his folk their doubts and now felt himself not quite whole unless he had occasional word of life in Hanto. Charboyya's successful trading house and industrious workers filled the place in his heart that a wife and children might fill for another dwarf,



but he still thought of his family and friends in Hanto often and fondly. When he had first begun to grow rich, Charboyya had vowed to the Passion Garlen that he would use his wealth to safeguard Hanto against any threat. Fortunately, no such threat had ever appeared—until now.

Charboyya strode across his sleeping chamber and sat down in front of a small cabinet of intricately carved, polished wood. One of his best-loved possessions, the elf-made cabinet had cost him a pretty silver penny. Most days, he stopped for a moment to admire its beauty and run a callused hand lightly over its lacy designs. But not today. Gnawing fear left no room in his mind for the contemplation of beauty. Charboyya pulled open the cabinet's top drawer, almost spilling its contents in his haste. The drawer was filled with letters from Hanto, written by his kin and old friends. He had spent far more silver than was prudent on this indulgence he allowed himself, hiring messengers to convey letters to Hanto and bring back replies. Such a journey through Barsaive's untamed lowlands posed many a danger to the messengers, and they charged a hefty fee for their services. But Charboyya did not begrudge the price, for the letters meant more to him than a cabinet full of gold.

With trembling hands he paged through the notes. Several were from his younger brother Emberica, full of temper and rebellion. His mother's letters still gently advised him to come home, pick up a hoe, and spend his labor at honest work. Orweia, a human and his childhood confidante, whimsically recounted the travails inflicted on her by her rambunctious twin sons and her precocious daughter, Aardelea. Near the bottom of the stack he kept a few stiff, formal notes from Chereca, Hanto's headwoman. Once, Charboyya had thought to marry her. But Chereca refused to leave Hanto, and Charboyya would not return.

Charboyya clutched the precious letters to his chest, crumpling a few in his anguish. Several weeks had passed since he last heard from the village, and the silence had filled him with a sense of foreboding. Charboyya took a deep breath, forced himself to lay down the letters and slowly smoothed the crumpled pages. *You don't know for certain anything's happened in Hanto. The messengers may have met with ill luck upon the road or are waiting out bad weather. Or they may have just as likely absconded with your coin, for all you know.*

Staring down at the letters in his lap, Charboyya sighed. No matter how often he tried, he couldn't make himself believe any of those comforting explanations. He had to find out the truth, no matter the cost.

Charboyya rose, still holding the letters, and began to pace again. He must hire a second party to journey to Hanto and bring him word. That meant spending coin he'd not set aside for this purpose. He could raise it by reducing his orders to the dyer and the weaver. They'd surely com-

plain, but that mattered nothing compared to the safety of his village. And should the first party of messengers straggle into Bartertown just as the second set out, Charboyya would gladly be proven a spendthrift. Please the Passions, his worries were but phantoms of events that would never come to pass.

Carefully, lovingly, Charboyya placed the letters back in their drawer and locked the cabinet. He drew his cloak out of a closet, threw it around his shoulders and thrust his feet into sturdy, leather boots. Surely someone could recommend an honorable and worthy party of messengers, and Charboyya could wait no longer.



Burning with rage, Emberica hefted his hoe and stalked toward the strangers' leader. No longer would he stomach that black-robed carrion crow lording it over his village, treating the free people of Hanto as a Thera treats his slaves! He would show them how an honorable dwarf behaves, by speaking his mind before striking. If the strangers had the wit to quit the town before angry words became violent deeds, so much the better for them. If not, so much the better for him! Emberica itched to strike a blow at the invaders. He would not allow these ruffians to imprison the people of Hanto in their own homes for a moment longer!

As Emberica drew near, the black-clad leader turned, and before the dwarf could strike a blow the figure raised a massive arm and sent him flying across the village green with a single, backhanded blow. Emberica slammed head-first into the wooden wall of a hut. Head spinning, he tried to sit up, but collapsed back against the wall. He felt blood trickling down the side of his mouth. The hoe lay broken at his feet. He stretched one hand toward the longer piece, but his arm fell weakly back into his lap.

A shadow fell over him. Emberica looked up, dazed with pain, the figure swimming in front of him. His attacker glared down at him in icy fury. "You will obey us or die. Do you understand, fool?"

Slowly wiping the blood from his mouth, Emberica nodded.

were actually there. Any special instructions for the gamemaster appear in **boldface** type.

Setting the Stage is followed by **Themes and Images**. This section provides background the gamemaster can use to set the mood and pacing for each encounter. This section includes hints about imagery to use in the scene, emotions to convey, sounds, sensations, and so on. The information provided varies in form and content from scene to scene, ranging from general themes to specific impressions.

Behind the Scenes explains the real story of each encounter. This section includes important game information needed for each encounter, such as statistics for creatures or gamemaster characters, specialized information on events or locations, maps, and so on. As with **Setting the Stage**, any special instructions for the gamemaster appear in **boldface** type.

The final section of each encounter, **Troubleshooting**, suggests ways to bring the adventure back on track in case things go too far wrong. For example, the characters may miss an important clue or lose a fight they need to win. Most gamemasters will not want the player characters to become discouraged or get killed off too easily. This section offers options for resolving trouble spots and keeping the game going. The gamemaster can, of course, ignore these hints and invent his own solutions—or simply let the chips fall where they may.

Following the encounters, **Loose Ends** sums up the consequences of the adventure and suggests ways to use material from **Infected** in future adventures and campaigns. This section also includes **Awarding Legend Points**, guidelines for awarding the Legend Points earned during the adventure to the player characters. The gamemaster awards Legend Points after each gaming session (see **Game Session Legend Points**, below) as well as at the end of the adventure. **Cast of Characters** provides game statistics and descriptions for significant gamemaster characters, including creatures and/or Horrors. **Rumors and Research** provides gamemasters with all the information the characters can obtain from outside sources: rumors, tales and legends, library research, and so on. If he wishes, the gamemaster can adapt much of the information in this section to future adventures. Finally, **Player Handouts** contains several letters and a map that the player characters will use during the adventure.

GAME SESSION LEGEND POINTS

In addition to awarding Legend Points to player characters at the end of the adventure, the gamemaster awards Legend Points at the end of each game session, whether or not the entire adventure fits into that session (see **Gamemastering Earthdawn**, p. 241, ED). The encounters of this adventure are grouped into two game sessions (see

Awarding Legend Points, p. 52 of this book). Each session has a clear goal (see **Completing Session Goals**, p. 242, ED). **Awarding Legend Points** lists the encounters and the appropriate **Legend Awards** for defeating creatures, finding magical treasures, creative roleplaying and heroics, and so on.

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Creating a published adventure that provides the appropriate opposition level for every group of player characters is impossible, because some groups are inherently more powerful than others.

To remedy this, adjust the game statistics and capabilities of the opposition in the adventure to provide an appropriate level of difficulty for your group. If the adventure does not suit the player characters' strengths and weaknesses, use it as an outline to develop an adventure of your own. Or, if it works well as written except for a slight hitch here and there, simply change the parts of the plot or events that will make the adventure a better one.

To help the players roleplay **Infected** as convincingly as possible, you may wish to give the player characters a personal connection to their prospective employer, the dwarf merchant Charboyya. For example, present the dwarf's offer through a gamemaster character that the player characters already know and trust, making Charboyya a friend of said gamemaster character. If the characters begin the adventure from somewhere other than Bartertown, assume that Charboyya sent a courier to the above-mentioned gamemaster character inquiring about trustworthy, competent adventurers for hire, and that the gamemaster character in turn contacts the player characters. If you wish to relocate Charboyya's establishment to somewhere other than Bartertown, he should choose a place likely to provide an honest merchant with a living—an honest trader is an oddity in Kratas, for example. Ideally, Charboyya should come across as a trustworthy, uncomplicated employer that the adventurers feel an emotional stake in helping.

If you wish to bring the characters to Bartertown following the events in **Mists of Betrayal** and/or **Terror in the Skies**, you can have them travel to Throal from Haven to research some of the magical treasure they may have found in the course of **Mists of Betrayal** or to research or sell the Tome of Banishment from **Terror in the Skies**.

The second, third, and fourth encounters in **Infected** take place during the journey to the village of Hanto and introduce the player characters to the harsh realities of life in Barsaive's hinterlands.



Though these encounters include more structured events than the rest of the adventure, the course of these encounters still depends largely on how the player characters interact with the gamemaster characters. Therefore, you should be familiar with the motivations and plans of the gamemaster characters in these sections before running the adventure.

Once the player characters arrive in Hanto, the resolution of each encounter and of the adventure depends almost entirely on how the player characters interact with different factions in the village. In addition to familiarizing yourself with the different gamemaster characters' personalities and motivations, you may wish to sketch out several possible plot lines based on the player characters' past behavior, determining ways they are likely to react to the major gamemaster characters and what consequences might result. The central dilemma of **Infected** has several possible resolutions, and you should provide the players considerable latitude in arriving at one of those resolutions. Those unfamiliar with decision-tree adventures will find it especially helpful to envision ahead of time the ways in which the player characters are most likely to tackle each situation.

Infected includes a generous amount of gamemaster-character dialogue that can be read aloud as is or paraphrased to suit the game and players. If you prefer to paraphrase, we suggest you make a few marginal notes next to each block of dialogue to sum up its content and style. This way, you can give each gamemaster character a distinctive speaking style and convey the necessary information to the players, without feeling confined to a word-for-word reading.

Finally, **Infected** assumes that the player characters are heroes with principles rather than a pack of amoral freebooters. Though the moral dilemmas presented in **Infected** work better with sympathetic characters, the gamemaster can alter the details to affect less scrupulous player characters, if necessary. The honest merchant Charboyya, for example, might become a ruthless, mercenary warlord who threatens revenge against the player characters if they botch the mission to Hanto.

Keep in mind that you, as the gamemaster, hold a unique responsibility to make the adventure exciting and keep the players involved and the story on track. When describing the world of **Earthdawn**, try to envision what the characters see, hear, touch, smell, and taste. Feel free to embellish the descriptions provided when creating places and moods in the players' minds. To keep the players connected to the action, ask them "What do you do?" each time you describe a new scene. By prompting the players to describe what they want their characters to do, you allow the players to help tell the story and increase their own enjoyment. If the players wander too far from the storyline, nudge them back in the right direction. If the players make

choices that interrupt the story or allow them to miss a vital clue, drop hints that will encourage them to follow the events of the adventure to their conclusion. Remember, however, to keep your encouraging hints subtle. A good gamemaster guides the players without telling them what to do.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

The tiny village of Hanto lies in the wilds of central Barsaive, just south of Lake Vors. Like the people of many an isolated hamlet in these first generations after the Scourge, the villagers of Hanto emerged from their kaer desiring nothing more than to farm the lands of their forebears in peace. Sadly, even that simple desire could not be fulfilled. Too little time had passed since the evil days when Horrors ravaged Barsaive, and many perils still lurked in the wild hinterlands. The people of Hanto learned not to trust the stranger at the gate, the traveler on the road—a stranger might be a bandit bent on thievery, an ork scorcher looking to blood his sword, or even a disguised Horror come to claim new victims. Undoubtedly, such suspicions saved the villagers from many dangers but also made them close their hearts and minds against anything new or different. Anything of which the people of Hanto knew little when they left the kaer, they shunned—including most of the outside world.

Only one among them sought the world beyond the village walls—the dwarf called Charboyya. Young, proud, and determined to make his fortune in the wide world, Charboyya left Hanto and became a cloth merchant. His business prospered, and he became one of the richest traders in Bartertown. Though Charboyya traveled far from his village, he still considered himself a child of Hanto and a loving son to his family. That he might know of the occupation of their days and tell them of his, Charboyya gladly spent some of his considerable wealth hiring messengers to carry letters back and forth from Hanto. For many a year, his family and friends wrote to their beloved wanderer, and all remained well with them.

The first hint of trouble surfaced a mere eight months ago, when a girl in Charboyya's village, Aardelea, began to exhibit strange, amazing magical powers. Though untrained in the use of magic, she could move objects by will alone and perform many other wonders. Aardelea's magic even saved the life of her young nephew one day when, using nothing more than the power of her mind, she lifted the boy out of a deep well into which he had fallen.

It happened that a wandering elven troubadour witnessed this event. The troubadour knew of certain folk who called themselves the Grim Legion, joyless and implacable vigilantes who saw the taint of the Horrors behind every mystery and paid well for news of unexplained magical wonders. The troubadour told them of Aardelea and pocketed his fee. A small group of Legionnaires traveled in haste to Hanto and upon their arrival, declared the village under quarantine. Claiming that the powers displayed by the child Aardelea must be Horror-spawned, the Legionnaires stopped all traffic from leaving the village, on the grounds that the village's supposed Horror-taint posed a threat to all Barsaive.

Though frightened and angry, the villagers dared not fight the Grim Legion. The Legion's arrival also trapped Charboyya's messengers. Bolder and quicker to fight than the villagers, the messengers attempted escape. Their strongest fighters died in the ensuing battle. The rest, badly wounded, fled into the wilderness. Lacking the strength or means to return to Bartertown and their employer, they resorted to banditry. Charboyya, fearing the worst when his messengers did not return at the appointed time, chose to hire a second band of adventurers to discover what has befallen the messengers and the village.

Now begins the adventure of the heroes of this tale. Learning of Charboyya's need for adventurers, the heroes arrange with a friend to meet with him. Charboyya tells them of his plight and promises to

pay them well if they discover the fate of his missing messengers and his village. The adventurers travel from Bartertown to Hanto, through wild lands dotted with villages whose inhabitants are wary of strangers. Each village they pass on their long journey shuns them, for fear they may be bandits or lackeys of Horrors. They encounter many dangers on the road, including an attack by the lost messengers. After a long journey fraught with peril, the adventurers arrive in Hanto to confront the Grim Legion that holds the village in its iron grip.

The adventurers enter the village and learn the truth of Aardelea's magic—the child has been touched, not by Horrors, but by a dying spirit set to safeguard a treasury of magical knowledge. The adventurers make their way to a cavern where Aardelea often spent her hours daydreaming, and in the child's hideaway they find the book whose guardian granted her its magic. Armed with this knowledge, the adventurers must defeat the Grim Legion—by persuasion or guile if they can, by force if they must.



CHARBOYYA'S HEROES

OVERVIEW

IN THIS ENCOUNTER, the dwarf merchant Charboyya hires the characters and briefs them on their mission. Before departing Bartertown, the characters may equip themselves for the journey to Hanto.

SETTING THE STAGE

You walk into the vast trading house of the silk merchant Charboyya, and a whirl of color dazzles your eyes. Truly, your prospective employer seems to deserve his reputation as one of Bartertown's most prosperous traders. Customers fill the room from wall to wall and even lounge against the central staircase, eyeing the countless bolts of fine silks displayed by the merchant's enthusiastic workers. From the snatches of conversation you can make out above the cheerful din, the merchant's people are as expert in the cut-and-thrust of barter as a swordmaster is in the art of swordplay. Nearby, a flamboyantly dressed ork displays a length of brilliant, crimson silk for a well-heeled caravan master. Next to him, a wizened old man in threadbare robes gently runs his wrinkled fingers over a length of heavy golden cloth held out to him by a slender elf maiden. The elf spies you, smiles, and rings a small bell on the table in front of her.

The bell's clear tones have scarcely died away when a middle-aged dwarf with a well-tended red beard and finely cut clothes descends the stairs. The bright colors of his suit tell you that the dwarf finds his own merchandise to his liking. The confidence of his step and the firmness of his handshake proclaim him anything but a fop.

"I am Charboyya," he says, and gestures toward a narrow door at the back of the trading floor. "Let us discuss our business in my office."

In stark contrast to the bright, bustling public room, Charboyya's office seems almost drab in its simplicity. A few wooden chairs stand opposite his small worktable, which is piled high with ledger books and loose papers. Charboyya invites you to seat yourselves, then opens a drawer in the table and brings out a bowl of nuts, setting

these on top of the piled letters and bidding you take some if you wish. Pleasantries obviously concluded, Charboyya sits down on the edge of his chair and begins to speak.

"Our mutual friend tells me that you have faced and conquered many dangers, and that you deal honestly with your employers. I have need of such honorable and bold Name-givers to undertake a mission of great personal importance. Though I have made my fortune in Bartertown, I was born in the village of Hanto, a small settlement in the wild lowlands south of Lake Vors. I left Hanto when I was young to make my way in the world, but found that I missed my family and friends. For years, I have hired adventurers to carry letters back and forth between Hanto and Bartertown. The last band of couriers I hired has not returned in a timely manner, and I fear that some dire evil has befallen the village of my birth.

"The road to Hanto is difficult. Seen on a map, it appears to be a mere nine days' ride from Bartertown, but much of the terrain is wild and overgrown. Allowing for the usual hazards of travel, to go from Bartertown to Hanto and back should take twenty days' ride or thirty days walking. My lost messengers rode fine horses, yet they have been gone these thirty days. I know that they may have met with mischance on the road, but I cannot help fearing for the safety of my village.

"I must know for certain that my family and friends are well. I wish you to travel to Hanto, discover what has happened and bring me word. I can warn you of many hazards you may face along the road and will answer any questions I can. If you accept employment, we shall negotiate a fair price for your services. Can you answer me now?"

THEMES AND IMAGES

Play up Charboyya's distress, as well as his honesty and essential goodness. Portray him as the salt of the earth, the kind of person for whom other people naturally, willingly go to the mat. The player characters will find it easier to play a major role in the action if they identify with Charboyya and want to succeed on his behalf.

In addition, emphasize the safety and prosperity of Bartertown. This bustling, noisy, busy city represents Barsaive at its most civilized. The muggings and fleeing of newcomers common to a place like Kratas, for example, rarely happen in Bartertown. The sense of prosperity, safety, and the overall friendliness of Bartertown will help provide a sharp contrast with the wild lowlands the characters must traverse to reach Hanto.

BEHIND THE SCENES

In this introductory encounter, the characters can question Charboyya for details about the mission, interview his employees to determine his honesty as an employer, ferret out information on the missing couriers and purchase equipment for the journey to Hanto.

QUESTIONING CHARBOYYA

For Charboyya's description and game statistics, see **Cast of Characters**, p. 59.

Charboyya has no reason or desire to deceive the player characters and will openly and honestly answer any questions they may have about their mission. If asked about specific dangers in the lands near Hanto, Charboyya mentions the village's isolation and describes dangers that plagued earlier messenger parties: "The land is wild and empty, and so almost anything can happen. The first couriers I sent to Hanto fell prey to a village that ensnared passing travelers for Theran slavers. A party I sent just a year ago lost several members to a strange, carnivorous plant unknown to me or any in these parts. Of course, any band

of heavily armed wanderers in those lands also risks being mistaken for bandits or worse, unless they can prove otherwise. Folks thereabouts are suspicious of every stranger—with reason."

If asked about the missing couriers, Charboyya describes them: "A troll named Abakule led them, seconded by a windling archer. Lu Pi, I believe her name was. Abakule was gruff in manner, but conducted herself honorably toward me. The rest of the band included several humans and an ork, but I cannot recall their names. My friend Jemboyia, a spice merchant for whom they guarded several important shipments, recommended them to me.

They seemed honest and skilled, and I hope I have not sent them to their deaths."

If the characters ask Charboyya where to find Jemboyia, he directs them to her trading house, half a mile down Royal Road from Charboyya's establishment.

If asked about his friends and family in Hanto, he asks for word of his mother, Laveriel, and his brother, Emberica. He cautions them against offending Emberica, warning them of his brother's hot temper. He mentions his childhood playmate, Orweia, and her family, and also Chereca, the village headwoman. He concludes by saying that all the people of Hanto are precious to him, and word of any would be welcome.

Setting A Price

Charboyya intends to pay the player characters a

total fee that amounts to 650 silver pieces each. Before offering that figure, this shrewd merchant asks the characters to quote him their fee. If they name a sum within 200 silver pieces above or below Charboyya's figure, he agrees immediately. If the player characters quote a total price lower than 450 silver pieces each, Charboyya becomes concerned that he may be dealing with amateurs. To reassure himself, he quizzes them about their experience as adventurers, asking them to describe previous assignments, employers, and successful exploits. Convinced of their abilities, he then agrees to the too-low fee.



If the adventurers propose a total price greater than 200 silver pieces above Charboyya's figure, the bargaining begins. To simulate the salesmanship required to increase the dwarf's offer, the player whose character speaks on behalf of the group makes a Trading Test, Haggle Test, or Charisma Test against Charboyya's Social Defense. If the test is successful, Charboyya raises his price by 5 percent, regardless of how much the party demands. If the character wishes to continue bargaining, he or she must make another Trading, Haggle, or Charisma Test. Each successful result leads Charboyya to add another 5 percent to the fee. As soon as the character fails at his negotiating test, the last sum reached becomes Charboyya's final offer, up to a maximum of 900 silver pieces per character.

Charboyya offers to pay 5 percent of the total fee in advance. Using the same tests mentioned above, the player characters can negotiate for a higher advance. As with the fee bargaining, each successful test increases the advance by 5 percent, up to a maximum of 20 percent. On reaching an agreement of price and advance money, Charboyya wishes his new employees good fortune and instructs them to return to him when they are ready to leave Bartertown. At that point, he will give them letters to take to Hanto, a map of the safest route he knows, and a set of medallions that identify them as his representatives. At this second meeting with Charboyya, give the players **Player Handout 1**, a crudely drawn map of the route to the village. The letters are single sheets of parchment, folded and sealed with wax. The medallions, wooden circles a few inches in diameter, are stamped with a crude likeness of Charboyya. They have no resale value.

INTERVIEWING CHARBOYYA'S WORKERS

Before they leave the trading house, the player characters may decide to try to find out if Charboyya really is as honest as he seems. Though none of Charboyya's employees will chat with the party while on duty, the elf Keleshanne and the ork Gamuudge gladly agree to a meeting later in the day.

Meeting with Keleshanne

Keleshanne, the elf maiden described in **Setting the Stage** (p. 11), wants a fling. Her betrothed, a roguish gambler, has left town on an extended journey and won't return for several months. Bored to tears and starving for some fun, she may see one of the male adventurers as a likely temporary partner. If one of them makes a successful Flirting or Charisma Test, Keleshanne agrees to meet him at dusk for a drink at the Juggling Shadowmant, a pub several doors down from Charboyya's trading house. Her manner suggests romance in the offing, and she hints strongly that she prefers the potential object of her affections to arrive

solo. If none of the males makes a successful Flirting or Charisma Test, Keleshanne makes a date with any elf or human male with a Charisma of 13 or greater.

If the character keeps the date with Keleshanne, he finds Charboyya's business to be the last thing on her mind. Before moving on to more serious matters (like romance), she tells the adventurer that Charboyya is an excellent employer, generous with his pay and far less stuffy than most dwarfs. He has seemed very worried about something for the past few weeks, but she has not asked what troubles him. After all, Charboyya is entitled to his privacy.

Throughout the evening, Keleshanne makes frequent Seduction Tests in an effort to get the player character to visit her small house in Bartertown's sprawling residential area. She shows no interest in a permanent relationship, and rejects her temporary lover if he seeks to continue the affair after the adventure ends.

KELESHANNE

Attributes

Dexterity (14): 6/D10
Strength (8): 4/D6
Toughness (10): 5/D8
Perception (14): 6/D10
Willpower (14): 6/D10
Charisma (17): 7/D12

Movement

Full: 65
Combat: 33

Damage

Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22
Recovery Tests Per Day: 2
Recovery Dice: D8

Initiative

Dice: D10

Equipment: Keleshanne carries a dagger concealed in her right boot.

Meeting with Gamuudge

New in town and lacking for friends, Gamuudge eagerly accepts any invitation from the characters for an ale after work. The lonely ork has a crush on Keleshanne, but knows better than to approach her. Though few make their opinions obvious, many of Gamuudge's fellow workers look down on him because

Skills

Artisan/Singing (1): 8/2D6
Conversation (3): 10/D10 + D6
Etiquette (6): 12/2D10
Flirting (4): 11/D10 + D8
Knowledge/Elven Love Songs (1): 7/D12
Read and Write Languages (4): 10/D10 + D6 (Human, Ork, Sperethiel, Throalic)
Seduction (2): 9/D8 + D6
Trading (1): 8/2D6

Combat

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 9
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2

of his race. Charboyya treats him as a kindred spirit because the ork also came from a tiny, outland village, but as his employer, Charboyya cannot be a true friend. Thrilled to find companionship of any kind, Gamuudge proves quite talkative with a brimming tankard in front of him.

If asked about Charboyya, he says, "Good fellow. Hired me soon's he talked to me, put me right to work. Glad to work, me—kicked around a long time, not getting nowhere at anything. Charboyya treats me good, not like some. Back home, people treat ever'body the same. Here, some folk look at orks like we're less than garbage. Charboyya's different. Treats you like you are on the inside, not the outside."

Gamuudge can also provide information about isolated, lowland villages like Hanto. If asked, he says, "Me, I'm from Burnpatch. Small place, like Charboyya's village. Back home, orks and elves and humans and dwarfs all say they're Burnpatchers first, anything else second. Outsiders, they figure are foul folk or bandits—they'll run you through with a pitchfork unless you walk real careful. Guess ever'body got somebody they don't trust."

If asked why he left Burnpatch, Gamuudge says: "Got bored, sticking plants in the ground all day. Also had a few bad words with somebody, used to be my friend. In the Grim Legion now, he is. Bad words with them people's not good, so I left."

Any character who makes a successful Perception Test can tell from Gamuudge's expression that he still feels very angry about his quarrel with his friend. In order to convince him to discuss the Grim Legion, a character must make a successful Conversation Test or Charisma Test against Gamuudge's Social Defense. If the test succeeds, the ork says, "You ain't heard of the Grim Legion? Back home, they're crawling all over the place. Bunch of crazy folk, I call 'em. They swear to root out Horrors and crush 'em. Think they can do anything they please, 'cause they're fighting Horrors all the time."

For additional information on the Grim Legion, see **Rumors and Research**, p. 72. If the player characters want to know the details of Gamuudge's run-in with the Legion, a character must make a second Conversation or Charisma Test. If the test succeeds, Gamuudge continues with the following:

"Had a friend from Burnpatch, we grew up like brothers. Ork, named Kwamm. He was like me; wanted to get out and do things, be somebody. Picked a bad way to do it, he did. Joined the Grim Legion, and came back to Burnpatch acting like he was king of somewhere and pushing folk around. So I called him out, and we roughed each other up some. Got mad, Kwamm did—said he'd

bring his friends to teach me respect for the Legion. Me, I figured I'd best not wait for 'em. So now I'm here."

For a different version of these events, see Kwamm's description in **Cast of Characters**, p. 62.

Gamuudge is clumsy as well as unsophisticated. During one of his speeches, he stands up or gestures to emphasize his words, accidentally jostling the table and knocking a full tankard of ale into an unfortunate player character's lap. This mishap should happen to the adventurer whose reaction to the accident you feel will be funniest. Gamuudge apologizes profusely. If the scene is working, try having the poor ork wreak further slapstick havoc with his bumbling attempts to set things right.

GAMUUDGE

Attributes	Skills
Dexterity (4): 3/D4	Knowledge/Dwarf Trade Routes (1): 6/D10
Strength (15): 6/D10	Knowledge/Farming (1): 6/D10
Toughness (13): 6/D10	Read and Write Language (1): 6/D10 (Ork, Throalic)
Perception (10): 5/D8	
Trading (1): 6/D10	
Willpower (15): 6/D10	
Charisma (12): 5/D8	
Damage	Combat
Death Rating: 35	Physical Defense: 4
Wound Threshold: 9	Spell Defense: 6
Unconsciousness Rating: 27	Social Defense: 7
Recovery Tests Per Day: 2	Armor: 0
Recovery Dice: D10	Mystic Armor: 2
Initiative	Movement
Dice: D4	Full: 32
	Combat: 16

Equipment: Gamuudge wears a short sword when out on the town.

INVESTIGATING THE COURIERS

After questioning Charboyya and his employees, the characters may want to learn something about the last couriers the dwarf merchant hired. Their most direct source of information is the spice merchant, Jemboyla. To speak with her, the adventurers must travel to Jemboyla's trading house on Royal Road. At the trading house, the character doing the talking must impress the spice merchant's snobbish office manager, a dwarf named Cezlarica, by making a successful First Impression, Etiquette, or Charisma Test against Cezlarica's Social Defense of 6. (For the rest of Cezlarica's statistics, use those given for the Dwarf



Merchant gamemaster character, p. 28 of **Gamemastering Earthdawn** in the **Earthdawn Gamemaster Pack**.) While waiting for Jemboyla, the characters notice that her entire staff consists of dwarfs.

Jemboyla dresses and acts in a simple, no-nonsense style. Currently busy preparing a shipment to Haven, she can spare only a few moments to speak to the adventurers. Any character who makes a successful Perception Test against Jemboyla's Social Defense of 8 recognizes that she is trying to hide her disdain for the adventurers as she speaks. For additional statistics, use those given for the Dwarf Merchant mentioned above, but raise Jemboyla's Charisma to 14.

Jemboyla claims to have known the couriers only slightly.

"They worked for me, that's all," she says. "Funny, I'm usually right about people. The troll woman seemed competent enough—I'm sorry they let Charboyya down."

If asked how she met the missing couriers, Jemboyla says she heard of them through the bartender at the Juggling Shadowmant, a troll named Brainbiter.

Talking to Brainbiter

A former adventurer who gave up that hazardous life when he lost a foot on an ill-fated expedition into Parlainth, Brainbiter owns the Juggling Shadowmant as well as tending bar. He loves chatting with customers, and frequently offers help to adventurers for old times' sake. If the player characters ask Brainbiter what he knows of the missing couriers, Brainbiter replies:

"Abakule came into the bar a few months back, said she was looking for steady work. Tough, she was—had the spark in the eyes, the iron in the spine that I had once. I used to go adventuring, you know. Faced death and laughed at it and lived to tell the tale more times than I can count. I remember one time, I—but you don't want to hear about that. You want to hear about Abakule. She had a motley band following her—a few seemed a little wet behind the ears, if you know what I mean. But Abakule and that windling she works with knew their way through a maze backwards, if you take my meaning. The windling surprised me—so flighty, most of 'em, but not this one. I figured Abakule and her band deserved a decent job, so I sent her to the spice merchant, Jemboyla. The one who thinks the dwarfs hold up the sky and make the earth spin. Pays well, for all she's so prideful. I heard they're missing—too bad, that is. But that's the business, if you know what I mean."

Brainbiter does not know anyone else who knew Abakule or her allies. He can, however, tell the characters the names of a few of the missing couriers. Two of the humans, a brother and sister, called themselves

Aetheela and Damien Blacklog. The ork called herself Bojazi Kofeeld.

BRAINBITER

Attributes

Dexterity (3): 3/D4
Strength (13): 6/D10
Toughness (12): 5/D8
Perception (11): 5/D8
Willpower (10): 5/D8
Charisma (10): 5/D8

Skills

Artisan/Music (Drum) (1):
6/D10
Conversation (4): 9/D8 + D6
Haggle (2): 7/D12
Knowledge/Business
Contacts (2): 7/D12
Knowledge/Local Lore (2):
7/D12
Read and Write Language (1):
6/D10 (Throalic, Troll)

Damage

Death Rating: 34
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 26
Recovery Tests Per Day: 2
Recovery Dice: D8

Combat

Physical Defense: 3
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Many seasoned adventurers spend time at the Juggling Shadowmant, and they all feel a vested interest in squelching any other patron foolish enough to threaten violence in Brainbiter's establishment. Regular drinkers at the Shadowmant are quick to avoid trouble or stop it before it starts—they face enough danger adventuring and come to the Shadowmant to relax. If the player characters take it into their heads to start a fight with Brainbiter or another patron, the bulk of the other drinkers immediately attacks them to subdue the troublemakers. Use enough combat-capable archetypes from the **Disciplines** section, pp. 66–91 of the **Earthdawn** rulebook, to defeat and disarm the player characters.

PREPARING FOR THE JOURNEY

Before setting out for Hanto, the characters may wish to buy equipment from the Bartertown merchants and try to learn other useful information. True to its name, Bartertown is a great place to buy all manner of items. The characters may purchase any product listed in the **Goods and Services** section, pp. 248–267, **ED**, at the listed price or something close to it. Keep in mind, however, that more exotic items may be in short supply.

Characters looking for information discover that merchants make excellent sources. Particularly friendly tradesmen may offer any or all of the following information in response to the travelers' questions about the lowlands and the Grim Legion.

Traveling through the Lowlands

"I was once a peddler, and I traveled to many a small village in my day. The villagers are good people, taking care of each other. But to a stranger like me—well, a peddler in those parts of Barsaive had best know how to handle a short sword, if you take my meaning. I could never be sure whether folk'd buy from me or kill me."

"Lowlands? No profit in 'em. Backward lot—I'd let them alone."

"I suppose one must, however grudgingly, admire the bravery of those simple farm folk, firmly rooted in their unforgiving native soil, united by their fierce struggle to scrape a pathetic living from the earth by the sweat of their peasant brows. Born of ignorance though it may be, such bravery is genuine. For myself, I cannot imagine living anywhere but a city."

"I was born in one of them villages. We live hard lives there; it makes you hard inside if you stay too long."

The Grim Legion

"One lot of 'em caused quite a spot of trouble in town, until a few weeks ago. Pack of glorified thieves, if you ask me. They'd pilfer what they chose from any stall in the bazaar, claiming they were "borrowing" what they needed for the fight against the Horrors. Hah! The magistrate ran them off by cooking up a tall tale about Horror taint in Kratas. They'll be back soon enough, though. Mark my words."

"Some people say the Grim Legion are thieves, or greedy, or power-hungry. Folk who talk like that have never seen a six-year-old girl turn into a hideous, insect-legged wolf and leap for her mother's throat. I have; and I say, anyone who fights the Horrors is all right in my book."

If the Legion needs supplies from me, I'll give them. It's the least I can do."

"Right lot of crazies, the Grim Legion. Ever heard them talk? They sound so flamin' pompous, I want to bust out laughing."

TROUBLESHOOTING

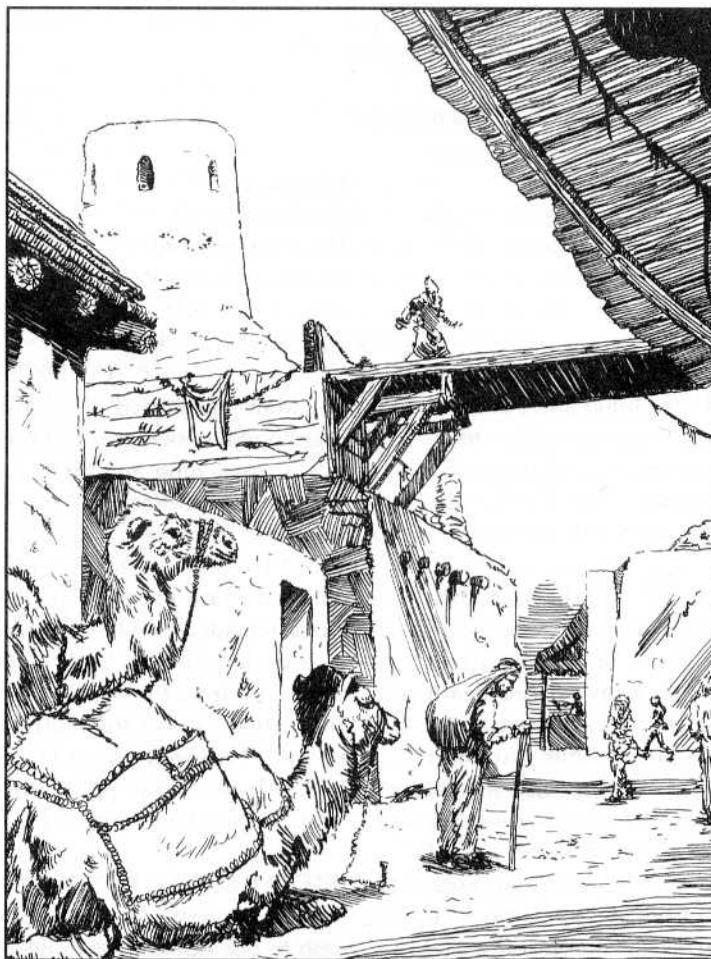
Little can go wrong this early in the adventure, unless the adventurers choose to reject Charboyya's offer. If this unlikely event takes place, create a compelling reason for the group to go to Hanto.

Perhaps an acquaintance of someone's gamemaster-character ally has gone there and disappeared, or an adventurer might come down with a mysterious illness for which the only known cure lies in Hanto. Because such storylines often feel contrived, try not to use them on players who object to being herded through the game.

The gamemaster can also adapt various parts of this adventure for future adventures. The encounters on the road to Hanto, for example, might apply to any overland journey the player characters take in the future. The Grim Legion may control the characters' next chosen destination, and most of the plot line involving

Hanto and its magical child might be usable with a few name changes.

Remember to portray Bartertown as a safe haven. Even if the player characters go looking for trouble, try to keep them out of it. Insulted guardsmen choose to dress down the player characters verbally instead of attacking them, cheated merchants use legal rather than violent means of reprisal, tavern patrons cannot be bothered to fight a bunch of loud-mouthed fools, and so on.



THE ROAD TO HANTO

OVERVIEW

THIS ENCOUNTER DESCRIBES the road to Hanto and several dangers that the adventurers might face on their journey. The section also provides guidelines for keeping the story on track if the characters wander off the road in search of additional trouble.

SETTING THE STAGE

Four or five days you've spent on the road, so far without incident. The monotony of the savanna, with its endless seas of grass and expanses of flat earth, has lulled you into an undoubtedly false sense of security. The countryside looks peaceful enough, but you know better. Keeping Charboyra's warnings in mind, you have not approached any of the small villages whose cooking smoke you've seen climbing into the sunny skies. You simply plod onward, following your rough map as best you can, almost hoping for attack by some enemy just to relieve the boredom.

THEMES AND IMAGES

Emphasize the silence, emptiness, and isolation of the countryside. If and when you choose to have the adventurers encounter other people, play up the locals' hostility toward strangers. Keep the player characters off-balance; make them wonder when the other shoe is going to drop.

BEHIND THE SCENES

This section describes the characters' journey from Bartertown to Hanto and offers several possible encounters. They may meet wary villagers, creatures that lurk in scattered copses of trees or behind the few rocky outcroppings that thrust out of the tall prairie grasses, bandits who roam the wild countryside, and so on. The trip to Hanto takes several days under the best conditions, roughly 15 days walking or 9 days riding. Give the player

characters the feel of a long, arduous journey by describing every day the sameness of the daily routine: rise at dawn, breakfast on trail food, walk or ride for several hours under a cloudless sky, rest and eat around noon, travel along the never-ending prairie for several more hours, make camp before dusk, eat, post sentries, and sleep.

In addition to setting the stage for the characters to encounter other travelers, villagers, bandits, creatures, and so on, the gamemaster may also wish to revisit ongoing plot threads from the current or previous campaigns. If someone is carrying a cursed magical item, for example, it chooses this (rather opportune) moment to display its malign powers. If the player characters seem to be spoiling for a fight, defuse their aggressive impulses by allowing the slaving monster of your choice to leap from the bushes or tall grass and attempt to lurch on the travelers.

USING SHANTAYA'S SEXTANT

If the gamemaster owns the **Barsaive Campaign Set** and wants to use the map of Barsaive and Shantaya's Sextant to find Hanto, he may follow the directions given below. Note that these directions center the sextant on Bartertown rather than on Throal.

Center Sextant On: Bartertown

Align: ☉ with: Travar

Sight Along Point: ξ

Follow: Lochost at Sundown

Days Travel: 15 walking, 9 riding

ENCOUNTERS IN LOWLAND SETTLEMENTS

When the adventurers enter or pass close to a lowland village during the journey to Hanto, play the encounters with the following details in mind. No true roads or trails cross the flat, open savannas. The grasslands simply go on for miles, occasionally interrupted by stony patches or jutting rock formations. The characters may have to go around these obstacles, if they loom particularly large, and can easily lose their bearings. The closest thing to roads on the savanna are paths beaten by the hooves of herd animals. If the adventurers follow these paths, they will eventually reach a village and are likely to meet locals along the way.

Hundreds of tiny villages dot Barsaive's plains. These hamlets commonly include dwarfs, humans, elves, and orks. Members of other races may live in these farming communities, though they are rare in this part of Barsaive. Within these settlements, the residents feel greater loyalty to their villages than their races and relate poorly to all strangers. Villagers may trust outsiders from nearby communities more than city folk, though feuds between villages are not unknown.

Though the hostility of country folk toward city folk predates the Scourge, that dark time strengthened this instinctive distrust. In the years just before the Scourge, envoys from Barsaive's great cities scoured the countryside, imploring farmers and other rural folk to join them in their vast kaers and citadels. They argued that only the

largest kaers and citadels could survive the Horrors' onslaught and claimed that the villagers would die needlessly in their tiny dirt kaers. In truth, the cities needed farmers to grow food for the kaers. Particularly persuasive ambassadors often lured entire extended families from their native soil to live in the cities.



The Scourge deepened the isolation of those villagers who remained behind. Cut off from contact with others for more than four centuries, many villages developed social customs and speech patterns unrecognizable to even their nearest neighbors. More than once, disguised Horrors attempted to trick the hidden villagers into believing that the Scourge had passed; only the most skeptical communities survived such encounters. To this day, a few villages remain resolutely in their kaers, refusing to believe anyone who tells them that most of the Horrors have vanished.

When the villagers emerged from their kaers, they learned the bitter truth that most of their ancestors who had followed the envoys to

the cities' kaers and citadels had fallen victim to the Horrors. Because the Horrors stood to entrap more victims in the larger kaers, they worked harder to penetrate the wards of such settlements. Though Horrors also breached many of the smaller dirt kaers, their low populations and erratic distribution across the countryside tended to keep them safe from depredation. The discovery of this painful truth reinforced the villagers' assessment of city folk as dangerously stupid. When bandits and slavers began to prey on



them in the early days after the Scourge, the villagers learned to view outsiders as not merely deluded, but vicious. If you wish, explain the villagers' hostility to the characters by having a villager relate some or all of this bitter history to the adventurers.

All the lowland villages appoint a single, highly respected man or woman to act as the community's leader and deal with every sort of trouble. Though the whole village makes its decisions through discussion and consensus, the headman or woman carries out these decisions and acts as village spokesperson to outsiders. The residents of most villages speak passable Throalic, spiced with a few loan words that remain from the mother tongues of the different races who entered the kaers.

Approaching A Village

Most savanna villages consist of several round huts made of kiln-fired brick and thatched roofs. The huts are arranged in a rough circle around a flat, open, communal eating area with a fire pit in the center. This "village green" serves as a gathering place for the evening meal, storytelling, observations to honor the Passions, public settling of grievances between individuals, and so forth.

If the adventurers approach or enter any village along the road to Hanto, they meet with considerable suspicion. Parents order their children inside their huts. The elderly and infirm shuffle indoors as fast as they can. Able-bodied men and women grab sharp farm implements such as pitchforks or hoes; a few of them may even wield swords and spears. Despite their immediate show of strength, the villagers generally prefer to avoid trouble, hoping that their seeming readiness to fight will discourage potential attackers. Even if the adventurers insult them, the villagers will not strike the first blow.

The headman or woman will intercept the adventurers before they approach too close to the village, bidding them go swiftly on their way. If the adventurers refuse to leave, perhaps claiming need for shelter, first aid, and so on, the headman or woman gives something like the following reply:

"We intend no offense, but you are strangers. Too often in the past, bandits and foul folk masquerading as honest heroes have done us harm when we aided them. Why should we believe you are who you claim to be?"

If the player characters attempt to use their social skills to impress the village leader, the gamemaster may determine the leaders' ability to resist the characters' persuasion randomly by rolling D6 and consulting the Social Interaction Table. For example, a die roll result of 2 gives the headman a Charisma step of 4 and he resists influence with a Social Defense of 5.

Player characters may also use the following talents and skills to sway a village leader into offering them hospitality: Acting, Bardic Voice, First Impression, and Lasting Impression. The deeply felt prejudice of country folk, however, make them somewhat less susceptible to such attempts to influence them. The villagers' responses vary according to the success level of any test an adventurer makes using the

above-mentioned skills or talents. Appropriate responses for each success level appear below, and may be read aloud or paraphrased. The adventurers may make only one such test per village; no matter how many characters possess suitable persuasive skills or talents, only

the first attempt by a single player character has any effect.

If the character achieves a Poor success, the village leader says, "The more you speak, the less I trust you. Go your way, and cease wasting my time."

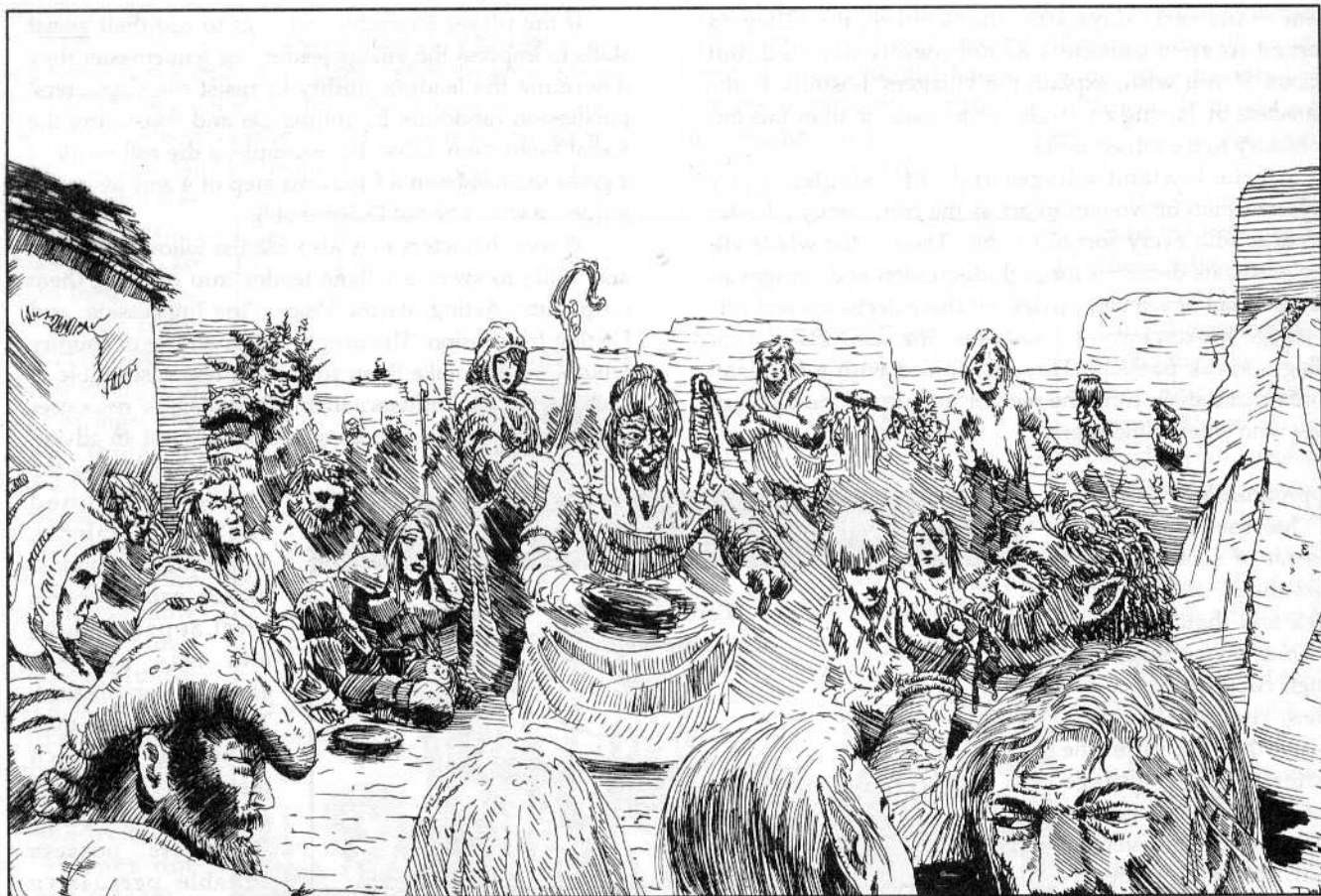
On an Average success, the leader says, "I hope you are as honest as you seem. I cannot risk misjudgment and welcome you despite my misgivings, but we offer you our good wishes. May the Passions smile on your mission."

A Good success produces the following reply: "I believe you are sincere, but cannot risk the well-being of my people on my judgment alone. We will give you water if you need it and allow you to rest a moment on the village green. I warn you not to abuse this hospitality."

On an Excellent success, the village spreads as much of a feast as they can manage for the adventurers but refuses to let them spend the night. The leader says, "Your words bear the ring of honesty and courage. Will you share with us a humble meal and perhaps tell us of your exploits before you depart?"

SOCIAL INTERACTION TABLE

Die Roll Result	Leader's Charisma Step	Leader's Social Defense
1	7	9
2	4	5
3	4	5
4	6	8
5	7	9
6	6	8



An Extraordinary success breaches the wall of suspicion and leads the villagers to offer a night's shelter as well as food. The leader apologizes for doubting the characters' intentions, saying, "Would that all strangers who pass our way were true-hearted heroes such as you! We will gladly offer you food and a bed for the night; you are welcome to partake of our best, little though it is."

If the adventurers provoke the villagers into fighting, use the Human, Dwarf, Ork, and Elf villager statistics provided in *Friends Indeed*, p. 26.

ADDITIONAL ENCOUNTERS

If it suits the campaign, create other types of encounters on the road. The adventurers might pass a band of slavers herding their wares to market, for example, or meet fellow adventurers returning from a dangerous escapade in a kaer filled with dreadful creatures, or even become the target of a bandit ambush. We suggest you outline these mini-encounters as part of your preparation for the adventure, and use statistics that enable the player characters to win easily if fighting breaks out. The primary purpose of the encounters on the road to Hanto is simply to give the adventurers a taste of the

various experiences of traveling in Barsaive (and to keep them on their toes).

READING CHARBOYYA'S LETTERS

If the adventurers still harbor some doubts about Charboyya's frankness in sharing all he knew, they may choose to read the letters he sent with them, in hopes of learning more about the situation they face. The medallions the characters received match the seal on the letters, so the adventurers should find it easy to melt the sealing wax and re-stamp the seal once they have finished reading. If the players choose this course of action, give them *Player Handouts 2-5*.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Ideally, the player characters will not resort to combat in this encounter. If they attack any villagers, the locals fight desperately to safeguard their homes and families. Though few of the villagers can realistically hope to defeat a band of adepts, you may want to fudge the rolls in the villagers' favor to teach the adventurers the futility of senseless violence.



FRIENDS INDEED

OVERVIEW

IN THIS ENCOUNTER, the leader of Yellowspring meets the adventurers and urges them to stay the night in his village. His friendliness conceals a sinister motive—Yellowspring village is expecting a raid from a neighboring village, with whom they have a bitter feud.

SETTING THE STAGE

You follow a faint trail through the tall, waving grasses, praying for some new sight to shake you out of your boredom. Above the seed-laden grass tops, a thin finger of smoke rises—a village must lie nearby. If earlier experience is anything to judge by, you see no point in attempting to contact its inhabitants. You can see a cluster of close-grouped huts like a dark smudge in the distance. The road leads you toward the tiny community, and as you draw closer, you see a figure on horseback waving to you. He spurs his horse and gallops out to meet you. As he approaches, you see that he is a bald, ebony-skinned ork, his face crisscrossed with age lines. A few feet from you, he pulls up his mount and holds out his hands in greeting.

"Hail, travelers! Pardon my presumption for accosting you, but I hunger for news of the outside world. I am Rhamduc, headman of the village of Yellowspring. If you permit, I would dearly love to ride and speak with you awhile. Will you indulge an old ork?"

THEMES AND IMAGES

Rhamduc's friendliness alone should unsettle the player characters; no one acts this kindly toward strangers in the lowlands. If the characters accept the invitation to accompany Rhamduc back to his village, play the ork and his fellow villagers as kind and sympathetic during the first part of the encounter. Lulling the characters into a false sense of good fellowship will heighten the sense of betrayal when the adventurers learn of Rhamduc's true plans.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Rhamduc is the leader of Yellowspring, a village locked in a mortal feud with its neighbor, Cherrypit. A recent midnight raid against Cherrypit cost the ork headman several of his best fighters. Expecting the Cherrypit men and women to launch a retaliatory raid at any time, Rhamduc spent all day riding the trails in search of help. A clever and worldly ork, Rhamduc hopes to trick the adventurers into spending the night in Yellowspring so that they will feel compelled to fight the Cherrypit raiders.



RHAMDUC

Attributes

Dexterity (11): 5/D8
Strength (14): 6/D10
Toughness (15): 6/D10
Perception (16): 7/D12
Willpower (12): 5/D8
Charisma (17): 7/D12

Skills

Knowledge/Farming (2): 9/D8 + D6
Melee Weapons (2): 7/D12
Missile Weapons (2): 7/D12

Damage

Death Rating: 38
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 29
Recovery Tests Per Day: 3
Recovery Dice: D10

Combat

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 9
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 1

Initiative

Dice: D8

Movement

Full: 54
Combat: 27

Equipment: Broadsword (Damage 12/2D10)

Padded Cloth Armor

If the player characters try to give Rhamduc the brush-off, he tries to reassure them of his good intentions with a line like the following: "I do apologize for disturbing you. No doubt you've already run afoul of local folk—I can't blame you for your suspicions. I lived a few years in Bartertown, so I know what it's like to take civility for granted. Bit of a shock to you out here, eh? Look, if you need any supplies, I can get them for you. No one else will, that's certain—most folk out here don't believe in hospitality." If the adventurers continue

to reject Rhamduc's friendly overtures, he bids them farewell. Go to the next encounter, **Charboyya's Betrayers**, p. 29.

If the adventurers return Rhamduc's greeting and seem inclined to chat or join him, Rhamduc tells them a bit about himself as they travel toward Yellowspring.

Read the following aloud or paraphrase it:

"I left Yellowspring in my youth to find my fortune. Wealth eluded me, alas, and I returned to my village some years later to find a wife and settle down. It's a good enough life, but I miss many things about the city—the music, the taverns, the endless parade of new faces. Where are you from, friends, and what brings you to this drab corner of Barsaive?"

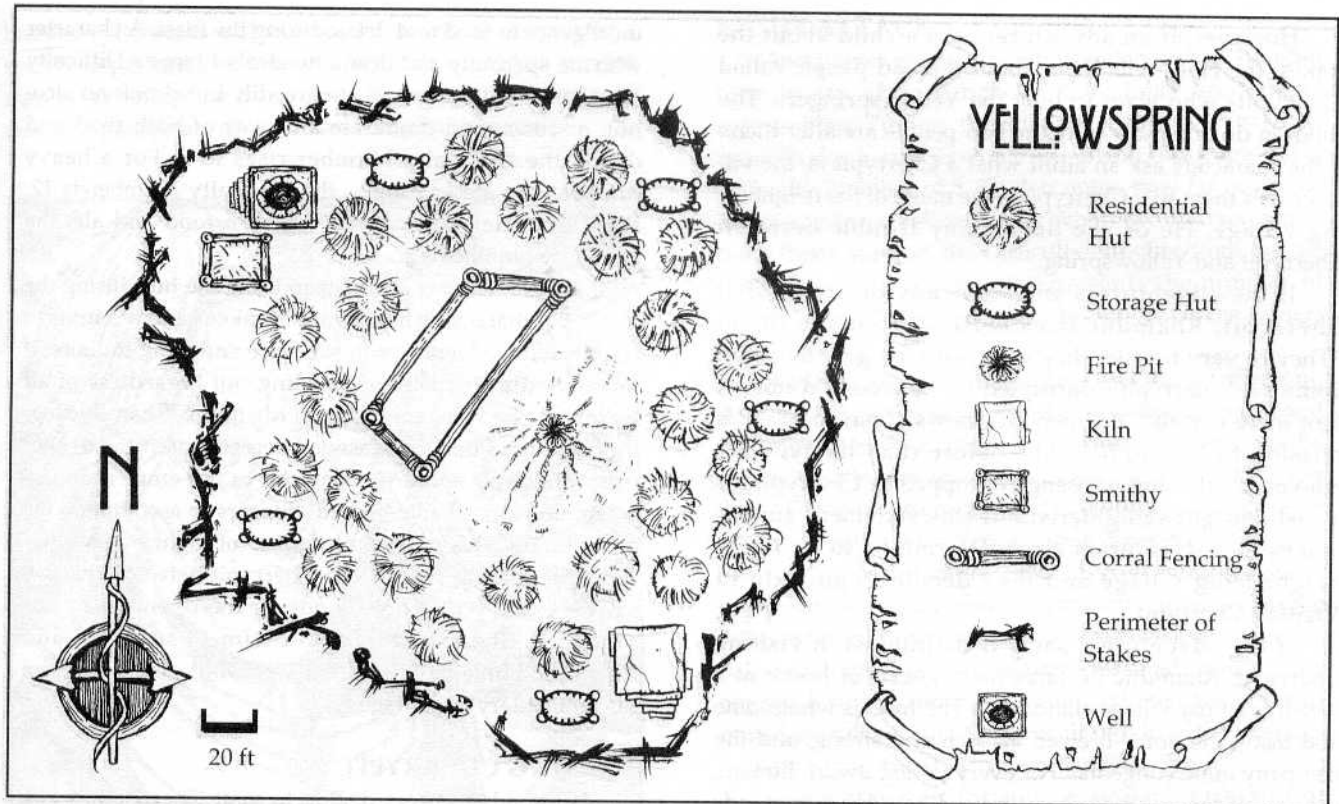
Though Rhamduc is certainly interested in the adventurers' journey, he concentrates mostly on appearing trustworthy rather than trying to squeeze information out of them. In particular, he hopes that in talking about their journey, the adventurers will give him an opening to invite them to stay the night in Yellowspring. He may ask outright if they need shelter, or simply ask how many days they have spent on the road. He may even resort to telling them that a storm is approaching, in hopes of getting them to ask for beds in the village. To earn the characters' trust, he may ask questions about Bartertown that seem to prove he did actually spend some time there, such as, "Are the Therans much of a problem there? Did you happen to see an elven tavern dancer named Melaria, a performer at the Red Wyrms Tavern? Is the Red Wyrms still standing?" and so on.

If asked, Rhamduc knows nothing about Hanto or Charboyya's lost couriers. He answers any other questions about himself or his village as honestly as he can, but carefully fails to mention the feud with Cherrypit. He offers his opinion on the Grim Legion only if asked: "We've not had much trouble with them in Yellowspring, but they hold quite a bit of power in these parts. Fear of the Horrors overshadows some people's better judgment, and they invite these people to take control. Myself, I prefer to keep out of their way."

WELCOME TO YELLOWSPRING

If an opportunity to offer a night's lodging does not come up naturally in conversation, Rhamduc simply invites the adventurers to stay. If the adventurers seem reluctant to accept the invitation, Rhamduc trots out a clever lie to make his offer of hospitality more credible. He claims he is motivated by the thought of future profit, asking if the adventurers think that an inn might draw customers in the lowlands. "I've often wondered





if I might add to Yellowspring's coffers by offering shelter for coin. Not that I'd dream of charging you, of course—I desire only your opinion and a chance to discuss the matter with folk who might well stay at such a place. A headman like myself, who knows somewhat of the ways of the world, might make a profit where others cannot."

A typical savanna village, Yellowspring contains the usual round huts and communal village green. Like many of their counterparts, the residents of Yellowspring keep their cattle and horses corralled inside the ring of huts. Though this arrangement certainly creates less-than-sanitary conditions, it is a necessary precaution against raiders. The villagers store their food in small quantities in several huts, rather than in a communal storehouse, for the same reason. Other buildings in the village include a kiln, a primitive smithy, and several storage sheds containing farming tools.

As the adventurers enter the village, any one of them who makes a successful Perception (4) Test notices an irregular circle of sharpened stakes sticking up about a foot out of the ground and pointing outward, encircling the village. The adventurers will not have seen such a stake-wall in any other village. The line of stakes breaks off in many places, and Rhamduc leads the adventurers through one of these breaks.

Because the flat terrain around Yellowspring offers no cover, raiding parties usually strike at night. Darkness, of course, makes the stakes difficult to avoid. On closer inspection of the stakes, the characters notice that the points are covered with horse dung. Any character who makes a successful test using a Knowledge Skill related to Healing or Folk Medicine realizes that the dung is intended to infect anyone wounded by one of these stakes.

As Rhamduc escorts the adventurers into the village, the people emerge from their huts. A mixed group of dwarfs, humans, orks, and elves, the people appear curious but more reserved than Rhamduc. Unlike their leader, they will not speak to the adventurers unless spoken to. When Rhamduc bids the villagers to prepare a welcoming feast, they set willingly to work. Some of the men slaughter one of the mangier-looking horses and begin butchering it for the occasion.

At this point, the adventurers can get acquainted with Yellowspring and its residents. All the adults know of Rhamduc's plan and take care not to hint at the expected raid from Cherrypit. If an adventurer asks any adult villager about the stakes, the villager says something like: "You can't be too careful, can you? We put those in a couple of years ago after some thieves tried to take our horses during the night."

However, if an adventurer asks a child about the stakes, the child tells them about the bad people called Cherrypits who want to hurt the Yellowspringers. The children do not know why the bad people are after them. If the characters ask an adult what a Cherrypit is, the villager tells them that Cherrypit is the name of the neighboring village. He or she denies any trouble between Cherrypit and Yellowspring.

If the adventurers announce any desire to visit Cherrypit, Rhamduc tries hard to dissuade them: "They're very hostile; they've killed strangers on sight. Some say Cherrypit's corrupted by Horrors; I'd not set foot there myself." If Rhamduc knows about the party's mission to Hanto, he adds, "More than likely, your employer's missing messengers stopped in Cherrypit for a rest and got slaughtered." If this statement simply makes the adventurers more determined to go to the neighboring village and they decide to go, skip to **Visiting Cherrypit**.

If the adventurers show little interest in visiting Cherrypit, Rhamduc declares them guests of honor at a lavish feast (by village standards). The food is wholesome and tasty, the home-brewed ale rich and strong, and the company quite congenial. For every young dwarf, human, ork, or elf among the adventurers, Rhamduc commands an attractive, unattached villager of the appropriate race and gender to sit near them and engage the adventurer in conversation. One of these innocent, young villagers might develop a genuine crush on an adventurer, especially if the player character uses Flirting or Seduction skills. Rhamduc assigns older adventurers table companions with similar interests—a local fighter trading brawling stories with a warrior, a magically talented villager to chat with a sorcerer, and so on. If you wish, invent gamemaster characters specifically tailored to appeal to each player character.

As the evening draws to a close, Rhamduc informs the player characters that each of them will sleep in a specific hut on the northern side of the village as guests of various families. Rhamduc expects the Cherrypitters to attack from the north and wants his new fighters on the spot. As the player characters bed down for the night, any character who makes a successful Perception Test against his host's Social Defense may notice that the villagers seem a bit nervous. The host villagers all have a Social Defense of 5 or 6, at the gamemaster's discretion. If asked why they seem so nervous, members of the host families initially deny these feelings, but if pressed, pass it off as a normal part of life on the savanna.

If an adventurer decides to stay up all night, he or she must make a successful Toughness Test to do so. The Difficulty Number varies according to the character's

indulgence in food and drink during the feast. A character who ate sparingly and drank no alcohol faces a Difficulty Number of 5. If he or she ate greedily but drank no alcohol, or consumed moderate amounts of both food and drink, the Difficulty Number rises to 9. For a heavy drinker who ate sparingly, the Difficulty Number is 12. For a character who overindulged in food and ale, the Difficulty Number is 15.

If an adventurer attempts to leave the hut during the night, the character's host-family awakens and attempts to convince the adventurer to stay safe and snug indoors. If the adventurers insist on heading out regardless of all warnings, the villagers summon Rhamduc. Rhamduc logically assumes that the seasoned heroes sensed the danger from Cherrypit and are riding out to pre-empt it and so assembles several able-bodied villagers to accompany the adventurers. This impromptu group of night riders intercepts the raiding party from Cherrypit between the two villages, and battle occurs out on the open plain. The attacking Cherrypitters fall victim to surprise, and Rhamduc immediately orders an all-out attack to press his momentary advantage.

VISITING CHERRYPIT

If the adventurers decide to visit Cherrypit at any point before the raid occurs, no one from Yellowspring offers to accompany them. Rhamduc gives them incorrect directions, telling them that Cherrypit lies an hour's walk to the northwest when it actually lies one hour's walk to the northeast. By following Rhamduc's false directions, the adventurers end up at a giant rock formation that is eroding from deep scratches made by a Horror's claws. If they return to Yellowspring and confront Rhamduc on his misdirection, he feigns innocence: "Northwest? I'm sure I said northeast. Everyone knows it's northeast." If Rhamduc defends his innocence within earshot of another villager who heard him give the original directions, the other villager backs up the headman's story.

If the characters do manage to stumble on Cherrypit, its headwoman, a human named Noha, tells them to leave. If the adventurers try to explain their presence, Noha says, "You come from the southwest, where Yellowspring lies. The village of Yellowspring has sworn to see every one of us dead, but we have no intention of dying to suit them. If you are kin or friends to them, then you are our enemies."

If a player character asks Noha to explain why the Yellowspringers want to kill the people of Cherrypit, she impatiently tells them that the Yellowspringers claim valuable pasture land that has belonged to Cherrypit from time immemorial. She then commands them to leave one last time; several young men and women of Cherrypit



brandish pitchforks and axes to encourage the adventurers' speedy departure. If a map of Cherrypit is needed, use the map of Yellowspring on p. 23 of this section, turning it to face the appropriate direction and omitting the stakes.



NOHA

Attributes

Dexterity (11): 5/D8
Strength (12): 5/D8
Toughness (11): 5/D8
Perception (13): 6/D10
Willpower (12): 5/D8
Charisma (15): 6/D10

Skills

Animal Training (2): 8/2D6
Artisan/Potter (3): 9/D8 + D6
First Impression (1): 7/D12
Knowledge/Farming (1): 7/D12
Melee Weapons (1): 6/D10
Missile Weapons (1): 6/D10

Damage

Death Rating: 32
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 24
Recovery Tests Per Day: 2
Recovery Dice: D8

Combat

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1

Initiative

Dice: D8

Movement

Full: 54
Combat: 27

NIGHT ATTACK

Any player characters who remain awake roughly four hours after sundown may hear hoof beats approaching. To hear the advancing riders, a character must make a successful Perception Test against a Difficulty Number of 5. To determine how far away the riders are from Yellowspring when the character first hears them, subtract the Difficulty Number from the die roll result. The difference represents the number of Combat Rounds the character can act before the raiders arrive.

Adventurers who are sleeping four hours after sundown are abruptly awakened by a crackling sound and the smell of burning straw. The raiders have reached the village's perimeter and begun torching the roofs of the huts. Fifteen raiders arrive from Cherrypit, some of whom do battle with Yellowspring defenders. You need not run the entire battle. Instead, concentrate on skirmishes involving the player characters. Assume that the villagers battle each other by posturing and parrying, doing each other no serious harm. Each adventurer may engage a single, mounted raider, whose race is determined by rolling D10. On a result of 0 to 2, the raider is human; 3 to 5, dwarf; 6 to 7, ork; and 8 to 9, elf.

Game statistics for raiders of each race appear below. All raiders wear padded cloth armor and all dwarf raiders carry hand-axes. To determine weapons wielded by raiders of other races, roll D10 and consult the Raider Weapon Table. Some raiders also carry slings and short bows. Roll D6 for each raider; on a result of 1-2, the raider carries neither weapon. On a result of 3-4, he carries a sling, and on a result of 5-6, a short bow.

These raids are disorganized acts of vengeance rather than carefully planned military operations. The Cherrypitters want to draw a little blood, set fire to a few huts and vanish into the night. They have no stomach for a fierce battle resulting in real casualties; if any raiders die, the rest flee. If one of their number is seriously injured, the Cherrypitters immediately stop fighting, try to retrieve him or her and flee.

As mounted fighters, the Cherrypitters can Charge and Split Movement (see pp. 198 and 201, ED). If the characters want to retrieve their mounts (if any) from the corral for this battle, they must leave the fight to do so.



HUMAN VILLAGER

Attributes

Dexterity (14): 6/D10
Strength (11): 5/D8
Toughness (12): 5/D8
Perception (11): 5/D8
Willpower (9): 4/D6
Charisma (8): 4/D6

Skills

Knowledge/Farming (1): 6/D10
Melee Weapons (1): 7/D12
Missile Weapons (1): 7/D12

Damage

Death Rating: 34
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 26
Recovery Tests Per Day: 2
Recovery Dice: D8

Combat

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 5
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0

Initiative

Dice: D10

Movement

Full: 65
Combat: 33



DWARF VILLAGER

Attributes

Dexterity (12): 5/D8
Strength (14): 6/D10
Toughness (15): 6/D10
Perception (11): 5/D8
Willpower (10): 5/D8
Charisma (8): 4/D6

Skills

Knowledge/Farming (2): 7/D12
Melee Weapons (1): 6/D10
Missile Weapons (1): 6/D10

Damage

Death Rating: 38
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 29
Recovery Tests Per Day: 3
Recovery Dice: D10

Combat

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 5
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0

Initiative

Dice: D8

Movement

Full: 57
Combat: 29



ORK VILLAGER

Attributes

Dexterity (11): 5/D8
Strength (14): 6/D10
Toughness (13): 6/D10
Perception (11): 5/D8
Willpower (8): 4/D6
Charisma (9): 4/D6

Damage

Death Rating: 35
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 27
Recovery Tests Per Day: 2
Recovery Dice: D10

Initiative

Dice: D8

Skills

Knowledge/Farming (2): 7/D12
Melee Weapons (1): 6/D10
Missile Weapons (1): 6/D10

Combat

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0

Movement

Full: 54
Combat: 27



ELF VILLAGER

Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10
Strength (10): 5/D8
Toughness (9): 4/D6
Perception (10): 5/D8
Willpower (9): 4/D6
Charisma (8): 4/D6

Skills

Knowledge/Farming (2): 7/D12
Melee Weapons (2): 8/2D6
Missile Weapons (2): 8/2D6

Damage

Death Rating: 30
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 21
Recovery Tests Per Day: 2
Recovery Dice: D6

Combat

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 5
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0

Initiative

Dice: D10

Movement

Full: 60
Combat: 30

AFTERMATH

When the Cherrypitters break off their attack and ride away into the night, the adventurers must decide what to do next. If they killed any raiders in the fight, an excited Rhamduc tries to convince them to pursue the fleeing Cherrypitters, making wild claims that Cherrypit is inhabited by insane, foul folk who ought to be destroyed. Improvise this speech so that it sounds as if Rhamduc could be making up the whole story. If the player characters agree to Rhamduc's scheme, allow them to plan their assault and have the Cherrypitters respond accordingly. If attacked on the plain, the raiders try to flee. If attacked in their village, every Cherrypitter fights to the death. If the adventurers wreak havoc in Cherrypit, Rhamduc all but dances with glee, saying, "Ha! That'll teach the scurvy swine! Steal our land, will they? They'll not steal from Yellowspring again, that's for certain!"

This little speech should tip off the player characters that they've been had. If they accuse Rhamduc of acting dishonestly, he shows no remorse and maintains that his deception was justified. If the characters become angry and attack Rhamduc, he and his villagers defend themselves as best they can. They will most likely lose, pointlessly spilling more blood.

If the characters recognize Rhamduc's game before doing serious harm to Cherrypit and demand that he explain his true motives, he claims that Cherrypit is nothing but a village of land-thieves. At this point, the adventurers can swallow their anger, leave Yellowspring and continue toward their goal, or they can try to mediate the dispute between the villages.

Negotiations

To mediate the dispute, the player characters must persuade both Rhamduc and Noha to talk to each other and then accept an agreement brokered by the group. Resolve the interactions involved in this task with role-playing or Charisma Tests per the following instructions.

Rhamduc considers the adventurers to be the worst kind of fools; if he tricked them into attacking Cherrypit, that success merely strengthens his opinion. To talk him into negotiating, the adventurers must convince Rhamduc of their wisdom and confidence, which requires a Good success on Charisma Test. Next, they must convince him that peace with Cherrypit would benefit Yellowspring, despite the fact that Rhamduc seems to have the upper hand in the conflict. This also requires a Good success. Finally, the adventurers must convince Rhamduc that Cherrypit will honor any commitments made during negotiations. This last achievement is a particularly tall order, and so requires an Excellent success.

Noha regards the adventurers as Hostile if she or other villagers know that they defended Yellowspring. In this case, a player character must achieve an Excellent success on a Making An Impression or First Impression Test to persuade Noha to negotiate. If the player characters helped pursue the raiders or raided Cherrypit, Noha sees them as Enemies. In this case, a player character must achieve an Extraordinary success on one of these tests. If the adventurers did not fight Cherrypitters or if Noha does not know of their involve-

ment, she regards them as merely Unfriendly. In this case, persuading her to negotiate requires a Good success on a Charisma Test. After persuading Noha to talk with Rhamduc, the player characters must convince her that mediation is not another of Rhamduc's tricks. This achievement requires a Good success on a Charisma

Test. Finally, they must convince her that Rhamduc will honor any commitments he makes—this requires an Excellent success.

If successful up to this point, the characters should propose a solution to the land dispute. Base the success level required for the

gamemaster characters' agreement on the feasibility of the solution suggested, then have the principal mediator among the player characters make a Charisma Test against each leader's Social Defense. If one or the other village leader rejects the proposal, the mediator may then propose an alternate solution and make a second Charisma Test. Because Rhamduc has a higher Social Defense than Noha, he is more likely to refuse a compromise; if so, the second proposal must appear more favorable to Rhamduc than the previous one, but not so much so that Noha balks at it. If the result of the second Charisma Test is sufficiently low, the player characters may lose the agreement of both leaders.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If the player characters decide to pass Rhamduc by without stopping, let them. Such a decision proves that they are swiftly learning the realities of the lonely savanna and cannot be easily distracted from their mission. The gamemaster may want to reserve this encounter for use in a later campaign, adding a stronger hook when he runs it to make the adventurers interested in resolving the villagers' feud.

The adventurers may also figure out the truth of the situation before the raid and immediately offer to mediate or simply leave. If they make either of these choices, they have avoided senseless violence through intelligent reasoning. Good for them. If it comes to a fight, the poorly armed and barely trained villagers should not pose a serious threat to the adventurers. However, feel free to let a villager get in a lucky shot or blow. After all, the savanna is a dangerous place.

RAIDER WEAPON TABLE

Roll Result	Weapon
0-2	Hoe (Damage Step 3, Size 3)
3-5	Pitchfork (Damage Step 4, Size 3)
6-7	Short sword
8-9	Hand-axe

CHARBOYYA'S BETRAYERS

OVERVIEW

IN THIS ENCOUNTER, the remnants of Charboyya's missing band of couriers assault the characters in an attempt to steal rations and equipment. If the characters capture and question their attackers, they can learn vital information regarding the fate of Hanto.

SETTING THE STAGE

Allow the adventurers to camp for the night. Six hours after sundown, make a Perception (8) Test for the player character standing watch. If the test is successful, read the following aloud:

The silent night presses in on you like a heavy, velvet cloak. Against the blanketing darkness, the banked coals of your small fire glow feebly, allowing you to glimpse only your companions' huddled forms. You hear a soft sound somewhere in the dark beyond you, a sound that chills your blood—the whisper of a long blade being drawn from a leather scabbard.

If the test fails, read the following aloud:

The silent night presses in on you like a heavy, velvet cloak. Against the blanketing darkness, the banked coals of your small fire glow feebly, allowing you to glimpse only your companions' huddled forms. Suddenly, from the corner of your eye, you see a bolt of yellow flame arc toward you. You flinch instinctively, though the bolt lands a few feet to your left, in the middle of your encampment. It is an arrow wrapped in a bundle of burning cloth. The smell of singed fabric and lamp oil tickles your nose, and the night turns bright as sunrise out to a distance of 50 yards or more.

THEMES AND IMAGES

This encounter contrasts the (presumably) noble player characters with individuals who once thought and acted like them, but have fallen on hard times—both materially and morally. Try to make the adventurers realize that they could end up equally desperate and violent unless they take care in their dealings.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The surviving members of the last of Charboyya's couriers have resorted to banditry, convinced that they will not make it back to civilization without better gear and a few healing aids. A sneak attack on an adventuring party might provide exactly what they need. They fire a burning arrow into the adventurers' encampment to create enough light to see the player characters, then they fire arrows and spells at them from a safe distance. The attackers have taken cover in a trench roughly 95 yards from the player characters' encampment and hope to avoid fighting at closer quarters. All three of the attackers are suffering from unhealed wounds taken in their escape from Hanto.



BOJAZI KOFEELD, FIRST CIRCLE ORK ARCHER

Attributes

Dexterity (17): 7/D12
 Strength (19): 8/2D6
 Toughness (17): 7/D12
 Perception (14): 6/D10
 Willpower (10): 5/D8
 Charisma (3): 2/D4 - 1

Talents

Avoid Blow (1): 8/2D6
 Karma Ritual (1)
 Missile Weapons (3): 10/D10 + D6
 Mystic Aim (1): 7/D12
 True Shot (2): 9/D8 + D6

Karma

Karma Dice: D6
 Karma Points: 1

Skills

Artisan/Wood Carving (1): 7/D12
 Knowledge/Legends and Lore (1): 7/D12
 Knowledge/Ork Politics (1): 7/D12

Damage

Death Rating: 40
 Wound Threshold: 11
 Unconsciousness Rating: 32
 Recovery Tests Per Day: 3
 Recovery Dice: D12

Combat

Physical Defense: 9
 Spell Defense: 8
 Social Defense: 3
 Armor: 2
 Mystic Armor: 0

Initiative

Dice: D12

Movement

Full: 80
 Combat: 40

Equipment

Broadsword (Damage 13/D12 + D10)
 Longbow (Damage 14/D20 + D4)
 Padded Cloth Armor

Note: Bojazi Kofeeld has Current Damage of 15 and 2 Wounds.



**DAMIEN BLACKLOG,
FIRST CIRCLE HUMAN ARCHER**

Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10
 Strength (13): 6/D10
 Toughness (10): 5/D8
 Perception (12): 5/D8
 Willpower (9): 4/D6
 Charisma (9): 4/D6

Talents

Avoid Blow (1): 7/D12
 Direction Arrow (1): 6/D10
 Karma Ritual (1)
 Missile Weapons (3): 9/D8 + D6
 Mystic Aim (1): 6/D10
 True Shot (1): 7/D12

Karma

Karma Dice: D8
 Karma Points: 7

Skills

Artisan/Music (Lute) (1): 5/D8
 Artisan/Wood Carving (1): 6/D10
 Knowledge/Underworld Rumors (1): 6/D10

Damage

Death Rating: 31
 Wound Threshold: 8
 Unconsciousness Rating: 22
 Recovery Tests Per Day: 2
 Recovery Dice: D8

Combat

Physical Defense: 7
 Spell Defense: 7
 Social Defense: 5
 Armor: 2
 Mystic Armor: 0

Initiative

Dice: D10

Movement

Full: 60
 Combat: 30

Equipment

Broadsword (Damage 11/D10 + D8)
 Longbow (Damage 14/D20 + D4)
 Padded Cloth Armor

Note: Damien Blacklog has Current Damage of 13 and 1 Wound.





**AETHEELA BLACKLOG,
FIRST CIRCLE HUMAN WIZARD**

Attributes

Dexterity (11): 5/D8
Strength (8): 4/D6
Toughness (15): 6/D10
Perception (17): 7/D12
Willpower (16): 7/D12
Charisma (8): 4/D6

Talents

Karma Ritual (1)
Read and Write Language (1):
8/2D6 (Throalic)
Read and Write Magic (1): 8/2D6
Spellcasting (2): 9/D8 + D6
Spell Matrix (1)
Spell Matrix (1)
Wizardry (1) 8/2D6 (Thread
Weaving)

Karma

Karma Dice: D8
Karma Points: 1

Skills

Artisan/Robe Weaving (1): 6/D10
Knowledge/Legends and Lore (1): 8/2D6
Knowledge/Magical Theory (1): 8/2D6
Melee Weapons (1): 6/D10

Damage

Death Rating: 38
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 29
Recovery Tests Per Day: 3
Recovery Dice: D10

Combat

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 5
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0

Spells

Astral Sense (in matrix)
Dispel Magic
Divine Aura
Flame Flash
Iron Hand
Mind Dagger (in matrix)
Wall Walker

Initiative

Dice: D8

Movement

Full: 54
Combat: 27

Equipment

Broadsword (Damage 11/D10 + D8)
Padded Cloth Armor

Note: Aetheela Blacklog has Current Damage of 17 and 3 Wounds.

BATTLE BY NIGHT

If the sentry heard Aetheela drawing her sword in **Setting the Stage**, he or she has 4 rounds to act before Bojazi fires the flaming arrow into the encampment. Once in place, the arrow illuminates the encampment and much of the surrounding landscape. Any player character who remains within 50 yards of the arrow may be targeted by the bandits without the standard 3-step penalty for actions performed in the dark. Bojazi and Damien concentrate their fire on the two player characters closest to them, while Aetheela stands ready to whip a Mind Dagger at anyone who charges the trench. The pale moonlight reduces the standard 3-step darkness penalty to 2 for the player characters, but the partial cover of the trench adds an additional 2-step penalty to missile Attack Tests when firing at the bandits.

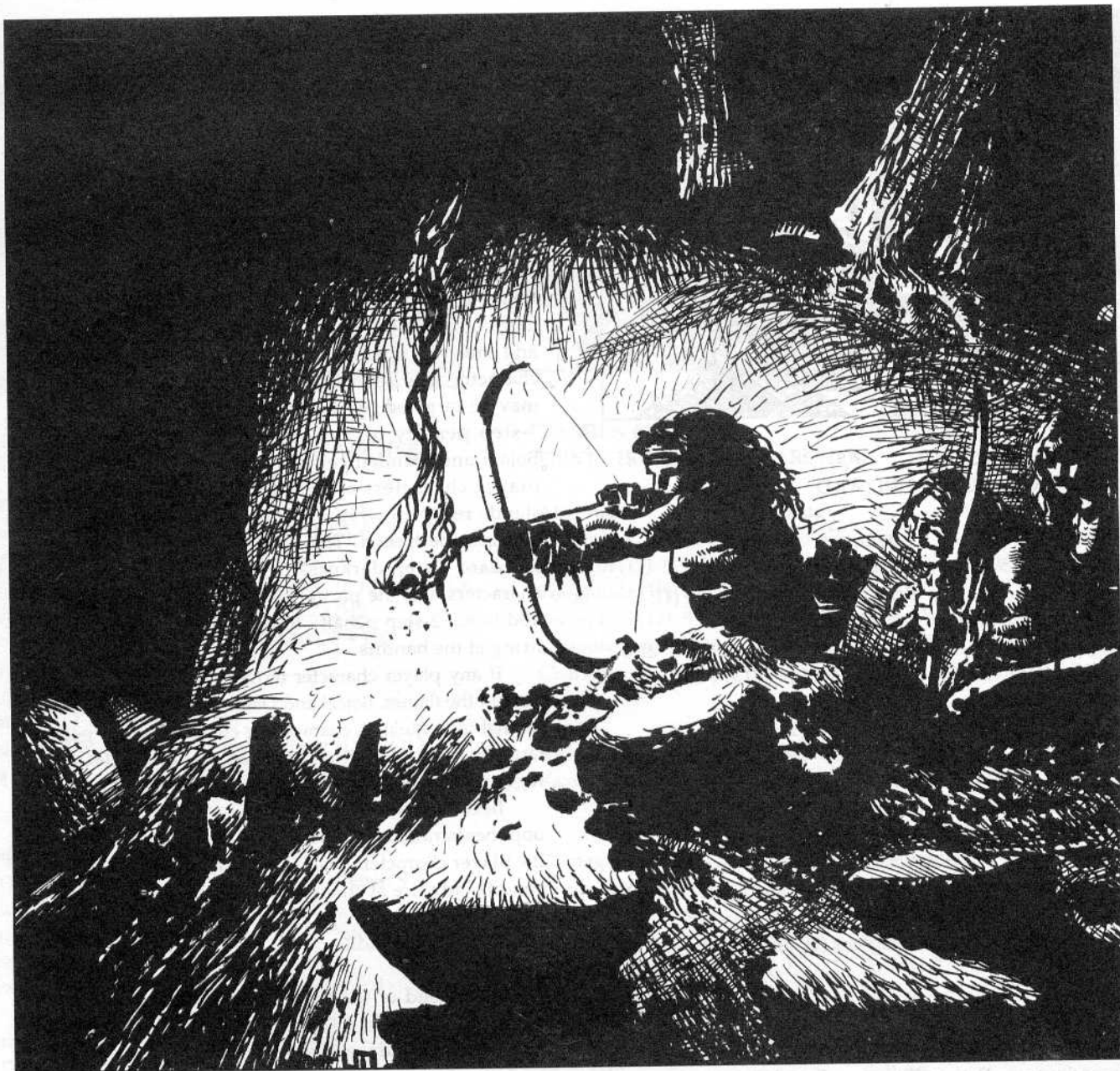
If any player character moves toward the arrow to put out the flames, Bojazi and Damien simultaneously fire on that individual. A character or characters must pour a large quantity of sand or water on the thick, oil-soaked rags to extinguish the flame. This requires an Action.

Because the bandits intend to steal from their opponents rather than kill them, they stop shooting at the player characters once the characters go down. The bandits only fire at characters charging them, shooting back, or running away. A clever player character might lure the bandits out of their trench by feigning death.

At the end of the third Combat Round, Aetheela calls out in Throalic, "Throw down your weapons, put up your hands and we'll stop shooting!"

Surrender

If the player characters surrender, Damien orders them to approach the trench one at a time. As each character reaches the trench, Damien and Aetheela tie him or her up with twine and gag each character with moldy rags. Bojazi stands guard, ready to fire at anyone who makes a sudden move. The bandits strip each character of his or her gear and take the adventurers' horses (if any). The bandits head off into the night, leaving the adventurers tied up with only a day's worth of food and water. Fortunately, none of the bandits knows how to tie good knots. Any character who



makes a successful Dexterity Test against a Difficulty Number of 4 can slip his or her bonds after 20 minutes of patient wriggling.

Just before the bandits leave, the character with the highest Perception notices that all three bandits wear medallions identical to those that Charboyya gave the adventurers.

Fighting Back

If the adventurers fight back, they should be able to defeat the bandits. If the fight shifts to hand-to-hand com-

bat, the bandits' injuries slow them down considerably. If fighting outside the trench or at close quarters within it, the bandits lose the advantage conferred by their flaming arrow.

In melee combat, the player characters avoid taking the 2-step penalty created by the partial cover of the trench. The bandits' reaction when the adventurers head for the trench depends on how well the fight has gone for them so far. If they took several player characters down with arrows, they fight until one of them goes down. At that point, the rest drop their weapons. If the bandits have

failed so far to incapacitate any of the adventurers, the bandits flee, hoping to escape the adventurers under cover of darkness.

These three surviving bandits are followers by nature, forced by circumstances to take care of themselves. If questioned about their activities, they all look at the ground like scolded children and wait for someone else to answer first. Bojazi, a sullen, headstrong woman with a wild mop of reddish hair, acts as if she is the wronged party. Damien Blacklog puts on an arrogant front and smirks nervously. But for his too-sharp chin and heavy brows, he might be good-looking. His younger sister Aetheela is pretty in an inconspicuous way, but believes she is devastatingly attractive. She attempts to use her feminine wiles to make any male adventurer go easy on her, pouting when she fails to get her way.

Talking to the Bandits

To notice Charboyya's medallions in the illumination of torchlight, a player character must make a successful Perception Test against a Difficulty Number of 5. If asked about them, Damien answers, "Filthy rich merchant in Bartertown gave them to us. Said all he needed us to do was deliver letters. He never said half of us would get killed doing it. If I see him again, I'll kill him with my bare hands." At further prompting, Damien continues, "The rotten little dwarf told us to take letters to his village. He never told us to expect the Grim Legion."

If asked about the Grim Legion, Aetheela eventually says, "Crazy folk, they are. Can't reason with them at all. Horrors, Horrors, Horrors, that's all they ever talk of. They go out looking for them, on purpose! Daft, isn't it? They say anybody that acts against them must be foul folk. That's how they justified killing our friends."

If this is the first time the players have heard of the Grim Legion, see **Rumors and Research**, p. 72, for guidelines on providing the characters with additional information.

If the characters ask what happened in Hanto, Bojazi answers (after considerable prodding), "We been there a day, maybe, when the Legion march in. Say they's takin' over the place. Quarantine, they say—fancy word for nobody leaving. 'Cause this girl from the village, she got funny powers nobody ever heard of, so the Grim Legion say she's Horror-tainted. Say whole village is Horror-tainted, and nobody leavin' 'cause they might spread it. Well, *buunda* to that, we say. They take our armor to keep us there, but we sneak out. Try to, anyway. They shoot at us, screamin' and yellin'. Our leader, Abakule, dies so we can get free. Them crazy people hurt Lu Pi bad—she die next day." None of the bandits recall the name of the magically gifted child or know anything about her powers.

If asked to explain why they have turned outlaw, an angry Bojazi says, "How we gonna live, hah? This lousy, rotten country chew us up 'less we steal. Need better gear from somebody just to get back somewhere decent. You do any different?"

If the adventurers ask for details about the specific Grim Legion members occupying Hanto, Damien answers, "Worst one's an obsidiman nethermancer—Moltaa, or something like that. You can't reason with that one. One look in her eyes was enough for me—nothing but craziness there. Far as I could tell, an ork named Kwamm was Moltaa's second in command. He's worse than crazy Rockface, to my way of thinking. She just wants to kill Horrors; Kwamm, he's crazy for power."

If asked how the villagers reacted to the quarantine, Bojazi replies, "Some of 'em want to fight the Legion, some say ride 'em out. Loudest mouth against the Legion's a dwarf, Emberica. Headwoman—don't remember her name—says keep quiet and the Legion'll go away. Not so smart as she thinks, that dwarf. Think she know everything, just like any dwarf."

Once they have answered the player characters' questions, the bandits ask to be set free and promise to leave the adventurers alone. If they think the adventurers plan to kill them, they plead for their lives, promising to pay ransom when they get back to Bartertown. If forced to accompany the adventurers back to Hanto, the bandits complain bitterly, fearing that Moltaa will order them killed (and she will). In this case, the bandits spend all of their time plotting to escape and flee at the first opportunity. If the adventurers plan on turning them over to some legitimate authority at the next village, they find this impossible—no village will take strangers as prisoners.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Some of the bandits may not survive to be questioned. If you must put one gamemaster character's dialogue in another's mouth, reword it slightly to match the speaker's style of talking. If a bandit gets lucky and kills an adventurer, the gamemaster can either fudge the Damage roll to let the character survive or allow the player to replace his or her dead character with a local-born equivalent.

If the adventurers end up hog-tied with only a day's worth of food and water, have a kindly hermit or some other plot device happen by and free them. He can give them a few rusty short swords, but no armor or other equipment.

HEARTS OF STONE

OVERVIEW

THE CHARACTERS ARRIVE in Hanto and meet the Grim Legion members who control the village. From this point on, the player characters' decisions determine the sequence of encounters.

SETTING THE STAGE

On the horizon you spy yet another cluster of village huts. According to your map, this should be Hanto. Weary of the long journey, you hope against hope that you have reached your destination.

As you approach, you notice that this cluster of round, brick, thatch-roofed huts is surrounded by a high corral. The wind carries a gentle jingling to your ears, and as you draw closer you see straight sapling poles strung with several strands of heavy rope. Hundreds of tiny, silver bells hang from the topmost strand.

A half-built brick structure, nearly eight feet high and twice as large as any village hut, blocks the pathway into the village's central circle. Two men stand atop the structure mortaring bricks into place, one an ork and the other human. Naked to the waist, they are sweating heavily under the relentless sun. Both wear black leather breeches, lined down each leg with silver studs.

At the foot of the structure, looking up at the workers, stands an ork in black battle armor decorated with identical silver studs. If you stare hard at the design, you see that the studs on his breastplate form stylized, grinning skulls. He unbuckles his breastplate and fans himself with it. Spying you, he meets your gazes with a cool look of challenge.

Behind him, a female troll and a male ork, dressed in less opulent versions of this ork's armor, stand ramrod straight. The hot wind is blowing toward you and carries the sickly sweet stench of rotting flesh. You suddenly realize why the two sentries stand so still and silent. They are cadaver men.

THEMES AND IMAGES

The Grim Legion's use of cadaver men to control Hanto points up the hypocrisy of this group. In their zeal to fight Horrors, they come to resemble them. Show the players both sides of the Grim Legion. If the adventurers seem to approve of them, emphasize their fanaticism and ruthlessness. If the characters regard them as purely evil, play up their noble aims.

BEHIND THE SCENES

* The ork removing his breastplate is Kwamm, sword-master and second in command of this band of the Grim Legion. The workers are Second Circle warriors, a human named Lo-Arr Brand and an ork called Gzoog Chainbreaker (see *Cast of Characters*, p. 64, for game statistics). The cadaver ork was a visiting peddler killed while trying to escape Hanto. The cadaver troll used to be Abakule, leader of the luckless couriers. The Grim Legion's leader, Moltaa, reanimated them using the powers of her magic helmet, adding blood magic to keep them "alive" for a year and a day.

MEETING KWAMM

Unless the characters continue on past the village when Kwamm sees them, the ork straps his breastplate back on and strides over to meet them, one hand on the unusual hilt of a well-made broadsword. He warns them that the village is under quarantine and suggests they move on unless they want to remain indefinitely. Kwamm's speaking style is blunt and businesslike, con-



cealing his violent nature under a veil of impersonal, military jargon. Miserly with his words, he does not volunteer information or engage in small talk except when doing so accomplishes some ulterior purpose. If asked the name of the village, he replies, "The locals call it Hanto. Move along."

If asked under whose authority the village is quarantined, he replies, "Grim Legion. Move along, please." If asked to identify himself, he says, "Kwamm. Grim Legion." If asked why the village is quarantined, Kwamm spits on the ground from the corner of his mouth and says, "Horror taint."

Like most Legionnaires, Kwamm enjoys impressing other people with hints of terrors beyond mortal comprehension. If asked for more details of the Horror infesting Hanto, he claims that such details are restricted information. If asked why, he says that disclosure will set off a panic. If asked who has made these decisions, he says, "Grim Legion."

If the player characters ask him about a group of couriers from Bartertown, Kwamm's expression hardens and he asks why they want to know. The adventurers may attempt to come up with a convincing lie rather than admit their connection to the couriers. Resolve this interaction with roleplaying or by having the adventurers' spokesman make a Charisma Test against Kwamm's Social Defense. If the result indicates a successful Half-Truth or Fabrication (see p. 238, ED), Kwamm says that they were in the village when the Legion imposed the quarantine, but they refused to abide by regulations. Jerking his thumb toward the cadaver Abakule, he says, "That's what's left of them." The adventurers' lie may come back to haunt them; if Kwamm finds out that they misled him, he becomes Unfriendly toward them and openly doubts anything else they tell him.

If the adventurers identify themselves as couriers from Charboyya, Kwamm tells them to wait and disappears into the village to confer with Moltaa. As soon as Kwamm leaves, have each of the characters make a Perception (5) Test. Any character who makes a successful test notices that

the Legionnaires working on the tower have put on their armor during the adventurers' conversation with Kwamm. They join the cadaver men at the gate in the fence, blocking the adventurers' path to keep them from following Kwamm.

After five or so minutes pass, Kwamm returns. He says that he will take Charboyya's letters and deliver them to their addressees and instructs the adventurers to return the next day for any replies. If the adventurers agree to Kwamm's proposal, he stuffs the letters into his belt and waits for the adventurers to move off. When they return the next day, Kwamm informs them that the Legion cannot allow replies "for security reasons," but claims that all to whom the letters were addressed are alive and well. He then dismisses the adventurers.

Entering the Village

If the characters insist on entering the village to deliver their messages personally, Kwamm reminds them that Hanto is under quarantine and advises them that if they enter, they cannot leave until the Legion lifts the quarantine (if ever). If the characters persist after this warning, Kwamm stands aside dramatically. Just before they

pass him, he holds his arm out to block their way and says, with a threatening look, "You understand what I told you, don't you? I can't be responsible for what might happen if you try to leave."

If the characters assure him of their good faith, he continues, "Then you won't mind leaving your armor and weapons with me as security for your good behavior. My men can deal with any raids or Horror—you risk nothing, as long as you behave." If the characters agree to Kwamm's demands, he waits for them to toss their armor and weapons at his feet, then allows them into the village. Kwamm takes his prizes to the storage hut marked "1" on the Hanto map. It lies within clear sight of the cadaver men, who have standing orders to attack any person attempting to enter the storage hut except for members of the Grim Legion.





STARTING A BRAWL

During the initial meeting at the gate, the adventurers may try to pick a fight with Kwamm or with the other four Legionnaires present. As a professional soldier, Kwamm does not start fights unless severely provoked. The adventurers can insult Kwamm to their hearts' content—nothing affects him unless they bring up his fight with Gamuudge, the ork from Bartertown.

Mention of that fight triggers Kwamm's *gahad*, an overwhelming physical response all orks have to certain passionate impulses. If an ork fails to satisfy his immediate desire when in the grip of a *gahad* attack, he suffers serious physical discomfort. If struck by an attack of *gahad*, Kwamm may resist his response by making a Willpower Test against a Difficulty Number determined by the nature of the provocation. If a character refers sneeringly to the fight with Gamuudge, the Difficulty Number is 15. If a character does not mention the fight specifically, but insults Kwamm in a way that echoes Gamuudge's taunts on that occasion (see **Cast of Characters**, p. 62), the Difficulty Number is 12. If Kwamm's test fails, he must act on his desire to lash out at whoever offended him or else suffer a physical effect similar to a hangover within 3D6 hours. At some point within that span of time, Kwamm's heart begins to pound like a jackhammer as adrenaline surges through him. Because he must compensate for the distraction of the adrenaline rush, the *gahad* reaction reduces all of Kwamm's steps by 1 for each level of difficulty to resist the temptation to strike out: Very Easy, Average, Hard, Very Hard, and Heroic. Suppressing his reaction to a direct reference to the fight with Gamuudge is Heroic, for example, and costs him 5 steps; resisting a

verbal crack that reminds him of Gamuudge's insults is Very Hard, and so costs the ork 4 steps. Each *gahad* hangover lasts roughly 30 minutes per difficulty level.

Rather than resisting his *gahad* rush, Kwamm may accept his response and challenge the offending character to a duel in one hour, allowing the player character to choose the weapon. Though Kwamm would love to kill his opponent, *gahad* does not overwhelm all sense of professionalism, and so he chooses to demand that the opponents duel until one duelist either falls unconscious or surrenders. Kwamm is willing to negotiate the site for the duel and settle for a fight to first blood.

If the offending character refuses to fight, Kwamm considers his honor satisfied, and his *gahad* subsides. If the offender continues to harp on the Gamuudge incident without agreeing to the duel, Kwamm screams in rage and attacks the character, intent on fighting until his opponent either surrenders or lapses into unconsciousness (for Kwamm's game statistics, see **Cast of Characters**, p. 62). If Kwamm accidentally kills the character during this fight, he feels no remorse. Unless the offender's companions join the fray, the other Legionnaires stay out of the fight, treating it as Kwamm's personal business. In fact, they stand around and watch, enjoying the spectacle. Gzoog Chainbreaker and Sork Sorjinka (for Sork's statistics, see **Cast of Characters**, p. 66) approach the other player characters and offer wagers on the outcome. Needless to say, they bet on Kwamm.

If the characters attack anyone else, even before speaking with Kwamm (as they well might when they smell the cadaver men), Kwamm immediately blows the whistle hanging from a cord around his neck to summon

reinforcements (see **Reinforcements**, following). Without waiting for help to arrive, Kwamm orders the cadaver men forward as Lo-Arr and Gzoog put on their armor. The player characters may slip through the fence ropes and outflank the two unarmored Legionnaires; if forced to fight without armor, Lo-Arr and Gzoog try to withdraw as soon as the reinforcements arrive.

Game statistics for the two Grim Legion cadaver men appear below. These statistics differ from those given for standard cadaver men (p. 288, ED) to reflect the nature of the living beings from which these cadaver men were so recently made.



LEYCUR GEWGAW, CADAVER ORK

DEX: 6 STR: 7 TOU: 7
PER: 5 WIL: 5 CHA: 4

Initiative: 2	Physical Defense: 5
Number of Attacks: 1 (4)	Spell Defense: 6
Attack: 7	Social Defense: 11
Damage: 10	Armor: 9
Number of Spells: NA	Mystic Armor: 0
Spellcasting: NA	Knockdown: 8
Effect: NA	Recovery Tests/Day: 2
Death Rating: 36	Combat Movement: 25
Wound Threshold: 9	Full Movement: 50
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune	

Legend Points: 110
Equipment: Plate mail armor
Loot: None

Leycur Gewgaw was a traveling peddler who became trapped in the village when the Legion arrived. Gzoog Chainbreaker cut him down from behind when he tried to

escape. Moltaa reanimated him as a cadaver man and dressed him in Legion armor to stand watch over Hanto. Leycur serves as the perfect sentry and also as an example to Hanto's residents of the high price of resistance.

Moltaa's control over Leycur prevents the cadaver ork from speaking to anyone. Although Leycur's unnatural resurrection has driven him mad, he retains enough of his conscience that, if released from Moltaa's mystic control, he would kill himself rather than harm the people of Hanto. In his fractured mind, a blind, headlong dash toward Moltaa or Kwamm constitutes the perfect method of suicide.

Like all cadaver men, Leycur goes into a berserker rage if wounded, making 4 attacks per round until the character who wounded him is dead or until 10 Combat Rounds have passed.



ABAKULE, CADAVER TROLL

DEX: 6 STR: 10 TOU: 9
PER: 5 WIL: 6 CHA: 4

Initiative: 2	Physical Defense: 7
Number of Attacks: 4	Spell Defense: 7
Attack: 8	Social Defense: 7
Damage: 13	Armor: 9
Number of Spells: NA	Mystic Armor: 1
Spellcasting: NA	Knockdown: 11
Effect: NA	Recovery Tests/Day: 4
Death Rating: 44	Combat Movement: 30
Wound Threshold: 13	Full Movement: 60
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune	

Legend Points: 110
Equipment: Plate mail armor
Loot: None

Moltaa killed Abakule, then revived the troll as a cadaver man. Abakule struggles desperately to maintain a fragment of her former personality to deprive Moltaa of total victory. Because of Abakule's fierce determination, Moltaa does not control the cadaver troll as completely as she does Gewgaw. Abakule cannot directly disobey Moltaa's wishes, but she can speak to the adventurers if none of the other Legionnaires are watching (see **Speaking to Abakule**, below).

Abakule harbors so much pent-up fury that she always makes 4 attacks per Combat Round. Even if she realizes that she is tearing apart an enemy of her enemy, she lacks the self-control needed to stop herself from attacking.

REINFORCEMENTS

If at any point fighting breaks out between the player characters and any Legionnaires, the following reinforcements appear. For statistics and complete descriptions of these members of the Grim Legion, see **Cast of Characters**, p. 58. Several members of the Grim Legion have created a true pattern for the group and woven threads to it as well. The effects of these threads are described in **Cast of Characters**, p. 59. (For more information regarding this use of thread magic, see p. 52, **Earthdawn Companion**.)

Moltaa, Sixth Circle Obsidiman Nethermancer: Moltaa grew up well acquainted with the dreadful deeds of the Horrors. At an early age, she vowed to rid the world of all traces of the Horrors' corruption, a vow that led her to her present position as leader of the local Grim Legion. Unfortunately, Moltaa tends to see Horrors behind any activity she cannot explain.

Lo-Arr Brand, Second Circle Human Warrior: A simple country boy, Lo-Arr joined the Grim Legion to impress a former sweetheart. Kwamm has helped Lo-Arr learn the art of the warrior, so that he may better serve the Legion.

Gzoog Chainbreaker, Second Circle Ork Warrior: This escaped slave joined the Grim Legion because he heard that it offered unlimited possibilities to steal without fear of repercussions. Gzoog loves to gamble and is friendly by nature, but gets straight to business when there is work to be done.

Sork Sorjinka, Fourth Circle Ork Cavalrywoman: Sork dedicated her life to the Grim Legion after a Horror decimated her scorcher tribe, killing all of its members except the young cavalrywoman. Sork has sworn never to drink spirits or marry until the Horrors no longer inhabit Barsaive. Of all the Legionnaires save Moltaa, Sork is the most fanatical.

Dalya Red Roses, Fourth Circle Elf Beastmaster: Dalya joined the Grim Legion late in life and truly believes that the Legion exists only to drive the Horrors from the world. Of all the Legionnaires, Dalya is the kindest and best-intentioned.

Maloniel, Third Circle Elf Thief: Maloniel is the group's newest recruit. The young elf joined the Grim Legion out of a desperate need to impress others. She hasn't found the camaraderie she expected in this group, however, and has no way of knowing that the other Legionnaires view her as simply the latest in a long line of thieves—all of whom died serving under Moltaa.

Arrkhard Gahh, Second Circle Troll Sky Raider: Arrkhard joined the Grim Legion after the Passion Thystonius appeared in a vision and instructed him to do so. The sky raider believes devoutly in the cause and constantly seeks new conflicts and challenges to honor Thystonius.

SPEAKING WITH ABAKULE

If the adventurers think to speak to her, Abakule proves a source of useful information. Abakule cannot initiate contact with them, however, because Moltaa has commanded her to guard the village entrance day and night. But if Kwamm tells the characters Abakule's identity, they may wish to speak to her, because they knew of her previously. The characters may also figure out Abakule's identity themselves or ask a villager for the cadaver men's former identities.

The heat is slowly mummifying both cadaver men, leaching the moisture from their bodies. Abakule's throat is as dry as sand, which makes her speech difficult to understand. The few words she manages to speak come out in a harsh, scratchy hiss. Every ten syl-



lables or so, her throat closes up and she must swallow hard before she can continue.

If any characters discreetly approach Abakule and speak to her, she tells them everything she knows that might bring harm to the Legion. The pain and horror of her undead existence are slowly driving her insane, and so she can only respond to direct questions.

Asking about the Grim Legion

Having carefully studied them before and after her death, Abakule knows quite a bit about the Legionnaires. If the player characters ask her opinion of particular Legionnaires, she offers the following comments, interspersed with choking coughs and gasps.

"Moltaa—crazy, crazy—made me this way! Kill her, kill her! Then kill *me*!"

"Kwamm—wants to run things. See it in his eyes. Wants to be king of the mountain."

"Lo-Arr, stupid young kid...seen hundreds like him. Few years from now he'll be dead or as crazy as Moltaa."

"Gzoog doesn't care—just putting in time."

"Sork—crazy like Moltaa, crazy. Horrors killed her family—she wants blood..."

"Dalya? Don't know why a nice old lady like her stays with this bunch of crazies."

"Maloniel is very young and very doomed. Reminds me of the Blacklogs and Bojazi—brains enough to become an adept, but not enough to stay alive as one."

"Arrkhard's crazy too, thinks Thystonius is with him. I saw Thystonius since I died—he's on my side."

Asking about the Couriers

Abakule gives a halting account of her couriers' botched escape from the village. Arrkhard Gahh knocked her down with a couple of well-placed sling stones, and Moltaa finished her off with a few Bone Shatter spells. If the characters tell Abakule of Lu Pi's death, the troll demands that the adventurers promise to kill Moltaa. If told about her former followers-turned-bandits, she shakes her head and apologizes: "Had a feeling they might turn bad. Good at following orders, but...I should have chosen better."

Asking about Hanto

Abakule offers the following assessments of some of the villagers, again interspersed with choking sounds:

"Chereca's village headwoman. Thinks she'll wait them out if she cooperates. Wrong. They'll never leave. Kwamm's building a fort."

"Emberica has the right idea. Fight back."

"Aardelea? Nothing tainted about her. Strange, but not because of Horrors."

If the gamemaster feels that using Abakule in this fashion reveals too much information, he can easily cut short the conversation. Have a Legionnaire wander by and notice the adventurers, causing Abakule to clam up. Or her throat may simply stop working for a while.

DIVIDE AND CONQUER

As the characters interact with the various members of the Grim Legion and talk to Abakule and the villagers, they may discover that this band of Legionnaires contains some dissension within its ranks. Moltaa feels that they should fight the Horrors by seeking them out and battling them wherever they hide. Beyond destroying the Horrors and all they represent, Moltaa has little personal ambition.

Kwamm, however, has different ideas. He joined the Grim Legion as a way to gain personal power, and his ambitions clash with Moltaa's. Kwamm wants to build a base of operations from which to battle the Horrors and sees the occupation and quarantine of Hanto as the perfect opportunity to set his plan into motion. Kwamm intends to use the finished tower as a Grim Legion fortress, which he will command. Though he has taken no action as yet, he intends to challenge Moltaa for leadership of this band of Legionnaires.

The descriptions of the various Legionnaires (**Cast of Characters**, p. 58) indicate who each would choose to side with in the event that the ranks split. The adventurers may need to take advantage of these tensions and force a split to rid Hanto of the Grim Legion. **End Games**, p. 50, provides guidelines on how the characters might do this.

TROUBLESHOOTING

To prevent the player characters from attacking the Legionnaires immediately and without provocation, use earlier encounters to establish the reality of the Legionnaires' tough reputation. Gamemasters preparing to run this adventure for a group accustomed to solving all problems through combat should emphasize the Legion's formidable strength every time any gamemaster character speaks of the Grim Legion.

If attacked immediately, the Legionnaires attempt to subdue opponents and interrogate them later. An unprovoked attack also puts the players at a significant disadvantage when attempting to deal amicably with the Legion later on in the adventure. If a player character dies in a fight with the Legionnaires, allow the player to introduce a new character from Hanto.

If the adventurers balk at entering the quarantined village, hint that Charboyva may not pay them unless they see for themselves that his family and friends are all right.

QUARANTINED

OVERVIEW

THIS SECTION DESCRIBES the village of Hanto and its residents under the Grim Legion's occupation.

SETTING THE STAGE

When the player characters enter Hanto, read the following:

You pass through the gate in the corral, gagging slightly at the stench of the cadaverous sentries, and walk toward the village green. Momentarily forgetting the Grim Legionnaires in their midst, the people of Hanto rush out of their thatched huts and mill around you. Dwarfs, humans, orks, elves, all gather eagerly around the strangers. This odd behavior for such normally suspicious folk makes you uneasy. . .and you feel uneasier still at the wary, frightened glances that the villagers dart at the Legionnaires. They do not speak—you feel they dare not. They simply watch you, gather close, smile.

As you reach the edge of the fire pit in the center of the village green, a dwarf with eyes the color of blue flame looks up at you. As he spies the medallions you wear, his face lights up with a grin both joyous and fierce. "By Thystonius, Charboyya's sent reinforcements!" he says, striding over and gripping the hand of the nearest of you in a rock-like handclasp. "Welcome to Hanto, warriors!"

THEMES AND IMAGES

Play up the emotional reactions of the villagers: their fear, simmering anger, and desperate hope that the adventurers bring relief. Make the player characters sympathize with Hanto's plight by showing the brutal conditions of life under the Grim Legion's rule.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Though Hanto is just as isolated as any other lowland village in Barsaive, the villagers regard travelers somewhat less suspiciously because Charboyya has sent

messengers every few months for many a year. The people of Hanto have become accustomed to the regular presence of outsiders, though they still tend to reject strangers who do not wear Charboyya's medallions.

VILLAGE LAYOUT

Though Hanto physically resembles other savanna villages such as Yellowspring and Cherrypit (see **Friends Indeed**, p. 23), the Grim Legion has made some changes since their arrival. The following map and map key describe Hanto.

Fence

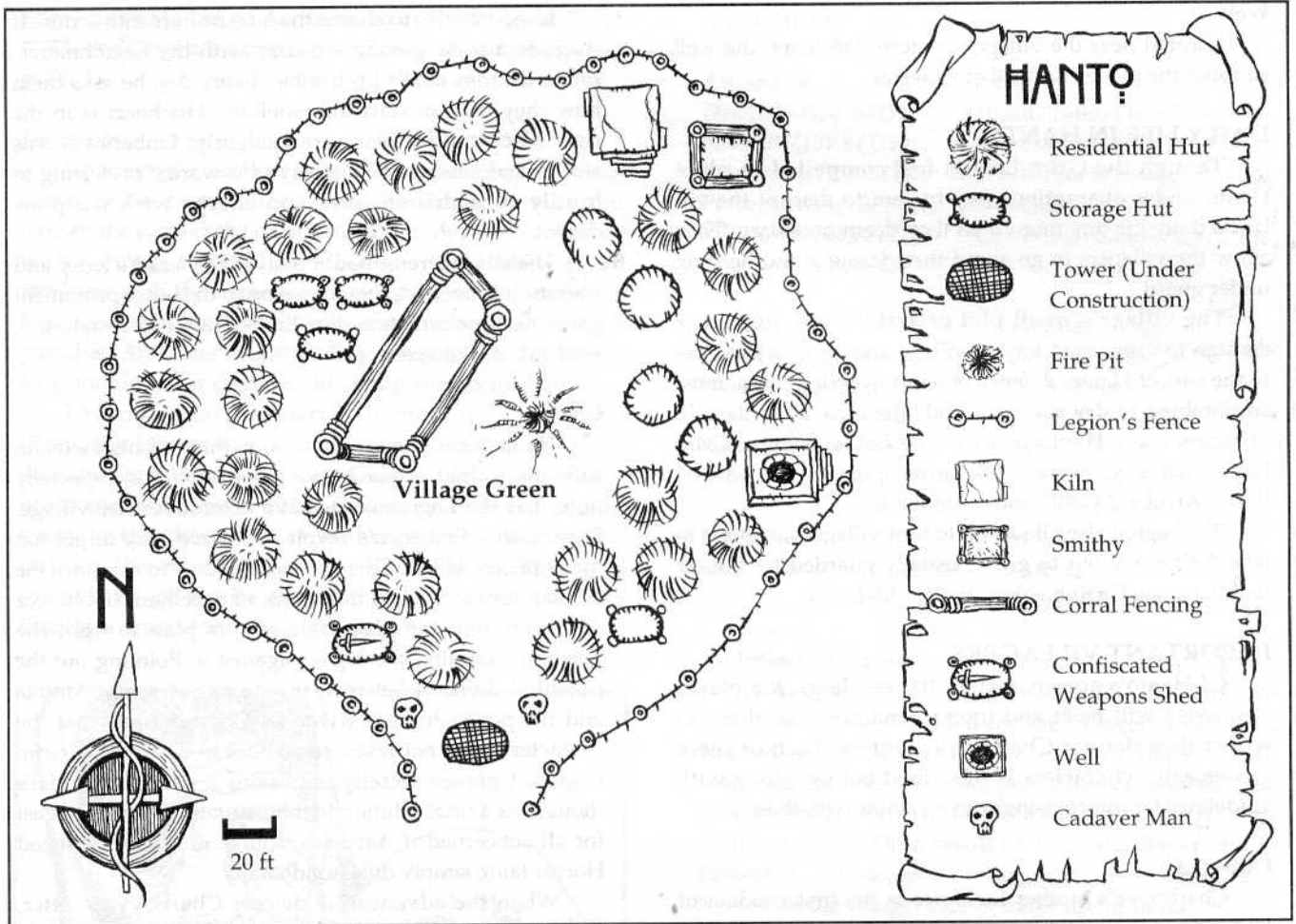
Constructed by the Grim Legion to keep the villagers within Hanto's confines, the fence is made of wooden poles with heavy rope strung in a tight pattern between them. The Legionnaires have hung small bells along the top strand, which ring whenever anyone touches the fence. To touch the fence without ringing the bells, a player character must achieve an Excellent or better success at a Dexterity (15) Test or other appropriate test. All members of the Grim Legion, including the cadaver men, have standing orders from Moltaa to investigate any attempt to breach the fence.

Residential Huts

These small thatch-roofed huts of hardened mud brick are the homes of the villagers. One family usually lives in each hut, though the Grim Legion commandeered four for themselves.

Storage Hut

Slightly smaller than the residential huts, these buildings hold food, supplies, farming tools and so on. Because they contain supplies vital to the village's survival, these buildings are sturdily constructed and well protected. The Grim Legion uses one of these, marked 1 on the map, to



store confiscated weapons and armor. The Legionnaires keep this building locked and have ordered their cadaver men sentries to attack anyone who goes near it.

Village Green

The village green is the central area where village gatherings take place. The green contains a large fire pit, where the villagers sometimes cook a communal meal, and a corral in which the village keeps its four goats, five cows, and four horses. The Grim Legion's mounts currently share the corral, as will the adventurers' horses (if any).

Tower

Kwamm's pet project, the eight-foot tower, is still under construction. Once the Legionnaires complete it, Kwamm hopes to use it and Hanto as his personal base of operations in the battle against the Horrors. For more information about Kwamm's plans, see **Cast of Characters**, p. 62.

Cadaver Men

The sentry posts of Abakule and Gewgaw, the Legion's two cadaver guards, are marked with two skulls on the map of Hanto. Game statistics for the cadaver men appear in **Hearts of Stone**, p. 37.

Kiln

The villagers use the kiln to fire the mud bricks they use to build their huts and sheds. Since beginning to build their tower, the Grim Legionnaires have forced some of the villagers to work extra hours making bricks for them. The kiln runs almost constantly these days.

Smithy

The villagers forge and repair their tools and few weapons at the smithy, which stands next to the kiln and shares its fire. One of the Grim Legion watches the smithy whenever anyone uses it to ensure that no villager forges a weapon.

Well

Located near the village's eastern perimeter, the well supplies the village with all of its water.

DAILY LIFE IN HANTO

Though the Grim Legion feel compelled to place Hanto under quarantine, they try not to disrupt the village's daily life any more than they deem necessary. They allow the villagers to go about their farming and herding under guard.

The village's small plot of arable land, just large enough to grow food for the village and its livestock, lies to the east of Hanto. A fence of short, wooden posts, most succumbing to dry rot, surrounds the area. Each day, 10 villagers leave Hanto to work the fields. Several Grim Legionnaires accompany the farmers, usually Dalya Red Roses, Arrkhard Gahh, and/or Maloniel.

The Legion also allows up to four villagers at a time to take their cattle out to graze, usually guarded by Lo-Arr Brand, Gzoog Chainbreaker, and/or Maloniel.

IMPORTANT VILLAGERS

Of Hanto's approximately 100 residents, the player characters will meet and interact mainly with those to whom they deliver Charboyya's letters. Each of these gamemaster characters is described below, along with guidelines for improvising conversations with them.

Emberica

Charboyya's brother Emberica is the first resident of Hanto to openly greet the characters. He assumed that the escaped couriers headed straight to Bartertown to inform Charboyya of the quarantine and believes that the player characters are highly skilled mercenaries sent by Charboyya to lead an armed revolt against the Legion. Although he is bitterly disappointed when he discovers that the adventurers are only a little stronger than the previous band of messengers, Emberica nevertheless urges them to help him stage a coup. The Legionnaires long ago confiscated all weapons in the village, but Emberica argues that hoes and pitchforks can do considerable damage if wielded with enough determination. If the player characters seem at all inclined to listen to him, Emberica further suggests that they help him break into the shed where the Legion has stored the villagers' weapons (see the map of Hanto, p. 41).

Emberica knows little about fighting tactics and holds the quaint belief that the villagers can defeat the Legion with sufficient righteous anger. His initial humiliation at Moltaa's hands (see **A Faraway Silence**, p. 5) only intensified his determination to drive the Legion from the village.

Use Emberica to shame the adventurers into action. If they seem to be getting too cozy with the Legionnaires, Emberica tries to stir up trouble. Every day he asks them how they plan to start the rebellion. His heart is in the right place, but his plans are foolhardy; Emberica scorns stealth and subtlety as the way of cowards, preferring to loudly curse his enemies and charge with weapons drawn.

The adventurers should deliver Emberica's letter and speak with him first, then move on to the other prominent gamemaster characters. For Emberica's game statistics, see **Cast of Characters**, p. 70.

Chereca

Hanto's conscientious, serious-minded headwoman feels the weight of her heavy responsibilities, especially now that the Legionnaires have taken over her village. Fearing that Emberica's revolt will serve only to get too many people killed, Chereca does her best to convince the adventurers to squash this spark of rebellion. If Chereca discovers that the player characters plan to fight the Legion physically, she argues against it. Pointing out the potential division between the deranged zealot Moltaa and the power-hungry Kwamm, Chereca hints that the characters need not resort to combat to destroy the Grim Legion. Chereca secretly entertains a particularly dark thought as a final solution to their situation: it may be best for all concerned if Aardelea, source of Hanto's alleged Horror taint, simply died accidentally.

When the adventurers deliver Charboyya's letter, Chereca asks about him, interested in his well-being for old times' sake. For Chereca's game statistics, see **Cast of Characters**, p. 71.

Orweia

Orweia is Hanto's healing woman and the mother of Aardelea, the girl who sparked the accusations of Horror taint. Moltaa told Orweia at the outset that the Legion intended to execute Aardelea if she turns out to be Horror-tainted, and Orweia will do anything to save her daughter. Fiercely protective of the child, Orweia grills the adventurers for their true opinion of the Legion and the quarantine before she allows them near Aardelea. To see the child, the characters must make a Persuasion Test with a Good success or better to convince Orweia that they can help. If the characters win Orweia's trust, she will give them any aid she can, even if she must endanger her fellow villagers.

If the characters do not approach Orweia about rescuing her daughter, she comes to them. She offers no plan of action, but simply wants to find out how their presence might influence her daughter's fate. If and when the char-



acters choose to talk to Aardelea, go to **The Magical Child**, p. 44. For Orweia's game statistics, see **Cast of Characters**, p. 71.

Laverium

Charboyya's mother Laverium remains physically vigorous, but her once-strong mind has begun to fade. She lives in the past, in the days when Charboyya and Emberica were young, squabbling siblings. She addresses all strangers with the names of long-dead residents of the village, no matter how many times they correct her. She happily chats for hours with the adventurers if they sit still that long, mulling over decades-old gossip and trading stories.

Laverium plays no part in battling the Legion and lifting the quarantine; instead, she embodies the harm done to Hanto by the Legion's takeover. After the adventurers meet Laverium, either Orweia or Emberica should speak to the characters about her, blaming her mental state on the quarantine. According to them, Laverium seemed to go senile the day after Moltaa slapped Emberica across the village green.

LAVERIUM

Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10
Strength (13): 6/D10
Toughness (15): 6/D10
Perception (6): 3/D4
Willpower (14): 6/D10
Charisma (10): 5/D8

Skills

Artisan/Tailor (3): 9/D8 + D6
Conversation (4): 9/D8 + D6
Knowledge/Farming (2): 5/D8
Knowledge/
Old Wives' Tales (3): 6/D10

Damage

Death Rating: 38
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 29
Recovery Tests Per Day: 3
Recovery Dice: D10

Combat

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2

Initiative

Dice: D10

Movement

Full: 60
Combat: 30

Additional Villagers

If the gamemaster needs statistics for additional villagers, use those provided for the villagers in **Friends Indeed**, p. 26. About a third of the villagers back Emberica, another third support Chereca, and the rest remain undecided. To decide a villager's loyalty randomly, roll D6. On a result of 1-2 the villager favors Emberica, 3-4 means the villager favors Chereca, and 5-6 means the villager cannot make up his mind.

TROUBLESHOOTING

This encounter offers very little opportunity for the adventurers to make a wrong move. Delivery of the letters simply forces the adventurers to meet four of the five important villagers. If they decide to attack the Legionnaires in this scenario, discourage them by constantly reminding them of the Legion's strength in subtle and not so subtle ways. If they insist on attacking anyway, let them suffer the consequences.



THE MAGICAL CHILD

OVERVIEW

IN THIS ENCOUNTER, the characters can discover the truth behind Aardelea's mysterious magical abilities. They may also learn the Legion's view of Aardelea and her powers.

SETTING THE STAGE

If the adventurers convince Orweia to bring them to Aardelea, read the following aloud:

Watching warily for Legion soldiers, you follow Orweia silently into the hut where the Legion has imprisoned her daughter. On the floor, slouched against the brick wall of the hut, sits a human girl of perhaps twelve summers, a beautiful child with dark eyes and features almost as fine as an elf's. She stares at the hut's earthen floor, scratching half-heartedly at it with a broken twig. She gives a long, bored sigh, blowing her bangs up from her forehead.

"Aardelea," says Orweia softly. The child looks up. At the sight of you, a dozen emotions flit across her face: fear, anticipation, excitement, resentment, and a thread of wild hope. You feel sudden pity for the poor child, who has suffered too much, too young.

If the adventurers think of arranging a meeting with Aardelea on their own, but make no move to do so, read the following aloud:

A young Legionnaire, the one named Lo-Arr Brand, approaches a hut at the edge of the village green. Orweia sits outside its door, sorting herbs, seemingly oblivious to Lo-Arr's approach. Lo-Arr speaks briefly to Orweia, who slowly raises her eyes and shoots him a blistering glare. She enters the hut, emerging seconds later with her arm around the shoulders of a beautiful, sulky looking human girl. The child looks perhaps twelve summers old, her features as fine and delicate as an elf's. She hangs back in the doorway of the hut, and you sense that her sulkiness hides fear.

Lo-Arr takes her arm, pulls her away from Orweia and leads her to the village square where Moltaa

awaits. Her massive arms folded and her face impassive except for her burning eyes, Moltaa reminds you of a volcano that might erupt at any moment. You move to draw closer to the pretty, frightened child, but Gzoog Chainbreaker steps into your path. "Touched by a Horror."

THEMES AND IMAGES

Portray Aardelea as sympathetically as possible. Make the player characters want to help this lovely, frightened, vulnerable little girl escape the clutches of the Grim Legion.

BEHIND THE SCENES

As described in the **Plot Synopsis** (p. 9), Aardelea came to the attention of the Grim Legion when a passing troubadour saw her perform an amazing magical feat and sold his story to Moltaa's band of Legionnaires. Immediately convinced that she had found a child capable of manipulating raw magic and therefore Horrortainted, Moltaa led her band to Hanto and placed the village under quarantine to "keep the Horror's influence from spreading."

In truth, Aardelea owes her unusual powers not to a Horror, but to a benevolent, if unusual source of magic. A precocious child who loves to explore her surroundings, Aardelea found a small, sealed cavern on the edge of Hanto's pastureland, empty but for a few decaying relics of a forgotten age. Among these seemingly valueless artifacts was an ancient book of magical knowledge, inhabited by a spirit. The book's creators, afraid that the magical powers and learning they possessed might vanish during the Scourge, conjured this



spirit and captured it in the book, commanding it to aid any who found the tome to decipher it. After centuries of solitude, during which the book fell victim to the elements and slowly rotted, the spirit became desperate to contact a living mind and reveal its treasured secrets before they all disappeared. The arrival of bright, curious Aardelea granted the spirit its dearest wish. It spoke directly to Aardelea's mind and, without her conscious knowledge, taught her to use several talents from the decaying magical tome.

Though Aardelea initially knew nothing of her new powers, the spirit instilled in her the subconscious ability to use them. When Aardelea daydreamed about what it might feel like to wield magic, a rock she was staring at slowly rose from the ground. Convinced at first that someone was playing a joke on her, Aardelea found to her delighted surprise that she could control the rock's movements. She displayed her powers for her fellow villagers, who nervously counseled her mother to forbid her to use them in front of strangers. When her small nephew fell into the well, however, Aardelea acted without thinking and lifted him out despite the presence of a visiting troubadour.

As part of the Legion's quarantine, Moltaa subjects Aardelea to daily interrogations and experiments

designed to force the Horror that supposedly possesses her to manifest itself. So far, Aardelea has kept her cavern a secret and

Moltaa's persistent questioning is beginning to make Aardelea wonder if she really is possessed. She tries her best to resist Moltaa's probing and conceal her other talents, trying to drag the investigation out as long as possible. She fears that the Legion will do something terrible to her when they solve the mystery.

TALKING TO AARDELEA

To convince Aardelea to talk to them, the adventurers must seem both trustworthy and competent. To overcome Aardelea's fear, a player character must make a successful Charisma (10) Test. If the test succeeds, Aardelea tells the adventurers about the cavern and the book that spoke to her mind. She can describe the cavern's location precisely; the entrance lies near a rock spire, roughly 2 miles northwest of Hanto. For a description of the cavern, see *Aardelea's Cavern*, p. 47.

Aardelea's Elsewhere Sense talent allowed her to overhear Moltaa and the others discussing the best way to

dispose of her if necessary. If the player characters speak to her, she repeats this overheard conversation to them, but tries not to reveal how she heard it.



VIEWING AARDELEA ASTRALLY

The characters may wish to examine Aardelea from astral space to discover the nature of her powers. To do this, a character must make an appropriate talent or spell Effect Test against Aardelea's Spell Defense. Aardelea's magical abilities increase her Spell Defense against probing and detection spells and powers; this heightened Spell Defense manifests when Aardelea feels frightened and attempts to hide the truth about her magic. Depending on how the characters approach her and what they say to her or her mother, this ability may not appear. In this case, use the Spell Defense given in Aardelea's game statistics (see **Cast of Characters**, p. 70).

If the test is successful, the character detects a pattern similar to that of an adept, but lacking the form and power of a Discipline. The pattern has a blue tint, a side effect of the spirit's power; the magical book to which the spirit was tied is entitled *The Book of Blue Spirits*. If the character achieves an Excellent result or better, he or she notices that Aardelea's pattern resembles that formed by a loosely woven set of magical abilities, more closely resembling the pattern of a magical creature than an adept.

TALKING WITH MOLTA

The characters can also learn something of Aardelea's powers by talking with Moltaa, though they cannot learn the truth this way. Moltaa is reluctant to discuss the subject because she believes that even talking about a Horror or its minions gives the evil being power. To persuade her to talk, a character must achieve a Good success or better on a Persuasion Test against Moltaa's Social Defense. If the test is successful, Moltaa shares what little she has learned of Aardelea thus far.

Moltaa cannot detect the slightest sign of a Horror's presence in Aardelea. Having tried and failed many times to view the child's pattern using her Astral Sight talent, Moltaa feels sure that the Horror possessing Aardelea is preventing her from seeing the little girl astrally, although she has no proof to support this assumption.

If the characters ask Moltaa to describe her method of examining Aardelea, Moltaa dismisses such inquiries, insisting that the characters cannot possibly understand the nuances of the nethermancer Discipline. If the adventuring group includes a nethermancer, Moltaa describes to that character a number of her experiments with Aardelea, none of which have yielded results. If the characters suggest that the lack of results may mean nothing exists to detect, or if they in any way imply that Moltaa's methods might be lacking, the obsidian becomes agitated and ends the discussion (see **Pushing Too Far**, below).

If asked to describe Aardelea's powers, Moltaa confesses that she has never seen the little girl use them. She learned of one of the child's abilities from a traveling troubadour and has no idea what other powers the girl might possess. Though Aardelea and Orweia have admitted nothing about Aardelea's powers, some of the villagers spoke of the child's powers with members of the Grim Legion. A few, gullible villagers have even begun to believe themselves that Aardelea owes her powers to a Horror.

Pushing Too Far

The characters should take care when talking with Moltaa and investigating Aardelea. Though Moltaa manages to keep her impatience hidden, her lack of progress makes her oversensitive to interference, real or perceived, from the characters. If they act skeptical or suggest that her methods are faulty, she immediately refuses to continue the conversation. If the characters wish to speak with her again or speak with Aardelea, they must wait until the next day to do so. If the characters harass Moltaa, she may place them under arrest or order the other Legionnaires to attack them. In either case, a character must achieve an Excellent or Extraordinary success on a Persuasion Test to convince Moltaa that the adventurers mean no harm.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Though the player characters should interview Aardelea at some point, try to delay that event until after they meet the Legionnaires and some of the other villagers. Such meetings will help them recognize the strength of the forces arrayed against the child. Also, these meetings should make them realize that discovering the truth of Aardelea's magical abilities is the key to saving Hanto. If the characters attempt to contact Aardelea before they learn sufficient other information, have Orweia put them off.

The characters should try to maintain as neutral an attitude as possible with regard to Moltaa and the Grim Legion. If they provoke a fight, the Legion will most likely defeat them.

The characters may fail to learn about the cavern, but that knowledge is not vital to the story. The adventure can end any number of ways, and not all the possibilities require the adventurers to discover the truth behind Aardelea's powers. Knowing that truth, however, does give the story a more satisfactory conclusion, and so you may want to nudge players toward learning more from Aardelea.



AARDELEA'S CAVERN

OVERVIEW

THIS ENCOUNTER DESCRIBES Aardelea's hidden cavern and the book from which she gained her mysterious powers.

SETTING THE STAGE

If and when the characters ask Aardelea to describe the cavern entrance, read the following aloud:

"It's on the edge of our pasture, less than an hour's walk to the northwest. You can't miss it. This big, sharp rock sticks up out of the grass, and there's a hole in the ground about fifty yards away from the rock. It looks like a smashed gopher home. But if you squeeze into it, it opens into a huge cave."

THEMES AND IMAGES

In this encounter, emphasize the sad, slow decay of once-great treasures as represented by the spirit of the magical book. As the book rots away, the spirit slowly loses its mind.

BEHIND THE SCENES

If the adventurers try to sneak out of Hanto and find the cavern, they must pass through the fence without ringing the warning bells strung along the top. The Legionnaires are particularly vigilant during the day, and so the characters may need to come up with a diversion to escape unnoticed during the daylight hours. At night, however, light sources may give the characters away.

The characters may get permission to leave Hanto temporarily, though Moltaa grants such permission reluctantly. If they want to avoid telling Moltaa about their cavern-hunting expedition, they can ask to go out with a party of herdsman. To achieve this, the characters must first convince Chereca that they do not intend to cause trouble or try to make a break for it. Chereca chooses which four villagers take the livestock to graze each day; to convince her to choose one of them as part of that group, an adventurer must make a Persuasion Test with

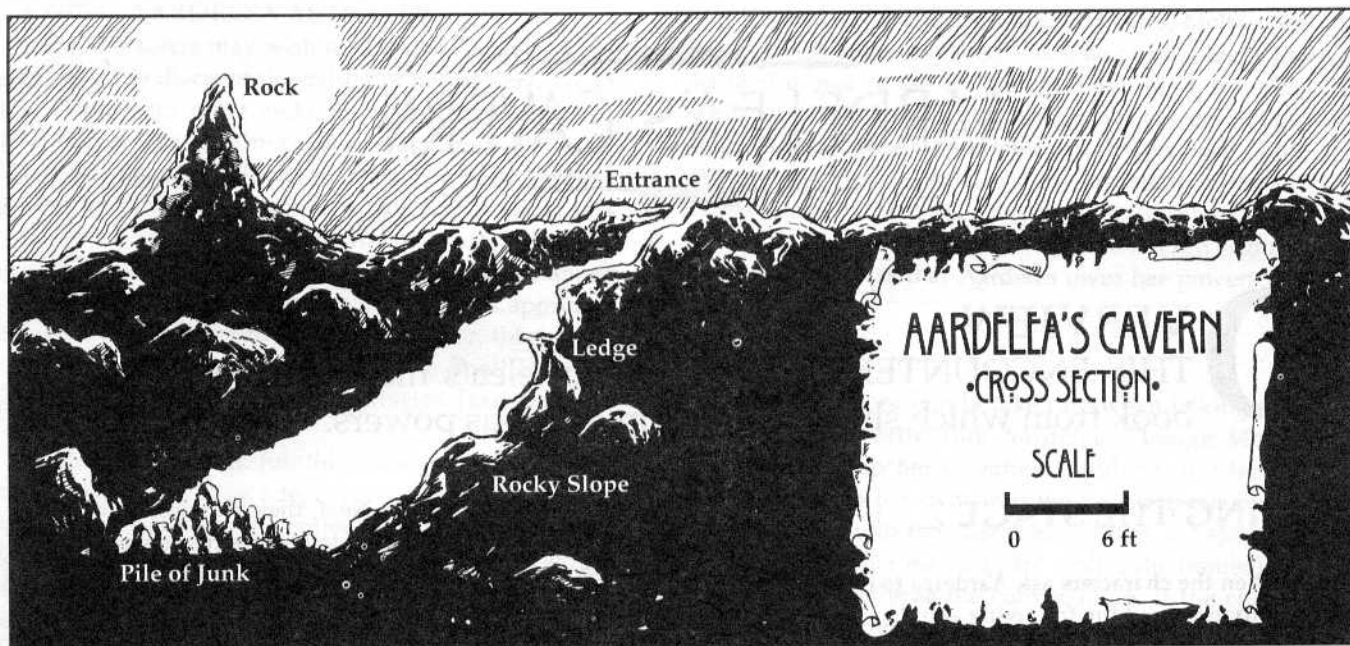
a Good or better success. Next, they must convince the Legion guards to allow them to join the herders by making a second Persuasion Test with an Excellent success or better against the highest Social Defense among the guards. If a character has become Friendly with Maloniel and attempts to persuade the thief to allow him out for the day, the required success level drops to Good. To get permission to go herding from Kwamm or Moltaa, a character must achieve an Extraordinary success on a Persuasion Test. No more than three of the characters can go herding at once, and Aardelea may not leave the village under any circumstances.

Once outside the village, the characters can ask the villagers to lead them to the site Aardelea described. When they reach the entrance, the guards who accompany the herding party will forbid the player characters to enter the cavern unless a character achieves an Excellent success or better on another Persuasion Test. If the test fails, the characters may try to subdue the guards and then enter the cavern, but this tactic puts them in serious trouble when they reenter the village. A furious Moltaa orders them placed under 24-hour guard.

A second angle the characters may try is to tell Moltaa about the cavern and ask for her help in exploring it. In this case, Moltaa, Arrkhard Gahh, and Maloniel take up to three player characters and head off to explore the cavern. Moltaa allows the characters to enter the cavern while she and her followers stand guard on the surface. Moltaa assumes that the cavern is crawling with dangerous Horrors and hopes to learn something from the anguished screams of the adventurers as the Horrors rip them to shreds.

AARDELEA'S CAVERN

Use the cavern map and the descriptions below to describe the cavern's features when the player characters enter and explore the cave.



Entrance

The entrance to the cavern is a small, diagonal fissure in the rock covered by a thin layer of soil. Tiny Aardelea found it easy to slip through, but most adults must wriggle and struggle to make it through. Trolls and obsidimen are too large to fit into the crack; a windling can crawl right in. Orks, humans, elves, dwarfs, and t'skrang must make a Dexterity or Climbing Test against a Difficulty Number equal to 7 plus the Initiative penalty of any armor the character is wearing (see p. 254, ED). If the test fails, the character gets stuck halfway down the fissure and must unwedge himself by struggling back to the surface. This takes a number of rounds equal to the difference between the Dexterity or Climbing Test result and the Difficulty Number.

Ledge

The fissure ends abruptly in a six-foot drop to a narrow ledge. To catch the ledge at the end of the drop, a character must make a Dexterity or Climbing Test against a Difficulty Number of 8 plus the appropriate Initiative penalty for the character's armor. If the test is unsuccessful, the character misses the ledge and bounces down the cavern wall, at least as far as the rocky slope (and possibly past it). This fall inflicts Step 4 damage, which armor does not reduce.

To clamber down from the ledge onto the gentle slope of the cavern floor, a character must make a Dexterity or Climbing Test against a Difficulty Number of 5. If the test is unsuccessful, the character makes an undignified slide down the cavern wall to the rocky slope, suffering Step 3 damage from minor abrasions. Armor does not reduce this damage.

Rocky Slope

Adventurers who climb safely off the ledge can walk down the rest of the gently inclining cavern floor to this rock-and-pebble-covered slope. To walk safely down the rocky part of the slope, the adventurer must make a successful Dexterity Test against a Difficulty Number of 6. If the test fails, the character slips and bounces down the incline, smacking into small boulders and sliding over rocks. This fall inflicts Step 4 damage, and armor offers no protection.

Characters already sliding when they reach the rocky slope must make a Dexterity or Climbing Test against a Difficulty Number of 12 to keep from sliding farther and suffering additional damage.

Junk Pile

This vast heap of rotting, crumbling, ancient objects includes tapestries, carpets, books, and furniture. None of the artifacts are usable, and most are not even recognizable.

When the characters reach this area of the cavern, each hears a voice inside his or her head. It seems to speak in the native tongue of each character, but in an unfamiliar accent, halting and disjointed:

"Finally...has arrived to...myself...waiting so long! I, I...my pages, my leather...disappears...take...to your greatest...where the...knowledge for...hungry and...age!"

The rambling words are the telepathic plea of the *Book of Blue Spirits*, a tome of magical lore. Ancient sages who feared their knowledge would be lost to the ravages of time created the book, then conjured a spirit



to watch over the volume, granting the spirit the ability to telepathically transmit its thoughts to others so that an adept in some distant time might perpetuate their magical knowledge. Unfortunately, slow rot set in with age, and the spirit's mind fragmented as the book's pages crumbled. It used its waning strength to reach out to Aardelea and transmit some of its contents to her. That effort, however, taxed it severely and accelerated its deterioration.

Examining the Book

The player characters can find the book buried in the junk pile by gauging the volume of the voice in their heads. The closer they get to the book, the clearer and louder the voice sounds. When a character finds the book, anyone touching it can communicate telepathically with its spirit.

The *Book of Blue Spirits* is a large tome, 2 feet high by 1 foot wide by 4 inches thick, bound in leather. Finely wrought inscriptions of orichalcum similar to elven runes grace its front cover. Not wholly elven, the runes consist of written Sperethiel combined with other, unrecognizable symbols. Similar runes, though much more intricate and complex, decorate the pages of the book.

If examined astrally, the book has a Spell Defense of 21. A result of 7 or greater on an Astral Sight Test reveals a magical aura surrounding the book, but a character's test result must equal or exceed the book's Spell Defense in order to learn any useful information. For guidelines on astrally examination of the book and reading the runes on its cover, see **Rumors and Research**, p. 76.

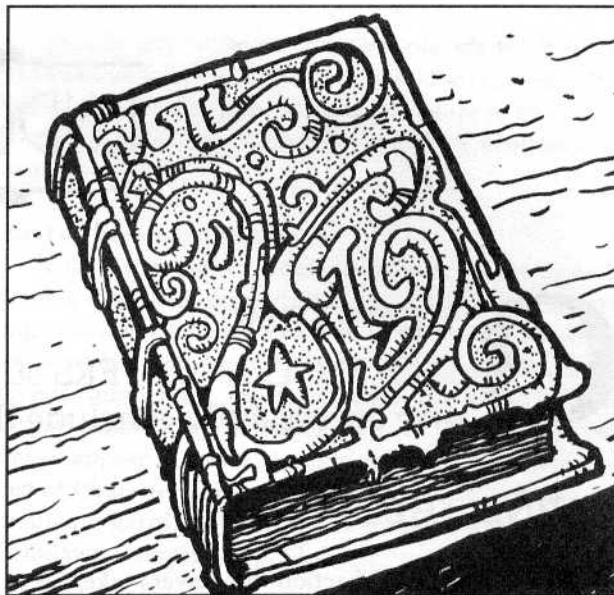
Speaking with the Book

If the characters ask the book about Aardelea's strange powers, it replies:

"Yes, I gave them to...child. These talents...forgotten magic of the...My last...knowledge...rot and die. Three...Sense, Mind...Matter...already forgotten...the last. Library...please!"

The gamemaster may continue improvising the book's dialogue in this halting, word-skipping manner until the player characters figure out the secret of Aardelea's powers.

If the adventurers take the book out into the open air, it begins to crumble rapidly, turning to dust within seven days. If they take the book to Moltaa, it tries to communicate with her. She confiscates it, regarding it as an evil trick of some unknown Horror. The adventurers must convince her otherwise or persuade Aardelea to pretend that her powers have disappeared once the book crumbles to dust. For more information on these potential solutions, see **Endgames**, following.



If the adventurers choose to burrow through the rest of the junk pile, the process takes one hour. After a diligent search, they may find a trap door that leads to a small, 3 foot by 2 foot space. The space contains a wooden strongbox, magically treated to resist the aging effects of time. If the characters open the box, they find inside it a sculpture wrapped in felt and fine linen. The sculpture is in the form of a common dragon, made of obsidian, 9 inches long by 5 inches high and about 3 inches thick. It weighs roughly 20 pounds and is in excellent condition. Light refracts off its curves and indentations in many different colors. The sculpture has no magical powers, but does have an astral aura. To astrally examine the sculpture or its box, a character must make a successful Astral Sight Test against the sculpture's or strongbox's Spell Defense of 12.

For more information regarding both the book and the sculpture, see **Loose Ends**, p. 56, and **Rumors and Research**, p. 76.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Because the adventurers need not find the book to solve the adventure's central problem, they can skip this encounter. In this event, the book's secrets and its impact on future adventures becomes much less significant (see **Loose Ends**, p. 56).

If the adventurers end up battling Legionnaires on the way to or from the cavern, Moltaa's forces fight to the death. As always, let the adventurers meet disaster if they act rashly, but allow them to succeed if they come up with a clever plan not anticipated in the adventure as written.

ENDGAMES

OVERVIEW

THIS SECTION OFFERS suggestions for various ways the characters may successfully conclude this adventure.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Whatever course of action the players take, keep them challenged. Throw all kinds of obstacles in their way, whether they are fighting this last battle with words or swords. The following text describes several ways you can use the information and situations from previous encounters to respond to any additional ideas the players may have.

CONVINCING MOLTA

The player characters may try to convince Moltaa that Aardelea's powers do not come from a Horror. Unfortunately, Moltaa cannot consider the subject rationally and is not persuaded easily. The characters must produce a very convincing alternative explanation for her odd powers to persuade Moltaa that Aardelea is not Horror-tainted. The success of such a scheme depends on the nature of the explanation. Although Moltaa treads close to the border of insanity, she is not stupid. Therefore, she and her Legionnaires carefully scrutinize any evidence of other explanations that the player characters offer. If you consider their explanation or trick implausible, allow the adventurers to fail.

If the characters find the true explanation of Aardelea's powers by learning about the cavern and encountering the mysterious book (see *Aardelea's Cavern*, p. 47), they may bring the book to Moltaa and try to convince her that the book is neither a Horror nor the property of a Horror. If they want to keep it and sell it rather than allow Moltaa to destroy it or allow it to disintegrate, their arguments must carry conviction of heroic proportions. Resolve these debates with roleplaying or have the player character with the highest Charisma make a Charisma Test against Moltaa's Social Defense.

If the player characters cannot save the book from destruction, they may seize the opportunity to persuade

Aardelea to pretend that her powers disappeared with the book. At least one of the characters may know how it feels to lose talents or spells and so can coach the girl in appropriate histrionics. The characters must make appropriate tests to convince Aardelea to play along. Require some sort of test to determine Moltaa's reaction as well.

If the players manage to pull off either the hoax or persuasion too easily, have Kwamm refuse to accept any of the player character's arguments. Kwamm has a secret agenda—he wants to remain in Hanto, finish building his fortress and make his bid for power. To defeat Kwamm in this situation, the player characters must discredit him in Moltaa's eyes.

BREAKING OUT

The adventurers may also try to escape with Aardelea and/or Charboyya's relatives to Bartertown. If so, the characters face an uphill battle persuading Orweia and Aardelea to go along with this desperate plan. Orweia fears for her daughter's safety on the dangerous trek back to Bartertown, possibly made even more hazardous by Legion pursuit. As for Aardelea, the thought of leaving Hanto terrifies her; village life is all she knows, and she will not relish the prospect of a whole new life in a large city under the protection of a dwarf merchant who left Hanto before she was born.

The characters might choose to kidnap Aardelea in an effort to rescue her from death at the Legion's hands. In this case, they must devise a way to keep her from crying out when they snatch her, or her screams will alert the Legion to the attempted escape.

To succeed at any escape attempt, the adventurers must get through the fence without ringing the bells and alerting the Legion. As was proved by the previous couriers, the Legion deals harshly with those bold enough to try to leave. Moltaa suffers no qualms about killing escapees, nor about killing the "Horror-tainted" child. If a

botched escape attempt provokes a Legion attack, Moltaa concentrates her Bone Shatter spells on Aardelea in an attempt to prevent the Horror supposedly possessing her from reaching other areas. If the Legion kills Aardelea in this way, that act ends the quarantine.

If the adventurers and accompanying villagers manage to make a clean getaway, the Legion tracks them down. Stage a few confrontations between the Legion and the adventurers on the road to Bartertown, keeping in mind that Moltaa is an expert in the art of the lightning raid. Review the character's plans to protect themselves on the road, and take into account the talents and spells available to the opposition. Make the pursuers as tough as possible, but allow the player characters the benefit of the doubt if they come up with particularly clever ways of avoiding trouble. Evasion offers a better solution than taking on the Legion in a frontal assault, because it allows the adventurers to avoid a pitched battle.

REBELLION

If the characters follow Emberica's advice and attempt to stage a revolt against the Legion, make them work hard for victory. The recommended power levels of the Legionnaires and the characters for this adventure make winning an open war against the Legion extraordinarily difficult. Stealth and trickery combined with an airtight plan might pay off on a long shot, but the player characters should fare just as poorly as the first band of couriers in a head-on assault, even with rebellious villagers to assist them. Play the various talents and spells of the Legion to the hilt. They are not pushovers, and they fight to the death.

DIVISION IN THE RANKS

Perceptive characters may notice a potential rift between the pragmatic, ambitious Kwamm and the fanatical, mystical Moltaa (see **Hearts of Stone**, p. 34, and the descriptions of Moltaa and Kwamm in **Cast of Characters**, pp. 60–65). If the player characters choose to solve Hanto's problem through psychological warfare, they can escalate tensions between Kwamm and Moltaa until the Legion splits into two warring factions. The player characters emerge at the end of the fighting to subdue the wounded victors, of course.

The players must determine exactly how their characters intend to go about fostering dissent, playing on the weaknesses of both gamemaster characters. Kwamm wants power and respect; characters who dangle those rewards in front of him might goad him into trying to depose Moltaa prematurely. For her part, Moltaa might believe (or be made to believe) that Kwamm's open rebellion proves that he is Horror-tainted.

As with any solution, make the players work for it. Add small victory to small victory (with the occasional setback for spice), using each success or failure to build to a dramatic, final confrontation between Moltaa and Kwamm.

Effect on the Legion Pattern

If the Grim Legion splits, the threads woven to each member's abilities through the group's true pattern no longer function. Because these threads improve the abilities of many of the higher-Circle Legionnaires, loss of the threads causes these enhanced abilities to revert back to normal ranks. Specific enhancements affected by this change appear in each Grim Legionnaire's description in **Cast of Characters**, beginning on p. 58. For a complete set of rules regarding this form of thread magic, see the **Earthdawn Companion**, p. 52.

KILLING AARDELEA

The player characters may choose the grimmest option and break the quarantine by killing Aardelea themselves. Though such a choice may appear tactically successful, it represents a failure in terms of the larger game. Immediate consequences are few; any villager seeing a murder attempt in progress immediately and willingly risks his or her own life to prevent it, and Kwamm might become sufficiently upset at the loss of his chance to build a fortress that he may either try to stop them or at least punish them severely after the fact. Moltaa may grumble about vigilante justice, but refuses to punish the adventurers for ridding Barsaive of a clear threat.

In the long term, however, killing Aardelea turns the heroes into villains. They lose all hope of payment from Charboyya; any message to him from a villager contains an account of the adventurers' foul deed, which enrages Charboyya. In fact, he may hire a third party of adventurers to track these characters down and exact vengeance for the murder of his close friend's child.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Creative players may come up with other strategies to resolve the adventure's central problem. If a solution is clever and makes sense, go with it. If things turn out so well for them that the story loses its suspense, throw an obstacle in their path just to keep things interesting.

Keep in mind that the characters must resolve the situation in Hanto on their own. How they manage this is less important than the fact that they have done it independently.

LOOSE ENDS

THIS SECTION PROVIDES guidelines for resolving the adventure's loose ends and suggests ways to use story elements and characters from **Infected** in future **Earthdawn** adventures and campaigns.

AFTER THE ADVENTURE

Because the characters can resolve the crisis in Hanto in many ways (or fail in as many ways), this story offers several possible outcomes. Most of these possibilities, however, fall into one of two categories: the characters break the quarantine while doing little harm to Hanto, or they break it in a manner that brings disaster to the village. As the player characters leave Hanto, end the story by reading one of the following paragraphs aloud.

If the adventurers break the Legion quarantine with few negative consequences to the villagers, read the following:

The entire village turns out to see you off, waving, cheering, and bestowing modest gifts upon you. As you ride out of Hanto, you see several stalwart young men and women tearing down the Grim Legion's hated fence. They wave as you pass, joyfully shouting your names and adding extravagant titles. At least in the tiny village of Hanto, you become legends and tales of your good deeds are sung around the evening fires for generations to come.

If the adventure has ended in disaster for Hanto, read the following:

You amble across the grassland, unable to resist the temptation to look back. Hanto recedes in the distance. If only it could vanish from your memories as easily as it does from sight. The past few days have taught you a bitter lesson. Unless you learn from your mistake, you will never truly become heroes.

HOMeward BOUND

If the adventurers escaped from Hanto with Aardelea and/or other villagers in tow, the story is only half over. The real action occurs during the flight back to

Bartertown. Try setting up a climactic final dash for Charboyya's trading house with the Legion in hot pursuit or some equally suspenseful, final encounter. Except for the exciting ending, get the return journey over with quickly so that it does not seem anticlimactic. If the player characters seem determined to go looking for trouble, however, feel free to invent some.

You might also consider tying up loose ends from earlier road encounters. The Blacklogs and Bojazi Kofeeld might turn up again; perhaps they pass the characters on the road, having struck it rich attacking some unfortunate merchant party. Or the characters may pass a village where they discover the three bandits chained to stakes, working as forced labor.

If the characters return to Cherrypit or Yellowspring, they find the villages as they left them: either locked in pointless feuding or thankful for the new friendship and harmony that the player characters helped foster.

CHARBOYYA'S REWARD

If the adventurers helped save Charboyya's friends and kin from the ravages of the Grim Legion, the grateful merchant pays them handsomely. If any villagers died in the process, however, Charboyya may withhold all or some of the adventurers' promised pay, depending on how many were killed by their actions. If pleased with them, Charboyya may recommend their services to other Bartertown merchants, providing hooks for future adventures (see **Campaign Ideas**, following).

AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

This section provides guidelines for awarding Legend Points to the player characters. As recommended in the **Introduction**, the gamemaster should award Legend Points at the end of each game session as well as at the end of the adventure. The following guidelines for



Legend Awards suggest the points to be awarded by the gamemaster for each task accomplished or goal reached in a game session.

GAME SESSIONS

The suggested game sessions outlined below each include certain encounters. If the gamemaster organizes the encounters differently in his game sessions, he should award Legend Points as appropriate. To reflect that **Infected** includes several difficult situations for beginning **Earthdawn** players, this system for awarding Legend Points differs slightly from the system given in the **Earthdawn** rulebook (pp. 241–42). Instead of calculating Legend Points per the standard procedure, the following information provides the appropriate number of points for each Legend Award.

Each game session includes several different Legend Point awards. The **session goal** is the objective of the session. If the characters achieved this goal, each of them receives a given number of Legend Points, called the **Session Legend Award**. Note that each session has a different Session Legend Award, depending on the difficulty the characters face in achieving that goal.

The **Creature Legend Award** appears in the Creature/Opponent Award Table, p. 55, which lists the available Legend Points for defeating opponents in each game session, arranged by the type and number of each opponent fought as well as by the number of player characters. The Legend Points listed for each opponent represent the total number of points for each type, not the number of Legend Points per opponent. The gamemaster should divide the total Creature/Opponent Legend Award equally among the player characters (see p. 242, **ED**). Round points down to the nearest multiple of 5; for example, 500 Legend Points divided by 6 characters equals 83.3 points per character, rounded down to 80 points per character.

Entries marked with an asterisk indicate opponents that the characters may choose not to fight. If they battle these opponents, add the indicated Legend Points to the total Creature Legend Award, and divide that total by the number of player characters.

A character can also receive a certain number of Legend Points for **creative roleplaying and/or heroics**. The description of each game session below includes a list of the types of actions characters might take that warrant this award. A single character may only receive one such award during a given session. Unlike other Legend Awards, the Legend Points listed for various acts of creative roleplaying or heroics are not divided among the characters. During the encounters in Hanto, when the adventure's pacing depends on the player characters' actions, the gamemaster may wish to favor player characters who keep up the pace over those who simply wait for something to happen.

Finding or acquiring specific treasures in each encounter earns the characters **Treasure Legend Points**. As with points for defeating creatures, the gamemaster should divide the Legend Points for each treasure equally among the player characters. If they choose, the player characters may sell certain items for a number of silver pieces equal to the Legend Points that the item is worth.

The **adventure goal** appears in the final game session, replacing the session goal. The final session also includes an **Adventure Legend Award**, which represents the Legend Points awarded for completing the adventure successfully. For more information on completing adventure goals and earning Adventure Legend Awards, see p. 242, **ED**.

Session One

In the first game session, Charboyya hires the characters to travel to Hanto. After determining their employer's honesty and equipping themselves for the trip, they head out. During their journey through the lowland wilderness, they encounter a number of small villages, eventually meeting Rhamduc, who leads them to his village of Yellowspring. The characters deal with the feud between Yellowspring and the neighboring village of Cherrypit; they continue on their way, only to fall afoul of an ambush by Charboyya's missing couriers-turned-bandits.

This session includes the encounters **Charboyya's Heroes**, **The Road to Hanto**, **Friends Indeed**, and **Charboyya's Betrayers**. Agreeing to work for Charboyya is the session goal. On the way to Hanto, the characters become involved in the other conflicts described above. The Session Legend Award is 150 Legend Points.

Award Legend Points for defeating any villagers and/or the bandits according to the Creature/Opponent Award Table, p. 55.

Award characters Legend Points for creative roleplaying and/or heroics if they take the following actions:

- Mediate between Yellowspring and Cherrypit = 75 points
- Learn that the bandits once worked for Charboyya = 75 points
- Persuade a Yellowspring/Cherrypit villager to do something against his/her inclinations = 30 points

The characters gain no Treasure Legend Points in this game session.

Session Two

In this session, the characters arrive at Hanto and find it under a quarantine imposed by the Grim Legion. They meet the villagers, attempt to discover the truth about the child Aardelea and her powers and (one way or another) try to lift the Legion's quarantine.



CREATURE/OPPONENT AWARD TABLE

SESSION 1

Opponent	6 Players	7 Players	8 Players
Villagers (30 each)*	600*	600*	600*
Bojazi Kofeeld	100	100	100
Damien Blacklog	100	100	100
Aetheela Blacklog	100	100	100
Total (w/out villagers)	300	300	300
Award Per Character	50	40	35

SESSION 2

Opponent	6 Players	7 Players	8 Players
Moltaa	500	500	500
Kwamm	300	300	300
Lo-Arr Brand	100	100	100
Gzoog Chainbreaker	100	100	100
Sork Sorjinka	200	200	200
Dalya Red Roses	200	200	200
Maloniell	150	150	150
Arrkhard Gahh	100	100	100
Cadaver Men (2)	220	220	220
Total	1,870	1,870	1,870
Award Per Character	310	265	230

This session includes the encounters **Hearts of Stone**, **Quarantined**, **The Magical Child**, **Aardelea's Chamber**, and **Endgames**. The adventure goal for **Infected** is to break the quarantine at Hanto, by persuasion or force. The Adventure Legend Award is 200 Legend Points.

Award Legend Points for defeating the members of the Grim Legion and the cadaver men according to the Creature/Opponent Award Table.

Award Legend Points for creative roleplaying and/or heroics if the characters take the following actions:

- Convince Moltaa that Aardelea is not possessed by a Horror = 75 points
- Find the *Book of Blue Spirits* in Aardelea's cavern = 75 points

The treasures that the characters may acquire in this session include **Derita's Silk-Tailed Wailer**, a broadsword worn by Kwamm, and the **Skull of Maarberg**, a magical helmet belonging to Moltaa. Each of these items is worth 300 Legend Points. To obtain them, the player characters must kill both Moltaa and Kwamm.

Charboyya's payment also counts as magical treasure, because the characters receive it in exchange for noble deeds. Each character receives 1 Legend Point per silver

piece. Depending on the final fee determined in **Charboyya's Heroes**, the payment should give each character about 650 Legend Points. Award these points at the end of the adventure, along with the Adventure Legend Award.

TOTAL LEGEND POINT AWARD

The **Total Legend Point Award** serves as a guideline for the gamemaster. He may award more or fewer Legend Points depending on the circumstances of his game, but the total should not vary drastically from the average given below. Based on the figures listed above in each game session, a single character who completes **Infected** should receive an average of 1,610 Legend Points. This average assumes 7 players in a group and does not include points earned for battling optional opponents.

CAMPAIGN IDEAS

Published **Earthdawn** adventures are designed to fit into an existing campaign with little or no extra work on the part of the gamemaster. Some of the situations and gamemaster characters presented in a particular adven-

ture can lead to other adventures in the gamemaster's overall campaign as well. For example, if the characters drive a Horror from a town or city but do not kill it, the Horror can turn up in a later adventure.

Similarly, the events preceding an adventure can lead to any number of other situations. For example, if an adventure's background involves disputes among the Blood Warders in the Elven Court as in *Mists of Betrayal*, these disputes might lead to a full-scale war between the elves of Blood Wood and the Kingdom of Throal in a later adventure.

As the previous examples make clear, adventures do not exist by themselves. *Earthdawn* campaigns should be dynamic, changing over time. Using events in adventures to trigger changes in an overall campaign will provide continuity between adventures and will infuse your campaigns with the lifelike quality vital to good roleplaying.

The following characters and story elements from *Infected* can be integrated in further adventures quite easily. Feel free to use this information in your *Earthdawn* campaigns in whatever ways you see fit.

THE GRIM LEGION

The members of the Grim Legion who appear in this adventure provide ideal material for sequels. They are sufficiently powerful so that player characters cannot destroy them. If interactions between the player characters and Legionnaires become particularly intense, you may want to bring these gamemaster characters back into the adventurers' lives after a suitable interval.

If Kwamm survives the quarantine of Hanto, he continues his empire-building attempts. The next time the player characters travel through the lowlands, they may find Kwamm acting independently of Moltaa, commanding a fort and garrison of Legionnaires. Kwamm can turn up several times over the course of a long-term campaign, each time with greater political and military power.

Moltaa can also appear again, with or without Kwamm. If she came off as completely evil in this adventure, try having her save the adventurers' bacon when they face certain death at the hands of a ravening pack of Horrors. Moltaa and her Legionnaires might also become the adventurers' rivals during a kaer-exploring adventure, competing to clear the kaer of Horrors and take the loot.

In another interesting twist, Moltaa or Kwamm might offer the adventurers membership in the Grim Legion the next time their paths cross, saying something like, "You fought against us, but we admired your skill. Perhaps we can teach you to appreciate the ways of the Horror Slayers." Either of these two Grim Legionnaires can provide an adventure hook by revealing to the adventurers

the location of a den of Horrors that the Legion cannot fit into its schedule or cannot exterminate by itself.

If the characters defeated the Legion in a pitched battle sometime during the adventure, surviving Legion members might return to seek vengeance. Fanatics such as Sork Sorjinka and Arrkhard Gahh are particularly likely to hunt down their newly made enemies.

Other Grim Legion Groups

Many Grim Legion groups patrol the lands of Barsaive, and not all of them are as fanatical as Moltaa's band. The characters might encounter a group of Legionnaires in virtually any situation involving a known Horror. The characters may choose to form their own Grim Legion group, formally dedicating themselves to fighting the Horrors and ending the spread of their corruption. The characters might also decide to form an independent group whose precepts more closely match the ideals of the Grim Legion's forerunner, the Proud Legion. For more information about the Grim Legion and its history, see *Rumors and Research*, p. 72.

AARDELEA

If the characters keep in touch with Charboyya or ever visit Hanto again, they may learn what happens to the child they saved.

Over the next few years, Aardelea's existing powers grow and she manifests additional ones. As this occurs, she may become a prize sought after by the same powerful organizations that show interest in the *Book of Blue Spirits* or the dragon sculpture. As the sole possessor of certain, unique powers, Aardelea piques the interest of many Barsaivian and Theran scholars and sages.

Though Aardelea and her powers will reappear in future *Earthdawn* products, at this point the truth of their origins remains a mystery.

CHARBOYYA

The gamemaster can easily link events in *Infected* to future adventures by having Charboyya recommend the characters to other prospective employers. If the adventurers succeeded in releasing Hanto from the Grim Legion's quarantine, Charboyya pays them well and sings their praises to everyone he knows. He may even embellish the characters' abilities out of sheer enthusiasm. The characters should rarely (if ever) lack work if they do well in this adventure. Indeed, they may be forced to choose among too many jobs.

BOOK OF BLUE SPIRITS

The *Book of Blue Spirits* is an ancient tome of powerful magical lore. The knowledge it contains and the

nature of those who wrote it will be revealed in future **Earthdawn** products. Unfortunately, once the characters remove the book from Aardelea's cavern, it deteriorates rapidly, turning to dust within 7 days. This gives the characters little time to study the book or transport it to a place where they might be able to sell it.

If you wish, allow the characters to devise a method to preserve the book. If they knew it existed, scholars from all across Barsaive and the Theran Empire would covet the tome's magical secrets. Its rarity and obvious power make the book extraordinarily valuable—and potentially dangerous. Many different factions might attempt to obtain it by purchasing it or by more sinister means. The Kingdom of Throal, the Blood Warders of Blood Wood, the Denairastas Clan from Iopos, the Theran Empire, a great dragon living in Barsaive, and any number of others might want to get their hands on the *Book of Blue Spirits*. If the characters take the book to Throal, they may be able to sell it for a high price—but not one so high that it skews the overall campaign awards.

Even if the book does not survive, people who hear of the magic it bestowed on the child may seek out the characters to discover what they know of its contents. One way or another, word of the book gets out in Barsaive, sparking particular interest in Bartertown and Throal. Impress on the players that their characters came into contact with a source of tremendous power and mystery, and many others might wish to share their knowledge.

If the characters find both the *Book of Blue Spirits* and the dragon sculpture (see below), make it clear that the book's astral presence shows some sort of connection between it, the sculpture, and common dragons. The nature of this connection will become apparent in future **Earthdawn** products.

DRAGON SCULPTURE

Like the *Book of Blue Spirits*, the dragon sculpture hidden in Aardelea's cavern can play a part in further adventures.

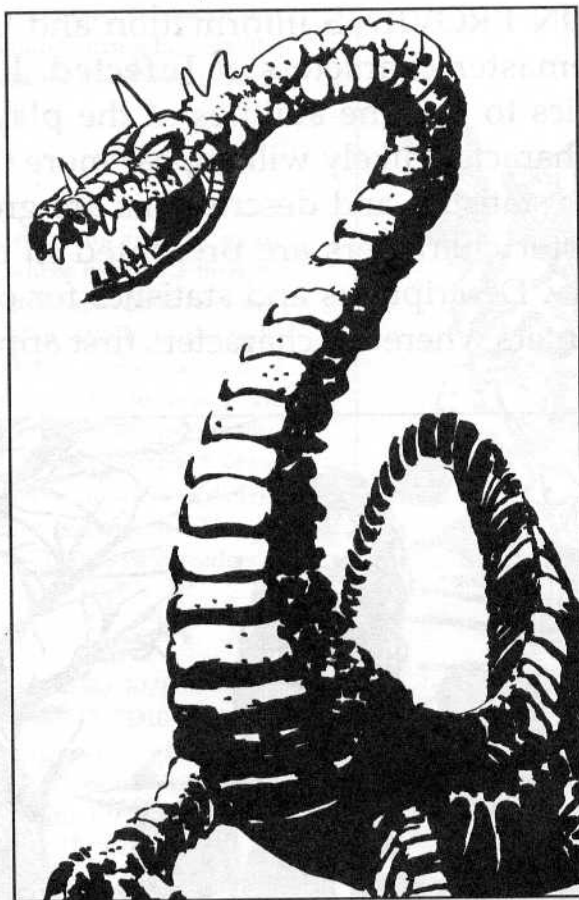
If the player characters believe it is a magical treasure, they may study it to learn its powers. As noted in **Rumors and Research**, however, adepts cannot use the sculpture, despite its magical aura. Its powers, if any, are of a kind far beyond the scope of any Discipline currently known in Barsaive. Once word of the sculpture's existence gets out, its uniqueness will make it as sought-after an item as the *Book of Blue Spirits*.

If the characters decide to sell the sculpture, they find that any number of merchants in Bartertown and Throal will pay a handsome sum for such a fine work of art. The gamemaster can set this price according to his own campaign, but the sculpture should net the characters at least 1,200 silver pieces.

The many groups and individuals who might seek the sculpture include the great dragon Icewing, who lairs in Barsaive near the Kingdom of Throal. If the characters decide to keep the sculpture, a mysterious man approaches them and offers to buy it for up to 1,500 silver pieces. The mystery man works for some individual or group—you decide. This potential buyer does not disclose the name of his employer to the characters. If the characters refuse to part with the sculpture or demand a higher price, either raise the offer or arrange to

have the sculpture stolen. Sometime after the players lose sight of the sculpture, they learn (through a method of the gamemaster's devising) that a third, unknown party has since acquired it. At the gamemaster's discretion, the sculpture may have been bought or stolen by this third party.

The mysterious third party is Icewing, though the characters may never learn this. You may keep the identity of the third party a secret or even feed the players false hints to throw them off the track. Implying that the dragon has the sculpture, however, should demonstrate its significance to the players. As with the *Book of Blue Spirits*, the secrets of the sculpture will be revealed in future **Earthdawn** products.



CAST OF CHARACTERS

THIS SECTION PROVIDES information and game statistics for the major gamemaster characters of **Infected**. If appropriate, modify these statistics to suit the abilities of the player characters in your game. Because these characters likely will appear more than once in the course of the adventure, their statistics and descriptions are grouped here for convenience. The gamemaster characters are presented in order of their general importance to the story. Descriptions and statistics for other, minor characters are given in the encounters where the characters first appear.



Note that Moltaa's Grim Legion band has created a group true pattern that enables the group's members to enhance their abilities through the use of thread magic (see p. 52, **Earthdawn Companion**). Each group member who has achieved at least Fourth Circle in his or her Discipline has helped create this true pattern and has woven threads from his or her own pattern to it. These threads enhance several of these members' abilities, indicated by an asterisk (*) in that character's statistics. Enhanced values are given in brackets next to each character's normal values for that ability. If the Grim Legion splits into warring factions, the group true pattern dissolves and the enhancements no longer apply (see **Endgames**, p. 50).

CHARBOYYA

A prosperous dwarf nearing his fiftieth year, Charboyya lives in Bartertown, where he runs a thriving business as a silk merchant. He grew up a poor farm boy in the village of Hanto, an isolated hamlet in the wild Barsaivian savanna. As he matured, Charboyya tired of sleepy village life and set out to make his fortune in the world. Though he succeeded beyond his wildest dreams, Charboyya came to miss his family and friends. To ease his loneliness, Charboyya began hiring couriers to deliver messages to and from Hanto every few months. Though this indulgence costs him dearly, Charboyya considers it more than worth the price.

Attributes

Dexterity (12): 5/D8
Strength (12): 5/D8
Toughness (13): 6/D10
Perception (13): 6/D10
Willpower (14): 6/D10
Charisma (14): 6/D10

Skills

Conversation (4): 10/D10 + D6
Etiquette (6): 12/2D10
Haggle (4): 10/D10 + D6
Knowledge/Dwarf Trade
Routes (6): 12/2D10
Knowledge/Economics (5):
11/D10 + D8
Read and Write Language (4)
(Human, Ork, Sperethiel,
Throalic): 10/D10 + D6
Trading (7): 13/D12 + D10

Damage

Death Rating: 35
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 27
Recovery Tests Per Day: 2
Recovery Dice: D10

Combat

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2

Initiative

Dice: D8

Movement

Full: 57
Combat: 29



MOLTA

Moltaa was born into the obsidian enclave of Hardpoint in the last generation before the end of the Scourge, a time she remembers all too well. The first residents of Hardpoint erected an opaque, granite-colored, magical dome around their Liferock rather than hibernate underground. When the Horrors came to Hardpoint, they scratched at the dome night and day with iron claws and whispered foul obscenities describing the wounds they would inflict on the obsidimen when they finally cracked the dome. By the time of Moltaa's birth, the call of the Horrors had become part of everyday life. Many went slowly mad from listening to it, while others attached themselves to the Liferock before their time in a desperate quest for solace and relief. The more the abominations scratched, the stronger became the settlement's physical defenses. Eventually the Horrors' scratching transformed the dome into a substance as hard and clear as diamond. Knowing that their victims could see them, the Horrors began acting out a continuous pageant of bizarre violence and unmentionable atrocities. The dreadful sight drove many more Hardpointers mad.

Young Moltaa steeled herself against fear of the Horrors and soon began to threaten them, describing in detail how she would avenge Hardpoint when the Scourge ended. Though Moltaa knew of the Grim Legion only from stories, she told the Horrors that she would join those determined heroes and see all the Horrors dead, suffering and dying as they had made her people suffer and die.

After the dark times finally ended, Moltaa left Hardpoint, learned the nethermancer Discipline and went in search of the Grim Legion. During the past eighty years or so, Moltaa has gained a command



position in the Legion, as well as the Sixth Circle of her Discipline. But over the years her quest to rid Barsaive of Horrors has an obsession, consuming her very soul. She feels nothing personal toward any of her soldiers, seeing them merely as weapons to wield against the enemy. Incapable of small talk and lacking all knowledge of how to deal effectively with people, Moltaa has no idea that some of her soldiers fear her. Kwamm's worldly ambitions would be beyond her understanding if she knew they existed.

In combat, Moltaa prefers to stand away from the swinging swords and fling Bone Shatter spells at her enemies. On occasion, however, she relishes wading into a nest of Horrors and cutting a swath through them with her two-handed sword. When struck, she uses her magical helmet's Swat power (see **Rumors and Research**, p. 75), even if using it enables her attacker to occasionally knock her down. In her spell matrices, she usually holds her Astral Horror, Bone Shatter, Pain, and Recovery spells.

Attributes

Dexterity (11): 5/D8
Strength (21): 8/2D6
Toughness (15): 6/D10
Perception (16): 7/D12
Willpower (17): 7/D12
Charisma (12): 5/D8

Karma

Dice: D4
Points: 10

Initiative

Dice: D6

Talents

Astral Sight (4): 11/D10 + D8
Durability (6)
Frighten (3): 10/D10 + D6
Karma Ritual (5)
*Nethermancy (6): 13/D12 + D10
[(9):16/D20 + D6]
Read and Write Language (6):
13/D12 + D10
(Human, Obsidiman, Ork,
Sperethiel, Throalic, Troll)
Read and Write Magic (4): 11/D10 + D8
*Spellcasting (6): 13/D12 + D10
[(9):16/D20 + D6]
Spell Matrix (6)
Spell Matrix (6)
Spell Matrix (6)
Spell Matrix (6)
Enhanced Spell Matrix (4)
Spirit Hold (6): 18/D20 + D12
*Willforce (6): 13/D12 + D10
[(9):16/D20 + D6]

Skills

Artisan/Embroidery (1): 8/2D6
Knowledge/Grim Legion History (3): 10/D10 + D6
Knowledge/Horrors (4): 11/D10 + D8
Knowledge/Legends and Lore (1): 8/2D6

Damage

Death Rating: 60
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 47
Recovery Tests Per Day: 3
Recovery Dice: D10

Spells

Animate Skeleton
Astral Horror (Matrix)
Bone Dance
Bone Shatter (Enhanced Matrix, 1 thread woven)
Death's Head (Matrix)
Detect Undead
Experience Death
Fog Ghost
Life Circle of One
Pain (Matrix)
Recovery (Matrix)
Spirit Grip
Undead Struggle

Equipment

Adventurer's kit
Black silk scarf (Grim Legion pattern item)
Hide armor
Skull of Maarberg (see **Rumors and Research**, p. 75)
Two-handed sword (Damage: 15/D20 + D6)
Troll sling (Damage: 12/2D10)
150 silver pieces

Karma Notes

Moltaa can spend Karma Points on any action using her Perception Attribute.

Thread Weaving Notes

Moltaa currently has a Rank 2 thread attached to the Skull of Maarberg, but has so far failed to find the Skull's Rank 3 Key Knowledge. Her band's group true pattern gives her Rank 3 threads to the following talents and ratings: Nethermancy, Spellcasting, Willforce, Armor Rating, and Mystic Armor Rating.

Combat

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 8
*Armor: 8 [11]
*Mystic Armor: 3 [6]

Movement

Full: 54
Combat: 27

KWAMM

Kwamm is an ambitious ork dedicated to eradicating all traces of the Scourge from Barsaive. Of course, he also sees his quest as a means to personal power. Over-confident in his own judgment and leadership qualities, he believes that whatever is good for Kwamm is good for Barsaive.

Kwamm grew up in the village of Burnpatch, a childhood friend of Charboyya's employee Gamuudge (see **Charboyya's Heroes**, p. 13). From an early age, he dreamed of power. Whenever the children played "Heroes and Horrors," Kwamm insisted on commanding the Heroes team. Years later, when a troop of Grim Legionnaires descended on Burnpatch, they impressed the adolescent Kwamm as tough, determined, and more worldly-wise than a dirt farmer could expect to become in a dozen lifetimes. Kwamm began to dream of joining the Legion and gaining a reputation as a mighty hero.

After some years of training as an adept, Kwamm heard of another Legion group roaming the land near Burnpatch. Under the leadership of an obsidiman named Moltaa, this group had taken up residence in Daneru, a nearby village. Burnpatch hosted a convocation of local village leaders to discuss ways of ridding the area of these overbearing fanatics; Kwamm spent that same evening in Daneru, offering his services as a recruit.

On his return to Burnpatch in full Grim Legion regalia, the jubilant Kwamm found scorn instead of jealous admiration. His childhood friend Gamuudge picked a fight with him, and though Kwamm gave Gamuudge a thorough thrashing, the other ork delivered a lucky, nose-shattering blow on his way down for the count. Instead of cheering Kwamm's victory, the other young villagers flocked around Gamuudge. The beaten ork taunted Kwamm through a split lip, calling him a "pretend hero playing black leather dress-up." Hurt and confused by this reaction, Kwamm stalked off shouting vague threats about bringing friends to give them all a whipping. Despite the emptiness of the threat, Gamuudge took it seriously enough to leave the village.

As a member of Moltaa's group, Kwamm swiftly proved his determination and bravery. He made himself indispens-



made himself indispensable to Moltaa and soon became her second in command.

Though Kwamm refuses to admit it even to himself, the fight with Gamuudge remains his greatest failure. Despite having proven himself time and again as a courageous slayer of Horrors, the jeers of his former friends ring loudly in his memory. Those long-ago taunts have helped drive Kwamm to his present success—whenever he needs extra courage to kick down a kaer door or lead an assault, he thinks of that fight and vows to prove just how wrong those fools were to laugh at him. The Gamuudge incident is one of the things that triggers Kwamm's *gahad*, the response all orks have to certain passionate impulses. For specific information on Kwamm's *gahad*, see **Hearts of Stone**, p. 36.

Increasingly confident of his power as a Fifth Circle swordmaster, Kwamm imagines himself leading the Legion band. Though he respects Moltaa's single-minded devotion to the cause, he believes the group should create a master plan to deal with Horrors, rather than simply riding around the countryside looking for individual Horrors to slay. Kwamm wants to set up a permanent base in the region and vastly increase the number of troops, so that the Legion can sweep the entire area clean of Horrors. Such a plan requires an overall commander, a powerful role Kwamm covets for himself.

Kwamm sees the occupation of Hanto as a first step in realizing his grandiose plans and entertains notions of expanding his observation tower into a huge, brick fort. He has yet to figure out how to move from his current role as right-hand man in an adventuring band to commander of a military base. As Moltaa's chief lieutenant, Kwamm controls recruiting and has personally brought many of the younger members of this Grim Legion group into the fold. Even some of the veterans prefer Kwamm to their current leader; in contrast to Moltaa, who often seems half-crazed, Kwamm is charismatic, personable, and stable. In any internal power struggle, many of the Legionnaires would support Kwamm over Moltaa.

Characters who play up to Kwamm's grand aspirations and sense of self-importance get along well with him. Those who threaten his plans or self-image, especially by mentioning the fight with Gamuudge, make a grimly determined enemy.

Attributes

Dexterity (19): 8/2D6
Strength (13): 6/D10
Toughness (14): 6/D10
Perception (12): 5/D8
Willpower (10): 5/D8
Charisma (16): 7/D12

Talents

Avoid Blow (5): 13/D12 + D10
Blade Weaving (5): 10/D10 + D6
*Durability (5) [7]
Karma Ritual (5)
Maneuver (5): 13/D12 + D10
Riposte (5): 16/D20 + D8

*Melee Weapons (5): 13/D12 + D10
[(7): 15/D20 + D6]

Missile Weapons (5): 13/D12 + D10

Second Weapon (3): 11/D10 + D8

Throwing Weapons (4): 12/2D10

Wound Balance (3): 9/D8 + D6

Karma

Dice: D8

Points: 40

Skills

Artisan/Runic Carving (1): 6/D10

Knowledge/Grim Legion History (3): 8/2D6

Knowledge/Horrors (3): 8/2D6

Initiative

Dice: D4

Knowledge/Military Procedure (1): 6/D10

Damage

*Death Rating: 73 [87]

Wound Threshold: 10

*Unconsciousness Rating: 58 [70]

Recovery Tests Per Day: 3

Recovery Dice: D10

Combat

Physical Defense: 10

Spell Defense: 7

Social Defense: 9

Armor: 12

*Mystic Armor: 0 [2]

Equipment

Adventurer's kit

Derita's Silk-Tailed Wailer

(Damage 11/D10 + D8;

see **Rumors and Research**, p. 74)

Footman's shield

Plate mail armor

Stone dagger (Grim Legion pattern item)

Troll sword (Damage 12/2D10)

65 silver pieces

Movement

Full: 90

Combat: 45

Karma Notes

Kwamm can spend Karma Points on any action using his Dexterity Attribute. He can also spend Karma to increase the damage of any attack with a sword.

Thread Weaving Notes

Kwamm currently has a Rank 2 thread attached to Derita's Silk-Tailed Wailer, as well as to the following talents and ratings: Durability, Melee Weapons, and Mystic Armor.

LO-ARR BRAND

The human Lo-Arr Brand is a Second Circle warrior, a shy country boy who joined the Grim Legion in a futile attempt to spite his childhood sweetheart for marrying another. Because Kwamm took Lo-Arr under his wing and arranged for his training in the warrior Discipline, Lo-Arr's devotion to the Grim Legion stems more from his personal gratitude to Kwamm than from any sense of mission to fight the Horrors. In any rift between Moltaa and Kwamm, Lo-Arr would support Kwamm without hesitation. He works hard and takes risks in order to impress his lieutenant.

In combat, Lo-Arr prefers to wade right in and hack away with his sword. If he takes 15 or more points of damage in a fight, he uses the Fireblood talent to heal himself.

His open, friendly nature makes Lo-Arr easy to approach. Prone to near-crippling shyness in the company of women his own age, he might prove susceptible to seduction attempts.

Attributes

Dexterity (15): 6/D10
Strength (12): 5/D8
Toughness (13): 6/D10
Perception (11): 5/D8
Willpower (10): 5/D8
Charisma (8): 4/D6

Talents

Acrobatic Strike (2): 7/D12
Durability (2)
Fireblood (2): 7/D12
Karma Ritual (2)
Melee Weapons (3): 9/D8 + D6
Riposte (1): 10/D10 + D6
Unarmed Combat (2): 7/D12
Versatility (2)

Karma

Dice: D8

Points: 7

Skills

Artisan/Music (Bugle) (1): 5/D8
Knowledge/Grim Legion History (1): 6/D10
Knowledge/Horrors (1): 6/D10
Knowledge/Military Procedure (1): 6/D10

Initiative

Dice: D4 - 2

Damage

Death Rating: 53
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 41
Recovery Tests Per Day: 2
Recovery Dice: D10

Combat

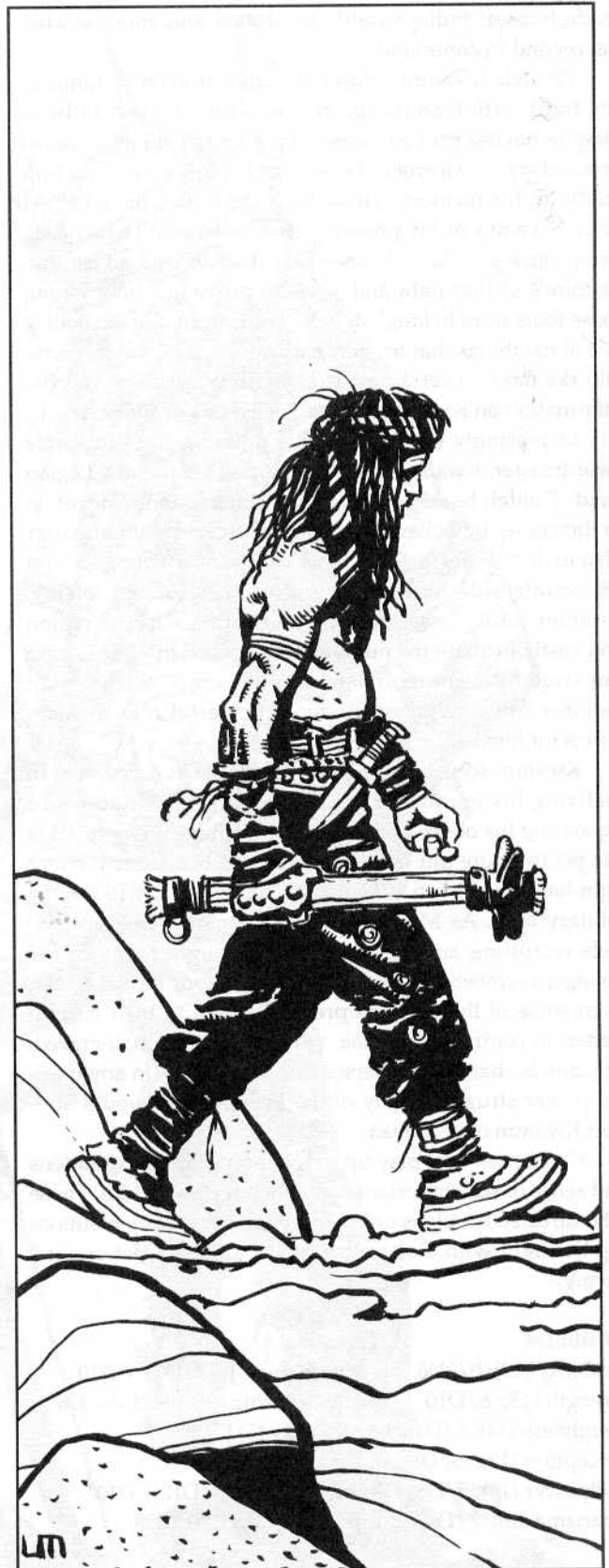
Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 5
Armor: 12
Mystic Armor: 0

Equipment

Adventurer's kit
Broadsword (Damage 10/D10 + D6)
Footman's shield
Light crossbow (Damage: 9/D8 + D6)
Plate mail armor
25 silver pieces

Movement

Full: 70
Combat: 35



GZOOG CHAINBREAKER

A Second Circle warrior, Gzoog Chainbreaker is a short, bow-legged ork with ratlike features and a perpetual squint. An escaped slave, he threw in with the Legion because he heard it was a great scam. Unfortunately for Gzoog, he joined an honest crew more concerned with defeating Horrors than feathering their nests. Requiring constant supervision to perform his assigned duties, Gzoog spends most of his time looking for ways to make a profit on the side, sometimes smuggling contraband or gambling with naive villagers. He fears Moltaa and will side with Kwamm if the two leaders split.

If an individual adventurer or two approaches him in a friendly manner, Gzoog is happy to chat, and after a bit of small talk asks them to play a few rounds of dice (with a small wager to make things interesting, of course). If the characters are losing money, Gzoog answers their questions to keep them in the game, dragging out his answers as long as possible. If the adventurers start winning, Gzoog abruptly remembers his assignment to a work detail and packs up his dice.

Gzoog uses his Wood Skin talent each day as part of his morning ritual. If both he and an opponent are on the verge of becoming incapacitated, he uses the Air Dance talent to compensate for the Initiative penalties conferred by his heavy armor. Gzoog hates to start fights and withdraws from losing battles if his superiors are not watching.

Attributes

Dexterity (15): 6/D10

Strength (16): 7/D12

Toughness (14): 6/D10

Perception (13): 6/D10

Willpower (11): 5/D8

Charisma (9): 4/D6

Talents

Acrobatic Strike (2): 8/2D6

Air Dance (2): 8/2D6

Anticipate Blow (2): 8/2D6

Durability (2)

Karma Ritual (2)

Melee Weapon (3): 9/D8 + D6

Unarmed Combat (2): 8/2D6

Wood Skin (2): 8/2D6

Movement

Full: 70

Combat: 35

Karma

Dice: D8

Points: 6

Skills

Artisan/Music (Fife) (1): 5/D8

Knowledge/Gambling (4): 7/D12

Knowledge/Grim Legion History (1): 7/D12

Initiative

Dice: D4 - 2

Knowledge/Military Procedure (1): 7/D12



Damage

Death Rating: 54

Wound Threshold: 10

Unconsciousness Rating: 42

Recovery Tests Per Day: 3

Recovery Dice: D10

Combat

Physical Defense: 8

Spell Defense: 7

Social Defense: 6

Armor: 12

Mystic Armor: 1

Equipment

Adventurer's kit

Broadsword (Damage 12/2D10)

Footman's shield

Light crossbow (Damage: 11/D10 + D8)

Plate mail armor

100 silver pieces

SORK SORJINKA

Sork Sorjinka joined the Grim Legion after Horrors wiped out her scorchers band. On signing up, she swore never to take a mate or drink alcohol until all the Horrors were driven from Barsaive. Sork's relentless hatred of Horrors puts her firmly in Moltaa's camp; she sees Kwamm as an opportunist insufficiently devoted to the cause.

Sork makes no claim to act for the good of others; vengeance is her motive and she tramples on other people's rights without a qualm if they interfere with her goals. Distant and unapproachable, Sork's only topic of conversation is the Horrors and how to fight them. If the adventurers regale her with tales of their Horror encounters, she listens with great interest, but sees no reason to give strangers any information about herself.

As a Fourth Circle cavalrywoman, Sork prefers charging into combat on her mount, but will fight on foot if necessary. When hit, she automatically uses her Avoid Blow talent. She retreats from losing fights only if the opponents are not Horrors; in losing battles with Horrors, her companions must often overpower her and drag her away to prevent her from dying unnecessarily.

Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12
Strength (15): 6/D10
Toughness (12): 5/D8
Perception (7): 4/D6
Willpower (8): 4/D6
Charisma (12): 5/D8

Talents

Animal Bond (4): 9/D8 + D6
Avoid Blow (4): 11/D10 + D8
Charge (4): 10/D10 + D6
Durability (4)
Karma Ritual (3)
Melee Weapon (4): 11/D10 + D8
Rider Weaving (2): 6/D10
Spirit Mount (4): 8/2D6

Karma

Dice: D8
Points: 26

Skills

Artisan/Leatherworking (1): 5/D8
Knowledge/Grim Legion History (3): 7/D12
Knowledge/Horrors (4): 8/2D6
Knowledge/Military Procedure (1): 5/D8

Initiative

Dice: D4 - 1

Damage

Death Rating: 62
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 56
Recovery Tests Per Day: 2
Recovery Dice: D8

Combat

Physical Defense: 9
*Spell Defense: 5 [7]
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 12
*Mystic Armor: 0 [2]



Equipment

Adventurer's kit
Black crossbow bolt
(Grim Legion pattern item)
Broadsword (Damage 11/D10 + D8)
Footman's shield
Lance (Damage 11/D10 + D8)
Light crossbow (Damage: 10/D10 + D6)
Plate mail armor

Movement

Full: 75
Combat: 38

Karma Notes

Sork can spend Karma Points on any action taken by her mount except for Damage Tests.

Thread Weaving Notes

Sork has Rank 2 threads attached to the following ratings: Spell Defense and Mystic Armor.

DALYA RED ROSES

A 287-year-old elf and Fourth Circle beastmaster, Dalya Red Roses found adventure late in life. The sheltered daughter of rich elves from a large kaer, she married into a prominent merchant family and spent most of her life raising children and taking part in social affairs. Having established her children and grandchildren in the world, Dalya decided to devote her final years to serving Barsaive by training as an adept, joining the Grim Legion and helping rid the province of Horrors. Needless to say, her choice scandalized her family. Convinced she had taken leave of her senses, Dalya's relatives hired a band of adventurers to retrieve her from the Grim Legion. The adventurers received a sound drubbing, and Dalya has since continued her career unmolested.

Cheerful and outgoing, Dalya considers herself in charge of group morale. Her sunny attitude means little to the group's more violent members, but Lo-Arr Brand quickly adopted her as an unofficial mother. She responds eagerly to any adventurers who approach her as friends, particularly if they are sophisticated conversationalists. In fact, Dalya will talk the player characters' ears off if given half a chance. Her greatest passions are talking and cooking, and most of her current companions offer little in the way of the first and fail to appreciate the second. Though willing to tell the player characters her life story, Dalya skillfully changes the subject if they seem to be fishing for information they might use against the Legionnaires. Strongly loyal to both Moltaa and Kwamm, the conservative Dalya will support the higher-ranking officer in any dispute.

Dalya tends to burn Karma in combat, relying heavily on her Claw Shape talent to harm her opponents. Believing that she has already lived a long and fulfilling life, she is willing to sacrifice herself if necessary to defeat or destroy a Horror.

Attributes

Dexterity (15): 6/D10
Strength (11): 5/D8
Toughness (14): 6/D10
Perception (14): 6/D10
Willpower (9): 4/D6
Charisma (15): 6/D10

Talents

Animal Bond (4): 10/D10 + D6
Beast Weaving (2): 8/2D6
Borrow Sense (4): 8/2D6
Claw Shape (4): 12/2D10
Creature Analysis (4): 10/D10 + D6
Durability (4)
Karma Ritual (4)
Tracking (4): 10/D10 + D6
Unarmed Combat (5): 11/D10 + D8

**Karma**

Dice: D6
Points: 18

Initiative

Dice: D4 - 1

Damage

Death Rating: 64
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 52
Recovery Tests Per Day: 3
Recovery Dice: D10

Equipment

Adventurer's kit
Crojen claw
(Grim Legion pattern item)
Footman's shield
Light crossbow (Damage: 9/D8 + D6)
Plate mail armor
250 silver pieces

Karma Notes

Dalya can spend Karma Points on Recovery Tests or on talent tests that substitute for such tests.

Thread Weaving Notes

Dalya has Rank 2 threads attached to the following ratings: Physical Defense and Mystic Armor.

Skills

Artisan/Cooking (7): 13/D12 + D10
Conversation (4): 10/D10 + D6
Etiquette (8): 14/D20 + D4
Knowledge/Elf Lore (1): 7/D12

Combat

*Physical Defense: 8 [10]
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 12
*Mystic Armor: 0 [2]

Movement

Full: 70
Combat: 35

MALONIEL

The newest recruit to the Grim Legion, the Third Circle thief Maloniel dreams of inspiring fear in others. Like Kwamm, Maloniel comes from a tiny savanna village, and she regards the neighbors she left behind as so many meek cattle. The Legionnaires represent excitement, power, and real life. She does not understand why her new companions all seem to avoid her gaze, refusing to answer her eager questions about the thrilling life of the adventurer. Even Dalya Red Roses, who goes out of her way to treat everyone kindly, seems to keep Maloniel at arm's length. What Maloniel does not know is that this particular band of Legionnaires has lost seventeen thieves under Moltaa's leadership—some caught in the throat by blade traps, others picked off by invisible monsters or meeting other unpleasant ends.

Starved for friendship and a bit naive, Maloniel responds to any interest the adventurers show in her. As a new recruit, she knows no worthwhile secrets; instead, she speaks mostly of the tediousness of village life, and how much more exciting life is with the Grim Legion. If the adventurers pay enough attention to her, Maloniel may decide to leave Hanto with them at the end of the adventure. In the event of a showdown between Moltaa and Kwamm, Maloniel would most likely quit in disgust rather than take sides.

In combat, Maloniel prefers to sneak up behind an opponent using her Silent Walk talent and position herself for a surprise strike. The Legionnaires' cool treatment has made her unwilling to die for them, and so she withdraws from combat if she falls to within 3 Damage Points of unconsciousness.

Attributes

Dexterity (17): 7/D12
Strength (12): 5/D8
Toughness (10): 5/D8
Perception (14): 6/D10
Willpower (13): 6/D10
Charisma (11): 5/D8

Talents

Avoid Blow (2): 9/D8 + D6
Climbing (3): 10/D10 + D6
Durability (3)
Karma Ritual (3)
Lock Pick (3): 10/D10 + D6
Melee Weapons (3): 10/D10 + D6
Silent Walk (3): 10/D10 + D6
Surprise Strike (3): 10/D10 + D6

Karma

Dice: D6
Points: 25

Skills

Artisan/Music (Singing) (1): 6/D10
Knowledge/Elven Ballads (1): 7/D12
Knowledge/Legends and Lore (1): 7/D12

Initiative

Dice: D12

**Damage**

Death Rating: 46
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 34
Recovery Tests Per Day: 2
Recovery Dice: D8

Combat

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 1

Equipment

Adventurer's kit
Broadsword
(Damage: 10/D10 + D6)
Dagger (Damage: 7/D12)
Padded leather armor
Throwing daggers, 3 (Damage: 7/D12)
Troll sling (Damage: 9/D8 + D6)
50 silver pieces

Movement

Full: 80
Combat: 40



ARRKHARD GAHH

Several months ago, Arrkhard Gahh, a Second Circle troll sky raider, had just begun his tour of duty on the *Tearful Barracuda*. As he gazed up into the rigging one night, the moon-shadows playing across the airship's sails seemed to coalesce into a face. The face spoke to Arrkhard, revealing itself as the Passion Thystonius, and told the troll to journey to Barsaive's wild lowlands. There he must join the Grim Legion, so that he could prove his worth to Thystonius by testing himself against Horrors.

Arrkhard's crewmates, hearing nothing, mocked him and said he had hit the grog too hard. Nonetheless, Arrkhard traveled overland to the backcountry, where he met Moltaa and her Grim Legion group. Though he has fought the Horrors for a mere six months, Arrkhard has already proved his bravery in many dangerous battles.

Though Arrkhard speaks softly and sounds reasonable, he can be as fanatical as Moltaa in his own way. His belief that he serves a higher purpose justifies any wrong he might commit. Though Arrkhard likes and respects Kwamm, in a showdown Arrkhard would cut Kwamm in half without a twinge of regret.

Arrkhard starts every fight with his battle shout, "Thystonius commands thy death!" He does not use his Fireblood talent until he has suffered 20 or more points of damage.

Attributes

Dexterity (17): 7/D12
Strength (21): 8/2D6
Toughness (16): 7/D12
Perception (13): 6/D10
Willpower (11): 5/D8
Charisma (10): 5/D8

Talents

Air Sailing (1): 6/D10
Avoid Blow (2): 9/D8 + D6
Battle Shout (2): 7/D12
Durability (3)
Fireblood (2): 9/D8 + D6
Karma Ritual (2)
Melee Weapons (4): 11/D10 + D8

Karma

Dice: D4
Points: 15

Skills

Artisan/Wood Carving (1): 7/D12
Knowledge/Horrors (1): 7/D12
Knowledge/Passions (2): 8/2D6

Initiative

Dice: D4 - 1

Damage

Death Rating: 63
Wound Threshold: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 49
Recovery Tests Per Day: 3
Recovery Dice: D12

Combat

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 12
Mystic Armor: 1



Equipment

Adventurer's kit
Footman's shield
Plate mail armor
Small statue of Thystonius
Troll sling (Damage: 12/2D10)
Troll sword (Damage: 14/D20 + D4)
10 silver pieces

Movement

Full: 80
Combat: 40

EMBERICA



Known for his hot temper even as a child, Emberica had become an object of gentle mockery in the village until the Legion arrived. Some of the younger villagers have begun to rally around him, finding that for once they agree with his fury.

Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10
Strength (13): 5/D8
Toughness (15): 6/D10
Perception (11): 5/D8
Willpower (5): 3/D4
Charisma (5): 3/D4

Skills

Hunting (2): 8/2D6
Knowledge/Farming (3): 8/2D6
Melee Weapons (2): 8/2D6
Missile Weapons (2): 8/2D6
Trading (1): 4/D6
Unarmed Combat (1): 7/D12
Wilderness Survival (3): 6/D10

Initiative

Dice: D10

Damage

Death Rating: 38
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 27
Recovery Tests Per Day: 3
Recovery Dice: D10

Combat

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 4
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0

Equipment

Hoe (Damage: 8/2D6)
Padded cloth armor

Movement

Full: 60
Combat: 30

AARDELEA



An intelligent and brave human child, Aardelea is in way over her head. If questioned too insistently about anything, she may break into tears, at which point her mother Orweia ends the interview. Though gifted with unusual magical abilities (see **Rumors and Research**, p. 77), Aardelea uses them only in dire emergencies for fear the Legionnaires might see her. For example, she might use her Mystic Healing talent on a character who did her a great service, but only if he seems on the verge of death.

Attributes

Dexterity (10): 5/D8
Strength (7): 4/D6
Toughness (8): 4/D6
Perception (12): 5/D8
Willpower (12): 5/D8
Charisma (11): 5/D8

Talents

Elsewhere Sense (1): 8/2D6
Mind Over Matter (1): 8/2D6
Mystic Healing (1): 8/2D6

Initiative

Dice: D8

Movement

Full: 50
Combat: 25

Damage

Death Rating: 28
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 19
Recovery Tests Per Day: 2
Recovery Dice: D6

Combat

Physical Defense: 6
*Spell Defense: 7[10]
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1

*Aardelea's magical abilities increase her Spell Defense to 10 against probing and detection spells and powers. This ability manifests whenever Aardelea becomes frightened and tries to hide the truth about her strange talents. Otherwise, use the lower Spell Defense of 7.



CHERECA



Once Charboyya's childhood sweetheart, Chereca refused to leave Hanto with him. She eventually became the village's headwoman and is reasonably content with her life, but she has never entirely gotten over Charboyya. The safety and happiness of her villagers matters to Chereca more than anything; should the firebrand Emberica succeed in sparking rebellion against the Legion, Chereca would regard it as a personal failure as well as a tragedy. Preferring to wait the Legion out rather than risk her people's lives, Chereca will do almost anything in her power to keep a revolt from occurring.

Attributes

Dexterity (8): 5/D8
Strength (10): 4/D6
Toughness (12): 5/D8
Perception (14): 6/D10
Willpower (13): 6/D10
Charisma (14): 6/D10

Skills

Animal Handling (4): 10/D10 + D6
Bardic Voice (4): 10/D10 + D6
Knowledge/Farming (2): 7/D12

Damage

Death Rating: 34
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 26
Recovery Tests Per Day: 2
Recovery Dice: D8

Initiative

Dice: D6

Combat

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1

Movement

Full: 43
Combat: 22

ORWEIA



One of Charboyya's dearest childhood friends, Orweia delights in bringing laughter and good cheer to others. However, her lighthearted soul has grown considerably darker with the arrival of the Grim Legion. She had children late in life, and they became the most important people in her world after the death of her husband some two years ago. Fiercely protective of Aardelea, Orweia will dare anything to help her.

Attributes

Dexterity (14): 6/D10
Strength (7): 4/D6
Toughness (14): 6/D10
Perception (15): 6/D10
Willpower (15): 6/D10
Charisma (14): 6/D10

Skills

Arcane Mutterings (2): 8/2D6
Emotion Song (3): 9/D8 + D6
Engaging Banter (1): 7/D12
Heartening Laugh (4): 10/D10 + D6
Knowledge/Farming (2): 7/D12
Physician (4): 10/D10 + D6

Damage

Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 28
Recovery Tests Per Day: 3
Recovery Dice: D10

Combat

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 2

Initiative

Dice: D10

Movement

Full: 65
Combat: 33

RUMORS AND RESEARCH

THIS SECTION PROVIDES gamemasters with information that the player characters may learn from various gamemaster characters during the adventure. It also includes detailed descriptions of the magical treasures the characters may come across, descriptions and game rules for Aardelea's magical powers, and a detailed description of the book these powers came from.

GRIM LEGION BACKGROUND

How much of the following background information on the Grim Legion the players learn depends on the level of success their characters achieve on Knowledge Tests. Because the Grim Legion has a reputation throughout Barsaive, all the player characters know something of the group without benefit of Knowledge Tests. When the characters first hear the Legion mentioned, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

"The Grim Legion. You recognize that name. Some say the Legionnaires are heroes, ready to lay down their lives to free Barsaive from Horrors and anything tainted by Horrors. Others scorn them as glorified bandits who justify their greed and violence with the name of a higher purpose. Still others pity them, seeing them as well-meaning Horror hunters, tainted and driven mad by the dark powers against which they fight and the awful sights they have seen.

"You have heard that every large city has its Grim Legionnaires, though the degree of their influence varies from place to place. Some are merely drunken loudmouths, others are dangerous fanatics. You have seen a few in Bartertown, standing out from the crowd in their black leather or blackened metal armor decorated with silver studs. They swaggered down the streets like Theran overlords, and most gave them a wide berth."

MAKING KNOWLEDGE AND PERSUASION TESTS

Characters with knowledge skills that might apply directly to the Grim Legion, such as Barsaive History, Cults and Organizations, or History of the Scourge, make

Knowledge Tests against a Difficulty Number of 5. Indirectly related knowledge skills, such as Horrors or Legends and Lore require a test against a Difficulty Number of 7. All available information that can be gleaned by a successful Knowledge Test appears below, arranged according to success level. The player character learns all information up to and including the information listed for the success level achieved; for example, a character who achieves a Good success learns the information listed for that success level and also for an Average success. The characters learn false rumors at lower levels of success and learn the truth at higher levels. If a player achieves a success level that gives him several levels' worth of information, explain that the higher-level information is more reliable.

The player characters may make Knowledge Tests to obtain information about the Grim Legion at any point after they hear of the Legion.

The player characters may also obtain the following information from members of the Grim Legion in Hanto by making successful Persuasion Tests. Several Legionnaires possess the knowledge skill of Grim Legion History, and any of these characters can share the history they know with the player characters. If a player asks an appropriately skilled Legionnaire about the history of the group, that player character must make a Persuasion Test against the Legionnaire's Social Defense. The success level achieved by the player character determines how much information the character learns. Depending upon which Legionnaire the player characters talk to, you may need to paraphrase certain statements given below in order to reflect the Legionnaire's attitudes. Moltaa, for example, would not describe the actions of any Legion band as



insane or extreme; instead, she might describe some groups as "more dedicated to the cause than others."

Average Success

The Grim Legion is a group of fanatical Horror hunter adepts who answer to no authority but their own. They travel across Barsaive in large, heavily armed bands, ready to take on any Horror in combat, no matter how great the odds against them. Unfortunately, they pose as great a danger to the common citizen as to local Horrors. They expect gratitude and unquestioning respect from others at all times and demand food, lodging, weapons, equipment and even coin whenever it strikes their fancy. They accuse any who resist of being Horror-tainted, harassing them unmercifully and sometimes even killing them.

Good Success

The Grim Legion includes both good members and bad members. Unfortunately, scattered among the righteous Horror-slayers are criminal elements who take advantage of the Legion's legendary reputation and extort whatever they want from local people. Throughout the Legion, these two factions constantly battle to gain the upper hand. Though the crooked Legionnaires boast greater numbers, the righteous members wield more power. After all, a warrior who can take on a Horror can easily handle a bunch of bullies who need to wear black leather to intimidate others.

Excellent Success

In general, members of the Grim Legion go to great lengths to appear mysterious, often claiming connections to ancient and powerful secrets that only they can comprehend. The Legion encourages rumormongering, as long as the tales told portray them as powerful and unknowable. Despite what many people say, the Grim Legion is not a single, united group. In fact, new bands of Grim Legionnaires spring up constantly—anyone can found his own Grim Legion band by outfitting himself and a few friends in silver-studded black leather and then swearing to fight Horrors. Many of the false rumors about the Legion are started and spread by so-called Legionnaires who actually know very little about the original group.

Any given group of Grim Legionnaires may be half-crazy heroes or shiftless swindlers, tough veterans or greenhorns who donned their leathers the day before yesterday. In general, Legionnaires who roam the countryside tend to be tough, skilled, and truly devoted to their cause, whereas those who congregate in or near cities are more often merely thugs or fools.

The original Grim Legion was founded during the Invae Burnings by a dwarf nethermancer named Verwol, who united the warring tribes and cities of Barsaive to fight

the first wave of insect Horrors (see p. 22, ED). Verwol coined the Grim Legion motto, "When in doubt, hack 'em to bits."

Extraordinary Success

The group now known as the Grim Legion first appeared during the dark period of Barsaive's history known as the Burning. At that time, the area we now know as Barsaive contained countless warring tribes and city-states, who banded together to fight a sudden infestation of bizarre insect creatures later recognized as harbingers of the Scourge. In southern Barsaive, where the infestation was worst, an unprecedented number of generals, armies, and guerrilla fighters ceased trying to slay each other and fought on the same side.

Though the province-wide famine that gripped the land in the aftermath of the Burning dashed any hopes of genuine political unity, it did not diminish the personal bond between veterans of the battle against the insect Horrors. Many of these fighters remained together in small units, eventually naming themselves the Proud Legion. Unfortunately, some bands of the Proud Legion turned predator when the threat of the Horrors subsided, setting in motion the conflict between heroes and opportunists that plagues the Legion to this day.

As the centuries wore on, the term "Proud Legion" fell into disuse. By the time of the Orichalcum Wars, it existed only in myths and songs about long-dead heroes of the past and as a sarcastic insult applied to extortionist mercenary bands.

The myths and songs outlived the insults; when the Horrors began to appear in force, many of the heroes who sought to eradicate them revived the traditions of the Proud Legion. As the Horrors' onslaught grew worse, a stubborn dwarf warrior named Verwol named his indomitable band of Horror-slayers the Grim Legion. Convinced that he and his fellows could only hope to defeat the Horrors by matching their viciousness and harboring no weaknesses to exploit, Verwol and his followers began to wear black clothing and adopted an intimidating manner. The practice of nethermancy also became a central part of Grim Legion strategy. Though scholars consider it unlikely that Verwol actually uttered the famous phrase, "When in doubt, hack 'em to bits," those words accurately describe his approach to fighting Horrors. As more units around Barsaive copied Verwol's style, the Legion hanged, burned, or put to the sword countless innocent Name-givers whom they suspected of being Horror-tainted. Anyone who dared speak out against the Grim Legion's methods was considered tainted and hunted down.

As Barsaive's people took refuge in the kaers, the Grim Legion followed them underground. In some under-

ground communities, they served as an unofficial vanguard against the most subtle Horror intrusions. In many cases, Grim Legion forces successfully destroyed Horrors who breached kaer defenses. Often, however, they also persecuted harmless eccentrics and any citizen who threatened their political power.

In modern times, dozens of Grim Legion bands roam both the countryside and city streets, ever vigilant against real or imagined Horrors. When the Grim Legion passes, the wise man crosses the street if he can do so without attracting their attention.

The Legion has no central organization, hierarchy, or governing council to determine who can become a Legionnaire. Instead, this disparate collection of fighting units identifies itself with a cause and a style, and each unit's captain follows no authority save his or her own. In fact, history speaks of many instances in which Grim Legion units fight one another, particularly when one group fails to adhere to another's standards of conduct.

TREASURES

The player characters may obtain two magical treasures during the course of **Infected**. The following descriptions of these magical items include the Key Knowledges and Effects for each thread rank of each treasure. See **Magical Treasure**, p. 270, and **Workings of Magic**, p. 136, in the **Earthdawn** rulebook for guidelines on how to use magical treasures in a campaign.

Because the owners of these items use them regularly and so have woven active threads to them, the players will find it extremely difficult to get their hands on these treasures. To do so, the player characters must defeat the Grim Legion and slay both Kwamm and Moltaa. Kwamm wears Derita's Silk-Tailed Wailer strapped at his hip, and Moltaa frequently wears the Skull of Maarberg as part of her armor.

DERITA'S SILK-TAILED WAILER

Maximum Threads: 1

Spell Defense: 24

Derita's Silk-Tailed Wailer is a unique silver broadsword, identifiable by intertwined bat wings carved on its black-enamel hilt. On the pommel of the sword is a thick ring, to which the wielder can tie a length of silk cord.

Thread Ranks

Rank 1 **Cost:** 500

Key Knowledge: First wielded by one of Verwol's original Grim Legionnaires, this weapon gained its magic when its owner, Derita, tricked a Horror into investing

the blade with magical powers. The wielder must learn Derita's name.

Effect: When unsheathed, the sword emits an eerie howl. The wielder makes a Charisma Test against his opponent's Social Defense, using a step number equal to his Charisma step plus the sword's thread rank. If the test is successful, the wielder's opponent suffers a penalty of a number of steps equal to the weapon's thread rank to any action he takes save for running away. The penalty lasts for a number of rounds equal to the weapon's thread rank.

Rank 2 **Cost:** 800

Effect: The wielder must attach a black silk cord to the pommel of the sword, tying the other end to his or her belt. In combat, the silk stiffens and propels the blade toward the wielder's chosen target, effectively lengthening the blade's reach. The cord can be up to 1 yard long for each of the weapon's thread ranks. At Rank 2, for example, the wielder can strike using his Melee Weapons talent at a target up to 2 yards away. At Rank 5, the distance increases to 5 yards, and so on. When used in this manner, the silk has the same tensile strength as the blade.

Rank 3 **Cost:** 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the name and title of the Horror who enchanted the blade: Harjarlifex, Artificer of Dooms.

Effect: The blade hums whenever it comes within 100 yards of a Horror. To use this power, the gamemaster makes a secret Perception Test for the wielder against the Horror's Spell Defense, using a step number equal to the wielder's Perception step plus the sword's thread rank. The sword adds 6 steps to the wielder's Strength step for Damage Tests.

Rank 4 **Cost:** 2,100

Effect: The wielder may add the sword's thread rank to his Physical, Spell, or Social Defense when resisting Horror powers. This effect does not apply to spells cast by Horrors. The sword adds 7 steps to the wielder's Strength step for Damage Tests.

Rank 5 **Cost:** 3,400

Key Knowledge: Derita and the Horror signed a contract to give the sword its magic using ink made from Derita's blood, the Horror's blood, and a third substance. The wielder must determine the third substance, which is the tears of an orphaned child.

Effect: The Horror-detecting hum described at Rank 3 occurs in response to the lingering effects of Horror powers used within 100 yards of the sword's position. The



sword adds 8 steps to the wielder's Strength step for Damage Tests against normal opponents, 10 steps against Horrors or Horror constructs.

Rank 6 Cost: 5,500

Effect: The Horror-detecting hum occurs in the presence of any being tainted by Horrors or bearing a Horror mark. The sword adds 9 steps to the wielder's Strength step for Damage Tests against normal opponents, 11 steps against Horrors or Horror constructs.

Rank 7 Cost: 8,900

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the terms of the agreement between Derita and Harjarlifex, and how Derita used the contract's fine print to outwit the Horror.

Deed: The wielder must seek out Harjarlifex and negotiate an agreement with her to activate the blade's greatest powers. Harjarlifex, however, has learned from her mistake with Derita and will not fall for the same trick again.

Effect: If within 100 yards of a Horror, the sword whispers the Horror's greatest weakness to the wielder. The sword adds 10 steps to the wielder's Strength step for Damage Tests against normal opponents, 12 steps against Horrors or Horror constructs.

SKULL OF MAARBERG

Maximum Threads: 1

Spell Defense: 21

The Skull of Maarberg is a helmet made using the top of a bizarre, semi-reptilian skull with what appears to be seven eye sockets. Light brown in color and discolored in several places by patches of light green, the helmet is much stronger than it looks.

Thread Ranks

Rank 1 Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The skull belongs to a Horror slain by a great hero during the earliest days of the Scourge, and was recovered many years after the Burning in a buried city that its discoverers christened Maarberg. The user must discover the name its long-dead inhabitants gave to the city (the gamemaster supplies the name).

Effect: The user gains the Swat ability. The step number for this ability is the wearer's Strength step plus the helmet's thread rank. Using Swat does not require an action. When struck, the wearer makes a Swat Test. If the die roll result equals or exceeds the result of the opponent's Attack Test, the user can deflect the force of the blow with a backhanded swipe of his or her arm. The force of the blow rebounds into the attacker, sending him or her flying backward a number of yards equal to the difference between the two test results.

To avoid taking 1 point of Stun damage for each yard flown, the target must make a successful Dexterity, Avoid Blow, or similar test against a Difficulty Number equal to the Swat Test result. If the wearer's Swat Test fails, the attacker's blow does standard damage, and the character wearing the helmet suffers an automatic Knockdown.

Rank 2 Cost: 800

Effect: The user gains the Horror power Animate Dead. The step number for this power is the wearer's Willpower step plus the helmet's thread rank.

Rank 3 Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must discover the name of the hero who slew the Horror in the final defense of his or her city (the gamemaster supplies the name).

Deed: When the user attaches the Rank 3 thread to the Skull, the lingering, malign presence of the dead Horror psychically assaults the user. To resist, the user must make a Willpower or Willforce Test against the Horror's Spell Defense of 21. If the test fails, the spirit of the Horror possesses the user for three days, during which it attempts to force the user to cause as much pain and suffering as possible.

Effect: The user gains the Horror power Cursed Luck. The step number for this power is the wearer's Willpower step plus the helmet's thread rank.

Rank 4 Cost: 2,100

Effect: The user gains the Horror power Damage Shift. The step number for this power is the wearer's Willpower step plus the helmet's thread rank.

Rank 5 Cost: 3,400

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the name of the Horror whose skull he wears (the gamemaster supplies the name).

Deed: When the user attaches the Rank 5 thread, the Horror's spirit psychically assaults the user. To resist, the user must make a Willpower or Willforce Test against the Horror's Spell Defense of 21. If the test fails, the Horror possesses the user for a year and a day.

Effect: The user gains the Horror power Skin Shift. The step number for this power is the wearer's Willpower step plus the helmet's thread rank.

Rank 6 Cost: 5,500

Effect: The user gains the Horror power Corrupt Karma. The step number for this power is the wearer's Willpower step plus the helmet's thread rank.

Rank 7 **Cost:** 8,900

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the curse that escaped the lips of the Horror whose skull she wears at the moment of its death, "Through a Name-giver's greed for power, I shall live again to laugh at your crumbling bones!"

Deed: The spirit of the Horror makes a final attempt to take over the user, who must make a Willpower or Willforce Test against a Spell Defense of 28 to defeat the Horror. If the test fails, the Horror destroys the wearer's identity and takes over his or her body until the body dies of natural causes. If the test is successful, the Horror possesses the wearer for three days.

Effect: The user gains the Horror power Karma Tap. The step number for this power is the wearer's Willpower step plus the helmet's thread rank.

ADDITIONAL MAGICAL ITEMS

The player characters may find the *Book of Blue Spirits* and the dragon sculpture in Aardelea's cavern. Though both show a magical nature, neither object can be used as a magical treasure. In the case of the book, it most likely disintegrates within seven days of discovery; even if the player characters preserve it, the spirit that gives access to the book's magic goes mad and can no longer communicate its secrets. In the case of the sculpture, the nature of its magic lies far beyond the knowledge or skill of any magician in Barsaive. Each is described below.

EXAMINING THE BOOK

As described in *Aardelea's Cavern*, p. 47, the book that granted Aardelea her powers has decayed over the centuries. When Aardelea dug it up and exposed it to the air, this deterioration accelerated. Still, the characters may have a chance to examine the tome closely—either astrally or by attempting to decipher its writing—during the remaining days of the book's existence.

Astral Examination

To examine the *Book of Blue Spirits* astrally, the player characters may use the Astral Sight or Detect Magic talent, or an Astral Sense spell. A windling character, of course, may use that race's natural astral sight. The book has a Spell Defense of 21. A result of 7 or higher on any appropriate test indicates a magical presence within the book, but a character must achieve a result equal to or greater than the book's Spell Defense to learn anything useful. The gamemaster may read aloud or paraphrase the following to any player whose character succeeds at an appropriate talent or magic test:

"As you gaze at the pattern of this book, the supposed source of Aardelea's mysterious powers, you slowly begin to sense that it is gazing back at you. After several minutes, you can see a faint, blue light shining around the book. As you watch, the formless light begins to take the shape of a small dragon roughly seven feet in length. It gazes back at you, settles into a sitting position and seems to fall asleep. Slowly, the sleeping light-dragon dissipates, first into formless blue light and then into darkness."

The dragon-shape's sitting position matches that of the hidden dragon sculpture (see below). Any player character who sees the above-described blue light and finds the sculpture may make a Perception (7) Test; if successful, the character notices that the positions are the same. Additional tests, however, shed no further light on the subject. For more information, see *The Book of Blue Spirits*, p. 56, in the **Loose Ends** section.

Examining the Writing

Any player character with the Read and Write Language (Sperethiel) Skill or an appropriate knowledge skill can attempt to decipher the book's runes by making a skill test using a Difficulty Number of 21. Appropriate knowledge skills include Ancient Languages, Ancient History, or Dragon Lore. The information learned depends on the success level that the character achieves on the test. Any success level above Average means the character also learns the information available at lower levels of success.

An Average success indicates that the runes are a combination of written Sperethiel and some other, unidentifiable script. The character can make no distinction between the runes on the book's cover and those on its pages.

On a Good success, the character can translate some of the writing on the cover into the words, "Book," "Blue," and "Spirits." The character can also tell that the contents are formulas and rituals similar to those found in contemporary grimoires, but far more complex.

On an Excellent success, the character recognizes the Sperethiel runes as an ancient form of the written language, believed to have died out in Barsaive. He or she also notices that the unknown script resembles ancient hieroglyphs used to indicate dragons.

On an Extraordinary success, the character finds and can read the three pages of text that describe the powers Aardelea has demonstrated. The character's rough translation, however, does not extend to information regarding how to use or teach the use of these



abilities. Among the non-elven symbols, the character can recognize several that represent dragons and dragon magic.

EXAMINING THE DRAGON SCULPTURE

If the player characters find the dragon sculpture (see *Aardelea's Cavern*, p. 47), they may choose to study it, but can learn little more about it than they can guess from its appearance. If examined astrally, the sculpture has a Spell Defense of 12. If a character makes a successful test against that Spell Defense using an appropriate magical ability, he or she discovers that the sculpture has a magical aura, but learns nothing more.

If a character with an artisan skill in stone carving or sculpture attempts to examine the sculpture, he or she must make the appropriate test against a Difficulty Number of 13. Any level of success indicates that the sculpture is made of exquisitely carved obsidian. On an Excellent success or better, a player character notices that the cunning detail owes its beauty and fineness to magic as well as to skilled fingers. The player also notices that the obsidian has an unnaturally brilliant sheen that may result from enchantment.

The strongbox that holds the sculpture is enchanted to resist the effects of age and decay. The box has a Spell Defense of 12. Its lock is broken, but otherwise the box is in excellent condition.

AARDELEA'S POWERS

Aardelea's unusual abilities function in a manner similar to other *Earthdawn* talents.

ELSEWHERE SENSE

Step Number: Rank + Willpower + 2

Action: Yes **Skill Use:** No

Requires Karma: No **Strain:** None

Discipline Talent Use: None

The Elsewhere Sense talent allows a player character to closely observe events occurring some distance away or behind a barrier, using either hearing, sight, smell, or touch. To use the enhanced sense of his or her choice, the player must specify the area around which the ability centers, up to 20 yards away per rank. Then the player makes an Elsewhere Sense Test against a Difficulty Number determined by the distance between him and the spot he is observing. The base Difficulty Number is 5, plus 1 for each 10 yards of distance. While using this ability, the player cannot use the chosen sense to observe his or her true surroundings; if a char-

acter chooses to see an eagle in a nest several yards up a sheer cliff, he can no longer see the desert floor on which he is standing. This weakness can render the character susceptible to blindside and surprise attacks (see p. 202, ED).

Beings with a Spell Defense can avoid being observed by a character using the Elsewhere Sense talent. In this case, the player character uses the highest Spell Defense of all beings observable from the selected area as the Difficulty Number for the Elsewhere Sense Test. Each use of Elsewhere Sense lasts for a number of rounds equal to the character's rank in the talent.

MIND OVER MATTER

Step Number: Rank + Willpower + 2

Action: Yes **Skill Use:** No

Requires Karma: No **Strain:** None

Discipline Talent Use: None

The Mind Over Matter talent allows a player character to move small amounts of solid matter at will. He or she may move the matter or object in any direction or through the air at a maximum speed of yards per round equal to the character's rank in the talent. To use this ability, the character makes a Mind Over Matter Test against a Difficulty Number based on the weight of the object moved. The base Difficulty Number is 2, plus 1 for every 5 pounds of weight. If a character attempts to move an object or being with a Spell Defense, use the Spell Defense as the Difficulty Number.

Each use of Mind Over Matter lasts for a number of rounds equal to the character's rank in the talent or until the character stops concentrating.

MYSTIC HEALING

Step Number: Rank + Willpower + 2

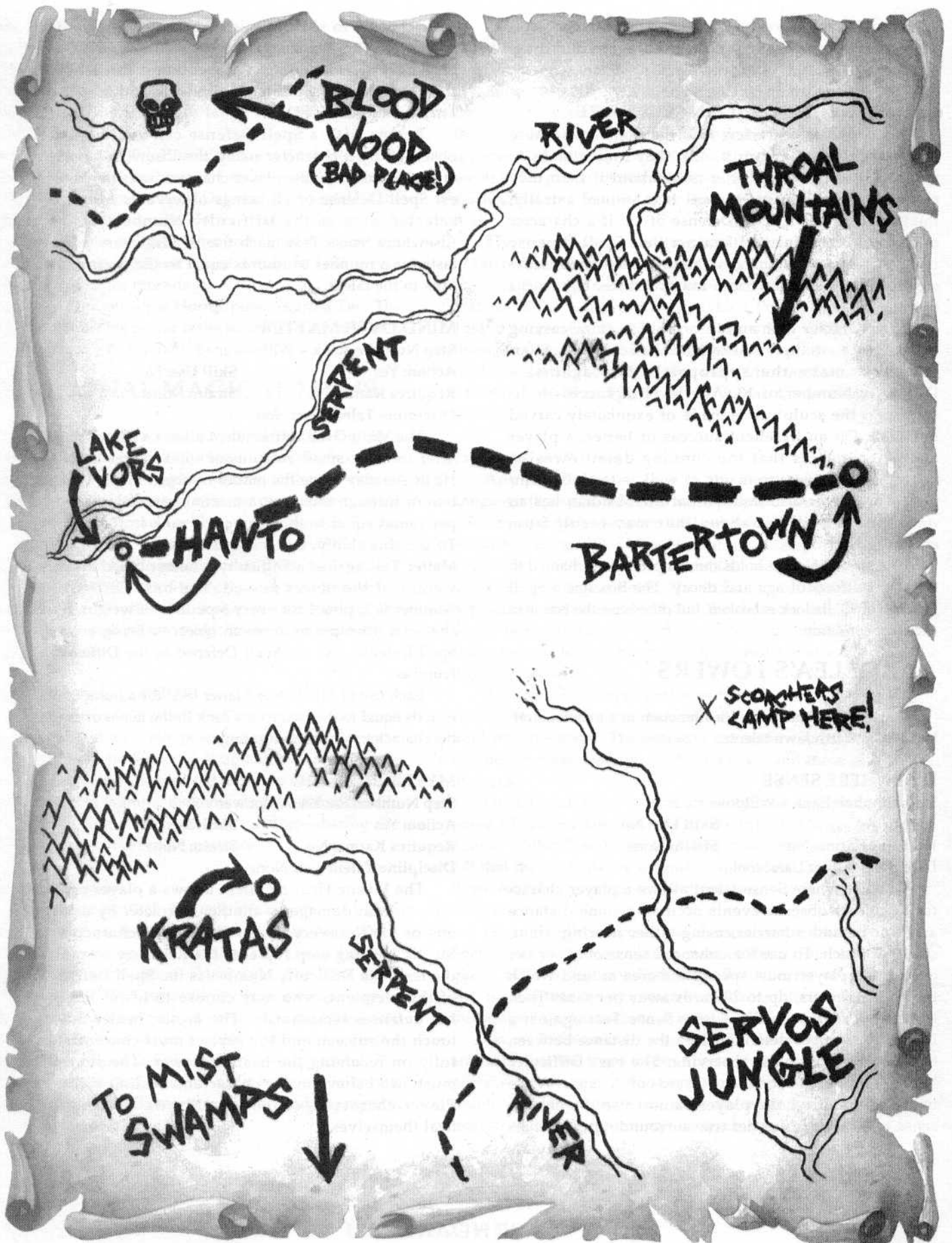
Action: Yes **Skill Use:** No

Requires Karma: No **Strain:** None

Discipline Talent Use: None

The Mystic Healing talent allows a player character to heal damage to another character by using one of his Recovery Tests. The player character's Mystic Healing step replaces his Recovery step for the test. The Difficulty Number is the Spell Defense of the recipient, who may choose to lower his or her defenses temporarily. The mystic healer must touch the subject, and the subject must concentrate fully on receiving the healing power. The subject must also believe in the character's healing ability. Player characters cannot use Mystic Healing to heal themselves.

HANDOUT #1: CHARBOYYA'S MAP



HANDOUT 2: CHARBOYYA'S LETTER TO LAVERIUM

To my dearest Mother,

Though you may reprove my extravagance in sending this second letter in a month, I eagerly await your reply. As you may already have heard from the brave adventurers who delivered this letter, the couriers I sent to Hanto a few weeks since have not returned. I fear that they took the advance fee I paid them—not, I assure you, a significant amount—and simply absconded to other parts to spend it. Likely they never reached Hanto, so these burlings of mine make little sense to you. I hope all is well with you, my dearest Mother.

Business continues to grow, which pleases me. I have found, however, that great success merely sharpens a dwarf's sense of regret. My profoundest regret, dear Mother, is your refusal to join me here in Bartertown. None in Hanto will scorn you for choosing to spend your twilight days in relative comfort; certainly you have labored hard in the fields long enough for any Name-giver twice over!

I know, I repeat myself—fruitlessly, I fear. Please give my love to all in Hanto. Should you ever decide to accept my offer, I will send you an escort within two weeks. As always, I remain your loving son.

Charboyya

HANDOUT 3: CHARBOYYA'S LETTER TO EMBERICA

My brother Emberica,

My respects to you! I hope you have ceased provoking trouble with the headman of Bari village. No doubt he deserved a good thrashing, but your description made him sound as if his muscles might put a smith to shame! I hope your nose remains unbroken, as it was before you last wrote (which is not saying much!).

This letter ought to get through. I've had to hire a second pack of couriers to get this to you; your last reply never arrived. Did you frighten them off with your fierceness? You can be a most frightening dwarf, especially in the dark.

Write back to assure me you haven't broken any bones—yours or others, lately.

Charboyya

HANDOUT 4: CHARBOYYA'S LETTER TO ORWEIA

My dear friend Orweia,

These last few weeks have been the most difficult I have faced in many a year. I worry little about myself, but the fear that something has happened to my family and friends makes me as nervous as a cat on a sinking boat. I have worn a path in my carpet with pacing, all because the last couriers I sent to Hanto did not return. I fear they have been waylaid and killed. They went willingly enough, for a fair price, but they might be alive were it not for my request. I have sent this missive by yet another group of fine young adepts, who may face a similar fate simply so that I may know how you all are faring. Truly, sometimes I think I am a selfish dwarf. (I know you will say otherwise—perhaps that is why I tell you such things.)

The lengthy letter you may have missed contained many details of inconsequential matters—buying silks, selling silks, hiring workers, firing workers. I am afraid it all seems too trivial to pen a second time, but please do not cease writing every scrap of news about your life—especially the tales of your children, which cheer me so!

And yes, to your inevitable question, I have yet to find a mate. Here I am at the gates of Throal and cannot find a suitable dwarf maiden to share my life. I suppose I am not really looking.

I anxiously await your reply, my dear Orweia.

Charboyya

HANDOUT 5: CHARBOYYA'S LETTER TO CHERECA

Greetings Chereca,

This is the second letter I have written you in a month, delivered by the second group of couriers I have dispatched in the same period. I fear for the safety of the first group, and so I would appreciate any assurances you can offer me. Is the savanna becoming more dangerous of late? Banditry and slaving seem to be on the rise; I very much hope you are all less troubled by Horrors. Have you succeeded in arranging the meetings you spoke of between the heads of Hanto's neighboring villages? The search for common ground seems a most worthy task; I admire your persistence for attempting it, though I confess myself doubtful of success if the current crop of village leaders are as hard-headed and shortsighted as those in charge when I left Hanto.

Best wishes always,

Charboyya

P.S. Lately you have appeared in my dreams.



HORROR TAINTED...

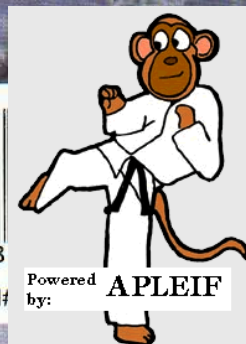
Deep in the isolated hinterlands of Barsaive, where strangers are met with fear and suspicion, lies a tiny, isolated village. When tales of strange powers possessed by one young villager began to spread, it was only a matter of time before the black-clad fanatics of the Grim Legion arrived to investigate these dire rumors.

These vigilantes pronounced the girl Horror-tainted, corrupted by foul evil—a pestilence to be purged from the land.

Held captive by the Grim Legion's reign of terror, this village's only hope lies with a small band of unsuspecting adventurers...

Infected is an Earthdawn adventure for 6 to 8 characters of any Discipline of Circles 2 through 4.

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