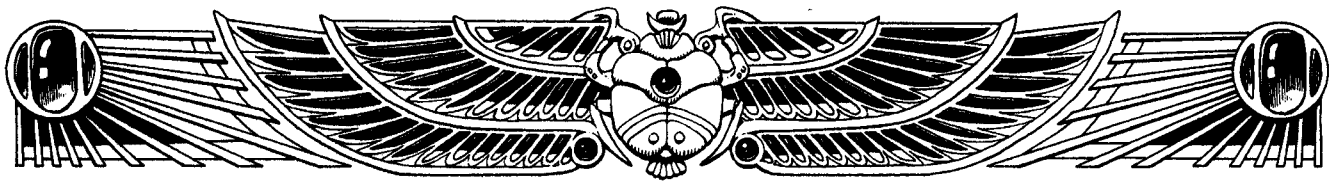


THROALTM

ADVENTURES

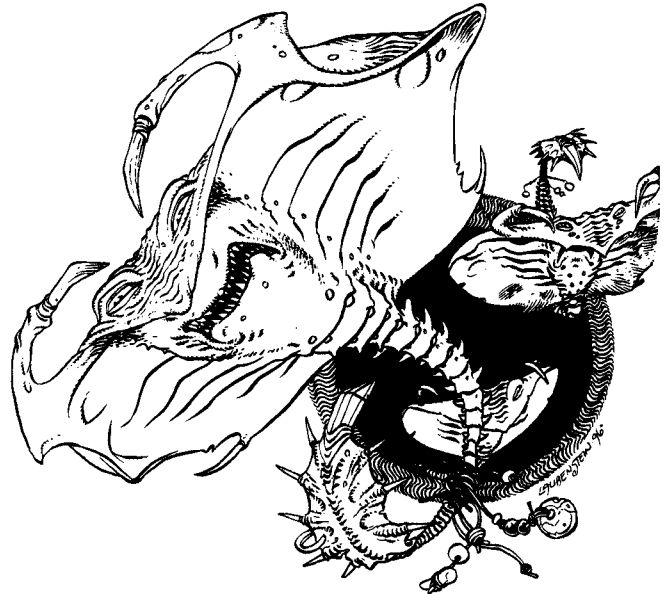


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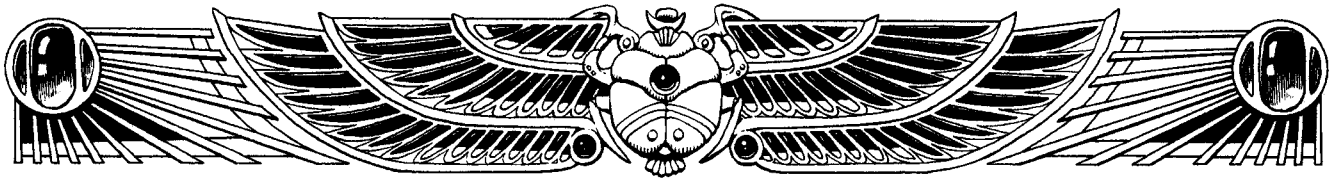
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THROAL ADVENTURES

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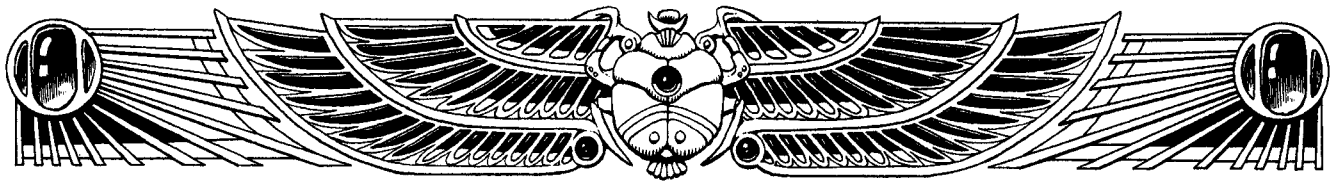
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INTRODUCTION



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

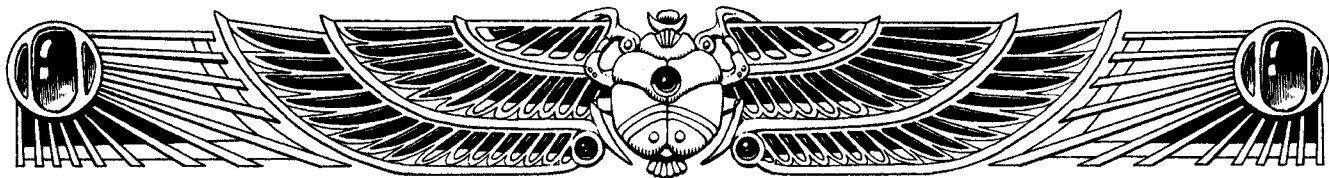
Scourge. Now, the people of Barsaive have re-emerged from their sealed kaers and citadels to reclaim their world from the remaining Horrors and the oppressive Theran Empire. From all across Barsaive, bold heroes arise to explore the world, search for magical treasure and slay the Horrors that still exist. 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.

Throal Adventures is a collection of three short roleplaying adventures set in the world of **Earthdawn**. Each adventure takes place in or near the dwarf kingdom of Throal and the surrounding Throal Mountains. **Purloined Provisions** takes the characters from the Halls of Throal to the underground rivers inhabited by the t'skrang known as the Pale Ones. Hired by merchants to protect their wares from mysterious thieves, the characters track the thieves to their subterranean village, where they learn that an unknown force has caused an underground river to cease flowing. Without their river, the Pale Ones of the village are starving, and have resorted to theft to stay alive. The characters must find the cause of the river's disappearance and restore it in order to save the village. In **Deep Trouble**, the characters are hired to investigate mysterious rumbling sounds emanating from the caverns and tunnels beneath the Inner City of Hustane. Tracking down the Horror-spawned cause of these sounds is not the only challenge the characters face, however; they soon find themselves caught up in the political intrigues of Throal's nobility. In **The Way Out**, the characters search for the secret entrance connecting the kingdom of Throal to the underground reaches of the Serpent River, and find much more than they bargained for: a small-scale war between rival Pale One villages, a force from one of the Banned Houses of Throal, and the t'skrang of House K'tenshin.

GAMEMASTERING NOTES

The adventures in **Throal Adventures** are linear, meaning that each follows a specific sequence. Each gamemaster, however, may modify the adventures as needed to suit his or her 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 should be thoroughly familiar with the contents of this book, and both players and gamemaster should be familiar with the **Earthdawn** rulebook (ED).





All three of 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. **Throal Adventures** is best suited for player characters of varying Circles; a brief introductory paragraph in each adventure suggests an appropriate number of characters and recommended Circles for that adventure.

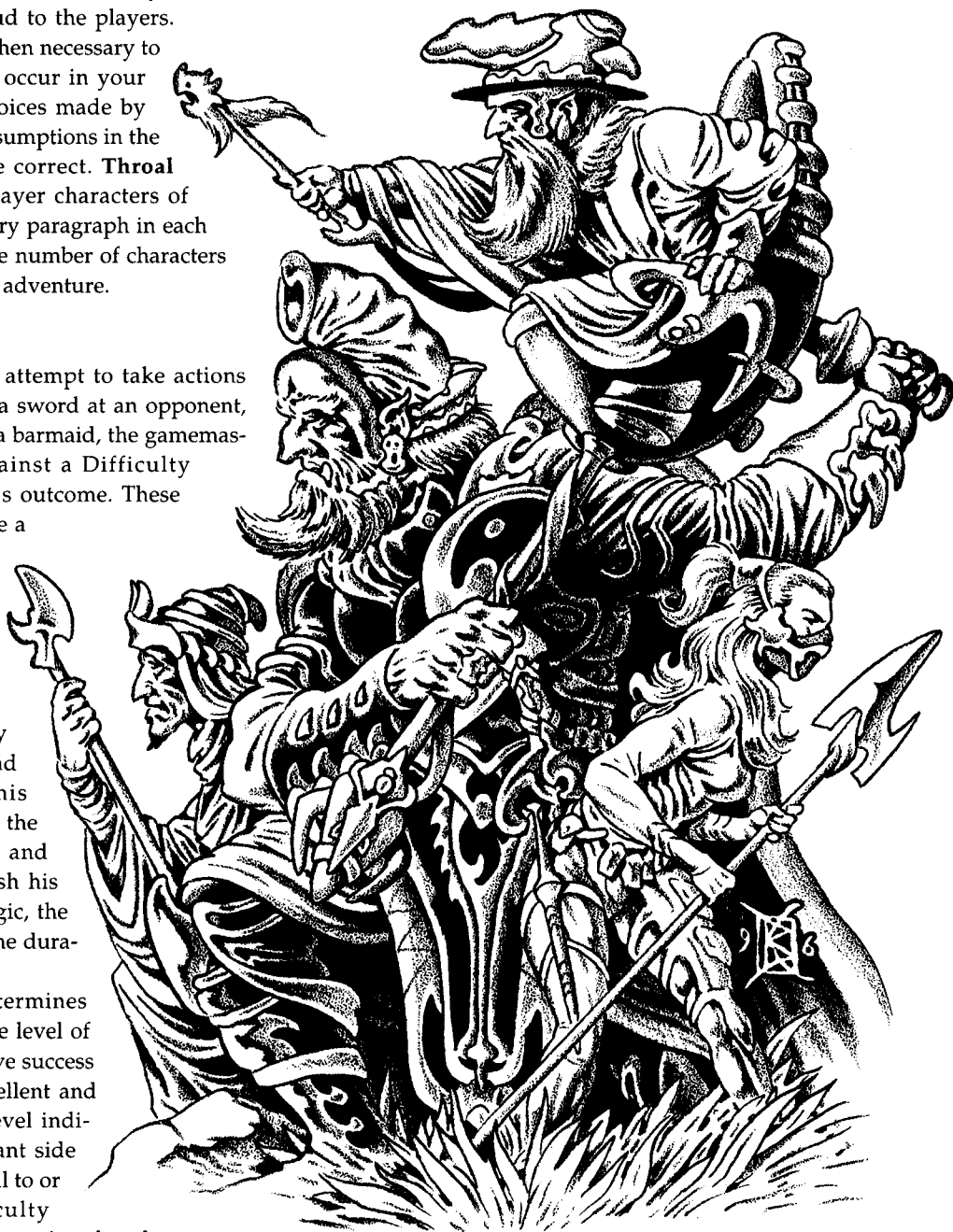
MAKING TESTS

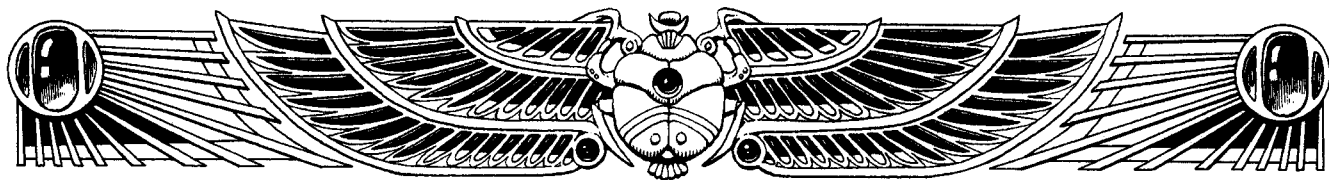
Whenever player characters attempt to take actions such as casting a spell, swinging a sword at an opponent, tracking a Horror or flirting with a barmaid, the gamemaster or the player rolls dice against a Difficulty Number to determine the action's outcome. These dice rolls are called tests. To make 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 lower than the Difficulty Number, the test fails and the character does not 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 else valuable extra information. The amount of gain for each success level is deter-

mined 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 **Earthdawn** rulebook (ED), this book contains everything required to run **Throal Adventures**. Gamemasters will also find the **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom** sourcebook a valuable resource, as the sourcebook provides detailed descriptions of the Kingdom of Throal and the Throal Mountains, their inhabitants, history, customs and so on. Gamemasters may also find the **Barsaive Campaign Set**, the **Earthdawn Gamemaster Pack**, the **Earthdawn Companion**, and the **Creatures of Barsaive** and **Horrors** sourcebooks useful. Read the adventures carefully to familiarize yourself with the backgrounds and plot lines of each before beginning the game. 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 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 that the player characters 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 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.

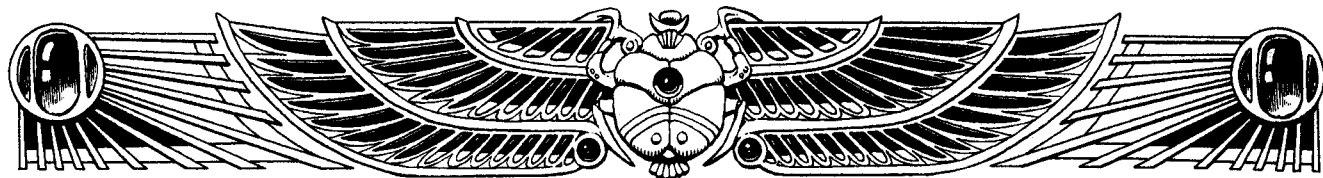
Following the encounters, the section entitled **Loose Ends** sums up the consequences of the adventures and suggests ways the gamemaster might use the adventure's gamemaster characters and settings in future adventures. This section also includes **Awarding Legend Points**, guidelines for awarding the 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 of the adventures also 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. If the gamemaster wishes, he or she can adapt much of the information in this section to future adventures.

AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

The **Loose Ends** section of each adventure includes Legend Award guidelines for that adventure. These guidelines indicate the points the gamemaster awards for each task accomplished or goal reached during the adventure. 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. 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. 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 shadowmants that the characters battle in **Purloined Provisions** (pp. 11–29) is 600 Legend Points for all three shadowmants, not 600 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 THE 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, the gamemaster

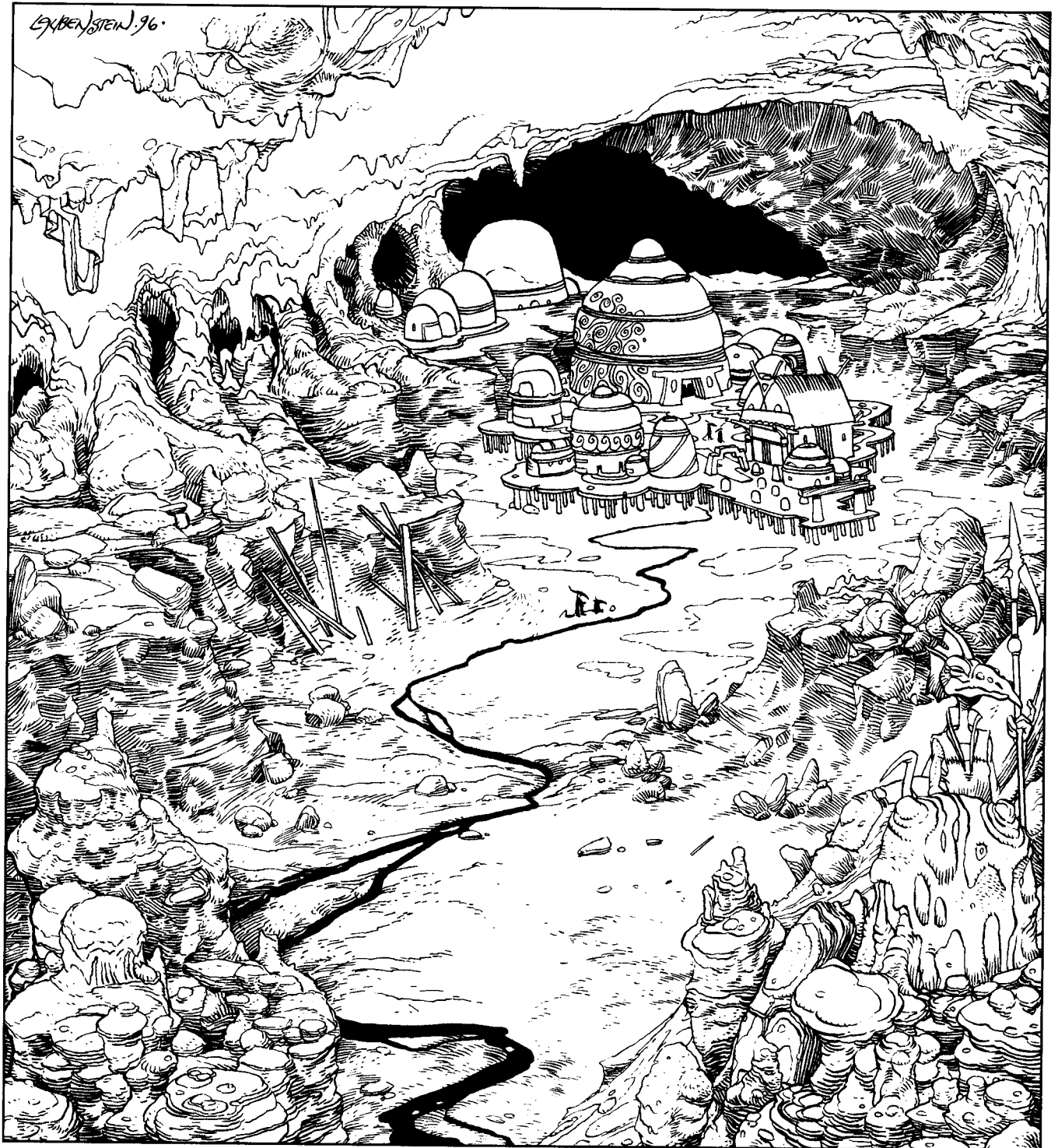
may need to adjust the game statistics and capabilities of the opposition in an adventure to provide an appropriate level of difficulty for his or her group. If an adventure does not suit the player characters' strengths and weaknesses, use it as a blueprint to develop an adventure of your own. Or if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

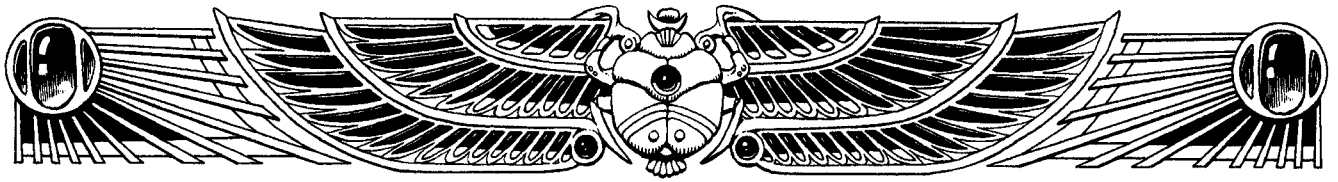
Keep in mind that you, the gamemaster, have a unique responsibility to make the adventure exciting, keep the players involved and hold the story on track. In describing the world of **Earthdawn**, try to answer all the players' questions about what the characters see, hear, touch, smell and taste. Feel 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 having to describe what they want their characters to do, the players help to tell the story and add to their own enjoyment. If the players wander from the story line, 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 to make a good story. Remember, however, to keep it subtle. A good gamemaster guides the players when he can, rather than telling them what to do.



PERLOINED PROVISIONS





DESPERATE TIMES



The domed meeting hall glowed softly in the subterranean gloom. Patterns of light and shadow danced across the intricate bas-reliefs that covered its walls and archways, and played across the pale faces of the t'skrang huddled around the central table. Thin and haggard, the villagers of Shining Waters sat and waited with quiet dignity to hear the word of their lahala. Their desperation showed only in their silence; fear had banished the usual lively talk and laughter.

No one had much heart to eat, despite the hunger that cramped their bellies. V'liskra, lahala of Shining Waters, looked around the table and fought back tears. She must not give way; her people must see her strong, confident, unafraid. V'liskra forced herself to take a spoonful of porridge, but could not bring herself to eat it. Carefully, she lowered the spoon and rested its handle against the side of her bowl.

The silence grew heavier, until someone broke it—Old K'vrana, the first to speak as always. Folding her hands in a sign of respect, she said, "Is there any news of L'anelh, lahala?"

V'liskra bowed her head. "None. But we must not despair. Somehow we will find a way to bring the river back—"

"How?!" cried Dunkach'k the Raftsman, slapping his bowl of thin porridge off the table. It crashed into the wall, spilling its contents across the floor. Two children rushed to scoop up the remaining porridge, licking it greedily from their claws.

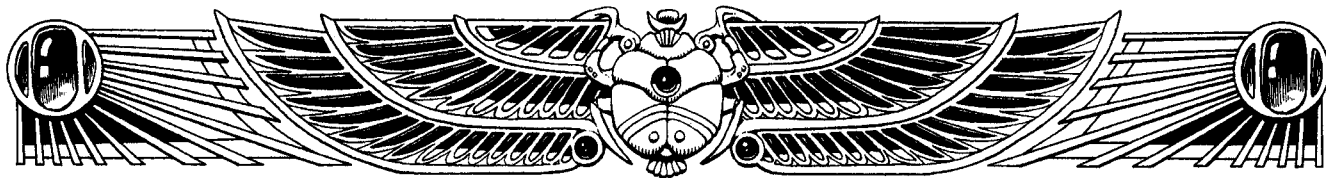
The others looked away in mingled sorrow and disgust. That their children should scabble on the ground for scraps of food like rats ... it was shameful. Yet what else could be expected? They were starving. Dunkach'k clenched his hands and continued more softly, his voice harsh with anguish. "L'anelh led our best warriors upriver days ago, and they have vanished—who is left now to find the cause of our misfortune? Who can take back our river from whatever evil spirit or monster or force has stolen it? Old men like me? Or the little ones?"

V'liskra turned to Dunkach'k. "L'anelh and the others went at my bidding, and whatever has befallen them will remain on my conscience for eternity. What would you have me do? Send more warriors into unknown danger, in the hope that they will miraculously succeed where our best have not? Shall I pound the walls and cry, hoping that the Universe will give me some answer out of pity?" The lahala closed her eyes and breathed deeply, struggling for composure. After a moment's silence, she spoke again. "I have failed my people," she said, quietly and without emotion, as if pronouncing a great truth. The villagers stared mutely at the ground.

"No," said a voice from the archway. "There is still something we can do."

The villagers turned and watched as K'skirla, a young warrior much favored by the lahala, strode into the meeting hall. Never before had K'skirla challenged the word of the lahala; so great was her respect for V'liskra that she





rarely spoke in the lahala's presence. Now she stopped a few feet from the lahala's chair, bowed deeply and said, "We must live somehow until we can find out what happened to the scouting parties we sent upriver. I ... I think I know a way."

V'liskra extended one hand, palm up, in the traditional gesture granting permission to speak. K'skirla bowed in acknowledgment, then looked around at her fellow villagers. "Throal has more food than they know what to do with. Much of it spoils before it can be properly stored away."

"But we have nothing to trade!" Dunkach'k interrupted. "Will you barter your wisdom in exchange for a few salt fishcakes? The merchants of Throal value nothing unless they can hold it in their hands. They will laugh at you, sister."

K'skirla shook her head. "No. I ... it pains me to suggest it, but ... we could enter the Grand Bazaar at night. We could ... take—"

V'liskra stood up, her eyes flashing pale fire. "You would make thieves of us? Have you no honor?!"

With downcast eyes, K'skirla whispered, "I want us to live. However we must."

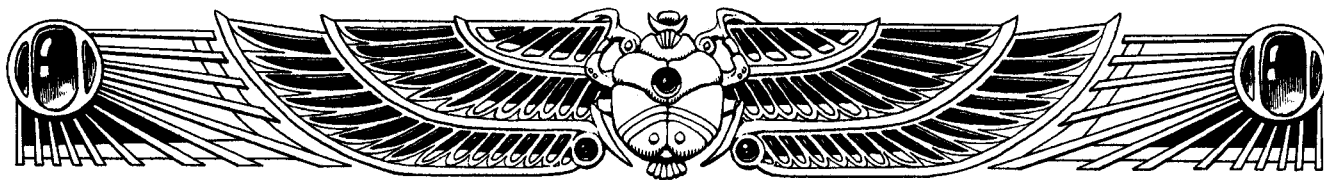
V'liskra stared at the young t'skrang for a long moment. Then her shoulders sagged, her outraged pride draining away like water and leaving dull acceptance in its wake. "Who will go on this ... expedition? Our best warriors have gone, and who is to say they will return?"

K'skirla hesitated, then looked up. "If it becomes a matter for warriors, then we have failed. I know the bazaar. I and a few others can get in and out quickly, quietly" She trailed off, looking for some sign of encouragement. The villagers and the lahala stood silent, not meeting her eyes. "I'm sorry," K'skirla stammered. "But I don't see what else we can do."

After a long moment, V'liskra sighed. "Choose whom you will, K'skirla. Meet with me before you leave." The villagers stared at her, startled; V'liskra threw up her hands. "We must steal or starve. If we live, we may find a way to restore our honor. Otherwise, we have no hope." Without another word, she turned and strode out of the meeting hall.

After a moment, K'skirla followed.





PURLAINED PROVISIONS



Purlained Provisions begins in the Grand Bazaar of Throal and eventually leads the characters far below the kingdom to the underground rivers and caverns inhabited by the Pale Ones. This adventure is best suited for a group of six to eight Fifth Circle characters of any Discipline, and assumes that the characters have been

hired to guard a merchant's wares against thieves who have so far avoided all efforts at detection. The gamemaster may wish to run a mini-adventure that leads to the characters taking this job.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

Far beneath the kingdom of Throal flow several small underground tributaries of the Serpent River. These rivers and the natural caverns around them are home to the t'skrang known as the Pale Ones (p. 66, *Denizens of Earthdawn, Volume I*).

Six months ago, one of these tributaries dried to little more than a trickle, depriving a Pale Ones village of its primary source of sustenance. Though enough water still flowed through the riverbed to provide the t'skrang villagers with drinking water, it no longer supported the fish and plant life that had been their primary source of food. The virtual disappearance of the river has also left the villagers without supplies of True water, their primary trade good, in which this particular tributary was especially rich. The Pale Ones sent several scouting parties to seek the river's source and learn why the water had stopped flowing, but none returned. With its food supplies gone and no more True water to trade for food from elsewhere, the village faced a harsh choice: relocate or die out.

While seeking a new cavern in which to rebuild, one of the village's scouting parties discovered a small natural tunnel that had been filled in during the construction of the dwarf kingdom more than a thousand years earlier. Upon excavating the tunnel, the scouts discovered that it opened into an infrequently used side tunnel in the *dahnat* section of the Hall of Tav, very close to the entrance of Throal's Grand Bazaar. Because the scouts opened the tunnel during the night, the disturbance went unnoticed. The scouts made a quick foray into the Grand Bazaar and made off with sacks of provisions. Their fellow villagers

hailed them as heroes upon their return; now that the village could take food from the Bazaar, they no longer needed to leave their beloved cavern.

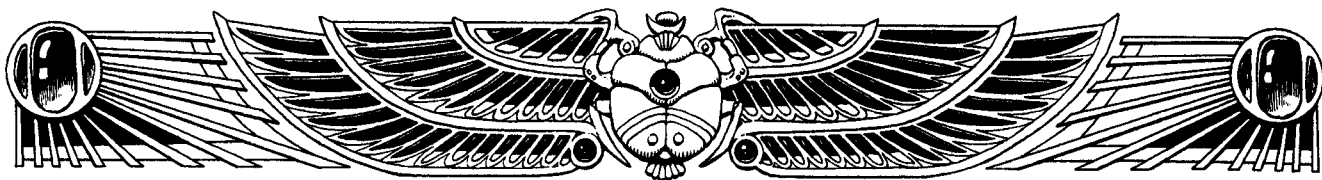
The scouts covered the tunnel entrance when they left the Hall of Tav, but left most of the tunnel clear so they could use it again. The Pale Ones have continued periodic raiding over the past several weeks, becoming increasingly stealthy as the merchants of the Bazaar have begun to set more guards on their wares. The t'skrang have been extremely careful to cover up any trail leading to the tunnel entrance, hoping to keep pilfering supplies until they can discover and correct whatever happened to their river. The first few thefts provoked little reaction, but the merchants were eventually forced to take more extreme measures.

At this point the player characters are hired by a group of merchants to protect their wares from the mysterious midnight thieves. The first three nights pass quietly; on the fourth night, the thieves return. Responding to cries and sounds of battle, the characters discover a pair of guards—one dead, the other barely conscious—as well as the body of a strange, pale t'skrang. The surviving guard tells the characters that two more pale t'skrang fled toward the Hall of Tav. The characters set off in pursuit, but cannot catch the t'skrang. In their headlong flight, however, the t'skrang were unable to conceal the entrance to their tunnel, and so the characters easily find it.

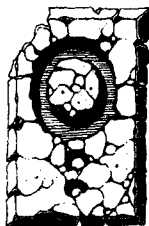
The player characters follow the tunnel and the fleeing Pale Ones until they reach the Village of Shining Waters. The lahala of the village explains her people's current predicament and apologizes for the thieves' actions, then asks the characters to help the villagers discover why the river has stopped flowing. The lahala also wants to find out what happened to the two scouting parties who did not return from upriver.

The adventurers make the dangerous trek toward the dried-up river's source, facing attacks along the way by a pack of trained shadowmants as well as various other creatures. At the river head, they find a group of cave trolls who have summoned a water elemental to divert the river down a side tunnel that runs past their village. The adventurers must defeat the trolls and destroy the water elemental in fierce battle in order to return the river to its former course.





NIGHT SCAVENGERS



INTERVIEW

In this encounter, the characters are keeping watch in the Grand Bazaar when they hear the sounds of a struggle. Upon arriving at the scene of the fight, the characters find two Royal Guardsmen—one dead, the other seriously injured—and the dead body of a Pale One.

SETTING THE STAGE

For more than two weeks now, the mysterious mid-night thieves have been the talk of the Grand Bazaar. No one has spotted them entering or leaving, or has any idea what they look like. Rumors are flying thick and fast, with guesses as to the identity of the thieves ranging from spoiled rich brats in disguise to the ghosts of long-departed dwarfs who bear grudges against the thieves' victims. The Royal Guards, charged with keeping watch over the Bazaar during the evening, are too embarrassed by their failure to apprehend the lawbreakers to add much to the debate.

Still, there's no misfortune without some small profit to be had. In this case, the profit is yours—several merchants have pooled their resources to pay you to help keep watch over their goods during the long night hours. You've been at your post for three nights now ... three quiet, slow, boring nights. You've rarely earned silver this easily. Trouble is, it's getting dull. A little quiet is welcome ... but this much quiet doesn't suit a band of skilled adepts. On your fourth night of duty, you're beginning to wonder if the thieves will ever return.

Suddenly a hoarse shout and the clash of steel ring in the hushed night air. The quiet Bazaar is quiet no longer ...

THEMES AND IMAGES

This encounter is full of contrasts and conflicting choices. Emphasize the difference between the Grand Bazaar's daytime bustle and the way it feels at night, with all the stalls closed down and the normal cacophony of trading, music and chatter stilled. When the player charac-

ters first catch sight of the dead Pale One, emphasize the differences between the Pale Ones and any t'skrang in the adventuring party; call attention to the corpse's faintly luminous skin, crude weapons and rough clothing.

BEHIND THE SCENES

As noted in the introduction, the adventure begins with the characters serving as guards in the Grand Bazaar following a series of mysterious thefts. Initial investigations have proven largely inconclusive; the raiding parties were careful to take things from a variety of stalls, sometimes even taking things they did not want in order to foil authorities attempting to establish a pattern for the thefts. If the adepts take it upon themselves to investigate further, they may discover the only pattern there is: though the thieves have taken a wide variety of foodstuffs, fishmongers seem to be the most frequent targets.

The characters are near a merchant's stall when they hear a shout and the clash of weapons splits the still night air. Upon reaching the source of the disturbance, the characters discover the bodies of two Royal Guardsmen near a fishmonger's stall, and also the body of a strange, pale t'skrang.

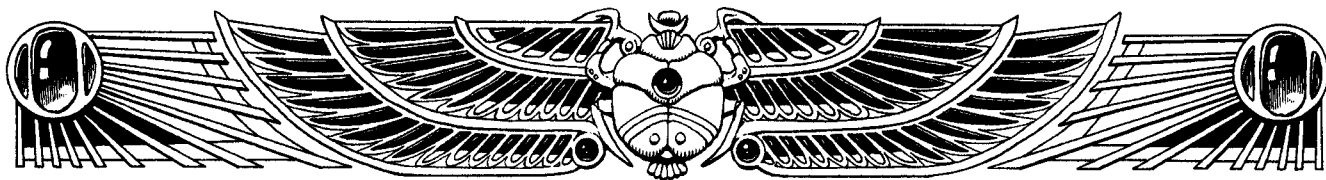
When the characters investigate the scene of the fight, read the following aloud:

Two guards—Royal Guardsmen, by their uniforms—lie in pools of blood scant feet from a fishmonger's stall. A few feet beyond them lies the body of a t'skrang with oddly pale skin. A basket of salt fish lies overturned near the t'skrang corpse, its contents scattered across the ground. Next to the basket lie a pair of crudely made sacks, half filled with fish.

You run to the fallen guards to see how badly they are hurt. One is beyond help. The other is bleeding profusely from a nasty gash down one leg, but is still breathing. If you work fast, you may be able to save him. You snatch up the nearest thing that might serve as a tourniquet—a leather thong likely intended to tie up one of the sacks of fish—and slip it under the injured guard's leg. As you pull the leather taut, the guards stirs, moans and opens his eyes.

"They ran that way," he gasps, "toward Tav. Catch them—hurry!"





The two guardsmen surprised the raiders in the act of emptying a basket of salt fish into their sacks. They dropped the fish and tried to run, but the guards gave chase and killed one of the raiding party. The t'skrang then decided to stand their ground; as the Pale Ones outnumbered the guards, the fight was soon over. After killing the guards, the Pale Ones fled toward their tunnel, getting a good head start on the player characters.

PURSUING THE RAIDERS

Try as they might, the characters cannot catch the t'skrang before they reach the tunnel. Once in the tunnel, the raiders quickly make their way back to their village. In their haste to escape, however, they failed to adequately conceal the entrance to the tunnel.

As the characters head toward the Hall of Tav in pursuit, allow each to make a Perception Test against a Difficulty Number of 9. One success allows the character to hear a faint sound coming from a small, little-used side tunnel (about 20 yards long). If the characters investigate the sound, at the end of this tunnel they find a pile of debris scattered around what looks like another small tunnel leading downward. The t'skrang have been using this second tunnel to enter the dwarf kingdom from below. As the characters approach the second tunnel, they hear the sound of the raiders' weapons banging against the rocks as they scramble toward safety.

If the characters choose to enter the tunnel in pursuit of the escaping t'skrang, go to **The Village of Shining Waters**, p. 14. If not, the characters will likely go back to the site of the fight to learn more about what happened.

If all the characters fail their Perception Tests, they will pass by the side tunnel without noticing it, and will find no trace of the fleeing t'skrang. If a character wants to use the Tracking talent or some other magical ability to track the raiders, the fleeing Pale Ones have a Spell Defense of 7 for the purpose of making tests.

If the characters have no magical means of tracking the raiders, the gamemaster can allow them to follow a trail of blood droplets or some similar type of evidence. When the characters enter the Hall of Tav, one or more of them may make a Perception Test against a Difficulty Number of 9. If the test is successful, the characters notice footprints in the dust on the floor near the entrance to the disused side tunnel.

Once the characters find the tunnels and decide to investigate them, go to **The Village of Shining Waters**, p. 14.

INVESTIGATIONS

If and when the characters go back to the stall where the fight took place, they will find that a number of other guards have since arrived, along with several of the merchants who originally hired the characters. As soon as the characters return, the merchants ask about the raiders. Because the characters obviously have not caught the thieves, the merchants will ask the characters to track the raiders down.

If the characters resist this idea, one of the merchants will remind them that tracking down the thieves is part of their job, perhaps saying, "We're not just paying you to stand around and watch that our wares don't walk off by themselves. We want those thieves caught and the matter settled." If the characters still resist, the merchants reluctantly offer to pay them an additional 200 silver pieces each if they return with the thieves.

The Dead Pale One

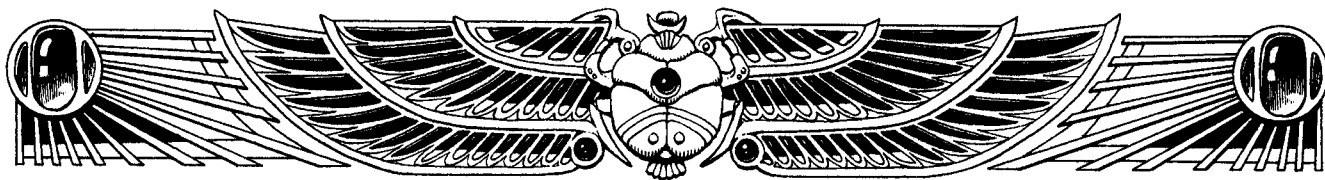
Unless they have already played **The Way Out** (beginning on p. 53 of this book), the characters are unlikely to have met a Pale One prior to this adventure. T'skrang characters or others with the Knowledge Skill of T'skrang Lore can make a Skill Test against a Difficulty Number of 7. If the test is successful, such a character can identify the dead t'skrang as a Pale One. Characters with other applicable knowledge skills, such as T'skrang History, may make this test against a Difficulty Number of 9.

A character who recognizes that the t'skrang is a Pale One also knows that the Pale Ones live in villages along portions of the Serpent River that run beneath many mountain ranges in Barsaive, including the Throal Mountains. This knowledge should tell the characters where to go next in order to find the raiders.

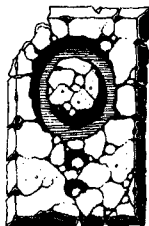
TROUBLESHOOTING

The only real problem arises in this encounter if the characters refuse to track down the t'skrang. Because the characters are currently employed by the merchants, they should agree to track the t'skrang without much argument.





THE VILLAGE OF SHINING WATERS



INTERVIEW

In this encounter the characters descend through the tunnel to the afflicted Pale Ones village, where they see the dried-up riverbed and meet the weakened, half-starved villagers. The lahala of the Village of Shining Waters, V'liskra, beseeches the characters to help her people discover why their life-giving river has dried to a trickle.

SETTING THE STAGE

After what seems like an eternity of climbing and sliding down the sloping, rocky tunnel, you end up in a cavern on the banks of what was once a sizable underground river. A short distance away along the sandy bottom, you can see a cluster of polished stone domes huddled together like lost children in the middle of the large riverbed. A trickle of water winds slowly through the center of the cluster. Each dome looks slightly different, with bas-relief carvings covering nearly every exposed surface. Some are surrounded with ornamental spires; others have inset windows looking out over the river. A decorated stone pier juts out into the dry riverbed, surrounded by several unusual-looking rafts half-buried in the sand. The rafts are made of what looks like a bone framework, with dark leather stretched over them. Nets lie unused in heaps on the shore.

Two large domes dominate the village—one in the center of the cluster near the riverbank, the other some distance away near the far wall of the cavern. The first dome seems to be a meeting hall of some sort. Unlike many of the smaller dwellings, this large dome has no door, only an ornate archway at one end. A large open courtyard lies just outside the archway; in it and passing through it are groups of pale t'skrang, talking or going slowly about their daily business.

The second large dome is smaller than the first, but seems as much a focal point as the meeting hall. A pathway of crushed crystal leads to this dome from the center of the village. A low wall surrounds the dome, apparently more for aesthetic value than for defense. The walls of the dome are inlaid with silver, highlighting carvings far more

ornate than those elsewhere in the village. A garden graces the dome's entrance, full of lichens and ornamental mosses intermingled with quartz and other crystals. Two pale t'skrang stand at attention just outside the low wall, spears in hand.

As you approach the village, a single t'skrang comes to meet you.

"I am Named K'skirla," she says, bowing in greeting. "The lahala bids you welcome; she is expecting you. Please come with me."

You follow K'skirla to the meeting hall, where several families have gathered for a communal meal. They invite you to sit and place wooden bowls in front of you. You notice that the amount of food seems barely adequate for such a large group—a cauldron of fish stew and a single plate of flatbread.

The stew is thin but savory. K'skirla tells you it is made from salt fish and a type of lichen that grows on the riverbanks. The taste is unusual, somewhere between cloves and pepper. The flatbread is unfortunately stale, but the t'skrang tear off a small piece each and eat it with great gusto. You wonder if the bread was stolen from the Grand Bazaar. The portions are small enough to leave you hungry after the meal is finished.

As you swallow the last spoonfuls of stew, a young t'skrang with pale blue scales enters the room and speaks briefly to K'skirla in hushed tones. K'skirla nods solemnly and turns toward you, saying, "The lahala will see you now."

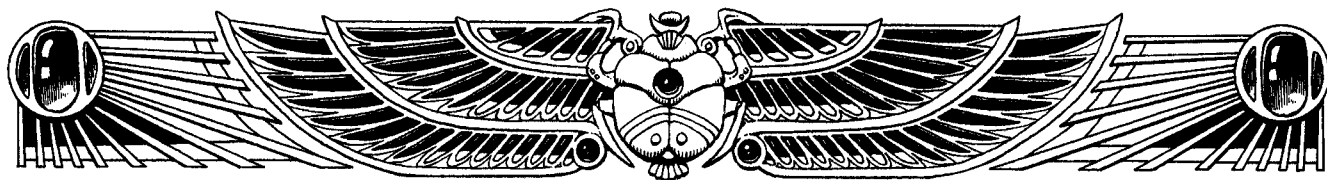
THEMES AND IMAGES

A great sorrow has fallen upon this village, and its people are hungry and disheartened. Even in the depths of despair, however, the Name-givers of Shining Waters retain a strong sense of community and purpose.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Pursuing the t'skrang thieves leads the characters down a steep, rocky tunnel from the Grand Bazaar. In places the tunnel becomes an almost-vertical corkscrew, and the characters will doubtless have a few scrapes by the time they reach the village of Shining Waters.





The village of Shining Waters is composed of a single niall, or extended family group, of seventy Pale Ones. For untold generations they have lived by harvesting the plentiful fish and True water from their river, trading both to outsiders for all the supplies they needed. The True water gathers in pools at the river's edge, where the villagers separate it from the stream with orichalcum-laced nets and then store the element in orichalcum jugs.

THE VILLAGERS

The t'skrang of Shining Waters are a peaceful people fallen on hard times. The drying of the river has deprived them of their only means of trade and their primary food supply, and the villagers have staved off starvation by living hand-to-mouth on stolen provisions from Throal plus what few lichens and plants they could scrounge. At first suspicious of the characters (who have effectively cut off the supply of purloined food from the Bazaar), they quickly come to see them as potential saviors.

V'liskra, the village's lahala, has seen her home go from a relatively prosperous fishing village to a desolate outpost haunted by starvation and despair. Her people are not fighters, and the fear that whatever has taken their river may soon claim them as well has caused many villagers to give up hope. The player characters appear to be a chance at renewed hope, and V'liskra will do anything within her power to persuade them to save her village.

Talking with the Villagers

If the characters ask about the thefts, K'skirla admits that the raiders came from the village, but says that the lahala will explain everything when they meet her. If the characters wish to find the thieves and

return with them to Throal as quickly as possible, K'skirla will plead for their patience and ask them to meet with the lahala before leaving.

The t'skrang raiders are in hiding, and will only come out if asked by the lahala to reveal themselves. V'liskra hopes to persuade the characters to aid her village, and will give up the two remaining thieves only if she has no other choice.

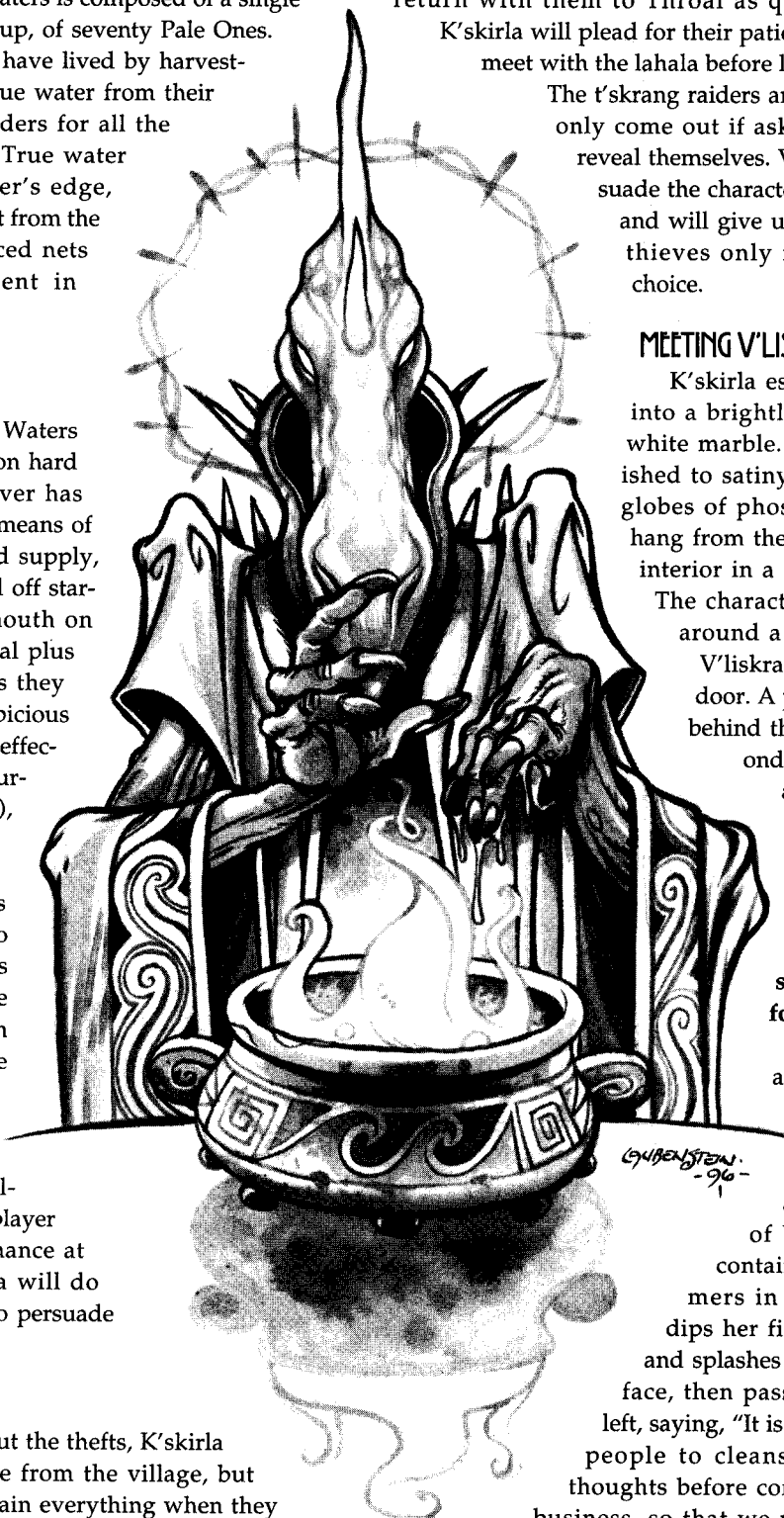
MEETING V'LISKRA

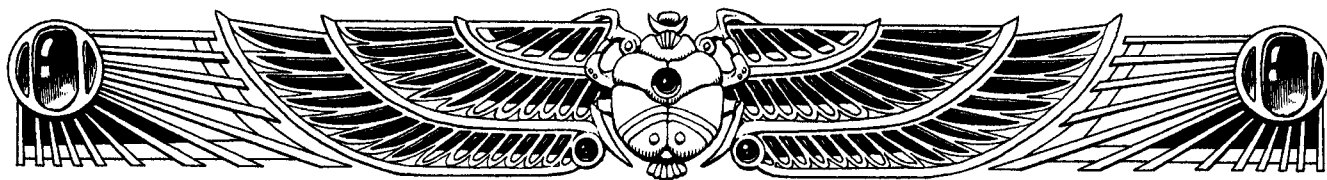
K'skirla escorts the characters into a brightly lit dome made of white marble. The interior is polished to satiny smoothness; small globes of phosphorescent fungus hang from the ceiling, bathing the interior in a pale but cozy glow.

The characters seat themselves around a circular table, with V'liskra sitting opposite the door. A pair of guards stands behind the lahala, with a second pair at the door and a third pair outside to ensure that nothing interrupts the discussion.

Once the characters sit down, read the following aloud:

A guard unlocks a cupboard on one side of the room, brings out an orichalcum bowl, and places it in front of V'liskra. The bowl contains water that shimmers in the light. V'liskra dips her fingers into the bowl and splashes a little water on her face, then passes the bowl to her left, saying, "It is tradition among my people to cleanse ourselves of ill thoughts before conducting important business, so that we may discuss things plainly and honestly. The future of my people





is at stake, so this cleansing shall be done with True water. Will you join me?"

The ritual cleansing requires each character to splash a token amount of water from the bowl on his or her face, as the lahala did. The True water has no harmful side-effects—in fact, the characters will feel refreshed for a few minutes after bathing their faces. If the characters decline to join in the ritual, the lahala will be disappointed but not especially upset.

After the characters complete the ritual cleansing, read the following aloud:

As the guard returns the orichalcum bowl to its cupboard, V'liskra speaks.

"I know you have come to our village in search of those who stole from you. I make no excuses for this act. I tell you only that we resorted to theft out of desperation.

"Our village once stood in a great river that ran swift and pure. This branch of mighty Shivoam was our lifeblood. Then, many days ago, the river dwindled to a trickle scarcely large enough to let us drink of it. We do not know why the river ceased to flow. At first we feared a cave-in might have diverted it, so we sent a scouting party to investigate. When they did not return, we sent another, this one led by a dear friend whose advice I trust. They, too, did not return.

"With no other recourse, we set out to find a new home for our village. Then our scouts found the tunnel leading up into the dwarf kingdom. When they came into the Grand Bazaar and saw so much food, more food than thousands upon thousands of dwarfs could eat, their hunger and their love for our village overcame their sense of justice. They took what they could so that our people could survive—we had no other choice. We have since lived on what meager food they could steal while we searched for a new home.

"Now that you have come, we may have another choice. If we can find the cause of our river's death and bring it back to life again, we will no longer have to steal to live ... nor will we have to leave this place that we love so much. We have tried and failed to do this task ourselves. My people are starving, and now they fear to go to the unknown place that has swallowed up our best warriors. You are our only hope. Will you help us?"

The characters should realize that these people are in dire straits and have resorted to theft in order to survive. If they seem hesitant to help the villagers, the lahala makes them the following offer:

"You do not wish to betray your employers by aiding those who stole from them. I understand. Well, then, can I hire you just as the merchants of Throal have done? Perhaps we might arrange a trade—your help for a few kernels of True water?"

Though hesitant to trade away her only resource, the lahala is desperate. She will offer 1 kernel of True water per character—all the True water she has—if they agree to help the village. If the characters still refuse, see **Troubleshooting**, below.

If the characters agree to help, V'liskra calls for the niall's troubadour. The t'skrang and the characters share tales over cups of strong tea flavored with one of the spices used in the stew, and the adepts have a little time to rest and prepare for their journey upriver. The villagers will give the characters what little supplies they can, mainly dried fish and fruits stolen from Throal. Even in the midst of hardship they are generous, keeping only the bare minimum of food for themselves. They can also provide rope, grappling hooks, nets and the like should the characters request these items. After the characters have what they need, the Pale Ones wish them a safe journey. Go to **The Journey Upriver**, p. 17.

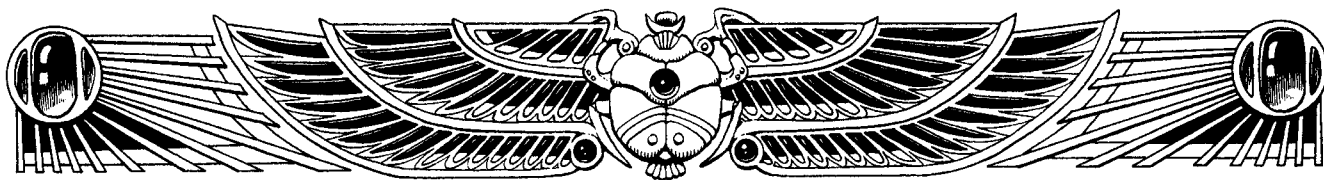
TROUBLESHOOTING

The biggest potential problem in this encounter is if the characters refuse to help the village. As heroes, they shouldn't hesitate; however, the characters may feel obligated to finish their current assignment before helping the village. If this happens, the lahala refuses to surrender the two thieves unless the characters help the village first.

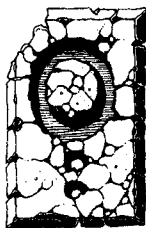
If the adventurers flatly refuse to help no matter what, V'liskra orders them apprehended. She tells them that unless they agree to follow the river to its source and attempt to revive it, she will offer them as sacrifices to Earthroot, the Dragon King of the Pale Ones. Perhaps, after such a meal, Earthroot might agree to help. V'liskra doubts that the Dragon King can do much, but the characters most likely know so little about Earthroot that it makes an effective threat.

Captured characters may be able to fight their way to freedom, but will end up killing several of the villagers in the process. If this happens, the characters have failed to achieve the adventure goal and so should be awarded no Legend Points for the adventure.





THE JOURNEY UPRIVER



VIEW

In this encounter the characters head upriver to the river's source to try to discover why it dried up. Along the way the characters find the dead bodies of one scouting party and fall afoul of a swarm of subterranean creatures sent by the cave trolls who have diverted the river.

SETTING THE STAGE

Equipped and provisioned, you begin the long journey upriver. The first few hours pass quietly; you walk along the sandy riverbed, moving swiftly and easily. Moderately steep banks rise up on either side of the riverbed, and so the going is easier if you stay toward the middle near the small trickle of water. This part of the cavern looks deserted, the only sign of life the occasional chittering of bats high overhead.

During the second day of the journey, the riverbed suddenly changes from flat, dry sand to craggy, broken ground. Sometime in the past century or so there must have been a cave-in, to account for all the debris. As the terrain becomes more and more uneven, the going gets harder, and you start to wonder what other surprises these underground grottoes may have in store.

THEMES AND IMAGES

Fending off stingers and shadowmants while clinging to a narrow cliff face should make the combat in this encounter considerably more interesting than the average fight. The shadowmants' ability to fly gives them a distinct advantage, especially given the player characters' precarious position. Play up the panicky feeling of fighting fast-moving shadows that the characters barely have time to glimpse before the creatures are upon them.

BEHIND THE SCENES

As the characters travel upriver they face several challenges and dangers, each of which is described below.

THE RIVERBED

After slowly crawling over broken shards of rock for awhile, one of the characters may notice a small ledge running parallel with the river. The characters may climb up a gentle slope to this ledge, where the going is easier, or may continue struggling along the rocky riverbed. Climbing up to the ledge at this point is simple enough not to require any tests.

If the characters stay in the riverbed, it quickly becomes impossible to navigate. The bed is littered with boulders, loose gravel and jagged rocks, making travel painstakingly slow and extremely dangerous. Eventually the characters will encounter sheer cliffs and drop-offs that will force them to either turn back or attempt to reach the ledge. At this point in the journey, the slope up to the ledge has become a steep wall, which the characters must attempt to scale. The ledge is approximately 100 feet above the riverbed, making the climb a difficult one.

Characters who attempt to reach the ledge via this wall must make two successful Climbing or Dexterity tests against a Difficulty Number of 12. A character who fails one of these tests slides down the rock face and lands on the riverbed, suffering normal Falling damage (p. 207, ED).

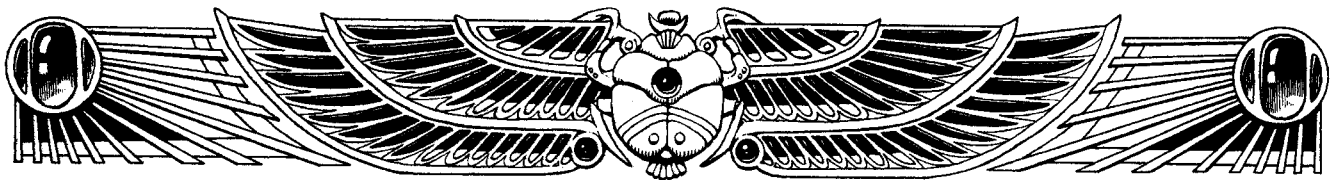
The ledge is barely wide enough to accommodate a troll, and so the characters must march in single file once they reach it.

STINGERS

Shortly after the characters climb up to the ledge, they will notice a row of five small holes in the cavern wall near the ground. The holes, all roughly three to four feet in diameter, lead to a nest of stingers (p. 92, **Creatures of Barsaive**). A beastmaster character can identify these holes by making a successful Half-Magic Test against a Difficulty Number of 7; a character with the Creature Lore knowledge skill can identify the holes by making a successful Skill Test against the same Difficulty Number.

After the characters have passed two or three holes, 10 stingers (in two groups of 5) will emerge and attack the characters, one group from the first hole and one from the hole just passed. Because the ledge is so narrow, a character knocked down in combat may fall off the ledge and plummet to the riverbed far below. To reflect this, any character whose Knockdown Test results in a Poor success





topples off the ledge. Such a knocked-down character can then make a Strength Test against a Difficulty Number of 9 to attempt to grab the lip of the ledge and hold on. If this test fails, the character falls to the riverbed and takes normal Falling damage (p. 207, ED).

STINGERS (10)

Attributes

DEX: 9 STR: 7 TOU: 4
PER: 6 WIL: 4 CHA: 5

Initiative: 10

Number of Attacks: 3 (2)

Attack: 10

Damage:

Claws: 7

Stinger: 8

Number of Spells: 1

Spellcasting: 12

Effect: Poison (Step 12)

Death Rating: 30

Wound Threshold: 6

Unconsciousness Rating: 25

Legend Points: 150

Equipment: None

Loot: Stingers and poison sacs worth a total of 2D10 x 10 silver pieces. These count as treasure worth Legend Points.

Physical Defense: 11

Spell Defense: 7

Social Defense: 6

Armor: 2

Mystic Armor: 2

Knockdown: 7

Recovery Tests: 3

Combat Movement: 75

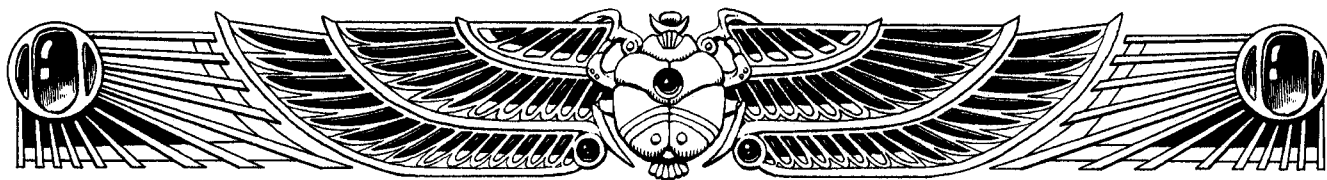
Full Movement: 150

DEAD BODIES

Roughly an hour after dealing with the stingers, have each of the characters make a Perception Test against a Difficulty Number of 12. Characters whose tests are successful notice several t'skrang bodies lying on a small ledge just below the ledge on which the characters are walking. The dead t'skrang are members of the second scouting party sent by the village to the river head. The first party made it all the way to the river's source, where they were captured by the cave trolls who have diverted the river from its course. They now serve as slaves, mining True water from the river. The second party of scouts was killed by a pack of shadowmants under the control of Gardak, a cave troll beastmaster (see **Shadowmant Attack**, p. 19).

If the characters climb down to check out the bodies, they will find it difficult to determine the cause of death. The bodies have been dead for almost two weeks and have decayed considerably. The shadowmants also fed on the bodies for the first two days after killing them, and have eaten away significant parts of each corpse. One of the bodies has a large wound in the center of the chest, with a large crystalline shard stuck in the wound. The shard is a shadowmant's stinger. A beastmaster character who makes a successful Half-Magic Test against a Difficulty Number of 8, or a character with the Creature Lore knowledge skill who makes a successful Skill Test against the same Difficulty Number, can correctly identify the shard.





SHADOWMANT ATTACK

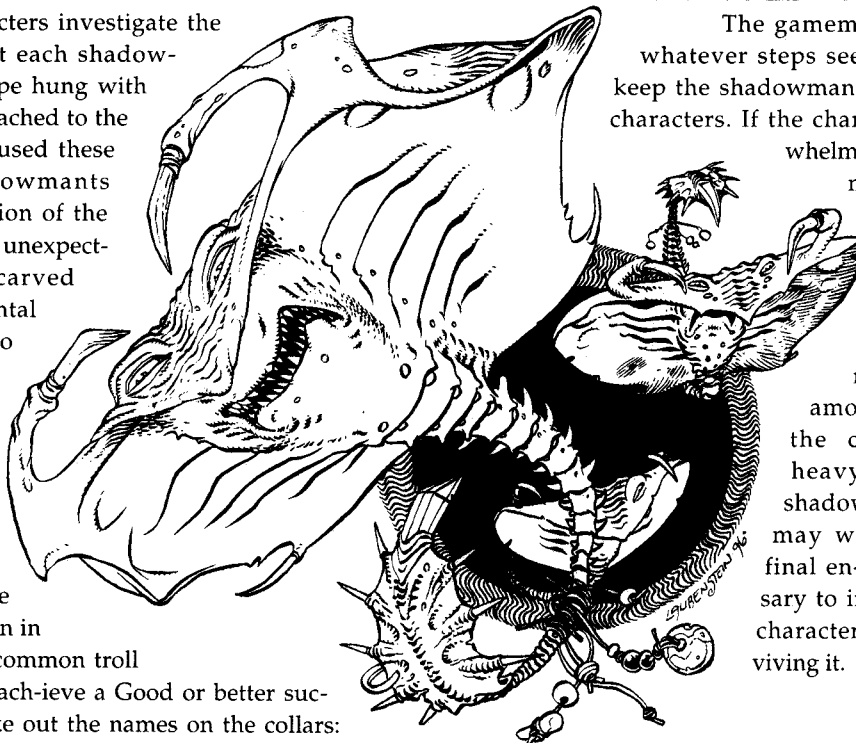
Soon after passing the corpses, the characters are attacked by the pack of shadowmants that killed the t'skrang scouting party.

When the shadowmants attack the characters, read the following aloud:

Dark shapes suddenly descend on you from the gloom. They look like giant shadow-kites, with long tails whipping behind them. Each tail ends in a jagged crystal point sharp enough to draw blood.

The three shadowmants are trained beasts under the control of a cave troll beastmaster Named Gardak (see **At the Source**, p. 20). Gardak has taught the shadowmants to patrol the riverbed and kill any living thing they encounter. Statistics for the shadowmants appear below; for more information, see p. 308, **ED**. These shadowmants are bigger and more powerful than the usual, and are so well trained that they will continue to fight until at least two of them are dead. If two shadowmants die, the third will flee upriver to its master.

The bodies of any shadowmants killed will fall either to the floor of the chasm or on the ledge. Enterprising player characters may decide to climb to the bottom to check the dead creatures for clues or valuable body parts. If the characters investigate the bodies, they notice that each shadowmant has a length of rope hung with carved pieces of bone attached to the base of its tail. Gardak used these ropes to tell the shadowmants apart. Careful examination of the bones reveals them to be unexpectedly lightweight and carved with runes and ornamental patterns. Characters who can read and write the troll language may make a Read and Write Language Test (or Perception Test) against a Difficulty Number of 7; if successful, they notice that the runes appear to be written in an offshoot of the most common troll tongue. Characters who achieve a Good or better success on this test can make out the names on the collars: "Spike," "Death" and "Crusher."



SHADOWMANTS (3)

Attributes

DEX: 8 STR: 8 TOU: 7
PER: 4 WIL: 5 CHA: 4

Initiative: 8

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 10

Damage: 12

Number of Spells: 1

(Poison)

Spellcasting: 6

Effect: Poison (Step 9)

Death Rating: 42

Wound Threshold: 12

Unconsciousness Rating: 34

Physical Defense: 11

Spell Defense: 6

Social Defense: 7

Armor: 6

Mystic Armor: 2

Knockdown: 6

Recovery Tests: 2

Combat Movement: 45 (Flight)

Full Movement: 90 (Flight)

Legend Points: 200

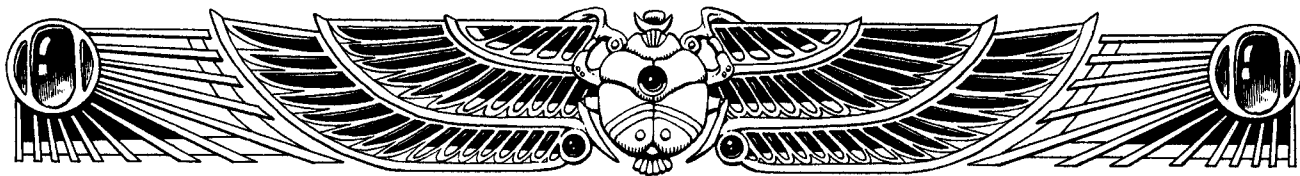
Equipment: None

Loot: Stingers worth 1D10 x 10 silver pieces. The stinger counts as treasure worth Legend Points.

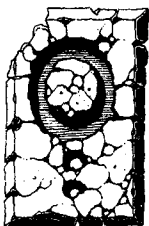
TROUBLESHOOTING

The gamemaster should take whatever steps seem appropriate to keep the shadowmants from killing the characters. If the characters seem overwhelmed by the shadowmants' attack, have the shadowmants retreat after just one of them dies, or after they take a relatively small amount of damage. If the characters suffer heavy damage in the shadowmant attack, you may wish to adjust the final encounter as necessary to improve the player characters' chances of surviving it.





AT THE SOURCE



VIEWVIEW

In this encounter, the characters discover that a cave troll elemental has summoned a water elemental and commanded it to divert the flow of the river. To return the river to its former path and save the Village of Shining Waters, the characters must battle the cave trolls and destroy or banish the elemental.

SETTING THE STAGE

Leaving the shadowmants behind, you continue following the riverbed. The narrow pathway widens, sloping downward toward the riverbed and making it much easier to move quickly. The riverbed seems to have leveled out, the broken terrain once again turning smooth and sandy.

After about two hours of walking, you hear a faint, low rumbling. Keeping alert for another attack or a cave-in, you keep moving cautiously forward. The sound gets louder as you continue on your way, and you soon recognize it as the sound of rushing water. You must be getting close to the source of the river.

The air is turning moist and clammy. The noise of the water grows to a deafening roar, as if the river is rushing straight at you. As you round a bend in the cavern, you finally see the source of the sound: a massive wall of water, towering nearly twenty feet above the riverbed right across your path. The river ought to be running toward you, but the wall of water has turned it down a side passage. The cataract swirls dizzily; as you look at it, the light from your lanterns plays off the surface and dazzles your eyes. In the sparkling water you can almost see faces peering back at you.

You hear a shout, and when you turn to look you see a group of trolls emerging from a small tunnel running parallel to the water-filled side passage. The trolls are larger than most, armed and angry. With a bloodcurdling yell they rush toward you, brandishing their weapons.

THEMES AND IMAGES

The sight of the towering wall of water (created by the water elemental) should be awe-inspiring. The immense

power of the elemental, combined with the sudden attack of the cave trolls, should initially seem overwhelming. The characters must make a real effort to gather their wits and face these formidable foes.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The characters have finally reached their destination, only to find strange enchantment and an unexpected enemy—a band of powerful cave trolls who have claimed the river as their own.

THE WALL OF WATER

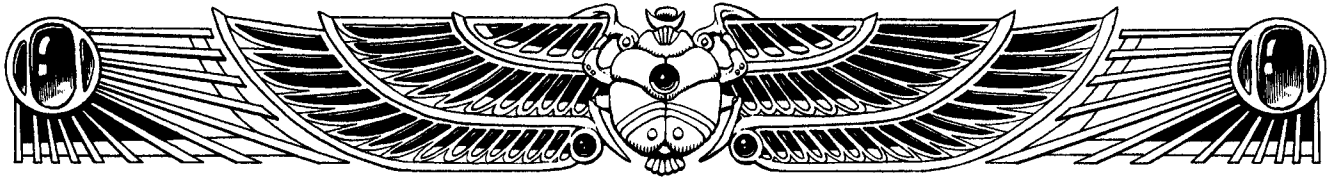
Many centuries ago, this underground river flowed along a different path than the one familiar to the villagers in Shining Waters. An underground earthquake changed the river's course, and over hundreds of years the river carved a new bed for itself. An elemental from a village of cave trolls living deep beneath the Throal Mountains recently discovered that the river contained rich deposits of True water, but that its current course took it too far from the cave troll settlement to make harvesting the True water practical. The river's original route, however, passed right by the cave troll village. The elemental decided to try diverting the river back to its old bed, and summoned a water elemental to do the job. The elemental created a wall of water that blocked the river from flowing toward Shining Waters and turned it in the direction of the cave troll settlement. Under normal circumstances, a water spirit only remains where it is summoned for a few minutes; however, the elemental has used blood magic to extend his control over the water elemental for much longer.

THE CAVE TROLLS

The cave trolls in this adventure are slightly tougher than the average cave trolls described in the **Earthdawn** rulebook. Statistics for the beastmaster and elemental are listed separately below. In the statistics for these adepts, the talents listed provide the talent rank (before the slash) and the total Step Number (after the slash). A single number means the talent uses only its rank. An asterisk (*) indicates a Discipline talent.

Gardak, the cave troll beastmaster, expected his shadowmants to return several hours before the player charac-





ters show up. Fearing the worst, he has assembled four of his tribe's warriors and the elemental to find the shadowmants or learn what happened to them. When the characters arrive, Gardak assumes (probably correctly) that they have killed his beloved pets. Enraged, he will attack the characters immediately. If one or more of the shadowmants escaped in the previous encounter, they are with the beastmaster and are fully healed of any damage they may have taken.

Gardak will make a point of going after characters whom he sees carrying any remains of the shadowmants. If the battle goes badly, he flees back up the tunnel from which the trolls initially emerged, leaving the other trolls and the water elemental to press the attack.

Elark, the elemental, discovered the underground river and its treasure trove of True water just two months ago, and has used blood magic to extend his power over the water elemental ever since (p. 93, **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets**). He will command the elemental to attack any characters who threaten the trolls, and it will continue to attack the characters even if all of the trolls are killed. It will also continue to divert the river during the fight—the diversion of the river is its primary task, and it will carry out that order until it is destroyed or banished. Elark will fight to protect his fellow trolls, and especially to protect the water elemental.

CAVE TROLLS (4)

Attributes

DEX: 8	STR: 13	TOU: 12
PER: 5	WIL: 6	CHA: 5

Initiative: 5

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 12

Damage: 20 (cave axe)

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Physical Defense: 10

Spell Defense: 7

Social Defense: 8

Armor: 7

Mystic Armor: 2

Knockdown: 7

Recovery Tests: 5

Death Rating: 78

Wound Threshold: 14

Unconsciousness Rating: 67

Combat Movement: 30

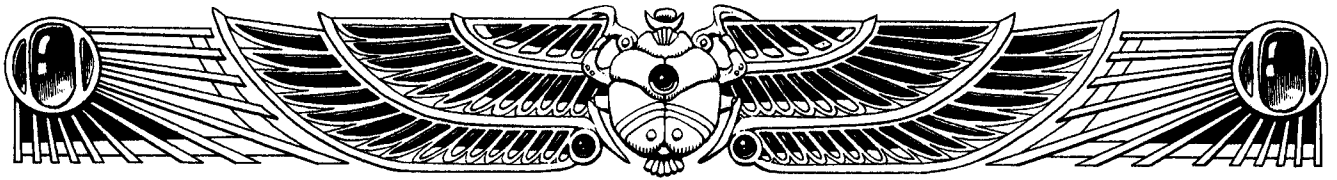
Full Movement: 60

Legend Points: 400

Equipment: Cave axe, chain mail

Loot: None





GARDAK (THIRD CIRCLE BEASTMASTER)

Attributes

DEX: 8 STR: 13 TOU: 9
PER: 5 WIL: 6 CHA: 7

Initiative: 7
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 8/14 (Whip/Unarmed)
Damage: 13 (Whip)
Number of Spells: NA
Spellcasting: NA
Effect: NA

Death Rating: 75
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 64

Karma Points: 10

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 10
Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 1
Knockdown: 7
Recovery Tests: 5

Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60

Karma Step: 3

Talents: Animal Bond* 4/11, Animal Training* 6/13, Borrow Sense* 3/9, Cat's Paw* 4/12, Claw Shape* 4/20, Creature Analysis* 3/8, Dominate Beast* 5/12, Durability (Beastmaster) 4, Karma Ritual 3, Tracking* 5/10, Unarmed Combat 6/14

Legend Points: 500

Equipment: Hardened leather armor, whip

Loot: None

ELARK (SIXTH CIRCLE ELEMENTALIST)

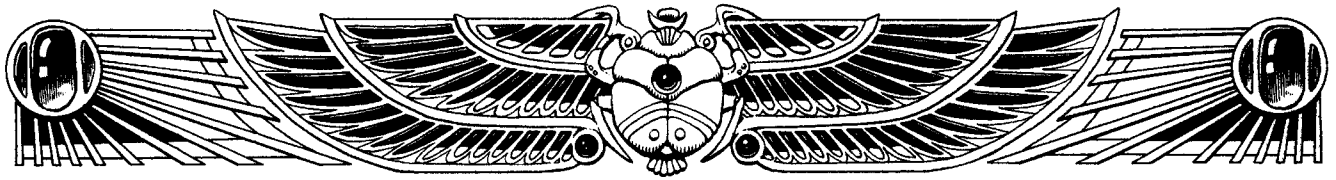
Attributes

DEX: 8 STR: 13 TOU: 9
PER: 7 WIL: 7 CHA: 7

Initiative: 7
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 8 (staff)
Damage: 15 (staff)

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 10
Armor: 5





Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 13
Effect: See Spells, below

Death Rating: 40
Wound Threshold: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 32

Karma Points: 10

Mystic Armor: 3
Knockdown: 7
Recovery Tests: 5

Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60

Karma Step: 3

Talents: Cold Purify* 6/13, Durability (Elementalist) 6, Elemental Hold* 6/13, Elemental Tongues* 6/13, Elementalism (Thread Weaving)* 6/13, Fire Heal* 6/13, Karma Ritual 5, Read and Write Language 4/11, Read and Write Magic* 6/13, Spell Matrix (x 4), Spellcasting* 6/13, Temperature* 6/13, Unshakable Earth* 6/24, Willforce 6/13

Spells: Elark knows all elemental spells for Circles 1 through 6. At the time of the battle with the player characters, his spell matrices contain the Ice Mace and Chain, Fireball, Tossing Earth and Uneven Ground spells.

Legend Points: 750

Equipment: Hardened leather armor, staff

Loot: None

THE WATER ELEMENTAL

The water elemental is a Strength 3 water spirit, assigned by Elark to do three things in the following order of importance: divert the river, keep anyone from entering the side tunnels leading to the cave troll village and protect the cave trolls from harm. The spirit will perform all of these tasks to the best of its ability, though it will always devote the most effort to diverting the river. For rules concerning the spirit's powers, see **Summoning**, pp. 78–96 of **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets**. When attacking the characters, the water elemental will primarily use its Engulf, Enrage Element and Spear powers. Under the elemental's influence, streams of water will erupt from the water wall, which the elemental can bend to its will.

Attributes

DEX: 11 STR: 9 TOU: 9
PER: 9 WIL: 9 CHA: 7

Initiative: 12
Number of Attacks: 3
Attack: 13
Damage: 13
Number of Spells: 3

Physical Defense: 15
Spell Defense: 12
Social Defense: 12
Armor: 8

Spellcasting: 11
Effect: See below

Death Rating: 50
Wound Threshold: 14
Unconsciousness Rating: 43

Karma Points: 4

Powers: Aid Summoner, Astral Sight 12, Detect True Element, Engulf 12, Enrage Element 12, Manifest, Manipulate Element, Share Knowledge, Spear 12, Spells (Circle 3 elemental, water only)

Legend Points: 600

Equipment: None

Loot: None

If the characters banish or destroy the water elemental, read the following aloud:

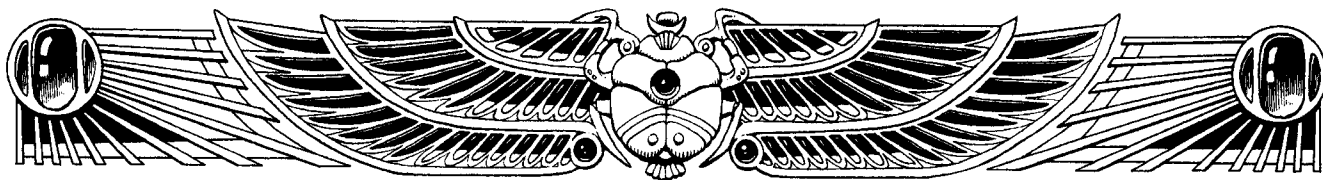
The water elemental shudders, its surface rippling from your attacks. Finally it falls, the great wall of water rushing like a tidal wave over the cavern floor. A thunderous roar echoes off the walls as the water crashes to the ground. In seconds the river resumes its natural course, filling the sandy riverbed to the tops of its banks.

THE RETURN OF THE RIVER

Characters who do not think things through before banishing or destroying the water elemental may find their victory celebration quickly cut short. Once the water elemental is no longer present to divert the river, the water will quickly revert to its natural course, surging over any characters who remain in the riverbed. Characters who climb up to the higher banks along the sides of the cavern before defeating the elemental will avoid the worst of the initial cascade and be perfectly safe once the river subsides to its normal level.

Characters remaining in the riverbed when the water elemental collapses must make a successful Strength Test against a Difficulty Number of 12 or be swept under by the fierce current. Characters who manage to remain standing must then make a second successful Strength Test against a Difficulty Number of 8 in order to make it to one of the banks. Characters who fail the first Strength Test must make two Step 15 Damage Tests to reflect the battering they receive from the force of the water. In order for such a character to break the surface and make it to shore, he or she must make two successful Strength Tests against a Difficulty Number of 8.





In each round thereafter a character may attempt to reach the shore, but the Difficulty Number for doing so increases by +1 with each failure after the first attempt. Characters who cannot break the surface and reach the shore will begin to drown. Such a character can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to his Toughness step, but the character begins to take damage from drowning as soon as he or she runs out of breath. At this point, the gamemaster makes a Damage Test for the character in each round, using a step number of 4 plus the number of rounds the character has spent underwater since running out of breath. For example, the Damage Step for the first Damage Test is 5 (4 + 1). The gamemaster keeps making Damage Tests each round until the character dies, is rescued, or somehow reaches the riverbank.

Characters standing on the riverbank when the water elemental collapses are much more fortunate; to avoid being swept away, they must make a successful Strength

Test against a Difficulty Number of 4. If a character fails to make a successful test, that character is subject to all the consequences described above.

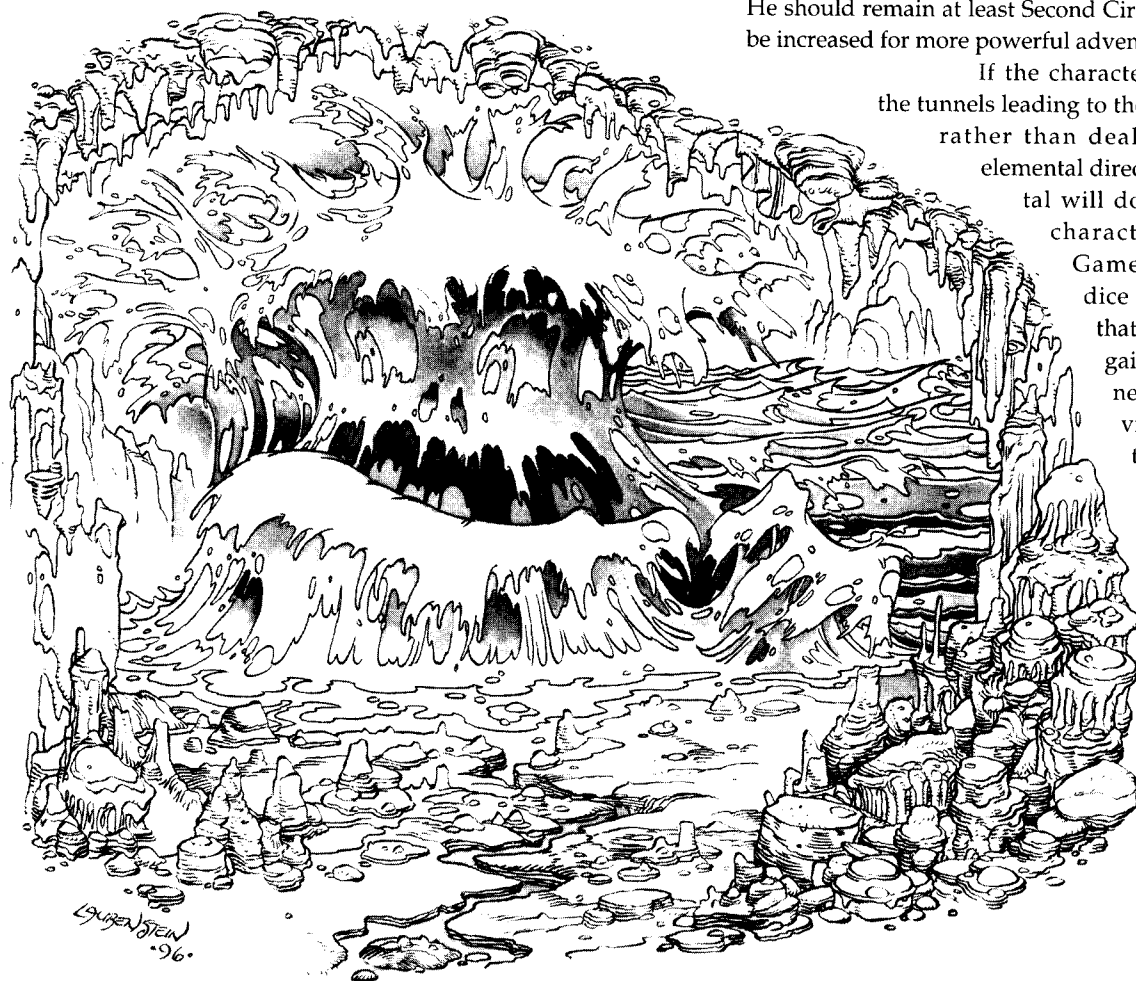
The death or disappearance of the elemental and the resulting shock wave caused by the collapse of the water wall will also cause the cave-in of the side tunnel into which the river had been diverted. The characters need only worry about this if they ventured into this tunnel during the battle. The cave-in effectively cuts off the cave trolls from this section of the underground caverns until they find another entrance (if ever).

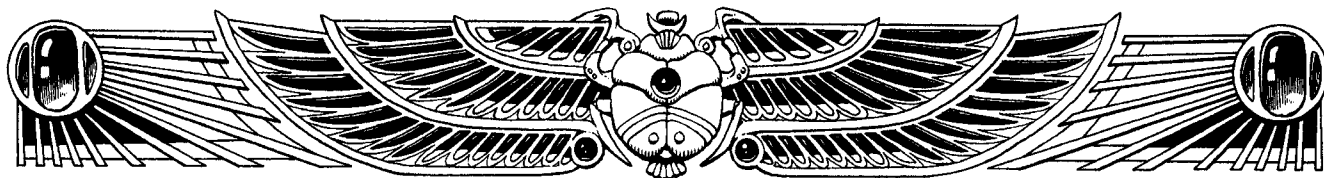
TROUBLESHOOTING

If Gardak and the cave trolls seem likely to defeat the player characters, the gamemaster can adjust the odds in the characters' favor so that their opponents pose a significant threat without overwhelming them by decreasing the number of cave trolls, for example, or lowering Gardak's Circle. He should remain at least Second Circle, and his Circle may be increased for more powerful adventuring groups.

If the characters choose to explore the tunnels leading to the cave troll settlement rather than dealing with the water elemental directly, the water elemental will do its best to keep the characters from doing so.

Gamemasters may fudge dice rolls to make certain that the characters cannot gain entrance to the tunnels leading to the troll village. The gamemaster can, of course, allow the characters to explore the tunnels and improvise any encounters the characters might experience. If the characters decide to attack the troll settlement, they are in for one tough fight.





LOOSE ENDS



he information in this section wraps up the adventure's loose ends, suggests ways to use story elements and characters from **Purloined Provisions** in future **Earthdawn** adventures and campaigns, and provides game statistics for V'liskra and the Pale Ones warriors.

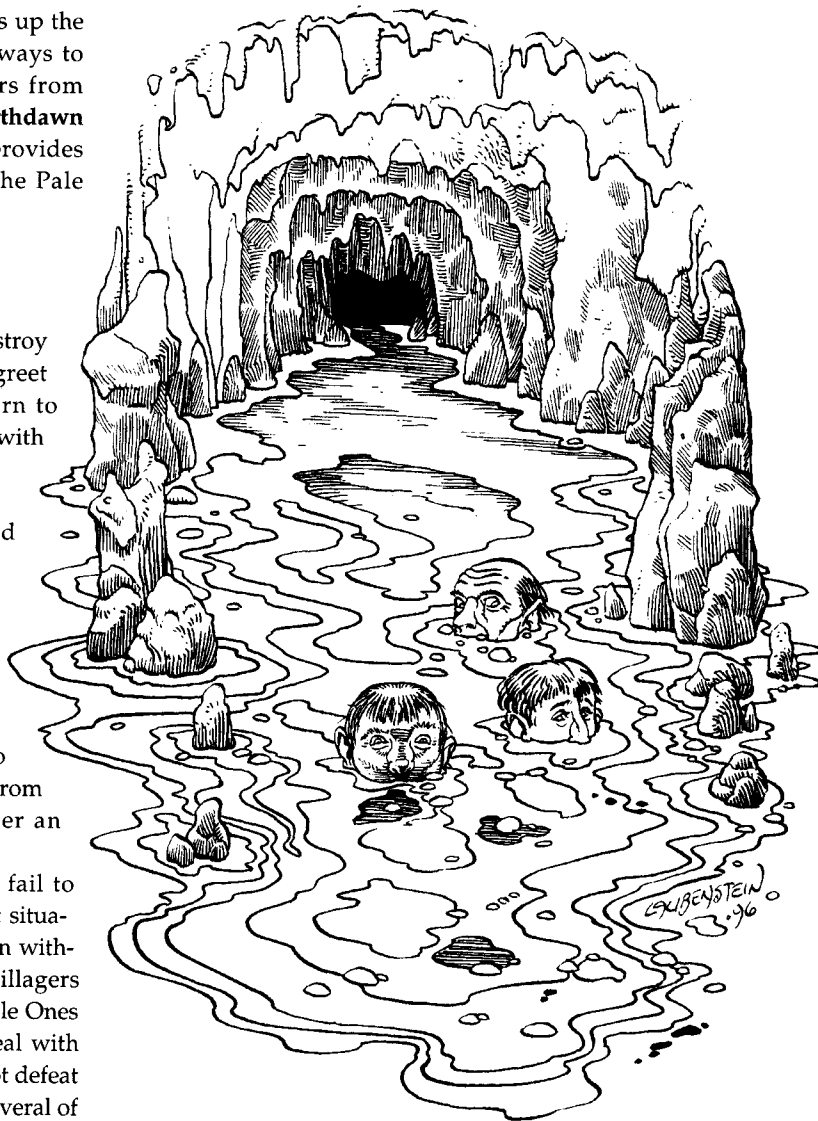
POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

If the characters defeat the cave trolls and destroy or dispel the water elemental, the villagers will greet them with a joyous celebration upon their return to Shining Waters. The Pale Ones will shower them with small handmade gifts in addition to any reward offered by V'liskra. The villagers will hold a feast in their honor, with fish from the newly returned river as the main dish. Afterward the characters will probably want to return to Throal as quickly as possible, though they will always be welcome guests in Shining Waters.

If any of the characters wandered down the side passages and became trapped in the cave-in, it may be some time (if ever) before they manage to find their way back to the surface. Seeking an exit from the underground caverns offers the gamemaster an opportunity to create an entire new adventure.

If the characters survive the final battle but fail to destroy or dispel the elemental, they face a difficult situation. The Pale Ones will not be pleased if they return without restoring the river. If the characters tell the villagers about the cave trolls and the water elemental, the Pale Ones may even insist that the characters go back and deal with the problem. If the characters confess that they cannot defeat the elemental, the villagers may be willing to send several of their remaining warriors with the characters. Alternatively, they may let the characters return to Throal and then settle the score with the cave trolls themselves. In this event, most of the half-starved Pale Ones will be wiped out in the fighting. The surviving villagers will not welcome the characters if they ever return to Shining Waters.

When the characters return to Throal, they may insist upon taking the two t'skrang raiders with them in order to bring them to justice. The lahala will reluctantly agree to this, but will also send along three of her warriors with a

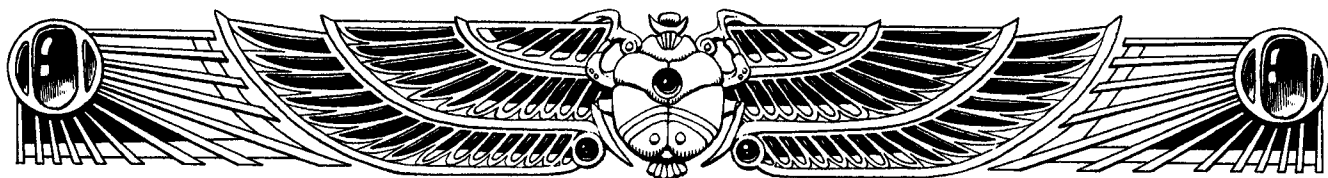


bounty of True water to compensate the merchants for the value of the stolen goods—with money to spare.

AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

Award Legend Points for this adventure as described in the **Introduction**, p. 6. Specific awards are described below. The Adventure Award is 500 Legend Points per character.





CREATIVE ROLEPLAYING AND HEROICS

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

Agreeing to search for the t'skrang thieves	100
Agreeing to explore the river's source	100
Exceptional roleplaying at Shining Waters	50
Insisting on payment for exploring the river's source	-50
Killing Pale Ones in the village	-100 per Pale One killed

DEFEATING CREATURES AND OPPONENTS

Award Legend Points for defeating creatures/opponents in this adventure as shown on the Creature/Opponent Award Table. These awards do not include Legend Points for killing the Pale Ones because they are not intended as targets. If the adventure takes a sufficiently different turn for a given player group, however, the gamemaster may award Legend Points for killing Pale Ones at his or her discretion.

CREATURE/OPPONENT AWARD TABLE			
Creature/Opponent	6 Players	7 Players	8 Players
Stingers (10)	1,500	1,500	1,500
Shadowmants (3)	600	600	600
Cave Trolls (4)	1,600	1,600	1,600
Gardak the Beastmaster	500	500	500
Elark the Elementalist	750	750	750
Water Elemental	600	600	600
Total	5,550	5,550	5,550
Award per Character	925	790	690

TREASURE

Treasure available to the characters in this adventure includes poison sacs from the stingers, the crystalline tails of the shadowmants, and possibly a few kernels of True water from the Pale Ones. Each kernel of True water earns the group 100 Legend Points.

TOTAL LEGEND AWARD

A single character who completes **Purloined Provisions** receives an average of 1,770 Legend Points. This average assumes 7 players in a group, and does not include points earned for battling additional opponents or finding treasure created by the gamemaster.

CAMPAIGN IDEAS

Several different adventures may result from the aftermath of **Purloined Provisions**. If the characters choose to explore the cave trolls' tunnels rather than immediately destroying the water elemental, they will certainly have their hands full, though in the end they could become even greater heroes in the eyes of the Pale Ones (assuming they survive). If the characters insist on taking the fight to the cave trolls, they will encounter at least twenty more warriors like those they have already met. In addition, the cave troll village likely includes other adepts—another beastmaster, or perhaps even a shaman (pp. 105–7, **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets**). The characters will also find the members of the first t'skrang scouting party, who were captured and forced to mine True water from the diverted river.

The friendship of the Pale Ones of Shining Waters may lead to other adventures as well. For example, V'liskra may ask the characters to help find the lost scouts, leading to a final confrontation with the cave trolls.

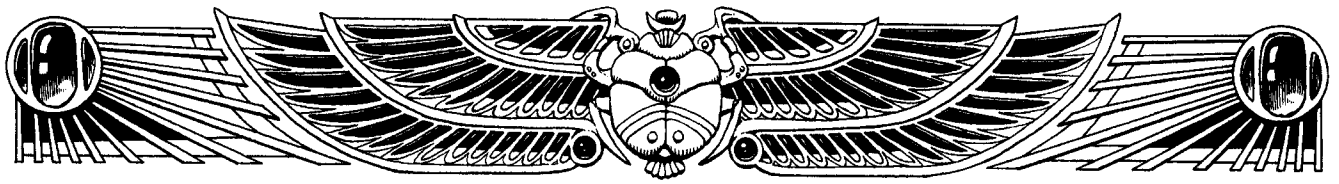
CAST OF CHARACTERS

This section contains information and game statistics for K'skirla, V'liskra, and the Pale Ones warriors.

K'SKIRLA

A Third Circle scout, K'skirla has often accompanied village traders to Bartertown and other nearby settlements. She was among the t'skrang who first found the tunnel leading into the Grand Bazaar. Stealing does not appeal to her, but she sees it as a necessary stop-gap measure to sustain the village until the dried-up river can be diverted back to its natural course. Though she does not trust people quickly, she will remain a loyal friend and ally to anyone who earns her respect. K'skirla may accompany the characters upriver if asked, or if the party seems too small to handle the adventure that awaits them. Once the river has been restored to her village, she may consider leaving for a short while to adventure with the characters.





Attributes

Dexterity (19): 8/2D6
Strength (11): 5/D8
Toughness (15): 6/D10
Perception (20): 8/2D6
Willpower (17): 7/D12
Charisma (13): 6/D10

Initiative

Dice: D12

Karma

Dice: D6
Points: 15

Talents

Astral Sight (3): 11/D10 + D8
Avoid Blow (5): 13/D12 + D10
Climbing (4): 12/2D10
Karma Ritual (3)
Maneuver (4): 12/2D10
Melee Weapons (5): 13/D12 + D10
Read and Write Language (3): 11/D10 + D8 (Throalic, Human, Troll)
Silent Walk (6): 14/D20 + D4
Tracking (2): 10/D10 + D6

Skills

Artisan/Basket Weaving (3): 11/D10 + D8
Fishing (2): 8/2D6
Knowledge/Creature Lore (1): 9/D8 + D6
Knowledge/Pale Ones Lore (2): 10/D10 + D6
Read/Write Language (Pale Ones) (4): 12/2D10
Trading (6): 12/2D10

Movement

Combat: 40
Full: 80

Combat

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 2

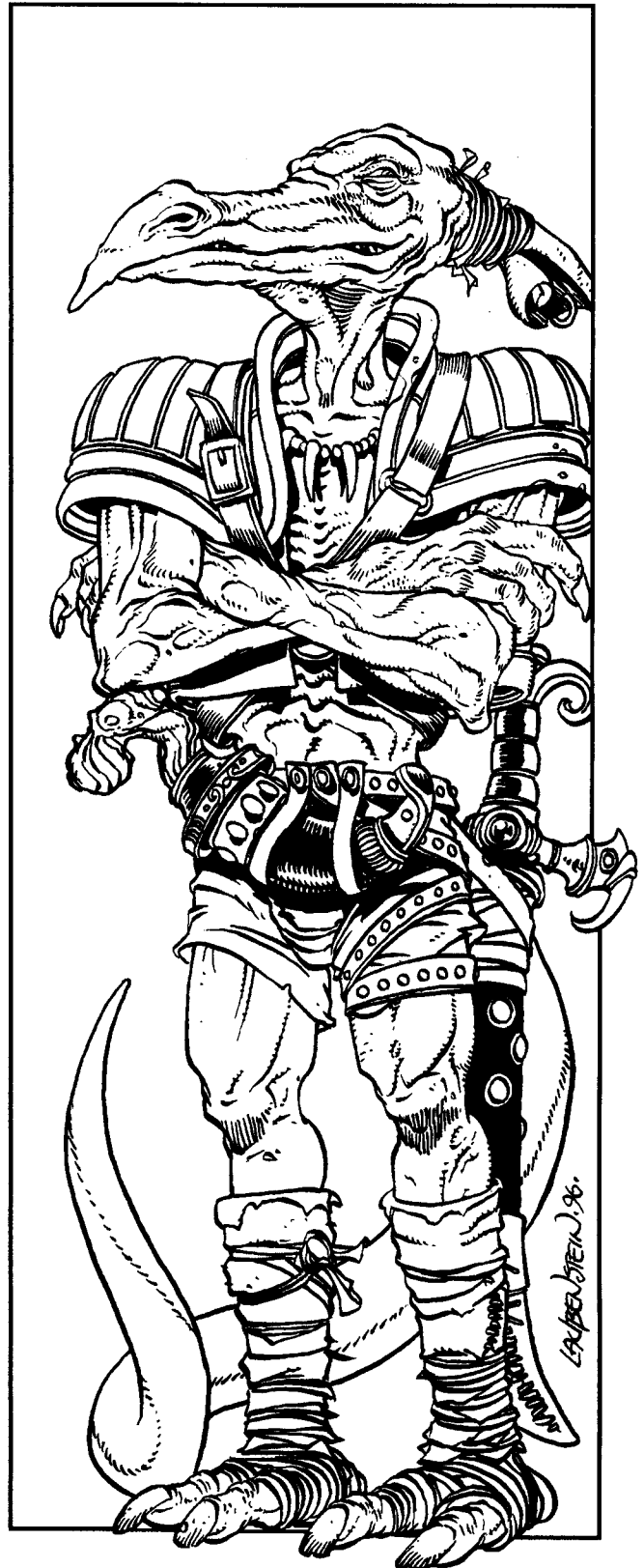
Damage

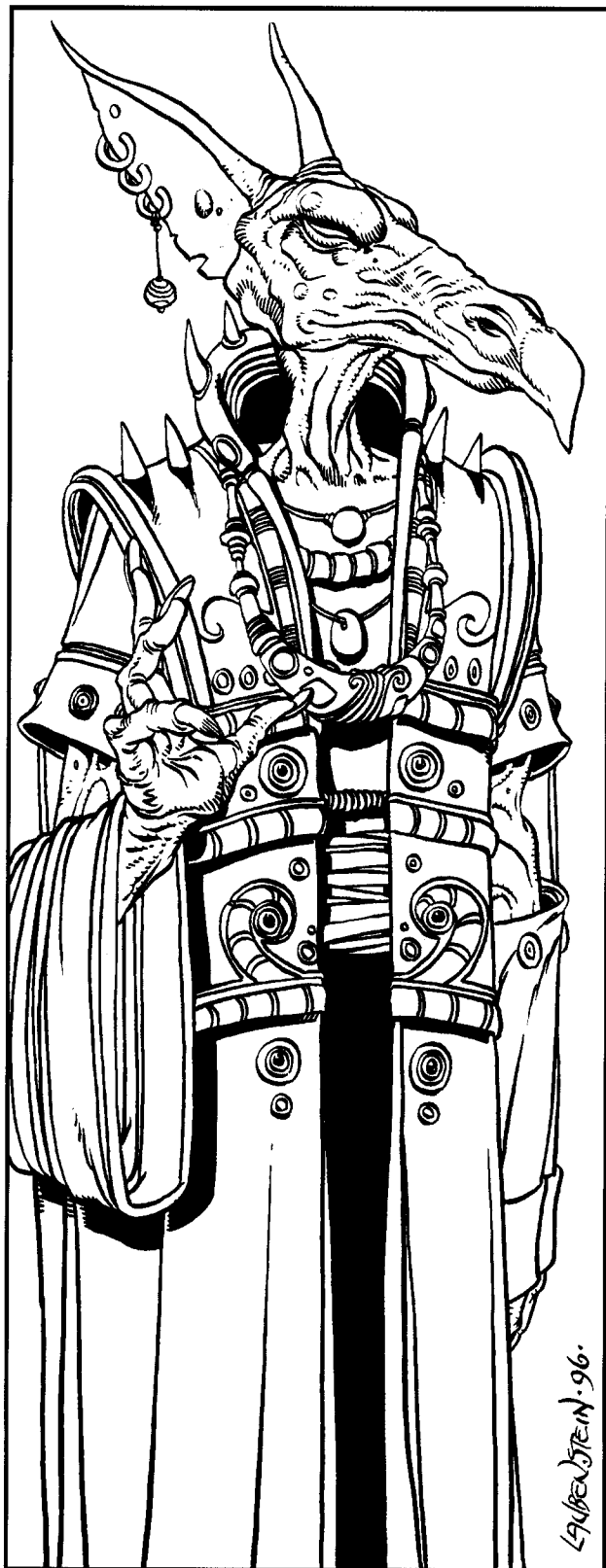
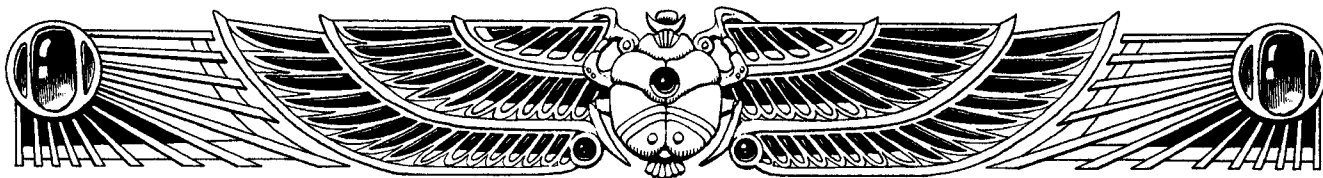
Death Rating: 38
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 29
Recovery Tests/Day: 3
Recovery Dice: D10

Racial Ability: Tail Attack 11/D10 + D8

Equipment

Leather armor
Footman's shield
Spear (Damage 9/D8 + D6)





V'LSKRA, LAHALA OF SHINING WATERS

A commanding and compassionate leader, V'liskra will do anything within her power to restore her village's vanished prosperity. It shames her deeply for outsiders to see her people weak and starving, but she does not allow this to shake her dignity or composure. She finds comfort in the rituals of her people, and will respect anyone with a similar reverence for the past.

V'liskra is a Sixth Circle troubadour. Because the characters are extremely unlikely to fight the lahalas, her statistics appear below in an abbreviated format.

Attributes

DEX: 6 STR: 6 TOU: 5
PER: 8 WIL: 6 CHA: 8

PALE ONES WARRIORS

Gamemasters may use these statistics for the guards at the characters' meeting with V'liskra. In addition, two or three guards might accompany the characters on their journey upriver.

Attributes

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

Initiative: 5

Attack: 8

Number of Attacks: 1

Damage:

Spear 10

Short Bow 9

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Physical Defense: 8

Spell Defense: 7

Social Defense: 7

Armor: 6

Mystic Armor: 1

Knockdown: 6

Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 32

Wound Threshold: 8

Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Combat Movement: 40

Full Movement: 80

Legend Points: 80

Equipment: Footman's shield, leather armor, short bow, spear

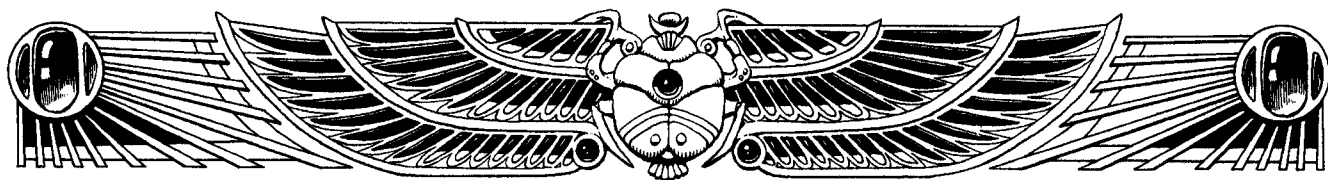
Special: Tail attack 9/D8 + D6

Loot: None



DEEP TROUBLE





DO NOT DISTURB



Gaurng Metsmetev shivered, peering vainly through the pitch darkness as though straining his eyes might magically produce some glimmer of light. His footsteps echoed off the stone walls and ceiling, and his own breathing sounded like the roar of a hundred skeorxes in his ears. His bones ached with cold, and he was afraid.

He didn't know what he was afraid of. He couldn't see what he feared. He simply knew it was there. Something waited for him in the dark, something he couldn't name but knew existed.

His breathing sounded louder now, faster. He willed himself to breathe more slowly, to calm down, but the harsh noise refused to subside. Slowly, it dawned on him that the roaring in his ears was not his own frightened breaths, but something else. Something ahead of him, somewhere in the dark.

The roaring descended in pitch to a rumble, like a mountain falling down. He had seen a landslide once, as a young boy on a trek with his father through the Throal Mountains. An entire hillside near them had crumbled away, tons of soil sliding downward at breakneck speed. The shock waves had toppled him and his father to the earth, where they lay clinging to each other's hands until the shaking stopped. Gaurng wished he had a hand to cling to now ... but there was nothing, nothing except the darkness and the noise and the terrible thing that lurked in it.

Gaurng took a step forward, then another. Far ahead of him, he saw a glimmer of reddish light, so faint he thought at first he was imagining it. The light frightened him, yet he could not stop moving toward it. Around him, the light grew brighter and the rumbling grew louder until he could feel his teeth rattling in his head. He could see the

walls of the passageway now, winding to his left and vanishing in the red glow.

As he stepped around the corner, hugging the wall, he felt cold, sharp claws bite into his shoulder from behind...

"Sir! Sir! Lord Metsmetev, please wake up!" The voice was young, panicked ... familiar. Gaurng followed the sound upward, dragging himself out of the well of sleep. Young

Nikol was bending over him, shaking his shoulder frantically. "Please, sir ...!"

"I'm awake ... I'm awake," Gaurng muttered, struggling to sit up. Nikol dropped his hand and stepped back, respectfully giving him a few seconds to collect himself. From underneath the floor came a faint rumbling, like a far-off thunderstorm.

"Do you hear that?" Gaurng asked.

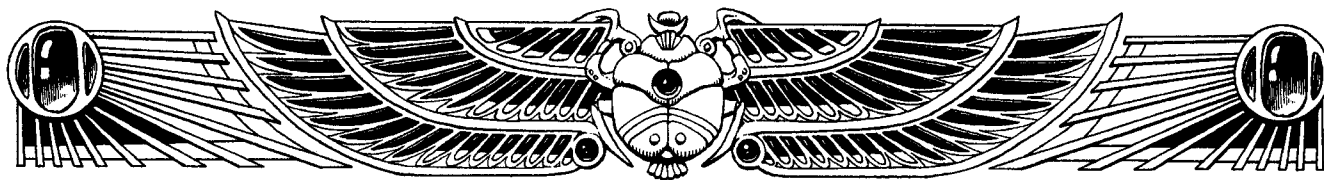
Nikol swallowed and nodded. "That's what I've come to tell you about, sir. We've been hearing it all the way up here for hours now. The workers are panicking ... they all think the tunnels are going to fall in on them. Some of them are saying there's a monster down there, or an angry earth spirit that doesn't want us meddling with its domain. And—" Nikol broke off and stared at the floor, twisting his hands together.

Gaurng sighed. "Out with it, lad. I won't bite your head off, whatever it is."

Nikol looked up, his eyes full of fear. "The second team, sir. One of them's just come back." He bit his lip. "I'm afraid she won't last long, sir. Not even Kelix's poultice seems to help—"

Gaurng swung his feet to the floor and grabbed for his long coat. "Lead the way," he said gruffly. "We've got to find out what happened while we still can."





DEEP TROUBLE



Deep Trouble begins in the Halls of Throal and leads the characters to the tunnels and caverns far beneath the Inner City of Hustane. This adventure is best suited for a group of to five to seven characters of Sixth to Seventh Circles. The adventure requires social skills in addition to abilities suited to exploration and combat, and characters should be able to deal with Throalic politics as capably as Horrors. The adventure assumes that the characters have high enough status in Throal to come to the attention of the Royal Chancellery, and that they begin the adventure in Throal or Bartertown.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

In addition to the thousands of citizens who live in the Halls of Throal, the Kingdom of Throal also contains seven Inner Cities. Five of these cities are thriving communities with sizable populations. The sixth, Valvria, opened only recently and is still filling up with settlers. The seventh city, Hustane, is in the process of being built. Unfortunately for the dwarf kingdom, things are not going smoothly. Hustane has acquired one resident far ahead of schedule—one whose presence threatens not only the city, but the entire kingdom of Throal.

Far beneath Hustane lies the Horror known as Emr'r'ko, the Dweller in the Depths. Unlike some Horrors, Emr'r'ko is not satisfied with the slow corruption of individual Name-Givers. It intends to gorge itself on the pain of thousands of Name-givers all dying at once. This Horror has made its way into the depths of the Throal Mountains beneath the Inner City of Hustane, where it has begun creating Horror constructs with claws that can shear through rock. The constructs are digging around fault lines and stress points under the city to weaken its foundations so that the cavern that holds the Inner City of Hustane inevitably will collapse, crushing the inhabitants under millions of tons of stone.

The rumbling of the Horror's excavations has attracted the attention of the workers constructing Hustane, who reported the strange noises to the Warden in charge of Hustane. The Warden in turn alerted his superiors in the Royal Chancellery, who allowed him to send a team in search of the cause of the mysterious sounds beneath the

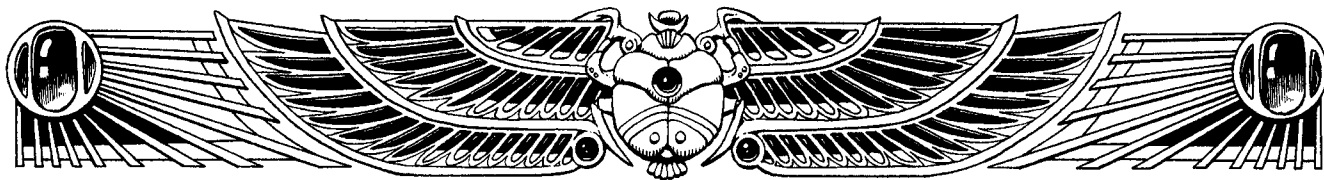
city. After two unsuccessful expeditions, the Chancellery has decided to hire an experienced group of adepts who presumably will have a better chance of surviving.

Through a bit of cloak and dagger maneuvering, the adventurers are hired to venture into the tunnels beneath Hustane, both to discover the source of the mysterious sounds and to find out what happened to the previous two groups. The Chancellery has decided to keep news of any potential dangers a secret, however, which complicates the characters' mission. Chancellery officials fear that if word of the situation should spread, it might slow or even halt construction and settlement in the city. The level of secrecy is so tight that even the newly appointed Baroness of Hustane, Divuna Divunicus, remains uninformed. The player characters cannot discuss their mission with anyone, not even after it is over. The common folk must never know the truth, lest fear of unknown Horrors and other hazards lead people to leave Throal in large numbers.

Despite the best efforts of the Chancellery, however, rumors have already spread among the Throalic nobility that the construction of Hustane is in some mysterious trouble. The rumors have caught the attention of Baroness Divunicus and Lendiltay, both nobles of House Moberl. Lendiltay served as Baron of the city of Oshane until he was deposed by the crown for proving himself completely inept at his job. In an attempt to pacify Lendiltay's family, the king appointed Divuna Divunicus to the barony of Hustane. Lendiltay, however, feels he should have gotten the job rather than "a jumped-up junior member" of his House. Insulted by Divuna's appointment, he is looking for anything that might let him discredit Divuna and take her position for himself. He plans to investigate the rumors, hoping to hit pay dirt. Divuna, meanwhile, has plans of her own to find the truth. Both these nobles have heard that the Chancellery hired a team of adepts to investigate Hustane, and both have taken steps to protect their own interests.

After gathering equipment and dodging inquiries, the adventurers set off for Hustane. Along the way, the characters are tailed by a thief in the employ of yet another House Moberl noble, and attacked by thugs working for Lendiltay. After dodging the thief and fighting off their assailants, the characters must cope with the difficulties of descending into the lower tunnels and caverns. They must





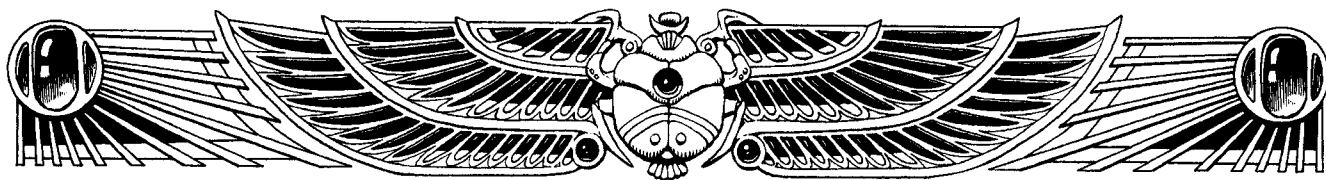
cross chasms, climb down sheer rock walls and avoid flammable pockets of subterranean gasses. Meanwhile, every light source they carry with them grows gradually dimmer, no matter what they do to compensate for the growing gloom.

As they descend further and further into Throal's depths, the characters discover that they are not alone. Two other groups of explorers are braving the deeps—one in the service of Lendiltay, the other working for Baroness Divunicus. The adventurers must not only complete their mission, but also attempt to keep their activities secret from the other two groups.

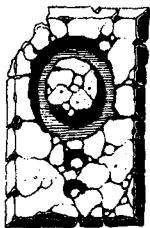
Finally, the adventurers come face to face with Emr'r'ko and discover why their lights have been going dim: the Horror detests light, and has been exerting a special power to dampen light sources in its vicinity. If the characters kill the Horror, they discover that its light-dampening power has become a curse on the city of Hustane.

As they start back toward the surface, the characters may end up dealing with the other two exploring parties. Upon reaching safety and reporting back to the Chancellery, the characters face one final hazard: politics. How they dealt with the other explorers and how they behave in the presence of nobility may determine their future in the dwarf kingdom.





A CONFIDENTIAL MEETING



INTERVIEW

In this encounter, the adventurers meet with an official of the Royal Chancellery, who makes them an intriguing job offer.

SETTING THE STAGE

When you first met the dwarf Named Ioroz, you thought he was the oddest person you'd ever dealt with, at least in Throal. He followed you halfway around the Grand Bazaar before asking you—in a voice so quiet you had to ask him to repeat his words just to be sure you'd heard aright—if you wanted to perform a great deed for a great power. And he flatly refused to say anything else—wouldn't answer a single one of your questions about himself or his employer. Definitely a strange one, that dwarf. But he intrigued you, so you told him you were interested, despite your better judgment.

Then things got even stranger. The dwarf sent you to an elf, a seller of potions Named Lirruri, who sent you to a grizzled old dwarf Named Poget who just happened to be a retired officer of the Arm of Throal. Neither of them would say a word about themselves or who they might be working for, either. In fact, Poget quizzed you unmercifully about your previous exploits, your current loyalties and your discretion. Somehow—you're still not sure how—you satisfied him that you were trustworthy, because he sent you to see Tonliga Uvnimsaya. You recognized Uvnimsaya's Name immediately—an Officer of the Court, a remarkably important personage for you to be visiting. You still have no idea what "great deed" your services are wanted for, but it must be something serious for someone only two steps removed from the crown to be involved with it.

Two guards politely usher you into Tonliga's chambers, where an aide invites you to sit and offers you drinks. Once each of you has refreshments to your liking, the aide cautions you that not a word to follow must ever leave this room. You solemnly promise silence, and the aide disappears briefly through a small side door. Then Tonliga Uvnimsaya comes in—a pensive, tired-looking dwarf in his middle years. He carries a leather portfolio stamped with the royal arms and clasped with a rune-inscribed lock. Taking a seat at his desk, he lays the portfolio down, folds

his hands on top of it and regards your group with a worried expression. "An unknown force is threatening the kingdom," he says. "I need you to discover what it is and deal with it quietly. Word of this threat must never reach the ears of anyone outside this room—not the people of Throal, not the nobles. Especially not the nobles. Not naming Names, but some of them will use anything they can to harm His Majesty's government; and a mysterious threat is just the thing to make people afraid of their own shadows. Poget assures me that you are up to this vital task, and he is normally an excellent judge of character. Are you willing to take on this mission?"

THEMES AND IMAGES

Make this encounter feel like a scene from a spy movie. From beginning to end the characters learn of secrets hidden behind mysteries wrapped in conundrums. The situation facing them is layered like an onion, with more layers behind every one they see. When any of them asks questions that no one wants to answer, the characters get nothing but blank stares.

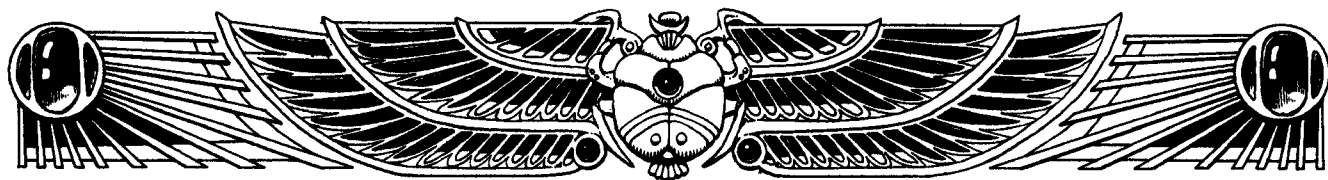
BEHIND THE SCENES

The adventure assumes that the characters have been through the web of contacts described in **Setting the Stage**. If the gamemaster wishes, he or she may roleplay the series of meetings leading up to the talk with Tonliga to enhance the "espionage thriller" feeling.

After Tonliga finishes his brief introduction, give the characters a chance to respond. If they ask about the nature of the threat to the kingdom, Tonliga hands them the letter on p. 34. If possible, make a copy of the letter and give it to the players to read.

Once the characters finish reading the document, Tonliga will ask for it back. If they ask to keep it, Tonliga politely but firmly refuses.





From: Gaurng Metsmetev, Chancellery of Hustane
To: Tonliga Cvnimsaya, Officer of the Court for New Construction, Royal Chancellery of Throal
Subject: Report Concerning the Second Deep Exploration Team

Confidential: Officer's Eyes Only

My lord, what follows must receive immediate attention from your office, for the sake of Throal. I cannot sufficiently stress the urgency of this matter.

The rumblings from deep in the mountains below Hustane have gotten progressively worse over the past two weeks. They remain relatively quiet in the lower tunnels and inaudible in the upper levels, but several expert builders assigned to this project expressed concern over possible shifting of rock below the city. If the stone is indeed moving, at the least we will have to shore up the city foundations before allowing settlement. Worse, these groanings may be early signs of an earthquake, in which case the entire cavern may collapse.

To answer these concerns, I sent a party of inspectors down into the deep tunnels. After some hours with no sign of them, we were forced to conclude that they had vanished—how or why, I do not know. I then sent a second team, better equipped and trained—this one included two adepts, a warrior who once served with distinction in the Arm of Throal and an elementalist recommended personally by Karon Foll of Yistaine. They were set upon by monsters in the depths of the mountain—of what nature, we cannot be sure. The monsters slew all but one of the second party, and the sole survivor died from her injuries soon after returning to the surface.

We must put together a third team immediately, consisting entirely of highly trained, powerful adepts, to discover what manner of fiend has invaded the depths of the kingdom. The issue must be handled with extreme discretion to avoid a panic. I beg you to use every resource at your disposal, and anxiously await the new team's arrival.

Yours,

Metsmetev

After the characters have read the letter, Tonliga briefly explains the political situation, saying that certain factions would like to see the newly appointed Baroness of Hustane—Divuna Divunicus—disgraced. He does not mention Lendiltay by name or hint that Divuna faces opposition from within her own House. Tonliga also urges the characters to begin their investigation as soon as possible.

Tonliga offers the characters three thousand silvers each, plus the heartfelt gratitude of the Crown of Throal, for successfully completing the mission. Depending on how successful the characters are, the latter may well be worth more than the former.

Once they accept the mission, each player character receives a pouch containing one hundred and fifty gold pieces (equivalent to 1,500 silvers). They will receive the rest of their payment upon completion of their assignment. The characters may use this money to buy supplies for the expedition. Because secrecy is of paramount concern, they may not requisition gear through the Arm of Throal, as that would involve official channels and make an obvious connection between the adepts and the government of Throal.

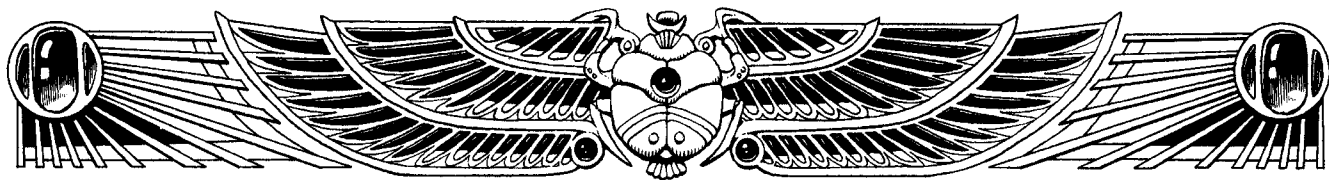
When the characters leave Tonliga's office, go to *Traveling Tribulations*, p. 35.

TROUBLESHOOTING

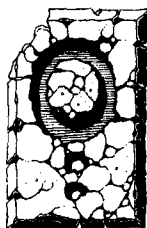
The only possible problem in this encounter occurs if the characters turn down the mission. If they want more money, Tonliga can offer them another thousand silvers each, upon completion of the mission. If necessary, remind the players that refusing a request from an Officer of the Court is a bad idea—such an officer is only two steps removed from the king, and turning him down is almost like turning down royalty. If the characters remain reluctant, hint that an ugly fate may await those who find out deep dark secrets and then prove themselves unreliable by refusing to do the right thing. Keep in mind, however, that Throalic officials never make overt threats. They simply imply that a bad end may await people who fail in their obligations to the kingdom.

If the group includes a nethermancer who wishes to use the Experience Death spell on the lone survivor of the exploratory team, Tonliga will grudgingly allow it. Unfortunately, the spell will only reveal the survivor's slow death without giving the nethermancer any information about the nature of the menace below the city.





TRAVELING TRIBULATIONS



VIEW

In this encounter, the characters travel to the caverns beneath Hustane. Along the way, they are followed by (and may confront) hirelings of Baroness Divunicus and her mysterious opponent, the former baron Lendiltay. Everyone wants to know what is going on in Hustane, and some are willing to resort to extreme methods to ferret out the information they seek.

SETTING THE STAGE

The busy Halls of Throal seem shockingly loud after the hush of Tonliga's office. After a few moments, however, all the sound and motion becomes reassuringly normal. People of various races going about their business, groups of dwarfs blocking the passageways with debates—all the color and background noise of the dwarf kingdom washes around you like a river. You plunge in, heading straight for the stalls where you know you can get the best deals on supplies.

Plenty of people in the crowds seem to be going the same direction as you. Not surprising, considering how busy the Grand Bazaar is at this time of day. Still, you can't help looking over your shoulder now and then. Somehow you can't quite shake the suspicion that you're being followed.

THEMES AND IMAGES

Even though the characters are simply preparing for an adventure, the need for secrecy and the presence of spies hired by Divuna and Lendiltay should turn a normally uneventful shopping trip into an exercise in paranoia. To make the characters even more suspicious of the people around them, have more than the usual number of people ask nosy questions about what the characters are planning to do with the provisions and equipment they are buying. Merchants who normally show no more than the usual dwarf interest in their customers' affairs make a point of asking where the characters are heading and what they intend to accomplish on their excursion. If the characters seem nervous when answering these questions, or otherwise act as if they are hiding something, the merchants should treat them with a certain level of suspicion.



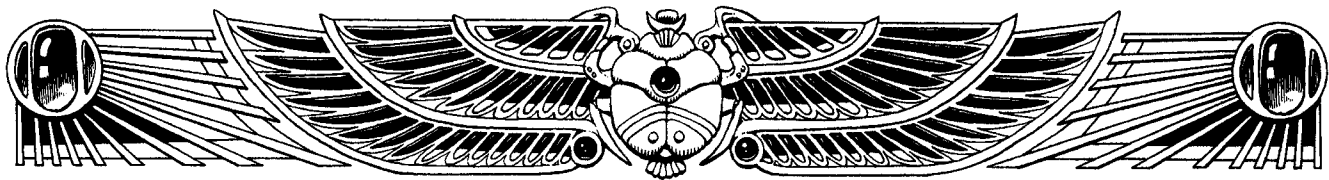
BEHIND THE SCENES

As the characters prepare for their mission, they have several brief encounters. The events described below occur after the characters leave Tonliga's office but before they set off toward Hustane, and should happen between the characters' other preparations for the adventure.

RESEARCH

Before they leave for Hustane, the characters may wish to do a little research at the Great Library of Throal on subterranean Horrors or creatures, or even the history of Hustane's construction. Nothing comes from researching the city, but the characters may obtain some potentially useful information about Horrors.





The Difficulty Number for Research Tests (p. 132, ED) is 13. The Research Table below shows the information the characters can obtain, based on the success level of the Research Test. If none of the characters has the Research Skill, they can make Perception Tests instead, against a Difficulty Number of 15.

RESEARCH TABLE

Success	Result
Poor	You find a lot of material, but so badly organized that you could spend days just looking for a useable index.
Average	You get sidetracked, learning more than you might want to know about specific subterranean Horrors, but nothing that looks useful in the current situation.
Good	Plenty of Horrors seem to prefer deep places. Artificer is prominent among them, as well as others best not named. Unfortunately, none in particular seems quite appropriate to your mission.
Excellent	Several records describe sounds from deep in the Throat Mountains, the Caucavics and the Tylon Peaks. Unfortunately, none of the adventurers who sought the source of these mysterious rumblings apparently survived to tell their tales.
Extraordinary	You find a fragmentary account of an encounter with something called the Dweller in the Depths. Some of the pages are missing, others are damaged by fire and rot. Apparently the author ran into this Dweller during a trip into Braza's Kingdom. He describes it as having claws like a cave crab and a passionate hatred of light. The middle of the record is covered in messy scrawls, in which the author complains about not being able to see well enough to write properly.

I WANT SOME ANSWERS!

While buying gear for their journey to Hustane's depths, the characters are cornered by Lady Chireget Yidrusn of House Moberl. A middle-aged dwarf of average height, she's a little stocky, but hides this under voluminous robes. Her jewelry is expensive but understated, and she carries her years well.

Chireget is a supporter of Baroness Divunicus, though she does not tell the characters this. She has heard rumors of trouble with the Hustane construction project, and she wants to know if the characters know anything about it. She has been told that the characters were seen leaving the offices of the Royal Chancellery and she wants to know where they are going—she recognizes adepts preparing for an adventure when she sees them. As a member of the queen's clan and a House of traditionally high standing, Chireget can and will pull rank on the characters if she feels they are lying to or evading her, but she does so reluctantly. Play her not as high and mighty, but as someone sharply aware of the responsibility to the kingdom that comes with her high position.

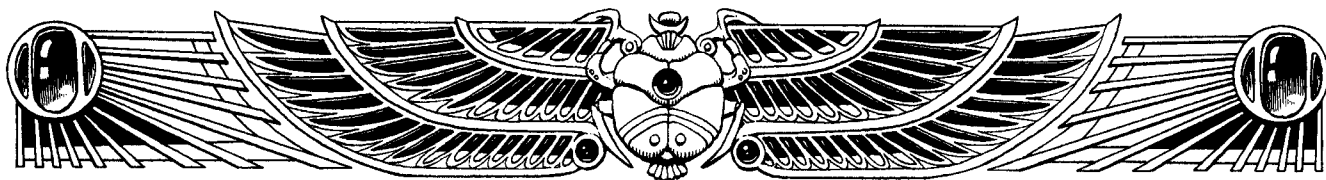
Being rude to a noblewoman is never a good idea, especially when she is simply displaying typical Throalic inquisitiveness. However, most Throalites expect non-dwarfs—who, in their minds, are more likely to be outsiders—to take mild offense at what they consider polite social inquiries. Lady Chireget will therefore tolerate minor rudeness from the characters; but if it looks likely to get ugly, she stomps off in a snit. Almost immediately, a guard squad drops by to check out the disturbance. At this point, the gamemaster may gently remind the adventurers that secrecy is part of their orders, and that making a lot of noise violates their instructions.

If the characters ignore Lady Chireget and her questions, she has them followed, first by a pair of dwarfs and then—if those spies fail to get results—a Second Circle thief Named Dendok the Unruly (see p. 37).

EVER HAVE THE FEELING . . . ?

As the characters continue on their way, they may notice that they are being followed. A character who makes a successful Perception (5) Test notices that a pair of dwarfs have been following the adventurers since shortly after they ran into Lady Chireget. Evading the dwarfs should be easy enough—they are neither adepts nor professional spies, and so the characters can get away with ducking into one side of a tavern and out the other. For these dwarfs, use the statistics given for the thugs in *Ambushed!*, p. 38.





If the characters shake the two dwarfs, a successful Perception (10) Test allows them to notice that a third dwarf has now begun to follow them. This dwarf is Dendok, under orders to find out what the party is up to and report to Lady Chireget. Under no circumstances is he to interfere with the adventurers or stand and fight if they spot him. He will run away as soon as he realizes he's been tagged, but will continue shadowing the party at his first opportunity.

DENDOK THE UNRULY (SECOND CIRCLE THIEF)

Dendok is a little taller and thinner than the usual dwarf, and definitely looks shifty. The talents listed in the statistics below provide the talent rank (before the slash) and the Step Number (after the slash). A single number means the talent uses only its rank. An asterisk indicates a Discipline talent.

Attributes

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

Initiative: 6

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 9

Damage: 10

Number of Spells: None

Spellcasting: None

Effect: None

Physical Defense: 8

Spell Defense: 7

Social Defense: 8

Armor: 5

Mystic Armor: 3

Knockdown: 7

Recovery Tests: 3

Death Rating: 57

Wound Threshold: 12

Unconsciousness Rating: 46

Combat Movement: 30

Full Movement: 60

Karma Points: 25

Karma Step: 4

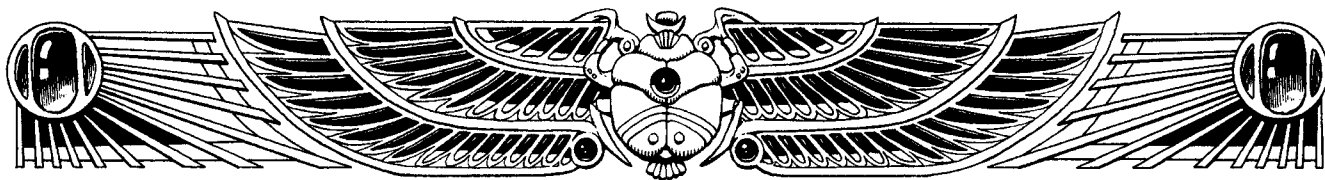
Talents: Climbing* 4/9, Lock Pick* 5/10, Lock Sense 4/9, Melee Weapons 4/9, Picking Pockets* 2/7, Silent Walk* 5/10, Surprise Strike* 2/7

Legend Points: 140

Equipment: Desperate Blow charm, dagger, dwarf sword, fernweave armor, silent fingers gloves, thieves' picks and tools

Loot: 50 silver pieces





AMBUSHED!

Halfway to Hustane, the adepts are attacked by thugs working for Lendiltay (though the characters do not know this yet). The thugs do not know who they are working for—they only know they have orders to waylay the characters and do enough damage to slow them down. Not being stupid, they will break off the attack and flee if the tide turns sharply against them. (Lendiltay's agent did not offer these toughs enough silver to make them loyal to the death.)

None of the thugs can provide any useful information if captured and interrogated. If the adventurers seem inclined to spend too much time tracking down the person or persons spying on them, remind them that they need to accomplish their mission as quickly as possible.

The characters can track down the agent who hired the thugs on Lendiltay's behalf, but this will also delay the expedition to Hustane. Finding the agent leads the characters to an employee of House Moberl, who will not name Lendiltay as his superior unless his life is threatened (and in that case, his confession will not stand up before a magistrate). If the characters go this route, Tonliga will track

them down either directly or through agents and express his displeasure at the delay.

The thugs are meant as a diversion, not a derailment. None of them are adepts, and so they are unlikely to cause the characters any serious problems.

THUGS

The following statistics apply to dwarf thugs. Gamemasters who want variety may apply appropriate racial modifiers (p. 50, **ED**) to convert the statistics to any other Name-giver race.

Attributes

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

Initiative: 5

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 13

Damage:

Crossbow: 11

Sword: 9

Throwing Dagger: 8

Number of Spells: None

Spellcasting: None

Effect: NA

Physical Defense: 9

Spell Defense: 6

Social Defense: 4

Armor: 7

Mystic Armor: 2

Knockdown: 10

Recovery Tests: 3

Death Rating: 38

Wound Threshold: 10

Unconsciousness Rating: 29

Combat Movement: 33

Full Movement: 65

Legend Points: 110

Equipment: Broadsword, buckler, dagger, medium crossbow, ring mail, throwing dagger

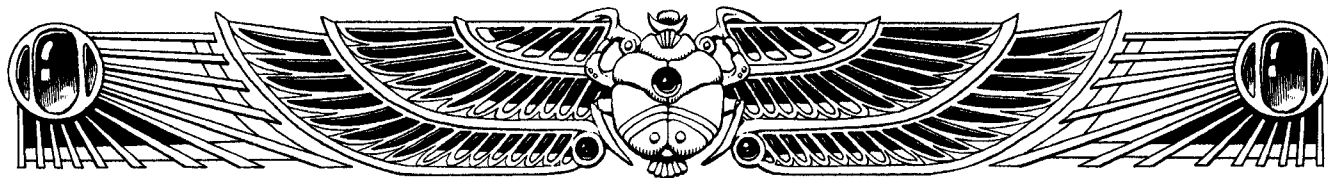
Loot: None

TROUBLESHOOTING

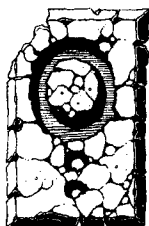
The biggest potential problem in this encounter occurs if the thugs seriously injure one or more of the characters. Given that the characters have been paid 1,500 silvers each, they should have been able to buy sufficient healing aids to deal with any damage the thugs may do them. If not, feel free to fudge dice rolls as necessary to keep the carnage to a minimum.

The characters may also get into trouble with Lady Chireget. If they get too far out of hand, Lady Chireget may have them apprehended by the Royal Guards. In this case, Tonliga will get word of their arrest and make arrangements for their swift release.





GOING DOWN



VIEWVIEW

In this encounter, the characters travel through the empty city of Hustane and begin their descent beneath it. On their journey, they must cope with various natural hazards while either avoiding or confronting the exploring parties sent by

Lendiltay and Divuna.

SETTING THE STAGE

You follow Tonliga's directions to the northwest portion of the cavern that houses the city of Hustane. As you wander through the empty streets, your footsteps echo off half-finished buildings as if someone is following you. Every sound you make is magnified by the quiet, the emptiness, the shadows. Out here, alone in the gloom, it's easy to believe in terrible unknown dangers.

You reach a partly completed structure, one story high and lacking a roof. Inside, a stairway leads down into darkness. Tonliga told you that the stairs go down roughly five stories, ending in a natural tunnel. Beyond this tunnel lie the caverns from where the mysterious rumblings have come. You gaze at the dark hole, and its inky depths stare back at you. From now on, you're on your own.

THEMES AND IMAGES

As the characters go through the tunnels and caverns beneath Hustane, make them feel as if they are exploring a haunted house. Spooky sounds—maybe echoes, maybe not—seem to come from around each corner. Strange shadows slip and slide across the walls and ceilings all around them. Countless unknown dangers may be lurking in the dark, waiting to pounce on unwary adventurers.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The city of Hustane is roughly three-quarters complete. The entire cavern has been excavated, but a large area still has no buildings in it—only the streets have been laid out. No one lives in Hustane yet except for the construction crews, and so the characters must pass by a large expanse of unlit open space as they walk through the cav-

ern. The city is spooky, dark and far too quiet for comfort. Describe the strange shadows, the echoes and the creepy emptiness of the city to set the stage for this encounter and the subsequent descent.

The characters head down the tunnel and into the unworked caverns without incident. Describe their progress from carved stairs to partly worked tunnel with clear footing and recent tool marks on the walls, to partly cleared natural tunnel with rubble carefully swept to either side, to natural cavern with bits of fallen rock strewn liberally over the floor. From this point on, all movement takes place over difficult ground, and so all tests involving movement or maneuvering suffer a -2 step penalty, including Knockdown Tests. Characters who avoid contact with the ground, such as windlings or characters using the Gliding Stride talent, do not suffer this penalty.

The characters will face a number of hazards as they explore, each of which is described below.

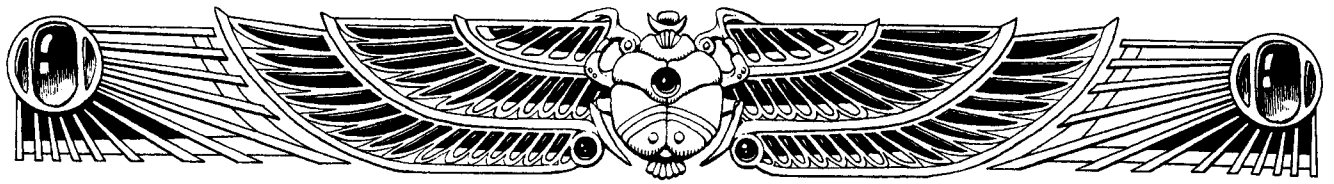
FINDING THEIR WAY

As the characters venture further into the tunnels beneath Hustane, they may wish to map the areas they explore so they can find their way out. Unless the gamemaster wishes it, mapping their course does not require the characters to make a test; simply assume that the characters draw an accurate enough map to let them find their way back to the surface.

Dimming Lights

As the characters get closer and closer to the Horror's lair, the light sources they carry will get progressively dimmer. Where appropriate, the events below describe specific reductions in the range of the light. For example, in **Bugs 'R' Us**, p. 42, the characters' light sources are reduced to half their normal effectiveness, meaning that a torch allows its holder to see for only 15 feet (see **Darkness**, pp. 215-16, ED). If the characters think to link the reduction in light with the source of the strange rumblings, have each of them make Perception (9) Tests. Any character whose test is successful eventually figures out how to use the dimming effect as a direction-finder, which will prove useful in finding the Horror and getting back home after the battle. If the characters do not make the connection on their own, have them make the Perception (9) Tests described above once their lights have been reduced to half the usual effectiveness.





THE CHASM

Shortly after entering the natural caverns, the adventurers reach a chasm 50 yards deep and 15 feet across. The rope bridge that once spanned it was cut loose by the survivor of the second expedition during his retreat toward the surface. If the characters choose to climb down one side of the chasm and up the other, each phase of the climb (descent and ascent) requires three successful Climbing (or Dexterity) Tests against a Difficulty Number of 9. The characters may use any number of magical abilities to aid them in crossing, and the gamemaster should allow any reasonable idea for crossing the gap to work. After all, the characters cannot continue the adventure until they reach the other side!

If a character fails a Climbing Test, he or she falls and takes normal falling damage (see p. 206, ED).

HIDE AND GO BOOM

Ten to fifteen minutes after crossing the chasm, the characters enter a chamber measuring two hundred yards from end to end and side to side, sectioned off by walls and pillars of stalactites and stalagmites that have grown together. So numerous are these walls and pillars that the characters have no clear line of sight from one side of the cavern to the other. The partial cover modifier (p. 97, ED) applies to all missile weapon attacks made at a distance of more than four yards from a target; no such attacks may be made more than ten yards away from a target.

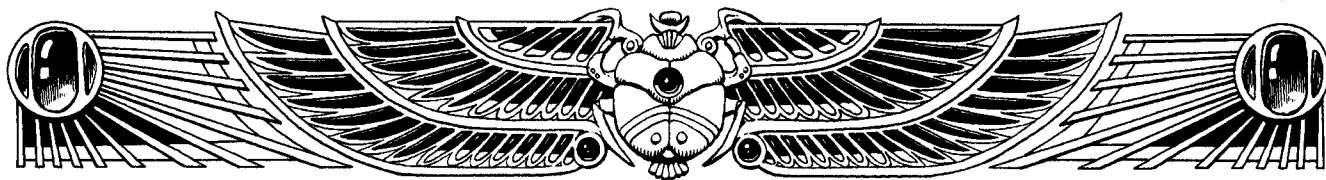
Some of the concave portions of the ceiling contain pockets of flammable natural gasses. If any of the characters uses fire as a light source (a torch, for example), roll 1D12 for every 20 yards the character moves while holding the flame high. On a result of 1, the flame ignites a gas pocket, causing an explosion. The blast does Step 8 damage to everyone within two yards of the flame, Step 4 damage to characters two to four yards away, and no damage to characters more than four yards away.

Once the characters get halfway across the chamber, have each make a Perception (7) Test. A successful result allows a character to notice signs that another party has been through the area, possibly recently, and may still be somewhere in the chamber. Specific details noticed by each character depends on the success level achieved in that character's Perception Test. On an Average success, the character hears sounds somewhere between him or her and the far side of the chamber. A Good success indicates that the sounds could be voices. An Excellent success reveals scuff marks on the stone floor from boots, plus noises from up ahead that suggest the presence of half a dozen or so Name-givers. An Extraordinary success reveals that the other group in the chamber is about two-thirds of the way between the characters and the chamber's far side.

The group ahead consists of eight non-adept dwarf warriors led by Arrisaz Heptagar, a Third Circle dwarf swordmaster. These warriors work for Baroness Divunicus, and will do their best to avoid meeting the characters face to face. They are investigating the mysterious rumblings on their own, and are attempting to be just as secretive about it as the player characters. If the characters decide to try to catch up to the other group, make a Dexterity (7) Test for Arrisaz. In order to find Arrisaz's party, the player characters must make a successful Perception Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the result of Arrisaz's Dexterity Test. If any of the characters' Perception Tests succeed, they locate and catch up to the other exploring party.

If confronted by the player characters, Arrisaz identifies himself and his people as tunnel inspectors checking for fault lines. He claims they are all armed because Foreman Metsmetev decreed days ago that no inspectors were to travel into the deeps unarmed or in groups of less than five. Arrisaz has a plausible explanation for most questions, and clearly wants to get on his way. If necessary, make a Conversation Skill Test for Arrisaz against the Social Defense of the questioning character. If Arrisaz





achieves a Good success or better, the player characters believe his story. Under no circumstances will Arrisaz's party join the characters on their mission.

Arrisaz's party will not start trouble. They want to leave the tunnels and return to the safety of Throal. If the characters threaten them, they will answer by asking if the characters are sure they want to start a fight. If the characters insist on drawing weapons, Arrisaz whips out his sword and makes an impressive strike against the nearest player character. Starting trouble with Arrisaz's party will have repercussions later on, especially when the characters return to the surface and report to Tonliga (see **Endgame**, p. 46).

Use the statistics for the dwarf thugs in **Ever Have the Feeling ... ?** (p. 36) for the non-adepts in Arrisaz's party. Arrisaz's statistics appear below.

ARRISAZ HEPTAGAR, THIRD CIRCLE SWORDMASTER

Arrisaz wears dwarf miner's garb under a suit of well-kept armor. His blade is likewise well-kept and serviceable, but otherwise unremarkable.

Attributes

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

Talents

Avoid Blow (5): 10/D10 + D6
Durability (5)
Heartening Laugh (5): 9/D8 + D6
Karma Ritual (4)
Maneuver (6): 11/D10 + D8
Melee Weapons (4): 9/D8 + D6
Missile Weapons (5): 10/D10 + D6
Riposte (3): 11/D10 + D8
Taunt (3): 7/D12
Throwing Weapons (3): 8/2D6
Wound Balance (6): 11/D10 + D8

Movement

Full: 65
Combat: 33

Karma

Dice: D6
Points: 25

Skills

Artisan/Weapon Rune Carving (5): 11/D10 + D8
Conversation (2): 8/2D6
Knowledge/Dwarf Lore (5): 10/D10 + D6
Knowledge/Dwarf Military (2): 7/D12
Navigation (4): 9/D8 + D6

Initiative

Dice: D6

Combat

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 7
Mystic Armor: 2

Damage

Death Rating: 74
Wound Threshold: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 61
Recovery Dice: D12
Recovery Tests per Day: 3

Equipment

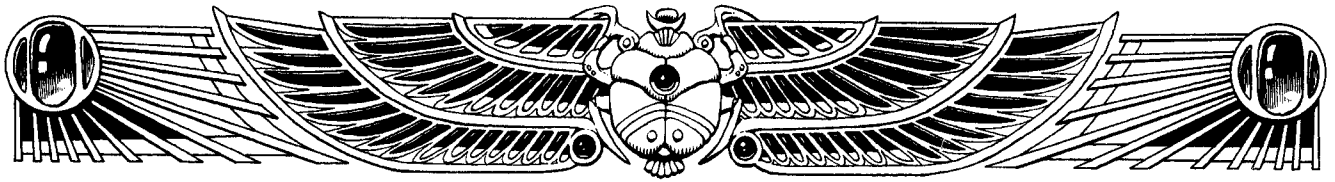
Absorb Blow Charm	Hawk Hatchet (2)
Booster Potion	Horror Fend Charm
Chain Mail	Kelix's Poultice
Dagger	Lantern (Light Quartz)
Dwarf Sword	Medium Crossbow

DOWN IS BAD, BACK IS WORSE

Shortly after exiting the chamber, the characters reach a point where they must make a long vertical descent in order to continue exploring. When they reach this point in their travels, all the characters' light sources have become 25 percent less effective than normal. As the characters prepare to follow the decline, have each character make a Perception (13) Test. Any character whose test succeeds can hear sounds coming from behind the group, sounds clearly being made by yet another group of people in the vast chamber. If the characters turn back to investigate these sounds, they run into Lendiltay's explorers (described in **Cast of Characters**, p. 49). Lendiltay has sent this group to find out what is going on beneath Hustane, stop the Chancellery's (and Divuna's) attempts to find the truth, and report back to him. If the characters confront them, Lendiltay's explorers at first give vague answers as to who they are and why they are down in the tunnels. If the characters do not buy their story, Lendiltay's party will attack the characters. They want to hurt the characters badly enough to force them to abort their mission, but do not want to risk severe injury themselves.

This fight occurs at the meeting of three passageways, where the tunnel widens out enough for three people to stand abreast and swing weapons. Lendiltay's hirelings will retreat down one of the three tunnels at the first opportunity, more interested for the moment in finding the source of the strange rumblings than in harming the player characters. If pursued, they eventually vanish down a small winding passage. If the characters attempt to follow, let them know that their light sources are getting brighter. This clue should tell them that they are heading the wrong way.





rubble and boulders. Suddenly, giant cave crickets, two per character, leap out from behind the boulders and attack the adventurers. When the crickets come around the boulders, have each character make a Perception (10) Test. Any character who achieves a Good success or better is not surprised (see p. 202, ED), and can immediately fight the crickets. The insects are the size of large dogs, stone gray with pure white eyes. Totally blind, they rely on sound and scent to locate their prey, and chitter constantly during combat. Light-based attacks will not affect them. Savagely hungry, they will fight to the death in hopes of a meal.

Soon after they defeat the crickets, the adventurers stumble across Saryz Attrin, a survivor of Arrisaz's party. From her, they learn that the "tunnel inspectors" ran into Horror constructs soon after parting company with the adventurers. Saryz was separated from her companions during the battle with the constructs and has no idea what happened to her compatriots. Her leg is broken and loss of blood from her many claw wounds has weakened her so much that she cannot travel under her own power. In her weakened state, she will truthfully answer any questions put to her, but still refuses to volunteer information. If the characters choose to add Attrin to their group, she could become a potentially helpful ally when the characters finally return to Throal and must deal with local politics.

After the battle with the giant cave crickets, go to the next event, **Too Big to be Termites**.

GIANT CAVE CRICKETS

Attributes

DEX: 11	STR: 5	TOU: 5
PER: 4	WIL: 3	CHA: 4

Initiative: 13

Number of Attacks: 2

Attack: 12

Damage: 7

Number of Spells: None

Spellcasting: None

Effect: NA

Physical Defense: 14

Spell Defense: 5

Social Defense: 5

Armor: 6

Mystic Armor: 3

Knockdown: 8

Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 32

Wound Threshold: 8

Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Combat Movement: 130

Full Movement: 260

Legend Points: 560

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Descending

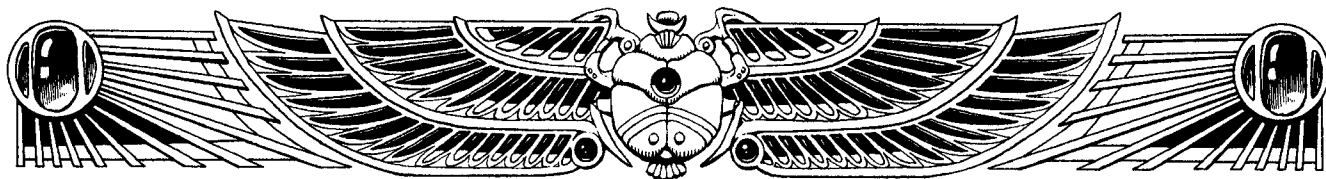
If the characters follow the dimming of their lights as they move through the tunnels, they should proceed downward. If the characters have not yet figured out that they can use their dimming lights for navigation, a successful Perception (9) Test will reveal this to them. The steep downward slope stretches forward for twenty yards and is fifty yards long. Getting down the slope requires a character to make a successful Climbing (or Dexterity) Test against a Difficulty Number of 9, unless the characters drop a rope down the slope. In that case, they can use the rope to guide themselves down without making a test. Characters may also use appropriate magical abilities to aid their descent.

At the base of the slope is another tunnel that leads further downward, into the tunnels and chambers occupied by the Horror and its constructs.

BUGS 'R' US

Their lights now at 50 percent of normal effectiveness, the characters enter a roughly excavated tunnel strewn with





TOO BIG TO BE TERMITES

By the time this event occurs, the characters' light sources have dropped to one-quarter of their normal effectiveness. As they round a corner into yet another tunnel, the characters encounter a pack of Emr'r'ko's Horror constructs chewing away at the rock. These Horror constructs, called stonecrushers, are giant beetles roughly the size of brithans. The stonecrushers sense the characters as soon as the characters notice them, and immediately attack. There is one stonecrusher for each character, and these creatures will fight to the death.

STONECRUSHERS

Attributes

DEX: 10 STR: 12 TOU: 14
PER: 9 WIL: 12 CHA: 8

Initiative: 14

Number of Attacks: 2

Attack: 11

Damage: 13

Number of Spells: None

Spellcasting: None

Effect: NA

Physical Defense: 13

Spell Defense: 12

Social Defense: 10

Physical Armor: 12

Mystic Armor: 5

Knockdown: 30

Recovery Tests: 7

Death Rating: 68

Wound Threshold: 20

Unconsciousness Rating: 61

Combat Movement: 30

Full Movement: 60

Legend Points: 500

Equipment: None

Loot: Claws worth 2D12 x 20 silver pieces

Notes: A weaponsmith can work a stonecrusher's carapace into armor with an Armor Rating of 6 and a Mystic Armor Rating of 3.

Commentary

Emr'r'ko created the stonecrushers in its own image. As big as a warhorse, the stonecrusher is shaped like a large beetle, with a bony carapace covering its head and back. Rows of short, stout legs run down each side of its body, giving it excellent balance and making it hard to knock over. Its glowing red eyes are set deep behind protruding bony plates. It has two massive front claws sharp and strong enough to cut through and crush solid rock.

PARLEY OR FIGHT

Before they can recover from the battle with the stonecrushers, the characters once again meet up with Lendiltay's explorers, who entered this lower level from another tunnel. Having gotten a look at Emr'r'ko, they are on their way back to the surface to report their findings. Lendiltay intends to use this report to embarrass Divuna and force the king to reconsider her appointment as Baroness of Hustane.

The gamemaster and player characters have considerable leeway to determine what happens in this encounter. If the characters met Lendiltay's party in **Down is Bad, Back is Worse**, the results of that meeting should be reflected in this one. Lendiltay's explorers are more interested in getting out safely than in anything else, but they will fight back if the characters attack them. The characters may instead choose to find out what—if anything—Lendiltay's party knows. The characters should find it fairly easy to get their fellow explorers to talk; Lendiltay's people are badly rattled by what they have seen in the deeps, and one of them is quite likely to blurt out that "there's a Horror down there!" If Lendiltay's explorers insist on fulfilling their mission and reporting the Horror's presence to the disgruntled noble who hired them, the characters will have to find some way of keeping the information secret from everyone but the king and his men—and might even need to choose a drastic solution.

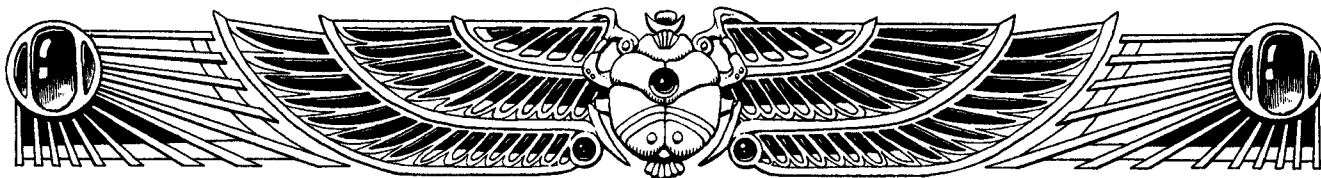
If a fight starts, Lendiltay's party will assess the odds at the end of each round and flee if the tide turns badly against them. If necessary, a few remaining members of Arrisaz's group can show up unexpectedly to help the player characters. If the characters slaughter Lendiltay's group, they will face repercussions during their debriefing (see **Endgame**, p. 46). If they leave the explorers alive, Lendiltay's people may cause trouble later on.

TROUBLESHOOTING

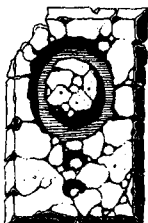
This encounter becomes problematic only if the characters are too badly injured to continue or to face the Horror in the following encounter. If necessary, arrange for the characters to discover the remains of either of the other exploring parties and find booster or healing potions among the deceased explorers' supplies.

Dealing with Lendiltay's explorers may pose another potential difficulty. At this point, Lendiltay's people should be more of an annoyance than a serious threat; they cause real trouble later on, near the end the adventure. For now, do not allow them to prevent the characters from continuing on and finding the Horror.





THE BATTLE BELOW



VIEW

In this encounter the characters come face to face with Emr'r'ko, the Dweller in the Depths. Battered and bloodied from previous battles, they must now fight a powerful Horror in almost total darkness.

SETTING THE STAGE

Up ahead, you can hear something tearing at the mountain's roots. More of the fearsome Horror constructs you just fought ... or something even worse? You draw closer, your lights dimming with every step. The grinding gets louder and louder, shaking its way from the soles of your feet to the top of your head. So much sound fills the air that you can't hear each other speak, even when you shout.

As you walk around a turn in the passage, the walls fall away and you emerge into a vast cavern, its ceiling apparently held up by a few spindly pillars of stone that hardly look strong enough to support the immense weight. Almost hidden in the shadows of the echoing vault is a creature three times the size of a thundra beast, bigger than a pair of mastryliths. Rows of short, stout legs down each of its sides support a long, tapering body, and shards of rock bounce off its carapace without leaving a mark.

Abruptly, the noise stops. Wheeling with terrifying speed, the monster turns to face you. Seven eyes, set deep behind bony plates, regard you with cold ruby light. Two massive claws extend toward you, each large enough to cut a Name-giver in two with a single stroke. The monster snaps its mandibles and clashes its claws, then moves slowly toward you. "You have disturbed Emr'r'ko, the Dweller in the Depths," it rumbles, in a voice like boulders tumbling over each other. "Now learn the price of your folly."

THEMES AND IMAGES

This encounter is a desperate fight under terrible circumstances. The characters are fighting in near black-out conditions against a formidable opponent. The frantic dancing of shadows created by the dying flickers of light should create an atmosphere right out of the characters' worst nightmares.

BEHIND THE SCENES

By the time the characters find the Horror, all their light sources have dimmed to one-tenth their normal effectiveness, and so the Darkness modifier (p. 202, ED) applies to all tests made in combat with Emr'r'ko. The characters confront the Horror in a cavern with an uneven, rock-strewn floor that imposes a -2 step penalty to any combat-related tests, including Knockdown Tests. During the battle the Horror remains low to the ground to protect its less-armored underside, and uses spells to soften up the opposition before closing in for the kill. As they battle the Horror, the characters may notice that it stays in a crouching position; a successful Perception (12) Test allows a character to notice that the Horror's armor is thinner on its underside. Attacking the Horror's underside requires a successful **Called Shot** (p. 200, ED). If such an attack is successful, use the Armor Rating listed in parentheses in the statistics below.

If and when the characters kill the Horror, Emr'r'ko uses sacrifice magic to create a dying curse (pp. 14-15, **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets**). As the Horror breathes its dying breath, it whispers to the characters, "My legacy will live on. The city above shall live in darkness for eternity." With those words, a burst of black flames erupts from the Horror's carcass. These flames do no damage, but the characters all feel a deep foreboding as the Horror dies.

EMR'R'KO, DWELLER IN THE DEPTHS

Attributes

DEX: 16	STR: 19	TOU: 17
PER: 15	WIL: 16	CHA: 14

Initiative: 18

Number of Attacks: 3

Attack: 17

Damage: 19

Number of Spells: 2

Spellcasting: 12

Effect: See below

Physical Defense: 21

Spell Defense: 20

Social Defense: 18

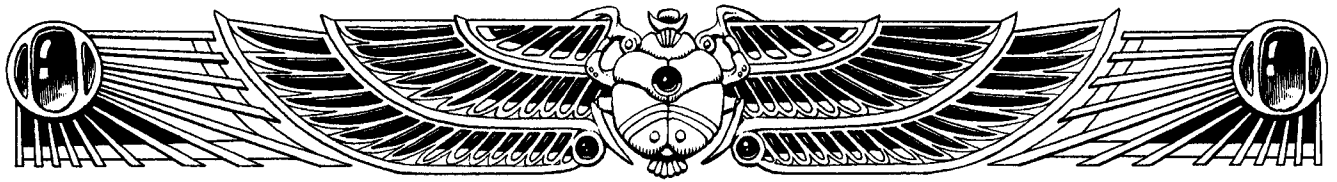
Physical Armor: 20 (10 underside)

Mystic Armor: 18

Knockdown: 23

Recovery Tests: 8





Death Rating: 200
Wound Threshold: 23
Unconsciousness Rating: 180

Combat Movement: 100
Full Movement: 200

Karma Points: 30

Karma Step: 11

Powers: Corrupt Karma 10, Damage Shift 12, Darkness 14 (see below), Horror Mark 14, Karma Tap 11, Thought Worm 11, Spells: Circle 4 Nethermancer and Elementalist

Legend Points: 35,000

Equipment: None

Loot: Carapace worth 5,000 silver pieces. This counts as treasure worth Legend Points.

Commentary

The Horror is described in **Setting the Stage**, above. Emr'r'ko hates light, and so cloaks itself in unnatural darkness. Damage from fire- and light-based attacks automatically defeat the Horror's armor. Loud noise also unsettles the Horror; particularly intense sound-based attacks, such as the Metal Scream spell, affect the entity as if it were Harried. For less intense sound-based attacks, such as Battle Shout, add 6 steps to the attack step number. Naturally, the Horror will focus its energies on eliminating any character using such attacks.

Darkness Power

Emr'r'ko has a unique magical ability that allows it to dampen light sources of all kinds within a certain range of its location. This power gradually weakens as the light sources get farther away from the Horror. Emr'r'ko has been using its Darkness power to reduce the light cast by the characters' torches, lanterns, light-quartz crystals, and so on. In its dying curse, the Horror imbues the foundation of Hustane with this power, the effect of which will remain for ten years and ten days or until it is dispelled.

To use this power, the Horror makes a Spellcasting (4) Test. If the Spellcasting Test is successful, all light sources are reduced in effectiveness according to the Darkness Power Table. The Horror then makes a Darkness Test. The result is the Dispel Difficulty for any attempt to dispel the effects of this power. For every 5 points of Strain damage the Horror takes, double the power's area of effect. Each use of the power lasts for 24 hours. In this adventure, Emr'r'ko took 10 points of Strain damage, increasing the range of the power by a factor of 4.

DARKNESS POWER TABLE

Distance from Horror (in yards)	Effectiveness of Light Source
10	10 percent
20	25 percent
50	50 percent
100	75 percent

GOING UP

After defeating the Horror, the characters must return to the surface and report to Tonliga. They should find going back up much easier than coming down, because they know the route and have already slaughtered many of the nasty creatures in their way. Their light sources get brighter as the characters ascend, making it even easier to find their way. When the characters finally emerge in Hustane, they see darkness spreading slowly over the city from the caverns below. The darkness heralds the beginning of the Horror's curse, which worsens until the entire city is enveloped in gloom that reduces the normal effectiveness of all light sources by half. For more information about the curse, see **Campaign Ideas** (p. 49).

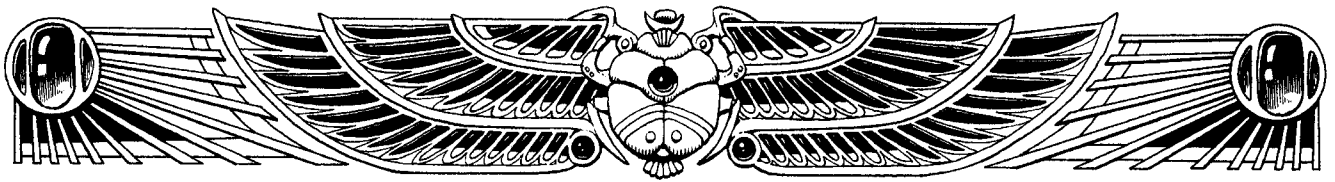
TROUBLESHOOTING

This encounter's biggest challenge is to keep the characters alive. Because this is the big battle, don't feel compelled to pull too many punches. Even high-Circle adepts often die when they fight Horrors.

If you want to go easier on the characters, have the Horror refrain from using Karma in attacks made against them. Additionally, Emr'r'ko has enough weaknesses to allow the adventurers to defeat it. To successfully complete the adventure, the characters must slay the Horror; beating a fast retreat won't produce the results they are being paid to achieve.

The gamemaster determines what happens during the return trip to the surface, but because the battle with the Horror is the climax of the adventure, the ascent should be relatively uneventful.





ENDGAME



INTERVIEW

In this encounter, the characters report to Tonliga about their journey to the caverns below Hustane. At this meeting, they learn about the involvement of Baroness Divunicus and Lendiltay, and also receive answers to any remaining questions they may have as to what was really going on.

SETTING THE STAGE

After a long hike back to the Halls of Throal and a day of rest, you tell your story to a Chancellery clerk just as Tonliga instructed. He writes down your every word, and with a practiced smile assures you that he will deliver it to Tonliga personally.

The next morning, an unfamiliar dwarf accosts you in the Grand Bazaar and politely but firmly asks you to follow him on "official business." He leads you to Tonliga's office, where you find Tonliga's chief aide, a well-dressed and dignified young dwarf woman, and a slightly older dwarf male who is failing to hide his extreme agitation.

"May I present Baroness Divuna Divunicus of Hustane," says Tonliga's chief aide, "and Lendiltay of House Moberl." As you murmur appropriate greetings, Tonliga walks into the room.

Tonliga nods in greeting and speaks to you. "It seems you were not the only explorers who ventured beneath Hustane in the past few days. The others you met were sent by Baroness Divunicus and Lendiltay." Tapping a sheaf of documents on his desk, he continues. "I've read the account of your expedition. Now I'd like to hear the story from you. Neither the Baroness nor Lendiltay has heard any part of your tale, and I'm sure they will find it interesting. Whenever you're ready . . ."

THEMES AND IMAGES

This encounter is all politicking, and the characters are out of their depth. Despite having been primarily responsible for resolving the situation in Hustane, the final outcome is not in their hands, but in the hands of the Throalic government. The characters should feel like spectators to the entire event, even though they played a significant part in it.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The characters will recognize the Baroness and Lendiltay by name, as the current Baroness of Hustane and the former baron of Oshane deposed by the king for incompetence. Both these nobles are of House Moberl, and the characters should guess right away that they have walked into an unusual (and tense) political situation.

Unless the characters already know the truth about the other explorers (which is unlikely), they find out in this encounter who the others were and why they were down beneath Hustane. Depending on how the characters dealt with those groups when they met them, the truth may or may not be good news.

Before the characters relate their adventure, ask the players if their characters gave the clerk an accurate account of the journey and their meetings with the other exploring parties. If they told the clerk the truth, they should have little trouble in this encounter. If they exaggerated or lied, they may face some difficulty.

Unless the gamemaster wishes to complicate matters, assume that survivors of the other exploring groups told their respective employers the truth as well. The members of either group may have exaggerated about specific details, but the essence of their stories should match the characters' account.

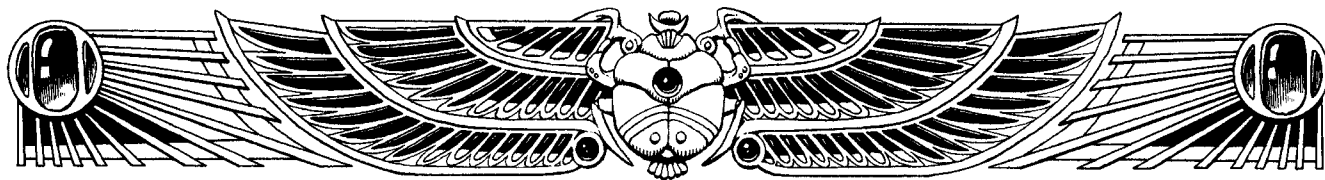
If the gamemaster decides that one or both of the other parties lied or exaggerated in telling their versions of the adventure, he must then determine the reactions of Baroness Divunicus, Lendiltay or both to the characters' tale. This may teach the characters an important lesson about politics; namely, that the truth is less important than the person telling it. The gamemaster may also need to adjust some of the material presented below, depending on how each group of explorers altered their version of the story.

The following paragraphs offer guidelines for resolving this scene, based on the specific events and circumstances of the adventure.

If any of Lendiltay's explorers made it back:

Lendiltay will be present for the meeting, as described in **Setting the Stage**. To his obvious irritation he is introduced only as Lendiltay of House Moberl, with no other title.





Lendiltay's actions depend on how the characters dealt with his hirelings. If the characters negotiated an agreement with Lendiltay's people to take the matter to Tonliga for adjudication, Lendiltay is quietly intense. He is still angry about Divuna's appointment to the barony of Hustane, but the characters will not be in his line of fire. If the characters got Lendiltay's explorers to agree to keep the Horror a secret (see **Going Down**, p. 39), Lendiltay may not know about Emr'r'ko, unless the gamemaster decides that Lendiltay's explorers did not keep their word.

If the adventurers injured or killed any of his explorers, Lendiltay will act outraged. He will accuse them of brutality or even murder, and rant at Tonliga for hiring such callous brigands. In response, Divuna will point out that Lendiltay's own lack of judgment cost him his previous position, a comment that will only add fuel to the fire. Eventually he will calm down, as his tirade is mostly for show. Hirelings are hirelings, and Lendiltay does not care personally about any of them. When Tonliga threatens to toss him out, he will settle down immediately for fear of missing the characters' story.

If none of Lendiltay's explorers made it back:

Lendiltay will not know about Emr'r'ko and will not be at the meeting, and so the gamemaster will need to adjust **Setting the Stage** appropriately. Divuna thanks the adepts for helping to resolve a touchy political situation (whether they actually did so or not). Tonliga elaborates slightly, saying that certain factions wished to see Divuna fail before she even took up her post. He does not want to know the details of the characters' dealings with Lendiltay's group, and stops them if they start talking about it.

If the characters dealt peacefully with Arrisaz's party:

Divuna thanks the characters for treating peacefully with her hirelings and apologizes for hedging her bets, but explains that a proper ruler can never place all her trust in a single solution. If the adventurers assisted Saryz in some way, especially if they brought her back with them, Divuna commends them for their actions and offers them a place to stay should they ever travel to Hustane.

If the characters attacked Arrisaz's party:

If any of Divuna's explorers survived, she will have heard their version of the conflict and will give the characters a scathing piece of her mind. If none of her hirelings made it back, she will suspect that the characters either killed them or injured them so badly that they succumbed to some other hazard, and she will ask pointed questions about whether or not the characters met her people. She

will pick at the tiniest inconsistency in the characters' story, pushing Tonliga (and likely the characters) to the limits of his patience.

IN CONCLUSION

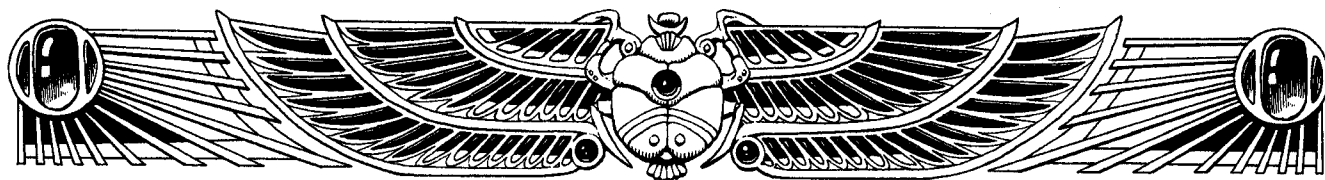
After the characters tell their tale, their part in the adventure is over. In **Deep Trouble**, taking out the Horror is only part of the adventure; the player characters must also relate their account of the expedition to the appropriate people in an appropriate fashion. If they don't realize it when they begin, by the end of this adventure they will recognize that their actions, especially in Throal, can result in unexpected consequences. How the characters handle themselves in this meeting will determine their future with the Throalic government and various political factions in the dwarf kingdom. They have an opportunity to make a friend of the future ruler of Hustane, and to prove themselves capable of handling touchy situations in front of an Officer of the Court. If Lendiltay is present, they may even impress him as professionals who are not afraid to do whatever the situation requires. Lendiltay may hire them himself at some future time. Business is business, and personal grudges are an expensive indulgence. The characters should leave the meeting with a clearer picture of Throal's fractious politics, and wonder at least a little just how far they have wandered into the mire.

If they handled things especially badly, they may find it hard to get more work in Throal. Tonliga, Divuna and possibly Lendiltay will tell everyone they know that the characters bungled this delicate matter, and word will get around that the characters cannot be trusted with real responsibility.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The biggest source of potential problems in this encounter is Lendiltay. His presence, especially if he is angry, offers plenty of opportunities to provoke the characters into acting carelessly or reacting to Lendiltay's heated rhetoric without thinking. If he manages to aggravate them into taking an extreme and unwise action, such as drawing a weapon, he simply stalks haughtily out of the room, pleased to have forced the player characters to show themselves in a bad light. Even if Tonliga agrees with the characters in their dislike of Lendiltay and acknowledges that they were acting under difficult circumstances, starting a fight in Tonliga's office will mean the end of adventures in Throal. The least the characters could hope for is exile, and they may fare worse. On the bright side, however, getting booted out of Throal could kick off a whole new campaign.





LOOSE ENDS



This section wraps up the adventure's loose ends, suggests ways to use story elements and characters from **Deep Trouble** in future **Earthdawn** adventures, offers guidelines for awarding Legend Points and provides game statistics for the major gamemaster characters.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

Whether or not the characters slay Emr'r'ko, the Horror's curse of darkness falls on Hustane. Rumors of the curse begin to spread through Throal, creating an atmosphere of unease. The opening of Hustane will be somewhat delayed, depending on the player characters' success or failure. Whatever the outcome, the politics surrounding it will remain complicated and nasty.

If the characters are successful, they come to the attention of several highly placed people in Throal, which may be good or bad. On the one hand, the Royal Chancellery is likely to offer them future work; they may even be hired to attempt to dispel the Horror's curse. Rumors spread by agents of the Eye of Throal claim that the curse was set by an evil nethermancer angry at the dwarf kingdom, and that the adepts are working to lift it. In addition, Baroness Divunicus and her supporters may also have work for the characters. On the other hand, Divuna's enemies may seek revenge for the thwarting of their plans.

If the characters fail in their mission but survive, they will get no more job offers from anyone highly placed in Throal for quite a long time. In addition, the king might reconsider Divuna's appointment to the barony of Hustane, and he may end up giving the office to another House entirely. After all this trouble within House Moberl, King Varulus is likely to think twice before assigning the baronetcy to another Moberl noble. Hustane's opening will be delayed while another party of adepts slays the Horror and lifts the curse, and while dwarf engineers shore up the foundations of the city. The people of Throal will grow restless as rumors of curses and monsters spread, and some may start moving away from the dwarf kingdom.

AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

Award Legend Points for this adventure as described in the **Introduction**, p. 6. The adventure goal is to defeat the Horror. The Adventure Award for **Deep Trouble** is 1,000 Legend Points.

CREATIVE ROLEPLAYING AND HEROICS

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

Negotiating a solution with Baroness Divunicus's party	200
Negotiating a solution with Lendiltay's party	200
Keeping the adventure a secret	200
Rescuing Saryz Attrin	200
Debriefing successfully with Divuna	100
Debriefing successfully with Lendiltay	200

Note that the player characters may not earn a Legend Point award for negotiating with an exploring party and for defeating them; they receive only one of those rewards.

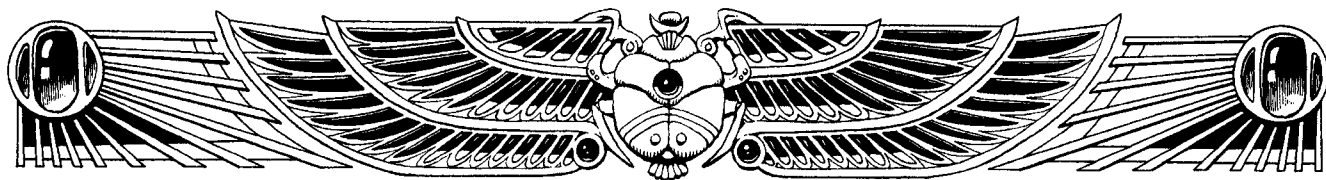
DEFEATING CREATURES AND OPPONENTS

Award the characters Legend Points for defeating opponents and creatures as shown on the Creature/Opponent Award Table.

CREATURE/OPPONENT AWARD TABLE

Creature/Opponent	5 Players	6 Players	7 Players
Dendok	140	140	140
Thugs	1,100	1,320	1,540
Divuna's explorers	1,030	1,030	1,030
Lendiltay's explorers	1,830	1,830	1,830
Cave Crickets	5,600	6,720	7,840
Stonecrushers	2,500	3,000	3,500
Emr'r'ko	35,000	35,000	35,000
Total	47,200	49,040	50,880
Award per Character	9,440	8,170	7,270





TREASURE

In this adventure, the characters may decide to take the claws of the stonecrushers and Emr'r'ko's carapace. Stonecrusher claws are worth roughly 1,560 Legend Points; the Horror's carapace is worth 5,000 Legend Points.

TOTAL LEGEND POINT AWARD

Based on the figures listed for each Legend Point Award, a single character who completes **Deep Trouble** receives an average of 11,360 Legend Points. This average assumes a group of 6 players and does not include points earned for optional encounters or for finding treasure created by the gamemaster.

CAMPAIGN IDEAS

If the characters succeed, they have proven themselves capable and discreet, and so the Royal Chancellery will have other work for them. Baroness Divunicus will owe them a favor, and will be glad to grant it if the adventurers did not massacre her explorers. The Chancellery or the Baroness

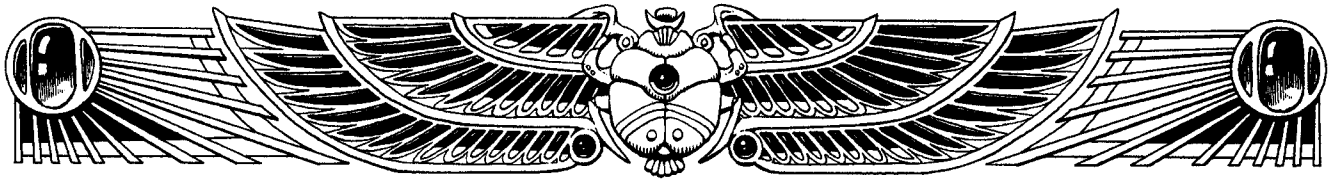
may hire the characters to find and destroy the focus of the Horror's curse, a task that requires adepts of great skill and courage. The characters might also be hired to accompany teams of engineers venturing beneath Hustane to repair the damage done by the Horror and its constructs. Though Emr'r'ko is gone, more cave crickets and stonecrushers may still roam the tunnels beneath the city.

Depending on how the adventurers handle Lendiltay and his hired explorers, he may become a bitter enemy, a possible employer, or simply an annoying troublemaker.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

This section offers descriptions and abbreviated statistics for Lendiltay's explorers: an ork nethermancer, a dwarf warrior, an elf thief, a troll illusionist and a dwarf weaponsmith. The exploring party also includes three dwarf soldiers who are not adepts. For them, use the statistics given for the dwarf thugs in **Ever Have the Feeling ... ?** (p. 36). For the adept explorers, use the descriptions and step numbers given below to work up complete statistics as necessary.





NOVODTIC DRENEX FIFTH CIRCLE ORK NETHERMANCER

Quiet and cynical, with the air of someone who has abandoned most of his illusions about life, Novodtic is amazingly methodical for an ork. Only one thing rouses his gahad—Name-givers stubbornly holding onto false hopes and beliefs. Novodtic keeps himself in excellent shape, exercising in secret and hiding his impressive muscles under voluminous robes as an unpleasant surprise for Name-givers who assume all nethermancers are weaklings. Novodtic finds grim amusement in messing with people's minds, using his Engaging Banter to tie them up in pointless discussions and then telling them things about Horrors that will give them nightmares for weeks.

Attributes

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

CRIF ERMOREEM FIFTH CIRCLE DWARF WARRIOR

Crif is the embodiment of most people's notions about dwarf warriors: rugged, powerful, not bright, and stubborn as a glacier. He is unmatched at improvising weapons and strategy, and will use any tactic that might give him an edge over his opponent. In combat, he likes to get in close and use his wrist carvers on the legs of tall Name-givers and the necks of short ones, then finish them off with his sword while they're still checking to see where they're bleeding. Crif is the group's spokesman, and so the characters are most likely to interact with him.

Attributes

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

HIATORI CAHZ FIFTH CIRCLE ELF THIEF

Hiatori is a lovely, graceful elf who can entice Name-givers of any race into her arms with a single burning glance. Her cold-heartedness matches her charm, making her an extremely gifted practitioner of her Discipline. Who needs to sneak around to steal when you can make people hand over their valuables to you just for the privilege of basking in your presence? Once their money is gone, she drops her conquests, leaving them with empty pockets and a broken heart. Hiatori understands the attraction most Name-givers feel toward the exotic and the dangerous, and uses her wiles like bait on a hook. When crossed, she is a vicious opponent, with a blowgun and extensive knowl-

edge of windling poisons. She enjoys paralyzing her enemies, then discussing her pique while removing small bits of them with a dagger.

Attributes

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

T'PORIF THE REDEEMER FIFTH CIRCLE TROLL ILLUSIONIST

As a troll illusionist with impressive reserve, T'porif is an unusual person. Of lowland stock, he carries himself with dignity. Only the most observant people catch the faint smile constantly playing around his eyes and the corners of his mouth, evidence of his vast secret amusement at the world. Given to elaborate pranks and subtle jests, he finds it almost as amusing when people don't get the joke as when they do. Life is funny, and the deceptions people practice, especially the lies they tell themselves about their existence, are utterly ridiculous. One who reveals these lies for what they are just might redeem a fellow Name-giver from his inner illusions. A great believer in comfort, T'porif doesn't hold with unnecessary suffering, his own or someone else's. Despite his quiet manner, when angered or in danger he can lop off heads with his troll sword as efficiently as any troll raider. He uses his size to advantage, running over his enemies and slaughtering them once they are down.

Attributes

DEX: 5 STR: 8 TOU: 7
PER: 6 WIL: 6 CHA: 5

JADRIS GANTRIEF FIFTH CIRCLE DWARF WEAPONSMITH

Having long ago abandoned any idea of family, Jadris considers herself married to her work. The forge is her altar. The creation and history of weapons consumes her. The possibility of uncovering any new secret of her craft draws her like a moth to a flame. Anything that gets between her and this knowledge must be overcome or destroyed. Her obsessiveness worries people, especially her fellow explorers in this adventure. She feels no regard for her appearance. With muscles the envy of any man, dark hair hacked off randomly whenever it got in her way and old burn scars criss-crossing her face and hands, she fails to embody anyone's idea of female beauty.

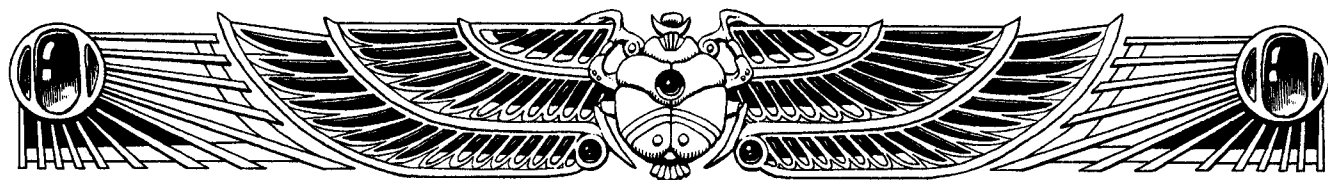
Attributes

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

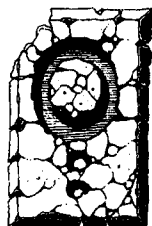


THE WAY OUT





INTERVIEW WITH THE BARON



With the tip of his steel dagger, Baron Mardek of Valvria gestured toward the empty chair at the end of the table. "For the last time, Lady Pono, please sit down."

Ela Pono felt her gahad pushing up through her throat. How *dare* this pompous, overdressed windbag sit there and clean his fingernails, expecting her to sit at his order like a biddable child! "Braza take you, Mardek! Not even you can abduct a scholar from the library of Throal and expect to go unpunished."

Mardek looked up a second time from his knife work, and as suddenly as it had arisen, Ela's gahad evaporated. At first she wondered if the ork baron had done something, but then she realized that her own scholarly curiosity had short-circuited her rage ... specifically, her curiosity about Mardek's fingernails. Carefully manicured, with a pale, pearly sheen, they looked nothing like a typical ork's unruly claws. She suddenly wished that her own fingernails looked so elegant.

By the time she reached the end of this train of thought, Ela found herself sitting down precisely where Mardek had told her to sit.

"Lady Pono," Baron Mardek began, "you sold me a map. You certified that this map was the genuine work of Captain Westhrall of House V'strimon, and that it represented the safest river route from the Coil River, through the underground caverns, into Throal. Your research led you to believe that the terminus of this route lay directly underneath the dome of the present-day city of Valvria. All this may be true—but after investing much effort and a considerable sum of money, I have come to the unfortunate conclusion that you have not been entirely honest with me."

Ela shifted uneasily in her chair. The cushion was worn too thin for comfort, and the back of the chair pressed into her muscles in exactly the wrong way. Cursing her nerves, she schooled her face to a neutral expression. Thom Edrull had always told her to choose her customers wisely. Courting Baron Mardek may have been a mistake. "My lord," she said, with her best innocent-question look, "I don't follow your line of reasoning."

"Then let me make it clear," the baron continued. "First, you neglected to inform me that the terminus was

more than 150 yards under the floor of my city. Do you understand the effort required to cut a shaft like that without drawing attention from the Royal Engineers? Second, you neglected to mention that the route runs along the fringe of Braza's Kingdom. As a scholar, you ought to be familiar with some of the denizens of that place—unless your pressing duties have not allowed you to read as widely as you should? I can assure you, the survivors of the first two missions I sent underground are quite, shall we say, intimately acquainted with them. Third—and I'm not certain how this detail escaped your attention—your map appears to end somewhat short of the Coil River or one of its tributaries. In fact, if my sources are correct, your map is little more than half complete."

Like a wicked spirit called by an unwary magician, Ela's memories of Braza's Kingdom flooded over her. Forcing them aside, she chose her words carefully. "If you feel I overcharged you for the information, perhaps we might arrange a reasonable refund."

Mardek smiled, showing teeth as clean as his nails. "We could, indeed ... if I happened to be feeling reasonable."

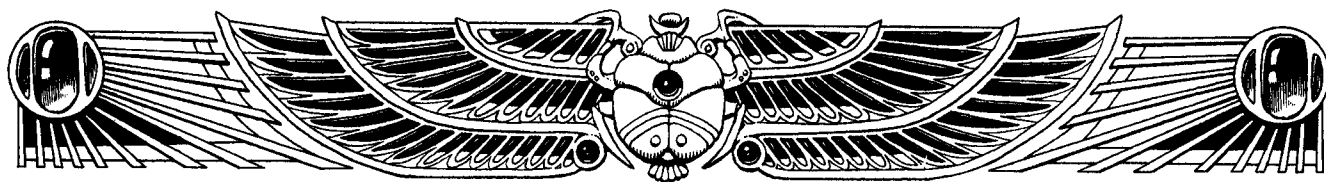
Ela swallowed hard. "What can we do to put you in a reasonable mood, my lord?"

Mardek laid down his dagger and leaned toward Ela. "One way or another, Lady Pono, I want the other half of that map. If you can't find it in the library of Throal ... well, you'll simply have to accompany my next expedition and draw out the rest of the route based on your own first-hand experience."

"My lord!" Ela protested, "I am no longer a b'jados, but a scholar. I cannot—"

Suddenly Mardek was out of his chair and standing right in front of her, the point of his dagger at her throat. "'Cannot' is no longer a part of your vocabulary, Ela Pono. You tried to cross me and you failed. Now your life is mine to spend as I will."





THE WAY OUT



The *Way Out* takes the player characters on a journey into the depths of the Kingdom of Throal, where the Pale Ones dwell and survival is always uncertain. This adventure is best suited for six to eight Third or Fourth Circle characters. *The Way Out* begins as a linear adventure but becomes more open-ended as it progresses, with the final outcome based on the actions of the player characters.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

During the Theran War, the Theran navy came close to destroying the delicate economy of the Kingdom of Throal by cutting off Throal's overland supply lines to the rest of Barsaive. In answer to this threat, the famous riverboat captain Westhrall of House V'strimon took his ship, *Astendar's Dart*, and blazed a trail from the Coil River to the caverns of Throal, using the underground rivers in the region. This underground supply line provided food and valuable raw materials to Throal's inhabitants, and brought back to the rest of Barsaive many of the weapons and spells that enabled Barsaive's people to defeat the Theran enemy.

After the war, King Varulus III ordered the underground river routes closed, sensibly claiming that they represented a threat to Throal's security that only the necessities of wartime could justify. The closing was easily accomplished because the network of subterranean caverns through which the rivers flowed was so labyrinthine that only regular manned stations along the routes prevented incoming riverboats from becoming hopelessly lost.

Recently, Baron Mardek Silkback of Valvria has begun secretly attempting to reopen the underground river routes to Throal. An ambitious ork and a consummate politician, Mardek would like nothing better than to take the crown of Throal for himself from the dwarf kingdom's weakening royal line. A secret road in and out of Throal would enable the baron to bring mercenaries into the kingdom under his banner, or make a quick exit should his schemes turn sour. Mardek is exceptionally loyal to Throal's ideals, but he feels that King Varulus is failing and that Prince Neden is likely to get himself killed on some foolish venture or other. If this happens, the kingdom of Throal will need

someone to protect it from the eager scions of House Ueraven and House Garsun, all of whom are circling the throne like vultures. Mardek is confident that he is just the person to save Throal from such a disaster. (For more information about Baron Mardek, see p. 138, *Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom*.)

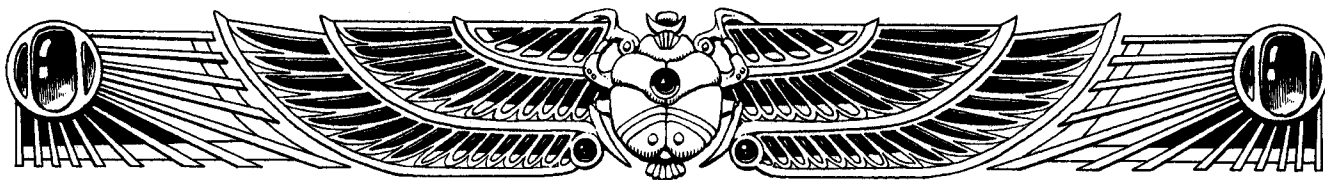
Ela Pono (p. 91, *Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom*) is an apprentice archivist in the Great Library of Throal. She has served Thom Edrull for about six years, and on many occasions acted as the front woman for Edrull's less savory activities. Prior to becoming an archivist, Ela was part of an adventuring group called the Band of Blood that mapped a section of Braza's Kingdom. When a wrong turn sent four of her best friends to a ghastly death, she retired and became a scholar at the library. Since then, she has undertaken to learn all she can about Throal's lowest depths. She recently discovered a fragment of one of Captain Westhrall's maps of the underground routes into the kingdom, which she sold to Mardek without Edrull's assistance or knowledge.

Since acquiring the map, Mardek has equipped two expeditions to follow it. The first expedition, consisting of soldiers from his bodyguard, discovered the hard way that the route passed through the fringe of Braza's Kingdom—a nesting place of Horrors and their constructs (p. 162, *Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom*). Of the three survivors, two were Horror-marked and the third has adamantly refused to return to the deep caverns.

Mardek put together a second expedition of adepts, soldiers and guides recruited from the t'skrang natives known as the Pale Ones. None of these explorers returned. Though Mardek does not know it, the company survived the Horrors in Braza's Kingdom, but discovered that the map ended far short of the exit to the surface world. The mapped route brought them to an underground lake inside a huge cavern inhabited by Pale Ones, a t'skrang dwelling-place known as the Great Dome of Yatrivash. While camped on an island in that lake, the expedition was attacked by a ferocious tribe of Pale Ones and captured as slaves.

This second expedition also wandered into a political mire. A tribe of Pale Ones known as the Raghul are trying to take over the communities in the Great Dome of Yatrivash, with the help of dwarfs from the Banned House



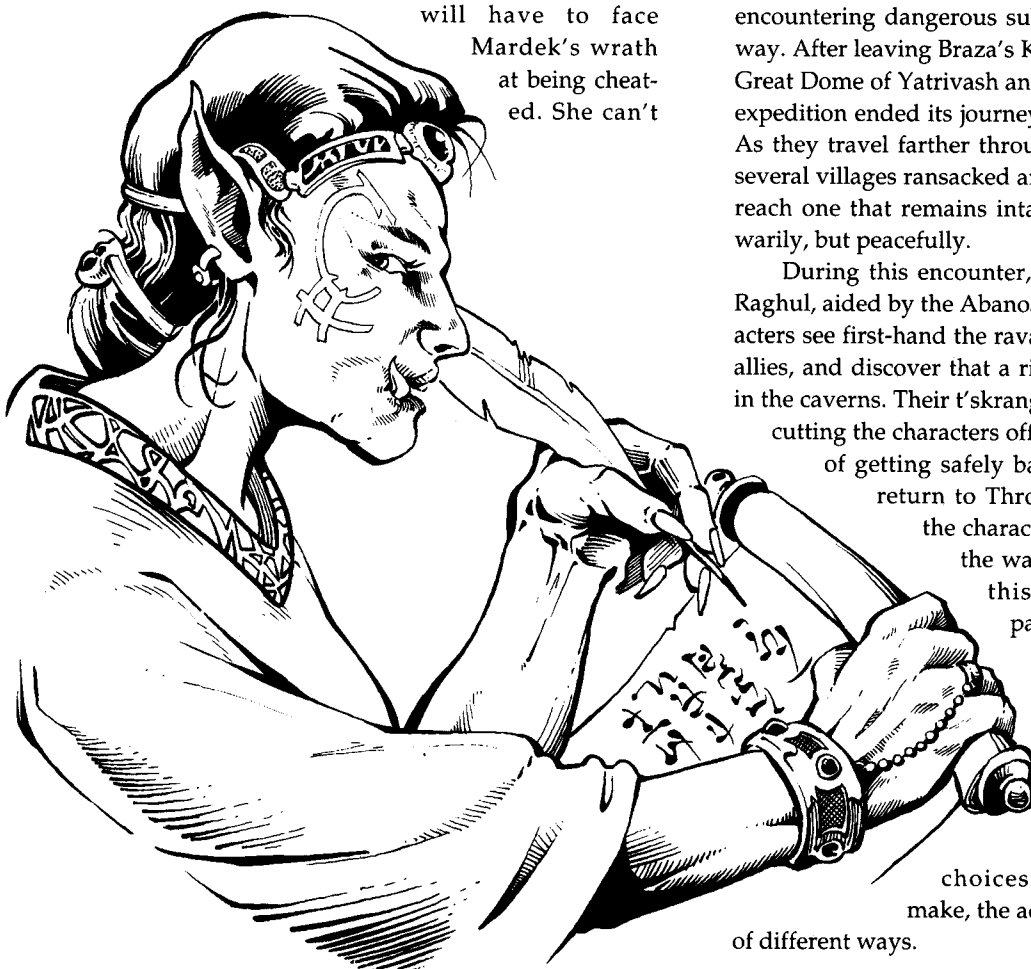


of Endour (p. 39, **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**) and t'skrang from the Abanos foundation of House K'tenshin, the House of the Nine Diamonds (p. 16, **Serpent River**). The Abanos possess the other half of Westhral's map, and are searching for a way into the Kingdom of Throal as a gift for their Theran allies. In the meantime, they are enslaving the Pale Ones of Yatrivash, whom the dwarfs of Endour are also using to mine a vein of silver ore.

Mardek has ordered Ela Pono to put together a third expedition to venture into subterranean Throal. He intends to use Ela's knowledge of Braza's Kingdom to get a small party of skilled adepts through the first part of the journey. He believes that the regiment of soldiers he sent with the second expedition attracted hostile attention from the locals, and that a small group might be seen as less of a threat.

Ela would do just about anything avoid returning to Braza's Kingdom, where she lost her friends six years ago. However, Mardek has her boxed into a corner. If she doesn't

go on the expedition, she will have to face Mardek's wrath at being cheated. She can't



approach the throne for help without risking exposure of her illegal deals at the Great Library. She can't approach Thom Edrull for fear of losing her position once he finds out she has made deals behind his back. She won't flee Throal, because she badly wants to become the first ork to be appointed Scribe and Archivist at the Great Library. Thom Edrull has promised her this position, should he succeed Merrox as Master of the Hall of Records. She has no choice but to follow Mardek's orders and hope to survive.

Ela Pono hires the player characters to accompany her far beneath the kingdom of Throal. She tells them she has found a fragment of a map that shows a route from the Serpent River into the Throal Mountains, and that she must verify its authenticity. By the time she approaches the characters, Ela has already acquired two native guides from the Pale Ones, a raft and 30 days' worth of provisions. She offers them a generous advance for equipment costs and pledges them to secrecy about the mission.

The adepts follow Ela's map from the terminus of the old supply route, skirting the edge of Braza's Kingdom and encountering dangerous subterranean creatures along the way. After leaving Braza's Kingdom behind, they reach the Great Dome of Yatrivash and find evidence that the second expedition ended its journey on the island in the vast lake. As they travel farther through the Great Dome, they find several villages ransacked and abandoned. Eventually they reach one that remains intact; the inhabitants greet them warily, but peacefully.

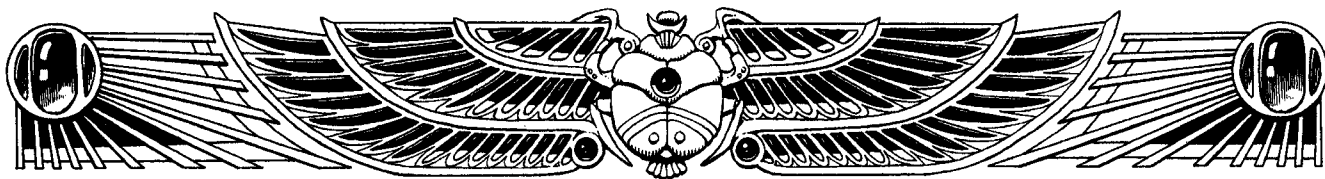
During this encounter, the village is attacked by the Raghul, aided by the Abanos of House K'tenshin. The characters see first-hand the ravages of the Raghul tribe and its allies, and discover that a riverboat is moored somewhere in the caverns. Their t'skrang guides are killed in the battle, cutting the characters off from their only reliable means

of getting safely back to the surface. In order to return to Throal and the world they know, the characters must forge ahead and find the way out on their own. Of course, this means they must first slip past, infiltrate, assault or retreat from the Raghul and K'tenshin warriors. As they plan their escape, the characters also discover that the allies of the Raghul include dwarfs from the Banned House of Endour. Depending on the

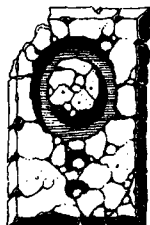
choices that the player characters make, the adventure may end in a number

of different ways.





INVITATION TO AN EXPEDITION



INTERVIEW

In this encounter, the characters are approached by Ela Pono, an apprentice archivist at the Great Library of Throal. She says she has discovered a fragment of what could be a map made by the great Captain Westhrall of House V'strimon during the

Theran War, which shows an underground route linking the Serpent River and the dwarf kingdom. She wants to hire the characters to accompany her on an expedition to authenticate the map.

SETTING THE STAGE

The Reading Room in the Great Library of Throal is the quietest hall in the kingdom. Even the most garrulous dwarf feels the weight of contemplation among the reading tables and book-stacked shelves, as if the Library was a temple dedicated to some Passion of learning. No voice in the Library rises above a quiet murmur—and rarely even that in the Reading Room, where debate is forbidden. Dwarfs being dwarfs, of course, many a whispered argument has started in the Reading Room and then moved outside the Library's massive brass doors. For those less inclined to constant discussion than the typical citizen of Throal, the Great Library is a blessed oasis of silence.

"Are you finding these writings helpful?" a soft voice inquires, accompanied by a rustle of silk. You glance up from the scrolls you've been reading, and see an ork woman in the yellow robes of a library apprentice standing by your table. Before you can answer her, she leans toward you with a smile, placing both hands on the tabletop. "If you need anything else, I can get it for you."

You shake your head, thanking her graciously. She bows her head and withdraws. As she steps away, you notice that she has left behind a small piece of brown parchment, pushed half-under your sheaf of papers. You pick it up and read:

Dear Sir,

If you and your company are not otherwise engaged, I wish to employ your services on an expedition into the deep subterranean regions of Throal. My employer has

authorized me to offer 1,200 silver pieces each for the successful completion of this exploratory mission. If you wish to know more, please come to the tavern called Ambica's Beard in the city of Valvria, tomorrow at the tenth hour. Please also come prepared to depart immediately on the expedition, should you decide to accept the offer.

With respect,

Ela Pono

Apprentice Archivist of the Great Library of Throal

THEMES AND IMAGES

A sense of mystery drives this first encounter. The characters should be forced to balance their desire for the silver with their natural suspicion that Ela's "exploratory mission" involves more than she is admitting.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The adventure begins with the characters in the Reading Room of the Great Library of Throal. The gamemaster may wish to create a brief scenario that leads the characters to the library, or may have Ela seek them out at their lodgings if none of the characters has reason or desire to be visiting the Library. If the player characters press Ela for more information immediately, she replies that she can say no more until the appointed place and hour, and she will stick to this position. If any of the characters is foolish enough to try strong-arming anything out of Ela, point out that physically threatening a staff member of the Library will undoubtedly draw the attention of the Royal Guards stationed at the doors.

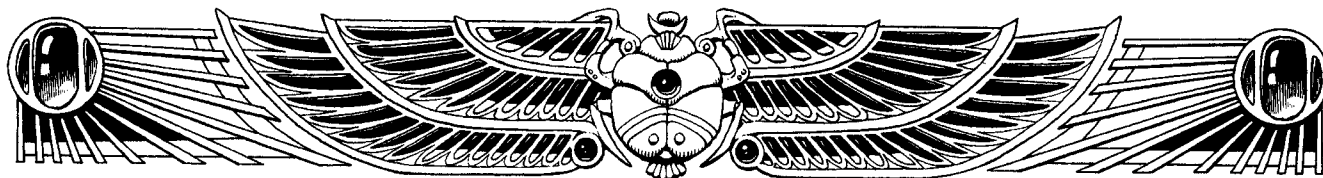
WHO IS ELA PONO?

If the characters ask around in hopes of learning more about Ela Pono, they can use their Streetwise, Conversation, or Research skills, or simply make Interaction Tests (p. 237, ED). The Difficulty Number for all such skill or Interaction tests is 12. How much the characters learn depends on the success level they achieve, as shown on the table below.

AT AMBICA'S BEARD

Ambica's Beard is located in a working-class neighborhood of the Inner City of Valvria. The tavern's sign,





Success Level

Information

Average

Ela Pono is an apprentice archivist at the Library of Throal, attached to the staff of Thom Edrull.

Good

Ela specializes in studies of Throal's subterranean regions.

Excellent

Ela was once a member of the Band of Blood, a b'jados group that explored Braza's Kingdom deep beneath Throal.

Extraordinary

Ela has been known to provide "special services" to library patrons in exchange for cash.

sists mostly of guards and b'jados who work for the dwarf trade houses based in Valvria, and most of them are much better behaved than the stereotypical ork. The Beard has only one house rule—no fights. If a fight looks likely to break out, every customer in the place will converge on the offenders and manhandle them out into the street.

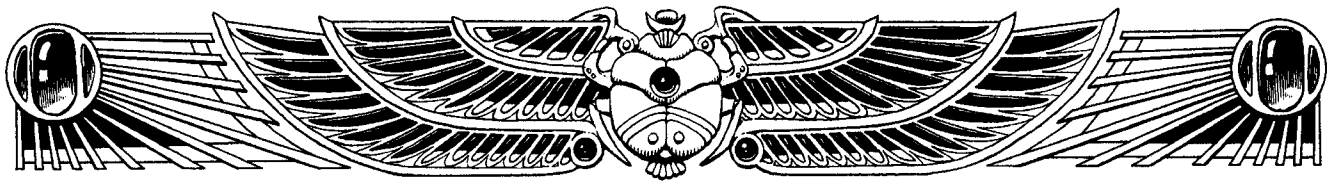
When the characters arrive, Ela Pono is sitting at a corner table sipping a mug of hurlg, the stiff ork brew that tastes and smells exactly like it sounds. She will wait for the group to approach her, then ask them to sit down. She may engage in a little light banter if the players want to roleplay it, but she will soon get down to business.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following paragraphs:

"To business, then. I recently came across part of a most interesting map, showing the way from the Kingdom of Throal to an underground river system that runs beneath the Throal Mountains. According to my research, this map might be part of the one made by Captain

painted in unusually detailed fashion for such an establishment, shows a drunken ork pulling hard on the beard of an otherwise female-looking dwarf. The tavern's clientele con-





Westhrall during the Theran War, when he first discovered the underground route between the Serpent River and the dwarf kingdom. I want you to accompany me on an expedition to find out if my research is correct. My employer wants very much to authenticate the map, and has sent two expeditions already. Unfortunately, neither succeeded. The first retreated when they discovered that the mapped route runs close to Braza's Kingdom, a dangerous place rumored to be full of Horrors. The second expedition was accompanied by a sizable band of soldiers, but I have heard nothing from them since they left more than two weeks ago.

"I believe we can avoid the dangers that beset the first two expeditions. We must skirt the edge of Braza's Kingdom, then follow the map into a great cavern where the Pale Ones live and search for a river outlet. I know the Pale Ones' language, and will act as translator. I have already hired two native guides, Pale Ones who know the terrain around and near the cavern. They have given us one of their own rafts, by far the safest and fastest means to travel the underground waterways.

"Upon our return, you will each receive 2,000 silver pieces in addition to the 1,200 I mentioned in my letter. Any treasure we may find on the way is ours to keep—but I must be honest with you, I've been in the area before and haven't found much. I also want you to know that my employer has arranged for a stipend for me and the guides, an amount of money that decreases for each member of the expedition lost. I tell you this so that you understand that I have a vested interest in getting every one of us out alive.

"Of course, the senior staff at the Library and even the King himself are concerned that our expedition remain confidential. If word should get out that a navigable route between the Serpent River and Throal existed, it would threaten everyone's safety. Our work must remain a secret, you understand? Even after we return, none of us can say anything to anyone about it. You must each swear a simple blood oath with me that you will keep the expedition and its outcome a secret for a year and day."

This deal is completely straightforward, at least as far as the fees are concerned; Ela has no authority to negotiate the cash reward. The blood oath may seem like an unusual twist, but such oaths are typically sworn by a b'jados to his or her employer in Throal. This oath simply requires each character to share his blood with Ela while swearing to go on the mission and keep it a secret. Each character takes 1 point of permanent damage to activate the blood oath, which cannot be healed for a year and a day. If a character violates the oath for any reason, accidentally or

on purpose, he suffers a Blood Oath Wound (p. 49, **Earthdawn Gamemaster Pack**). Ela takes 1 point of damage for each of the adepts in the exploring party.

After hearing Ela out, the characters may have a few questions for her. If they ask how long the journey will take, Ela estimates fifteen to twenty days out and ten to fifteen days back to Throal. The expedition will get under way as soon as the characters swear the blood oath.

If the characters want to know what happens should Ela die on the mission, she tells them to report to Ambica's Beard for three nights after their return to Throal. Ela has arranged for a friend at the tavern to pay the characters the rest of their fee by the third day.

As for supplies, Ela has already acquired 30 days' worth of provisions for a party of ten; poles, tarps and waterskins; four light-crystal lanterns; ropes, fish nets, lines, hooks and floats; chalk for leaving marks on the cavern walls; quills and paper; a stove plant; and a variety of trinkets, cloth and steel items for trade with the Pale Ones. If the characters need or want anything else beyond that, they must purchase it with their own money, and quickly.

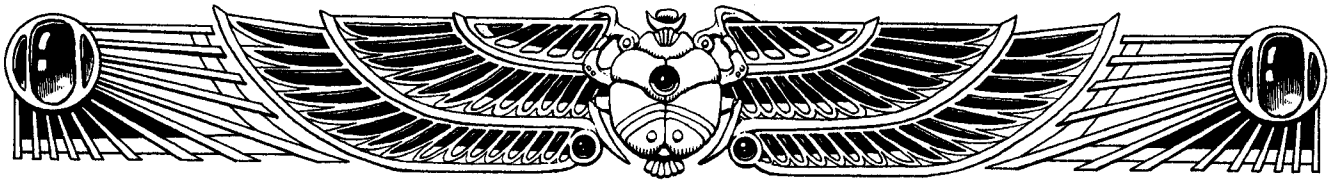
TROUBLESHOOTING

If the characters refuse Ela's offer, the adventure ends before it starts. Because the characters have little reason to distrust Ela at this point, however, this problem should not arise.

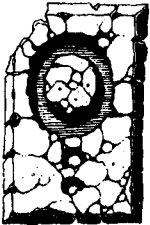
If the characters do refuse the job, after some time goes by, Baron Mardek might approach them through another agent. This agent explains that Ela's expedition has failed to return, and offers the characters a reward to find out the expedition's fate. The adventure can then be run pretty much as written, but the characters will not have Ela's expert help. In this event, Ela will be enslaved in the dwarf mining camp (see **Enslaved!**, p. 72).

The Way Out assumes that the characters are not employed directly by the Kingdom of Throal in any capacity. If they do work for Throal, the gamemaster can still run the adventure with a slight alteration. If the characters report Ela's offer to their employer (the Eye of Throal, Arm of Throal, His Majesty's Exploratory Force, or whoever) their superiors will ask them to go on the mission and submit a detailed report afterward. They will also ask the characters to do their best to recover the map fragment, along with any maps made during the mission that show the route from the Great Dome of Yatrivash to the Serpent River. See **Possible Outcomes**, p. 75 in **Loose Ends**, for more information about this turn of events.





SHUSS HALIMA



VIEW

In this encounter the characters enter the underground realm that the t'skrang call Shuss Halima, following the map fragment in search of the connection between the Kingdom of Throal and the Serpent River.

SETTING THE STAGE

Ela Pono leads you through the streets to the edge of the city. Valvria is a recently completed Inner City, and plenty of land remains unsettled between the outskirts of town and the steep cavern walls.

Ela steers you toward a large, low building. Walking inside, you see crates and barrels stacked on long rows of shelves. Ela turns down one of these rows, walks about twenty feet, then suddenly stops and stomps on the floor. A trap door slides open, revealing a ladder leading down. You look through the trap door and see a dwarf with a lantern beckoning from the bottom of the ladder.

You climb down the ladder and find yourselves in a small basement chamber. In one corner is a huge winch and pulley system from which hangs a wicker basket large enough to hold four human-sized people. Waiting in the room along with the dwarf are two t'skrang, dressed in breechcloths and carrying barbed spears. Their skin is pale green with black-and-gold markings, and each wears a braided cord wound around each arm from wrist to neck.

THEMES AND IMAGES

This encounter begins with the familiar (the city of Valvria, a tavern, a warehouse) and becomes gradually more mysterious (the descent, the raft and the river, the carnivorous mushrooms). The characters should notice that Ela becomes increasingly apprehensive as the adventuring party draws closer to Braza's Kingdom.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The two t'skrang, whom Ela introduces as Shigo and Muravi, are the adventurers' guides. Though the expedition will go to places neither t'skrang has ever seen, their

knowledge of the underground passages and their skills in the water make them invaluable additions to the team. Muravi is delighted at this chance to practice her broken Throalic, and will join any conversation with enthusiasm.

Should you need statistics for Shigo and Muravi, use those given for the Raghul warriors on p. 79 of the **Loose Ends** section, with the following additions. Shigo has Sailing Skill 9, Fishing Skill 7 and the Knowledge Skill of Subterranean Throal 6. Muravi has Charisma 6, Social Defense 7, Sailing Skill 7, Engaging Banter Skill 7 and the Knowledge Skill Subterranean Throal 7. She also speaks Throalic well enough to get by in most situations.

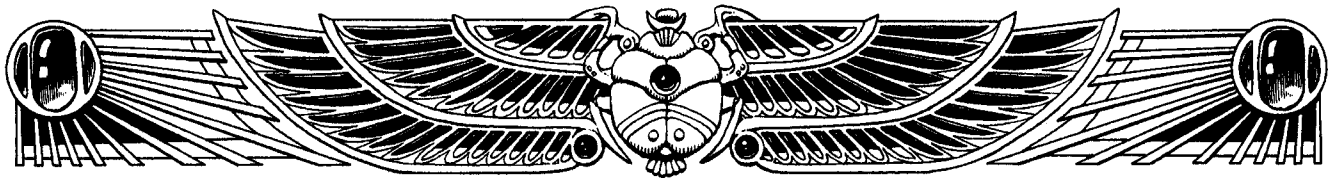
The adventurers must ride the basket down a four-hundred-foot shaft into a portion of the underground river network beneath the Throal Mountains. The winch and pulley are cunningly devised so that the dwarf caretaker can easily handle a full load by himself. The descent takes about fifteen minutes; transporting Ela, the adepts, the guides and all their assorted gear will probably take more than one trip.

The basket ride deposits the characters in a wide tunnel, about twenty feet high and sixty feet wide, with an underground river running through it. The basket drops down lightly on a fifteen-foot sandy bank between the tunnel wall and the water's edge. The rotting remains of a wooden dock extend from the bank into the water, and a raft is tied to the timbers. The raft is twelve feet wide and roughly twenty feet long.

Shigo and Muravi gather up the company's equipment and tie it down in the center of the raft. The characters may notice that the equipment is bound in a canvas tarp, and the tarp has two big "balloons" wrapped inside it. This arrangement keeps the tarp afloat in case the raft capsizes. ("No, no," Muravi assures the characters if they ask, "raft no drown!") The raft is made of more the balloon devices, lashed together on a frame of bones and covered with boiled hides stretched tight. Light crystals embedded in its fore and aft help illuminate the raft's path. The Pale Ones have devised covers for the crystals in case stealth becomes necessary.

In preparing for their raft trip, the characters should keep two things in mind: swimming skills and storage. To stay afloat for ten minutes, a character must achieve an Average or better success on a Swimming Test against a





Base Difficulty Number of 5. The Swimming Test is based on each character's Strength step, which may be reduced by the initiative penalty of the character's armor combined with the size of his largest weapon. For example, a character in chain mail with a broadsword and footman's shield would have his Strength step reduced by 7 for this test ($3 + 3 + 1 = 7$). If a character fails a Swimming Test, he begins to sink. The character must immediately make another Swimming Test; if he achieves an Average or better success, he recovers and continues swimming. If this test fails, the character must make a third Swimming Test, and must achieve a Good or better success in order to stay afloat. If this test fails, the character makes a fourth Swimming Test on which he must achieve an Excellent or better success. If he does not, he sinks beneath the surface and must hold his breath to keep from drowning. A character can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to his Toughness step. Once he can no longer hold his breath, he begins to take drowning damage.

At this point the gamemaster makes a Damage Test each round using a step number of $4 +$ the number of rounds the character has been underwater since running out of breath. No type of armor protects against this damage. The gamemaster continues to make Damage Tests each round until the character dies, is rescued, or somehow manages to break the surface.

Obsidimen cannot swim; if they fall in the water, they sink unless they can climb out. Windlings only swim if there is no other way to survive, because getting their wings wet effectively cripples them until the wings dry out.

The characters should also remember to tie down any weapons and armor they are not wearing in order to keep them from sinking to the bottom if the raft capsizes. The Pale Ones have constructed loops on the edge of the tarp, onto which the characters can bind a number of items with a total Size/Initiative Modifier of 35. Shigo and Muravi have each bound their spears (Size 4) in this fashion, and will assist the others in doing the same. Ela carries her sword, but has bound her shield (Size 1) to the side of the tarp, instead of stowing it inside, for quicker access. This allows the characters to attach an additional amount of equipment with a cumulative total Size/Initiative Modifier of 26 to the tarp. Anything bound inside the tarp (as opposed to the side loops) takes 2 Combat Rounds to retrieve.

The raft is propelled by poles and the river's current. One raftsman takes a pole at each corner, and a fifth raftsman usually sits in front and watches the river for hazards. The key to managing a raft is maintaining balance. If the weight shifts too far to one side or the other, the raft will tilt and may overturn.

EXPLORATION

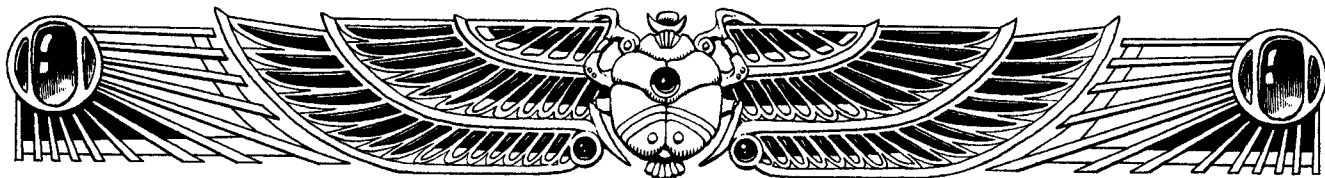
This adventure does not include a copy of Westhrall's map because playing out the adventurers' progress across every foot of the subterranean passages under the Throal Mountains would become extremely tedious. Instead, the characters measure progress toward their goal by reaching various milestones, each of which represents one day's journey by raft. Each day, a member of the expedition makes an Exploration Test against the Difficulty Number of the region through which they are traveling. If the test succeeds, the adventurers reach the next milestone—or more, depending on the level of success achieved (see the Exploration Success Table, p. 60). There are twenty milestones between the shaft below Valvria and the surface exit to the Coil River. Their general locations and Difficulty Numbers appear in the Travel Table.

TRAVEL TABLE

Milestones	Difficulty Number	General Location
1-3	10	Between the shaft from Valvria and Braza's Kingdom
4-7	12	Between Braza's Kingdom and the first island in the Great Dome
8-13	11	Across the Great Dome of Yatrivash
14	12	Between the village of Yesha and the Dragon's Jaws
15-20	11	Between the Dragon's Jaws and the surface exit near the Coil River

The step number for the Exploration Test is the character's Perception Step, increased (if appropriate) by any skills possessed by any of the other adventurers that pertain directly to the expedition's mission. This bonus is cumulative for the entire party, regardless of which individual makes the Exploration Test. For example, Ela Pono has the Knowledge Skill of Subterranean Throal 3, which adds +3 to the Exploration Test step number (see **Cast of Characters**, p. 77). The two t'skrang guides know quite a bit about traveling through the underground regions, and their expertise allows each of them to add +2 to this step number for a total of +4.





The step number of the test can be further modified by the information the explorers have collected about the region in which they are traveling. For example, Westhral's map adds +3 to all Exploration Tests for the first ten milestones. The Shivalahala Yatrivash can share enough information to add +2 to the Exploration Test for Milestones 7 through 14 (the Yatrivash and Dragon's Jaws regions), and may also be able to offer some hints about Milestones 15 through 20 (beyond the Dragon's Jaws). The t'skrang of the Abanos foundation have the other half of the Westhral map; if the characters obtain the second half of the map, it adds +3 to Exploration Tests for milestones between the Raghul encampment and the surface exit.

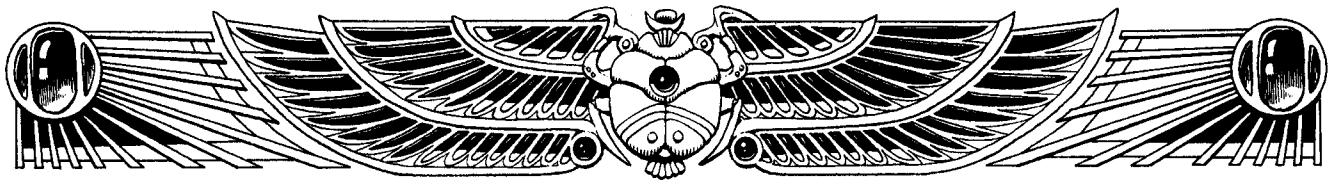
Only one character may make the Exploration Test each day. The expedition's progress depends on the success level that character achieves. If the test fails, the explorers are hopelessly lost and do not reach the next milestone on that day. The same character or another adept must make a successful Exploration Test the following day in order to reach the missed milestone.

EXPLORATION SUCCESS TABLE

Success Level	Results
Poor	Explorers are unsure where to go. Subtract 1 step from the next Exploration Test.
Average	Explorers make some progress. Move to the next milestone.
Excellent	Explorers reach 2 milestones.
Extraordinary	Explorers find a shortcut and reach 3 milestones.

The expedition can survive for thirty days on the food supplies Ela purchased, and can extend their rations by fishing. Characters should keep in mind that fishing near Braza's Kingdom (Milestones 4-7) will probably yield Horror-tainted or poisonous fish.





ENCOUNTERS

The following paragraphs briefly describe several encounters the characters may have at various milestones as they follow the map. The gamemaster may invent a description of any milestone not specifically described elsewhere in this adventure. In the first stages of the journey, the characters should run into no dangers. Describe the subterranean passages as mysterious and beautiful, brimming with unusual underground flora and fauna. Mosses, mushrooms, lichens and algae are the primary plant life, and many plants and animals are phosphorescent. In the crystal-clear waters, fish and amphibians use light to attract prey, and their wavering luminescence makes the river glitter like the night sky. The caverns are quiet, the silence broken occasionally by the plop of a creature entering the water or the buzz of some subterranean insect.

Each night the adventurers should camp on the banks of the underground river. The raft makes a poor bed for so many to sleep on, and the guides will explain the importance of mooring the raft nightly and checking the underside for wear and tear.

Milestone 2

Ela stops the raft to harvest a number of phosphorescent-green balls of fungus growing by the side of the river. She calls it brain sponge, and explains that it wards off certain kinds of Horrors. Each night, she makes sure the rest of the explorers use a little brain sponge as a pillow.

Milestone 3

The characters see a large frog, illuminated by the glow of the three-foot-wide toadstool on which it is perched. Upon closer examination, they can see the frog is struggling, as if trying to leap from the toadstool. A number of large beetles are buzzing on neighboring toadstools. Looking more closely still, the characters can see that the toadstool seems to have absorbed the frog's hind legs, and the beetles are stuck in the same manner. The toadstools are carnivorous, and the frog and beetles are tasty snacks.

Milestone 4

Ela informs the characters that they are nearing Braza's Kingdom, and so they must all look out for Horrors. Ela becomes noticeably nervous as the group moves through this region.

On the evening that the expedition first reaches this region, the characters awake to Ela Pono's screams. Ela is in the grip of a terrible nightmare. "Run, Ch'sanga, run!" she screams, over and over. When she finally comes to her

senses, she stands on shaky legs and takes her "brain sponge" to soak it in the river. When she wrings it out, three worms with hook-shaped tentacles squirm out of it. She crushes one under her heel and keeps grinding it into the ground. When she lifts her boot, the worm is still trying to move away. She stomps on it again and again. "Mindslugs," she mutters, and washes the sponge a second time.

The brain sponge tricked the mindslugs (p. 302, ED) into believing they had found a victim, thereby keeping the minor Horrors from crawling inside Ela's own head and mitigating the damage they were able to do. Ela again warns everyone to be on the lookout for signs of the Horrors. If the characters ask who Ch'sanga is, Ela replies, "That was long ago. I won't think about it now." In fact, Ch'sanga was one of Ela's former adventuring companions lost in Braza's Kingdom years ago. If the characters had much success researching Ela's background (see **Invitation to an Expedition**, p. 56), they might recognize this name.

Milestone 6

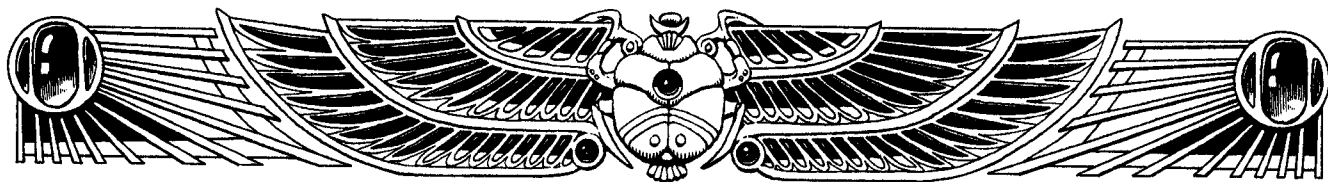
Unknown to the characters, they have intruded on the lair of a pair of jehuthras (pp. 305–6, ED). As the characters make camp at this milestone, the jehuthras attack. Using their Iron Web power to cover the entire camp, they separate the characters from one another and then attack them individually. The jehuthras will not fight to the death; if they take damage to within 10 points of their Unconsciousness Rating, they will flee into small tunnels along the cavern wall.

TROUBLESHOOTING

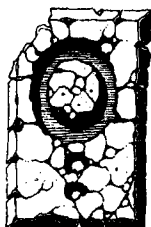
Let the players become familiar with the rhythms of going exploring. Have them set watches at night, let them enjoy the strangeness of the environment. If the results of the Exploration Tests extend the quest by several days, Ela may show signs of exasperation or fear. The more time she spends in the first stages of the journey, the more frightened she will become of losing her way in Braza's Kingdom.

The jehuthras should not pose too big a challenge for the characters. If you are concerned about harming the characters too much, have the Iron Web power separate the characters into pairs to give them better odds of surviving an attack. If any of the characters dies, Ela and the t'skrang guides each carry a Last Chance Salve that might save the unlucky character's life.





AMONG THE PALE ONES



INTERVIEW

In this encounter the characters enter the Great Dome of Yatrivash. The dome is a flooded cavern, more than twenty miles across, with islands and stalagmites rising out of its waters. The map fragment that the characters have been following ends on a deserted island just a few miles into the cavern, where they find the remains of a few members of Mardek's second expedition. As they continue across the dome, they come across abandoned villages, burned huts and decomposing corpses. Finally, they enter the village of Yesha and meet the Pale Ones of Yatrivash for the first time. The natives of Yesha challenge the characters to ritual combat, after which the village elder asks them to meet the shivalahala of the Great Dome. As they set out to speak with the Shivalahala Yatrivash, raiders from the Raghul tribe and their Abanos allies attack the village.

SETTING THE STAGE

This encounter includes several pieces of text to read aloud to the players as their characters reach Milestones 8, 9, 10 and 11.

When the characters reach Milestone 8, read the following:

The tortuous tunnels of Braza's Kingdom are behind you, and ahead of you the river has emptied into a huge subterranean lake. Shigo and Muravi have shipped their poles and are moving the raft forward with sculling oars. Massive stalagmites stretch from the cavern floor to its ceiling, dwarfing the raft on every side. Near midday, you reach a large sandbar. Close to its edge you see what looks like a shrine to the Passion Garlen—a statue of the Passion surrounded by twenty-five white stones, each covered with softly glowing green moss.

When the characters reach Milestone 9, read the following:

A raft much like your own floats abandoned in the lake. Its surface is pocked with scorch marks and what look like bloodstains. A few minutes later, you reach an island that appears inhabited. When you land on the beach, you see that the sand has been churned up, as if by many running feet. A path leads up a steep slope; along

the slope stand the ruins of a dozen dome-shaped huts, linked in groups of three or four by six-foot-high palisades. The palisades and ruined huts also show fire damage. Near the bottom of the slope lie several decomposing bodies, each covered with a thick layer of insects. Most are dwarf, but you can also identify an ork, and a t'skrang dressed in a breastplate of overlapping bones. They have been dead for several days.

When the characters reach Milestone 10, read the following:

You come across two more devastated island villages much like the one you recently encountered. The ashes of the second one are still smoldering when you arrive.

When the characters reach Milestone 11, read the following:

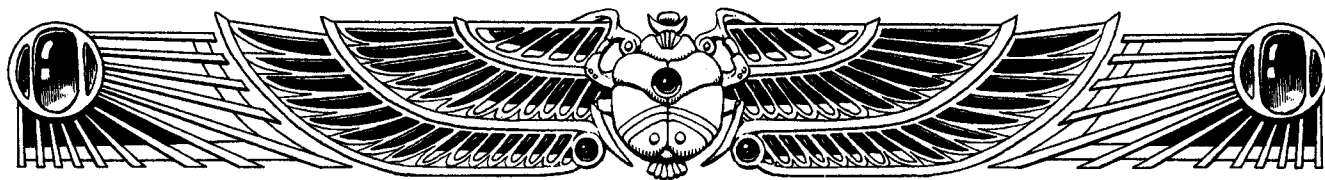
A vertical band of light appears atop one of the islands ahead. The band splits in two, then four, then eight, and then finally disappears over the lip of the cliff above as the raft enters the shadow of the island.

The raft moves along the cliff side of the island until it reaches a small inlet on the opposite side. A path climbs the gentle slope from the inlet, lined with a dozen or so huts on either side. At the peak of the island, its inhabitants have built a massive arched gathering hall. The light you saw from the water streams out of the hall's tall, narrow windows.

From the cliff top high above comes a great cry as the raft approaches the beach. The words are unintelligible, but the voice is strong enough to reverberate through the dome. As the echoes return from the walls and ceiling, the crier shifts to a song. His voice overlaps with the echoes to form unusual rhythms and harmony, as if he was accompanied by a choir.

By the time you land on the beach, the cavern has fallen unnervingly quiet. A lone t'skrang warrior stands on the sand, holding two spears. She wears a bone breastplate, and the skull of some strange aquatic creature for a headdress. Her skin gleams pale ivory. As you land she throws a spear, precisely aimed to sink deep in the sand just in front of you, and shouts out something in a strange language.





THEMES AND IMAGES

As the characters travel across the Great Dome, they see the ruins of several villages that have already fallen to the Raghul. As they approach the large island with its towering hall, they should feel vaguely uneasy; will the Pale Ones end their greeting rituals by embracing them as friends, or stringing them up?

BEHIND THE SCENES

The glowing statue of Garlen and the stones surrounding it (Milestone 8) have no magical properties; the fungus covering them gives off light naturally. The stones are about the right size for one person to carry in both hands. The characters may want to take a stone or two to use as a light source, though the stones are only about a quarter as bright as standard light-quartz. Taking a stone, of course, means disturbing the shrine. The two t'skrang guides warn the characters against this action, insisting that to disturb the stones or the statue will bring the wrath of the Passions down upon them all.

The destroyed villages (Milestones 9 and 10) are casualties of the most recent raids. If the characters look around even briefly at any of these villages, they will notice that there are too few bodies to match the number of huts in each village; clearly, more people lived in these places than were killed in the fighting. The characters may assume that the missing villagers abandoned their homes in haste and left their dead to rot. In fact, the raiders took the villagers as slaves, which the characters will most likely discover later in the adventure (see **Enslaved!**, p. 72).

MILESTONE II

At Milestone 11, the characters have reached the island village of Yesha, one of the few in this dome that has not yet fallen to the Raghul raiders. When the t'skrang warrior on the beach confronts them, Shigo and Muravi explain that the

warrior is offering ritual combat: "She say, we fight." The combat must be one-on-one with spears—the character chosen to fight may wear armor, but may use no other weapon. The guides say that the battle must be fought to first blood—as soon as the warrior or the character takes a wound, the ritual combat is over. Neither Ela nor the two t'skrang guides will offer to fight, and so the characters must choose a champion from among themselves.

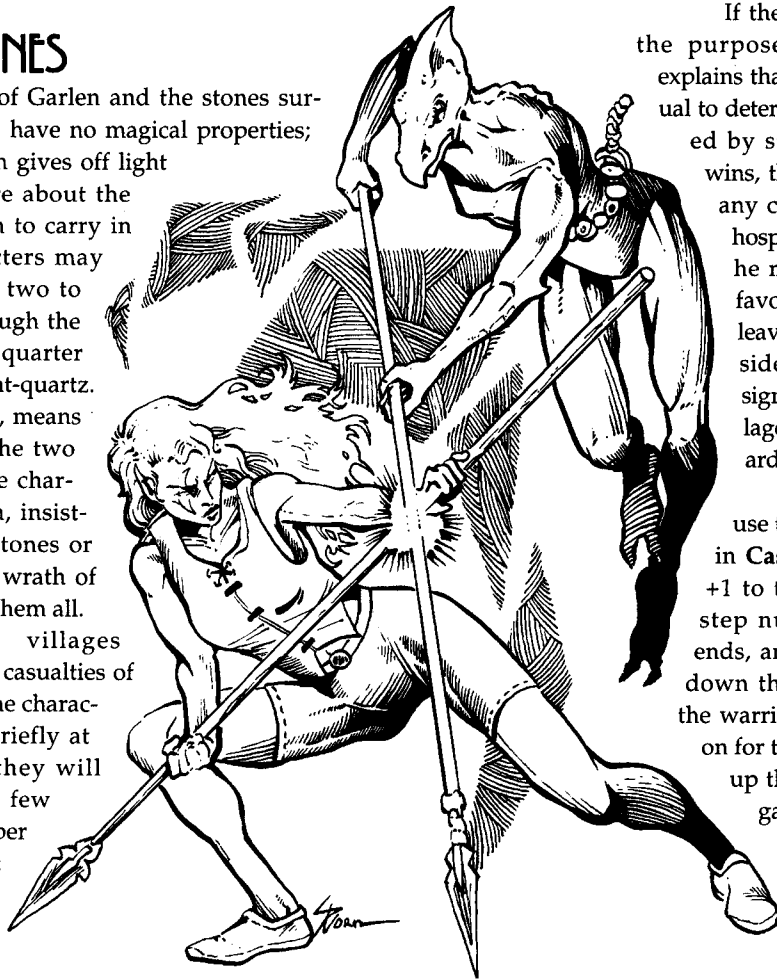
If the characters want to know the purpose of the challenge, Ela explains that the Pale Ones use the ritual to determine the danger represented by strangers. If the stranger wins, the villagers show him and any companions deference and hospitality. If the stranger loses, he must perform some small favor for the village before he leaves. Refusing to fight is considered a grave insult and a sign of weakness, and the villagers will treat any such cowards with disdain.

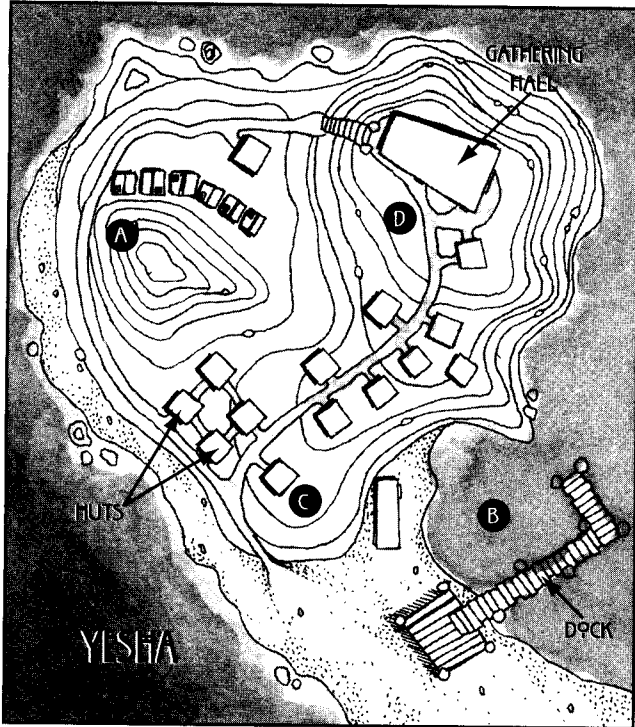
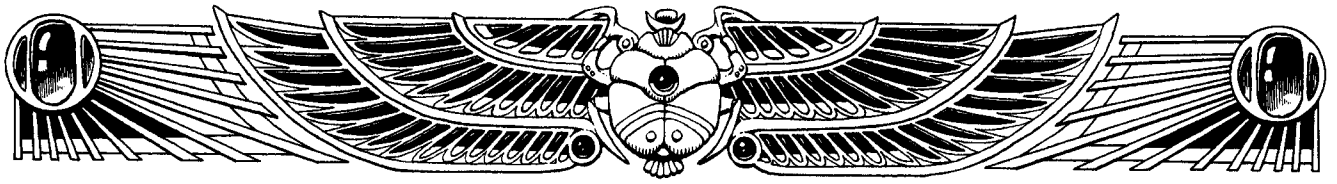
For the Yesha warrior, use the statistics given on p. 79 in **Cast of Characters**, but add +1 to the Initiative and Attack step numbers. When the fight ends, another t'skrang will come down the path, check to see that the warrior is still alive, then beckon for the characters to follow her up the path toward the village gathering hall. As they pass through the palisades, a crowd will emerge from the dwellings and follow close behind. If one of the characters is

an obsidiman, various people will try to touch him. Windlings and trolls also fascinate the villagers, as do large metal weapons like axes and swords. By the time they reach the hilltop, the characters should realize that at least a hundred Pale Ones are behind them.

THE RAID

As the characters approach the gathering hall, they hear a faint shout that sends ripples of fear and anger through the t'skrang all around them. If they ask what's happening, Shigo and Muravi tell the characters that the





island is under attack by raiders, accompanied by a riverboat equipped with a fire cannon. Though the guides do not know the attackers by name, the raiders are the Raghul and the riverboat belongs to the t'skrang of the Abanos foundation.

Roughly five minutes pass between the watchman's first sighting of the riverboat (the distant shout) and the first fire-cannon bombardment. The ship's cannon fires once per minute, aiming at each hut in the village one at a time, starting with those closest to the beach. Ten minutes after the first sighting of the riverboat, three rafts full of Raghul will land at the beach and forty-five enemy warriors will advance up the path toward the gathering hall. Along the way they will fight anyone who attacks them and will capture and bind unarmed villagers. From the high ground near the hall they will split into two roughly equal groups—the first group will retrace the path down the hill, while the second descends the slope behind the gathering hall to the other side of the island (see Map of Yesha, above).

As soon as the villagers realize they are under attack, a few adults lead the children and elderly to a subterranean sanctuary (A) on the far side of the island from the raiders' landing site (B). It takes at least fifteen minutes for these people to move across the island. Meanwhile, the Shivalahala Yatrivash leads thirty warriors toward the

beach (C) to hold the Raghul at bay. If any Raghul warriors manage to slip past the defenders and reach the head of the shorter path (D) while the young and the elderly are still heading toward the sanctuary, the raider(s) will spot the non-warriors and try to take them captive.

The sanctuary is a grotto under the hill. A narrow passageway winds about thirty feet into the hill, then opens into a cavern roughly forty-five feet in diameter. The cavern is dimly lit by phosphorescent moss of every imaginable color. At the lowest point in the cave is a ten-foot wide pool. The women of Yesha incubate their eggs in the mud along its edges. A character who makes three consecutive, successful Swimming Tests against a Difficulty Number of 7 can swim from the pool out to the giant lake whose waters cover the entire Great Dome.

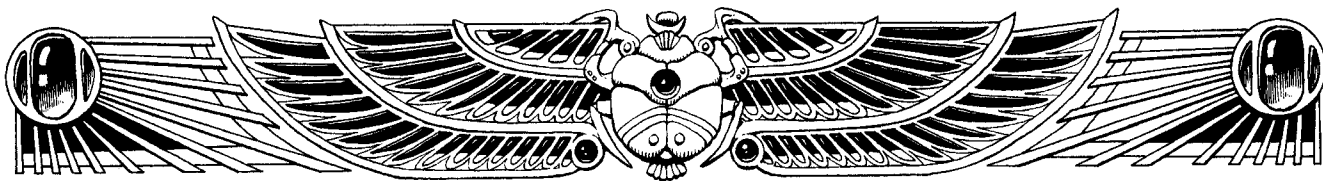
If the characters do not fight for the villagers of their own accord, several village warriors will ask the characters to help them repel the attack. The shivalahala's band will take the characters with them to meet the raiders on the beach.

To make it easier to keep track of this large-scale battle, the gamemaster may wish to decide on a specific number of Raghul warriors that the adventurers must incapacitate in order to swing the battle their way—for example, enough Raghul warriors to equal the total Circles of all the characters in the adventuring group. If the characters defeat this number of Raghul, the remaining warriors will retreat. Keep track of the casualties suffered by the raiders in this battle; that number will become important in the following encounter, *The Dragon's Jaws*, p. 68.

The characters should find it relatively easy to defeat the Raghul, as the raiders were not expecting to fight against experienced adepts. After the battle, the shivalahala will ask to meet the characters (assuming the raiders did not capture them); go to *In the Gathering Hall*, p. 65. If the Raghul defeated and captured any of the characters, see *Troubleshooting*.

The characters will definitely notice the riverboat shooting its fire cannons at the village during the battle. From the presence of the riverboat in the dome, the characters should figure out that a navigable route must exist between the Great Dome and the Serpent River. If they do not come to this conclusion themselves, Ela Pono will surely comment on it; it means her map is authentic, and that's why the adventurers are there in the first place. Ela Pono should also suggest to the characters that the riverboat may have followed the route on the missing half of Captain Westhral's map, meaning that the t'skrang aboard it might have the map in their possession.





The characters may also start wondering which of the aropagoi would give one group of Pale Ones a riverboat to help them raid another; the t'skrang of the Serpent River don't usually involve themselves in the Pale Ones' affairs. Ideally, they will want to solve the mystery; if not, events will soon leave them with little choice. The riverboat is flying the flag of House K'tenshin, which any t'skrang player character who has worked on the Serpent River will automatically recognize. Any character with an appropriate Knowledge Skill related to the t'skrang of the Serpent River can recognize the symbol of the Abanos niall on the flag by making a successful test against a Difficulty Number of 7.

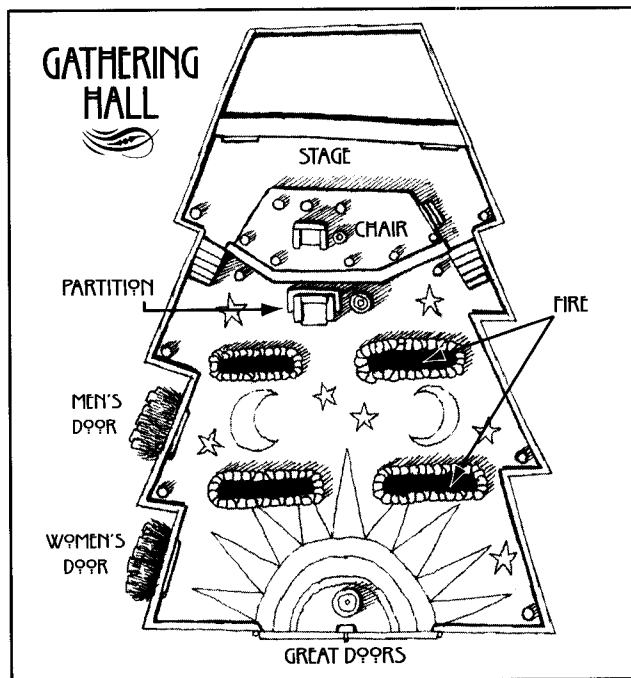
AFTER THE BATTLE

If the Raghul lose the battle, they will retreat to the beach and attempt to escape by raft. The Abanos t'skrang aboard the riverboat will not enter the fray unless the Raghul are cut off from their rafts. If that happens, twenty Abanos will embark from the riverboat on a small raft and attempt to open a line of retreat for their allies. The entire raiding party will then retreat from the island.

If the Raghul win, they will round up all the villagers left alive and march them to the beach in shackles, then ferry them by raft to the riverboat. Then they will search for the t'skrang who hid at the onset of the battle, but the entrance to the Yesha sanctuary is well enough hidden to defy their best efforts unless they actually saw the people going inside. The raiders' main force will leave after two to three hours, and a third of their number will stay behind awhile longer in hopes of capturing any survivors. This group will leave after twenty to twenty-five hours.

If the characters have avoided capture, they may try to get to a beached raft and escape. They must be careful, however, because the riverboat crew is watching intently for any movement on or near the beach. Five riverboat crewmen are stationed on deck as guards, and each of them has a Perception Step of 5. If they spot the characters heading for a raft, they will train a fire cannon on it and attack at Step 8. If the attack hits, the cannon does Step 16 damage. Each of the rafts has an Armor Rating of 10, and can only take 34 points of damage before it is destroyed.

Fortunately for the characters, location is in their favor. It is dark underground, and the light quartzes that the Abanos t'skrang have placed near the boat and dock only cast light so far. The characters should therefore be able to cross much of the beach in total darkness or shadow, and may get quite close to the rafts before running any real risk of being seen.



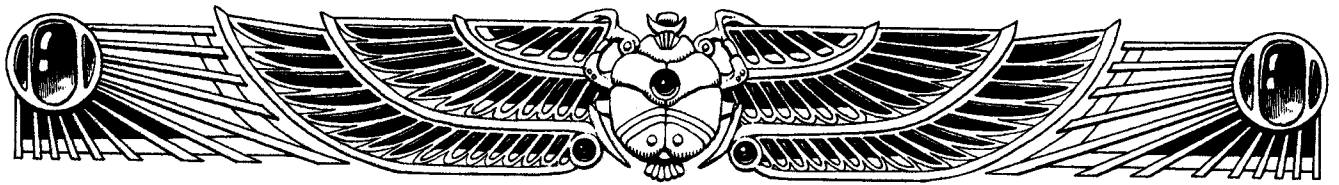
During the battle, both of the t'skrang guides are slain by the raiders. Their loss means the characters cannot return to the surface the way they came (they would never be able to retrace their route), and so the only way the characters can get out is to find the course to the Serpent River.

IN THE GATHERING HALL

After the battle, the villagers tell the characters that the shivalahala wishes to meet them. A pair of t'skrang warriors escorts the characters to the Gathering Hall, a huge building made of enormous stone blocks nestled so tightly against each other that not even a piece of paper can slip between them. The shape of the building resembles the hull of a sailing ship turned upside down. The warriors lead the adventurers up to the Great Doors at the front; the rest of the surviving villagers, who are following close behind, split into two groups by gender and enter through designated men's and women's doors on the side. The Great Doors remain closed until all the villagers have filed in. Once all are inside, a drum begins to beat like slow thunder. The Great Doors swing open and the characters may enter the hall.

Light fills the hall from four fire trenches and a row of light quartzes. The quartzes are set in the floor at the hall's far end on a raised platform that looks very much like a stage. The men sit on the floor behind the rear fire trenches, the women behind the front trenches. Between the front





fire trenches and the stage is a plain wooden bench, on which sits an ancient t'skrang with an oddly luminescent cast to her skin. Her garments are decorated with ornate beadwork and her headdress, made of feathers and bone, is nearly half as tall as she is. The warriors escort the characters to a spot about a dozen paces shy of the bench, then kneel gracefully and bow their heads.

The crowd will pay close attention to everything the characters do or say at this point, and the shivalahala's words will provoke whispers and quiet discussion at every turn. After a lengthy pause the shivalahala, speaking fluent Throalic, will thank the characters for their aid in fighting off the Raghul raiders. She will then offer to tell the characters what she knows of the Raghul if they will first agree to join in the Rituals of Stories and Questions. In the Ritual of Stories, each participant shares a story with the other; in the Ritual of Questions, each participant asks questions of the other. If the characters agree to this exchange, the shiv-

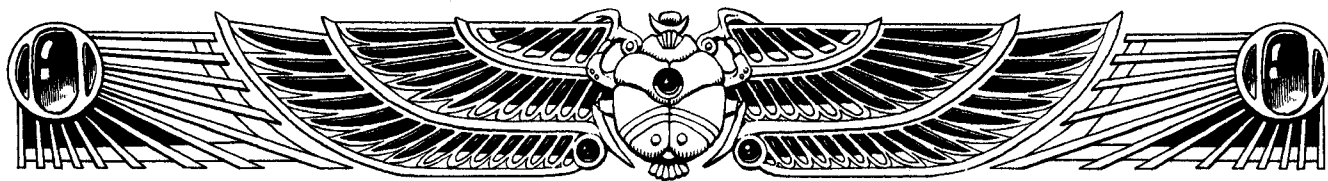
alahala will begin the Ritual of Stories by telling them the following tale:

"A holy man was bathing in the lake when a poisonous serpent sped toward him, intending to bite him. When he saw the snake, the holy man gently stretched out his hand to the creature and said, 'Go ahead and bite!' The snake, who had expected a struggle to the death with his victim, was startled at this strange behavior. 'My bite will kill you,' it said. 'Are you so eager for death, that you freely offer me your hand?'

"And the holy man answered, 'I know that to take life is wrong. If it is wrong for you to kill me, O snake, then how can it be right for me to raise my hand against you?'

"The snake was greatly intrigued, and listened carefully as the holy man spoke of the sacredness of life. When the man was finished, the snake promised from that day forth to live a life of peace and compassion.





"When the people of the nearby village saw that the snake had become harmless, they pelted him with stones and dragged him around by the tail. A year passed, and the holy man returned to bathe in the same place. When he saw the pitiful, battered snake, he asked what had happened. Shedding bitter tears, the snake said, 'I have done as you told me, teacher, but people are so merciless!'

"And the holy man replied, 'When I asked you not to bite anyone, I did not tell you not to hiss!'"

When the shivalahala finishes her story, the characters must tell a story of their own. Then the shivalahala will begin the Ritual of Questions by asking about the characters' origins, destination, purpose, adventures and so on. She will make a point of asking about their connection (if any) with the Raghul and their allies. The characters must answer each question she poses before they may ask one of their own. The Ritual of Questions is a favorite form of entertainment for the villagers; their shivalahala is particularly skilled at asking penetrating questions and making the most succinct possible answers.

During this question-and-answer session, the characters can learn the following information from the shivalahala if they play the game well. She calls the Raghul the "Deep Ones," and believes that they come from lower regions of the caverns. She knows the Raghul have so far raided eight of the twenty-five villages in the Great Dome of Yatrivash, and that they have powerful allies. She calls the Abanos riverboat a "magic raft," refers to the Abanos t'skrang as "colored ones" (surface-dwelling t'skrang have brighter-colored skin than the Pale Ones) and calls the dwarfs of House Endour "bearded ones." She has heard tales of the fire cannon from survivors of earlier Raghul raids, but she believes that the cannon's destructive power comes from the spells of vile magicians aboard the magic raft. The Raghul's surprise attacks and enslavement of defeated villagers deeply offend her sense of what is right, because they violate the ritual traditions of the Pale Ones. She does not know exactly where the Raghul have made their encampment, as the speed of the attacks and the scarcity of refugees has made it virtually impossible to track the raiders back to their base of operations.

She believes that the raiders entered Yatrivash through Braza's Kingdom, which she calls "the realm of the Ashnazg." She has since forbidden her people to venture past the statue of Garlen built by one of her predecessors many centuries ago (Milestone 8).

The shivalahala possesses ancestral memories of Westhrall's exploration of the Great Dome of Yatrivash, and she remembers helping him to find the way up and out toward Throal. If the characters think to ask, the shiv-

alahala can give them a few useful hints about the route ahead of them past the Dragon's Jaws (Milestones 15–20). How much the shivalahala reveals is up to the gamemaster. She knows how to speak Throalic because the "colored ones with their magical rafts" visited Yatrivash and its villages many times during the Theran War. The magical rafts entered the cavern through the Dragon's Jaws, a treacherous outflow of Lake Yatrivash from which no raft of the Pale Ones has ever returned.

If the characters ask the shivalahala for help, she can offer only food and supplies. Her people must remain on their island to prepare for possible future raids.

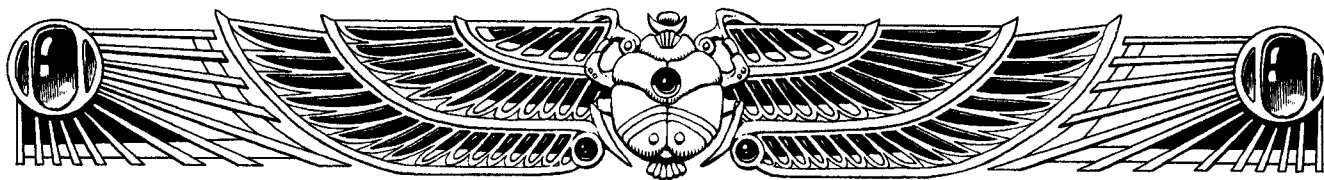
WHERE NEXT?

How the characters proceed in the adventure depends on what happened during this encounter. If the characters are captured by or surrender to the Raghul, the raiders will round them up with the rest of the villagers and take them to the Raghul encampment under the Dragon's Jaws. In this case, go to **Enslaved!**, p. 72. If the characters drive the raiders off or manage to escape their clutches, they must choose their next step. If they know that the Raghul are taking slaves, they may want to find the raiders' base of operations and free the captives. Or they may simply want to find the route back to the surface. Either way, they will end up traveling through the Dragon's Jaws and passing by the Raghul encampment. Go to **The Dragon's Jaws**, p. 68.

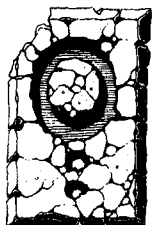
TROUBLESHOOTING

The characters are unlikely to die in this battle, but if the worst seems likely to happen, feel free to fudge dice rolls to ensure the characters' survival. Keep in mind that the Raghul would rather have live slaves than corpses, and so are likely to pull their punches somewhat. If all of the characters are knocked unconscious, they are taken captive and brought to the Raghul encampment (see **Enslaved!**). In this case they will not meet the shivalahala, and must find out first-hand about the Raghul and their allies. They will also learn nothing from the shivalahala about the route ahead of them. If some of the characters are captured and others remain free, the free agents may want to set off immediately to rescue their companions. Feel free to suggest that they might find it useful to talk with the shivalahala first, but allow them to take off right away if they insist. (They'll find out all they need to know about the Raghul and their allies soon enough ...) Go to **The Dragon's Jaws**.





THE DRAGON'S JAWS



VIEWVIEW

In this encounter, the characters must navigate a treacherous section of river that runs right past the Raghul encampment. Depending on the choices they make, they may attack the Raghul and their allies or be forced into combat while searching for the exit to the surface. This encounter assumes that the characters arrive at the encampment as free agents; if they arrive there as captives, go to **Enslaved!**, p. 72.

SETTING THE STAGE

Before you lies the Dragon's Jaws—three channels through which the waters of Lake Yatrivash flow. The haunting sound of water beating against stone fills the air, and the course ahead of you curves downward into darkness. To push a raft into the swift-flowing current is an act of bravery—or foolhardiness. According to the Pale Ones of Yesha, no raft has ever returned from this place.

THEMES AND IMAGES

The three parties using the Dragon's Jaws as a military encampment are not entirely at ease with each other at the best of times, and are likely to be even more prone to squabbling if the Raghul suffered a defeat at Yesha. The camp is segregated between the Raghul warriors, who sleep in the open around open fire pits; the dwarfs of House Endour, who live in several recesses that they have cut from the cave walls; and the Abanos t'skrang, who stay on their riverboat. The noises of the rushing water and the crowded camp produce strange, confusing echoes.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The following map and key describe the Raghul encampment.

ENTRANCE CHANNELS (A, B, C)

The characters can enter the Dragon's Jaws through any of the three channels. Channels A and B are safer than C, but from the characters' viewpoint on the lake side, C appears easier to navigate. Entering the Dragon's Jaws

through any of the three channels requires the characters to make several Boating Tests, for which the step numbers are based on the character's Strength step or step number in the Pilot Boat talent or skill. To safely enter through Channels A or B, the two characters poling the raft must each make two successful Boating Tests, each against a Difficulty Number of 6. To safely enter through Channel C, the characters must each make three Boating Tests: the first and third against a Difficulty Number of 6 and the second against a Difficulty Number of 8, as the tunnel veers sharply to the right. If one of the characters fails one of these tests, that character must achieve a Good success or better on a second test in order to prevent the boat from capsizing. If this test fails, everyone on the boat must make Swimming Tests against the Difficulty Numbers given above (6 for Channels A and B, 6 and 8 for Channel C) in order to swim down the channel to dry land. If the success level of the second test allows the characters to prevent the raft from capsizing, the poling characters each suffer a -2 step penalty to the next Boating Test they make.

Poling upstream against the current adds a +5 penalty to the Difficulty Number for all Boating Tests.

INLET (D)

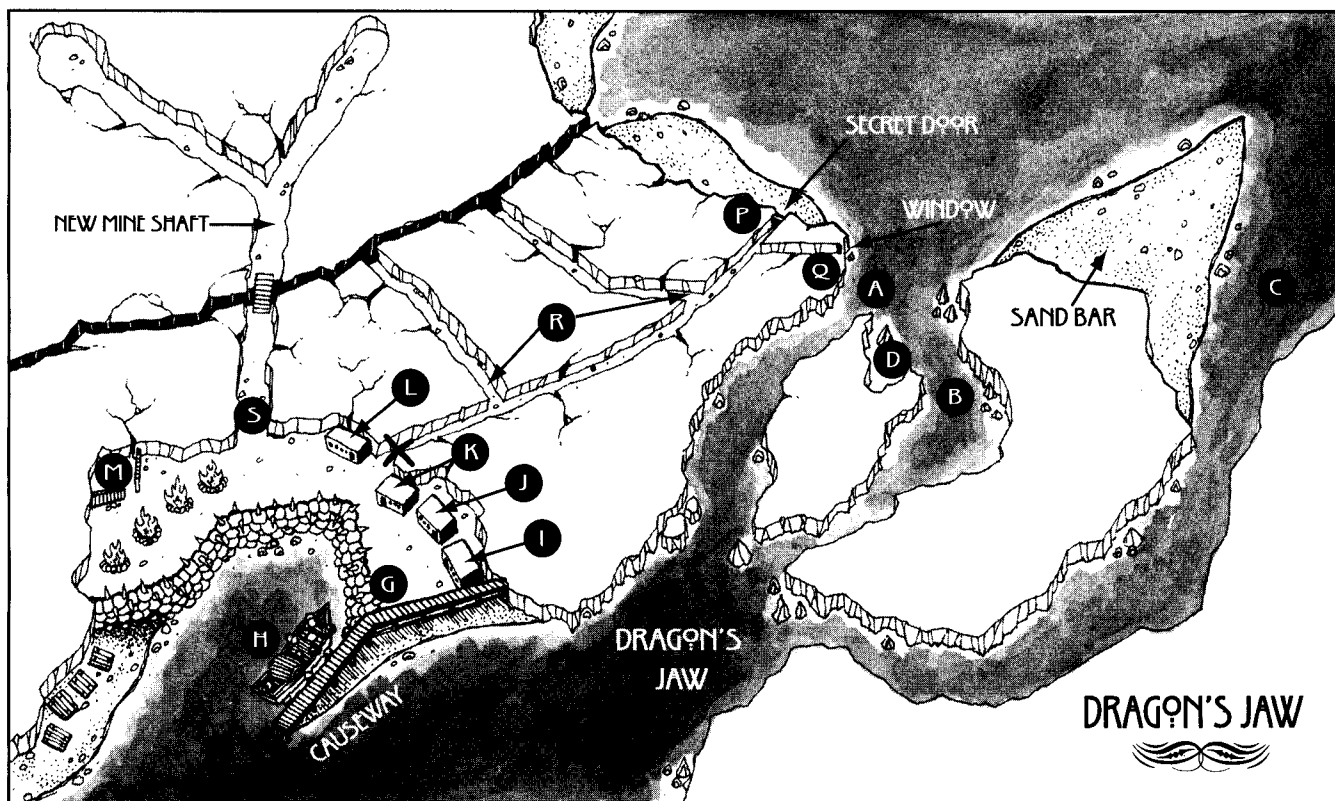
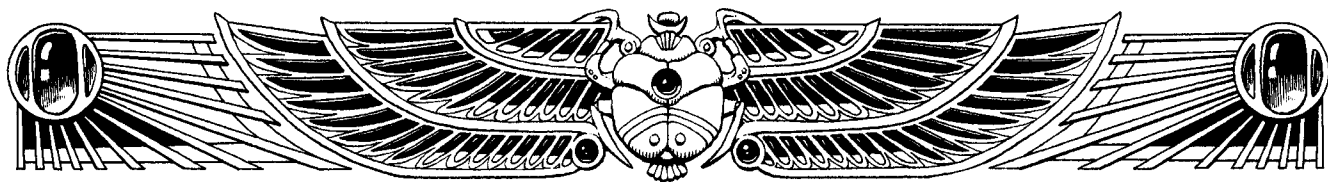
A raft can enter this inlet and remain relatively still for an extended period of time. To reach it, the raft pilot must make a Boating Test against a Difficulty Number of 8. Failure invokes the penalties described above for entering the Dragon's Jaws. The inlet is shaped so that a raft could conceivably escape the notice of another boat passing upstream through Channel A. A raft can leave the Dragon's Jaws via this inlet by making a successful Boating Test against a Difficulty Number of 9.

FISSURE (E)

This fissure is a three-foot wide crack in the cavern wall, through which water churns and plunges sixty feet downward. The fissure cuts across several of the mine shafts below. Characters can reach the mine shafts by climbing down this fissure, though doing so is extremely difficult; a climbing character must make a successful Climbing or Dexterity Test against a Difficulty Number of 10 once every fifty yards.

If a character fails a test, he slips and may be swept to the bottom by the rushing water. The character can try to





regain his or her footing by making a Strength Test against a Difficulty Number of 9. If the test is successful, the character catches himself and can continue climbing. If the test fails, the character is pulled along by the water until he reaches the nearest mine shaft below him. At each mine shaft, the character can try to save himself by making a Strength Test against a Difficulty Number of 7. If the test succeeds, the character pulls himself from the water. If the test fails, the character continues his plunge downward to the next shaft. If a character fails this Strength Test at the bridge across the fissure (Point T on the map), he falls past the last of the mine shafts and dies unless his fellow adventurers can somehow manage to retrieve and revive him.

RAMPART (F)

Along the shoreline closest to the cavern's north wall, near the place where the channel widens to several hundred feet, the Raghul and their allies have built a fortification around their camp. This steep rampart of rock, debris and packed sand stands about forty feet high. At the top of the rampart is a hedgerow of iron spikes, each spaced about a foot apart and angled over the edge.

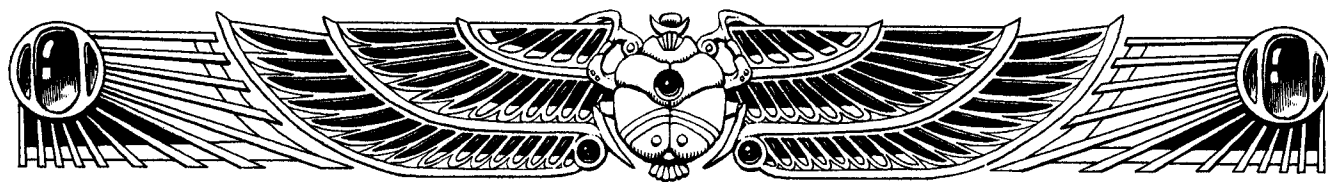
PIER AND RIVERBOAT (G, H)

Abutting the rampart is a stone pier level with the water, which protects the Abanos riverboat from the current. When docked, the riverboat is bound to the pier with four evenly spaced hawsers, each as big around as a man's arm. The riverboat is equipped with four fire cannons on each side, each of which can be fired at targets on either side of the vessel.

The fifty riverboat crewmen—forty regular crew and ten officers—spend most of their time onboard their ship while in camp. All ten officers, including the captain, are adepts of varying Circles. For crew and officer statistics, see **Cast of Characters**, p. 80. Every third crewman wears the token of the House of Nine Diamonds, an earring made of rubies and diamonds, worth twenty-five silver pieces.

At any given time, at least half the crew is aboard ship. The rest are in the camp proper fraternizing with the Raghul, moving slaves around, or simply lounging. Five crew members are always stationed on the deck to ensure that no dwarf or Raghul comes aboard without permission. These guards have a Perception Step of 5. If they spot trouble, they will ring an alarm bell on the deck that will bring every crewman within earshot running back to the riverboat.





In the captain's private cabin is a copy of the second half of Westhrall's map, marked with numerous corrections charting the changes in the watercourse between the Great Dome and the surface world since Westhrall's day. If the raiders captured the characters and took Ela's half of the map, it will be lying near the second half. The captain also carries valuable maps of the South Serpent River worth 250 silver pieces. The captain is a Seventh Circle Boatman (p. 106, *Denizens of Earthdawn*, Vol. I).

The ship's stores contain barrels of prepared fish, preserved eggs, flour, wine and a wide selection of chains and shackles. The armory contains enough broadswords, daggers and leather armor to equip twenty t'skrang. A magically locked chest with Spell Defense 11 contains six silver ingots, as well as any treasure or items taken from the player characters by their captors. Each ingot is worth 500 silver pieces.

ENDOUR BARRACKS (I, J, K, L)

Inside the rampart, the camp is segregated into Raghul and dwarf sections. The thirty dwarfs of Endour live in stone barracks (I, J and K), ten of them to a barrack. The fourth building (L) is a forge and smelter where silver ore is turned into pure silver ingots. If the characters sneak into the forge, they will find a single silver ingot cooling on the fire bricks. The dwarfs transfer their silver to the riverboat as soon as each ingot cools completely.

RAGHUL LIVING AREA (M, N, O)

The Raghul live out in the open, sharing the warmth of six communal fire pits (O). At the beginning of this adventure, the Raghul warriors number about a hundred. By the time the characters arrive at the encampment, losses suffered during the raid on Yesha will have reduced this number somewhat. The Raghul keep a crude field hospital (M), where the wounded and sick are tended by a physician with Physician Skill 9. Their rafts are lined up on racks (N) on the beach outside their half of the camp.

MINE SHAFTS (P, Q, R, S)

One of the two main mine shafts dates back to before the Scourge; the other is quite recent, dug out by the dwarfs of Endour. The old mine shaft runs from the camp all the way back up to Lake Yatrivash, with a hidden entrance (P) on the sandbar near the fissure (E). The Difficulty Number to detect this secret portal is 12. A side passage leads to a window (Q) about twenty-five feet above the lake; the window commands an excellent view of the main approaches to the Dragon's Jaws. A Raghul warrior stands guard by the window, but most guards consider it a great place to take a nap. Two other abandoned

side cuts (R) are used to store coal for the smithy and various supplies that the dwarfs wish to keep away from the Raghul, such as kegs of beer and extra weapons. This improvised "armory" holds enough chain mail, short swords and crossbows to outfit fifteen dwarfs. Each side cut ends abruptly at the fissure, which is approximately twenty feet at this point.

The newer mine shaft (S) is described in detail in *Enslaved!*, p. 72.

BRIDGE (T)

The dwarfs of Endour built this wooden bridge across the fissure to accommodate the carts full of ore from the mine. For more details, see *Enslaved!*

ATTACKING THE ENCAMPMENT

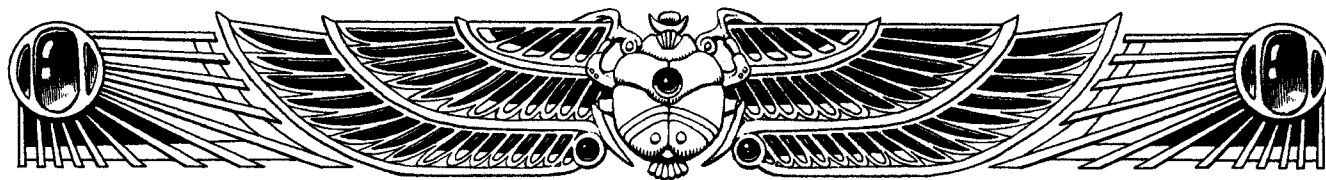
If the characters launch a full frontal assault on the Raghul encampment, their odds of success or failure will depend in part on how many casualties the Raghul suffered in the raid on Yesha and whether or not the Abanos riverboat is docked at the camp. If the characters are smart enough to wait for the riverboat to enter the Great Dome on another raiding expedition before they take their own raft through the Dragon's Jaws, they will not have to face the riverboat's weapons and crew, or the Raghul warriors aboard the vessel. The gamemaster determines the exact number of raiders departing; make sure, however, that enough Raghul stay at the encampment to make the fight challenging for the adventurers. Also keep in mind that if the raid on Yesha was ultimately successful, roughly a third of the forty-five-man raiding force will still be on the island waiting for survivors to come out of hiding.

The rampart will make it difficult to launch an effective assault on the camp. Scaling it requires no Climbing Tests, but the slope of it will slow the characters down to a quarter of their normal movement speeds. Flying characters are not affected. In order to pass safely through the spikes along the top of the rampart, a character must make a successful Dexterity Test against a Difficulty Number of 7. If the test fails, the character suffers Step 6 damage from the spikes.

Neither the Raghul nor their dwarf allies have set guards on the rampart because they don't really expect trouble in this isolated spot; however, once the characters reach the top of the rampart, one or another of the dwarfs or t'skrang warriors going about his business will certainly see them and raise the alarm. The characters can expect most of the Raghul remaining in camp to attack them fairly quickly.

The dwarfs of Endour will not join the fight unless they must; they prefer to let the Raghul, whom they regard as expendable, deal with the characters. If the Raghul look





likely to retreat, the dwarfs will head down the old mine shaft in hopes of escape. If the characters follow closely, they will confront a group of ten dwarfs in the mine shaft at the point marked X on the map. The mine shafts are twenty feet across, giving the characters plenty of room to battle the dwarfs. While the ten-dwarf rear guard fights a delaying action, the remaining dwarfs will spend the next 10 Combat Rounds assembling a raft at the secret entrance (see map key).

While battling the dwarfs, observant characters may notice a family crest on the hilts of the dwarfs' short swords. Any characters possessing Knowledge Skills related to Throalic politics or nobility may make appropriate Skill Tests against a Difficulty Number of 7 in order to identify the crest as belonging to House Endour.

The Abanos t'skrang will defend their riverboat rather than joining their allies near the rampart. If the characters bypass the riverboat, the Abanos will attack with their fire cannon at Step 8. The attack does Step 16 damage to anything it hits. If the Raghul seem likely to lose to the characters, the Abanos will leave their allies to fend for themselves. Protecting the riverboat is their primary concern.

SLIPPING BY THE CAMP

To slip past the encampment and find their way out of the caverns, the characters must carefully navigate through one of the entrances to the Dragon's Jaws and then continue along the underground river past the encampment without being spotted. Unless the characters guide their raft along the far wall of the cavern opposite the encampment, they run the risk of being seen by the Raghul and their allies. In order to sneak past, the characters must make three consecutive, successful Boating Tests against a Difficulty Number of 10. If all three tests succeed, the adventurers pass by the encampment safely and can continue on their way.

If any of the tests fails, the Raghul warriors spot the characters and sound an alarm. (For their statistics, see **Cast of Characters**, p. 79.) The Raghul will immediately man their rafts and head out to confront the characters, and the Abanos will launch the riverboat in an attempt to cut off the characters' avenue of escape. At this point, the characters must decide to fight or flee. If they choose to flee, they must make three consecutive, successful Boating Tests against a Difficulty Number of 10. If any of these tests fails, a Raghul raft or the riverboat will continue to pursue the characters; the decision is left up to the gamemaster. If all three tests are successful, the characters dodge their pursuers and can continue on their way.

ATTACKING THE RIVERBOAT

The characters can attack the riverboat in dock or while it is out raiding in the Great Dome. If they attack it in dock, they will not have to contend with the fire cannon, because they will be inside its minimum firing range. However, they will face a large number of angry t'skrang willing to fight as hard as necessary to keep their precious boat safe. Also, if the characters focus their attack on the riverboat for more than three minutes of game time, half of the Raghul will join the Abanos in defending the vessel.

If the characters attack the riverboat when it is out raiding, they must first locate it by making a successful Exploration Test against a Difficulty Number of 10. If the characters are hiding in the inlet (see map key) and see the riverboat go by, they can simply follow it without making the Exploration Test.

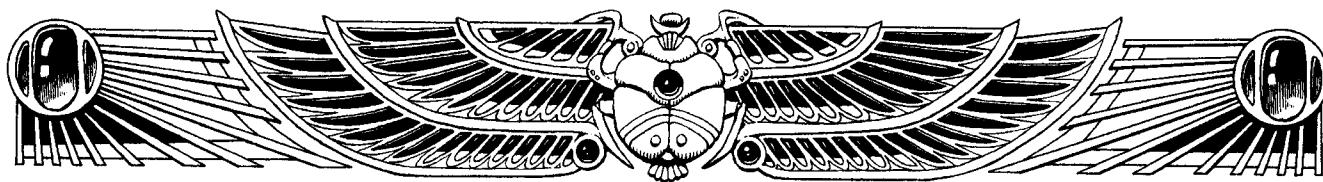
The riverboat will be pulling three empty rafts linked together on a thirty-foot line—the Raghul intend to get ashore on these rafts when they launch their next raid. The characters may pole their own raft close to the riverboat and attempt to board, or climb onto an in-tow raft and then pull it close to the riverboat. The guards posted on the riverboat's deck have a Perception Step of 6, and may notice the characters' approach by making a successful Perception Test. Once they spot the characters, the guards immediately alert the rest of the crew.

If the adventurers ambush the riverboat, they must confront the combined might of the Raghul war party and the entire fifty-man riverboat crew. The odds against success are high, but the payoff for the characters is enormous. Seizing control of the riverboat keeps the Raghul from traveling to the head waters of the Dragon's Jaws, and also gives the characters the fire cannon and the second half of Westhrall's map. The characters can then easily follow the map to where the Serpent River emerges above ground, successfully completing the adventure. If this happens, go to **Loose Ends**, p. 75.

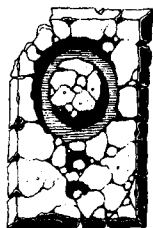
TROUBLESHOOTING

In this encounter, the adventure may get bogged down in over-planning. The characters will have limited knowledge of the encampment, so remind them that simple plans are likely to work better than complex ones. Also, the characters may well die during their assault on the camp. If this happens, feel free to declare them captured instead; then go to **Enslaved!**, p. 72. You may also simply let them die—this is a huge, climactic battle, and casualties are to be expected.





ENSLAVED!



VERVIEW

Use this encounter only if the characters are captured during the raid on Yesha (*Among the Pale Ones*, p. 62) or in the attack on the Raghul encampment (*The Dragon's Jaws*, p. 68).

In this encounter the characters are stripped of their possessions and set to slave labor in a silver mine. Their fellow slaves are men, women and children of the Pale Ones captured in several raids against the villages in the Yatrivash dome. Among them is also Yegor Grodno, an ork liberator and one of the few survivors from Baron Mardek's second expedition.

SETTING THE STAGE

The mine shaft is wide, with a ceiling so low that only the dwarf overseers can stand up straight under it. Dust, blood and the stench of too many unwashed bodies clog the air. Like you, the Pale Ones of Yatrivash are chained ankle to ankle; they move slowly, as if weighted down by despair, and their gazes rarely leave the ground. The men hack wearily at the wall, digging for the vein of silver ore. Children with small pick axes chisel away the precious, glittering metal. The women remove the debris and the ore in baskets, dumping the contents into wheeled carts. The strongest men draw the loaded carts away up the mine shaft. A dozen dwarfs armed with crossbows, short swords and wicked lashes and protected by chain mail stand guard over the slaves. Every so often, one of the dwarfs flicks his lash at a slave who isn't moving fast enough to suit him.

A sudden rumble echoes through the shaft. The slaves cringe away from the sound, some screaming in terror. Then the rumbling stops, and the overseers crack their whips. The chain of slaves moves further down the shaft to the fresh rock fall and begins digging out the survivors of this latest cave-in.

A whip cracks loudly near you, and you see two dwarfs standing over an ork on the cart-pulling detail. The ork lies prone with his ear to the ground. "Get up!" the overseers shout at him in Throalic. He obeys slowly, keeping his head bent and his eyes averted. They give him a few lashes, which he stoically endures. Then he

bends over and grips the stanchions of a full ore cart. A terrible smile full of rage crosses his face, then vanishes. As his gaze briefly meets yours, he grins again—almost warmly this time.

THEMES AND IMAGES

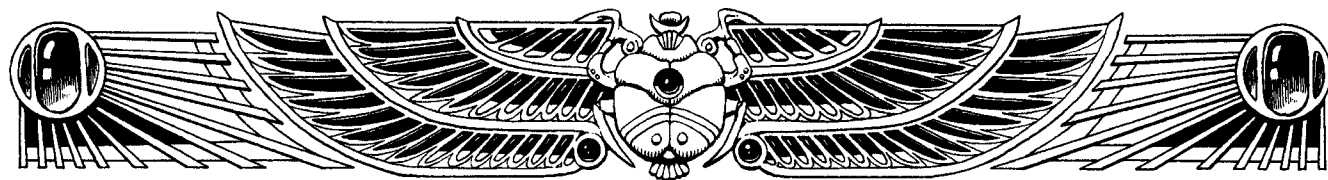
Conditions in the mine are atrocious. Filth, overcrowding, starvation and dangerous mining techniques are taking their toll. Contrast the weary hopelessness of the t'skrang with Yegor's confidence. When and if rebellion breaks out, play up the sheer brutality the slaves show their masters as their rage makes them fight as if possessed.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The characters begin this encounter working in the more recent of the camp's two mine shafts. A mining slave's life is a dreadful fate—there is no respite from the mind-numbing, backbreaking work except sleep or death. The characters wear iron shackles; to break them requires a successful Strength Test against a Difficulty Number of 12. Each character is chained to approximately fifty other people, who must all move in the same direction at the same time in order to effectively attack the guards. The slaves' diet consists of a cup of water every three hours, and raw fish that the dwarfs throw to the slave gangs like zookeepers feeding animals. For each day a character spends in the mines, he suffers Step 7 damage, which causes Wounds and can be recovered in the normal manner. Needless to say, the characters have been divested of their possessions, including Ela's half of Captain Westhrall's map.

On the first day of the characters' imprisonment, a group of eight t'skrang from the Abanos niall will come to the mines and grab the player characters and Ela one at a time. They will take each one down to the old, disused mine shaft and begin a ruthless interrogation that inflicts Step 8 damage on the character. The t'skrang will demand to know where the characters came from, how they entered the Dome of Yatrivash, what their mission was, who sent them and what abilities their fellow adventurers possess.





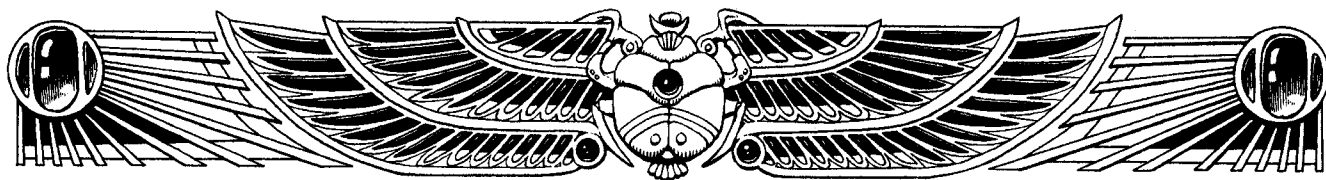
On the third day, the dwarfs will move the characters from the pickax crew to the cart-pulling crew. The carts go up to the bridge across the fissure (see map, p. 69 of **The Dragon's Jaws**), then roll down a gentle slope out of the mine. The slaves are never allowed to cross the bridge.

While on the cart-pulling crew the characters meet Yegor and learn his story. "I serve Baron Mardek of Valvria," he tells them. "Garrison life bored me, so I volunteered to go crawling through the lower parts of Throal. We slogged through some kind of Horror nest perched on little rafts, but the Horrors were mostly as scared of a regiment of soldiers as we were of them. Then we got to a giant lake and found real trouble. We camped on an

island—big island, no creatures lurking near, safe enough we thought—and woke up to find the place swarming with fish-bellies—t'skrang, you know. We fought hard, but we were outnumbered—four, maybe five to one.

"I was one of the few that survived. The fish-bellies took us with them, set us to slaving for the dwarfs. My friends and I worked this mine for a while, planning a break-out the whole time. We got some of the poor fish-bellies down here to join up, but we didn't realize how many friends these plague-rotted dwarfs had out there. We walked straight into more fish-bellies, more dwarfs, more riverboat t'skrang than we could handle—especially on the poor excuse for food and water they give us. They





killed my friends and left me alive, probably because they figured out that I planned it all. That's their revenge. Slavery is worse than death for folk like me, who yearn to be free. Now I can't get anyone to look twice my way ... except you."

Yegor's escape plan is not sophisticated, but it covers all the angles. Yegor knows there are fifteen dwarf guards on duty in the mine shaft at any one time. They work four-hour shifts, but there are only two teams for the four shifts each day. Eight guard the miners, four guard the carts, and three guard the bridge. Whenever a cave-in occurs, two of the four cart guards have orders to help clear the debris and repair the damage. The guards at the bridge hold the keys to the shackles. An alarm bell at the bridge can bring up to fifteen more dwarf guards.

At the end of the working day, the guards leave the slaves chained in the mine shaft and return to the encampment. The tools and mining equipment are hauled away each evening on the last cart, so the slaves cannot use them to dig a way out during the night. Yegor has managed to creep close enough to the bridge at the end of the last shift to watch it being raised by "some infernal dwarf contraption." Five to eight Raghul guard the bridge all night.

As far as Yegor is concerned, the only hope the slaves have of fighting their way out of the encampment is to wait for the riverboat to leave on a raid, which will cut the camp garrison roughly in half. Yegor had his ear to the ground during **Setting the Stage** because he was listening for the echo of the paddlewheel or the footsteps of new slaves; by these sounds he can keep rough track of the riverboat's comings and goings.

Unless the characters can think of some way to cross the forty-foot wide fissure that cuts across the mine shafts, Yegor believes the best plan is to wait for the riverboat to leave at a time when he and the adventurers are all on the cart-pulling detail. When they reach the bridge, he will break free and rush the three guards and seize the keys before they have a chance to ring the alarm bell. Meanwhile, the characters will have to handle the four guards assigned to the carts. The characters are to seize the guards' weapons, return to the mine shaft and deal with the other eight guards, free the slaves, and then lead them in a takeover of the encampment. Yegor is open to any suggestions that might make his plan more workable.

As an ork liberator Yegor can use his **Shackle Shrug** talent to break his chains and his **False Shackles** talent to replace them with a illusory set that will fool the guards until he is ready to make his move. His **Mind Armor** talent grants him an **Armor Rating** of 8 for a cost of 2 points of **Strain** at the start of combat.

Should the escape attempt succeed, the characters will march out of the mine shaft at the head of a mob of 120 angry, bloodthirsty t'skrang. Use the statistics for the Yatrivash t'skrang (**Cast of Characters**, p. 79), but reduce all step numbers by 1 to reflect the slaves' exhausted and half-starved state. Also, the freed slaves have no armor. The garrison, minus the forty-five Raghul in the raiding party and the riverboat crew, will be hard pressed to resist an unexpected attack from within, even when the attackers are without armor and half-dead on their feet.

NOW WHAT?

Assuming the characters free the slaves and defeat the forces remaining at the camp, they must decide their next course of action before the riverboat crew and the Raghul raiding party return (within three days). The characters cannot take a raft back up the Dragon's Jaws and into the lake of Yatrivash, as the current is much too strong to move against in their weakened state. With the help of the Pale Ones, however, the characters might take a raft apart, carry it up the old mine shaft, and use the secret exit to return to the Great Dome. Alternatively, they might stick around and help the victorious slaves fight the returning war party.

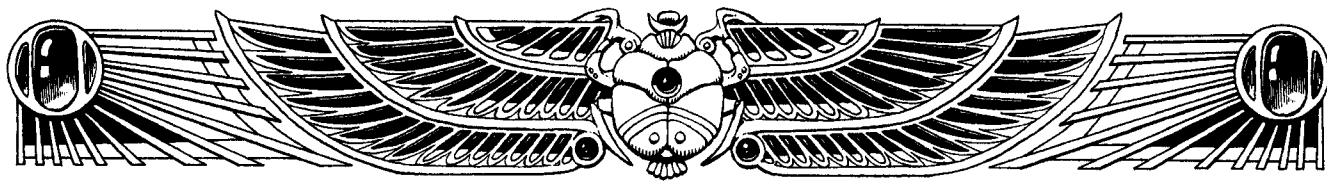
The characters may also simply want to continue searching for a way out. They may promise to recruit help upon their return to Throal, but Yegor will see this as a cop-out and make no secret of his disappointment. Both he and the slaves will return to Yatrivash to carry on the fight against the Raghul.

If the characters want to retrieve their personal belongings before heading out, they are stored in the old mine shafts along with the dwarfs' weapons (see **Mine Shafts**, p. 70 of **The Dragon's Jaws**).

TROUBLESHOOTING

The biggest problem in this encounter occurs if the escape plan fails. Should this happen, Yegor will be killed and the characters will be imprisoned in cages on the riverboat. About a week later, the riverboat will leave Shuss Halima with a cargo of silver and slaves for the markets of the South Serpent river. For details, go to **Loose Ends**, following. If one or more of the characters dies in a failed escape attempt, the gamemaster may declare them captured and caged along with the surviving characters, or may simply leave them dead.





LOOSE ENDS



his section wraps up the adventure's loose ends and suggests ways to use elements and characters from **The Way Out** in future **Earthdawn** adventures and campaigns. It also provides guidelines for awarding Legend Points, as well as descriptions and game statistics for major gamemaster characters.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

This adventure has several possible outcomes, each of which is described below.

If the characters capture the riverboat and drive the Raghul and their allies from the Great Dome, they will acquire the missing half of Captain Westhrall's map (which is in the captain's quarters) and can easily navigate the rest of the route to the surface. They will come out on the Coil River, which feeds into the Serpent. Though the characters' oath of secrecy keeps them from making their discovery public, Baron Mardek will be extremely pleased with this outcome, and may offer the characters a fat reward in addition to the agreed-upon fee. He will also be likely to think of them first the next time he needs a job done.

As for the map itself, the player characters are unlikely to make any profit from it. Ela will insist on keeping it in order to appease the wrath of Baron Mardek (though she will not tell the characters this). If the characters seem inclined to argue, she will remind them of their oath of secrecy and assure them that the map will find a safe home in the Great Library.

The characters can ransom the riverboat back to the Abanos of House K'tenshin for a handsome sum, or they can sell it to a dwarf consortium interested in probing the delicate secrets of the fire cannon and fire engine. For the specific amounts of silver and Legend Points available as a result of either of these actions, see **Treasure**, p. 77. If the players want their characters to keep the riverboat, discourage them; keeping the boat will only buy them trouble. The Abanos t'skrang will come chasing after their prized property before too long, and are likely to have Theran backing; do the characters really want to take on this kind of opposition for a boat that not many of them are likely to know how to operate? Also, maintaining such a vessel (and the

extra crew needed to run it) is expensive. The characters are far better off ransoming the boat back to its owners or selling it to someone else and letting them deal with the angry t'skrang.

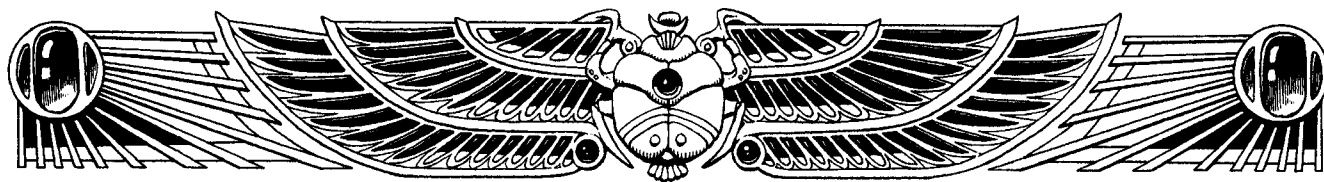
If the characters defeat the Raghul and their allies but do not seize the riverboat, they will not get their hands on the missing half of the map. However, they can still find their way out of the caverns by making Exploration Tests for Milestones 15 through 20 (see **Shuss Halima**, p. 58). The exact nature of the final six milestones is up to the gamemaster. In addition, they must navigate the rest of the passage to the surface by raft. The defeated Abanos will return home to the K'tenshin stronghold on the South Serpent River, and the niall's elders will plan their next move. This gives the characters several months to find a way to the surface and return to Throal.

Any victory over the Raghul earns the player characters the everlasting friendship of the t'skrang in the Great Dome of Yatrivash. As a token of her gratitude, the Shivalahala Yatrivash will give the adventurers a single coin made of elemental fire that Captain Westhrall of House V'strimon bequeathed to the Pale Ones just before the Theran War ended and the underground passages to Throal were closed. The coin is worth 1,000 silver pieces and 1,000 Legend Points.

If the characters sneak past the Raghul encampment and continue their explorations, they must get to the surface and back to Throal by making Exploration Tests, just as if they had defeated the Raghul but failed to capture the riverboat. If they get hopelessly lost in the early stages of exploration, they risk running into the Raghul or their allies, and may end up enslaved or dead. The farther away from the encampment they get, however, the less likely this is to happen.

If the characters are captured by the Raghul, several possibilities crop up. If they take part in the slave rebellion and succeed, they may ultimately manage to capture the riverboat and get the rest of Westhrall's map; if they defeat the garrison without capturing the riverboat, they will at least earn the gratitude of the freed slaves and the friendship of Yegor Grodno. Yegor may turn up in subsequent adventures, either as a catalyst or as a supporting gamemaster character. If the rebellion fails, the Raghul will send the characters down the river to be sold in the





southern markets, perhaps in Travar or Kratas. If the players have grown tired of the subterranean realm, it may be best to send their characters to the surface with the next slave shipment and let events play out from there. Escaping from slavery could become an adventure in itself.

If the Raghul take Ela's half of the Westhrall map from the captured characters, make sure the players understand the danger that threatens Throal. The Raghul will almost certainly give the map to their Abanos allies, meaning that the pro-Theran House K'tenshin will possess a secret route into the heart of the dwarf kingdom. If the K'tenshin share this secret with the Therans in turn, Throal is in terrible peril. The Therans are unlikely to do anything hasty, but will certainly start crafting plots around this valuable information.

HOME AGAIN, HOME AGAIN

Unless they are sent down river to the slave markets, the characters will eventually find their way to the surface exit near the Coil River—a cave sixty feet wide in the foothills of the Throal Mountains. The river runs thirty miles through rugged terrain before joining the Coil. The first community downstream of the tributary is the town of Darranis, about eight miles south of the cave. River and ground transport leave Darranis on a daily basis. The first community to the north is the small dwarf mining colony of Shabaz, about four miles from the cave. A dwarf barge collects the ore mined there every ten days or so and drops it off in Darranis.

If the Abanos riverboat returns to the K'tenshin headquarters in southern Barsaive, Darranis will be abuzz with the news that a riverboat was recently seen on the Coil River flying the flag of the House of Nine Diamonds.

When the characters arrive in Throal, they must decide whom to inform of their exploits. If Ela Pono is still with them, she urges them to accompany her to Baron Mardek's household in Valvria. Mardek will grant the characters an immediate private audience and listen to their story with great interest. Whether or not they bring him the second half of the Westhrall map, their successful return proves the existence of the underground route, which will please Mardek greatly.

If the characters describe the Raghul, Mardek may ask the characters to accompany up to four hundred soldiers from his private army to clear out the Raghul and secure the underground river passage. If the characters do not wish to return underground, Mardek will remind them to observe their oaths of secrecy and then pay them off. If the characters remain in Throal, Mardek will have them watched carefully for several months to make sure they

keep quiet. If the baron learns that the characters have approached any of the powers-that-be in Throal, he will seal the shaft beneath Valvria and attempt to discredit the adventurers or get them expelled from the dwarf kingdom.

More than a few factions in Throal would be interested in the results of the expedition. Loyalist forces, including the Eye of Throal and Master Merrox of the great Library, will lobby Varulus to send an army underground if they find out about the doings of House Endour and the K'tenshin t'skrang so close to the heart of Throal; the potential Theran threat will only make them more determined to strike first. Noble houses opposed to Varulus, particularly House Ueraven, might attempt to somehow discredit Varulus by making the expedition public. Both sides are likely to give Baron Mardek and his motives a much closer look than the baron might like.

AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

Award Legend Points for this adventure as described on p. 6 of the **Introduction**. Specific awards are described below. The Adventure Award for **The Way Out** is 400 Legend Points. For more information on completing adventure goals and earning Adventure Legend Awards, see p. 242, **ED**.

CREATIVE ROLEPLAYING AND HEROICS

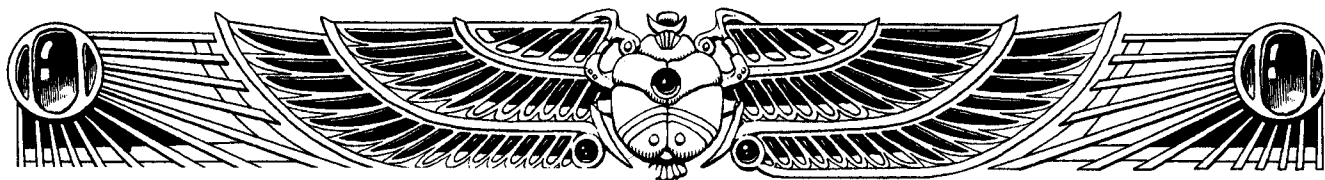
Award Legend Points to characters for taking any of the following actions:

Engaging in ritual combat	50
Defending the village of Yesha	150
Participating in the Rituals of Stories and Questions	125
Defeating the Abanos riverboat	150
Defeating the Raghul	175
Defeating the dwarfs of Endour	125
Participating in the slave rebellion	100

DEFEATING CREATURES AND OPPONENTS

The creature awards for this adventure are unusual because the number of opponents defeated can vary widely, depending on the choices the characters make. The gamemaster should keep track of how many Raghul and their allies the adventurers defeat in combat, and award Legend Points accordingly. The Creature/Opponent Award Table shows the awards for defeating all of the opponents in this adventure.





CREATURE/OPPONENT AWARD TABLE

Opponent	6 Players	7 Players	8 Players
Jehuthra (2)	500	500	500
Raghul			
warriors (100)	6,000	6,000	6,000
Abanos sailors (40)	2,800	2,800	2,800
Abanos officers (9)	900	900	900
Abanos captain (1)	750	750	750
Endour dwarfs (30)	2,100	2,100	2,100
Total	13,050	13,050	13,050
Award per Character	2,175	1,860	1,630

TREASURE

The only treasure the characters gain in this adventure is the gift from the shivalahala if they defeat the Raghul. The elemental-fire coin is worth 1,000 silver pieces and 1,000 Legend Points.

The characters can ransom the riverboat to the K'tenshin for approximately 2,000 silvers, or sell it to the dwarf consortium for the same amount. Selling it back to the Abanos earns the characters 2,000 Legend Points in addition to the silver; selling it elsewhere earns the characters nothing but money. The silver ingot from the forge (**The Dragon's Jaws**, p. 70) is worth 3,500 silver pieces. Gamemasters who do not want to put that much money in the hands of their player characters may feel free to reduce this award.

TOTAL LEGEND POINT AWARD

Based on the figures listed for each Legend Point award, a single character who completes **The Way Out** receives an average of 3,325 Legend Points. This average assumes a group of 7 players, and does not include points earned for optional encounters or finding additional treasure placed by the gamemaster.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

The following characters are listed in order of their importance to the story. Statistics for the t'skrang of Yatrivash, the Raghul, the Abanos and the Endour dwarfs also appear in this section.

ELA PONO

A Third Circle ork thief, Ela Pono is an apprentice archivist at the Great Library of Throal, under the tutelage of the morally bankrupt Thom Edrull. For more information about Ela, see p. 91 of **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**.

Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10
Strength (11): 5/D8
Toughness (16): 7/D12
Perception (15): 6/D10
Willpower (9): 4 /D6
Charisma (10): 5/D8

Talents

Avoid Blow (2): 8/2D6
Climbing (2): 8/2D6
Durability (4)
Fence (4): 9/D8 + D6
Karma Ritual (3)
Lock Pick (3): 9/D8 + D6
Melee Weapons (3): 9/D8 + D6
Silent Walk (3): 9/D8 + D6
Surprise Strike (3): 9/D8 + D6

Skills

Knowledge/Horrors (1): 7/D12
Knowledge/Subterranean Throal (3): 9/D8 + D6
Mapmaking (2): 8/2D6
Research (4): 10/D10 + D6
Read and Write Language (4): 10/D10 + D6 (T'skrang, Theran, Throalic, Sperethiel)
Speak Language (3): 9/D8 + D6 (Ork, T'skrang, Throalic)

Karma

Dice: D8
Points: 21

Initiative

Dice: 6/D10

Movement

Full: 70
Combat: 35

Equipment

Adventurer's kit
Dagger (Damage: 7/D12)
Footman's shield
Knife (Damage: 6/D10)
Leather armor
Short sword (Damage: 9/D8 + D6)
Traveler's garb

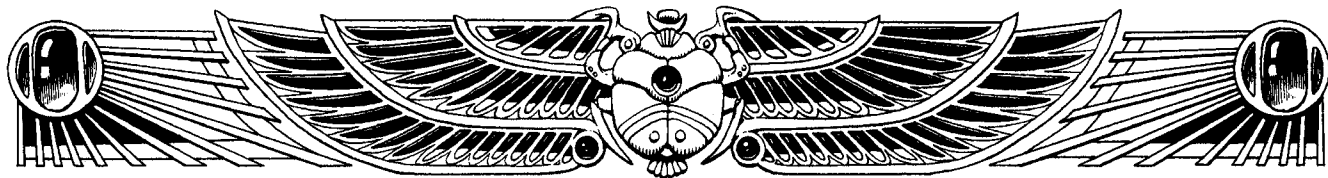
Combat

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 0

Damage

Death Rating: 59
Unconsciousness Rating: 47
Wound Threshold: 11
Recovery Tests: 3
Recovery Dice: D12





SHIVALAHALA YATRIVASH

The Shivalahala Yatrivash is the leader of the village of Yesha and of many other villages in the Great Dome of Yatrivash. Though deeply concerned about the recent raids, she has so far been unable to muster an effective response. Old and wise, she cares intensely for the welfare of her people.

Attributes

DEX: 5 STR: 4 TOU: 8
PER: 6 WIL: 8 CHA: 6

Initiative: 5 Physical Defense: 10
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 7
Attack: 7 Social Defense: 8
Damage: 8 (spear) Armor: 1
Number of Spells: None Mystic Armor: 3
Spellcasting: None Knockdown: 4
Effect: None Recovery Tests: 3

Combat Movement: 29 Death Rating: 43
Full Movement: 57 Wound Threshold: 12
Unconsciousness Rating: 35

Legend Points: 200

Equipment: Spear, light bone armor

Loot: None

YEGOR GRODNO

A Fourth Circle ork liberator, Yegor was part of Baron Mardek's second expedition to the Yatrivash dome. Raghul raiders captured him and several of his companions, and Yegor has been laboring in the silver mines for the dwarfs of Endour ever since. One failed escape attempt has only whetted Yegor's appetite for another try. The arrival of the adventurers gives him just the chance he's been waiting for. He is an experienced soldier and a reasonably sound strategist, though he tends to favor blunt tactics over subtlety.

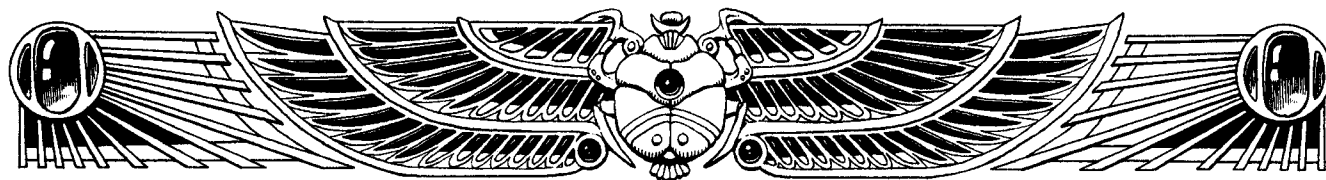
Attributes

Dexterity (11): 5/D8 Perception (10): 5/D8
Strength (15): 6/D10 Willpower (17): 7/D12
Toughness (16): 7/D12 Charisma (11): 5/D8

Talents

Durability (4)
False Shackles (3): 9/D8 + D6
Freedom Search (2): 7/D12
Karma Ritual (4)
Melee Weapons (4): 9/D8 + D6





Mind Armor (4): 11/D10 + D8
Shackle Shrug (4): 10/D10 + D6
Unarmed Combat (4): 9/D8 + D6

Skills

Artisan/Storytelling (2): 7/D12
Avoid Blow (4): 9/D6 + D8
Battle Shout (3): 8/2D6
Knowledge/Liberator Lore (2): 7/D12
Knowledge/Ork History (2): 7/D12

Initiative

Dice: 5/D8

Karma

Dice: D8
Points: 30

Movement

Combat: 30
Full: 60

Combat

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 5
Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 3

YATRIVASH WARRIORS

Attributes

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

Initiative: 6

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 7

Damage: 9 (spear)

Number of Spells: None

Spellcasting: None

Effect: None

Combat Movement: 35

Full Movement: 70

Legend Points: 50

Equipment: Bone breastplate and helmet, spear

Loot: None

Physical Defense: 7

Spell Defense: 6

Social Defense: 5

Armor: 1

Mystic Armor: 1

Knockdown: 5

Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 32

Wound Threshold: 8

Unconsciousness Rating: 24

RAGHUL RAIDERS (100)

Attributes

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

Initiative: 6

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 8

Damage:

Spear: 10

Knife: 8

Number of Spells: None

Spellcasting: None

Effect: None

Combat Movement: 33

Full Movement: 65

Legend Points: 60

Equipment: Padded cloth and bone armor, knife, spear

Loot: None

Physical Defense: 7

Spell Defense: 6

Social Defense: 5

Armor: 2

Mystic Armor: 1

Knockdown: 6

Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 32

Wound Threshold: 8

Unconsciousness Rating: 24

DWARFS OF HOUSE ENDOUR (30)

The dwarfs at the encampment are not from the noble ranks of the Banned House; they are workmen, miners and warriors loyal to House Endour.

Attributes

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

Initiative: 2

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 8

Damage: 10

Number of Spells: None

Spellcasting: None

Effect: None

Combat Movement: 25

Full Movement: 50

Legend Points: 70

Equipment: Chain mail, crossbow, short sword

Loot: None

Physical Defense: 7

Spell Defense: 6

Social Defense: 5

Armor: 7

Mystic Armor: 1

Knockdown: 6

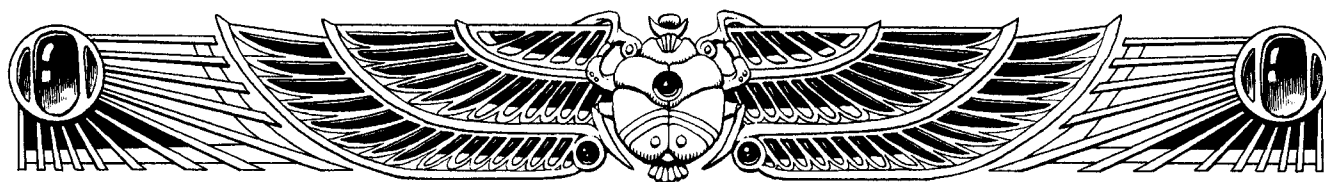
Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 35

Wound Threshold: 9

Unconsciousness Rating: 27





ABANOS SAILORS (40)

The statistics below apply to the non-adept riverboat crewmen.

Attributes

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

Initiative: 6 Physical Defense: 8
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 6
Attack Step: 9 Social Defense: 6
Damage: 10 Armor: 3
Number of Spells: None Mystic Armor: 1
Spellcasting: None Knockdown: 5
Effect: None Recovery Tests: 2

Combat Movement: 35 Death Rating: 32
Full Movement: 70 Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Legend Points: 70
Equipment: Leather armor, broadsword
Loot: None

ABANOS OFFICERS

The following statistics apply to the officers and captain of the Abanos riverboat, all of whom are boatman adepts. The values listed after each talent represent the average talent rank and step at a particular Circle. The first number is the talent rank, the second the talent step. Damage Ratings and Karma Points are listed according to Circle.

Two of the adepts are First Circle, one is Second Circle, and two are Third Circle. The four senior officers are all Fourth Circle, and the captain is a Seventh Circle boatman. All riverboat officers of Fourth Circle and above may use Karma when making Dexterity Tests. The captain may use Karma on Damage Tests made for melee weapon attacks.

Attributes

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

Talents	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	7th
Acrobatic Strike	—	1/7	2/8	2/8	3/9
Avoid Blow	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	7/13
Cast Net	—	—	2/8	4/10	7/13
Durability	—	1/1	2/2	4/4	5/5
Engaging Banter	—	—	—	—	2/7
Evaluate	—	—	—	—	7/12
First Impression	—	—	—	—	2/7
Great Leap	—	—	—	—	2/8
Haggle	—	—	1/6	2/7	3/8
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	4/4	7/7
Lizard Leap	—	—	—	—	3/9
Melee Weapon	2/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	7/13
Mystic Aim	—	—	—	1/7	2/8
Pilot Boat	2/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	7/13
Read River	—	1/6	3/8	4/9	7/12
Speak Language	—	—	—	—	7/12
Thread Weaving	—	—	—	1/6	7/12
Throwing Weapon	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	7/13
Unarmed Combat	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	7/13

Damage

Death Rating	36	42	48	54	60
Wound Threshold	10	10	10	10	10
Unconsciousness Rating	28	33	38	43	48
Recovery Tests: 3*					
Recovery Dice: D10					

Karma

Karma Dice: D6					
Karma Points	5	7	10	12	15

Combat

Physical Defense: 8*
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 1

Equipment

Broadsword (Damage: 11/D10 + D8)
Javelin (Damage: 9/D6 + D8)
Parrying Net (see **Cast Net**, p. 113, **Denizens of Earthdawn**, Volume I)

Notes

*The captain receives +1 to his Physical Defense Rating and 1 additional Recovery Test per day.
All officers can make a Tail Attack (Damage: 9/D6 + D8).





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