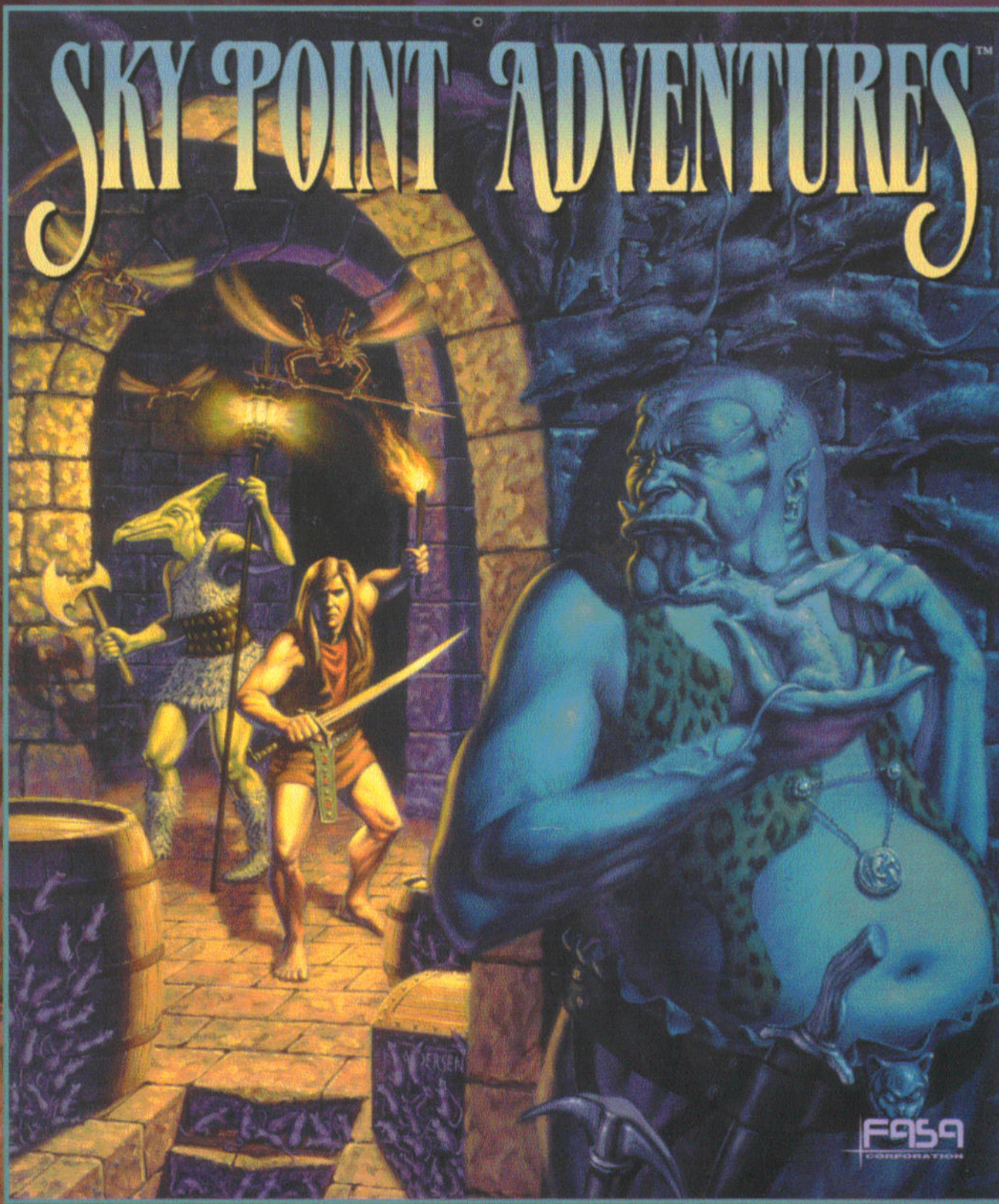


EARTHDAWN®

SKY POINT ADVENTURES™



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SKY POINTTM ADVENTURES

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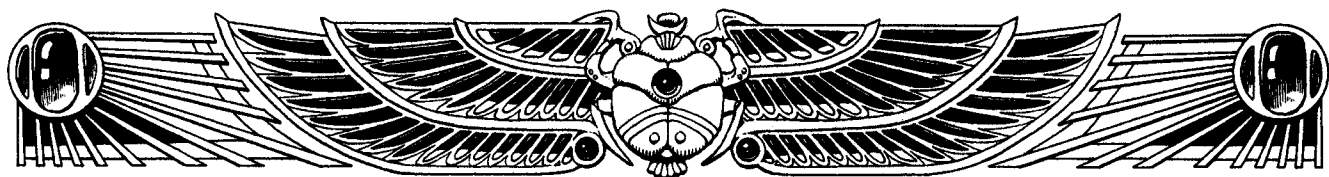


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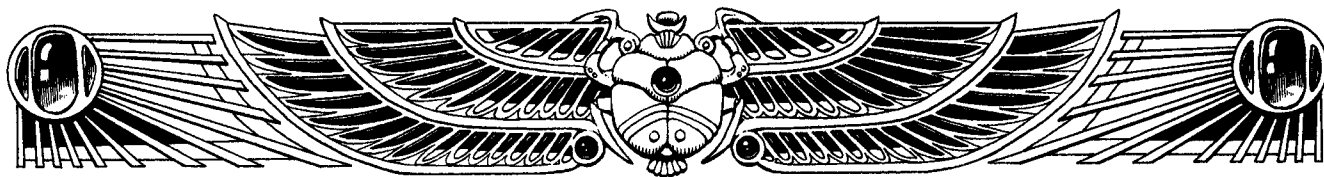
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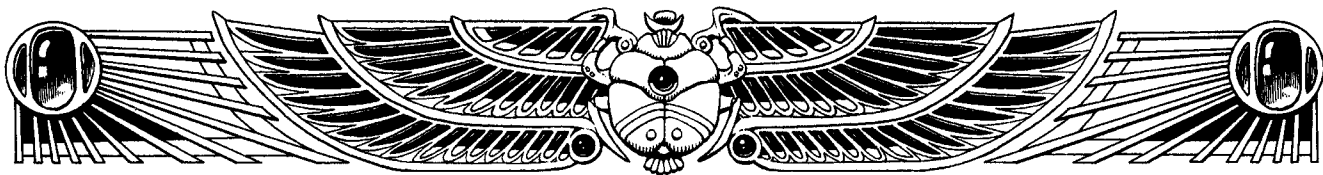
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INTRODUCTION



Thousands of years ago there existed an age of magic and high adventure, the age of **Earthdawn**. The power of magic flowed freely through the world, and people could draw on magic to perform both wondrous feats and everyday tasks. But the dawn of magic also brought Horrors to Earth, creatures from the depths of astral space that devour all life in their path. For four centuries, the people of Earth hid from the Horrors that devastated their land during the time that came to be called the Scourge. Now, the

people of Barsaive have re-emerged from their sealed kaers and citadels to reclaim their world from the remaining Horrors and the oppressive Theran Empire. From all across Barsaive, bold heroes arise to explore the world, search for magical treasure, and slay the Horrors that still exist. Magicians spin the magical energies of the universe into powerful spells, and adepts use the magic to enhance their natural talents. Armed with magic, courage, skill and daring, Barsaive's heroes strive to heal the world of the scars left by the Scourge and to build their own legends into the history of their land.

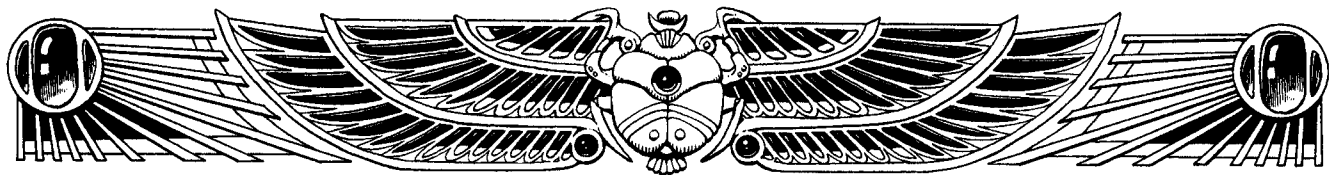
Sky Point Adventures is a collection of three short roleplaying adventures set in the world of **Earthdawn**. Each of the adventures takes place in or near the Theran military outpost of Sky Point, the nearby city of Vivane, or the shantytown of Vrontok that lies in Sky Point's shadow. **Chasing the Snakeskin Boots** takes the characters into the roughest areas of Barsaivian Vivane—the Broken Quarter and the forbidding tunnels of the Undercity—on the trail of a thief who has stolen a treasure far more valuable than he realizes. In **A Message to Vivane**, the characters travel to Vivane to deliver purloined information that may make the Resistance a viable threat to Theran rule—or break it completely if the information falls into the hands of the Theran authorities. Of course, the characters have no inkling of the worth—or the danger—of the “goods” they are carrying. The final adventure, **Shadows**, leads the characters into the perilous rats' warren of Vrontok, huddled beneath the huge Theran fortress of Sky Point. There, an unscrupulous wizard is performing experiments in mind-control with the connivance of Vrontok's thuggish mayor, Lorgo T'rask. The wizard's latest victim is the son of one of the adventurers' oldest friends, and so the adventurers must rescue the boy or die in the attempt.

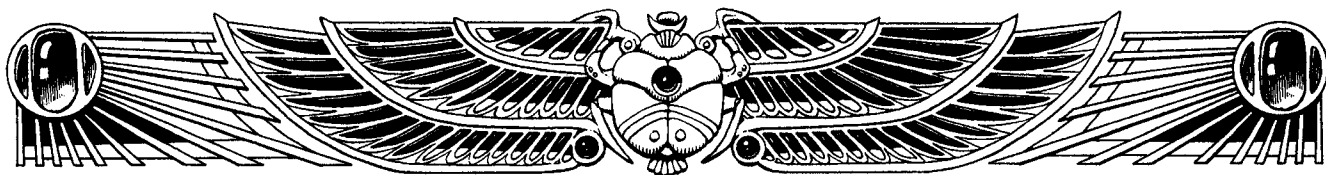
GAMEMASTERING NOTES

The adventures in **Sky Point Adventures** are linear—each follows a specific sequence. However, feel free to modify the adventures to suit your particular group of players. Though the encounters of each adventure progress logically, the gamemaster need not follow the adventure precisely as written to run a successful game. To run any of these adventures, the gamemaster needs a thorough familiarity with the contents of this book, and both players and gamemaster should be familiar with the **Earthdawn** rulebook (ED).

All these adventures include clearly marked sections intended to be read aloud to the players. Adjust the text of these sections when necessary to accurately reflect







events as they occur in your adventure; depending on the choices made by different groups of players, the assumptions in the existing text may not always be correct. All adventures in **Sky Point Adventures** are best suited for player characters of varying Circles; a brief introductory paragraph in each adventure suggests an appropriate number of characters and their recommended Circles.

MAKING TESTS

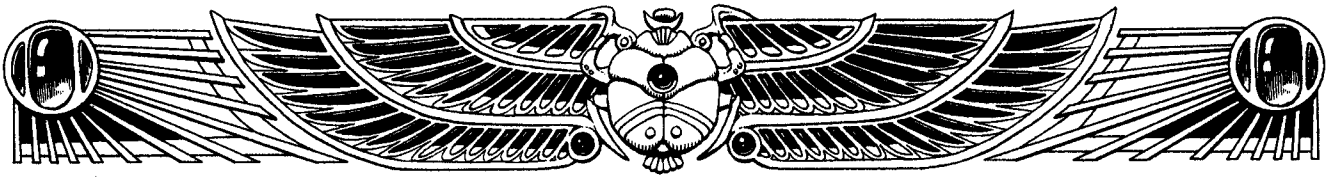
Whenever player characters attempt to take actions such as casting a spell, swinging a sword at an opponent, tracking a Horror, or flirting with a barmaid, the gamemaster or the player rolls dice against a Difficulty Number to determine the action's outcome. These dice rolls are called tests. To make a test, the player or gamemaster rolls the appropriate Action dice based on the step number of the ability being used (see the **Step/Action Dice Table**, p. 36, ED). If the dice roll result is equal to or greater than the Difficulty Number, the test is successful and the character accomplishes his action. If the result is less than the Difficulty Number, the test is unsuccessful and the character fails to accomplish his action. In tests that deal with

magic, the dice roll result often determines the duration of a magical effect as well.

Frequently, a test result determines not only success or failure, but the level of success. A test may have one of five success levels: Poor, Average, Good, Excellent, and Extraordinary. A Poor success level indicates failure that causes unpleasant side effects. An Average success—equal to or barely exceeding the Difficulty Number—means that the character just barely accomplished his action. A somewhat better dice roll yields a Good success, and a result close to double the Difficulty Number means an Excellent success. To achieve Extraordinary successes requires an even better roll. Any success level greater than Average may give the character some gain for his actions or valuable extra information. The amount of gain for each success level is determined by the gamemaster unless otherwise noted.

In many cases when the player characters must make a test, the required ability is noted, followed by the Difficulty Number of the task in parentheses. For example, a Perception (13) Test means that a player character must use his Perception ability against a Difficulty Number of 13.





HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Aside from the **ED** rulebook, this book contains everything required to run **Sky Point Adventures**. However, the **Sky Point and Vivane** boxed set will greatly enhance the adventures. The boxed set provides much more detailed descriptions of Vivane, Sky Point, the shantytown of Vrontok, and the surrounding lands of Vivane Province. Gamemasters may also find the **Barsaive Campaign Set**, the **Earthdawn Gamemaster Pack**, the **Earthdawn Companion**, and the **Creatures and Horrors** sourcebooks useful. Read the adventures carefully to familiarize yourself with the backgrounds of each before beginning the game. Familiarize yourself with the basic outline of the plot of each adventure as well and know precisely which plot developments trigger later events. As always, be prepared to deal with the unexpected.

Each adventure begins with a prologue story and a brief introduction, followed by a **Plot Synopsis** that summarizes the story background and the most probable course of the adventure. The following chapters, called encounters, describe the situations and events the characters must deal with during the course of the adventure. Each encounter contains five sections: **Overview**, **Setting the Stage**, **Themes and Images**, **Behind the Scenes**, and **Troubleshooting**.

The **Overview** briefly summarizes the action that occurs during the encounter and describes the encounter's main conflict. The next section, **Setting the Stage**, contains a narrative description that the gamemaster reads aloud to the players. The narrative describes the player characters' location and what is happening to them as if the characters were actually there. Any special instructions for the gamemaster here are printed in **boldface** type.

Themes and Images helps the gamemaster set the mood and pacing for a particular encounter. It 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 sensory impressions.

Behind the Scenes explains what is really going on in each encounter. This section provides the gamemaster with all the information he needs to run the encounter, such as specialized descriptions of locations and events and statistics for gamemaster characters they may meet or creatures they may fight. If the players or gamemaster need a map to play an encounter, it appears here. As with **Setting the Stage**, any special instructions for the gamemaster here are printed in **boldface** type.

The final section of each encounter, **Troubleshooting**, offers suggestions to help the gamemaster get the adventure back on track should things go awry. For example, the characters may miss an important clue or lose a fight that they need to win. Most gamemasters will not want the player characters to get discouraged or killed off too easily. This section offers the gamemaster options for keeping the game going over trouble spots. Of course, the gamemaster may ignore these hints and invent his own solutions or simply let the chips fall where they may.

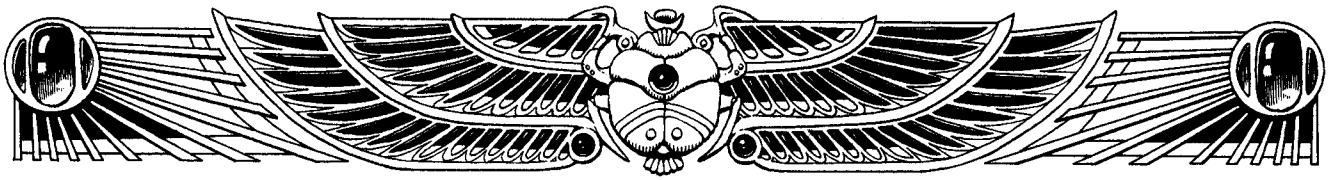
Following the encounters, the section entitled **Loose Ends** sums up the consequences of the adventure and suggests ways the gamemaster might use the adventure's gamemaster characters and settings in future adventures. This section also includes **Awarding Legend Points**, guidelines for awarding the adventure's Legend Points to the player characters. In **Earthdawn** adventures of standard length, the gamemaster awards Legend Points after each gaming session as well as at the end of the adventure. Because the adventures in this book are designed to fit into a single gaming session, the gamemaster need only give his players an Adventure Legend Award (see **Awarding Legend Points**, following). **Cast of Characters** provides game statistics and descriptions for significant gamemaster characters in each adventure, including creatures and/or Horrors. One adventure contains a **Rumors and Research** section, which provides all the information the player characters can obtain from outside sources in the adventure: rumors, tales and legends, library research, and so on. Much of the information in this section may be adapted for future adventures.

AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

The **Loose Ends** section of each adventure includes Legend Award guidelines for the adventure. These guidelines indicate the Legend Points the gamemaster awards for each task accomplished or goal reached during the adventures. The **Adventure Legend Award** 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**. In addition, player characters may receive Legend Awards for creative roleplaying and/or heroics, defeating creatures and/or opponents, and finding or acquiring treasure.

For **creative roleplaying and/or heroics**, characters may receive a number of Legend Points for taking certain types of actions listed in each adventure. A single character may only receive one such award during a given adventure.

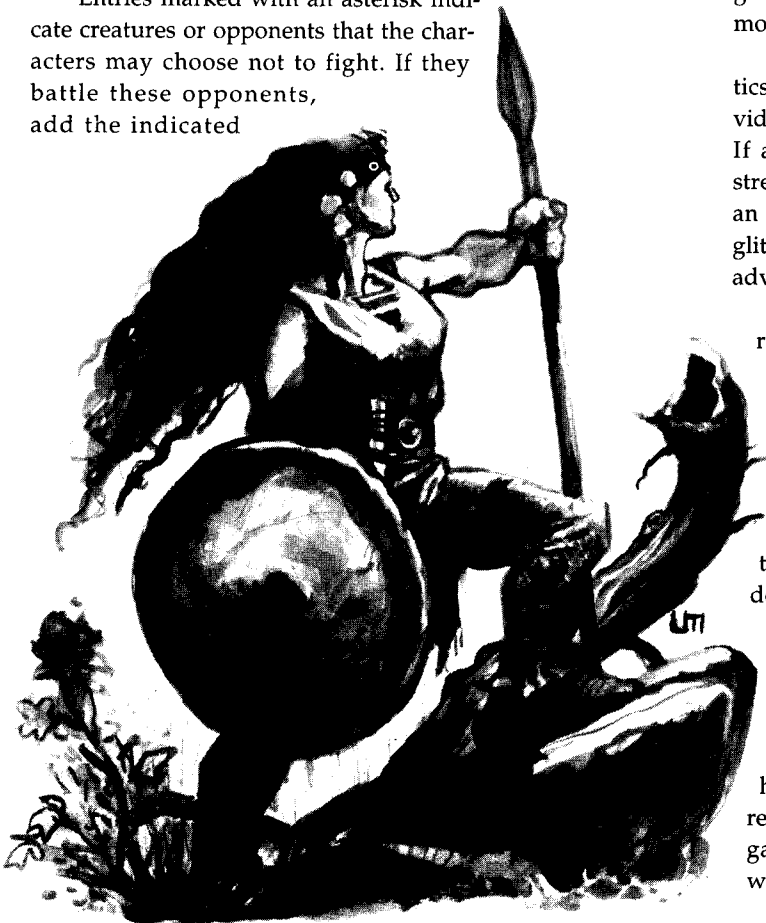




Unlike other Legend Awards, the Legend Points listed for various acts of creative roleplaying or heroics are not divided among the characters.

The **Creature Legend Award** appears in the Creature/Opponent Award Table provided in each adventure. These tables list the available Legend Points for defeating the adventure's creatures and/or opponents, arranged by the type and number of each creature and opponent fought as well as by the number of player characters. The Legend Points listed for each creature represent the total number of points for each type, not the number of Legend Points per creature. For example, the Creature Legend Award for the Resistance members that the characters battle in *Chasing the Snakeskin Boots* (p. 27) is 300 Legend Points for all 6 Resistance members, not 300 for each one. Divide the total Creature Legend Award equally among the player characters (see p. 242, ED). Round points per character down to the nearest multiple of 10; 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 creatures or 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.

Characters earn **Treasure Legend Points** by finding or acquiring specific treasures in each adventure. As with points for defeating creatures, 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.

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 provided in each adventure.

PREPARING ADVENTURES

It is impossible to create a published adventure that provides the appropriate opposition level for every diverse group of player characters. Some groups are inherently more powerful than others.

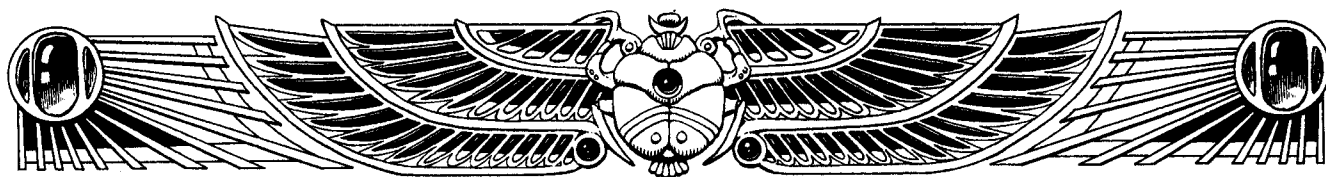
Therefore, gamemasters must adjust the game statistics and capabilities of an adventure's opposition to provide an appropriate level of difficulty for his or her group. If an adventure does not suit the player characters' strengths and weaknesses, use it as a blueprint to develop an adventure of your own. Or if it works well except for a glitch here and there, modify the plot or events to make the adventure a better one.

Keep in mind that you, the gamemaster, have a unique responsibility to make the adventure exciting, keep the players involved and hold the story on track. In describing the world of *Earthdawn*, try to answer all the players' questions about what the characters see, hear, touch, smell, and taste. Feel free to go beyond the descriptions provided in this book when evoking places and moods. To keep the players connected to the action, ask "What do you do?" each time you describe a new scene to them. By describing what they want their characters to do, the players help tell the story and add to their own enjoyment. If the players wander from the storyline, nudge them back in the right direction. If the players make choices that interrupt the story or make them miss a vital clue, drop hints to encourage them to do what the adventure requires. Remember, however, to keep it subtle. A good gamemaster guides the players; he does not tell them what to do.

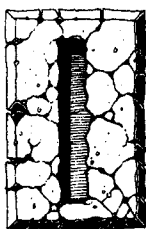
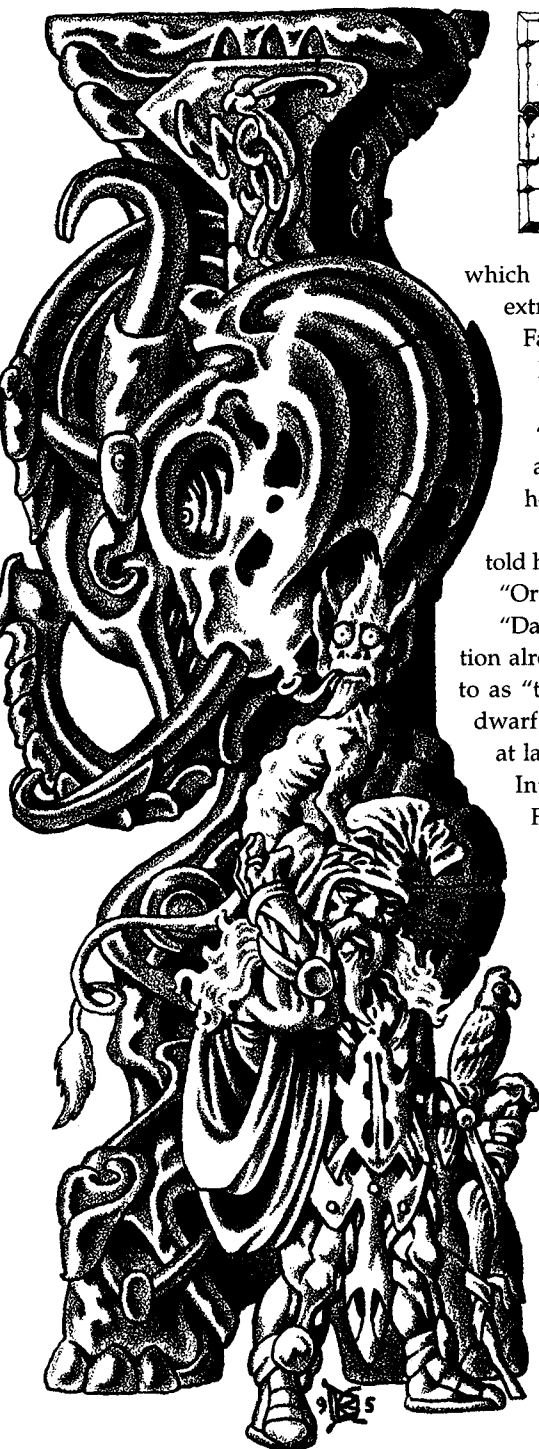


CHASING THE SNAKESKIN BOOTS





A WIZARD TO DIE FOR



'm afraid he got away, ma'am," Fansherin said, forcing himself to look downcast. He knew Shand would be angry. Fansherin hated it when wizards got angry—unless Shand was the wizard.

"He got away?" Shand stared at him. "I pay you and those other idiots good gold every week and you let him get away? A little rat of a Barsaivian thief?"

Her reaction was less intense than Fansherin had hoped. Shand simply tapped one foot on the floor; her fists weren't clenched, which was a sure sign of absolute fury. The foot-tapping merely meant that she was extremely angry with him. The volatile wizard spent a lot of her time angry, and Fansherin rather admired her when her face was flushed and her voice raised. In his opinion, rage made Shand remarkably pretty for a human woman.

"I have already sent people to trail him," Fansherin replied in a soothing tone. "They will be back soon." As if on cue, one of Shand's lackeys entered the room and whispered in Fansherin's ear. Fansherin thanked the woman and dismissed her, then turned back to his mistress.

"It appears the thief somehow managed to get through the North Gate," Fansherin told her. "Into the Broken Quarter. He must have bribed the gate guards."

"Or he has a pass, courtesy of that damned dwarf," Shand snapped.

"Daragast?" Fansherin pricked up his elegant ears. He knew the answer to his question already, of course. Daragast was the only person in Vivane that Shand would refer to as "that damned dwarf." The enmity between the mercurial wizard and the dour dwarf was legendary, both in the Theran Conclave in which they served and in the city at large. Fansherin knew little of the reason behind it and didn't care to know more. Intelligent apprentices kept well out of the political affairs of their betters, and Fansherin regarded himself as more intelligent than most. Nonetheless, he was curious. "What can Daragast have to do with this?"

"Never mind," Shand grumbled, avoiding his gaze.

I knew those coins weren't ordinary copper, Fansherin thought. After all, who in his right mind would care about a thief carrying off ten copper coins? He remained silent, however, awaiting the wizard's orders.

"Go and find someone to retrieve my property," Shand said finally, cooling down a little. "I doubt either of us wants to follow our thief into the Broken Quarter."

"We could inform the authorities," Fansherin said. "They can have the Barsaivian militiamen out in an instant and we'll get—"

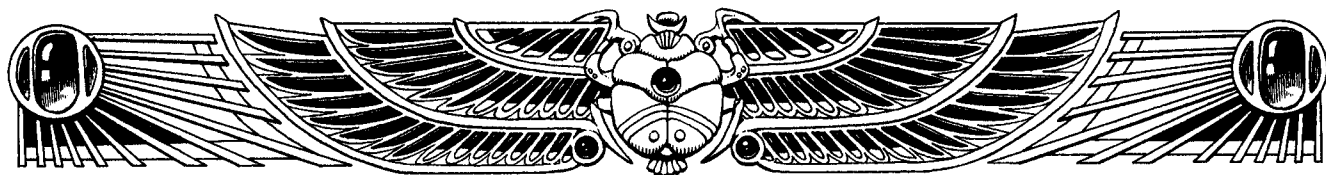
"No," Shand said in a hard voice. "This is a private matter. Find some Barsaivians to do the job for us—people who won't be out of place in that rat's hole."

"We don't know any gutter rabble like that," Fansherin protested.

"Then find some," the wizard shot back. "What do I pay you for?"

Fansherin could have pointed out that she *didn't* pay him—he got free board and lodging in return for helping her with her magical research, but not a coin from her ever passed over his palm. Looking at her face, he decided against it. She might be pretty when she got angry, but Shand's unbridled fury was a thing to be feared. Now was not the time to goad her into an explosion, especially if he wanted to keep learning his trade. He sketched the wizard a brief bow and headed for the door.





CHASING THE SNAKESKIN BOOTS



Chasing the Snakeskin Boots takes place in the city of Vivane. The adventure is best suited for a group of five to seven Second or Third Circle characters. Although the adventure has a linear structure, it has several possible outcomes. The gamemaster determines

exactly when the characters confront the various enemies they encounter during the adventure.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

Beriel Shand, a human wizard of House Narlanth, and Garagund Daragast, a dwarf wizard of House Thaloss, are members of the Theran Conclave of Vivane. They have detested one another for years and think nothing of acting out their mutual antipathy. Recently, Shand paid a few hirelings to steal some magical coins from Daragast. Though she did it primarily to irk him, she also values the coins because they contain elemental water nodes that she can use to find elemental water stores. To her chagrin, an opportunistic Barsaivian thief named Kuiper Repetel has just stolen the coins from her in turn. Shand cannot pursue him herself—she would lose face by demonstrating that a gutter rat can steal from her, and she is also unfamiliar with the non-Theran areas of

Vivane into which the thief has fled. Instead, she recruits the adventurers to get the coins back for her. She gives the adventurers a detailed description of the thief and tells them that he recently left the Theran Quarter through the northern city gates.

The adventurers trail the thief into the Broken Quarter and the Undercity. There, they discover that their quarry has been killed and the coins taken from him by an ork beastmaster who prowls the tunnels beneath the Rat

Circus. While searching for the beastmaster, they run into a covert meeting of the Barsaivian Resistance, who are none too pleased to be disturbed by outsiders. While all this is going on,

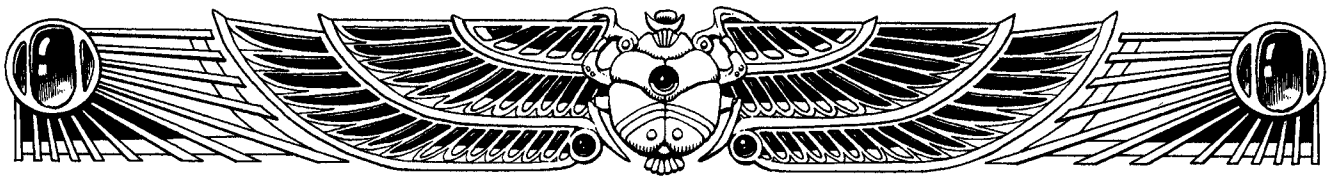
Daragast has sent out his own hirelings to find the coins.

Assuming the adventurers manage to extricate themselves from irritated and paranoid Resistance members and get the coins from the beastmaster, they run into Daragast's men almost immediately and must deal with them. Depending on the choices they make, the adventurers may end up becoming renegades or favored lackeys of one powerful Theran and enemies of another.

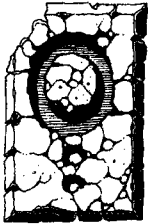
This adventure assumes that the adventurers are prepared to work for Therans, and that they can easily enter the Theran Quarter of Vivane. If they cannot, the gamemaster may set the initial encounter in the Merchants' Quarter, from which the adventurers can pursue the

thief into the Broken Quarter.





FOR A FISTFUL OF COPPERS



VIEW

In this encounter, Fansherin hires the characters to track the escaped thief and recover the stolen coins. They may suspect that someone is tracking them, though they do not find out who is doing so.

SETTING THE STAGE

You are sitting in a little tavern off the Grandwalk, having a late-morning break along with the rest of the Vivanian crowd. Merchants, couriers, and errand-runners stream in from the bustling markets to take coffee, *kokaila*, and sweets as a rest from their hectic work. Therans, Barsaivians, and other people from far-flung lands of the Theran Empire crowd the tables around you, eating and drinking and talking. Even you don't seem out of place in this busy little eatery.

A soberly dressed young elf sidles up to your table and asks softly if you are interested in recovering some stolen property for him—for a fee, of course. By his accent he's a Theran, and no mistake. You decide to hear him out—after all, you've nothing else to do this morning except see the sights. The elf gives the tavernkeeper a nod and a wink, and you find yourselves in a quiet back room with steaming coffee, ale, and food in front of you. While you eat and drink, the elf makes his proposal.

"My patron has recently lost ten copper coins," the elf explains. "They are family heirlooms, stolen by a wretched little thief who was surprised in the act before he could take anything more valuable. The coins are worth little in themselves, but they have sentimental value for my patron, and she will pay well for their recovery. I can give you a description of the thief and offer four hundred silver pieces for the return of the coins. You must decide now; the theft occurred barely an hour ago, and the trail is still fresh. If you delay, it will grow cold."

THEMES AND IMAGES

This encounter is a straightforward job proposal, so play up the the elf's open manner. He is hiding nothing from the adventurers, not even the true nature of the coins—after all, he only suspects that they have magical

power. Other dominant images are the bustle of the tavern and the many races and cultures of the people in it.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The elf, Fansherin, is a Third Circle Elementalist who serves the Theran noble, Beriel Shand. He has been looking for Barsaivian adventurers who can venture with reasonable safety into the Broken Quarter after the thief. He does not know that Shand stole the coins from Garagund Daragast, nor does he know for certain that they are magical. He suspects, however, that they must be more than mere copper and doubts Shand's claim that they are family heirlooms.

Unknown to Fansherin, one of Daragast's henchmen who knows of the robbery at Shand's home has spotted him. The henchman suspects that Fansherin is seeking people to find the coins and follows the adventurers when they leave the tavern.

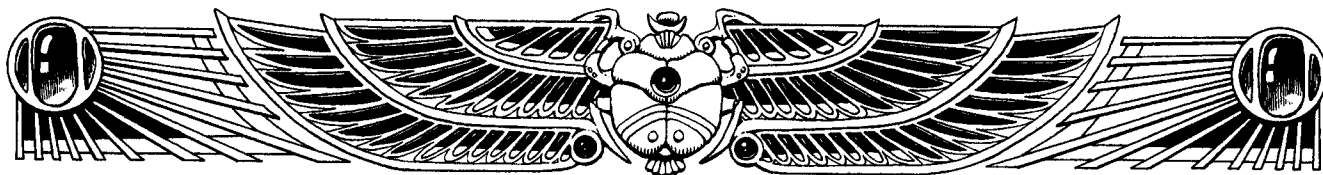
NEGOTIATING WITH FANSHERIN

If the adventurers ask for more money, treat their request as a Large Favor from a Neutral character (p. 240, ED). If they are successful, they can raise Fansherin's offer to 425 silver pieces. Fansherin refuses to give them funds up-front—the deal is strictly cash on delivery. Fansherin expects the characters to return with the coins within the day and remains near the tavern. If they need more time, they must give him a progress report by nightfall. If the adventurers ask about payment for returning only part of the haul ("What if the thief has disposed of some of the coins and we find only a few of them?"), Fansherin says he will pay a mere twenty silver pieces for each individual copper—he really needs the whole set of ten.

If the adventurers ask for a description of the coins, Fansherin says each one is about an inch and a half in diameter and bears a running-water design on each side. They were in a blue silk pouch with black and red silk purse-strings, with the symbol of House Narlanth embroidered on both sides.

If the adventurers take the job, Fansherin describes the thief. The characters' quarry is human, about 5' 8", in his late teens or early twenties, with short-cropped black hair and brown eyes. He was wearing a plain leather jerkin, gray pants, a purple silk neckerchief, and a pair of distinctive snakeskin boots. Fansherin goes on to say that his own





inquiries have traced the thief to the north gates of the Theran Quarter, where he vanished about hour or so ago—presumably headed into the Broken Quarter. This last piece of information should allay any suspicions the adventurers harbor about Fansherin's reasons for hiring them; no Therans venture into the rats' warren of the Broken Quarter if they can help it.

TO THE GATES, MORATIO!

As soon as the adventurers are ready to start, they should head for the northern gate of the Theran Quarter. As they leave the tavern, any character who makes a successful Perception (8) Test sees a red-haired dwarf with a blue-trimmed gray cloak staring at the group and then ducking into a side street. If pursued, the dwarf manages to escape into one of the many side-avenues and byways. This encounter lets the adventurers know they are being followed but provides no information about their shadows.

The adventurers need passes to get into and out of the Theran Quarter. The adventure assumes they have these, as they meet Fansherin inside the Quarter. (If the adventurers do not have the right paperwork, set the tavern encounter in the Merchants' Quarter and revise the following encounter (*A Different Kind of Circus*) accordingly).

The adventurers can ask the guards at the northern gates whether they have seen the thief. The guards shuffle around a bit, say that their memories aren't quite what

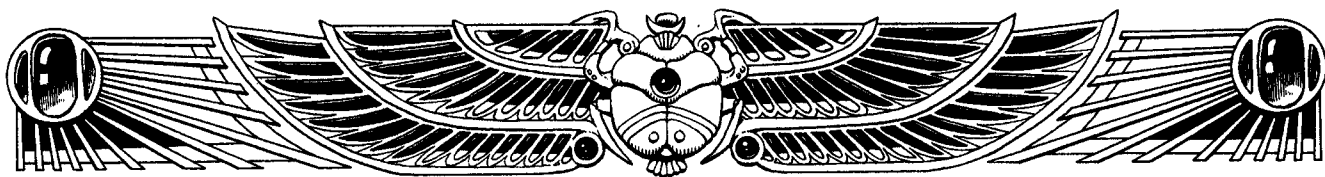
they were and then set off on a long moan and whine about their poor wages. The adventurers should take the hint. For a single silver piece, the guards give the adventurers directions to the northeast area of the Broken Quarter, in the direction of the neighborhood known as the Rat Circus. The guards saw the thief scuttle off a hundred yards or so from the gate—they confirm that he is Barsaivian and that he had a city pass.

TROUBLESHOOTING

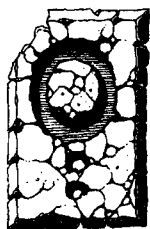
Almost nothing can go wrong in this encounter. The adventurers have little reason to decline the commission—four hundred silver pieces is a decent wage for a day's work. If they decline in the hope of raising the offer, Fansherin says he will seek other willing hands and makes it clear that Vivane has no shortage of mercenaries eager to earn this kind of money. If an adventurer attempts to use magic against Fansherin, the elf has the normal defenses for a Third Circle Elementalist as well as a magical amulet that adds 4 to his Spell Defense and Mystic Armor ratings. Using magic against Fansherin is a crime under Theran law, of course, and so adventurers foolish enough to try this can look forward to a sentence of slavery. Feel free to point this out to them if they seem to need the warning.

If the adventurers ask other tavern patrons about Fansherin, they are unlikely to find anyone who knows him.





A DIFFERENT KIND OF CIRCUS



INTERVIEW

In this encounter, the adventurers track the escaped thief to Vivane's Undercity.

SETTING THE STAGE

You don't walk in the Broken Quarter—you stumble, pick your way around broken bricks and rubble and smashed bottles, and try to avoid stepping in piles of ordure. The contrast with rich, elegant Theran Vivane is all the more shocking because it occurs within barely fifty paces. You can see a few half-intact buildings, and quite a few more that are virtually ruined. Families live in the shells of these houses and under tarpaulins draped against standing walls. Hostile, sullen and despairing eyes track you as you step through the wreckage.

You approach a network of what once must have been roads leading to a roundabout, where a battered statue stands encrusted with bird droppings and graffiti. Around a couple of crude wooden trestle benches, a t'skrang with two ork bodyguards is selling beer and pies filled with meat—the origins of which you'd rather not know about. About twenty people are loitering around this spot, all looking underfed and poorly clad. By the smell of them, they haven't washed for days. A pair of snot-nosed dwarf brats with "pickpocket" written all over their faces slide wary glances your way. An ork woman with a pock-marked face gives you a leer that suggests you can buy more than beer in this place. Clutching your money tight in your pockets, you approach and buy a little of the t'skrang's rank swill. She coughs and hawks up a ball of phlegm as she serves you, which doesn't increase your appetite for the stale-smelling brew.

"We're looking for someone," you begin.

The t'skrang shrugs. "Isn't everybody?"

THEMES AND IMAGES

The Broken Quarter is not a pleasant place. Don't go overboard in describing the ruination of the buildings and the people, but give the characters a clear sense of how bleak the area is. Most of the people are too enfeebled by disease, dissipation or depression to pose any real threat to the adventurers. The characters should feel some pity for them, especially for the children.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The thief, Kuiper, passed by the Rat Circus about an hour ago, headed east toward Jerzen Road. The adventurers can learn this from the t'skrang vendor, Has'tilshera, for a silver coin. The adventurers should give the locals a partial description of the thief—the denizens of the Rat Circus most clearly remember Kuiper's distinctive boots. (If the adventurers fail to mention this detail, one of the people mentions the boots. This should tell the adventurers that they are on the right track.)

Once the adventurers learn which way Kuiper was heading, they should strike out east toward Jerzen Road. About half a minute after they have left the Rat Circus, one of the young dwarfs trots up to them. Rubbing his runny nose on his worn shirt-sleeve, he offers to give them more information in exchange for a silver piece. "I know somefink about Kuiper," he says in a conspiratorial voice. The adventurers should pay up—haggling with a dwarf brat is surely beneath their dignity.

"There's someone else after 'im," the brat says proudly as he stows the silver piece in his ragged trousers. "Coupla dwarfs. They come by down there about ten minutes ago." He points southeast toward the road that leads to the district known as The Arrow. "They said he'd stolen somefink and they wanted it back."

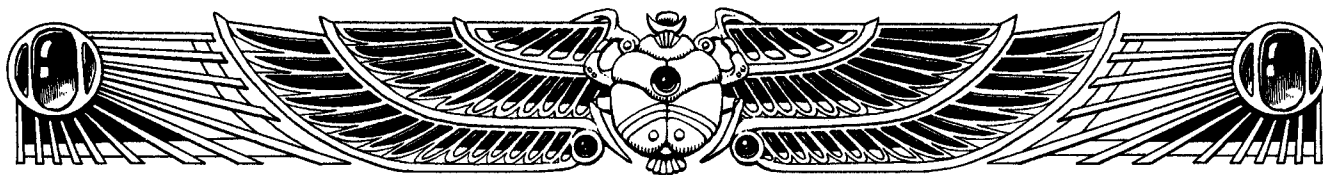
The brat does not know who the dwarfs were, but he knows they were Barsaivians. He describes them as well-dressed in leather armor and good weapons and says one even wore a helm. The brat suspects they came from the Theran Quarter or the Merchants' Quarter, as they looked far too prosperous to be from the Broken Quarter.

The brat tags after the adventurers for a short way and then points at something by the roadside—a torn purple neckerchief lies in the rubble. Any character who makes a successful Perception (7) Test notices a small spatter of blood on a rock about 5 yards from the kerchief. There is no trail of blood, however. Not liking the look of this very much, the dwarf brat scampers off.

If the adventurers ask about Kuiper in the Broken Quarter:

No one in the area will speak of Kuiper to outsiders, and so the characters learn nothing more about him than the little they already know (aside from the odd offhand





comment about Kuiper's "lucky boots"). Advertising the fact that they are on a manhunt is a foolish thing for the adventurers to do in the Broken Quarter. If they do so, put them through an extra encounter in the Undercity (see *The Locals Are Revolting*, p. 17).

If the adventurers ask around about the armed dwarfs:

The adventurers should realize that asking about the other people tracking Kuiper will only draw unwanted attention. If they insist on making inquiries, however, the adventurers can find two drunken orks on the margins of *The Arrow* who have seen the dwarfs in question. The orks overheard one of the armed dwarfs telling the other, "the thief's gone to ground. Seems he has friends in low places." This statement is an indirect clue to the adventurers to look for an entrance to the Undercity near the place where they found the neckerchief. Getting this information costs them a silver piece or a bottle of ale and requires a successful Interaction (7) Test. Even a Poor success nets them the information, though it also prompts a drunken aspersion on the asking character's manhood/clothing/facial appearance. Additionally, the orks say that the dwarfs headed northeast, the direction from which the adventurers have just come.



If the adventurers spend some time observing the area near the neckerchief:

Evaluate the players' level of planning. Wandering around aimlessly is a waste of time. But if the players make a definite plan—"We'll look around for ten minutes to see who comes and goes, and if nothing happens we'll start searching this area"—a grubby young man in torn cotton pants and a dirty blue silk shirt (clearly stolen) appears after five minutes or so. He hovers around the margin of the area, about twenty yards from the characters. If one of

them makes a successful Perception (5) Test, the character can see that the youth has a bloody nose.

If the adventurers approach the young man, he tries to run. If they call out to him, he starts to shamle away southward. Unfortunately, he has a deformed leg and can be caught easily. If the characters decide to accost the youth, ask them if they are going to run after him. If they do, they should have no trouble capturing the youth.

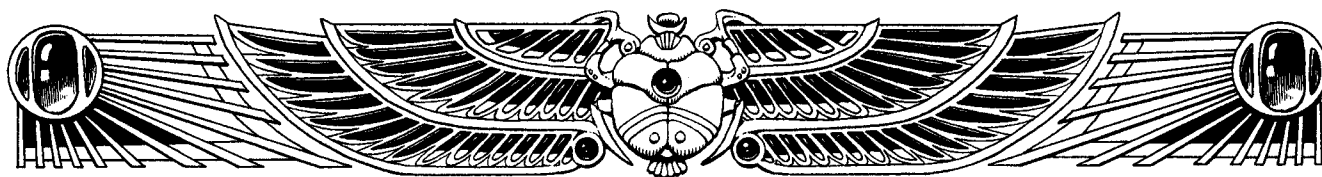
The young man, whose name is Hanrald, sniffs and begs for his life. If the adventurers manage to calm him down, he admits that he tried to pick the pocket of someone passing along the road and got a smack on the nose for his pains. His description of his would-be victim clearly matches that of the thief the adventurers are tracking. Hanrald says he came back because of the neckerchief—he saw Kuiper drop it in their brief scuffle, and the thief seemed too eager to get away to stop to pick it up. It might be valuable, and Hanrald intends to sell it to buy food. Hanrald also says that the thief headed north into the rubble, and he can show the adventurers where he lost sight of him. If the adventurers take Hanrald up on this offer, he leads them to a spot barely ten yards from the Undercity entrance marked on

Map 1 (p. 16).

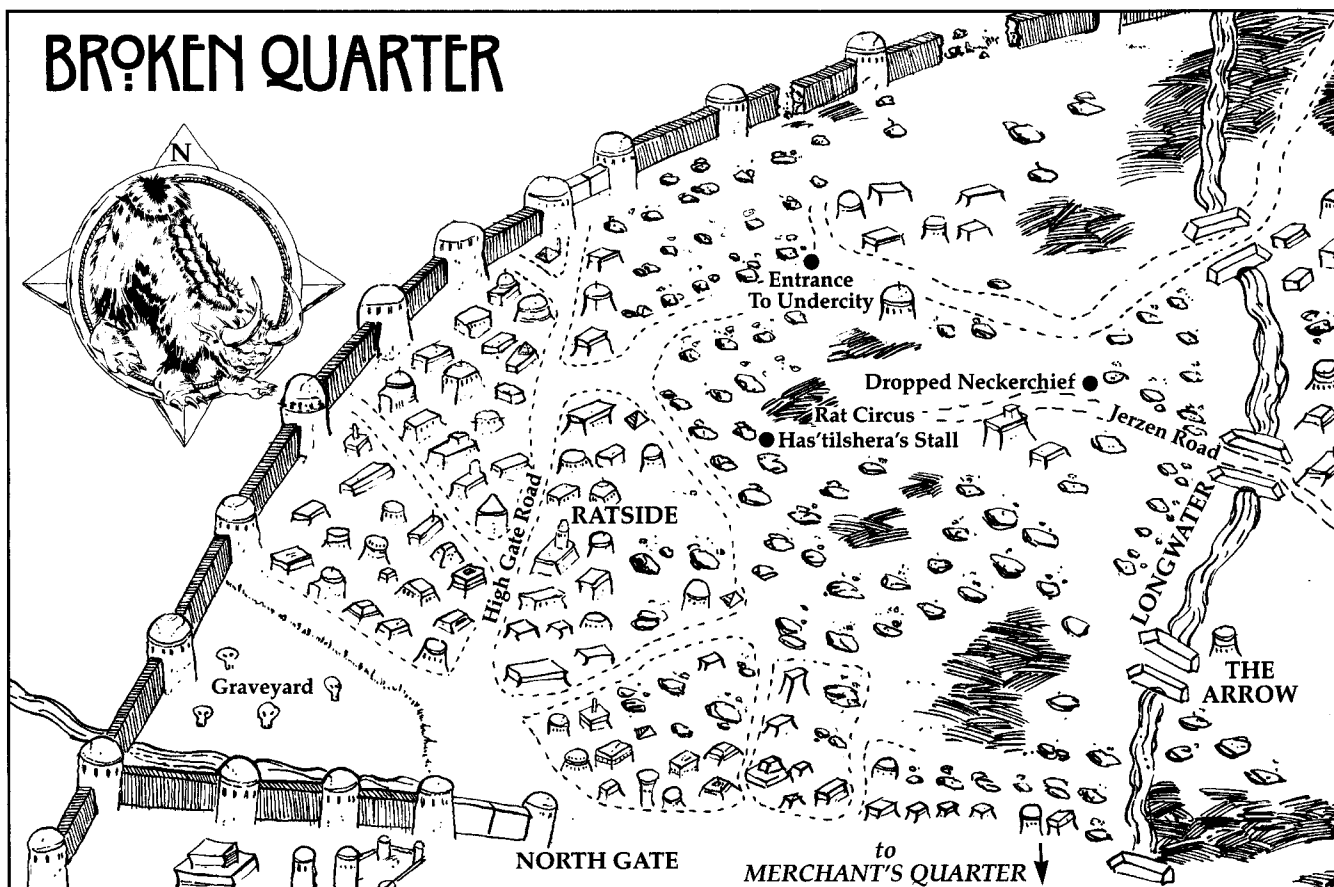
If the adventurers search the area around the neckerchief:

If the adventurers do not have the dwarf brat with them, they find the neckerchief anyway, after a period of time determined by the gamemaster. However, without help from Hanrald the adventurers have trouble discovering where Kuiper went. Searching the area is time-consuming and not easy. To locate the entrance to the Undercity, a character must achieve an Average success or better on a Perception (10) Test.





BROKEN QUARTER



If the players find simply searching around dissatisfying, the gamemaster may have the adventurers encounter another gamemaster character who saw Kuiper disappear into the Undercity. Such a gamemaster character should preferably be drunk and abusive, and should demand a coin or two for his or her help. This gamemaster character should recognize and describe Kuiper's distinctive boots.

THE UNDERCITY ENTRANCE

Map 1 shows where Kuiper entered the Undercity. A house with two largely intact walls and two collapsed ones stands near the marked spot. Rubble covers the house's floor, and trailing vines, creepers and sharp-thorned brambles hide its walls. The place exudes an overpowering stench of urine. The thick vegetation keeps the house's interior dark, so modify Perception Test results accordingly unless the adventurers use an appropriate light source.

A character who achieves an Average success or better on a Perception (7) Test spots a long, relatively fresh skid mark in the middle of the floor. Kuiper made this mark when he slipped and almost fell in a pile of ordure. Another

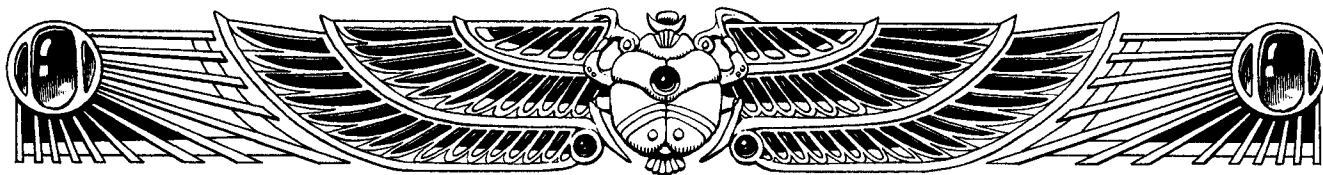
Average or better success on an identical Perception Test enables the characters to see a wooden trapdoor in the far corner. Most of the door is covered with brambles that have been carefully attached to it with metal pins and fragments of twine. A successful Perception (10) Test enables an adventurer to see a small smear of fresh blood on one of the lengths of twine—the blood came from Kuiper's hand after he had biffed young Hanrald in the nose.

If the characters decide to open the trapdoor and enter the Undercity's depths, go to **The Locals Are Revolting**, p. 17.

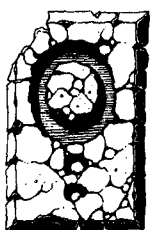
TROUBLESHOOTING

If the adventurers talk to people and cough up the odd silver coin, they should easily track down the spot where Kuiper the thief disappeared into his bolt-hole. Feel free to keep this encounter on course by having gamemaster characters steer the adventurers in the right direction if necessary. If you wish, penalize the adventurers for poor role-playing by increasing their afflictions in the Undercity.





THE LOCALS ARE REVOLTING



VIEWVIEW

In this encounter, the adventurers attempt to follow Kuiper's trail through the various hazards of the Undercity. While exploring the locale, the adventurers run into a Resistance meeting. The Resistance members are naturally suspicious of them and may attempt to take them hostage or even kill them. The adventurers may also have additional encounters in the Undercity at the gamemaster's discretion.

Map 2 shows the part of the Undercity important to this adventure. However, many side-passages and surface exits also exist in this area. For suggestions on keeping the adventurers on the right track, see **Where To Go**, p.19.

SETTING THE STAGE

You pry open the trapdoor and easily breach the rusty bolt on its underside. A flight of rickety wooden steps leads down to a cellar. You pick your way cautiously down

into the pitch-dark depths, trying not to breathe the stinking air too deeply. At the far end of the cellar, a hole smashed in the wall leads to a network of passages beyond.

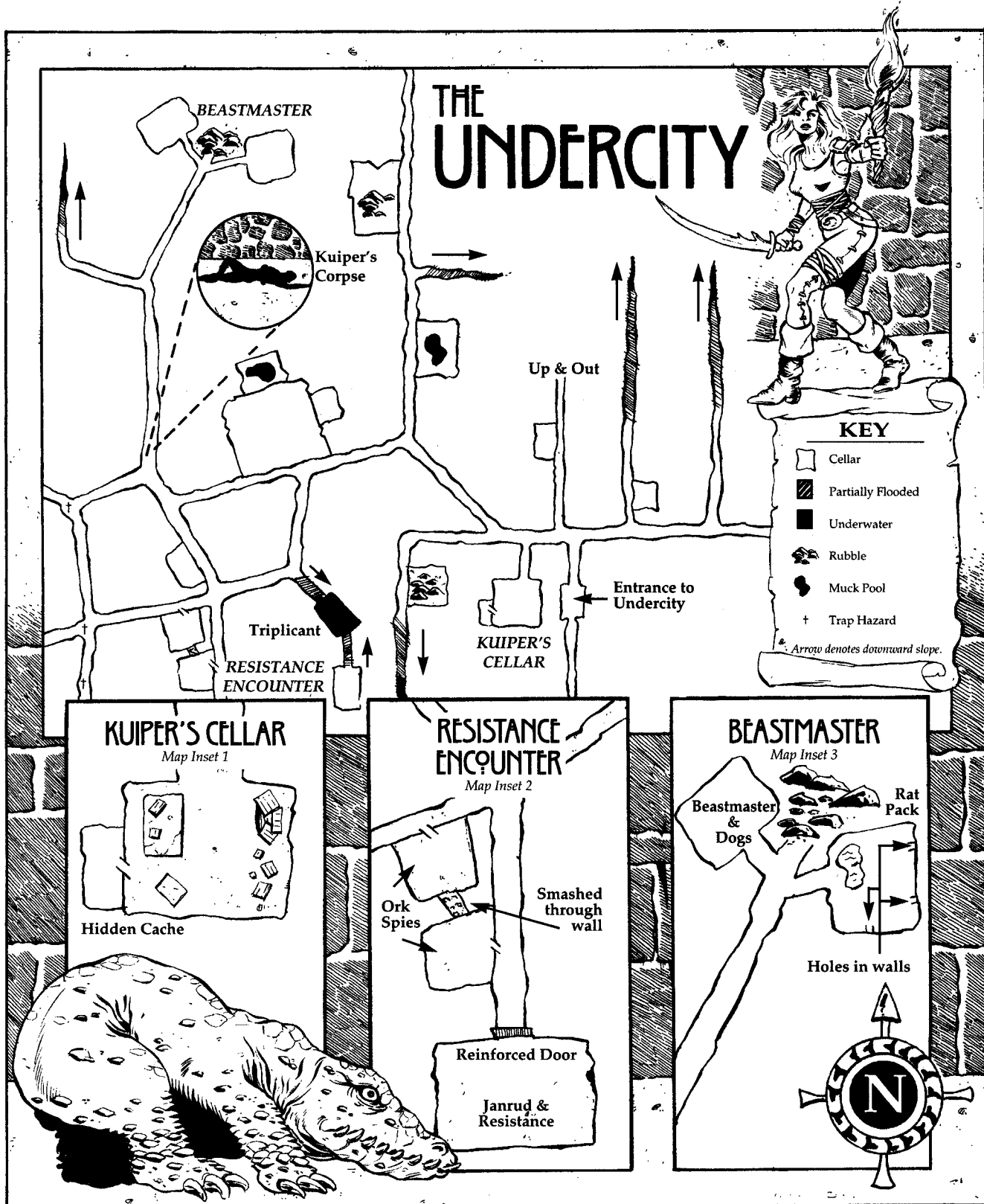
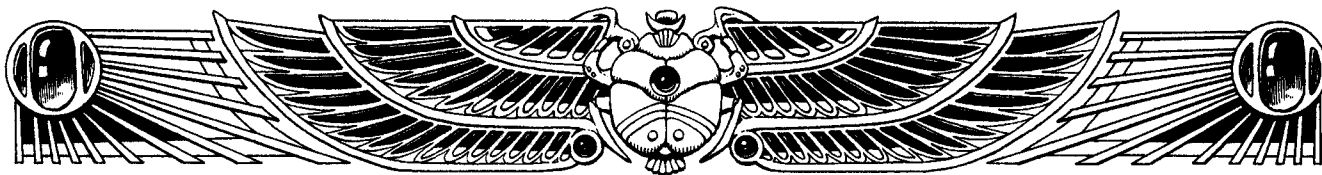
You step through the hole and into the Undercity proper. Almost immediately, your foot splashes into a puddle of something you hope is water. Dripping sounds echo from distant tunnels, along with the scrabbling of unseen rodent feet.

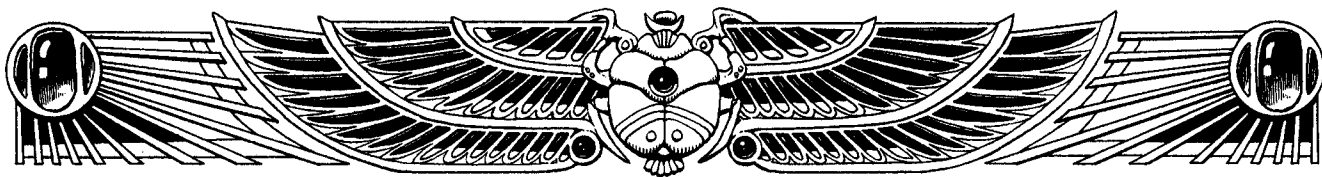
Now where can that wretched thief possibly have gone?

THEMES AND IMAGES

The Undercity is dark, wet, dank, malodorous and unpleasant—a warren of old cellars, passages, tunnels, and excavated earthworks running haphazardly under the entire city. In places, the deeper tunnels are waterlogged. Muck, debris, dead rats, rotting vegetation, cracked stone slabs, and worse are all around, so the characters had better watch where they put their feet. Neglected since the Scourge, the Undercity is a charmless place.







BEHIND THE SCENES

Once in the Undercity, the adventurers must track down their elusive quarry while dealing with any number of other potential hazards that the gamemaster deems fit.

WHERE TO GO

If the adventurers track Kuiper with the Tracking talent, they may follow the dotted-line route shown on **Map 2**—this route is the path Kuiper took. Keeping the adventurers going along this route is far more of a challenge if they are not using the Tracking talent. In this case, the gamemaster must employ the following tactics, allowing the adventurers to get off-track occasionally and then bringing them back to it.

Obstacles and Encounters

Place obstacles, such as those shown on **Map 2**, in the adventurers' path to let them know if they are going the wrong way. Sunken passages, piles of rubble, and heaps of garbage that clearly have not been disturbed in some time (refuse dumped from above, raw sewage, decomposing plants, and such) should be sufficient hints for the adventurers.

Unpleasant encounters may also deter the adventurers from going off on too many sidetracks. See **Hazards of the Undercity** for possible hazards.

Signs of Recent Passage

Recent footprints, fresh scratch marks on the walls, slip marks in muck, a dropped item or two (a button fallen from a garment, for example) and the like can serve as clues to keep the adventurers on course. Perception Tests may work too—astute players may infer that they are on the right path if the gamemaster keeps asking for Perception Tests. Any such Perception Tests should have relatively easy Difficulty Numbers.

FINDING KUIPER'S STASH

The cellar of the house next door to the secret entrance contains an alcove set behind a handleless door (see **Map Inset 1**). The door is set flush into the wall and is difficult to see. Detecting this door requires a successful Perception (10) Test. Kuiper stashes some of his ill-gotten gains in this alcove. The door is not locked—Kuiper relies on its undetectability to protect his loot—but it does contain a small surprise for the unwary.

The alcove contains three lengths of light green embroidered silk (value 50 silver pieces per length), a

locked box covered with black lacquer (12" x 6" x 4"), a redwood box about half the size of the lacquer box, and a silk pouch. The lacquer box contains 45 silver pieces, a single gold piece, and 20 copper pieces. The lock can be smashed or picked open with a successful Lockpicking (6) Test. The pouch is of blue silk with red and black purse-strings and an embroidered symbol of House Narlanth. It matches the description of the pouch Kuiper stole, but it contains no coins.

The redwood box is empty. If any character attempts to open its ornate bronze lock, the box flies open and three spring-loaded iron darts fly at the lock-picker. The statistics for this trap appear below. The darts are coated with a Damage poison (p. 208, ED) with a Step Number and Spell Defense of 8. Even a single scratch from one of the darts poisons the target. In addition, the dart itself has a Damage Step of 3 if it hits the target.

Dart Trap

Detection Difficulty: 15

Disarm Difficulty: 8

Trigger Condition: Opening Box

Trap Initiative: 13

Trap Effect: Darts strike target, Damage Step 3, Poison Damage Step 8

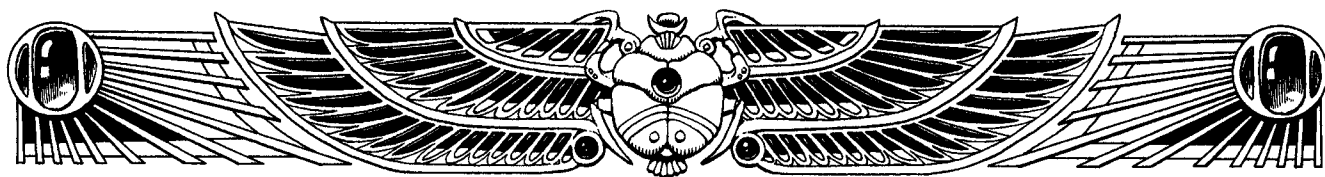
HAZARDS OF THE UNDERCITY

In addition to the hazards shown on **Map 2**, the gamemaster may place any of the following hazards in the area as well. A suitably fiendish gamemaster can add his own hazards to the following list, though they should not be too numerous or too vicious (people do move around down here and survive, after all).

Rats

Rats are all over the place—big, fat, hungry, vicious, evil, diseased and psychopathic black-furred monsters with sharp yellow teeth.





RATS

Attributes

DEX: 4 STR: 1 TOU: 3
PER: 4 WIL: 4 CHA: 2

Initiative: 5 Physical Defense: 6
Number of Attacks: 5 Spell Defense: 6
Attack: Bite Social Defense: 5
 Damage: 3 Armor: 0
Number of Spells: NA Mystic Armor: 0
Spellcasting: NA Knockdown: 2
 Effect: NA Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 20 Combat Movement: 18
Wound Threshold: 5 Full Movement: 35
Unconsciousness Rating: 15

Legend Points: 15
Equipment: None
Loot: None

A character bitten by a rat must make a Toughness Test against the effective Spell Defense of the blood-poisoning disease the rat is carrying. The actual Spell Defense varies from rat to rat, ranging from 5–8. If the test fails, the adventurer has acquired blood poisoning. Onset time ranges from 12 to 24 hours. For 36 hours before the systemic poisoning actually sets in, the infected character is feverish—add 2 to the Difficulty Number of any test the character makes. In addition, the infected character must make a Toughness Test every 24 hours; the character loses 1 point of Toughness for every test that fails.

Once the poison sets in, the character's body becomes a disgusting mass of boils, sores and pustulant buboes. A healer can cure these effects for the usual fee of 25 silver pieces, and a character undergoing treatment regains lost Toughness at the rate of 1 point for every 48 hours of bed rest or for every 7 days of normal activity levels. If the character's Toughness drops to 0, he dies immediately.

Rats appear in groups of 5 to 10 at a time. They may or may not attack, depending on how hungry and vicious they are. Roll D10—if the result is 6 or higher, the rats attack. Add 1 to the result if the adventuring group includes a dwarf or a windling, as rats are more likely to attack small targets. Subtract 3 from the result if the characters have naked flame visible to the rats and immediately brandish it at them. If a third or more of the rats are killed, the others turn tail and run squeaking off into holes where the adventurers cannot pursue them.

Other Creatures

At the gamemaster's discretion, the Undercity's passages may also contain a rabid dog or two, a venomous snake that has slithered down from the ruined overgrowth above, or some other such nasty creature. However, neither undead nor Horrors should appear in these upper passages. Also, see **Optional Encounter: The Triplicant**, p. 21).

Muck Pools

Pools of muck and slime may cover lengths of descending passageways. Adventurers who wade through these pools must make successful Dexterity (6) Tests to avoid slipping and getting soaked in filth. A character who falls down in one of these pools may inadvertently swallow a mouthful of the filth, be nibbled by a muck leech, and so on. Treat these misfortunes like exposure to blood poisoning from a rat bite, using a Difficulty Number of 4 for the Toughness Test. Increase the Difficulty Number by 2 if the character achieved a Poor success in the Dexterity Test.

Traps

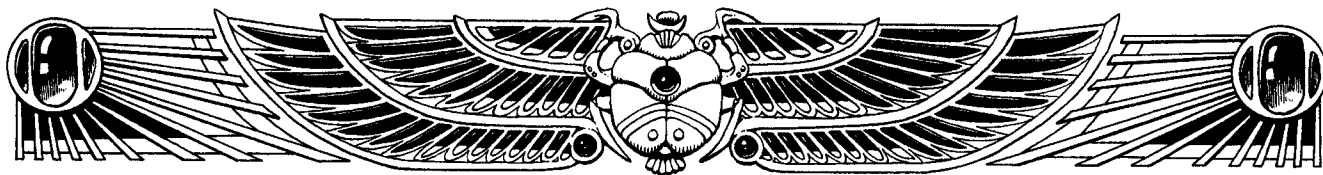
At certain areas in the Undercity tunnels, the Therans have placed traps to dissuade people from trying to head southwest into the passages beneath the Theran Quarter. Though the adventurers should encounter few of these traps in the tunnels they are traversing, the gamemaster may improvise pit traps, spear traps, or the ever-popular mantrap. The Therans have used magic to render mantraps semi-invisible, giving these traps Detection Difficulties of 16 (reduced to 12 for Illusionist adventurers). A character who steps on one of these ghastly things triggers serrated metal jaws that spring up and grip the character's leg.

Mantrap

Detection Difficulty: 16
Disarm Difficulty: 12
Trigger Condition: Pressure Plate
Trap Initiative: 13
Trap Effect: Damage Step 20

A character caught in a mantrap can only be set free if two characters work to spring the trap. Combine the Strength step numbers of the two characters, then consult the Step/Action Table (p. 50, ED) and make the appropriate dice roll. A result of 10 or higher frees the trapped character. Trapped adventurers suffer 1 point of damage each Combat Round until they are freed and their wound is staunched and bound, irrespective of armor or magical protections. Staunching the wound requires 1 Combat Round.





The gamemaster may decide that any given mantrap is poisoned, just to add to the character's misery. (Unpleasant people at times, those Therans.)

Optional Encounter: The Triplicant

A triplicant (p. 310, *ED*) has slunk into the Undercity and laired in a side passage off the adventurers' route. To feed itself, it emerges from a sunken length of passageway and ambushes whatever passes by. When the adventurers pass by its lair, the triplicant attacks the rearmost member of the group and attempts to drag its victim underwater (the triplicant itself can survive underwater for several minutes).

The triplicant creates duplicates of itself just prior to its attack, and so three of it grab at the victim. If any of the three latches onto the victim and causes damage, the victim and the triplicant each make a Strength Test; if the victim achieves a higher result, he frees himself from the creature's grip. If the triplicant achieves the higher result, it drags the character to the water's edge.

The character and the triplicant then each make a second Strength Test. If the victim achieves the higher result, he frees himself. If the triplicant achieves the higher result, it drags the character underwater. The luckless adventurer suffers normal drowning damage (p. 123, *Denizens*, Vol. I). Physical damage is determined separately, per standard rules. The triplicant does not release a victim unless it suffers damage to within 5 points of its Unconsciousness Rating. If this happens, it dives down through the flooded passageway and takes refuge in an airy chamber beyond (sufficient ventilation from above makes the air breathable). If the triplicant must fight a large group of adventurers, it produce as many duplicates as possible before attacking.

MEETING THE RESISTANCE

Several members of the Resistance are meeting in the area shown on **Map Inset 2**. These members include a pair of Second Circle ork warriors wearing hardened leather armor and carrying knives and broadswords. These orks hide behind two carefully concealed doors and hear the adventurers when they pass by—their hiding-holes face two passageways, and adventurers moving along either one will arouse the guards' interest. Unless the characters detect the pair first, the orks step out behind them and place their swords at the adventurers' backs. As soon as the orks are in place, they order the characters to drop their weapons and surrender. To detect the hidden doors, a character must make a successful Perception (10) Test.

In the main meeting room (see **Map Inset 2**), the following gamemaster characters are discussing acts of sabotage in the Theran Quarter: the wizard Thomalas Janrud (see *Cast*

of Characters, p. 28), the Second Circle thief Patrus Marcan, and two Third Circle warriors. If necessary, create statistics for Marcan and the warriors modeled after the archetypes in the *ED* rulebook (adjust for race and Circle). However, their equipment is poorer than the usual. The warriors have hardened leather armor, broadswords, and a dagger or knife, and one also has a studded mace (Damage Step 5). One of them—not necessarily the same one—has a vial of an oil that increases the Damage Step of any blunt weapon coated with it (mace, staff, and so on) by 3. The vial contains enough oil to coat six weapons.

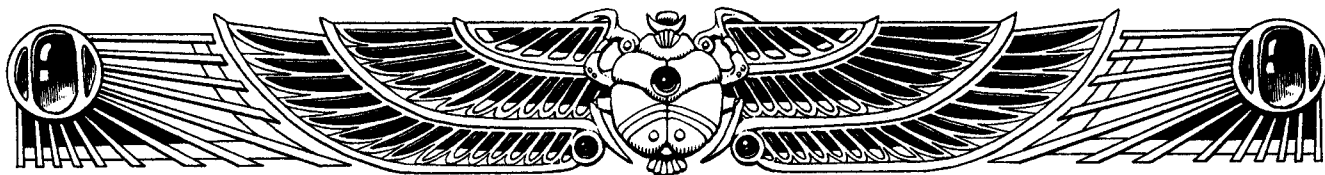
These gamemaster characters are edgy, understandably afraid that anyone they do not know must be a Theran spy. If the adventurers refuse to lay down their weapons on demand, the group makes threatening gestures and noises. The adventurers have one chance to talk their way out of conflict. To do so, one of them must Make an Impression (p. 239, *ED*) on Janrud. Use the negotiating character's Charisma. In addition, this character's player must come up with the line of negotiation for his character (for example, "We're not hostile—we haven't lifted a weapon to attack you. Can't we discuss this? We don't mean any harm.")

The adventurers can and should avoid a fight by dropping their weapons and negotiating. The Resistance members want to know what the adventurers are doing in their neck of the Undercity. If the characters lie outright, make a Perception Test for Janrud against the Social Defense of the lying character. On a Good success or better, he spots the deception and signals his associates to attack. If this happens, the Resistance gains the advantage of surprise. If the characters embroider the truth or omit a crucial detail—for example, the fact that they are working for a Theran—let them get away with it. Telling the full truth in this situation is a bad idea. If the adventurers admit that they are in the employ of a Theran, Janrud becomes furious and shouts angrily that they must be spies. If this happens, the adventurers must Make an Impression again to avoid being attacked.

The Resistance members know nothing of Kuiper and don't care a whit about the adventurers or their goal. However, the gamemaster can use the Resistance band to make the adventurers' lives even more complicated (see *The Ratmaster*, p. 23) or to warn the adventurers about hazards. The latter may help keep the adventure on track.

As a final option, have one of the Resistance members mutter something like, "There are too many people wandering about down here for comfort." Alternatively, if a character makes a successful Interaction Test, Janrud may let slip the fact that he and his men have seen a group of unfamiliar-looking dwarfs in the area recently. Janrud is referring to the red-haired dwarf that the adventurers may have seen in





For a Fistful of Coppers (p. 12) and his band. If the adventurers ask specifically about a red-haired dwarf in a blue-trimmed gray cloak, the Resistance members confirm that one of the dwarfs matched that description. This clue may help the adventurers anticipate the climax of the adventure and prompt them to take appropriate precautions.

RESISTANCE GUARDS (9RKS)

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

Initiative: 4	Physical Defense: 7
Number of Attacks: 1	Spell Defense: 7
Attack: 7	Social Defense: 6
Damage: 11	Armor: 5
Number of Spells: NA	Mystic Armor: 0
Spellcasting: NA	Knockdown: 6
Effect: NA	Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 34	Combat Movement: 30
Wound Threshold: 9	Full Movement: 60
Unconsciousness Rating: 26	

Legend Points: 50

Equipment: Hardened leather armor, broadsword or mace

Loot: None

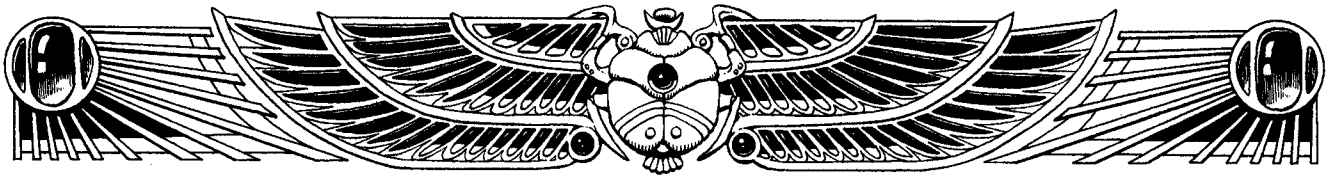
TROUBLESHOOTING

Two things can go wrong in this encounter—the adventurers may choose to battle the Resistance members or they may consistently go the wrong way in the passages.

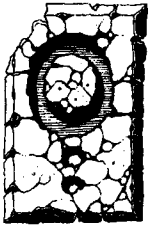
The adventurers have every chance to avoid combat. If they initiate violence or fail to do their best to keep things calm, throw everything at them. Janrud and his men are not particularly powerful, but they can probably inflict some nasty wounds or worse. The Resistance members are desperate and do not hesitate to safeguard themselves and their cause with extreme tactics, such as cutting the throats of any unconscious adventurers. If the adventurers win the fight, be stingy with Legend Point Awards. In addition, they mark themselves as enemies of the Resistance if they fight, which may hamper them in future adventures.

If the adventurers keep going the wrong way despite every attempt to keep them on track, relocate Kuiper's corpse to a different place so that the adventurers stumble onto it (see the following encounter, *The Ratmaster*). The gamemaster may reduce the adventurers' Legend Point Awards if this adjustment becomes necessary.





THE RATMASTER



VIEW

In this encounter, the adventurers find Kuiper's corpse and the ork beastmaster who killed him—not for the stolen coins, but for the snakeskin boots. The adventurers must battle Kuiper's assassin to gain the coins and deal with the mysterious dwarfs who are after the same prize.

SETTING THE STAGE

When the adventurers find Kuiper's corpse, read the following aloud:

This place is even more dangerous than you feared. It's easy to get lost in this dank warren, and hazards seem to be everywhere. Is three hundred pieces of silver really worth the smell and the rats and the filth and the unseen terrors that seem to lurk around every corner? And all this for a handful of ordinary copper coins ...

You round a corner and stop abruptly. A naked body lies face-down across your path, bloodied and bitten as if by some savage animal. Is this the thief you sought? You turn his body face up—his hair and sightless eyes match the thief's description. But where are his snakeskin boots? And more important, where are the copper coins?

Then you notice the bloody footprints and paw prints leading away from the body.

THEMES AND IMAGES

The action heats up in this encounter. Make it clear to the players that they are homing in on their goal, and that their characters should prepare for a battle. They are about to encounter the person or creature that killed the thief, and they should anticipate the adventure's possibly violent climax.

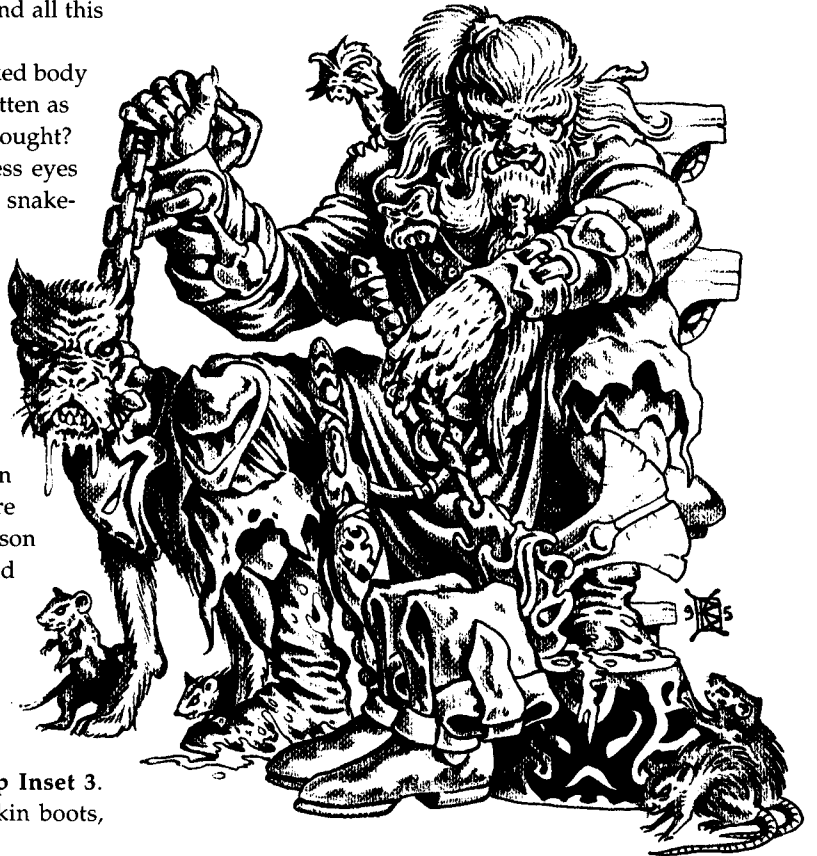
BEHIND THE SCENES

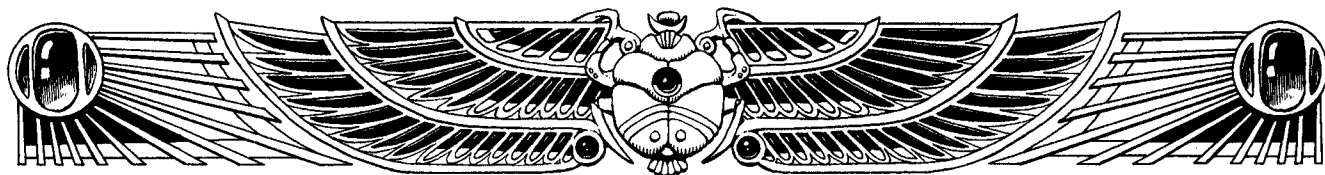
The thief was killed by the ork beastmaster Kazagad Kagend, whose lair is shown on **Map Inset 3**. Kazagad killed Kuiper for his beautiful snakeskin boots,

stripped the body and took the coins as an afterthought. The characters can find one of the coins they sought beneath the corpse. No Perception Test is necessary for this discovery. The other nine coins are missing.

If the adventurers inspect the body, they can tell that Kuiper was mauled by a large animal. A beastmaster adventurer can tell that one or more dogs, or possibly wolves, attacked the thief, and that the corpse was also bitten by rats.

The adventurers should be able to track Kazagad to his lair fairly easily by following the clearly visible boot prints and pawprints leading to it. The ork beastmaster dimly senses that the coins he took are magical, and they intrigue him. His preoccupation with the mystery of the coins has made him careless, and he failed to take his usual precautions to avoid discovery.





KAZAGAD'S LAIR

The positions of the ork beastmaster's animal defenders around the lair appear on **Map Inset 3**. Two large, mangy dogs sit in the entranceway to his filthy cellar, and these dogs smell approaching adventurers from up to 15 yards away. Use standard statistics for dogs (p. 311, ED) for these animals, but give them a Strength of 6. If the adventurers get careless and make a lot of noise, the dogs become aware of them even sooner (at the gamemaster's discretion). Once the dogs spot the adventurers, they bark furiously and alert Kazagad.

The ork immediately uses his Dominate Beast Talent to summon and command his rats. He can call on a total of twenty-two rats, three of which are in his lair and six others of which are in the cellar opposite. The remaining 13 rats appear at the rate of 1–4 per Combat Round after Kazagad uses his talent. Statistics for the rats appear in **The Locals Are Revolting**, p. 20.

Kazagad has used his Dominate Beast talent on these creatures so often that they continue to fight until at least half of them have been killed (count dogs and rats separately). If that happens, Kazagad must use his talent again to rally the remaining animals. If he fails, they flee.

When the adventurers catch up with Kazagad, he is counting the coins he has taken. He senses that the coppers are magical but does not know exactly what their magic does. He is fascinated by them and does not want to give them up. Most likely, the adventurers have to kill him or force him to surrender to get the coins.

Kazagad may surrender if at least half of his attendant beasts (including at least one of the dogs) is killed, *and* if he takes damage to within 5 points of his Unconsciousness Rating. Even if these things happen, however, an adventurer must make a successful Interaction (Intimidation) Test against Kazagad's Social Defense *and* must make it clear that the adventurers only want the stolen coins. Under these circumstances, Kazagad hands over his ill-gotten gains.

Alternatively, the adventurers may obtain the coins from Kazagad by persuasion or an offer to trade. The magical coins interest Kazagad, but what he *really* wants is the boots (which he thinks are truly wonderful). He may give the coins up for something useful in return, such as better armor than the hide he is wearing, a fine hand weapon, and so on. He does not volunteer any willingness to trade, however, and the adventurers have to work hard to persuade him to do so.

NEW ARRIVALS

As soon as the characters have obtained the coins, Haldamund Armunn and his band approach from the

south. Haldamund is the mysterious red-haired dwarf. He and his armed men are Garagund Daragast's servants, and they have been tracking the coins (and the adventurers) throughout the encounters. They want the the stolen coppers back and are prepared to fight for them or negotiate—whichever seems more likely to succeed.

Haldamund is described in **Cast of Characters**, p. 30. His fellows are three Second Circle dwarf warriors equipped with chain mail vests and hardened leather greaves and arm bracers—treat this armor as a suit of ring mail for combat purposes. They wear helms and carry bucklers, dwarf swords, battle axes, daggers and any other miscellaneous equipment the gamemaster deems appropriate. Between them, they carry 150 silver pieces as well.

Haldamund initially adopts an aggressive air—he demands that the adventurers hand over the coins, stating that they are his patron's rightful property. If the adventurers respond by saying that they are also retrieving stolen property for their employer, Haldamund laughs and says, "That wretched elf told you that. He was lying. His mistress, the thieving slut, stole them from my own master—the Theran noble Daragast. Hand them over now, or you'll regret it." As he speaks, the dwarfs heft their axes. What happens next depends on whether or not the adventurers killed the Resistance members they met earlier.

If the adventurers killed the Resistance:

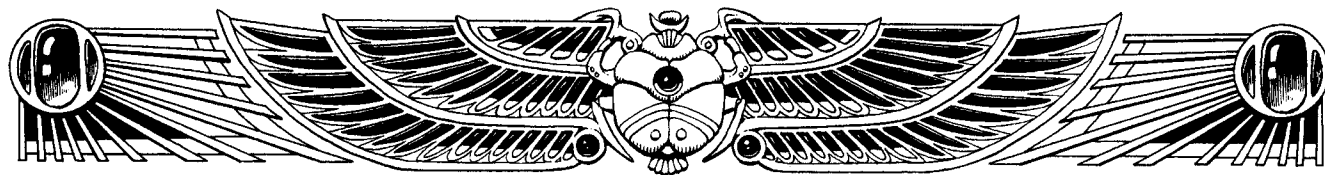
The adventurers either hand over the coins, try to haggle with the dwarfs, or fight them. If they hand the coins over, go to **Loose Ends** (p. 26). If they decide to haggle, the dwarfs refuse to bargain. They want the coins and will fight for them. However, haggling might buy the adventurers a little time to make covert preparations for the inevitable battle.

If the adventurers fight, the dwarfs surrender if two or more of them are knocked unconscious. They have no desire to die and will offer the silver they carry in return for their lives. If the adventurers accept the dwarfs' surrender, Haldamund and his band beat a retreat. If the adventurers refuse, the dwarfs fight to the death. In either case, go to **Loose Ends**.

If the Resistance members are still alive:

At this tense moment, Janrud and his men arrive. They have decided that something must be drawing so many people down to the Undercity, and they want to find out what it is. If the gamemaster deems it appropriate, Janrud may have cast a spell or two in advance of the meeting (such as Astral Shield if the adventurers include a wizard





among their number). The looming conflict has gone from a two-way to a three-way battle.

The dwarfs, clearly hostile to the Resistance members, order them to keep their distance. This open enmity may prompt the adventurers to suggest a deal to Janrud: since Haldamund and his friends are Theran servants of Garagund Daragast (whom the Resistance members have heard of), the Resistance members and the adventurers should team up against them and talk over the fine print later. If Janrud agrees, the adventurers and the Resistance members together should be able to defeat the dwarfs. Subsequently, the Resistance members insist on keeping every piece of equipment and all the money the dwarfs have as the price of letting the adventurers go free. Smart adventurers should accept this deal, but feel free to let really eager homicidal maniacs fight the Resistance members. Go to **Loose Ends**.

Alternatively, the adventurers can ally with the dwarfs against the Resistance members. If the adventurers choose this course, the dwarfs still demand the coins and the two sides must resolve their differences as described above. Go to **Loose Ends**.

If the adventurers do not try to negotiate with anyone, the dwarfs attack them while the Resistance members stand by. The Resistance members may or may not attack the victors of this fight, depending on how

powerful the winners seem when the dust has settled. If the adventurers make a successful

Interaction Test with Janrud, they can persuade him to accept the dwarfs' gear and money in return for letting them go free with the coins.

Whatever happens, Kazagad does not assist the adventurers. If he is still alive, he simply flees.

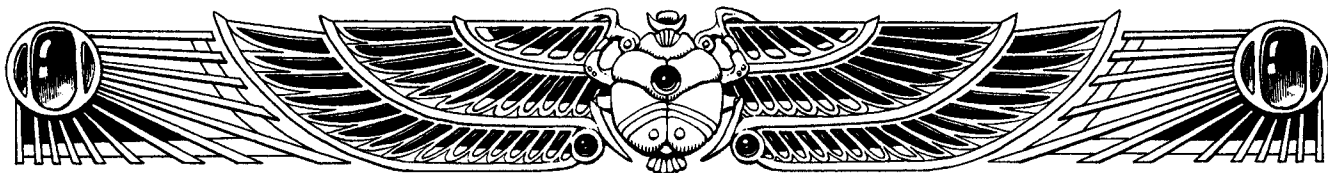
TROUBLE-SHOOTING

This encounter is the climax of the adventure, and the gamemaster needs to make the players sweat. Dealing with the beastmaster is difficult enough—trying to fight the Resistance members and the dwarfs should be more than the adventurers can possibly handle. If they try and fail, too bad. If the gamemaster feels kindly, he can have the victorious dwarfs or Resistance members accept the adventurers' surrender before they are all killed. Strip them of everything they have and teach them a lesson. If they manage to defeat every opponent they face, good luck to them!

The gamemaster may also consider the following option. If the adventurers defeat the dwarfs without killing them all, the survivors may manage to rally some Barsaivian mercenaries to take one last crack at the adventurers before they get back to the Old City with the coins. The

gamemaster should determine the strength of the mercenaries as appropriate to give the adventurers a stiff but not impossible fight.





LOOSE ENDS



his section provides directions for tying up loose ends and suggests ways to use story elements and characters from **Chasing the Snakeskin Boots** in future **Earthdawn** adventures and campaigns.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

Chasing the Snakeskin Boots has several possible outcomes. The most likely are described below.

If the adventurers get safely back to the Theran Quarter with the coins, Shand and Fansherin are extremely pleased with them. In addition to collecting their pay, the adventurers acquire a powerful Theran noble patron and benefactress. Shand is likely to consider them for courier duty and covert work in the future and may even warn them of potential hostilities from Daragast. By aiding Shand, the adventurers have made a noble enemy as well as a noble friend, though Daragast's wrath probably fades after a month or two.

If the adventurers give the coins to Haldamund, Shand becomes furious when she discovers that Daragast has his coins back. She takes steps to punish the adventurers for their failure, probably having them beaten senseless or somehow afflicting them magically. Daragast may recruit the adventurers just to get Shand's goat—in this case, the adventurers find a patron but gain a permanent and powerful enemy as well.

If the adventurers keep the coins, anyone among them with astral sight can tell that the coins are magical. In fact, the coins can help locate sources of elemental water with great accuracy. Both Shand and Daragast send parties of

mercenaries to assault the adventurers until they hand over the coins to one or the other of the squabbling Theran nobles. Needless to say, the adventurers should get out of Vivane for good if they decide to keep the coins. If they trade the coins with a wizard or elemental and get a long, long way out of Vivane, they just might live to tell the tale.

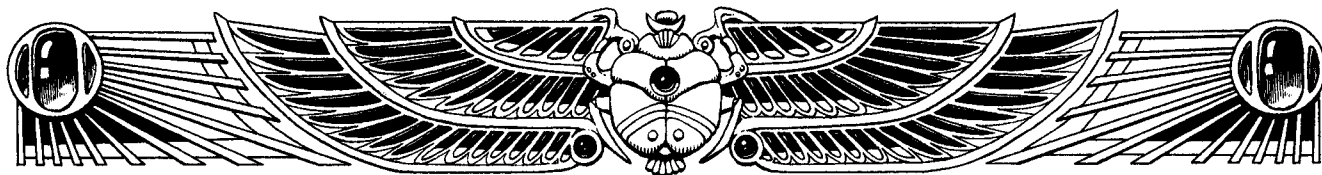
The adventurers may also decide to join the Resistance. Barsaivian adventurers may want to join with Janrud and may consider the magical coins somehow useful to the Resistance cause. In fact, the Resistance

will find the coins useless, and Shand and Daragast will send mercenaries after them. Resistance warnings and posted sentries may initially help the adventurers to avoid trouble, but eventually the Resistance members come to view the adventurers as a major liability and wash their hands of them. A double agent in the Resistance may even betray the adventurers to a strong band of Theran mercenaries. Soon, the adventurers find themselves outcasts again, without the coins to buy their way out of trouble.

Finally, the adventurers may offer to help Janrud by completing their mission for Shand. By doing this they hope to get into the good books of their Theran patron, which enables them to gain her trust and further commissions. This, in turn, puts them in a position

to help the Resistance as spies within the Theran Quarter. This course of action is very dangerous, and only gamemasters and players interested in an intrigue-based campaign should consider it. Initially, Janrud distrusts the adventurers until they have performed at least one useful service to demonstrate their trustworthiness.





CREATURE/OPPONENT AWARD TABLE

Creature/Opponent	5 Players	6 Players	7 Players
Resistance members (6)	300	300	300
Kazagad and his creatures	300	300	300
Daragast's dwarfs (4)	350	350	350
Total	950	950	950
Award per character	190	160	135

AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

Award Legend Points for this adventure as described in the **Introduction**, p. 7. Specific awards are described below.

The Adventure Award for **Chasing the Snakeskin Boots** is 250 Legend Points. The Adventure Goal for **Chasing the Snakeskin Boots** is retrieving the coins and returning them to Shand and Fansherin.

Creative Roleplaying and Heroics

Award characters Legend Points for taking any of the following actions:

Negotiating with the Resistance members	100
Trading for the coins with Kazagad	150
Negotiating with Daragast's dwarfs	100

Defeating Creatures

Aside from the rats and dogs that Kazagad sics on the adventurers, all creatures defeated are worth the Legend Points listed in the **Earthdawn** rulebook (see **Creatures**, beginning on p. 284). For Kazagad's creatures and all Name-giver opponents, award Legend Points according to the Creature/Opponent Award Table.

Note that the awards listed for defeating the Resistance members and Daragast's dwarfs are incompatible with the awards for negotiating with these gamemaster characters, unless the adventurers are forced into combat. The awards for trading with Kazagad and for defeating him and his creatures are also incompatible.

Treasure

The characters earn 150 Legend Points if they keep the coins. In this case, the characters do not receive the Adventure Award, as they have not completed the Adventure Goal. If the characters kill Kazagad and take the

snakeskin boots, they earn an additional 150 Legend Points. These boots are magical (see **Earthdawn Companion**, p. 65).

TOTAL LEGEND POINT AWARD

Based on the figures listed for each Legend Point Award, a single character who completes **Chasing the Snakeskin Boots** receives an average of 760 Legend Points. This average assumes a group of 6 players and does not include points earned for optional encounters or finding additional treasure placed by the gamemaster.

CAMPAIGN IDEAS

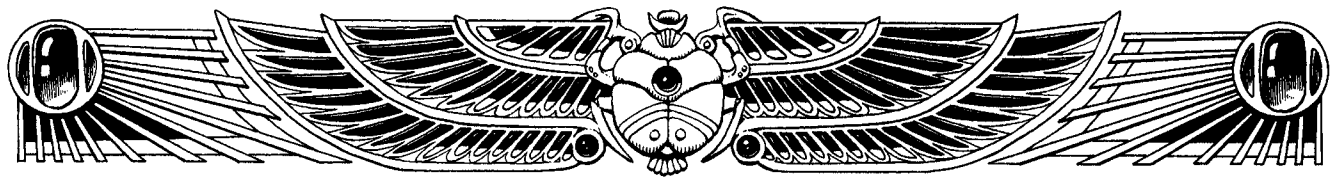
The adventurers stand to make an enemy of at least one Theran noble in this adventure and may well also gain a powerful patron. Depending on the circumstances, Shand and Daragast may turn up in future adventures—as friends, opponents, or movers and shakers behind the scenes. The most likely possibility is that the adventurers find themselves once more in the middle of a spat between these two antagonists.

If the adventurers throw in their lot with the Resistance, the gamemaster can exploit Thomalas Janrud's weaknesses in a spin-off campaign. As described in **Cast of Characters**, below, Janrud's plans fail more often than they work because he tends to overlook crucial details. Some people in the Resistance are beginning to wonder if he is a Theran spy in their midst; the gamemaster can draw his own conclusion and create future adventures accordingly.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

The following major gamemaster characters are listed in order of their general importance to the story.





THOMALAS JANRUD

A human Third Circle wizard, Janrud is 37 years old, tall and sallow. Born in Landis, he is a Resistance veteran of two years' standing—in fact, surviving for two years makes him positively venerable. Suspicious by nature, Janrud escaped the Theran airship on the fringes of Landis that took his family into slavery. This experience has made him hate the Therans. However, his hatred often gets the better of his intelligence. Though capable of a cool head and careful planning, he frequently loses these abilities when dealing with Theran enemies. His plans for his Resistance band usually have a fatal flaw because Janrud does not attend to details properly. Some people in the Resistance have recognized that the wizard seems to be a jinx—one or two even wonder if he might be a Theran plant.

Janrud is brave, loyal to his immediate fellows and friends and genuinely concerned with the welfare of Vivane's oppressed inhabitants. He has given away almost all the money he's acquired over the years to the poor, and so Barsaivians in Vivane think well of him. He is extremely popular with the "foot soldiers" of the Resistance, who do not share their superiors' misgivings.

Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10 Perception (19): 9/2D6
Strength (13): 6/D10 Willpower (16): 7/D12
Toughness (14): 6/D10 Charisma (10): 5/D8

Talents

Book Memory (2): 11/D10 + D8
Book Recall (2): 11/D10 + D8

Durability (2)
Evidence Analysis (2): 11/D10 + D8
Karma Ritual (3)
Read and Write Language (3): 12/2D10
Read and Write Magic (3): 12/2D10
Spell casting (3): 12/2D10
Spell Matrix (1)
Spell Matrix (2)
Spell Matrix (3)
Thread Weaving (Wizardry) (3): 12/2D10
Versatility (0)

Movement

Full: 60
Combat: 30

Karma

Dice: D8
Points: 15

Skills

Artisan/Robe Embroidery (1): 6/D10
Knowledge/Barsaive History (1): 10/D8
Knowledge/Theran Politics (1): 10/D8

Initiative

Dice: D6

Combat

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2

Damage

Death Rating: 44
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 34
Recovery Dice: D10
Recovery Tests per Day: 3

Equipment

Adventuring kit
Daggers (2)
Grimoire (contents as shown below)
Week's worth of trail rations
10 copper pieces
10 silver pieces
Other items determined by gamemaster

Spells

Circle 1

Astral Sense
Dispel Magic
Ignite
Iron Hand
Mind Dagger

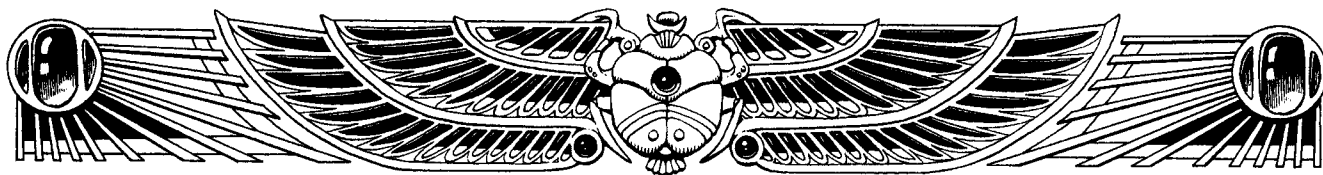
Circle 3

Combat Fury
Levitate
Quicken Pace
Shatter Lock

Circle 2

Astral Shield
Dodge Boost
Vines





KAZAGAD KAGEND

Kazagad is a child of the Broken Quarter, an unwanted ork orphan brat who managed to stay alive despite all the odds. This Third Circle beastmaster has survived to the age of eighteen years by living and scavenging in the Undercity and befriending the creatures of the tunnels. He fed them scraps and gradually learned to make them his eyes and ears in the surface world. He speaks only halting pidgin Throalic and distrusts and fears surface-dwellers. He knows the Resistance members only as occasional, unwanted visitors to his domain; he avoids them and prefers to keep away from all surface-dwellers. As an ork, he has the racial ability of low-light vision.

Attributes

Dexterity (12): 5/D8	Perception (11): 5/D8
Strength (16): 7/D12	Willpower (13): 6/D10
Toughness (14): 6/D10	Charisma (19): 9/D8 + D6

Talents

Animal Bond (3): 12/2D10
 Animal Training (1): 10/D10 + D6
 Borrow Sense (2): 8/2D6
 Cat's Paw (3): 8/2D6
 Claw Shape (3): 13/D12 + D10
 Creature Analysis (1): 6/D10
 Dominate Beast (3): 12/2D10
 Durability (2)
 Karma Ritual (3)
 Tracking (3): 8/2D6
 Unarmed Combat (3): 8/2D6

Movement

Full: 65
 Combat: 33

Karma

Dice: D8
 Points: 10

Skills

Artisan/Woodcarving (1): 10/D10 + D8
 Knowledge/Creature Lore (2): 7/D12
 Knowledge/Vivane History (1): 6/D10

Initiative

Dice: D6

Combat

Physical Defense: 7
 Spell Defense: 7
 Social Defense: 10
 Armor: 6
 Mystic Armor: 2

Damage

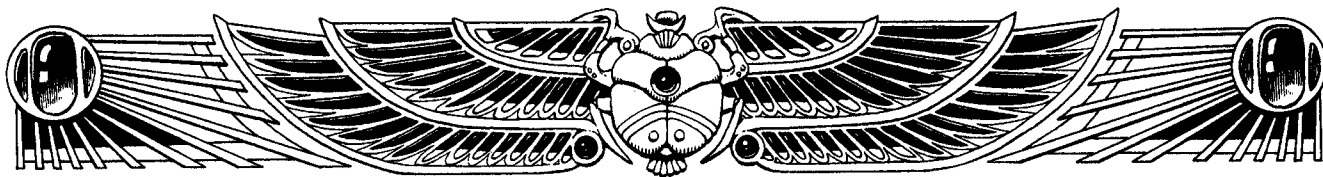
Death Rating: 50
 Wound Threshold: 10
 Unconsciousness Rating: 40
 Recovery Dice: D10
 Recovery Tests per Day: 3



Equipment

Adventuring kit
 Buckler
 Dagger
 Hand axe
 Hide armor
 Week's worth of trail rations
 Whip
 10 copper pieces
 10 silver pieces
 Pair of ivory dice inscribed with troll's head engravings
 (worth 12 silver pieces each)
 Other items determined by gamemaster





HALDAMUND ARMUNN

Haldamund is a Third Circle dwarf warrior and a distant cousin of his noble patron. This blood relationship makes him incorruptible, in the sense that he knows where his best interests lie. Red-headed and more flamboyant than he should be, Haldamund is ruthless and arrogant; he expects all Barsaivian scum—including the adventurers—to immediately accede to whatever he demands. His brav-

ery matches his arrogance, and he enjoys a good fight. Half his right ear is missing, which enhances his reputation as a bruiser—he also has some interesting scars in concealed places. He speaks in a haughty voice, and the gamemaster should roleplay him as an irritating and unlikable individual.

Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10
Strength (17): 6/D10
Toughness (21): 8/2D6

Perception (12): 5/D8
Willpower (13): 6/D10
Charisma (8): 4/D6

Talents

Acrobatic Strike (1): 7/D12
Air Dance (3): 9/D8 + D6
Anticipate Blow (2): 7/D12
Avoid Blow (3): 9/D8 + D6
Durability (2)
Melee Weapons (3): 9/D8 + D6
Throwing Weapons (1): 7/D12
Tiger Spring (2)
Unarmed Combat (3): 9/D8 + D62
Wood Skin (3): 11/D10 + D8

Movement

Full: 54
Combat: 27

Karma

Dice: D6
Points: 6

Skills

Artisan/Runic Carving (1): 5/D8
Knowledge/Barsaive History (1): 5/D8
Knowledge/Theran Politics (1): 5/D8

Initiative

Dice: D6

Combat

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

Damage

Death Rating: 62
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 53
Recovery Dice: 2D6
Recovery Tests per Day: 4

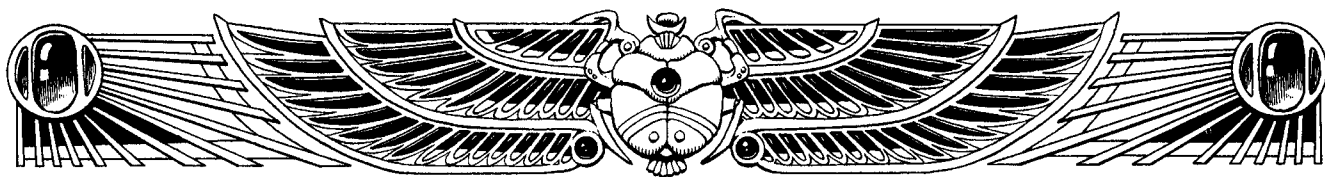
Equipment

Adventuring kit
Battle axe
Daggers (2)
Hardened leather armor with chain mail vest (Armor 6,
Mystic Armor 1, Initiative Penalty 2)
50 silver pieces



A MESSAGE TO VIVANE





THIEF IN THE NIGHT



Kellis crept up the winding stone stairs of the Wizard's Tower, smiling a little at the rising howl of the wind outside. The storm would break within moments, or she had no weather-wisdom. Such a tempest was coming as the city of Inshaldren had not seen in fifty years—this great storm would hide her from pursuers better than any magic she could devise. The t'skrang snickered at the thought of the Redoubt's Theran garrison, burdened by their heavy metal breastplates and boiled-leather tunics, trying to ride their high-strung war horses in the driving rain with lightning and thunder raging overhead. The storm was her best surety that any pursuit would be brief and grudging. The Theran authorities would instead rely on their network of spies and informers throughout Vivane Province to net the thief who'd stolen their precious secrets. But they would learn that a humble t'skrang river-trader has more ways to slip a net than the slipperiest eel ever fished out of the Flamewalk—and that the Resistance was far more dangerous than these arrogant fools had ever imagined.

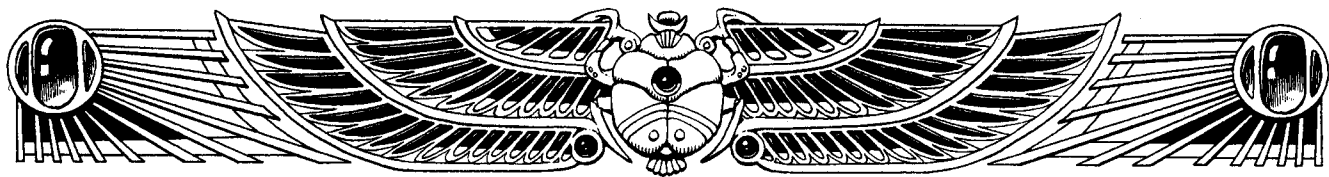
Dim orange light from guttering torches on the wall fell across the top step. Kellis stopped just shy of the landing and tugged her tunic straight, then carefully balanced the flagon of wine she carried atop a small silver tray. Should anyone see her near Arthaldus's chambers, she would act the humble servant, bringing the great wizard a little of his favorite Barsaivian wine. As for the wizard himself, Kellis had it on excellent authority that Arthaldus was deep in secret conference with City Administrator Zalunchis himself. By the time Arthaldus realized that his precious magical scrolls had been rifled—assuming he and Zalunchis weren't already too deep in their cups to notice anything beyond how much drink was left—Kellis and her prize would be long gone.

Kellis passed no one on her way down the curving hall—the topmost floor of the Wizards' Tower was as silent and deserted as the legendary Deeptombs. The door to Arthaldus's study was less well-protected than she had expected. She slipped inside and set the wine tray down, casting a wary look around.

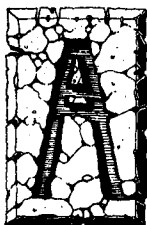
"Great stars in the sky ... " Kellis's voice trailed off in dismay. The study was awash in parchment and papyrus. Leatherbound books and scrolls and odd bits of paper lay in heaps on every surface, along with jars of magical herbs, the melted stubs of candles, a plate of desiccated apples, a tipped-over aleskin, and a trail of crumbs from Arthaldus's most recent meal. It could take halfway to forever to find the scroll she sought in this mess.

"Akarrin Nebarrak," Kellis muttered as she began digging through the first pile of papers, "you are going to owe me a lot of money!"





A MESSAGE TO VIVANE



Message to Vivane takes place primarily in the city of Vivane, the Theran Empire's last stronghold in Barsaive. This adventure is best suited for three to six characters with some degree of experience and reputation, preferably at least Third Circle. The adventure turns on espionage as well as

open combat, so characters should be as comfortable with subtlety and discretion as with knock-down, drag-out fighting.

The adventure begins in Throal or any other large free city in Barsaive, according to the gamemaster's choice. The characters travel across Barsaive between the starting place and the city of Vivane, but the gamemaster decides how much to make of the road trip. He may sum it up in a few brief sentences and save the major action for Vivane itself or make the cross-country trek an adventure-within-an-adventure, chock full of encounters with bandits, creatures, fellow travelers, and possibly even minor Horrors.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

Some months before the start of the adventure, a t'skrang river trader in the pay of the well-known merchant Akarrin Nebarrak infiltrated a Theran fortress and stole a scroll containing intelligence about the magical defenses of Vivane and Skypoint, including the Names of certain powerful artifacts. The information in the scroll would enable the Vivane Resistance to turn some of the Therans' own most powerful magics against them. The thief successfully smuggled the scroll to Nebarrak, who has been sitting on it until the hue and cry about the theft dies down. Theran authorities in Vivane Province have had no luck tracing the theft, and in recent weeks they have reluctantly relegated the quest for the missing scroll to the back burner. Judging that the time is right, Nebarrak takes this opportunity to smuggle the scroll to its intended destination—the Resistance in Vivane.

Nebarrak sends a brief, polite message to the adventurers, inviting them to dinner. Then he commissions them to deliver a small scroll to certain parties in Vivane. He does not reveal to them the scroll's contents, but he does offer to pay them well for their services.

The adventurers journey to Vivane, where a representative of the Resistance—an ork thief of remarkable

resourcefulness named Kron—arranges the transfer of the scroll on the following night in a waterfront tavern. The adventurers hand over the scroll in the appointed time and place, but a scant few minutes later the place is raided—not by the usual City Militia, but by Theran soldiers from Sky Point. The adventurers must fight their way free from the tavern, aided by their Resistance accomplice.

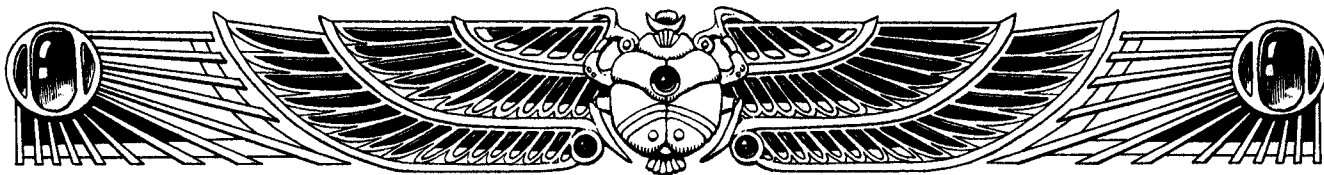
Kron takes them to the home of Lygis Arvannon, a minor noble and wealthy merchant who is also a member of the Resistance movement's inner circle. Minutes after they arrive at the manor house, however, the Therans strike again. Both assaults are part of a coordinated strike against the Barsaivian Resistance. Fighting their way free once again, the fugitive adventurers follow their ork guide to a secret, subterranean hideaway known only to him. The adventurers are left to wonder if the scroll they brought is the target of the raid, and what might have happened to it.

The next day, Kron ventures out into the city to seek information. He returns and informs the adventurers that the Resistance still survives, though greatly weakened, and that the timing of the raid to coincide with the arrival of the scroll was apparently sheer coincidence. The Therans are still unaware that the scroll has turned up in Vivane. Unfortunately, the Resistance no longer has the scroll either. It has fallen into the hands of a local criminal gang led by a formidable troll warrior named Marikis, who is demanding a sizeable ransom from the Resistance for its return. Marikis threatens to sell the scroll to the Therans if the Resistance cannot raise the funds within two days,

In its present weakened and disorganized state, the Resistance cannot raise even a fraction of the fortune Marikis demands. And with the Therans hunting all known or suspected Resistance sympathizers, the rebels are in no shape to confront the troll and his gang directly. However, a group of outsiders unknown to the Therans might stand a chance of taking on Marikis and recovering the scroll for the Resistance. Kron begs the adventurers to raid the gang's headquarters, promising them eventual payment for keeping the scroll in Resistance hands.

Whether or not the raid succeeds, the Resistance spirals all survivors out of Vivane Province into free Barsaive, where they may collect their reward from Akarrin Nebarrak or explain their failure.





THE COMMISSION



VIEWVIEW

In this encounter, one or more of the adventurers receives a letter bidding him and the rest of the adventuring party to appear at the Hall of Dengeri, an establishment frequented by well-off merchants and traders. The adventurers will be the guests of Akarrin Nebarrak, who has an offer of employment for them.

Note that this encounter may take place in any sizeable city in Barsaive—Bartertown, one of the cities of Throal, Urupa, Jerris, and so on. Adapt the following read-aloud section to suit the circumstances.

SETTING THE STAGE

As you walk down the street, a messenger approaches you—one of the many anonymous runners who grease the wheels of commerce and society by delivering essential correspondence within the city walls. The messenger hails you by name. In accordance with his service, he confirms your name and then hands you a neatly folded piece of parchment. The wax seal on it is a plain circle, and no address is written on this unexpected missive.

You break the seal and unfold the letter. Your name and those of all your adventuring companions appear at the top of the page, in the precise, attractive hand of a professional scribe (see invitation on this page).

THEMES AND IMAGES

Play up a sense of anticipation and potential danger. “A professional matter of some discretion” implies that whatever is to be done must escape the notice of someone

important, which means a certain amount of risk to the characters.

When the characters enter the Hall of Dengeri, emphasize the solid comfort of the surroundings. The place should feel welcoming and respectable, a refuge for the prosperous from the noise and bustle of the streets outside.

BEHIND THE SCENES

If the characters make inquiries, they discover that the Hall of Dengeri is a gentleman’s club for affluent traveling

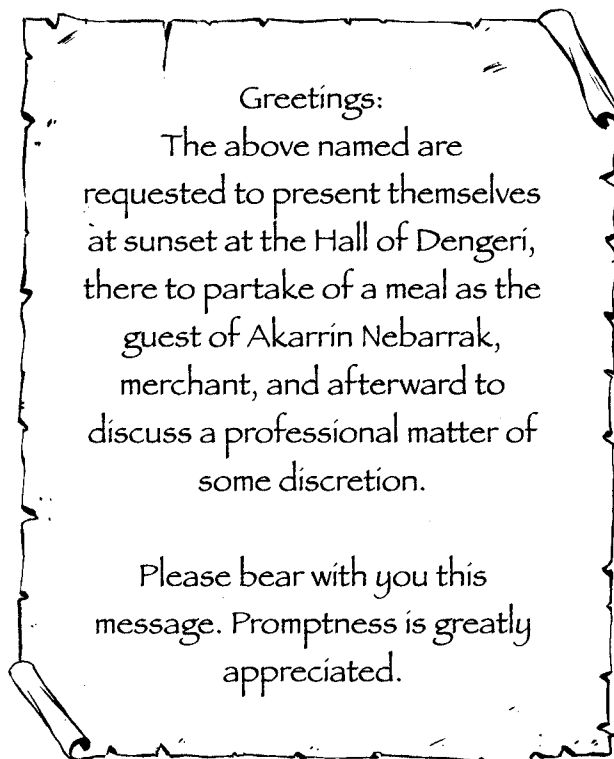
merchants. It contains comfortable living quarters, luxurious sitting rooms, and a fine kitchen, all staffed by attentive servants. The Hall of Dengeri gives its members a chance to enjoy their stay in town in a refined, homelike atmosphere, as a respite from the bustle of public inns or the squalor of the caravanseri. Many local merchants also frequent the hall, as it makes an excellent place to make deals as well as find a pleasant evening’s recreation.

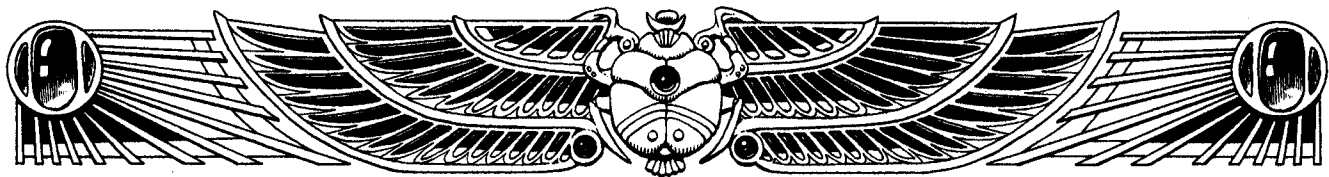
Information on Akarrin Nebarrak is a little harder to track down. Persistent characters, however, can discover that he is a respected independent merchant whose travels bring him to the city two or three times a year.

If the characters cannot or choose not to attend that evening for any reason, Nebarrak sends them the invitation one or two more times. If these attempts are unsuccessful, a somewhat exasperated Akarrin seeks out the adventurers in person.

AT THE HALL OF Dengeri

The Hall of Dengeri is an older, unimposing building in the merchant’s quarter of the city. Only a small brass plaque near the front door identifies the place. If





the characters pull on the bell-pull over the plaque, an elderly troll butler of stately demeanor appears within a few minutes. If they try to hand him the message, he politely ignores it and says, "Master Nebarrak is expecting you," as he ushers them inside. If they identify themselves and mention Nebarrak by name, the butler says, "Very good," and admits them.

The hall is far more luxurious inside than outside, though characters knowledgeable about such things notice that the furniture and accoutrements are comfortable, solid, attractive and tasteful, but not of any remarkable value. The butler conveys the characters to a small private room at the far end of the ground floor. Inside, at a table set for several people, is Akarrin Nebarrak.

Nebarrak is a middle-aged dwarf, dressed expensively but less gaudily than many dwarfs of substance. His charm becomes apparent immediately as he greets his guests and thanks them profusely for honoring him with their presence. As soon as the greetings are done, Akarrin asks for his invitation back. With a casual flick of his wrist, he throws it into the fireplace. Akarrin acts friendly toward the characters to put them at ease, but becomes noticeably more formal and precise once he begins discussing the mission.

Almost immediately, servants bustle in with platters heaped with food and dusty bottles fresh up from the wine cellar. During the excellent dinner, Akarrin says nothing of the reason for his invitation. Instead, he encourages his guests to tell him about their prior adventures.

Once everyone has eaten their fill and the servants have cleared the table, leaving only brandy and tobacco behind, Akarrin lights his pipe and gets to the point.

Read the following aloud, paraphrase it, or play it "in character":

I represent certain individuals who wish to see Barsaive free of the Theran presence. My patrons have entrusted to me certain information of great value to those brave souls in Vivane who strive to free their land from the Theran oppressors. As it would be unwise for me to personally visit Vivane at this time, I wish to hire messengers to carry this information to those in need of it.

I have selected you for this commission because I require discretion and resourcefulness as well as prowess in combat. Ideally, this mission will involve no fighting at all—you will merely make the journey, deliver the goods and return. Should complications arise, however, I need messengers who can avoid trouble when possible and deal with it when unavoidable.

For your services, I am prepared to pay in advance 3,000 silver pieces, which sum will also serve to finance your journey. Upon successful delivery of the information, you will receive an additional 5,000 silver pieces.

Having made his offer, Akarrin waits for the adventurers' response. His price is firm—he will politely refuse all attempts to bargain. He also declines to offer any further information about the mission until the adventurers have agreed to accept it. Once they do, Akarrin explains the details of the group's cover story and the rendezvous with the Vivane Resistance.

Read the following aloud or paraphrase it:

The best lie always contains an element of the truth. Therefore, you will travel as what you are—couriers delivering a small but valuable parcel to Vivane. The cargo you will appear to be protecting is this. (Akarrin places a small, heavy brass coffer on the table, with a sealed wax envelope riveted to its lid.)

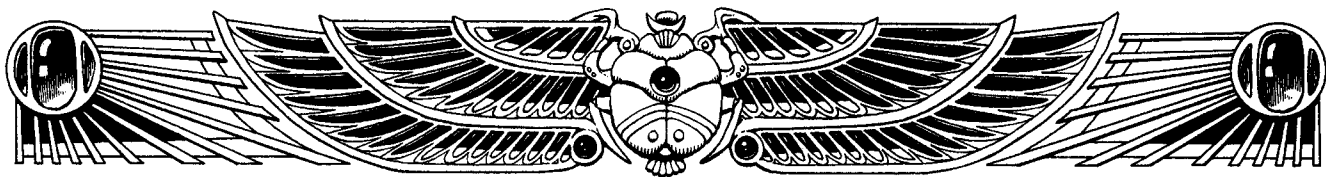
This box contains gems and other small valuables, worth somewhat less than the sum you will receive for the successful accomplishment of your true commission. The coffer is payment in full for a legitimate business debt between my acquaintances, fellow merchants Yetrone Cavarre and Daris Glensndon. The paper attached to the coffer identifies you as legitimate agents of commerce and will serve to gain your admittance to the Old City of Vivane.

Glensndon—a human, by the way—has no connection to the Resistance. However, representatives of the Resistance will be watching for the arrival of this box, and its delivery will alert them to your presence in Vivane. The day after you deliver the coffer, proceed to a place on the riverfront called Liar's Wharf at noon. There, a representative of the Resistance will meet you and arrange for the fulfillment of your true commission—and your final payment, of course.

Having finished his speech, Nebarrak takes questions from his newly appointed couriers. He refuses to divulge details about the Resistance, saying that it is in the adventurers' best interests to know as little as possible about such things. He freely answers any questions they may have about the journey, the city or province of Vivane, and the Theran occupying forces.

If the adventure is beginning in Throal, Nebarrak recommends that the adventurers follow the trade route between Throal and Vivane—a long, curving path that runs down the Serpent River through Lake Vors to just south of the Scol Mountains, then overland to Jerris, then south toward the nearest river. Back on the waterway, the





the adventuring party have legitimate reasons to hesitate about accepting the job, offer further inducement—for example, give the character a good reason to want to leave town abruptly or suggest a pressing need for an extra 3,000 silver pieces.

This mission is best suited for characters capable of acting with subtlety and restraint. If the player characters are not particularly suited to discretion and careful planning, the gamemaster may need to restructure the entire introduction to Akarrin. For example, the adventurers might encounter him fatally wounded on the road somewhere far from any city, and the dying dwarf may pass the scroll on to them because they are his only hope of getting the information to the Resistance.

Make the trip to Vivane as quick or as lengthy as you wish. If the characters take Akarrin's

route goes upriver almost to the Death's Sea, then downriver again past the jungle, then follows a brief leg overland to Vivane. In all, this journey takes three to four months and is by far the safest and most reliable route. The adventurers themselves, however, must make the final decision about the route they want to take—if they choose a shortcut through the wilderness, Nebarrak does not attempt to dissuade them.

Before they leave the Hall of Dengeri, Nebarrak gives the adventurers their real cargo—a small parchment scroll sealed with a thin disk of silver—and a final warning.

Read the following aloud or paraphrase it:

Please don't take offense, but I must advise you that while this seal may appear easy to counterfeit, the recipients will know and demand an accounting if it is broken and replaced before delivery. It is in your own best interests to know as little as possible about what is written on this parchment.

TROUBLESHOOTING

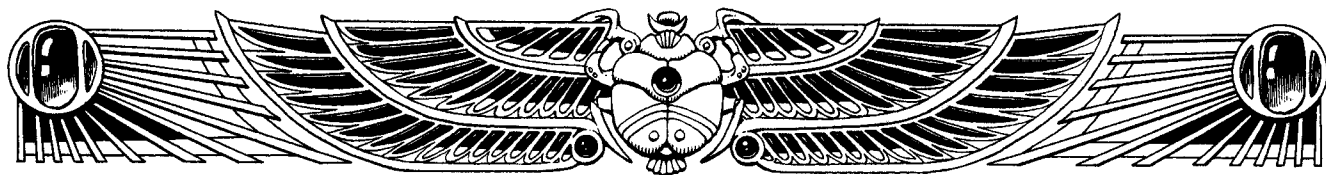
Obviously, the adventure is over if the adventurers refuse Akarrin's offer of employment. If some characters in

suggestion and follow the well-traveled trade routes, they are most likely to meet river pirates and dishonest traveling companions along the way. If they decide to go cross-country, they may run into monsters, savages, or possibly Horrors.

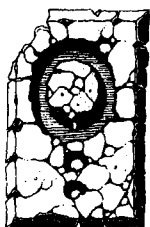
If the scroll becomes unsealed during the journey, nothing dramatic or tragic occurs—no bolt from the blue, no horrible curse. However, the Resistance will know that the seal has been broken and will demand an explanation. Whether they find that explanation satisfactory and how they respond is up to the gamemaster. If the seal is broken through no fault of the adventurers'—stolen by bandits who open it before the adventurers get it back, for example—the adventurers should simply present the scroll as is to the Resistance along with a full and frank explanation of the circumstances. Any attempt to disguise the fact that the seal has been broken will be regarded with suspicion by the rebels.

Without the scroll, the adventure cannot continue. So if the adventurers lose the scroll along the way, give them a reasonable chance to recover it. Do not allow them to lose it through sheer mischance or a bad roll of the dice. And should the adventurers lose the scroll through sheer incompetence, return it to them by a stroke of luck or even a *deus ex machina*.





SO THIS IS VIVANE



INTERVIEW

In this encounter, the player characters arrive in Vivane and attempt to enter the Old City. Assuming they succeed, they deliver their cover package to Glennsdon and make the rendezvous at Liar's Wharf in the Merchants' Quarter.

During this part of the adventure, the characters may experience any number of colorful urban encounters with cutpurses, bunko artists, arrogant young nobles out slumming, and so on, at the gamemaster's discretion.

SETTING THE STAGE

After days of travel through rough and often barren countryside, the city of Vivane is a hive of noise and chaos. People are everywhere, more people than you've seen in days—striding purposefully toward shops, stumbling out of taverns, strolling up the steps of inns and public buildings. Carts creak by you in the streets, their wheels rattling over cobblestones. In the distance, toward the Merchants' Quarter, you can hear the vendors of the open-air markets crying their wares. You hear the tramp of booted feet, and a troop of the Theran City Watch marches by. A few people glance surreptitiously their way—most studiously avoid seeing them. They pass without incident, apparently on patrol. The stream of Name-givers in the streets scarcely pauses, and you let yourselves flow with them toward the towering walls that mark the boundary of the Old City of Vivane. Now you'll find out if Nebarrak's cover is good enough to get you inside the Theran Quarter.

THEMES AND IMAGES

The guards at the gates of the Theran Quarter disguise their patronizing, arrogant attitude with the thinnest possible veneer of courtesy until the characters hand over a small bundle of "import duty" that Nebarrak has provided them. Once the guards have the coin in hand, they become almost obsequious.

A mood of gloomy Dickensian drudgery pervades Glennsdon's office. Make the adventurers wish they were in the middle of an interesting life-and-death battle with a Horror somewhere, rather than sipping cheap wine and

nibbling dry biscuits while Glennsdon's overworked and underfed clerk endlessly counts elemental pieces.

In contrast, Liar's Wharf vibrates with liveliness, despite its scruffy appearance. The ork's sales pitch is loud and brassy, in sharp contrast to his terse, whispered instructions about the next night's rendezvous.

BEHIND THE SCENES

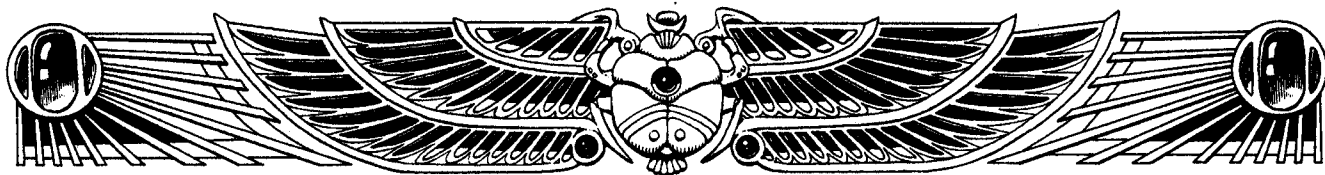
Assuming they commit no egregious violations of Theran law and do not call undue attention to themselves, the adventurers arrive in Vivane and enter the Old City without incident. The guards at the Theran Quarter's gate read Nebarrak's letter of authorization, then open and inspect the contents of the brass coffer before letting the characters through. On top of the gems in the coffer, the guards find a stack of coins wrapped in paper and labeled "Import Duties." The guards immediately unwrap and count the coins. Satisfied with the amount, they accept the money, admit the characters inside the gates and authorize weeklong visitor passes for them.

Once inside the Old City, the adventurers may obtain whatever accommodations best suit them (and their finances)—anything from a luxurious suite in the Merchants' Quarter to a cheap dockside dive. They have until sunset the next day to report their place of lodging to the Theran Watch.

The merchant Daris Glennsdon operates several large dockside warehouses from a central office in the Wedge. The office opens each morning at sunrise and closes an hour or two after sunset. If the adventurers do not deliver the coffer full of valuables on the same day that they arrive in town, their obviously valuable cargo is likely to attract the attention of unsavory elements, especially if the adventurers spend the night in a more dubious part of the city. No matter when the adventurers finally make the delivery, they do not meet Glennsdon. Instead, they are greeted at the office by its harrassed and scandalously underpaid manager, a nervous 'skrang named Gik.

The office is a large, open room where more than a dozen clerks of all ages and races sit scrunched over high desks, scribbling away the hours. Gik acts impatient and a little suspicious toward the adventurers at first, but he becomes much friendlier—almost fawning, in fact—once he learns they have come to pay a business debt. Gik sends





one of the junior clerks out for wine and cakes for the adventurers to enjoy while he takes the coffer to Glennsdon. After about half an hour, Gik returns with a written receipt and Glennsdon's profuse thanks.

LIAR'S WHARF

When the adventurers inquire the way to Liar's Wharf the next day, they discover that everyone on the dockside knows where it is. Despite its name, Liar's Wharf is not a wharf at all, but a small stone-flagged courtyard adjacent to the docks in the Merchants' Quarter. The courtyard is the site of a chaotic open-air bazaar, much smaller than those in the Theran Quarter. Enterprising docksiders gather at Liar's Wharf to sell cheap grog, dubious food, gaudy junk, prostitutes of all persuasions, and even more dubious commodities to the sailors disembarking from newly arrived ships.

Upon arriving at Liar's Wharf, the adventurers are accosted by all sorts of merchants hawking their wares. One of these merchants is a wiry ork in gaudy clothing, carrying a six-foot-long dowel on which seven brightly colored birds perch. Seemingly oblivious to the bustle all around, the ork offers to sell the adventurers a parrot for only 10 pieces of silver.

"These are birds of truly rare talent," the ork says, giving the adventurers his standard spiel. "Allow me to show you what Little Red here can do. Give me but a moment of your gracious attention—'twill cost you nothing." If the adventurers gather around him to see the show, the ork asks quietly if they delivered a casket to Glennsdon yesterday and if the rest of their goods are safe. If the adventurers answer yes to these questions, the ork says, "I'm going to walk away now. Don't follow—just watch where I turn off the path. Be at that spot at sunset tomorrow with the goods." If the adventurers demand proof of his identity at any point during this little scene, the ork says, "I know what you carry. That's all the proof you need."

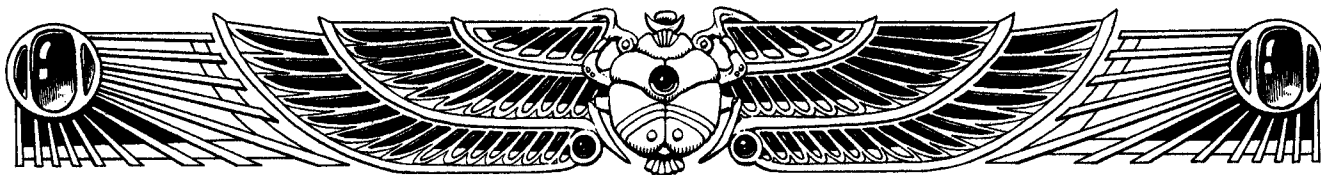
The ork silently refuses to sell the adventurers a parrot if they offer to buy one—he does not want to do anything or give them anything that might make the adventurers stand out in the memory of guardsmen or potential witnesses.

Once the meeting place is set, the ork resumes his pitchman's demeanor, saying, "Well then, if you will not buy, you will not buy. No matter—not everyone is suited to be the master of such remarkable birds as these. I thank you for your time." Bowing slightly to them in farewell, he meanders out of the square and down a cobblestone cart path that runs between the docks and the warehouses. His progress is easy to follow, as he holds the pole full of birds high over his head. About a hundred feet beyond Liar's Wharf he abruptly turns toward an archway and disappears through it. If the adventurers walk up to the archway, they discover that it opens onto a narrow, winding alley that disappears rapidly into the depths of the southern Riverwalk district.

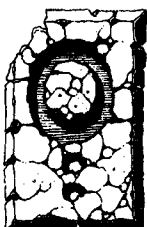
TROUBLESHOOTING

As bonded couriers, the adventurers may carry swords and other personal weapons without arousing suspicion. However, they must keep the hilts bound when out in public. Barring any acts of colossal arrogance or stupidity on the characters' part (such as carrying an unsheathed blade down a public street), this encounter should go off without a hitch.





DELIVERY



VIEW

In this encounter, the adventurers go to a hole-in-the-wall tavern and deliver the scroll to members of the Resistance. Before they can finish the transaction, however, Theran soldiers raid the tavern.

SETTING THE STAGE

You walk through the narrow streets of the Merchants' Quarter toward the meeting place, shivering a little at the cold touch of the fog rolling in off the river. This area, so loud and brash and busy by day, is eerily empty by night. Your footsteps echo off warehouse walls and broken street cobbles. Every noise you hear, from the creak of a tavern door to the muted clatter of your gear as you walk, sounds shockingly loud and seems to come from several directions. Strange shadows loom up at you out of the shrouded night—it takes you a minute to realize that they are only stacks of crates, or the slump-shouldered roofs of low buildings.

You pass into Liar's Wharf and make your way to the archway by the little alley. A shape detaches itself from the arch, and you recognize the ork birdseller. He has shed his gaudy clothes for a dark brown tunic and treads, and his parrots are nowhere to be seen.

"Follow me," he whispers curtly, as he starts down the alley. After a few steps, he says over his shoulder, "I am Kron, if you want a name to call me by." He leads you through the alley into a narrow avenue, then across it to a low-slung building with a thatched roof, cracked plaster over mud-brick walls, and a half-open wooden door. Though you see no sign, the sounds and smells drifting from the place tell you it's the entrance to a tavern.

"Sit down at the empty table in the far corner," Kron says. "Have a mug of beer if you like. I'll join you soon." With that, he vanishes into the shadows.

THEMES AND IMAGES

The first part of this encounter, during which the scroll is delivered, should feel like a detective movie. Emphasize the rolling fog and the disembodied sounds of the Riverwalk docks at night. When the Therans break into the tavern, the mood shifts to one of frantic, panicked

action. Keep the players off balance by emphasizing the need for haste—push them to declare their characters' actions quickly. If a player hesitates to declare an action, give him or her a couple of seconds to consider before demanding an action from the next player. If everybody else has declared an action and the player still hasn't decided on one, that player's character simply stands confused for the duration of the turn.

During the flight from the tavern, play up the sense of a blind sprint through a strange place in the dark. Emphasize the treacherous footing, the mysterious noises that could be pursuers, and the characters' inability to see what they are leaning on, splashing through or running from. Keep reminding them how fast Kron is moving ahead of them—make them feel that a single misstep at the wrong time could separate them forever from their only reliable guide.

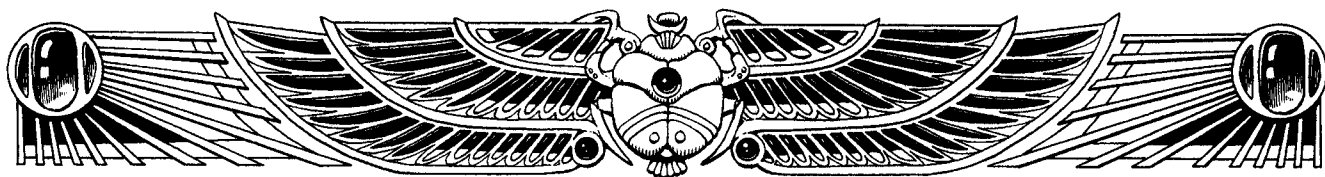
BEHIND THE SCENES

The tavern has no official name, but patrons call it "Dochner's" after its proprietor. It is strictly a local place—Dochner makes no effort to attract sailors or anyone else except working-class docksiders. In recent months the tavern has become an unofficial Resistance gathering place. Dochner himself is not a member of the Resistance—too much political intrigue can be bad for business—but he sympathizes with their aims and allows them to use his tavern as a meeting place.

The tavern's main room is dimly lit and medium-sized, about 25' by 40'. Though reasonably full of dedicated drinkers, the place is not boisterous. Some patrons sit alone on long benches, downing mug after mug as if their lives depended on it. Others huddle in small groups, conversing in low voices. Despite the number of people in the room, a large table in the farthest corner from the door remains empty. A few heads turn to regard the adventurers as they make their way across the room, but no one seems more than briefly interested.

After sitting for a few moments at the table, the adventurers should realize that this establishment boasts no serving wenches or waiters. Dochner, a stocky human with untidy dark hair and large hands, stands by a enormous tapped keg near the door—patrons go to him whenever they need their tin mugs refilled. Beer seems to be the only





thing served in this tavern. If the adventurers go up for a drink, Dochner wordlessly draws them each a mug and hands it over. When they offer payment, he waves it away, grunting, "You've been paid for already." The beer is undistinguished, but adequate.

THE EXCHANGE

After 10 or 15 minutes, Kron enters the room. He goes straight to the keg for a drink, then carries his mug over to the adventurers' table. He acts more social than the adventurers have seen him up to this point, inquiring about their journey and even asking if they've seen any of the local sights. To this last query he adds, "I hope you saw something on the way into town, for you'll not want to linger on your way out." If the adventurers bring up the evening's business, Kron hushes them and says, "We're waiting for one more."

A few minutes later, this mysterious final guest arrives—a slender young human, dressed in the somewhat foppish garments favored by well-off young elves. He sits down with a cheerful "Hello" to the table at large, then produces a bottle of red wine and a small pewter cup from a deep pocket in his long coat. He pours himself a drink, but does not offer to share. Kron introduces him as Kaleb.

Once Kaleb is comfortably settled at the table, Kron at last asks to see the goods. When the adventurers produce the scroll, Kron hands it over to Kaleb, who slips it inside his tunic with no more than a glance at the seal. Kron then explains the night's plans to the group. "Kaleb is going to take this away now and verify that it's the genuine article. Once he's done that, he'll return here with your payment. It will take him an hour or so, and I'll stay with you until he returns." If any of the adventurers object to the plan, Kron makes conciliatory noises, but refuses to change anything. Kaleb quickly finishes his wine, gives the group a pleasant nod and leaves, taking scroll, bottle and cup with him.

Kron proves a pleasant enough drinking companion, regaling the adventurers with bawdy stories and humorous local anecdotes. He steers the talk away from any discussion of the Resistance or even local politics in general.

The exchange of the scroll is exactly as Kron describes—the Resistance has no intention of bilking or double-crossing the adventurers. Kaleb is an elemental—he will use his abilities to check the integrity of the silver seal and verify the contents of the scroll. Once he has finished his tests, he intends to secure the scroll in a safe place and then take the adventurers' payment back to Dochner's tavern.

UNWELCOME GUESTS

The specified hour passes, plus a few extra minutes. Kron begins to act a bit impatient, but not too worried.

Suddenly, a dozen well-armed men in Eighth Legion uniforms burst through the door. No sound warned of their approach; they seem to have materialized out of the fog. One of them shouts, "Yield in the name of the Theran Empire!"

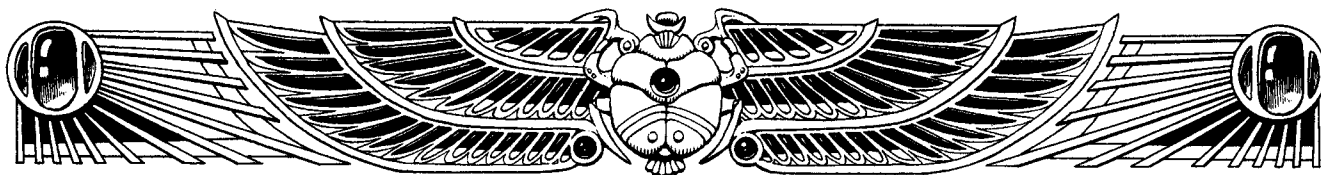
The tavern erupts into chaos. Some patrons mill about in confusion—others try to dash past the invaders, with little success. Several draw small weapons and assault the Theran warriors with suicidal fury. Kron stands up and shouts to the adventurers, "Follow me!" Then he grabs the short bench he had been sitting on and swings it with all his might at the wall near the table. The force of his blow cracks the plaster, sending large chunks of it skittering across the floor. After a couple swings, he calls to the brawniest of the adventurers to help him. The adventurer in question must make at least 3 Strength (6) Tests. Breaking through the plaster requires 3 successes of Average or better. Once this is accomplished, enough plaster has fallen to show the adventurers what lies behind the apparently solid wall—an old door that has been plastered over. Kron slips the rusty latch and shoves the door open with his shoulder.

The adventurers and Kron spill out into a small, junk-filled yard behind the tavern. The yard faces a narrow blind alley. Ushering the adventurers into the foggy night, Kron hisses orders: "Follow me, stay together, and for the Passions' sake move quickly!" If any of the adventurers objects to such an ignoble escape or tries to go back into the tavern, Kron grabs the offender by the shirt, puts his fangs a few inches from the hapless adventurer's face and spits out, "Good men are dying in there to cover your escape. So you're going to escape, damn you!" He ends this speech by giving its recipient a rough shove toward the alley.

After a scant few steps, Kron stops short and flings out his arm to stop the characters behind him. He gestures to them to crouch down. Sharp-eyed characters can see figures ahead of them, milling around the alley's entrance. Kron creeps silently forward a few feet, then returns. With a terrible grin on his face, he whispers, "City Militia. Take 'em out fast and keep moving." He draws a wicked-looking long knife from beneath his cloak, scoops up a short piece of board from the alley's littered ground to use as a cudgel, and hurls himself on the guards with silent savagery.

The guards are members of the Red Squad (see p. 40 of the **Barsaivian Vivane** book, **Sky Point and Vivane Campaign Set**). They outnumber the fugitives by two or three individuals. The adventurers are fighting to clear the way for further flight as quickly as possible, so if any of the guardsmen try to escape, Kron calls out to let them go. Once the last guardsman has fallen or fled, the adventurers can hear the shouts of rapidly approaching soldiers in the





alley behind them. Simultaneously, another squad of soldiers appears around a corner to the left. Kron takes off to the right at a full sprint, pausing just long enough to make sure that all the adventurers are following him.

FLEEING THROUGH THE STREETS

The next several minutes are a torturous sprint through alleys, down side streets, and even through a few buildings (most of them abandoned). The adventurers must scramble over walls, leap from rooftop to rooftop, and crawl along a narrow ledge over the harbor. Several times they seem to have lost the pursuing soldiers, only to encounter them again around the next corner.

Obstacle Course

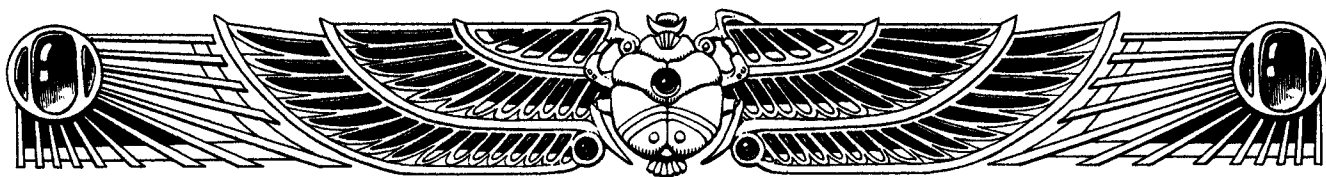
Sustain the flight from the Theran troops for as long as it remains exciting for the players. How long it lasts depends on several factors, including the players' mood and how the adventurers fared in the fight with the City Militia (see **Troubleshooting**, p. 43). The adventurers have no idea where they are running, and so no map of their flight is provided. Instead of running in a clear path across the docks, their flight is a series of obstacles to be overcome. Likely obstacles are briefly described below, which the gamemaster may mix and

match as he or she wishes. Note that many of the tests given below will not apply to windling characters who are flying.

Walls: The adventurers must scramble over several walls in the course of their flight. Getting over each wall requires a successful Climbing or Dexterity (7) Test. This Difficulty Number assumes a 10-foot wall. For every 2 feet higher or lower than 10, increase or decrease the Difficulty Number by 1. If any player's test fails, one of the other characters must go back and help the stranded character. At this point, the players of both characters must make a second Climbing Test—the character being helped receives a +1 step bonus and the helping character suffers a -1 step penalty. Alternatively, a very large and strong character can simply push or pull a smaller character up over the wall.

Exhaustion: Periodically, require the adventurers to make Toughness Tests to see how they are keeping up physically. The Difficulty Number for these tests is the number of minutes the characters have been chased. If a character fails such a test, he begins to falter and must get help from the rest of the adventurers to keep up (thereby slowing everybody down). If the majority of the group starts to succumb to exhaustion, Kron can find a hiding place for the





fugitives to take a brief breather. If the characters rest for a few moments, reduce the Difficulty Numbers by half.

Dead Dog: A large, dead dog lies across a narrow alley that the adventurers must traverse. Each of them must make a Dexterity (5) Test to avoid the corpse. The darkness, however, makes the species of the corpse impossible to tell at first. If an adventurer trips on it, he knows only that he has fallen on something soft, dead, roughly the size of a small human or a dwarf, and more than a little ripe. To reflect the momentary shock of the experience, anyone who trips on the dog must immediately make a Willpower (6) Test to avoid crying out.

Rooftop Race: At some point during the chase Kron takes to the rooftops. He leads the adventurers up to the top of a low shed, and from there to the edge of a peaked roof. This route requires the characters to scramble along unstable, slanted roofs, during which each of them must make Dexterity (6) Tests to avoid falling. They must also make a couple of terrifying leaps from one roof to the next, with the ground below completely obscured by the darkness. To accomplish these feats, each adventurer must make a Dexterity or Strength (6) Test, whichever poses the most difficulty for the character. A character who fails this test suffers a painful fall of six to eight feet (Step 2 Damage), causing a loud noise and several seconds of delay. This option could prove troublesome for obsidiman and troll characters—if your player group includes them, either skip this option or allow the characters to cross the roofs of buildings capable of supporting obsidimen and trolls.

Shortcut: Several times Kron tries to cut off pursuit by dashing through a building—bursting in one door or window, sprinting through, and leaving by another. Sometimes the area traversed is inhabited. This obstacle involves no tests—however, the characters may have momentary encounters with a middle-aged couple roused from their night's rest by a parade bounding over their bed, a pair of young lovers disturbed in a tryst, a frightened mother and her small children, or some other bewildered innocent citizen.

Crowd: Kron also tries to shake off pursuit by cutting through a crowd, a private party in the courtyard of one of the Merchants' Quarter's larger and more respectable public houses, and so on. To quickly and unobtrusively traverse a crowd, each character must make a successful Dexterity (5) Test (to slip past others in the area) or a Charisma (6) Test (to persuade bystanders to get out of the way).

No exit: Once or twice, Kron thinks they may have finally lost their pursuers, only to find militiamen close by as soon as he opens a gate or goes around the corner. Each time this happens, the guardsmen give chase and the characters must elude them.

Confused Drunk: The characters literally run into an intoxicated individual who becomes confused by all the hurly-burly. The drunk may try to seize a character and demand to know what's going on, lose his balance and fall, or both. If the drunk falls, he takes down any nearby character who fails a Dexterity (5) Test.

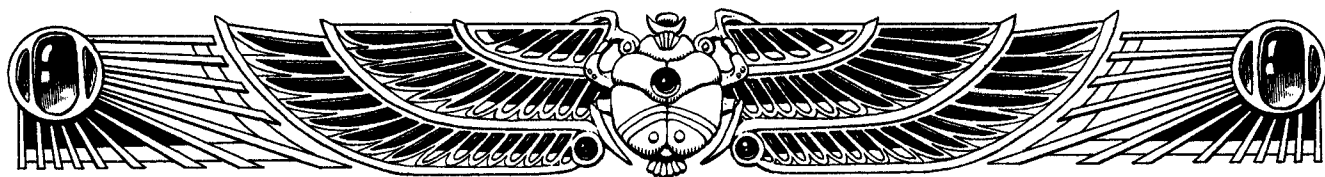
Abattoir: The group comes to a broad, dead-end alley lined with shuttered wooden booths. The smell lets the characters know that the area is a fishmarket by day. Kron lifts up a heavy metal grate on the ground and motions the fugitives to jump into the pit below. They land knee-high in rotting fish parts—this part of the alley is reserved for cleaning and gutting the fish, and the pit is an abattoir where the discarded parts are thrown. The adventurers must slog through the foul stuff for several yards, after which they get to another grate set high on the pit's wall at ground level. This exit leads to a different alley a little way from the fishmarket. To cope with the stench, everybody in the pit must make a Willpower (5) Test. Characters become nauseous if their tests fail. Each character must also make a Dexterity (5) Test on first dropping into the pit. If this test fails, the adventurer takes no damage but loses his balance and falls into the offal.

Ledge Crawl: This obstacle makes a good ending for the flight. Kron leads the adventurers into an abandoned warehouse, up a ladder and out a high, narrow window. Once outside again, the fugitives find themselves standing on a ledge less than a foot wide, about 15 or 20 feet above the Flamewalk River. The group must negotiate this ledge for several dozen feet before reaching dry land (possibly the secluded recess in which Kron declares the chase over). Each character must make a Dexterity (6) Test when crossing the ledge. Failure means that the character plunges into the water with a loud splash, and the rest of the adventurers must stop to pull their comrade out of the drink. This can be extremely troubling for obsidiman characters.

Safety at Last

At last, Kron calls a halt in a dim and stinking dead-end street between two warehouses. As soon as the adventurers are all within earshot of a whisper, he says, "I think we've lost them for now, but I have to get you somewhere





safe for the night. I'll take you to stay with someone I know. You'll find the accommodations comfortable." If the adventurers ask any questions, Kron shakes his head and says, "Later."

The group winds its way through back streets and alleys at a more relaxed pace, finding only minor obstacles and unexpected detours on their way. One tense moment comes when the adventurers are heading down a high, narrow lane bordered on both sides by ramshackle two-story homes. The lane is more than a hundred yards long, with no side streets or alleys to break up the solid line of shuttered windows and locked doors. Suddenly a squad of City Militia appears at the opposite end of the lane, heading toward the adventurers. Kron scowls for a moment, then softly tells the group to keep moving. If they obey Kron, walking quietly past the guardsmen with a polite nod or "Good evening, officer," they pass with no trouble.

AND NOW THE BAD NEWS . . .

Unfortunately, Theran troops also raided the safe house where Kaleb was conducting the tests on the scroll. Kaleb escaped with the scroll and a good portion of the adventurers' promised fee in the chaos of the raid. He used both to buy his escape from Vivane.

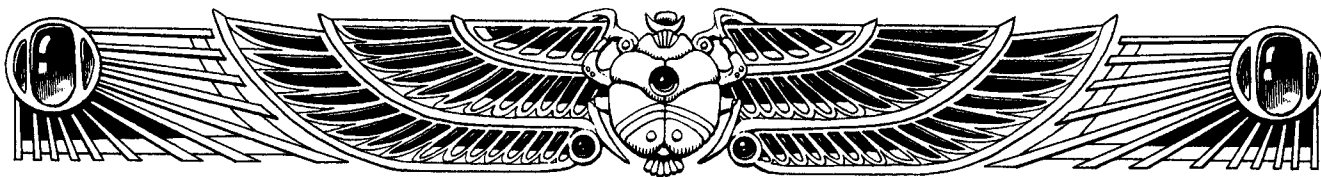
TROUBLESHOOTING

The progress of the chase through the dockside depends on how the adventurers fare in their first fight with the City Militia. If the adventurers kill or scatter the guardsmen without taking any significant harm, the chase can proceed full-tilt. If any adventurer is seriously wounded, however, he needs help negotiating many of the obstacles, and the chase becomes a great deal more difficult.

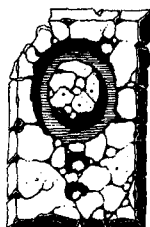
Though the adventurers should feel as if they are in constant danger of losing sight of Kron and getting lost in the darkened city, do not allow any character to become cut off from the rest of the group unless he deliberately separates himself from them. Even then, consider allowing Kron and the others to double back and rescue the "lost sheep" after a few moments of disorientation.

The characters' relative success in negotiating the various obstacles during the flight can determine whether or not the group attracts unwanted attention from the Militia patrol in the hundred-yard alley. A character who is soaking wet, covered head-to-toe in fish guts, limping, or bleeding profusely tends to draw the attention of the guards. The watchmen might ask a few inconvenient questions of such a character, but most likely will not attack or try to arrest the adventurers unless one of the characters does something rash—tries to flee, draws a weapon, and so on.





AT THE MANOR HOUSE



VIEW

In this encounter, Kron leads the adventurers to supposed safety at the manor of Lygis Arvannon, a wealthy Resistance supporter. Soon after the group's arrival, Theran soldiers break in and execute Arvannon and her servant. Once again, the adventurers and Kron must flee for their lives.

SETTING THE STAGE

Thank all the Passions, it seems you've finally lost your pursuers. You're not sure how long you've been ducking and dodging through the streets of Vivane—perhaps half an hour, perhaps half the night. Mercifully, Kron has slowed his pace. As you catch enough of your breath to be able to look around, you understand why.

You've traveled quite a ways from the Riverwalk docks. Narrow alleys have widened into tree-lined boulevards, and the cobblestones underfoot feel blessedly smooth to your tired feet. In place of the huddled throng of warehouses and dilapidated inns, you see graceful manor houses set well back from the street, each surrounded by a low stone wall with plenty of open space between them. Instead of river bilge and fish leavings, you smell flowers and the scent of fresh-cut grass. The peace and quiet of the place seem unreal after your hectic flight.

Kron turns off the street, hugging close to a wall around one of the manor houses. You turn a corner, then another corner and stop at a small iron gate. Kron fishes a key from his pocket, unlocks the gate and silently swings it open. After ushering you through it, he locks the gate behind him.

Kron leads you across a well-kept lawn and up a short flight of stone steps onto a small terrace, stopping at the manor's back door. He knocks on it in a patterned rhythm that might be some kind of code.

After a few silent minutes, a bolt clicks back and the door opens. A human woman in a nightgown and shawl, with graying brown braids dangling over her shoulders, blinks groggily at you. Recognizing Kron, she suddenly looks alert and beckons you into the house.

THEMES AND IMAGES

This encounter should initially convey a sense of security, suddenly disrupted by the Imperial troops' arrival. The sudden execution of Arvannon and Gorra should come as a terrible shock as well.

Keep the final dash to the abandoned areas short and to the point. By now, the players have probably had enough skulking for one night.

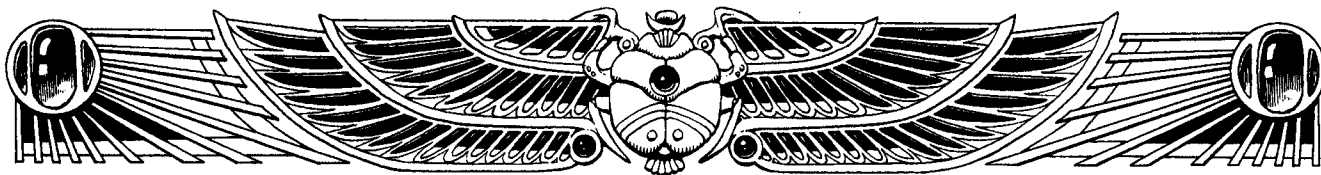
BEHIND THE SCENES

The house belongs to a minor noblewoman, an elf named Lygis Arvannon, who owns several ships that ply the Flamewalk River. She lives here alone with her housekeeper, a human woman in her mid-fifties named Gorra. Gorra admits the fugitives into a large and comfortable kitchen, stokes up a fire and puts the teapot on, then runs to fetch the mistress of the house. A few minutes later she returns with Arvannon, who wears an elaborate brocade dressing gown.

Kron gives Arvannon the following report: "We were waiting at Dochner's for Kaleb to get back with the money when Imperials burst into the place. I don't know if they were after the scroll or not. I can't think why else they'd have been there. Anyway, I didn't wait around to find out. We broke out through the old door, the one behind the plaster. Some of the boys jumped the soldiers to cover our escape—I don't give them much of a chance. We had to go over a bunch of Reds, then shake the Imperials behind us. Once I was sure we'd lost them, I brought our friends here. It was dark enough and we were moving fast enough that I don't think any of the Imperials would recognize us in the daytime—unless they already know who we are. Either way, we should be able to get these folk out of town and on their way home tomorrow."

At this point the adventurers can ask any questions that Kron's report has not already answered. For Kron and Arvannon, the most important unanswered question is whether or not the Imperials were after the scroll and the adventurers. If they were, how did they know the scroll had arrived in Vivane? If they weren't, why did they raid the tavern rather than leaving the job to the City Militia as they normally would have done? As Kron, Arvannon, and the adventurers discuss who knew what and how and for how long, Gorra serves them steaming mint tea and sweet cookies.





IMPERIAL RAID

The conversation finally settles into an argument between Kron and Arvannon about the next move. Kron wants to go out immediately to find out what's going on; Arvannon thinks he should wait until morning. The disagreement becomes moot when heavy knocking begins at the kitchen door. An equally brutal pounding of the huge front-door knocker echoes faintly from the other side of the house. Through the kitchen door a voice bellows, "Lygis Arvannon, open in the name of the Empire!"

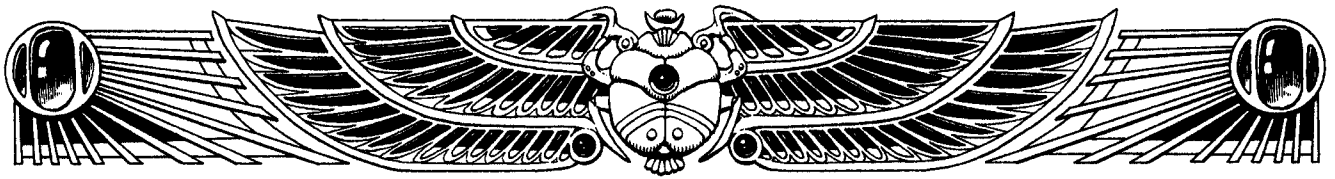
Kron hisses at Arvannon, "Let them in, play dumb, try to keep them downstairs as long as possible!" He then

beckons the adventurers to follow him. The ork leads them up a narrow flight of stairs to the second floor, down a narrow and dingy hallway, up another flight to the third floor, then into a closet and up a ladder to a vast, dark attic. From there he scrambles up another ladder nailed to a support beam, which leads to a heavy, padlocked trap door. Kron opens the door quickly with a skeleton key, and he and the adventurers climb out onto the roof.

ROOFTOP ESCAPE

The trap door opens into a recess between two of the manor house's many high gables. Kron silently sidles over





to various points on the rooftop to check out the situation and does not object if a reasonably stealthy adventurer joins in his reconnaissance. The grounds below are crawling with at least a dozen soldiers and guardsmen, and for all Kron knows there may be any number of others inside. Soldiers are watching the lawn and gardens, loitering on the street in front, hovering in the alley behind the house, and a few are even patrolling the grounds of the neighboring estates. Parked just outside the front gate is a large, open cart drawn by four brawny pack horses. Three or four riding horses—officers' mounts—are tethered nearby. Kron scans the grounds urgently, looking for a weak spot in the invaders' cordon.

After a couple of minutes of observation, the watchers see the soldiers push Arvannon and Gorra out onto the front lawn. Without any ceremony the soldiers force the two women to kneel, and a sergeant quietly slits their throats. As the bodies slump down, one of the officers gives order to search the house. Most of the soldiers have wandered into the front yard to witness the execution, and Kron decides to take what may be the only opportunity for escape.

Beckoning the adventurers after him, he darts across the roof toward the side of the house that faces a narrow strip of grass between it and the ten-foot-high wall of the neighboring estate. Several heavy shade trees growing in the neighbor's garden hang heavy branches over the wall. Near the roof's edge, Kron grabs a large oilcloth sack and a thick iron bracket about a foot tall, anchored firmly into the roof beams, previously placed there for just such an emergency. Kron removes a coil of sturdy rope from the sack, quickly affixes one end of the rope to the iron bracket, then kicks the rest of the coil off the roof. It falls well short of the ground, its end hanging about even with the top of the wall. After curtly instructing his charges to follow him and do as he does, Kron slides over the edge of the roof and shimmies quickly down the rope, then briskly kicks off the side of the house and swings over to the top of the wall, dropping into a crouch. The top of the wall is a flat surface, barely more than a foot wide.

To get down the rope, each character must make a Dexterity (5) Test. An additional Dexterity (5) Test and a Strength (4) Test are required to swing over to the wall. Each of the characters receives a +2 step bonus to these tests because Kron catches and steadies the adventurers as they land. Once every adventurer has made it off the roof, Kron leads them along the top of the wall to an alleyway behind Arvannon's house that leads into the depths of the city.

Each of the characters must make a Stealth or Dexterity (6) Test to move along the wall and into the

alleyway quietly. If any of the characters fails this test, the alarm goes up and the Therans pursue the adventurers.

After losing the last of the Theran soldiers, Kron leads the characters across the city, eventually into the abandoned areas of the Broken Quarter. As long as the characters follow Kron's instructions and refrain from attracting attention, they encounter no additional pursuit or complications.

WHAT THE THERANS KNOW

As should now be apparent, the Therans have raided several centers of rebel activity on this night. The manor house was the second site secured by the troops that raided Dochner's tavern. The forces sent to Arvannon's house included a dozen Theran soldiers, plus a half-dozen city guardsmen. The soldiers handled the execution of Arvannon and the search of her estate.

At this point, particularly alert players might make the following valid assumptions. First, the swiftness with which Arvannon and Gorra were executed means that no one thoroughly interrogated them. Presumably, the Imperial soldiers found some specific piece of incriminating evidence early on in the search that led their commander to order the killings. Exactly what they found, the characters will probably never know.

Second, the fact that the executions took place before the soldiers finished ransacking the house indicates that the Imperials arrived to arrest and execute Arvannon rather than to search for anything else in particular. This in turn suggests that the Imperial raids are not intended to net the characters or the scroll.

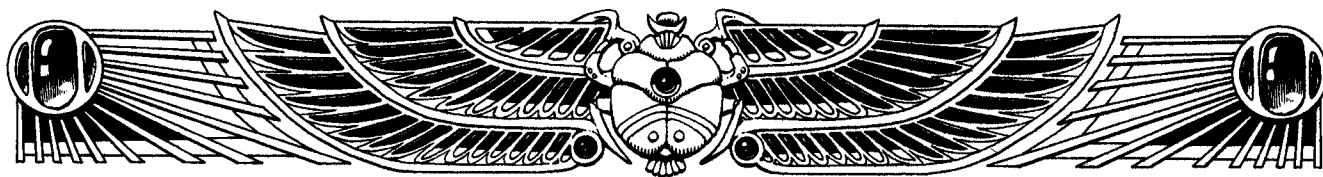
Of course, the characters cannot know for certain that either assumption is correct. If they ask Kron, he confirms that their assumptions are most likely correct and speculates that the timing of the Theran raid and the delivery of the scroll is precisely the coincidence it appears to be.

TROUBLESHOOTING

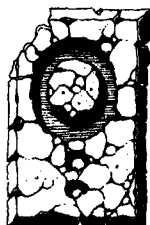
Arvannon's roof and the rope the adventurers use to escape are just sturdy enough to support an obsidiman. The adventurers must use some ingenuity, however, to get a dangling obsidiman over to the top of the wall. An obsidiman attempting the "kick-swing-and-drop" method only creates a lot of noise and a large hole in the estate's outer wall.

If the Theran soldiers pursue the characters and actually catch up to them, a fight will likely ensue. Keep Kron alive, conscious, and not severely wounded during this encounter, though the ork need not emerge from combat entirely unscathed.





THE SECRET ROOM



VIEW

In this encounter, Kron leads the adventurers to his secret bolthole in the Undercity. The next day, after scouting around the city for news, Kron returns to the hideaway and tells the adventurers that the scroll is in the possession of a troll crime boss. The Resistance can neither afford his exorbitant price for it nor mount a raid to get the scroll back, and so Kron asks the adventurers to recover the scroll for them.

SETTING THE STAGE

Your feet are starting to hurt again. This flight seems even longer and more confusing than the last one. You've left the Merchants' Quarter far behind, once more scuttling through dirt-littered streets and back alleys like rats in a warren. Seedy taverns and shabby houses pass by in a blur of increasing squalor. Wherever Kron is leading you, it won't be anything like the sanctuary you just fled.

Broken cobbles abruptly give way to packed earth littered with bits of rubble. Instead of buildings crowding both sides of the street, empty space stretches around you. By the dim light of the stars, you can see caved-in roofs and crumbled walls, some no higher than a dwarf's knee. Now you know where you are—the Broken Quarter, home to every beggar and footpad in Vivane.

Kron keeps moving ahead of you, as swiftly as he can over the rough ground. You stumble after him, climbing over the rubble of several ruined buildings. Suddenly, Kron ducks under a section of fallen roof that leans drunkenly over a low fragment of wall. He stops abruptly, and you almost bump into him. Beyond him you see a pitch-black hole—a gaping cellar entrance, the trapdoor that covered it long since rotted away. A dank smell rises from it, the odor of rotting vegetables and other kinds of sewage you'd rather not think about. Scuttling noises echo from deep in the depths, suggesting untold dozens of tiny clawed feet scraping against cold stone. Kron produces a dry torch from somewhere, lights it and descends into the cellar, beckoning you to follow.

THEMES AND IMAGES

Play up the sense of squalor and danger. Mention shadowy figures glimpsed out of the corner of the eye as the group files through the ruins, small eyes glowing in the torchlight in the Undercity's tunnels, the terrible reek of the place, the rubble and unidentifiable slop underfoot, and so on. Later in the encounter, if any characters suspect treachery when they wake up and find Kron gone, let them.

If the characters have participated in *Chasing the Snakeskin Boots* (p. 11), they may recognize this area of Vivane. Also, if the characters have had it easy thus far (unlikely but possible), liven things up with some of the optional Undercity encounters from that adventure (*The Locals Are Revolting*, p. 19).

BEHIND THE SCENES

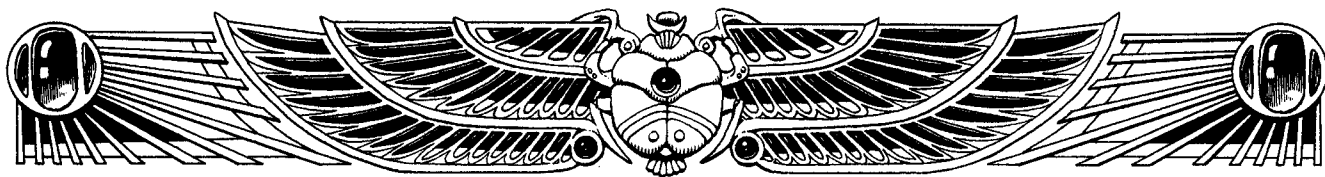
The dank, smelly cellar leads to a narrow passage no more than 5 feet high. Humans, elves and t'skrang must bend over to get through, and trolls and obsidimen must hunch over or perhaps crawl. After about 25 feet, this tunnel opens out to a more spacious corridor, about 10 feet high and wide enough for 2 brawny characters to walk abreast. The adventurers have crossed into one of the oldest parts of the Undercity.

After about half an hour of wandering through the abandoned tunnels, Kron comes to a stone pillar virtually identical to many others that line this particular passage. He reaches around to the back of the pillar and manipulates something. A soft click echoes in the absolute silence of the Undercity—and Kron reaches out and opens a narrow door cunningly concealed in the tunnel wall. The door is the entrance to a secret room. Once the adventurers have all slipped inside, Kron shuts the door and quickly activates a light-quartz crystal lamp.

The light reveals a reasonably intact chamber, the remains of a once-luxurious living space. The elegant furniture is damp and musty but still solid and probably has a smaller complement of bugs than most dockside inns. The tapestries lining the walls are discolored by mold but still keep out the underground chill. A second door, as narrow as the first, is at the opposite side of the room.

Kron pulls out bundles of stowed provisions—blankets, a cask of wine, jerky, biscuits and cheese—and tells





the adventurers about his hideaway as he sets out a makeshift meal.

Read the following aloud or paraphrase it:

I found this place about a year ago. Cleaned it up, stashed some provisions here. Should have taken you here first, I suppose, but I've never told anyone else about this place. Wanted to keep it to myself. And Arvannon's should have been safe.

We're probably underneath one of Arvannon's near neighbors, though I've never found out whose place that

door leads to. As far as I can tell, some rich family built and furnished this room as an emergency shelter against Theran soldiers or Horrors—or maybe both. The passage outside that other door is crumbling to pieces—nobody but me's been down here for at least fifty years. We're as safe here as anywhere in this city, though after tonight it'd not surprise me one bit if a platoon of Therans crawled out from under the bed.

Between the old furniture and Kron's stored blankets, the adventurers should have enough reasonably comfortable bedding. Allow the characters to hash over the evening's events for awhile, but before long Kron suggests they get some rest.

THE NEXT DAY

When the adventurers wake up, their muscles are stiff enough to suggest several hours of motionless sleep on improvised bedding. Once someone turns the lamp up, the group sees that Kron is no longer there.

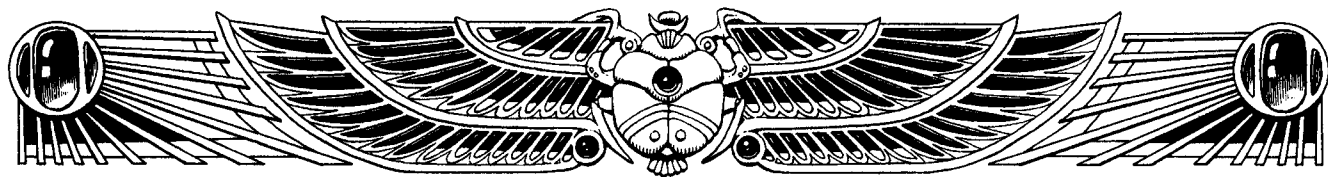
As the characters wipe the sleep from their eyes, they hear the sound of someone or something approaching. If the characters

seek out the source of the noise, they discover that Kron is returning from gathering news in the city. The passageway door opens and Kron slips silently in. Looking grim, he makes the following report to the adventurers.

Read the following aloud or paraphrase it:

I've been gathering news about last night. It isn't good. The Imperials hit nine separate places, mostly the homes of Resistance leaders. Dochner's seems to be the only public place they hit. They rounded up quite a few of us, leaders and foot soldiers both. Obviously, someone





betrayed us. We have some idea who the traitor is—we'll soon know for sure—but that's not your concern.

The Imperials hurt us badly last night, but they seem to think they hurt us more than they really did. They executed some of our leaders in addition to poor Arvannon, but without questioning them first. That means they thought they got everyone important. Too bad for them they're wrong, and we'll make them regret their mistake soon enough. Arvannon and Gorra, by the way, are hanging from a gibbet near the city gate, along with about a dozen more of my best friends.

But it looks like the Imperials have no idea who you are or what you brought us. They *do* know who I am. I expect I'll be leaving town about the same time you do. I hate to leave a job half-finished, but I'm a danger to the movement now. No use to them up on that gibbet.

We do have one large problem. We lost the scroll. Not to the Therans, thank the Passions—but to someone nearly as bad. No one's sure exactly what happened, but we know the Therans hit the house where Kaleb took the scroll to test. We also know he escaped. It looks as if he panicked and traded the scroll and most of your money for quick passage out of Vivane. Kaleb sold the scroll to the troll called Marikis, a dedicated man of *business*. His most profitable pursuits are extortion, smuggling and assassination. He doesn't particularly care for us or our aims, but we've worked with him once or twice in the past—when we had to—and he likes the Therans even less than he likes us. So he's given us a chance to buy back the scroll before he offers it to the Empire. We have two days to raise the money. Thinks he's being generous, he does, giving us so much time.

We don't have that kind of coin on hand, though, and we can't raise it. The Resistance leaders the Imperials killed were also the richest ones. We need to take the scroll back by force, but we're too disorganized to mount a credible assault in two days. Marikis' gang isn't large, but his men are loyal and well organized, and even if we managed to fight them, the Therans would know for certain that the Resistance is still alive. They'd strike again, and this time they might not leave the job half done. So you see, there's no real hope of our preventing that scroll from returning to Theran hands.

Unless a small group of skilled adepts the Therans have never heard of—such as yourselves—attack Marikis and take the scroll back. The Imperials would see it as just another gang war, and Marikis would never expect it—he knows we're too weak just now to attack him ourselves.

I realize we're asking a lot, especially when we can't even pay what we already owe you—not yet, anyway. If

you don't want to do it, we'll get you safely out of the city tonight with no questions asked. But you'll need to make up your minds soon—if we're going to attack Marikis, we should do it tonight.

Will you help us? You're the only ones who can.

The Therans are seriously looking for Kron, and he is already making plans to leave the city a day or two after the adventurers are safely out. He will tell them this if asked, though he will not reveal any details—he knows his best hope of getting the characters to do what he wants is to deal openly and honestly with them. If the adventurers ask how much Marikis is demanding for the scroll, give them an astronomical sum—at least 25,000 silver pieces.

TROUBLESHOOTING

As this encounter is a transition between the frantic chase scenes and the climactic fight with Marikis and his gang, little can go awry.

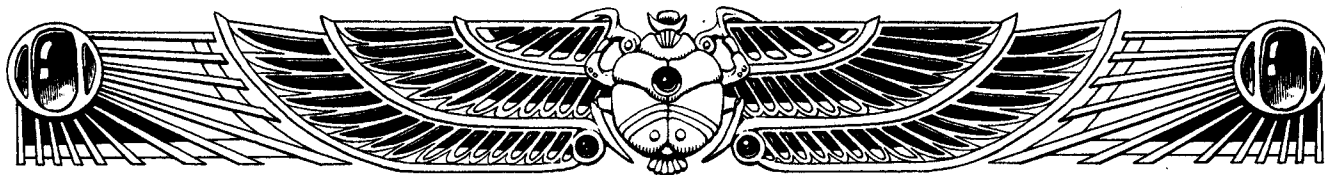
If any of the adventurers decide to explore the Undercity the next day before Kron returns, let them leave the room just long enough to realize that they have no idea of the route back. At that point they should run into Kron, who herds them back to the hidey-hole to hear his report.

If the characters refuse Kron's plea for help, produce some plausible inducements, such as promised payment in silver or perhaps magical knowledge or treasure, to change their minds.

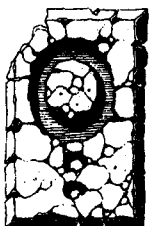
It's best if the characters willingly agree to help retrieve the scroll, but the Resistance can also use blackmail to achieve their ends. Nebarrak knows the characters' Names, and so Kron most likely does as well. Kron would find it easy to anonymously inform the Therans of the characters' presence in Vivane and their recent activities. Keep in mind, however, that using this option may affect the relationship between the characters and the Resistance. The characters may well have thought of the Resistance as noble freedom fighters—being blackmailed would definitely change their minds. If the blackmail option is used, Kron rescinds his offer to help the characters leave town, telling them they are on their own.

If nothing works, the adventure ends here. Unless he attempts to blackmail the adventurers, Kron makes good on his promise to smuggle the adventurers out of town. If the events of the previous night have seriously whittled down the adventuring group through death or serious injury, skip the final encounter and get them out of Vivane. In either case, go to **Loose Ends**, p. 52.





MARIKIS'S GANG



VIEW

In this encounter, the adventurers (and possibly Kron) attack Marikis and his gang in the crime lord's stronghold and attempt to recover the scroll.

SETTING THE STAGE

Kron leads you back through the dank tunnels of the Undercity. Almost every step you take seems to send rats scurrying away, squeaking in terror from the noise and light of your approach. You wonder what the chances are of your sending Marikis and his henchmen fleeing that easily—probably none, from what Kron has told you.

Faint light cuts through the shadows ahead, and the barest touch of fresher air lets you know you are close to the tunnel exit. Just shy of the cellar opening, Kron stops and gathers you all close around him. "Marikis conducts his business above Narlus the Tailor's shop in the Eastern Quarter. He'll have a band of paid thugs and riffraff guarding the place, but I don't know what kind or how many. I know Marikis works closely with a windling cutpurse named Tamwyn—watch that one, she's vicious for her size and as tricky as a Theran ratcatcher." He stops, and looks at you with the closest thing to real feeling you've yet seen on his face. He seems about to say something more, but then he simply shakes his head. "May the Passions be with you," he mumbles, then melts back into the shadows.

THEMES AND IMAGES

This encounter is an old-fashioned battle royal. The characters have been kicked around ever since the Theran raid, and this battle is their chance to do some kicking back. Encourage a certain amount of tactical forethought on the part of the adventurers, but don't let the assault on Marikis get bogged down in contingency planning. Let the fur fly.

BEHIND THE SCENES

As a marked man, Kron joins in the raid against Marikis only if the adventuring group consists of four or fewer characters, or if a substantial number of the adventurers are seriously weakened from the events of the night before. If Kron

accompanies the characters, modify **Setting the Stage** to reflect the ork's presence. If he does not join them, Kron draws a map to Marikis's headquarters and escorts the adventurers as far as the exit from the Undercity.

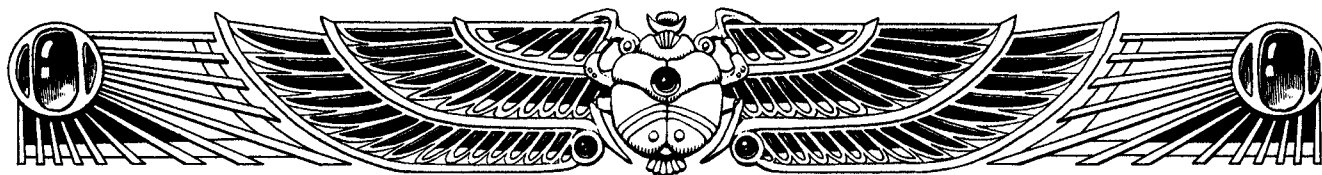
Marikis is currently holed up over the tailor's shop along with several of his best strongmen. He intends to stay there until he can dispose of the scroll and collect the price for it, either from the Resistance or the Therans. The large front room of the gang's headquarters serves as a gathering place for Marikis's operatives. Marikis uses a second, smaller room as his office. An exterior staircase leads from the first room down to the street, and a similar staircase leads from the second room to the tailor's shop. The shop has two exits, one to the street and one to a tiny alley behind the building. Both of these exits are securely barred from the inside, but the adventurers can probably get into the first room just by knocking—Marikis is waiting for the Resistance to respond to his offer and expects them to deliver the ransom. Both rooms have a few small windows, all protected by sturdy iron bars set into the masonry.

FIGHTING THE GANG

Kron makes several tactical suggestions that the adventurers can accept or ignore. He recommends launching the attack between midnight and dawn, when the streets are deserted and the defenders will be groggy. He also suggests that the adventurers stay together rather than splitting up and trying to cover all the exits. That tactic requires that the raid be accomplished quickly, before someone can grab the scroll and slip out the back door.

Kron does not know exactly how Marikis has deployed his various henchmen. The first room is guarded by a pair of trolls, an ork known as Isek, and four additional human thugs. Statistics for the human thugs appear on p. 51. For the trolls, use the Troll City Watch statistics given on page 36 of the **Barsaive Gamemaster Book (Barsaive Campaign Set)**. The orks have the same statistics as ork members of T'rask's Men (p. 18 of the **Vivane Province book, Sky Point and Vivane Campaign Set**). All the thugs carry shortswords. Two of the four also carry crossbows. Marikis, his chief lieutenant Tamwyn, and six more thugs are in the second room. All are armed as above, and two of these thugs also carry crossbows. In both rooms the bowmen are under orders to keep their weapons cocked and pointed toward the door, so that they can kill the first





enemy through the door in crossfire. The bowmen in the first room concentrate on the exterior entrance, those in the second on the connecting door between the rooms.

HUMAN THUGS

Attributes

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

Initiative: 4

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 7

Damage:

Shortsword: 9

Crossbow: 10

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Physical Defense: 6

Spell Defense: 6

Social Defense: 6

Armor: 5

Mystic Armor: 0

Knockdown: 5

Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 35

Wound Threshold: 9

Unconsciousness Rating: 27

Combat Movement: 25

Full Movement: 50

Legend Points: 50

Equipment: Medium crossbow (4), hardened leather armor, shortsword

Loot: None

If Marikis hears fighting in the first room, he waits for the invaders to come through the door and orders his henchmen to attack (a fight he happily joins). The scroll is in a strongbox bolted to the floor under Marikis's desk. Tamwyn, the windling lieutenant, has a key to this box—if the battle seems to be going against Marikis and his troops, she darts under the desk, opens the box, grabs the scroll and attempts to fly off with it. She intends to escape through a transom leading to the interior stairway, then down and out through the back entrance of the tailor shop. If Tamwyn leaves the building, the adventurers find it almost impossible to catch her unless a windling among them gives chase.

If the raiders come in quietly, they can attempt to convince the guards in the outer room that they are a delegation from the Resistance come to negotiate with Marikis. Doing this requires a successful Interaction Test (p. 237, ED) against the Social Defense of the thugs. If the adventurers pull off this subterfuge, Marikis comes out of his office to parley. If the adventurers attack Marikis in the outer room, the thugs in the office rush to their boss's



defense as soon as they hear the sound of battle. Tamwyn remains behind to guard the scroll. If at any time the adventurers have Marikis completely at their mercy, he orders the scroll delivered to his captors as ransom for his life. Of course, using an experienced troll warrior as a hostage is a chancy proposition at best. Statistics for Marikis and Tamwyn appear in **Cast of Characters**, p. 55.

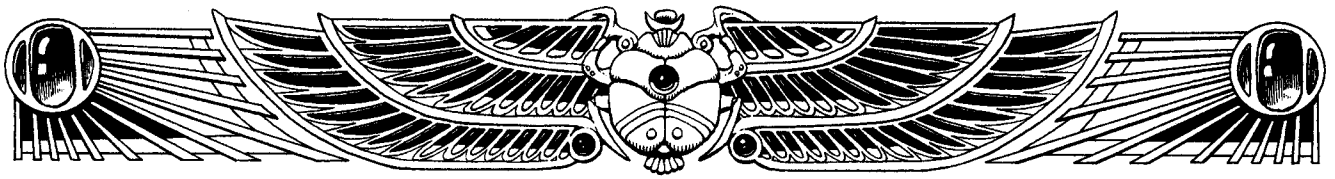
A fight rouses the interest of the City Militia, but not right away. Allow the survivors of the raid, successful or not, to slip out of the building well ahead of the arrival of any authorities.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The battle should be tough enough to challenge the characters but not so tough that they cannot survive. If necessary, alter the number of opponents to make it possible for the players to survive the encounter.

The biggest potential problem occurs if Tamwyn escapes with the scroll. A windling adventurer can shine if this happens—that character can take the spotlight in a high-speed, one-on-one flying chase after the fleeing Tamwyn. If none of the attackers are windlings, however, make sure they get a reasonable chance to spot Tamwyn trying to bolt and prevent her from leaving the room. A character with a missile weapon may shoot at Tamwyn to kill her or knock the scroll from her hands. In the absence of a windling character or some other extraordinary measure, such as a reliable magical means of tracking Tamwyn or the scroll across Vivane, Tamwyn's escape from the building means the adventure is over and the characters have failed.





LOOSE ENDS



his section wraps up the adventure's loose ends, suggests ways to use characters and story elements from **A Message to Vivane** in future **Earthdawn** adventures and campaigns, and provides descriptions and statistics for major gamemaster characters.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

Once the raid against Marikis's stronghold is over, surviving characters can slip back through the pre-dawn darkness to the spot where they left the Undercity. If Kron did not accompany them on the raid, he is waiting for them there. He hands each character a pouch containing 200 pieces of silver to cover traveling expenses on the trip out of southwest Barsaive. He also promises that they will receive payment in full for their mission as soon as possible, whether or not they succeeded in getting the scroll from Marikis. Kron regards the loss of the scroll as his fault and considers repaying them for their efforts a debt of honor.

Kron then leads the adventurers on a circuitous route to the docks, where a small rowboat is waiting. The rowboat takes them to a large cargo boat that is preparing to depart. Strangers on the cargo boat hoist the adventurers up over the side that faces away from the dockside torchlight and rush them into the hold. Almost immediately, the riverboat hoists anchor. Once the boat is out of Theran territory, the adventurers can stay aboard until it reaches the end of the river near the Death's Sea or disembark and strike out on their own for their chosen destination.

Several months later, when the adventurers are spending time once again in a large Barsaivian city, they run into Kron. He is eager to sit down and share a meal with his former comrades while he tells them his news. He escaped from Vivane just two nights after they left the city and has been traveling in the employ of Akarrin Nebarrak. Nebarrak himself has retired from traveling, though not from business, and resides permanently in Throal.

The Resistance in Vivane is recovering rapidly from the Theran raids. If the adventurers recovered the scroll for the Resistance, Kron tells them that his people have used the information in it to hand the Therans several setbacks. As usual, he does not discuss Resistance operations in any detail.

At the end of the meal, Kron tells the adventurers to expect a delivery that evening at the place where they are staying. An hour or two after supper, two couriers turn up with a strongbox full of silver and gold coins, the rest of the group's pay for delivering the scroll. If they recovered the scroll from Marikis, the box contains a bonus of 3,000 silver pieces. If they tried to recover the scroll but failed, the bonus is 1,000 silver pieces. If they declined to attempt the raid, they receive no bonus.

AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

Award the characters Legend Points for this adventure as described in the **Introduction**, p. 7. Specific awards are described below. The Adventure Award for **A Message to Vivane** is 450 Legend Points. The Adventure Goal is to deliver the scroll to the Resistance—if the characters do not retrieve the scroll from Marikis, they cannot earn this award.

Creative Roleplaying and Heroics

Award characters Legend Points for taking any of the following actions:

- Surviving the Theran raid on Dochner's tavern: 150
- Escaping from Arvannon's house to the Undercity: 100
- Successfully escaping from Vivane: 50

Defeating Creatures/Opponents

The characters earn Legend Points for defeating the City Militia and Marikis's men, as shown on the Creature/Opponent Award Table.

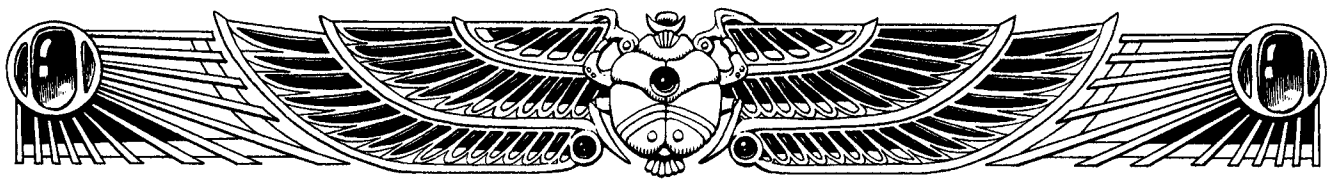
Treasure

The characters gain no treasure in this adventure.

TOTAL LEGEND POINT AWARD

Based on the figures given above, a single character who completes **A Message to Vivane** receives an average of 1,265 Legend Points. This average assumes 7 players in a group and does not include points earned for battling additional opponents or finding treasure placed by the gamemaster.





CREATURE/OPPONENT AWARD TABLE

Opponent	6 Players	7 Players	8 Players
City Militia	800	900	1,000
Marikis's Thugs (13)	1,300	1,300	1,300
Marikis	500	500	500
Tamwyn	200	200	200
Total	2,800	2,900	3,000
Award per Character	475	415	375

CAMPAIGN IDEAS

Depending on how the adventure proceeded, a number of adventures can be based on events in **A Message to Vivane**. If the characters successfully acquired the scroll for the Resistance, the Resistance may offer them additional employment. The secrets contained in the scroll may be a focal point of a sabotage mission against the Therans at Sky Point or in the city of Vivane—for example, the characters may be asked to participate in a large-scale action intended to weaken Sky Point's defenses so that a rebel-controlled airship can strike the fortress. Akarrin Nebarrak might employ them again as well, either on Resistance business or on personal business, if they acquit themselves well in this adventure. Alternatively, the characters may become targets of retribution if they earn the enmity of the Resistance.

Also, Theran authorities might discover the adventurers' identities and seek to punish them for working against the Empire. A contingent of the Eighth Theran Legion may hunt the characters in any number of adventures, forcing them to race across such exotic and dangerous locales as the Caralkspur Mountains, the Arkhazid Jungles, or even deep in the wilds of Barsaive.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

The following major gamemaster characters are listed in order of their general importance to the story. Feel free to change the statistics of any characters to better suit your game. Certain characters, such as Nebarrak and Kaleb, are necessary to the advancement of the plot and may turn up in future adventures, but their descriptions include no statistics because their roles in this adventure do not require them.

All Resistance members described here have a new knowledge skill called Conspiracy. This skill gives them working knowledge of how to act as part of a secret orga-

nization—keeping secrets, knowing who to report to and around whom to keep quiet, how to avoid learning sensitive information that they do not need to know or that might compromise the organization if a member is arrested, and similar concerns.

AKARRIN NEBARRAK

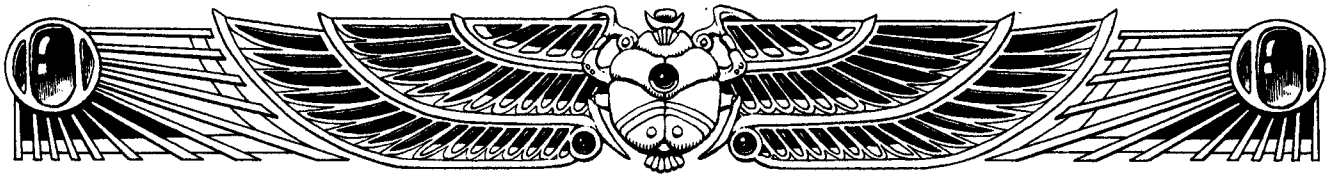
Likable and effusive, Akarrin is a Fifth Circle dwarf warrior a decade or so short of middle age. A merchant at heart, he chose to follow the warrior Discipline in anticipation of the rigors of life on the road. Akarrin has served as an important liaison for the Resistance for almost two decades, motivated by his sincere belief in self-rule for all Barsaive rather than by hatred of the Empire. He does not regard the Therans as wonderful people, however; he first joined the Resistance after being enslaved for several years because a trading venture with a Theran merchant went sour.

Though Akarrin wears no visible armor and carries no weapons when the characters meet him, on the road he wears chainmail and carries a dwarf sword. Both of these have magical properties; because these items are extremely unlikely to figure in the adventure, their abilities have been left up to the gamemaster. In the unlikely event that the adventurers attack Akarrin during the initial meeting, assume that Akarrin has one or more subtle but effective magical items that he uses defend himself.

KALEB

Kaleb considers himself a bon vivant. Though human, he imitates elven fashion to a degree that real elves find ridiculous. Vain and a bit selfish, he became involved with the Resistance because it seemed like a dashing way to rebel against a dull status quo. Though often appalled by his light attitude, his fellow rebels tolerate him because he is one of the most accomplished Fifth Circle elementalists in Vivane.





In the unlikely event that the adventurers engage Kaleb in combat, the gamemaster may design several magical items Kaleb uses to defend himself. He should be more than a match for the adventurers, but does them no serious harm unless absolutely necessary.

KRON

One of the most competent and canny members of the Resistance in Vivane, the Fifth Circle thief Named Kron has served as one of the movement's thirty lieutenants for several years. Though he might have used his thief's talents to get rich robbing the nobles of Vivane, Kron chose to devote himself to political struggle.

Grim and close-mouthed, Kron can focus on the mission at hand to the exclusion of all else. If the best interests of the Resistance call for torture or murder, Kron takes on the job—however, he generally despises unnecessary or excessive violence as inefficient and obvious. A great believer in keeping secrets, Kron often refuses to discuss even the most mundane details of Resistance operations even with a known ally, under the theory that the fewer secrets known to the rank-and-file, the less they can spill if they are caught. If not for Kron, it is doubtful that the Resistance could survive the Thera raids that occur in this adventure. He travels light to move around quickly and silently; the only equipment he carries is a magical suit of hardened leather armor and a magical dagger.

Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12	Perception (13): 6/D10
Strength (14): 6/D10	Willpower (14): 6/D10
Toughness (15): 6/D10	Charisma (11): 5/D8

Talents

Avoid Blow (3): 10/D10 + D6
Climbing (5): 12/2D10
Detect Trap (4): 10/D10 + D6
Disarm Mechanical Trap (3): 10/D10 + D6
Durability (5)
Fence (6): 11/D10 + D8
Karma Ritual (5)
Lock Pick (5): 12/2D10
Lock Sense (5): 11/D10 + D8
Melee Weapons (3): 10/D10 + D6
Picking Pockets (5): 12/2D10
Silent Walk (5): 12/2D10
Surprise Strike (5): 12/2D10
Thief Weaving (2): 8/2D6
Trap Initiative (5): 12/2D10

Movement

Full: 85
Combat: 42

Skills

Acrobatics (3): 10/D10 + D6
Artisan/Flute (4): 9/D8 + D6
Bribery (3): 8/2D6
Disguise (2): 8/2D6
Knowledge/Conspiracy (4): 10/D10 + D6
Knowledge/Theran History (2): 8/2D6

Initiative Dice: 6/D10

Combat

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 3

Damage

Death Rating: 63
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 49
Recovery Dice: D10
Recovery Tests per Day: 3

Equipment

Dagger (STR +4 steps, plus special*) [Damage 10/D10 + D6]
Hardened leather armor (p. 63, **ED Companion**)
*Kron's dagger has a Name that only he knows. In addition to its high damage bonus, Kron can expend 1 Strain Point and make it exude a magical poison that does an additional 10 steps of damage. Once called into existence, this poison lingers on the blade for 1 hour or until the blade wounds a victim. The poison must be called up again for each use, at a cost of 1 Strain Point. It is odorless and undetectable to sight or touch. Simply touching the poisoned blade has no effect—the poison must penetrate to the bloodstream to work.

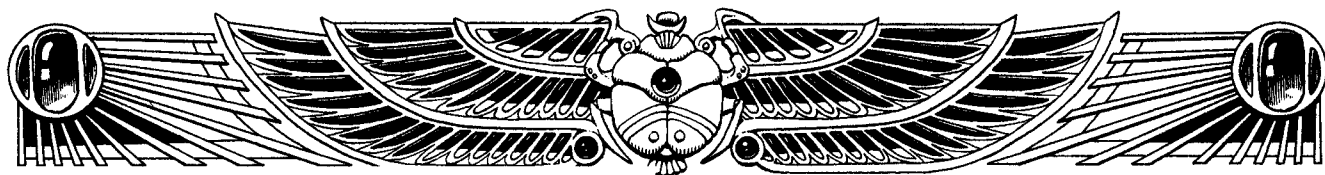
Karma Notes

Kron can spend Karma on actions using Perception only.

Thread Weaving Notes

Kron has woven a Rank 2 thread to his armor and another to his dagger.





MARIKIS

A powerful Sixth Circle troll warrior, Marikis excels at his life of crime. As cunning as he is fearsome, he started out as leg-breaker for his predecessor and worked his way up to his present position. After his former employer peacefully retired, a series of lethal mishaps befell Marikis's rivals in the gang, and the troll assumed leadership of the group.

Despite his reputation for brutality, Marikis is not a terribly bloodthirsty troll. He always looks for the simplest, most direct route to accomplishing his goals and views violence as no more than a tool. Causing pain and suffering prompts neither enjoyment nor guilt in him.

He wears a magical chain mail coat and carries a magical troll sword. In combat he comes on like a screaming fury from hell, but behind this berserker's facade he is always watching, taking stock, and revising his tactics. He dislikes fleeing from combat, but swiftly departs if a situation is obviously hopeless. He never surrenders—if forced to flee, he eventually takes revenge.

He dislikes both the Resistance and the Therans, considering them obstacles to his business. Because he has had marginally profitable dealings with the rebels in the past, he has no particular interest in helping the Therans suppress them unless he can gain a clear and dramatic profit by doing so.

Attributes

Dexterity (12): 5/D8
Strength (19): 8/2D6
Toughness (17): 7/D12

Perception (13): 6/D10
Willpower (16): 7/D12
Charisma (14): 6/D10

Talents

Acrobatic Strike (6): 11/D10 + D8
Air Dance (3): 8/2D6
Anticipate Blow (5): 11/D10 + D8
Avoid Blow (6): 11/D10 + D8
Down Strike (6): 17/D20 + D10
Durability (8)
Gliding Strike (3): 8/2D6
Karma Ritual (4)
Life Check (2): 9/D8 + D6
Melee Weapons (9): 14/D20 + D4
Missile Weapons (3): 8/2D6
Swift Kick (6): 11/D10 + D8
Throwing Weapons (5): 10/D10 + D6
Tiger Spring (7)
Unarmed Combat (9): 14/D20 + D4
War Weaving (3): 9/D8 + D6
Wood Skin (6): 13/D12 + D10

Movement

Full: 57
Combat: 29

Karma

Dice: D4
Points: 18

Skills

Artisan/Tattooing (4): 10/D10 + D6
Bribery (3): 9/D8 + D6
Knowledge/Vivane History (2): 8/2D6
Knowledge/Troll History (2): 8/2D6
Streetwise (5): 11/D10 + D8

Initiative Dice: 5/D8

Combat

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 9
Mystic Armor: 3

Damage

Death Rating: 112
Wound Threshold: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 88
Recovery Dice: D12
Recovery Tests per Day: 3

Equipment

Chain mail (p. 62, **ED Companion**)
Troll sword (STR + 8 steps) [Damage 16/D20 + D8]

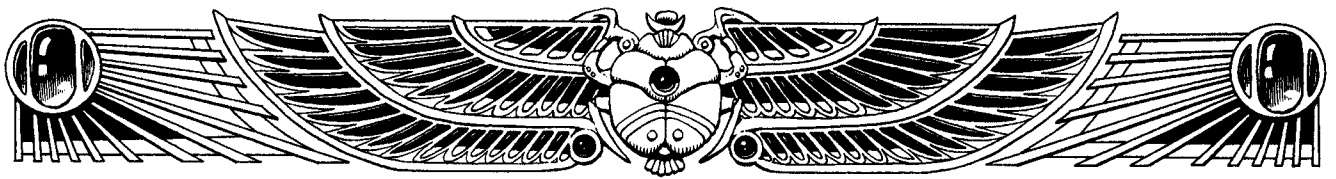
Karma Notes

Marikis can spend Karma on actions using Willpower only.

Thread Weaving Notes

Marikis has woven a Rank 3 thread to his chain mail and a Rank 2 thread to his sword.





TAMWYN

Tamwyn is a Fourth Circle windling thief, second-in-command to Marikis. She originally gained Marikis's attention as sort of a court jester, but over the years has parlayed her position into one of real trust. She is still quite young, with a pinched face and blonde hair that always looks dirty. A hardened professional criminal, Tamwyn is capable of as much cruelty or violence as it takes to get the job done. She

can be particularly vindictive against anyone she suspects of dismissing her on account of her race or size.

Attributes

Dexterity (18): 7/D12

Strength (10): 5/D8

Toughness (11): 5/D8

Perception (14): 6/D10

Willpower (11): 5/D8

Charisma (13): 6/D10

Talents

Avoid Blow (5): 12/2D10

Durability (3)

Fence (6): 12/2D10

Karma Ritual (3)

Lock Pick (7): 14/D20 + D4

Lock Sense (4): 10/D10 + D6

Melee Weapons (4): 11/D10 + D8

Picking Pockets (6): 13/D12 + D10

Surprise Strike (5): 12/2D10

Thief Weaving (1): 7/D12

Trap Initiative (3): 10/D10 + D6

Movement

Full: 50

Combat: 25

Flight: 100/50

Karma

Dice: D10

Points: 30

Skills

Artisan/Singing (3): 9/D8 + D6

Bribery (3): 9/D8 + D6

Forgery (6): 13/D12 + D10

Knowledge/Theran History (2): 8/2D6

Knowledge/Legends and Lore (2): 8/2D6

Streetwise (4): 10/D10 + D6

Initiative Dice: 7/D12

Combat

Physical Defense: 12

Spell Defense: 8

Social Defense: 7

Armor: 2

Mystic Armor: 1

Damage

Death Rating: 47

Wound Threshold: 8

Unconsciousness Rating: 36

Recovery Dice: D8

Recovery Tests per Day: 2

Equipment

Dagger [Damage 7/D12]

Padded cloth armor

Windling bow [Damage 8/2D6]

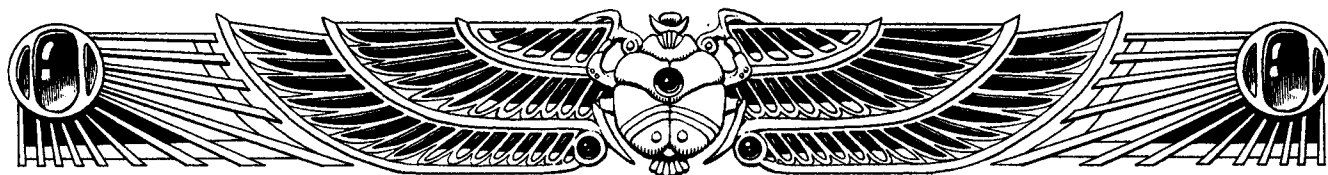
Karma Notes

Tamwyn can spend Karma on actions using Perception only.

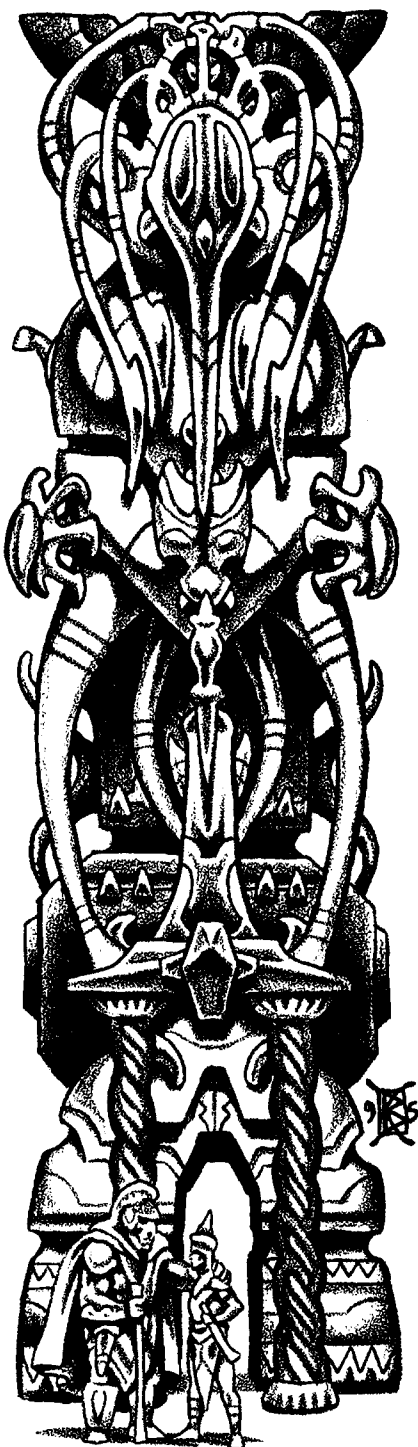




SHADOWS



LOST SOUL



Thillik's tongue crawled with the taste of cheap wine and two-day-old Wingsticker stew—apparently the house specialty, since it had been on the menu four days running. Stepping onto the pitted wooden sidewalk outside the Wingsticker Tavern, Thillik rubbed at the puckered pink scar on his left forearm—the legacy of a carting accident that had almost cost him his arm at the age of ten. It hurt tonight. So did his head. Time he was on his way home, before his father got to worrying. With a sigh, Thillik turned from the Wingsticker's warmth and light toward the dark and chilly streets.

Suddenly Thillik felt two strong arms pin his own arms against his sides. He felt the hard smoothness of boiled leather and gagged as someone's foul, sour breath filled his nostrils.

"No problem with this one," said a gravelly voice with a cruel edge. It didn't sound like anyone Thillik knew. "Didn't even see us coming. You'd think folk new to town would pay more attention to what's around 'em, wouldn't you?"

The voice grated against the pain stabbing through Thillik's head. What had happened to him? Where was he? He had paid his bill, surely—he remembered taking the last few coins from his purse. He twisted in his captor's grip, but the arms refused to relax their hold. Over his captor's shoulder, he could see the glow from the Wingsticker's front window, much farther off than he'd expected. Funny, he couldn't remember walking this far. He must have drunk more wine than he'd realized. He had no money left. "Please—" he gasped out, then choked back his words. If they knew he could give them nothing, would they kill him? Before he could form another coherent thought, a second voice answered the man who held him.

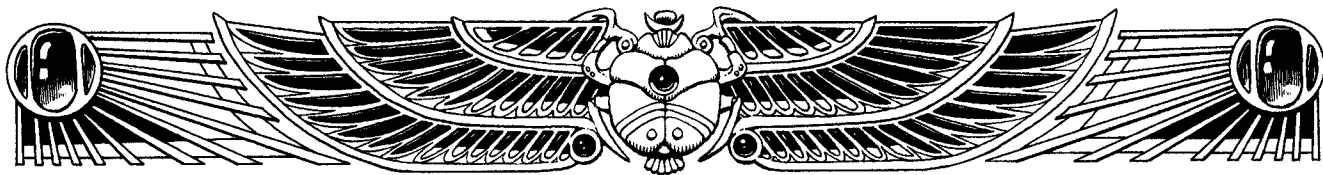
"Well done, Anghar," said the new voice with a smooth chuckle. "All of you have done well tonight. Another visitor breaking T'rask's curfew—such a foolish thing to do. Hold him down, Anghar, Mervin—just another minute or two and he'll be quite cooperative. Positively docile, in fact." The second speaker stepped into Thillik's view—an ork, wearing ring mail and a heavy chain of office that glittered in the dim light. The mailed ork grinned horribly at Thillik and fumbled with a bulging leather pouch.

Ignoring the pain in his head, Thillik struggled furiously against the human who held him. He opened his mouth to cry out, but the ork stuffed a wad of oily cloth into it before Thillik could make a sound. As he slumped in momentary defeat, Thillik felt skittering, feathered claws bite lightly into his calf. For an instant, he wondered why the mailed ork was gnawing at him—then he felt the thing crawling up his leg. Struggling desperately, his eyes stinging with sweat, Thillik caught a brief glimpse of a pale, almost translucent spider the size of his fist. As the ghostly creature scrambled up his back, he gave a final heave and broke his captor's grip.

Blood streamed down Thillik's arms where the man's ragged nails had dug into his flesh, but he hardly noticed the pain. Thillik scraped desperately at his back, trying to dislodge the spider. He felt the thing's legs scrabbling along his neck—he smashed his fist down hard on it, screaming as a searing pain cut into the base of his skull. "Father, help me," he whispered. "Please help me. I'll be good."

The words seemed to echo in Thillik's battered skull—the last, dying echoes of his own mind, futile talismans against the darkness that rose up to swallow him.





SHADOWS



Shadows takes place in the slavers' town of Vrontok, the seedy underbelly of Sky Point. The adventure is best suited for a group of five to seven players using Third or Fourth Circle adept characters. The gamemaster should familiarize himself with the entire adventure before beginning the game.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

Lorgo T'rask, a former slaver turned mayor of Vrontok, first seized leadership of the town about fifteen years ago. Since that time, T'rask has insinuated himself into almost every aspect of commerce in this squalid city of shadows. Recently, some of his pet slavers stumbled on a nest of strange spiders in the Arkhazid jungles. One of the spiders attacked a slaver, burying itself at the base of his skull. A strong, thin thread dangled from the bloody wound where the thing had entered.

Within seconds, the man's face went slack and he no longer recognized any of his partners. Interestingly, the afflicted man seemed unaware of his sudden mental incapacitation. Very quickly, his fellows discovered that he followed whatever orders were given him by anyone holding the dangling end of the thread. Another slaver accidentally jerked too hard on the thread, and it came loose. Rather than recovering his wits, however, the man continued to obey the orders of the person holding the thread.

Returning with the victim and a few captured spiders, the slavers presented their strange booty to Lorgo T'rask, who quickly grasped the significance of the find. Slave laborers present an intractable difficulty for their owners—a tendency to resent slavery and the constant hope of rescue makes them dissatisfied and rebellious and often impedes their work. A slave implanted with one of these spiders, however, would no longer resent or hope for anything. Such a slave would make the perfect laborer—completely docile and biddable, but still capable of following complicated instructions. Scenting profit, T'rask searched for a way to make his new acquisition a marketable commodity.

Immediately Lorgo ordered two groups of soldiers to capture more of the creatures he had dubbed "soul-spiders." Then Lorgo tracked down an old acquaintance

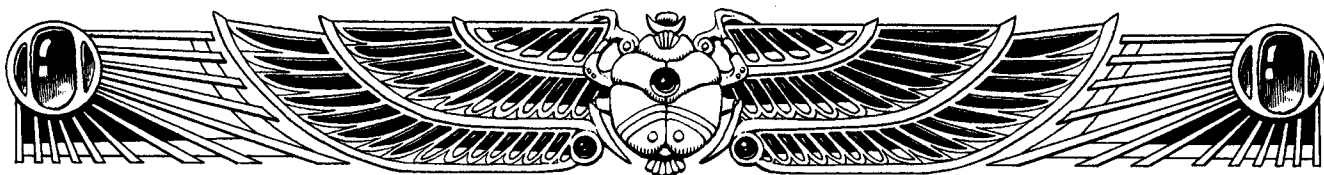
whom he thought might also find these creatures interesting—the wizard Caravath. Caravath had often expressed interest in discovering effective ways to manipulate the minds of his fellow Name-givers, and he possessed impressive knowledge of magical creatures. Lorgo offered the wizard a deal, which Caravath accepted—Caravath would work for T'rask temporarily in exchange for a free supply of slaves and facilities where he could conduct experiments with the spiders. The experimental subjects come from Vrontok's "criminal classes," a category that includes anyone T'rask doesn't happen to like (or anyone his henchmen take exception to).

T'rask is eager to reap the rewards that the soul-spiders might bring, but he also wants to keep his enterprise a secret from the Theran authorities—at least for the present. He has no wish for the Therans to horn in on something that he expects to be extremely lucrative, and if Chief Secretary Patracheus finds out about it, he will demand a substantial cut as the price of allowing T'rask to remain in business. Were T'rask fortunate enough to gain a powerful Theran patron at a later date, he might be able to keep Patracheus's fat fingers out of the soul-spider pie—but until then, T'rask cannot risk exposure.

Approximately a month before the adventure begins, Caravath and the soul-spiders arrived in Vrontok and the wizard set up a lab. Caravath has had great success implanting spiders into slaves, despite the fact that roughly half of them go insane or die shortly after implantation. Since these initial experiments, Caravath has been attempting to discover the reasons for these "rejections."

Three weeks ago, T'rask's Men "arrested" a young human named Thillik for a curfew violation and successfully implanted a soul-spider in him. Thillik is currently one of Caravath's slaves, working mindlessly for his master in the wizard's secret laboratory across from the Wingsticker Tavern. Unlike the vast majority of poor souls who wind up slaves in Vrontok, Thillik has a determined father willing to risk himself to aid his son. Aberdeen, an aging cartographer who adventured far and wide across Barsaive in his youth, tracked down his son soon after the boy's disappearance. When he tried to get Thillik away from the slavers, however, his son refused to go. Shocked and bewildered, Aberdeen fled to his home in a small village some miles away from Vrontok to escape the vengeance of Thillik's captors.



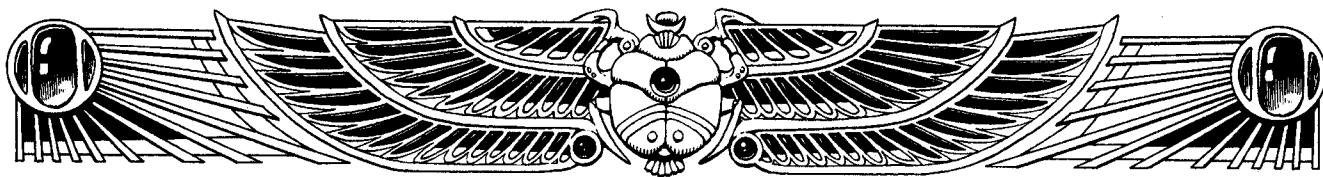


Within a few days of his departure from Vrontok, Aberdeen runs into the player characters. Recognizing one or more of them as relations of his former adventuring companions, he pleads with them to help him free his son. Aberdeen then leads his newfound allies to Vrontok and shows them the building where Thillik is being held. On the way, the group has an unpleasant encounter with some of T'rask's Men. After reaching the building, the adventurers may decide to make their plans at the Wingsticker Tavern—if so, they can uncover more information about

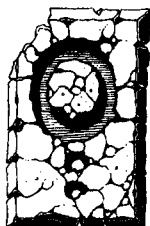
Caravath's experiments from a few of the Wingsticker's regular patrons.

The characters eventually break into the laboratory, where they confront Caravath and some of T'rask's Men, as well as Caravath's collection of soul-spiders. If the heroes defeat these enemies, they can save Thillik by destroying the soul-thread or extracting the soul-spider. They may also destroy the lab and the remaining soul-spiders and free the slaves. Of course, such actions make them outlaws in Vrontok and earns them Lorgo T'rask's undying enmity as well.





A FATHER'S FEARS



INTERVIEW

In this encounter, Aberdeen of Skoald approaches the characters and asks them to help rescue his son Thillik from the clutches of Vrontok slavers. The old man asks the characters for aid because of his prior connection to them—he knows one or more of them or knows one of their parents or mentors. The gamemaster determines the details of Aberdeen's acquaintance with one or more of the adventurers; ideally the character or characters in question should feel indebted to Aberdeen in some way.

Aberdeen lives in the village of Skoald, a few miles away from the vast city of Vivane. The adventurers may encounter him in Skoald, in Vivane, or just outside Vrontok, wherever seems appropriate.

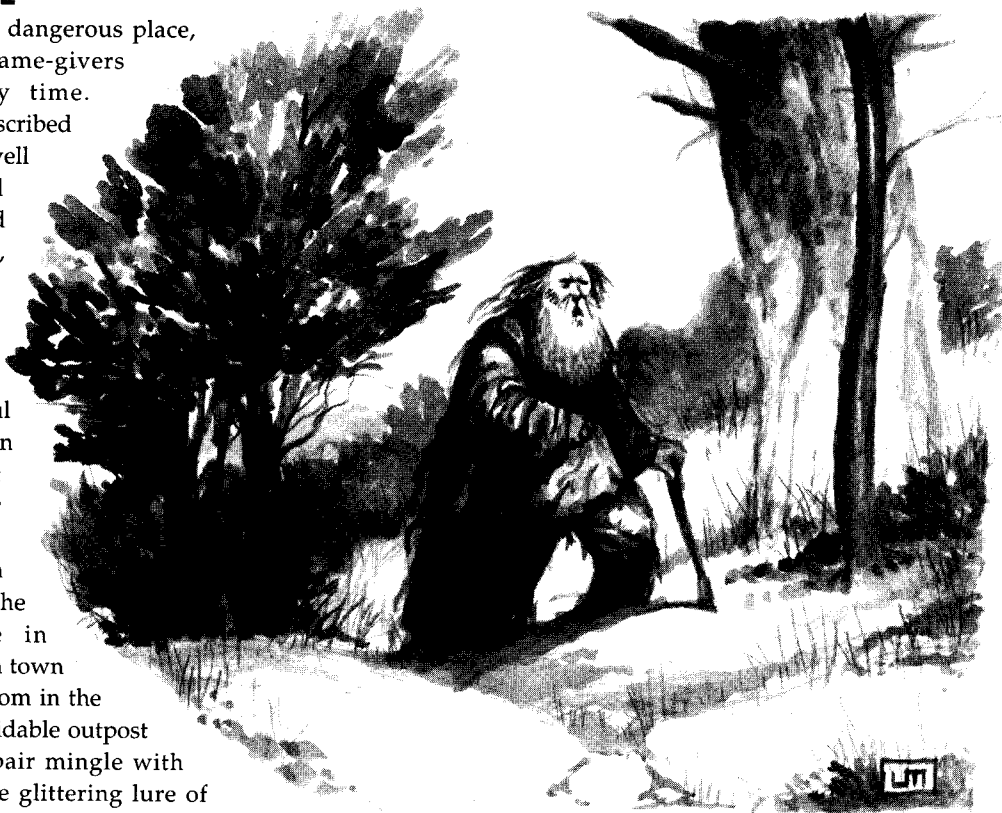
SETTING THE STAGE

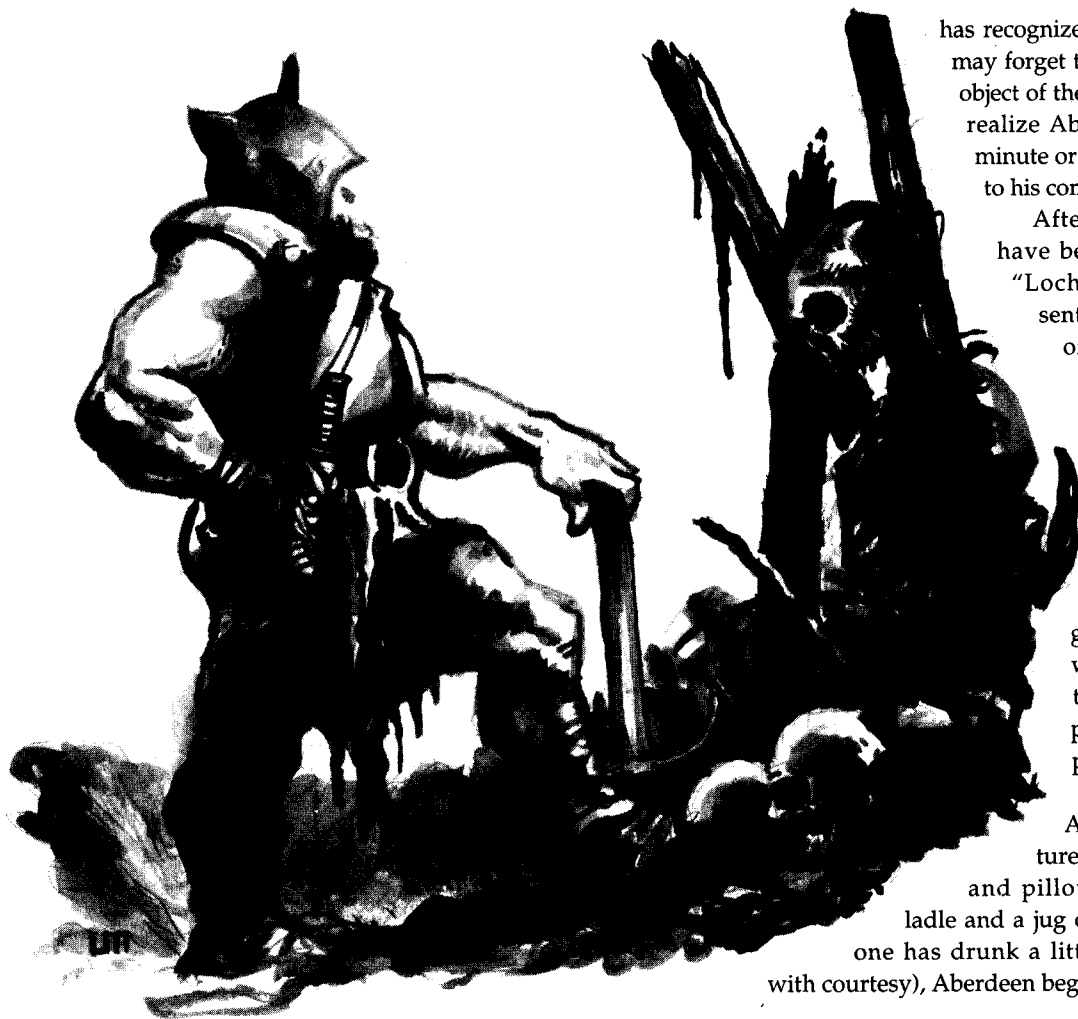
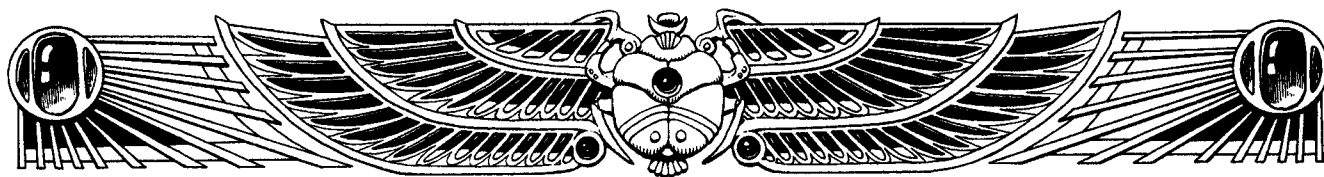
Southwest Barsaive is a dangerous place, full of tensions between Name-givers that can explode at any time. Someone you know once described it as a huge pile of kindling well spread with pitch, inhabited by countless people armed with flint and steel. Any time, anywhere, someone might just strike a spark and set off a blaze. Theran and non-Theran, rich and poor, distrustful ork and disdainful elf—all live cheek by jowl in the countless villages that depend on Vivane for their livelihoods or in Vivane itself, a rich slice of the Theran Empire in Barsaivian land. The unluckiest of them live in Vrontok, a rotting abscess of a town that sprang up like a mushroom in the dark shadow of Thera's formidable outpost of Sky Point. Fear and despair mingle with excitement, intrigue, and the glittering lure of

Theran wealth, intoxicating almost everyone who comes to these parts—at least until their coin runs out. Even at this tiny roadside stop you can feel it in the air and see it in the faces of the people.

You first notice the old man as you pause to refresh yourselves at a small ale stand. He is leaning wearily against his dun mountain pony, his back bent with exhaustion and age. He wears a plain tunic and trousers covered with road dust—pens and grease pencils stick up from assorted pockets. The dust and protruding pens make him look remarkably like a wilted Ustrect cactus. Desperation is stamped into every line of his weathered face—an expression all too common in these parts.

You take your ale and begin to turn away. Suddenly the old man catches sight of you. Amazement lights up his eyes, followed by a relieved and joyous smile. He snatches up his pony's reins and limps quickly across the road toward you.





THEMES AND IMAGES

The desperation that simmers close to the surface in any slave-holding area should be a strong undercurrent during this encounter. No one in this region is safe from the depredations of slavery, and Aberdeen's demeanor should emphasize the tenuous nature of freedom in Theran-dominated lands.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Aberdeen of Skoald was a fair to middling warrior adept in his youth, and in his old age has become a cartographer. His life now revolves around his attempt to map all of Barsaive. Though he knows his ambition far outstrips his ability to wander the world, he is making surprisingly good progress. When Aberdeen spies the characters, he rushes over and embraces the adventurer or adventurers whom he

has recognized. He is so agitated that he may forget to introduce himself, but the object of the old man's attention should realize Aberdeen's identity within a minute or two and introduce the elder to his companions.

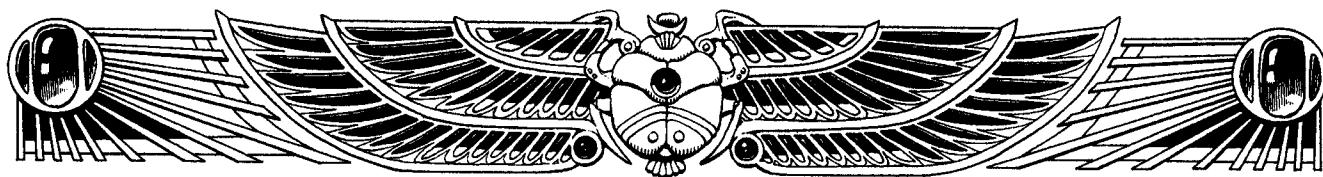
After the initial introductions have been made, Aberdeen says, "Lochostr or Garlen must have sent you to me—just the sight of you gives my poor heart hope!" Aberdeen then insists that the adventurers accompany him back to his tent.

Aberdeen swiftly leads the adventurers to a small tent. The only genuine furniture in it is a single chair and a handsome wooden drafting table littered with mapmaking paraphernalia: pens, inkpots, a sextant, parchment, a magnifying lens, and so on. Aberdeen offers the adventurers seats on various blankets and pillows, then passes around a ladle and a jug of sweet water. Once everyone has drunk a little something (or declined with courtesy), Aberdeen begins his tale.

When the characters are ready to hear Aberdeen's story, read the following aloud:

It is a sad, sad time to wander the world, for all that the kaers are open and we walk in sunlight once more! My son Thillik and I have lived in these parts for nearly two years with no trouble—but our luck ran out just a little while ago. Most folk hereabouts will leave you in peace if you do them the same courtesy, but far too many are just waiting for a chance to reap their foul harvest of once-free Name-givers and sell it at market! Living flesh for sale! I turned a blind eye to it, you know. I told myself that it had nothing to do with me—that, sad as it is, slavery's just the way of the world in Theran parts. Most folk around here do that—it's easier than fighting, particularly for them that have nothing to fight with. But now they've taken my son Thillik, and I will take him back however I can. Yes, and do whatever I must to stop them from enslaving people ever again!





Pardon my outburst—old men will ramble on. They took my son about a month past, I don't know exactly when or how. I searched high and low for him—many a day it took me, and all my money and most of the favors owed me. I found him ten days ago in Vrontok. Lorgo T'rask has him—my poor boy is a slave of the mayor himself!

I waited a fortnight for my chance to free Thillik. I may not be the warrior I once was, but I can still fight when I've a need to. Five days ago, they let Thillik work outside the little building they'd been keeping him in. I managed to slip a sleeping powder into his guard's ale, then went to my boy as quick and quiet as I could. The thought that the pair of us would soon be away from that stinking place gave wings to my old feet and light to my heart. But when Thillik saw me, he stared at me as if I were a stranger! He didn't recognize his own father!

I couldn't stay past a few minutes. Someone would see me near Thillik, and all would be lost. I begged my son to come with me, but he just stared at me as if I had gone mad. He looked at me with fear in his eyes, as if I was a brigand or a monster. When I laid hands on him to cut his bonds, he cried out in terror like a little child. I had to run then. I had to leave Thillik behind.

I left my son in that despicable place because I hadn't the strength to force him to come with me. They've done something to Thillik, I'm certain of it! The look in his eyes—it was as if no one lived inside his body any more. Horrible enough to force another into slavery, but to take a Name-giver's very self away from him? Such an evil is beyond imagining.

Please, can you help me get my son back? I'll give you any aid I can. I have nowhere else to turn, and I don't know how much longer my old heart can stand the thought of my Thillik in bondage!

Aberdeen's bloodshot eyes grow tearful as he speaks, and the adventurers should be able to tell that he has gone without real rest for a long time. Aberdeen answers any questions he can about Vrontok, Lorgo T'rask, and Thillik. Aberdeen knows the general information about Vrontok and T'rask found in the **Vivane Province** book in the **Sky Point and Vivane Campaign Set**.

If the characters suggest that Thillik has amnesia, read the following:

I thought of that right off! But it wasn't just confusion I saw in his face. It wasn't just that he couldn't recognize me. He looked as though *Thillik* wasn't really there, that he

couldn't even recognize himself. Like as not I'm making no sense, but there it is.

If the characters ask Aberdeen whether he noticed anything else odd about his son, read the following:

He had some bruises and cuts, most likely from beatings. I also thought I saw a nasty wound on the back of his neck—a ragged cut, not like something made with a knife or a dagger. I'm not sure what might have made it. It seemed to be almost healed, but his neck was a bit swollen. That might be a mark of infection. He wouldn't get amnesia from a blow to the neck, would he?

Aberdeen is desperate to see his son home and whole again. If the adventurers ask about payment for their aid, Aberdeen offers them one of the few maps he's found that pre-date the Scourge. The map shows the location of an ancient observatory in the Delaris Mountains that allegedly houses an extraordinary device, rumored to allow the viewer to see into astral space. Should the adventurers be too heroic to ask for a reward for helping a friend, Aberdeen gives them the map out of gratitude if they retrieve his son.

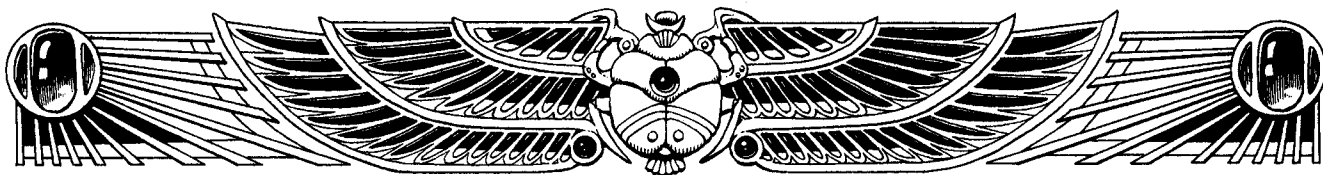
Once the characters agree to aid him, Aberdeen insists on starting out immediately. He leads them to the Wingsticker Tavern in Vrontok (see **Into the Shadows**, p. 64) whose windows look out on the building where Thillik is being held. Aberdeen wants to accompany the heroes at least as far as the tavern, and it is almost impossible to dissuade him. The adventurers may have more luck convincing the old cartographer to remain at the tavern instead of accompanying them on the mission.

For more information on Aberdeen, see **Cast of Characters**, p. 79.

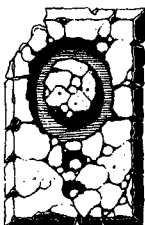
TROUBLESHOOTING

The only potential problem in this encounter occurs if the adventurers refuse to aid Aberdeen. If the heroes seem reluctant, remind the players whose characters have a connection to Aberdeen of that bond. Appeal to other characters, either by remarking on how pitiful Aberdeen appears or by emphasizing the potential value of the old man's proffered map. If the characters still refuse to aid Aberdeen, the adventure ends here. In that case, use elements of this adventure in other stories. For example, the use of soul-spiders to control slaves could spread throughout Vrontok, and perhaps beyond. At some point in a future adventure, force the characters to deal with this growing epidemic.





INTO THE SHADOWS



INTERVIEW

In this encounter, the heroes reach Vrontok. As they arrive at the Wingsticker Tavern, the group is beset by thugs who work for Vrontok's mayor, Lorgo T'rask.

SETTING THE STAGE

Crouched in the constant shadow of Sky Point's underbelly, protected by a thick wall and deep ditches hacked into the earth around it, Vrontok seems like the den of a sick animal waiting to die. You approach the huge iron gates, which are bolted into the sixteen-foot wall and guarded by eight Theran soldiers. With bored sneers, the Theran gatekeepers eye the disparate Barsaivians entering the squalid town. At the nearby exit gate, another eight Theran soldiers watch over travelers leaving the city. Judging by the people's resigned faces and the clinking of coins, the Therans are collecting a fee before allowing people out of Vrontok.

As you pass through the towering gates, you sense the Theran soldiers appraising you. One of the guards places a hand on the hilt of his sword as he looks you up and down, but the legionnaires allow your party to pass unmolested.

Within half a block of the gate, the air becomes heavy with the stench of animal and Name-giver bodies. For a moment it seems that the hideous smells have actually darkened the air—then you realize that Vrontok's shadows are simply closing in around you. Small huts, storefronts, dice pits, and taverns crowd the alleys and streets. They all look as shabby and ill-used as the people passing in and out of them.



Aberdeen plunges ahead, leading you unerringly through a maze of stinking alleys before emerging onto a larger road. A stone signpost with a crack near its base identifies the road as the Slave Way. The noise hits you as hard as the initial stench of the town, but at least the walls are no longer crowding you quite so much. Aberdeen turns toward you, making sure you are all behind him before moving on.

As Aberdeen turns back to lead you northward, a young man bumps into him hard enough to knock him to the ground. The youth is dressed in soft leather that gleams with oil, and his shoulder-length hair is slicked back with grease. He turns a vicious look on Aberdeen and shouts, "How dare you bump into me, you wrinkled lump of dung?!"

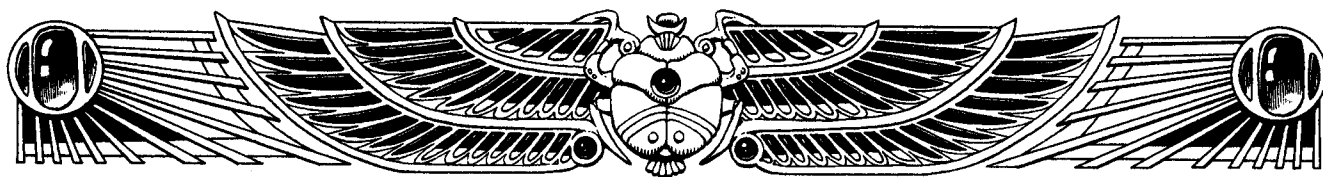
THEMES AND IMAGES

Vrontok is a city of vermin, both Name-givers and other kinds. T'rask's Men are simply larger vermin with enough authority to bully others openly rather than waylaying them in back alleys. The arrogant ease T'rask's Men display when they confront the characters should make clear the bizarre workings of law and order in this dark, unpleasant slavers' town.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Mervin, the young fop who bumped into Aberdeen, is one of T'rask's Men, a gang of thugs who serve as the local constabulary. One scarred ork, a burly human man with a broken nose, and a sallow-faced human woman make up the rest of this band. If any character attempts to defend Aberdeen or accuses Mervin of shoving the old man, the





rest of the band materializes from the crowd to stand with their compatriot. Mervin immediately denounces the characters as troublemakers with no respect for the law: "Don't you imbeciles know who we are? We're T'rask's Men, and we're not to be trifled with! Pay the Insult Tax *now*, or we'll take you all in for questioning!"

Aberdeen averts his eyes and mumbles apologies, but Mervin and his cohorts pay him little heed. They are watching the younger, stronger, but potentially wealthier adventurers whom they hope to shake down for three or four gold pieces per person. This band of T'rask's Men is currently cash-poor, cocksure and itching for a fight. The characters look pretty well-off by Vrontok standards and come off as a bit too high and mighty for the thugs' liking. If the characters placate T'rask's Men by paying what they ask, the thugs insult them freely but eventually let them pass, unless the adventurers appear particularly weak. However, if any of the adventurers provokes the thugs by arguing with Mervin, insulting them, refusing to pay the tax, and so on, they immediately attempt to arrest the adventurers.

If Aberdeen gets the chance, he whispers urgently to the nearest adventurer that just about everyone taken in for questioning by T'rask's Men ends up dead or a slave. The characters should quickly realize that coming along quietly with the arresting officer is not the wisest of ideas. In any case, Mervin and the other thugs do not give the characters much time to consider their choices. If the adventurers appear ready to put up any resistance, the two humans (Anghar and Imeena) attack immediately from one flank, while the ork (Beltruncher) strikes from the other.

If the adventurers kill one or more of T'rask's Men, Mervin tries to summon another band. This group is looking for money, however, and they won't split it with another band of T'rask's Men unless absolutely necessary. None of T'rask's Men fight to the death if things start looking dicey, but they fight hard and dirty for as long as they stick around.

If the characters attempt to flee, Aberdeen leads them away as best as he can. However, unless the adventurers have seriously wounded or killed one or more of T'rask's Men, they are unable to shake the pursuing thugs.

Unless the fight drags out interminably, allow the characters to leave the scene. No other pedestrians attempt to aid or hinder any of the combatants. Instead, most people ignore the scene or watch it out of the corner of their eyes, making whispered bets with their neighbors over the outcome.

Statistics for T'rask's Men appear below. Mervin's statistics and description appear in **Cast of Characters**, p. 78.

Note that these statistics represent humans. Stats for orks among T'rask's Men appear on page 18 of the **Vivane Province** book in the **Sky Point and Vivane Campaign Set**.

T'RASK'S MEN

Attributes

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

Initiative: 6

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 10

Damage: 11

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Death Rating: 35

Wound Threshold: 9

Unconsciousness Rating: 27

Physical Defense: 10

Spell Defense: 9

Social Defense: 6

Armor: 5

Mystic Armor: 1

Knockdown: 6

Recovery Tests: 2

Combat Movement: 40

Full Movement: 80

Legend Points: 100

Equipment: Broadswords, daggers, hardened leather armor

Loot: None

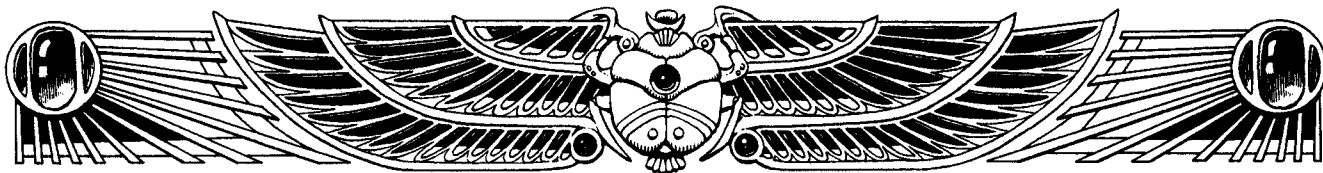
TROUBLESHOOTING

The major problem in this encounter occurs if the adventurers surrender to T'rask's Men. Aberdeen strongly urges the adventurers not to take this course of action and may even draw his longsword and brandish it at Mervin to provoke a fight. However, he backs down if the characters insist. Mervin also arrests the characters if they fight and lose, unless they can escape pursuit.

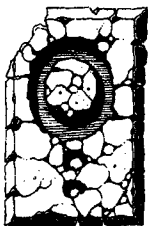
Once T'rask's Men have secured the characters, they take them to a holding area and lock them into two cramped cells. Mervin then taunts the adventurers, telling them how much they will enjoy being slaves. At some point in his monologue of sniggering insults, he says something like, "If you're very, very lucky little slaves, the boss might let you have one of his new pets!"

During the night fewer guards are around in this holding area, which provides the characters a chance to redeem themselves by escaping. If the characters fail to escape, T'rask introduces them to the soul-spiders and the former heroes end their days as mindless slaves—end of adventure.





A ROOM WITH A VIEW



INTERVIEW

In this encounter the adventurers may discover more information about Thillik's captors by asking the right questions. They may also find an ideal entrance to Caravath's laboratory building—one of the Wingsticker's third-floor rooms provides an excellent view of the laboratory's roof, including a trap door located on it.

SETTING THE STAGE

Moving steadily north and west, Aberdeen leads you through Vrontok's maze of highways and byways. After a time, you take for granted the knots of gamblers, the haunted eyes of the prostitutes, and the furtive, calculating stares of the ubiquitous street urchins.

Finally Aberdeen slows to a stop just down the street from a small tavern. The sign in front reads "Wingsticker" in sprawling, ill-cut letters. Above the letters is a carving of a windling, its wings splayed out and pinned with daggers. Nothing else distinguishes the Wingsticker from every other tavern you've passed so far. The building across the way, however, is nothing like the teetering wooden firetraps all over the rest of town.

A low-slung one-story structure of gray stone, the building seems to hunch and glower like an old t'skrang hovering protectively over his F'rynnish betting sticks. The building is set about fifteen yards back from the street and is surrounded by a four-foot stone wall.

"That's it," Aberdeen says in a low voice. "That's where they're keeping my boy. I talked to a nice young

lady at the Wingsticker, and she said there's more than one simpleton slave over there. My Thillik's no simpleton—far from it!—but he might as well have been, from the way he looked at me a few days ago." Aberdeen blinks hard and wipes his eyes, then glares at the squat gray building as if his mere look could curse the place.

THEMES AND IMAGES

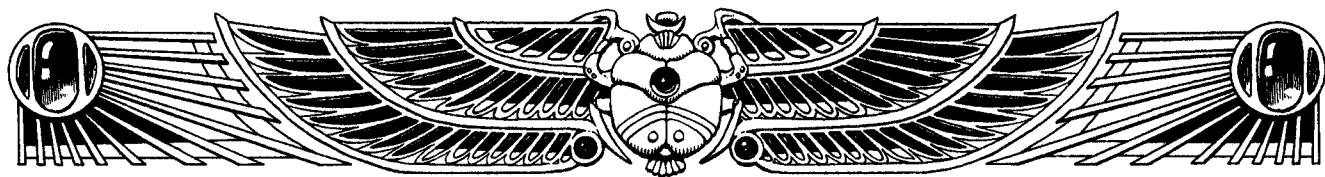
The theme of this encounter is discovery amid deception. Everyone in Vrontok seems to have something to hide or a grudge to nurse. Even among the hardened denizens of this shadowed city, however, some people are willing to help those in need. Indifferent exteriors are often facades—only by looking beyond the surface can the adventurers find what they seek.

BEHIND THE SCENES

By the time the heroes reach this part of Vrontok, sunset is only an hour or so away. Though the shadowed streets of Vrontok are always dangerous, the chance of misadventure increases dramatically at night. If the characters do not say so first, Aberdeen suggests that they all go over to the Wingsticker for a quick bite to eat while the adventurers concoct a plan. Should any of the characters wish to find out more about the building across the way, the Wingsticker is the most likely place to look—its location across the street means that its regulars are the most likely people in Vrontok to have seen something.

The Wingsticker is three stories high, a tall and narrow wooden building. The rickety walkway that runs in front of the building is elevated a foot or so above the ground in





a noble attempt to keep the tavern's customers clear of the rancid muck that tends to collect in the gutters. A large wooden sign hangs from the tavern's second story. The poorly painted board shows a crudely drawn windling grimacing in pain. Two thin blades (or wingstickers, as the tavern's owner likes to call them) pin the poor creature's wings firmly in place.

Inside, the Wingsticker boasts a huge iron fireplace, "big enough to roast eight dozen windlings," according to tavern owner Rapier's claim. Mismatched tables and chairs dot the tavern's main floor, and a large wooden bar dominates one side of the room. Beyond the main tavern, in a low-ceilinged room, lies a gambling pit. The two floors above contain a dozen miniscule sleeping chambers. These rooms seldom echo with snores, however, since Rapier usually rents them by the hour. When the adventurers enter the Wingsticker, there are five people inside: Rapier, the serving girl Ammie, and three customers.

DEALING WITH RAPIER

Rapier stands behind the long bar, clad in a faded doublet and sagging woolen leggings. A human male of middling years, Rapier has shaggy blonde hair, bulging muscles, and a sharp countenance that might once have been handsome.

Years of bitter regret and hard drink have been especially unkind to Rapier. In his teens, he dreamed of journeying through the world and finding a swordmaster with whom he could apprentice. However, Rapier began to practice the grandiose manners and braggart's conduct of certain less-than-admirable swordmasters before he had the skills to defend himself. When a small troop of windlings passed through his village, Rapier chose to pick a quarrel with them and soon found himself dueling with a true warrior. While his friends and fiancée looked on, Rapier lost his right ear and the pinky finger of his right hand to the rough windling's sword. Humiliated, he fled his home and abandoned his fiancée, eventually entering the innkeeping business.

Because of his long-ago ordeal, Rapier hates windlings. However, he remains a bragging coward at heart. If a windling character enters his bar with an air of confidence, Rapier taunts and torments the character but lacks the guts to throw the character out. If the windling character chooses to fight with Rapier, the innkeeper panics and begs the windling's fellow adventurers to protect him from the "maniacal butterfly."

Rapier knows remarkably little about the building across the way and its occupants, save that there are a lot of slaves about. Rapier gladly rents one or more rooms to

the adventurers if they ask, leering appreciatively at any female characters and winking broadly at their male counterparts.

Rapier lives in his own fantasy world, in which he is a mighty, retired swordmaster and slayer of windlings. He knows countless heroic tales and legends and makes himself the hero of all but the most ancient tales. If the characters have participated in any noteworthy adventures near Vrontok, they may even find themselves listening to a strange yet just-recognizable version of their own heroics—starring Rapier. (Rapier may tell one of the more clearly modern tales found in **Legends of Earthdawn, Volume I**, substituting himself for the story's hero.)

If confronted, Rapier insists that his tales are true, but quickly backs down in the face of any threat. For all his bluster, Rapier is harmless man. He tends to agree with just about everybody when he isn't blustering, and his only real concern is for his tavern. Even here, however, Rapier has less power than it seems. Though he is the Wingsticker's nominal owner, Ammie really runs the show.

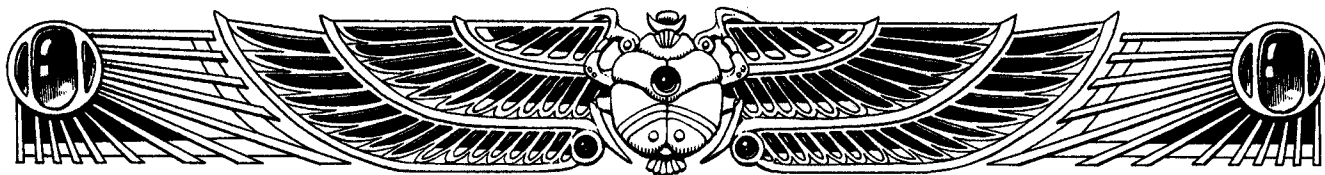
ABOUT THE CUSTOMERS

Two of the customers, a dwarf couple, sit nursing drinks near the fireplace at the back of the tavern. Merra, the dwarf woman, has bushy eyebrows and long hair in intricate braids. Carefully stitched symbols of protection cover her leather armor. Her companion, Blanack, is a particularly stout dwarf with pale, silvery hair and beard. He wears plain leather armor. Merra and Blanack are mercenaries and sometime slavers—less than an hour before the characters' arrival, they delivered a shipment of four human slaves to Caravath and his lackeys across the street. The dwarf pair plans to start for Jerris in the morning.

The third customer, Krannock, is a large obsidiman. He is mostly a pale gray, with a few thin veins of some purplish mineral spiderwebbed across his broad head. Krannock sits at a table by the corner window, his large head turned to watch the narrow street. He has sat at this table for almost a year now, becoming a sort of fixture at the bar. Rapier and Ammie like Krannock because he helps keep the customers compliant (they often assume he is the bouncer). He causes no trouble and occasionally orders whole pots of Wingsticker stew. Krannock is currently contemplating the dissolute lifestyle he has maintained for almost two decades and is thinking of making a fresh start as a questor of Mynbruje.

The room's occupants know a fair amount of useful information about the building next door. If the characters ask questions with sufficient skill and subtlety, they may





a short human male named Caravath appears to be running things at T'rask's behest. Apart from his connection to T'rask, they know nothing specific about Caravath. Merra happened to get a quick look inside the building's main work area and saw "all kinds of mesh cages, tables with leg and wrist irons, and a pile of bloody towels." The pair also noticed that the hair of the slaves in the holding cells had been chopped off at the back of the neck, though some still wore long locks up front. If pressed, Blanack might remember noticing something odd about the necks of one cluster of slaves: "They looked raw and sort of swollen, like they'd been carrying heavy yokes that weren't padded good enough." If anyone asks whether Blanack noticed anything else unusual about these slaves, he will pause for a moment and then say, "Yeah, maybe. They looked like they'd been through something bad. Real bad. Like they'd been shocked clean out of themselves.

Who knows what T'rask has got Caravath doing to his stock? Not that it's any of our business, mind. They're his—he can do with them what he pleases."

WHAT KRANNOCK KNOWS

Krannock talks to anyone who sits at his table. Getting information out of the obsidiman requires patience, however, as he often steers the conversation toward grand ethical questions and dilemmas ("Where is the line between good and evil? Can one truly atone for past actions and injuries?") or talks of the Passion Mynbruje.

The huge obsidiman knows that the building across the street receives an unusually large number of slaves for its size. Krannock recently calculated that the building would be standing room only if every slave that has entered it thus far still remained within it. As far as Krannock knows, only a small number of slaves have left the building in carts. He does not know the fate of the others. All the slaves Krannock has seen entering the building

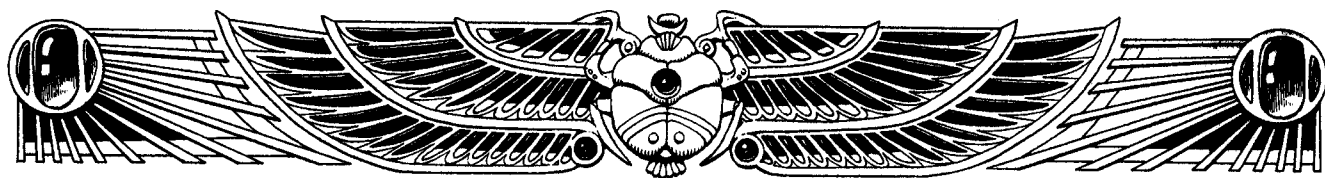
learn the following information from each regular. Make getting the information as easy or difficult as seems appropriate and reward creative roleplaying.

WHAT MERRA AND BLANACK KNOW

The two dwarf slavers talk if the characters treat them like compatriots—sitting with them, buying them drinks, trading road stories, and so on. If the adventurers act *offended* by the dwarfs' involvement in the slave trade, the dwarfs clam up. Characters can also bribe the mercenaries for information—for approximately two gold pieces each, the dwarfs tell what they know.

Merra and Blanack know that Lorgo T'rask owns the stone building and all the slaves in it. They also know that





are humans or elves—he has seen no slaves from other Name-giver races being delivered.

AMMIE'S INFORMATION

Ammie once made a precarious living renting rooms from Rapier by the hour, but she eventually saved enough from her takings to become a part-owner of the Wingsticker. Ammie is one of Vrontok's few success stories. A tall, lanky human with red hair and blue eyes, Ammie stands out in a crowd. Her guarded expression and the pain in her eyes are the only external signs of the harsh life she has lived.

Business is slow when the characters arrive, and so Ammie has time to talk as she polishes the Wingsticker's battered mugs and chipped glasses. Though outwardly friendly, Ammie answers questions about the place across the way only if the adventurers strike her as decent types. If Aberdeen and the characters appeal to her sense of decency, she tells them what she knows. If they try to bribe her, Ammie fobs them off with the cynical banter she gives most customers.

Ammie knows that Lorgo T'rask owns the building across the way, because the Wingsticker pays its operating taxes, liquor taxes, gambling taxes, fire safety taxes, guard taxes, and so on to T'rask's Men. Though Ammie loathes T'rask's Men, "especially that slimy, fumble-fingered, wrong-side-of-the-blanket so-called *Lord Mervin*," she always treats them nicely to avoid drawing their unwanted attention. Mervin, mistakenly assuming that Ammie is interested in him, recently attempted to impress her by confiding that Caravath is going to revolutionize slavery at T'rask's order. As Mervin put it, "We'll get no more lip from the silly, whining buggers! No more sulking, no more rebellion, no more whimpering about their lost freedom! When their masters say jump, they'll just ask, 'how high, my lord?'" When Ammie scoffed gently at this, Mervin claimed to have seen the results with his own eyes. "Just set one of those things loose on a slave—that's all there is to it!" He refused, however, to tell her what the "things" were.

Ammie has a soft spot for Aberdeen and former slaves in the adventuring group. If she decides she likes the adventurers enough, she casually tells them that Rapier rents rooms by the hour. She also informs them of the room that offers a view of the roof of T'rask's building. ("Should you happen to ask for the third floor on the far left, you might find your window looks right out on the top of that stone monstrosity. You might also look for a wooden trap door on the roof, not far from the stone chimney.")

MEETING MERVIN AGAIN

Mervin and his friends visit the Wingsticker tavern almost every day, and the day the characters arrive in Vrontok is no exception. Depending on how the characters dealt with Mervin earlier in the adventure, his daily visit may prove problematic—and possibly disastrous.

If T'rask's Men are looking for the characters, Ammie may be a useful ally. If the adventurers have impressed her, Ammie hides them from the thugs in a secret room under the Wingsticker's eaves.

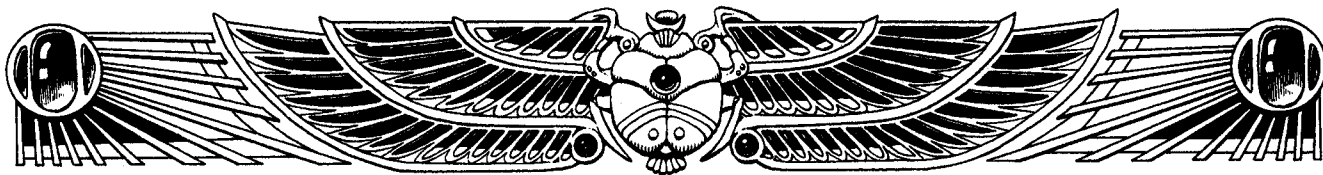
If the characters bribed or talked their way past Mervin and his men, this encounter offers an opportunity for Mervin to hit the characters with even more derogatory comments and insults. If the characters have talked with Ammie and have learned that Mervin knows something about T'rask's building, they may see his arrival as an opportunity to learn a bit more. This is a risky tactic, however. Mervin is already suspicious of the characters and may consider any attempt to learn about the goings-on in the building an excuse to arrest them. If the characters can somehow play up to Mervin's ego, they may be able to learn from him that a wizard named Caravath is performing experiments on slaves.

When Mervin and his men leave the tavern, they head straight for the building across the street. This should warn the characters that they may have to deal with Mervin one more time before the adventure is over.

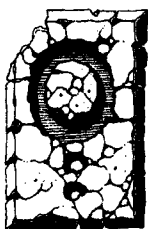
TROUBLESHOOTING

This encounter is straightforward, and not much can go too badly wrong. How much information the characters discover from Ammie and the tavern's customers is up to the players and gamemaster. The only real problem arises if the characters are on the lam from T'rask's Men and they fail to impress Ammie. If the characters are escaping from the thugs, T'rask's Men arrive at the Wingsticker while the heroes are there. If the adventurers have won Ammie's trust, she protects them against T'rask's Men (assuming the adventurers fought Mervin and his allies in the previous encounter). If they have offended Ammie, she refuses to hide them. In this case, the characters must flee out the back (by way of the gambling pit) or risk getting caught (see *Troubleshooting*, p. 65 of *Into the Shadows*). As long as the characters do not greatly offend her, Ammie helps them, if for no other reason than because she loathes T'rask's Men.





T? THE RESCUE



VIEWVIEW

In this encounter, the characters confront Caravath in his lab. If they succeed, they may discover the truth about the soul-spiders, destroy Caravath's carefully established breeding facility and rescue Thillik. If they fail, they risk becoming the next subjects of Caravath's experiments.

SETTING THE STAGE

As the shadows deepen with the coming of twilight, you gaze across the narrow street toward the stone building where Aberdeen's son is held captive. Quickly and quietly, you finish making your preparations to rescue Thillik. All you have to do is get into the building, preferably without attracting attention. After that, who knows what you'll face? But it's no use thinking about that now. You'll find out the worst soon enough.

As the moment for action draws near, Aberdeen grows strangely calm. Your preparations seem to have taken him back to the time when he traveled Barsaive as a warrior and a hero. The look in his eyes tells you how much he wants to go with you, but he knows his old bones can't take the strain of the fight you're likely to get. His quiet acceptance of his own limits is a brave thing to see, as courageous in its way as your own willingness to risk danger by aiding him. As you finish your preparations, Aberdeen throws back his bent shoulders and says, "Thank you all. No matter what happens, I owe you a great debt. The Passions grant I may pay it, and soon."

THEMES AND IMAGES

Though the soul-spiders are not Horrors, they symbolize how easily anyone can lose his true self unless he remains vigilant against internal or external threats and corruption. In this encounter, the characters face a wizard who has lost himself to his own inner demons and is now attempting to force others to lose themselves to external ones. The wizard's actions are terrifying and tragic and should give more than one character the shudders.

BEHIND THE SCENES

This encounter assumes that the adventurers enter Caravath's laboratory by some carefully planned means, either through the trap door in the roof or through the front door. If the characters take the time to come up with a decent plan, they should have a good chance to get into the building before anyone notices them.

ENTRY THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR

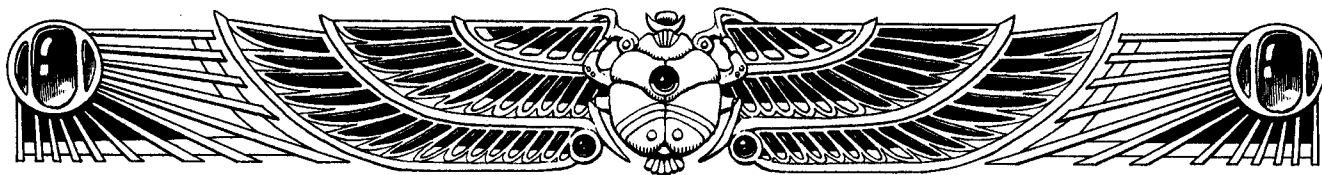
If the characters march up to the front gates and knock, break the door down, or try some equally unsubtle frontal assault, they likely encounter some difficulties. T'rask has recently had the lab's exterior doors reinforced, and they are almost impossible to break down. In addition, a pair of T'rask's Men are standing guard. At the first sign of the adventurers' efforts to enter, Caravath sends two more guards out the rooftop exit to get help. By the time the characters manage to batter their way in, even more reinforcements will have arrived or will be close enough at hand to show up within a few rounds. The characters may have to flee, hopefully escaping to plot another attack. The next time they approach, however, they will discover that Caravath has doubled the number of T'rask's Men guarding the laboratory.

ENTRY BY ROOFTOP

If the characters attempt to enter through the trap door in the roof, they have a much better chance of getting in unnoticed.

The first challenge they face is getting onto the laboratory roof. The area between the Wingsticker and the laboratory is roughly ten yards, and so an enterprising group should be able to figure out a way to get from the Wingsticker's third-floor rooms to the rooftop. For example, the characters might affix a rope between the buildings and then shimmy across. Trolls and obsidimen weigh too much to take advantage of this option, but other possibilities exist. If a member of the group is a wizard with the Levitate spell, he can use it to get the larger characters onto the roof fairly easily. The guards patrolling the laboratory grounds make their rounds every 15 minutes or so, giving the characters a gap of 10 minutes during which they may reach the laboratory roof without being noticed (unless they make excessive noise when entering).





Once on the roof of the building, the adventurers need only open the trap door and drop inside. Surrounded by a small, untended herb garden, the boarded-over trap door opens onto a ladder strong and wide enough to support an ork. Troll or obsidiman characters must find another way down. If such characters choose to jump the 10 feet to the floor, they suffer Step 2 falling damage. The ladder extends into the far corner of a room that serves as kitchen and mess hall. In addition to this room, the building also contains a large laboratory that occupies roughly half the available space, 8 long, narrow cells that currently house 20 slaves, and 2 other rooms. One of these rooms currently serves as living quarters for guards—the other room is Caravath's. It contains a pallet and a chest with several changes of clothing. Both the cells and the other chambers can only be reached by a hallway from the main laboratory (see **Laboratory Map**, p. 72).

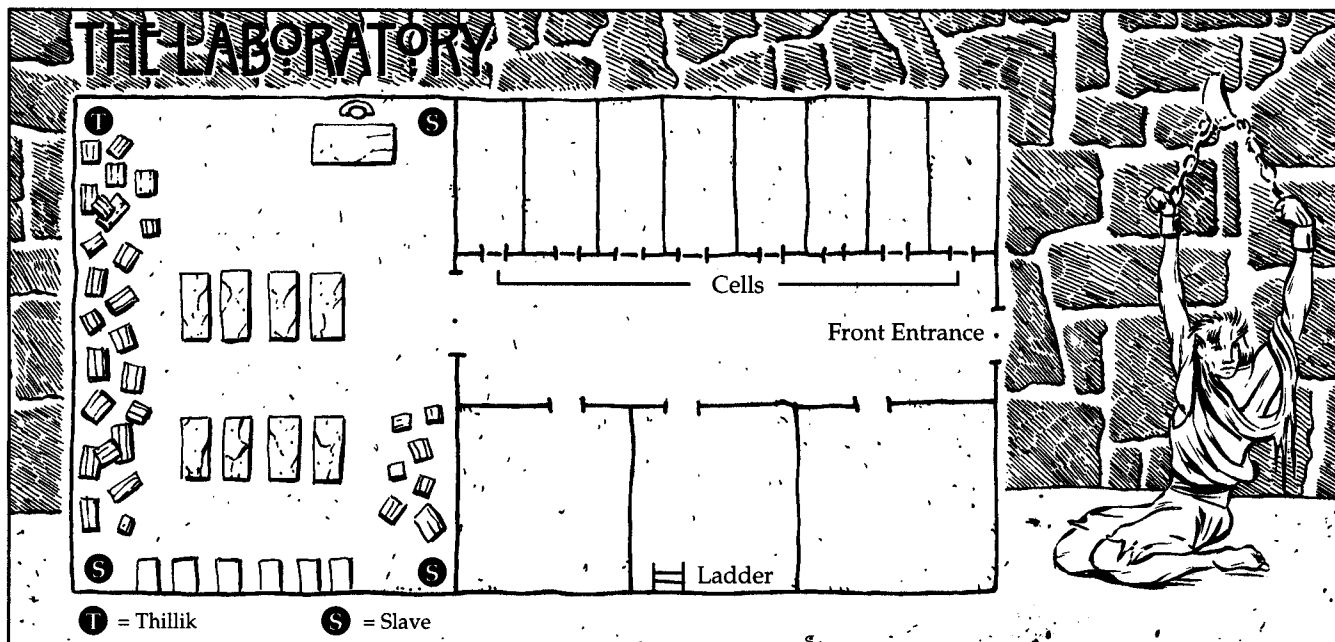
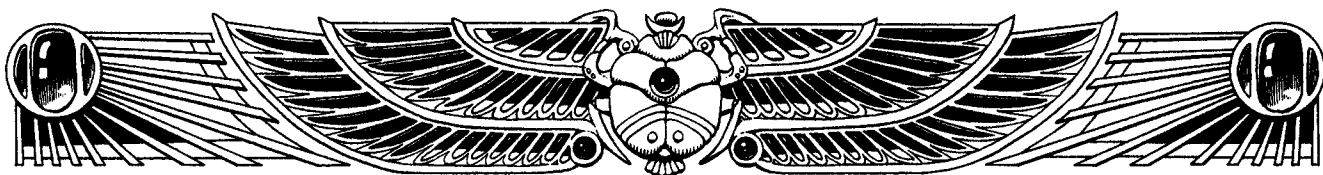
A short corridor leads directly from the front entrance, past the cells and other rooms, to the main lab. Though the exterior of the building is solid stone, all interior walls are made of slightly tarry wood. Anyone who bothers to look can tell that the walls are a new addition. By making a successful Perception (7) Test, characters with construction skill or knowledge of wood can also tell that the construction is hasty, but strong. Perceptive characters may also realize that the walls are a fire-trap—a fire would undoubtedly gut the building in no time.

The laboratory lies beyond a set of double doors. Eight heavy wooden tables dominate the center of this vast room. All but two of the tables are equipped with four iron shackles, and each table has several dark stains along its length.

A large desk and stool sit against one wall, and old furniture and boxes stand against two others—all are remnants of the business that once occupied this place. A number of heavy mesh cages, about 2' x 2', line a third of one long wall. Ten soul-spiders are in two of these cages, five to each cage. The empty cages have arrived and been installed recently in preparation for more spidery occupants.

Caravath and two of T'rask's Men—Mervin and another of his band, if they survive through **Into the Shadows**—are in the lab when the characters arrive. One of Caravath's spider-controlled slaves sits hunched in each of the room's four corners. They serve as a grotesque alarm system. If the slaves see anyone aside from Caravath, Lorgo T'rask, or one of T'rask's Men, whom the slaves identify by the thick armbands and insignia that all T'rask's Men wear, they begin calling out a dull-voiced warning to Caravath. The slaves can only see individuals visible to the human eye, but they are mindlessly diligent in their task. One of these slaves is Thillik.





SEARCHING FOR THILLIK

If the characters search for Thillik in the cells, they will not find him. If they ask any of the other slaves, they may be able to learn that Thillik is currently in the laboratory with the Master. Getting this information from the slaves requires a Charisma Test against a Difficulty Number of 12 (the slaves' Social Defense modified by the presence of the soul-spiders). Unless the characters take care to keep the slaves quiet, however, the sound of their voices alerts Caravath to the characters' presence.

ENTERING THE LAB

If the characters have managed to enter the building and reach the laboratory unnoticed, they have a chance of catching Caravath and his allies by surprise. However, the slaves in the corners most likely warn the wizard. As soon as Caravath spies the intruders, he orders his henchmen to attack. Mervin or the ranking guard present immediately blows a sharp whistle, summoning the remaining men from the back room. The total of T'rask's Men who take part in this fight should be two more than the number of characters.

BATTLING CARAVATH'S GUARDS

T'rask's Men engage the characters in combat while Caravath moves over to the soul-spider cages. Once at his destination, the wizard summons the slaves to form a barrier between himself and the adventurers. He then begins to use his spells in combat. Should any of the adventurers get too

close to him, Caravath sends the helpless slaves to attack them. As a last resort, Caravath opens the two soul-spider cages one at a time and flings the spiders at the characters. If the characters are easily defeating Caravath's guards, one of the guards runs out of the lab, opens the remaining slaves' cells and orders the slaves to attack the characters. Statistics for the slaves—all humans or elves—appear below.

SLAVES

Attributes

DEX: 4	STR: 5	TOU: 5
PER: 3	WIL: 5	CHA: 3

Initiative: 4
 Number of Attacks: 1
 Attack: 5
 Damage: 5
 Number of Spells: NA
 Spellcasting: NA
 Effect: NA

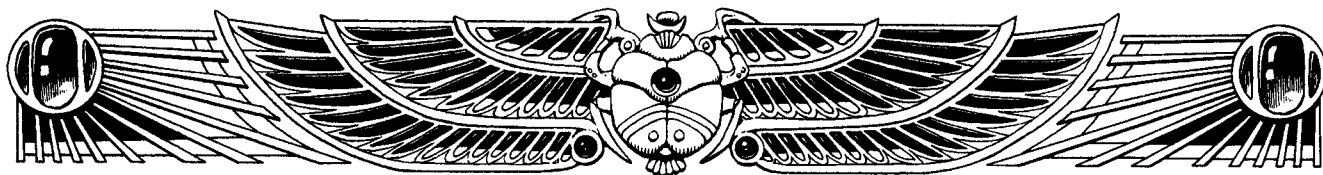
Physical Defense: 6
 Spell Defense: 5
 Social Defense: 5
 Armor: 0
 Mystic Armor: 0
 Knockdown: 5
 Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 31
 Wound Threshold: 8
 Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Combat Movement: 20
 Full Movement: 40

Legend Points: 30
 Equipment: None
 Loot: None





If the characters defeat Caravath and T'rask's Men, they may attempt to help the surviving slaves. (If Caravath or one of the men escape, the characters must move quickly before the escapee warns Lorgo T'rask that his prize slaves may be rescued.) Normally, the only way to remove a soul-spider without killing its host is to destroy its soul-thread. Caravath has recently discovered this fact after much experimentation. The notes currently on the laboratory desk reveal that information, as well as the approximate location of the soul-spider colonies in the Arkhazid jungles. Theoretically, it is also possible to cut out a soul-spider if a powerful questor of Garlen is immediately available or if some other magical means of healing the wound is at hand.

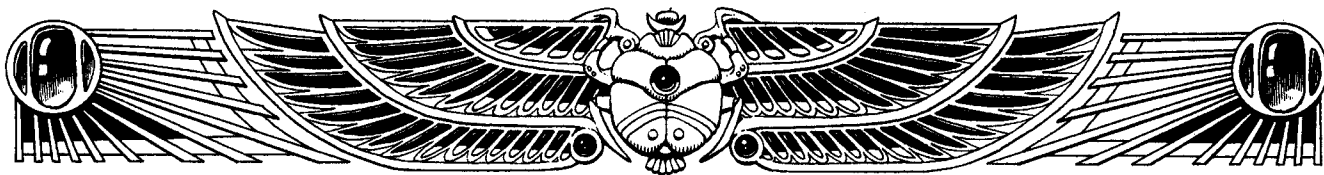
Once the adventurers have stopped Caravath and freed the slaves, they should leave Vrontok as quickly as possible.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The characters should be on an even footing with Caravath and his guards if they enter the laboratory before being discovered. If not, the battle will be much more difficult but should not be impossible to win.

One or more of the characters may fall victim to a soul-spider during the battle. If so, the remaining adventurers can rescue the victim along with the slaves. If the laboratory burns down or the characters fail to read Caravath's notes, they must discover for themselves how to remove the spiders. (Perhaps a wise man in the Arkhazid jungles can aid them.)





LOOSE ENDS



This section wraps up the adventure's loose ends and suggests ways to use elements and characters from **Shadows** in future **Earthdawn** adventures and campaigns. It also provides descriptions and game statistics for major gamemaster characters and the soul-spiders.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

If the characters successfully defeat Caravath and his minions and rescue Thillik, they earn Aberdeen's undying gratitude. As soon as the group has reached safety, the old cartographer thanks the characters profusely and presents them with the map to the ancient observatory in the Delaris Mountains. If the heroes also succeeded in removing Thillik's soul-spider, Aberdeen has a tearful reunion with his bewildered son—Thillik remembers nothing after the soul-spider attack. If not, Aberdeen vows to seek a cure for his son's affliction. He and Thillik immediately leave Vrontok for distant parts—the more distant, the better.

The characters may also end up dead, captured, or on the run from T'rask's Men. Captured characters have a chance to escape, but their captors take plenty of precautions. Aberdeen attempts to get enough help to rescue any captured characters, but his attempt has a limited chance of success—Caravath intends to use the adventurers as experimental subjects and guards them with great care. If Thillik remains alive and captive, Aberdeen attempts to devise another desperate rescue plan with or without the player characters; again, he has little chance to succeed on his own. If Thillik is killed in the final battle or dies in a fire, Aberdeen is crushed. He does not reproach the characters, but returns home a broken man. The characters may hear later that he died attempting to assassinate Lorgo T'rask.

AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

Award Legend Points for **Shadows** as described on p. 7 of the **Introduction**. Specific awards are described below. The Adventure Award for **Shadows** is 350 Legend Points. For more information on completing adventure goals and earning Adventure Legend Awards, see p. 242, **ED**.

Creative Roleplaying and Heroics

Award Legend Points to characters for taking any of the following actions:

Agreeing to aid Aberdeen before the map is mentioned	50
Avoiding combat with Mervin's band	100
Obtaining information from Ammie	25
Obtaining information from Krannock	25
Obtaining information from Merra and Blanack	25
Entering the laboratory through the trap door	30
Freeing all the slaves at the laboratory	100

Defeating Creatures

Award Legend Points for defeating the following creatures/opponents: the soul-spiders, Caravath, and T'rask's Men. Defeating Caravath earns the adventurers 750 Legend Points. Defeating Mervin is worth 200 Legend Points—defeating the rest of T'rask's Men nets the characters 150 Legend Points per thug. Each soul-spider is worth 130 Legend Points. Distribute all these Legend Points equally among the players.

Treasure

The characters find no treasure in this adventure.

TOTAL LEGEND POINT AWARD

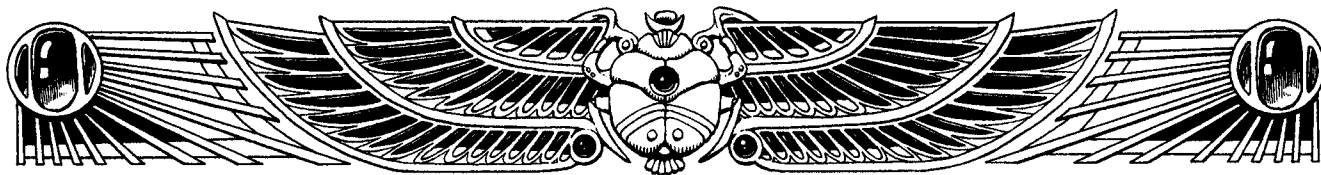
Based on the figures listed for each Legend Point Award, a single character who completes **Shadows** receives an average of 1,100 Legend Points. This average assumes 7 players in a group and does not include points earned for battling optional opponents (including Mervin's band in the second encounter).

CAMPAIGN IDEAS

The following characters and story elements from **Shadows** can be adapted for use in other adventures. Feel free to use the information as you see fit in your **Earthdawn** campaigns.

First, the adventurers have undoubtedly gained powerful enemies in Lorgo T'rask and the wizard Caravath (assuming he survives). These two gamemaster characters may well reappear, seeking revenge against the adventurers for their humiliating defeat. Returning to Vrontok is a





dangerous gamble for all the adventurers from this time forward. Mervin also bears a grudge toward any character who personally defeats him in battle and may seek another duel to regain his so-called honor. However, he poses much less of a threat than his superiors.

The map that Aberdeen gives the characters shows the location of an ancient observatory in the Delaris Mountains. According to rumor, this observatory houses a magical optical device that can peer into astral space. A quest for this item may lead the characters into the mountains on a treasure hunt and cause them to seek out the elven mage Leonarus, an expert on magical lenses (p. 42–43 of the **Vivane Province** book, **Sky Point and Vivane Campaign Set**). Leonarus, in turn, can provide the adventurers with connections that might spark future adventures.

Aberdeen remains a friend to the characters. His maps, connections, and knowledge of obscure regions of Barsaive may prove useful on many occasions. Ammie may also become a friend or love interest for a character—indeed, she may be the only reason to return to a place like Vrontok.

Finally, this adventure introduces a deadly new creature to the world of **Earthdawn**. Though the wizard Caravath harvested plenty of soul-spiders for his experiments, the Arkhazid jungles hold many more nests of these tiny monsters. Also, soul-spiders need not be unique to the Arkhazid jungles; they may infest the Liaj and Servos jungles in Barsaive as well. The characters may well encounter soul-spiders or their terrible effects in any number of other adventures.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

This section provides information and game statistics for Aberdeen, Caravath, Mervin, and the soul-spiders. If necessary or appropriate, modify these statistics according to the abilities of the players. These gamemaster characters are presented in order of their general importance to the story.

SOUL-SPIDERS

Soul-spiders are pale, almost translucent creatures found in the Arkhazid jungles. Each spider is approximately the size of an ork's fist, with knife-like protuberances on four of its eight legs. These extraordinarily agile creatures are parasites—they feast on the life essences of other creatures, digging into the victim's neck and nesting at the base of the skull. Once a soul-spider has buried itself in its host's flesh, a swollen wound and the trailing end of a *soul-thread* indicate the creature's presence.

A soul-spider's host loses all animation, eating and drinking just enough to maintain their bodily functions but doing little else. Most hosts die a relatively quick death, upon which

the soul-spider releases a stream of microscopic eggs into the fresh corpse's bloodstream. Though the soul-spider dies with its host, its eggs exist happily in the victim's decaying flesh, eventually developing into tiny, maggot-like creatures. Once the flesh rots sufficiently (from five to fifteen days on average), the soul-spider's young squirm out of the flesh and transform into adult spiders, starting a new colony. If the host's body is consumed or destroyed before this transformation, the larval soul-spiders perish. Those eating spider-tainted flesh become ill, as if they had eaten rancid meat.

Soul-spiders can live in a host for as long as the host survives. They depart from their hosts if the trailing piece of the spider's soul-thread is burned or otherwise destroyed. (For some reason as yet unknown, the spiders need the soul-thread intact as a link to the outside world. However, the soul-thread need not remain attached to the spider for it to function.)

Soul-Threads

Soul-threads are the magical fibers spun by a soul-spider as it enters a host. These threads remain partially outside the host creature's body and connect the spider to the outside world. Anyone holding a soul-thread can control the spider's host—the victim obeys any commands it can hear and understand. Soul-threads have other uses in magical research and alchemy; they may be used to create magical items requiring thread (nets, blankets, and so on), and in potions that affect the will.

Attributes

DEX: 5	STR: 4	TOU: 4
PER: 7	WIL: 4	CHA: 3

Initiative: 6

Number of Attacks: 5

Attack: 7

Damage:

Bite: 7

Claw (x 4): 6

Number of Spells: 2

Spellcasting: 8

Effect: Drain Personality

Death Rating: 27

Wound Threshold: 6

Unconsciousness Rating: 18

Legend Points: 130

Equipment: None

Loot: Soul-thread worth 100 silver pieces. This also counts as treasure worth Legend Points.

Physical Defense: 7

Spell Defense: 9

Social Defense: 4

Armor: 2

Mystic Armor: 2

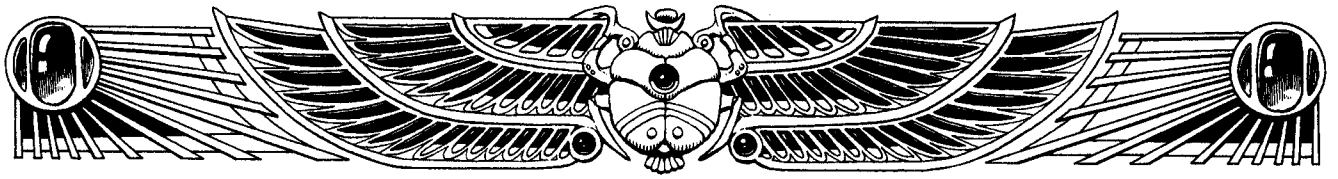
Knockdown: 15

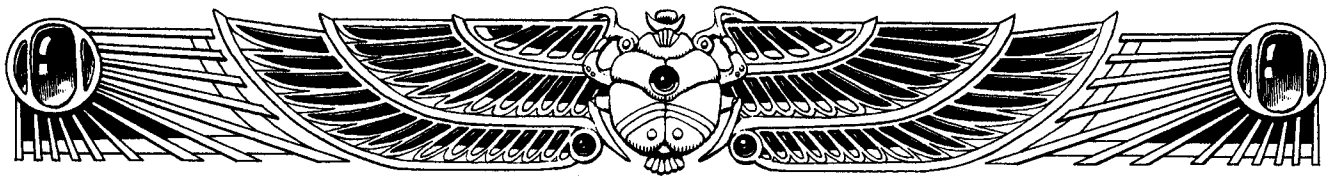
Recovery Tests: 1

Combat Movement: 29

Full Movement: 57







CARAVATH

Caravath is a Seventh Circle wizard, a short and skinny middle-aged human male with slightly bulbous blue eyes and receding blonde hair. As a token of his Discipline, he always wears dark robes decorated with whirlpool patterns. He is obsessed with Name-giver psychology, particularly the psychology of manipulation. Never talkative or friendly, throughout most of his life Caravath has envied those who could make others do things for them through persuasion or flattery.

Unable to communicate well with other Name-givers, Caravath sought to become a beastmaster adept. Because he lacked the required empathy, however, his efforts proved unsuccessful. Soon after this failure, Caravath discovered that he had a remarkable knack for wizardry. As he learned more and more about his new chosen Discipline, Caravath realized that wizardry could aid him where his own personality fell short. Through experimenting with manipulation of the minds and bodies of Name-givers and studying magical creatures, Caravath found a niche that appealed to his interests and allowed him to wreak vengeance on those who had once rejected him.

The discovery of the soul-spiders is one that has captivated Caravath's interests. Beyond their use in the control of slaves, Caravath has other plans for using these creatures. If the wizard survives, the characters may encounter Caravath and the soul-spiders again.

Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10
Strength (8): 4/D6
Toughness (14): 6/D10
Perception (16): 7/D12
Willpower (15): 6/D10
Charisma (10): 5/D8

Talents

Arcane Mutterings (5): 11/D10 + D8
Astral Sight (6): 13/D12 + D10
Book Memory (5): 11/D10 + D8
Book Recall (6): 13/D12 + D10
Durability (6)
Enhanced Matrix (6)
Evidence Analysis (5): 12/2D10
Hold Thread (3): 9/D8 + D6
Karma Ritual (6)
Melee Weapons (2): 8/2D6
Read and Write Language (2): 8/2D6 (Elven, Throalic)
Read and Write Magic (7): 14/D20 + D4
Spellcasting (6): 13/D12 + D10
Spell Matrix (7)
Spell Matrix (7)

Spell Matrix (7)

Willforce (6): 12/2D10

Wizardry (7): 14/D20 + D4

Movement

Full: 60

Combat: 30

Karma

Dice: D8

Points: 36

Skills

Artisan/Robe Embroidery (1): 7/D12

Etiquette (2): 7/D12

Knowledge/Anatomy and

Physiology (2): 9/D8 + D6

Knowledge/Magical

Creatures (4): 11/D10 + D8

Speak Theran (1): 8/2D6

Initiative

Dice: D10

Combat

Physical Defense: 7

Spell Defense: 9

Social Defense: 6

Armor: 0

Mystic Armor: 2

Damage

Death Rating: 60

Wound Threshold: 10

Unconsciousness Rating: 46

Recovery Tests/per Day: 3

Recovery Dice: D10

Spells

Circle 1

Astral Sense
Dispel Magic
Divine Aura

Circle 2

Astral Shield
Dodge Boost
Vines

Circle 3

Combat Fury
Levitate
Notice Not

Circle 4

Inventory
Relax
Trust

Circle 5

Counterspell
Mage Armor
Solo Flight

Circle 6

Doom Missile
Karma Cancel
Sleep

Circle 7

Blood Boil
Spell Cage

Equipment

Dagger

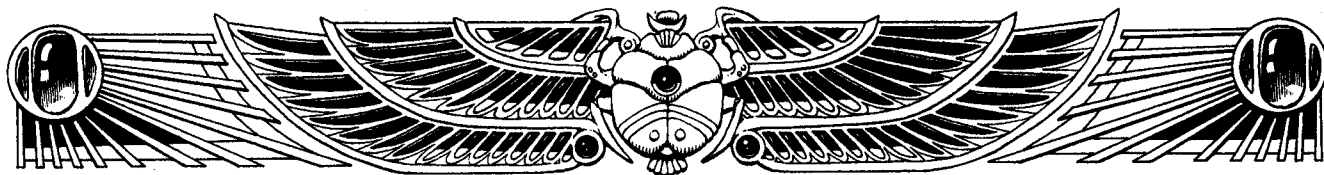
Fine Clothing

Embroidery Kit

Grimoire

125 silver pieces (in chest in Caravath's quarters)





MERVIN

Mervin, or *Lord Mervin* as he prefers to call himself, is a Second Circle swordmaster of dubious ability. Mervin is obsessed with respect, which he believes he and he alone is entitled to. He is so caught up in his own ego that only the most blatant displays of bootlicking and groveling qualify as "respect" by Mervin's standards.

Mervin grew up in Vivane, the fifth son of a fairly high-ranking Barsaivian slavemaster. Three years ago, after disgracing himself once too often by impregnating the daughter of a minor Theran noble, Mervin was banished from the city. Since that time, Mervin has worked for Lorgo T'rask. He considers himself T'rask's right-hand man, but T'rask regards him as no more than a useful flunky.

At heart, Mervin is an insecure, jealous little boy who has grown into a bullying, selfish, egotistical man. He is also a decent swordfighter—he lacks brilliance, but can hold his own against most opponents. This fact often comes as an unpleasant surprise to his foes, who tend to assume that he is the ineffective fop he appears to be.

Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12
Strength (13): 6/D10
Toughness (13): 6/D10

Perception (11): 5/D8
Willpower (14): 6/D10
Charisma (12): 5/D8

Talents

Avoid Blow (2): 9/D8 + D6
Durability (1)
Karma Ritual (2)
Melee Weapons (3): 10/D10 + D6
Riposte (2): 12/2D10
Taunt (2): 7/D12

Movement

Full: 75
Combat: 38

Karma

Dice: D8
Points: 8

Skills

Artisan/Acting (1): 6/D10
Bribery (1): 6/D10
Conversation (2): 7/D12
Etiquette (2): 7/D12
Flirting (2): 6/D10
Seduction (2): 7/D12
Streetwise (3): 8/2D6

Initiative

Dice: D10

Combat

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

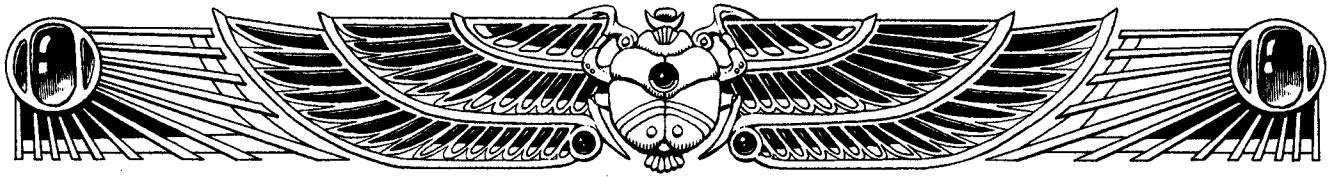
Damage

Death Rating: 42
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 33
Recovery Dice: D10
Recovery Tests per Day: 2

Equipment

Broadsword (Damage 11/D10 + D8)
Daggers (2) (Damage 8/2D6)
Grooming kit
Hardened leather armor
35 silver pieces





ABERDEEN

A warrior adept in his youth, Aberdeen rose to Third Circle in his Discipline but retired after the deaths of two of his closest friends. Returning to his home in a little village in western Barsaive, Aberdeen apprenticed himself to a cartographer, wed a local girl and settled down. His marriage produced one child, his son Thillik. Soon after the boy's birth, Aberdeen's wife died of a severe infection.

For the past fifteen years, Aberdeen and Thillik have traveled much of Barsaive as the retired warrior became increasingly interested in his new craft. Aberdeen also grew more and more interested in ancient maps. He soon

began to collect them, carefully rendering his own copies of the delicate ancient parchments. As Thillik grew older, he learned to do all necessary bargaining for the travelers while on the road, and the father and son make an able pair. Thillik means the world to Aberdeen, and most likely the old man cannot survive losing him.

Attributes

Dexterity (12): 5/D8

Strength (9): 4/D6

Toughness (16): 7/D12

Perception (14): 6/D10

Willpower (15): 6/D10

Charisma (11): 5/D8

Talents

Acrobatic Strike (3): 8/2D6

Avoid Blow (3): 8/2D6

Durability (3)

Karma Ritual (3)

Melee Weapons (3): 8/2D6

Throwing Weapons (1): 6/D10

Unarmed Combat (3): 8/2D6

Wood Skin (3): 10/D10 + D6

Movement

Full: 57

Combat: 29

Karma

Dice: D8

Points: 30

Skills

Artisan/Cartography (4): 9/D8 + D6

Artisan/Wood Carving (3): 8/2D6

Called Shot (3): 8/2D6

Knowledge/Barsaive History (3): 9/D8 + D6

Read and Write Language (2): 8/2D6 (Human, Throalic)

Research (1): 7/D12

Streetwise (1): 7/D12

Trading (2): 7/D12

Initiative

Dice: D8

Combat

Physical Defense: 7

Spell Defense: 8

Social Defense: 7

Armor: 0

Mystic Armor: 2

Damage

Death Rating: 66

Wound Threshold: 11

Unconsciousness Rating: 52

Recovery Dice: D10

Recovery Tests per Day: 3

Equipment

Broadsword (Damage 10/D10 + D6)

Carving tools

Maps

Parchment

Pens (5)

Shantaya's sextant

Throwing dagger



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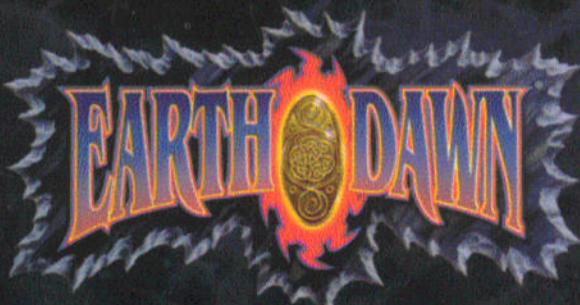
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