
EARTHDAWN
GAMEMASTER'S
GUIDE
THIRD EDITION



• THIRD EDITION •

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• EARTHDAWN THIRD EDITION •

GAMEMASTER'S GUIDE

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We can compile knowledge of our lands all day long for every day of our lives. Yet, our work can never be complete, as a thousand new threads unfold themselves while we write down a single one. And even if we could write them all down, knowledge that transcends our words remains.

• Merrox, Master of the Hall of records •

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INTRODUCTION

The Passions play by their own rules—every being more powerful than a Namegiver does. It's a fact we have to live with. But remember that rules work both ways. Use your wits and you can make them work for you.

• J'Role the Honorable Thief •

Among a group of people who get together to play roleplaying games, one of the players does not play a permanent role. Instead, this player moderates the game, keeping in mind and enforcing the game's limits and rules. This person, called the **gamemaster**, determines the effects of the player characters' actions and what the responses to those actions will be. The gamemaster also plays all the bit parts—bystanders, creatures, villains, and other characters who are not central to the action but still interact with the player characters in some way.

As the gamemaster, you run the game. You create or adapt the story told during a game session. You create the situations and scenes your players' characters get involved in, you determine whether or not a character succeeds at an attempted action, and you roleplay all the people and creatures the characters meet. You decide what creatures the characters encounter, how those creatures react to the player characters, and who gets to hit who first. You describe the world as the characters see it, functioning as their eyes, ears, and other senses. Being a gamemaster requires both skill and practice, but the thrill of creating an adventure that engages the players, tests both their gaming skills and the characters' skills in the game world, and captures their imaginations makes the job worthwhile.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

If you are new to **Earthdawn**, you might wonder what our intentions are by confronting you with several massive tomes of rules. While experienced **Earthdawn** players might love us for that, beginners might feel they have a reason to get scared. Don't worry, the **Earthdawn** game is really very easy to learn.

The ***Player's*** and ***Gamemaster's Guides*** contain all the rules you need to run an **Earthdawn** game. Since most roleplaying games are played as ongoing campaigns, these books, in addition to the ***Player's*** and ***Gamemaster's Companions***, provide everything required for years of play—advanced rules, high-Circle opponents, legendary spells—you name it, you'll probably find it in one of these books. However, you only need to be familiar with a fraction of the material in order to get started.

The best advice we can give new players and gamemasters is this—*only use the rules you need*. You can safely ignore everything else; optional rules, for instance, can be integrated later when you are more comfortable with the game. Much of the content in our books is sorted alphabetically—talents, skills, creatures, and so on—with other content organized in a similarly accessible order—dragons, for instance, which are grouped by their general type.

The first part of this book offers an in-depth description of the **Land of Barsaive**, complementing the historical information found in the **How It Came to Pass** chapter, and including historical information about **The Scourge**, and reports written by other adventurers describing Barsaive's **Places of Legend and Peril**.

In the book's second part, you will learn everything you need to know about the art of **Gamemastering**, creating **Adventures and Campaigns**, and how to deal with situations that your group will encounter while **Adventuring**. This part of the book also contains game statistics you will probably need to make reference to during your game sessions. **Magical Treasures** contains a number of general and unique magical items for use in your campaigns. The **Creatures** chapter is the first of four chapters that comprises **Earthdawn**'s massive bestiary. While this chapter lists creatures both magical and mundane, **Spirits**, **Dragons**, and **Horrors** are described in their own chapters—each detailing their unique powers and abilities and how to use them in your games.

While you might want to read our books from cover to cover, remember that you don't need to memorize everything. Instead, focus on remembering where to quickly find the information you need. A comprehensive **Contents** and **Index** are included in each book to help you find things quickly. The **Appendix** should also prove useful as a quick reference, along with providing handy forms for in-game use.

Armed with this knowledge, you should be in a good position to quickly get up to speed with your **Earthdawn** game and thus get your first campaign running as quickly as possible. Welcome aboard!



CHAPTER TWO

HOW IT CAME TO PASS

Though we must be thankful for the here and the now, we must always remember what was. Some things must never be allowed to happen again.

• King Varulus III of Throal, 1438 TH •

The following is abridged from a speaking by the ork storymaster Jallo Redbeard to a group of dwarf scholar students in the Great Library of Throal, 1509 TH.

Regardless of what one believes of the Therans, the story of the lands we now call Barsaive would not be complete unless we started with them. Without the Therans Barsaive might have ended up as nothing more than the scores of warring tribes and city-states that dotted the land a thousand years ago.

Though the Therans brought us oppression, deceit, slavery, and inhumanity, they also gave us culture, politics, commerce, and a glimpse of the power that unity can bring.

What we know of the origins of the Therans comes from their mouths and their writings. It is their tale, their legend, that we recount here. How much is truth, how much is lie, and how much falls between may never be known while the halls of Thera still stand. Despite that, it is a tale worth telling, the story of the creation of an empire.

THE MARTYR SCHOLAR

The saga of Thera begins nearly one century before the founding of the dwarf kingdom of Throal.

The elf Elianar Messias, who will one day be revered or cursed as the Father of Thera and the Martyr Scholar, is an honored follower of the elven Spiritual Path. In addition, Messias is an important advisor to High Queen Failla of the Elven Court at Wyrm Wood, the center of elven culture. Messias has a falling-out with Failla over the desire of the elven nation of Shosara to loosen the cultural shackles that bind it to the Court. Messias believes the elves of Shosara should be allowed to develop their national culture as they see fit. Failla disagrees: the Court is the center of elven culture and all elven nations must emulate her. Failla will allow no exception.

Failla declares Shosara "separated" from the elven Court, an act of such gravity it threatens to fracture that nation. Messias adamantly opposes Failla and her Declaration of Separation and is banished for his challenge. Queen Failla casts him from the Court for one hundred years, and orders that he may return after that period only if he "has learned the value of heritage and a quiet tongue." Messias never returns.

As part of his banishment, he is dispatched to a small monastery set in the foothills of what are known today as the Delaris Mountains in southwestern Barsaive. There, along with a cadre of scholars dedicated to Mynbruje, the Passion of Knowledge, Messias works to recover, translate, and transcribe volumes of books and scrolls recently recovered from a nearby mountain cavern. The scholars believe this cache of knowledge to be thousands upon thousands of years old, dating from early in the time when the magical aura of our world still lay dormant, before it rose to become the vibrant energy of our own time. What little learned men had deciphered of the works prior to Messias' arrival indicated that the documents spoke of an even older time, when the world's aura was as strong as it is now.

Messias focuses on a group of six books barely kept intact by the magic and climate of the cavern where they are stored. The six are a set, matched in size and style, even down to the odd, blood-inscribed rune on each of their covers. Messias can tell just by looking at them that they contain powerful, probably dangerous, information. He also believes them to be a warning, though against what he does not know. He devotes his life to untangling their secrets. In the end those secrets eagerly take the life he has offered.

Late one evening some years later, his fellows discover his body twisted and wracked with his dying agonies. Messias has torn his eyes from his head and then thrust his clenched fists and their bloody contents into the fire raging in the hearth of his quarters. He has also left a brief note nearby. It says:

These are the Books of Harrow.
They are our doom and our salvation.
Learn from them, or we will all perish.



That night, something horrid stalks the corridors of the monastery and six of Messias' brethren die terribly. The next morning, an elder elven scholar named Kearos Navarim takes the six *Books of Harrow*, three of his fellow scholars, and ample provisions, and sets out on a long journey to the land of his birth far to the south and west of Barsaive. In that place, in the protection that he knows he can find there, he intends to continue Messias' work and unlock the secrets of the *Books of Harrow*. He and the others settle on an island in the midst of the great Selestrean Sea and found a place of learning called *Nehr'esham*, or "center of the mind."

This place marks the beginning of Thera, the beginning of the learning that would reveal the Horrors to us, and the beginning of the great war of the mind to save us all.

THE ETERNAL LIBRARY

Word of Nehr'esham and of its Great Project to translate the *Books of Harrow* spreads quickly throughout the lands of the world. The island soon becomes a gathering point for magicians, adepts, and scholars of all types and races. Nehr'esham grows rapidly from its humble beginnings into a small city. Though Navarim nominally leads the burgeoning city, he keeps around him a tight circle of scholarly and magical advisors who administer the city's needs. Navarim himself concentrates on unlocking the secrets of the *Books of Harrow*.

Realizing that more books like the *Books of Harrow* must have survived elsewhere, Navarim sends scholars and adepts out from the island to find these books and bring them back to Nehr'esham. To hold these tomes and scrolls the city's overseers arrange for the construction of what will become known as the Eternal Library. Magically protected and controlled, it will be a place where these and other ancient works can be kept and studied in safety for both the works and the reader.

Ironically, as the first stones for the Eternal Library are laid, thousands of miles to the northeast, dwarf miners are taking up permanent residence in the mountains that will someday compose Thera's greatest rival: the dwarf kingdom of Throal. The Throalic Calendar, by which Barsaive will one day mark its time, counts forward from that day.

THE FIRST HORRORS

As the Eternal Library nears completion, one hundred and fifty years after the founding of Nehr'esham, the first signs of the Horrors begin to appear in the world. In the city of Majallan, in the human-dominated lands of Landis, dark wraithlike spirits stalk the streets, driving men to violence against each other. For a year in the city of Draoglin, in the ancient dwarf kingdom of Scytha, every dwarf child shrivels and dies before reaching its first month of life, its essence devoured by something unseen. And across the entire land that will one day be Barsaive, hordes of twisted, insect-like creatures are found nesting in isolated urban and rural areas. In southern Barsaive their infestation is so great that sworn enemies find themselves working side by side to destroy the creatures. This time, known as The Invae Burnings, is the closest Barsaive comes to unification prior to the arrival of the Therans. Hopes of unity collapse, however, in the face of the tragic famine that grips Barsaive in the following years.

To the aged Navarim and his followers, the dreadful tidings from Majallan, Scytha, and the city-states of southern Barsaive portend the beginning of something terrible. What these awful signs warn of becomes frighteningly clear shortly thereafter. Navarim's brilliant student and assistant, the dwarf Jaron, breaks through to understanding and completes the translation of the first of the six *Books of Harrow*. This book, named simply The *First Book of Harrow*, speaks of terrible days ahead, of the coming of the Horrors, their nearly unstoppable power, and the possible ruination of the world.

TIMELINE

Year*	Event
~400 BT	First recorded settlement at what is now Vivane.
~100 BT	Elianar Messias is banished from Wyrm Wood when he disagrees with Queen Failla over the Separation of Shosara.
~50 BT	Elianar Messias is found dead with the *Books of Harrow*. His successor, Kearos Navarim, travels to an island in the Selestrean Sea and founds Nehr'esham.

* References to years in the Timeline use the Throalic Calendar. BT refers to the time before the founding of Throal.

The Horrors, the book says, are terrible spirits dwelling in the darkest corners of the netherworlds. When the magical aura of this world reaches a certain strength, the Horrors will be able to build mystical bridges between this world and the twisted realm where they dwell. And then the Horrors will come. Terrible and powerful, they are beyond reason. They seek only to consume. Some desire anything physical: rocks, trees, it matters not. Others want flesh, blood, and living creatures. The more powerful live on pain, terror, and the dark emotions those experiences arouse in their victims.

The Horrors will come, the book says, and little can be done to stop them.

THERA IS BORN

Word of the *First Book of Harrow* spreads quickly. The city around Nehr'esham begins to swell just as quickly until it covers the entire island. It is soon renamed *Thera*, meaning "foundation." In time, the island becomes a center of trade and commerce as well as the center of learning and thought in the eastern Selestrean Sea, attracting many magicians and other adepts.



TIMELINE

Year*	Event
~1 TH	Construction begins on the Eternal Library at Nehr'esham.
12 TH	King Thandos I of Throal mysteriously vanishes. His son, Thandos II, succeeds him.
~100 TH	The Eternal Library is completed. Jaron completes translation of the *First Book of Harrow* and re-Names Nehr'esham to Thera. The very first signs of Horrors appear in the kingdoms of Scytha, Landis, and elsewhere. Discovery of a corrupt sect of Chorrolis results in The Invae Burnings. The ork hero Hrak Gron frees her people from slavery, which comes to be known as the Great Uprising.
~200 TH	Kearos Navarim named first Elder of Thera. The t'skrang House K'tenshin is founded.

* References to years in the Timeline use the Throalic Calendar. TH refers to the time after the founding of Throal.

The growth of Thera does not come without its price, however. Unable to support the enormous tasks of physical labor required to keep up with the swelling population and commerce, the Therans must import workers from other lands. Theran slavery begins with these laborers. The great Theran merchant houses that arrange for the transport of the workers maintain "control" over the workers they import. Financial arrangements must be made with the merchant house for the use of the workers. Soon, "control" of workers becomes commonplace as the powerful and influential arrange to import workers specifically as servants and minor laborers. Within seventy years from the arrival of the first work-ship, "control" becomes ownership and true slavery is as common on Thera as the ocean breeze.

Within a year of the translation of the *First Book*, Navarim dispatches copies to all the leaders in all the lands he has ever heard of in an effort to warn them. Few listen.

Meanwhile, work on deciphering the other *Books of Harrow* continues in the hopes of finding some way to stop or defend against the Horrors. Early on, Navarim establishes the School of Shadows as the center for this effort and charges it to find ways of defeating the Horrors. From that School groups of adepts and magicians travel across the known world to confront the burgeoning Horrors and learn what they can from those confrontations.

At the same time, Thera's leading citizens create a more formal organization to govern the island. Navarim, named the Elder of Thera, presides over a body of advisors and administrators known as The Twelve. This body controls and manages the various areas of Thera and her growing influence. In one of their first acts, The Twelve establish a military force to defend Thera against increasing bandit and pirate raids.

The research conducted at the School of Shadows proves to have more uses than at first expected. Theran scholars and magicians discover insights and understandings into the ways and makings of magic that have far-reaching ancillary results. Their research opens up to the Therans the ability to work the powerful elemental magic contained in the True forms of air, earth, fire, water, and wood. Using that knowledge, the Therans build their stunning cities, none of which could exist without the aid of magic. They also create their airships, vessels of all kinds that fly through the air. Their research also gives them knowledge of magical warding and protection, illusion and healing, the transformation and manipulation of physical objects, and insight into the deepest reaches of the netherworlds. Thera becomes an island, a nation, and eventually an empire built on magic.

The Therans and Barsaive

As Thera grows, the land that will someday become Barsaive exists in ignorance. Unnamed, the area is home to independent tribes and isolated city-states. Little trade exists between these powers, the only real contact coming through intermittent attacks on rich Thera by the poorer city-states. Occasional efforts by the Elven Court at Wyrm Wood to bring the area under their control fail. Though rulers of a great empire, the elves of Wyrm Wood do not see enough worth conquering in Barsaive to exert the necessary political and military pressure. Their failure ultimately leaves Barsaive vulnerable to Theran domination.

In the year 212 TH, the Therans finally arrive in Barsaive. They first make contact with the humans of Landis near the city of Vivane and what will someday become Sky Point. From there, Theran representatives and ambassadors travel across Barsaive making contact and trade alliances with every group they can find. This land, they discover, abounds with the natural and magical elements and materials the Therans covet. The Theran envoys promise a glittering future through trade to Barsaive's city-states and tribes; dazzled by the prospect of Theran riches, the local leaders sign agreements without reading between the lines.

The arrival of the first Theran trading fleet in 216 TH comes as a great surprise to Barsaive's local powers. They had signed treaties and agreements with the Theran envoys, but without any real understanding of the implications. The sight of dozens of Theran airships drifting slowly through the air over their palaces, castles, and tents is a literal and symbolic blow to them. A new power has come to Barsaive now, and it is second to none.

Birth of an Empire

The Therans enjoy their growing power. The island itself, its central citadel, the Eternal Library, and other great works of architecture and culture are renowned across the world. Thera's position in the heavily traveled Selestrean Sea makes her an ideal port of trade and commerce. For mystical thought and pure magical power, Thera has no equal. The potency of her magicians and the skill of her adepts are envied the world over. She needs little else to seal her position in the world. Nevertheless, Fate gives it to her.

Nearly four hundred years after the founding of Nehr'esham, in the Throal year 341 TH, Kearos Navarim dies of old age. His body is sealed in amber and placed in the great plaza of the citadel at the heart of Thera, next to the cenotaph of his friend Elianar Messias. Word spreads quickly that Navarim died while putting the finishing touches on the culmination of the Great Project and the researches of the School of Shadows. The rumors are correct.

Five years after Navarim's death, his successor as Elder of Thera, the human Meach Vara Lingam, announces to the world that though the scholars have found nothing beyond a keen blade and an iron will to defeat the coming Horrors, they have discovered something to protect against them. Lingam unveils to the world Kearos Navarim's crowning and final work, the *Rites of Protection and Passage*.

Rites of Protection and Passage

Despite Lingam's brave words, the *Rites of Protection and Passage* do not offer any truly effective methods of protecting against the Horrors, but it does present the theoretical means by which that protection can be discovered. In his four-volume work, Navarim concluded that isolation from the Horrors is the only true means of protection against them once

they come in full force. Because of their individual power and sheer overwhelming numbers, direct confrontation with the Horrors would ultimately prove suicidal.

To hide from the Horrors, Navarim proposed to construct great underground fortresses. Dubbed kaers, these dwellings would protect their occupants against the Horrors on the theory that strong enough walls will keep out even the most physically powerful Horror. The natural, solid, earthen walls of the kaer would also provide protection against those Horrors that travel through astral space or by means as yet unguessed. However, Navarim warned an earthen barrier might not be enough to withstand every Horror.

Navarim's book also offered other means of protection. Cities could be shielded under domes of stone or those woven of True air or True fire. Kaers could be built beneath the sea and protected by True water, and so on. Navarim believed that the underground kaer would offer the strongest defense, though even it might be breached.

To shore up the kaers' defenses, Navarim offered additional protections to defend against the Horrors on a primal level. Navarim believed that magicians could learn to create wards and runes that would "call" to a Horror through magic. Once the Horror examined the rune, its mind would become caught in the magical web and mathematical maze of the rune's construction.

Because the Horror comes from a place deep in the mystical netherworlds, a Horror must always devote some degree of its concentration to keeping itself in this world. A rune entrapping its mind would break the Horror's concentration and force the thing either to retreat or lose its grasp in this world and be flung back to the pit from whence it came.

Unfortunately for Thera and her sister lands, only the theory for these runes and wards exists. Navarim believed they could be devised and had charged the School of Shadows with their creation just prior to his death. In the meantime, he recommended that kaers be built wherever possible in preparation for the day when the infestation of Horrors would become so overpowering that they would render the surface of the world all but uninhabitable. This would occur, Navarim believed, in just over eight hundred years.

The School of Shadows continues to work on mastery of the runes, intending to make them available to all once their secrets are unlocked. And unlock them they do, but instead of sharing them, Thera closely guards the secrets of the runes. Soon she will use them as a bargaining tool to extend the Theran sphere of influence.

TIMELINE

Year	Event
212 TH	Theran emissaries first contact Landis with news of the coming Scourge.
216 TH	The first Theran trading fleet arrives in Barsaive.
220 TH	Thandos V of Throal dies without an heir. A brief civil war erupts in Throal when it is learned that Thandos V was not of royal blood. Braza I becomes king and begins excavation of Braza's Kingdom.
275 TH	Braza I of Throal dies. That same year, a Theran military armada arrives in Barsaive.
300 TH	The Therans conquer the city of Vivane with a tremendous display of magical might.
309 TH	Construction begins on Sky Point, a staging platform for the Theran Fleet in Barsaive.
341 TH	Kearos Navarim dies. He is succeeded by Meach Vara Lingam.
346 TH	Meach Vara Lingam unveils the Rites of Protection and Passage.



The immediate reaction to Navarim's work is mixed. Many dismiss its conclusions outright, while others look upon it with almost religious reverence. Most, though, cannot take seriously a threat eight hundred years in the future. They read Navarim's words and vow to prepare, later.

Orichalcum Wars

Thera, however, does not wait. The mighty, magic-rich island needs significant and perhaps extravagant protection against the Horrors. To this end its leaders begin to collect vast quantities of the magical metal orichalcum. The Therans begin striking favorable trade agreements in order to obtain large quantities of the rare material. No one can guess what manner of protection the Therans wish to build that requires so much of that metal, but as long as they pay well for it, no one much cares.

For those who do not know, orichalcum can only occur from the natural mixing of certain other earthen materials that combine in the presence of True earth. Though not a part of orichalcum, True earth is always found in the same area as that rare ore. Orichalcum must usually be mined, but occasionally nodes of it are found close enough to the surface of the land to be gathered by hand.

Orichalcum trade with Thera proves profitable for the rest of the world, despite the hue and cry of some deprived local magicians. It is so profitable that shipments become the target of bandits and raiders. Sixty years after Thera has begun its extensive importation of orichalcum, the trolls of the Twilight Peaks, called the crystal raiders, lead their ramshackle airships in a stunning long-distance raid against Shosaran orichalcum stores being prepared for shipment overland to Thera. Other raids quickly follow suit as the crystal raiders hone their skill of raiding by air.

Rather than band together for protection against the raiders, the lords and leaders of various lands take the raid as a signal to start their own plundering. The provinces of Ustrect and Cara Fahd simultaneously attack Landis; Throal is nearly overrun by marauding bands of orks known as ork scorchers, the Elven Court in Wyrm Wood fights Scythan dwarfs and their human allies in a series of terrible battles. The wars last more than 40 years. Nations switch sides with a shift of the wind, migratory tribes become little more than mercenaries, and nobility plot against and betray their own kin. Only in Shosara and Throal are the rightful rulers not at

least temporarily deposed. For the first 30 years, orichalcum and elemental mining and gathering operations are declared off-limits by unspoken agreement; each side needs the mines, and no one would profit from their destruction.

The ork kingdom of Cara Fahd changes hands when Landis retakes the area around a lava field ripe with True fire. In retaliation, the retreating ork commander, Cathon Grimeye, unleashes every bound or trapped fire elemental present in the field. No ork survives, most of the vanguard of Landis' army is destroyed, and the mines are severely damaged. This action sets the stage for the final, brutal years of the war.

Theran Navy and Empire

As long as the flow of orichalcum and other magical elements remains steady, the Therans care little about the war. As the Orichalcum Wars rage on, more and more Theran mining vessels sail over Barsaive. These barges rarely touch down, instead mining and gathering True air from the clouds around the highest mountain peaks. Using new techniques known only to them, the Theran miners are very successful. That success makes them targets.

The crystal raiders, having set off the Orichalcum Wars, sit back and watch them rage. Because the furious fighting has halted nearly all mining in the area, they make only the occasional supply raid. The Theran air barges, however, offer them a target they cannot resist.

The raiders strike quickly and often, plundering and looting the air barges. Thera warns that they will not tolerate further interference with the air mining operations. The Therans begin protecting the air barges with warships, military airships. At first these ships are vedettes, air barges expanded and armored for war. The raiders thumb their noses at the Theran war vessels; they continue attacking the convoys, using their faster, more maneuverable airships to escape back to the Twilight Peaks with their booty.

The Therans then begin protecting the mining convoys with kilas, stone-hulled vessels resembling small fortresses, built specifically for war. Despite mounting losses, the raiders step up their attacks. The final straw for the Therans comes after they lose a massive fleet of air barges, vedettes, and kilas to the raiders. Sixty days later the Therans reveal their true power.

As morning comes, the clan-moots of the crystal raiders awaken to the sounds of alarm across the Twilight Peaks. Drifting across the great plain to the southeast of the mountains, not far from Vivane, is the largest airship anyone has ever conceived of, let alone seen. Devoid of a true ship's hull and sail, the vessel is a massive shard of rock nearly a thousand feet long propelled by raw magic in defiance of the laws of nature. The Therans call this terrible machine of war a behemoth.

The crystal raiders are astounded by the sight, but swarm to their airships and move to attack. The Theran airship commander dispatches a messenger spirit to the raiders, telling them to surrender or be obliterated. Proud and defiant, the raiders destroy the spirit.

Moving to attack, the raiders encounter a thunderous rain of weapons fire from the Theran ship. Siege engines, mounted onto the ship's stone hull and guided by magic, catapult giant arrows of metal and wood at the attackers. Bolts of mystic energy lash from the airship as well, as Theran mages focus their powers against the raiders. The raiders scatter under the onslaught, straight into the waiting guns of kilas hidden in the clouds overhead.

The battle continues for hours until the Theran behemoth finally reaches the edge of the Twilight Peaks. Then, it turns its terrible destructive power away from the remaining raider airships and directs it against their homes. The siege engines pound the moot-homes, magics tear into the raider families who attempt to defend the surface buildings and caverns, and elementals unleashed from the Theran ship ravage what little defense remains.

Stunned at the massacre they are witnessing, the raiders surrender. They are taken prisoner aboard the stone airship, to be brought back to Thera as slaves in chains. The Theran forces burn their airships, though they do not bother to destroy the few remaining survivors in the Twilight Peaks. With what will become known as the Battle of Sky Point, the Therans prove they are a power to be reckoned with. No longer content to simply conduct trade and commerce subject to the whims of local lords, the Therans use the Battle of Sky Point to show the world what awaits those foolish enough to interfere with Theran desires and aims.

One hundred days later, in the four hundred and forty-third year of Throal, the then-human Elder of Thera, Thom Edro, proclaims the Theran Empire. Thera declares the lands of Barsaive a Theran province, promising all those who swear loyalty to her protection from the ravages of the Orichalcum Wars, as well as first rights to new enchantments to defend against the Horrors. To enforce their power, the new Empire places a permanent Theran military presence into the southwestern corner of Barsaive, Naming it Sky Point for all of Barsaive to remember the folly and fall of the crystal raiders, and founds the provincial capital of Parlainth in the northwest corner of the land. Dozens of smaller city-states and kingdoms quickly submit to Thera. More powerful kingdoms submit more slowly, but visits from the Theran Navy prove persuasive.

A leading citizen of Thera, the human Kern Fallo, is named the first Overlord of Barsaive. Though Thera controls the province, Fallo sees the practical value of local administration and calls upon the dwarfs of nearby Throal to assist him. Throal, unwillingly allied to Thera out of need for the Theran enchantments against the Horrors, agrees.

Through this administration, Throal mediates between the Therans and Barsaive. The dwarfs provide a buffer between the governments of Barsaive and their Theran overlords, defusing much of the tension between them. Also through this administration, Throal spreads and promotes the dwarf tongue as the trading language of Barsaive. For the first time in its history, citizens of various Barsaivian regions can communicate with relative ease.

TIMELINE

Year	Event
~360 TH	Kingdom of Ustrect founded with King R'Graya Bash'ak on the Throne.
402 TH	Lugrul of Cara Fahd dies.
~405 TH	Crystal raiders attack a Shosaran trading vessel, sparking the Orichalcum Wars.
407 TH	The forgotten Queen of Ustrect declares war on Cara Fahd.
408 TH	King Wujemba ascends the throne of Cara Fahd.
423 TH	Two year peace in Cara Fahd begins.
425 TH	Landis attacks Cara Fahd.
~440 TH	Sacrifice of Cathon Grimeye at Cara Fahd lava field. The ork nation collapses.
443 TH	Battle of Sky Point. Theran behemoth destroys several crystal raider settlements in the Twilight Peaks. Queen Jonatha of Throal signs peace agreement with Thera, ending the Orichalcum Wars. Thom Edro proclaims the Theran Empire and Barsaive becomes Thera's first province, with Kern Fallo as Provincial Overlord.

JARON AND THE SPHINX

When Thom Edro establishes the Theran Empire, he installs himself as its First Governor. Many know it is only a matter of time before Edro secures the backing to proclaim himself Emperor.

Other grumblings surface as well, rumors that Edro is using unnatural magics to extend his life and those of loyal human and ork followers. Of course dwarf adepts had long ago developed life-extending magics for themselves … but this is different.

Magic had extended the life of the dwarf scholar-magician Jaron as well, though it left him less energetic than previously. He fears that Edro is turning Thera into a mockery of the teaching of Elianar Messias, called the Martyr Scholar. Each time Jaron voices his objections, another of his followers vanishes. He realizes that despite his deciphering of the *First Book of Harrow*, the expanding Theran Empire no longer considers him an asset.

The night after the disappearance of Jaron's closest apprentice, a great working begins in the open park across the harbor from Thera's central citadel. Three great earth elementals tear rock, stone, and True earth up from the very foundations of the island and begin to sculpt them under Jaron's watchful eye. Theran imperial guardsmen and magicians rush to the area, but a powerful shield surrounding the park holds them back. They gape in wonder as a giant stone Sphinx takes form. Its head is sculpted turning downward and seemingly asleep. As the Sphinx is completed just before daybreak, Jaron turns to address the masses gathered in the park. He speaks to them of the teachings of the Martyr Scholar and the dreams of Kearos Navarim. He also speaks of the dangers of power and the dark path he fears Thera is beginning to walk. He has constructed the Sphinx, he tells them, to watch over Thera and her governors. It will remain in the park as the guardian of the beliefs of the past and an eternal reminder to the future. As Jaron falls silent, the shield protecting the park dissolves. The three earth elementals gather Jaron within themselves and together the four merge with the Sphinx. The crowds rush forward, and the Sphinx slowly opens its stone eyes, which blaze from within with a blue-white light. The Sphinx lifts its head to stare out across the main harbor directly at the central citadel and the heart of Thera. From that moment on, it remains in that position.

Theran magicians examine the Sphinx's construction, but its magical weavings baffle them. None can penetrate it enough to even glimpse the Sphinx's True pattern, much less learn enough to gain power over it. Because they cannot predict what may happen, they fear trying to manipulate or unmake it. To this day, the great Sphinx sits staring out over the harbor of Thera as a reminder to all who come and to all who rule there. The leader of Thera remains the First Governor. None dares call himself Emperor.

THERA AND THE DRAGONS

Thera's domination of the cultures of the Selestrean basin and neighboring areas is not total. Kingdoms and peoples continue to search for their own solutions to the problem of the Horrors because success means greater independence from Thera's increasingly oppressive rule. They sponsor eager scholars and brave adventurers to seek out dragons, for the creatures are known to have survived the last Scourge (as the invasion of the Horrors has come to be known) remarkably intact. However, many dragons have no desire to share their secrets, greatly reducing the population of eager scholars. Some dragons, through bribery or entreaty, share the method of creating the dragon lair, which scholars believe protected them. A rare few actually contact kingdoms on their own, offering to help for their own dragon reasons.

The leaders of Thera see the dragon actions as a challenge to their power and position. Proposed responses spark fierce debate; Edro has no desire to antagonize the dragons at a time when Thera should be using all its power to prepare for the coming Scourge. But the factions that profit most from the trade in magical elements mount effective pressure. The Theran Navy organizes strikes against three powerful and influential great dragons. The first two succeed in killing the target dragons and destroying their lairs, though the action costs the Therans one of their mighty stone behemoths for the first time. The third strike, against the great dragon Icewing,



TIMELINE

Year	Event
~900 TH	Queen Ulutur begins construction on Halls of Throal. Braza's Kingdom sealed.
950 TH	Varulus I ascends the throne of Throal.
960 TH	*Book of Tomorrow* commissioned.
997 TH	A group of Throalic nobles known as The Fourteen are banished for plotting against Varulus I.
1008 TH	Thera seals its citadel.
1020 TH	Ersh Wearg becomes Provincial Overlord of Barsaive.
1032 TH	The Raggok Incident in Throal becomes the first indication that the Passions were driven mad by the Scourge.
1044 TH	Theran provincial overlord Ersh Wearg arrives in Throal, fleeing from Parlainth.
1045 TH	Parlainth vanishes.
1049 TH	Varulus I journeys to an audience with the great dragon Icewing.
1050 TH	Throal seals its gates.

fails. The Therans find only his lair, largely empty of anything of value and power.

Theran ambassadors pass firmly worded communiqués through discreet channels; they refuse to tolerate dragon interference in Theran domestic policy. The dragons appear to retreat; Theran merchants and guild adepts do a booming business as new orders for Theran protective enchantments flood in.

Then, one sunset, sailors and dock merchants spot a dragon atop the head of the Sphinx. As the Therans hesitate between staring and fleeing, the dragon flies off. The next morning twelve citizens are found dead. Two are provisioners to the navy, one an earth-element smith, one a clerk to the treasurer, two guild adepts, one a moneylender, and five are principal contractors for protective enchantments. Each of the twelve had agitated for or profited from, the action against the dragons. Over the next two weeks the dragons strike twice more. Two dozen more leading Therans die. Theran diplomatic channels convey a second message: Therans are to leave dragons strictly alone. No further Theran raids will be planned or executed. The dragons apparently take the Therans' message to heart and cease to disclose what they know of the Horrors and the coming Scourge.

Race to the Shelters

As the Scourge draws nearer, the kingdoms and cultures of the world prepare for the mass invasion of the Horrors. Some build small underground villages with protective wards woven from the roots of the plants above. The dwarfs of Throal hollow out most of an entire mountain, the largest in the kingdom, to build their kaer. Other cities become fantastic citadels, with hand-written runic phrases carefully inscribed on every bit of masonry in the city. With each new report of a Horror, work becomes more frantic, ever more urgent. Fear and panic result in such a heavy spread of rumors that it becomes difficult to sort out the truth. Contact between cities, between kingdoms, becomes erratic. Some cities become so fearful that they isolate themselves years before the actual Scourge begins.

Throughout this time the most reliable communications come from, or through, Thera. The Theran Empire literally holds together the fabric of civilization until most of their client states are prepared.

Thera's demands for slaves greatly increase during this period. Life is cheap, so the demands are met. Rulers sometimes sell an entire town into slavery in order to obtain the Runes of Warding to protect two or three other towns. Throal and Landis balk at the increased demand for slaves and work furiously to pay Thera's dear price with raw elements.

The Elven Schism

Some reject Thera outright. Queen Alachia of Wyrm Wood, High Queen of all the Elves, despises the Therans for their use of slavery and for their political opposition to her rule. She commands that no elven nation, and no elf, follow the Theran ways of protection. She presents an alternative in which elven Elementalists will use wood magics to weave the living plants of Wyrm Wood into a kaer. The Horrors, she believes, will be unable to pass through living wood.

Elven scholars outside Wyrm Wood, and it is said even some within, are aghast at the proposal. They believe that though the Theran method is not foolproof, it would provide effective protection against the Horrors. These magicians and scholars doubt that any wooden kaer could possibly withstand the savage physical punishment the Horrors would inflict upon it.

Alachia, however, stands resolute. She vows that any elf who follows the Theran way will be forever separated from all of elven culture. This threat, far from cowing the other elven nations, shatters the great cultural elven empire Alachia commanded, presumably forever.

Word comes first from the elves of the far-away Northern Kingdoms. As the elves most distant from the Court at Wyrm Wood, they feel the least amount of true loyalty to its ways. Though little is known of those Northern Kingdoms in Barsaive, their rejection of Alachia represents a severe blow to her power. Before she can react, Alachia receives word from other elven nations and city-states that they refuse to follow her. They wish the Court well, but they will not follow Alachia to what they believe to be certain death.

Queen Alachia, in the end, does not formally declare these nations separate. Their refusal has bereft the Elven Court of much of its power, making any such declaration an empty gesture. Instead Alachia chooses to wait until after the Scourge when her continued existence can prove her wisdom. At her command, the elves of Wyrm Wood begin the construction of the wooden kaer that will be their downfall.

The Scourge

Scholars now place the beginning of the Scourge in the one thousand and eighth year of the Throal Calendar. The Therans count that date as the year TE 565. Both use the same indicator for the beginning of the Scourge: the sealing up of Thera. As a center and focus of magical power, Thera is beset by the Horrors earlier and with greater severity than the rest of the world. Thera's last words to her subject nations are wishes of luck and safety, and an affirmation of her power. Then, the great dome of True air and fire that surrounds the island ignites and seals Thera off from the world.

Though some other groups had previously sealed themselves off, the rest of the world sees the sealing of Thera as the last great sign that the Scourge is beginning. Horrors appear with increasing frequency and are becoming more than a match for local militia, constabulary, and brave adventurers.

Within twenty years of the sealing of Thera, the rising tide of Horrors cuts off virtually all communication between kingdoms. Even astral space becomes too polluted to access, and magicians



TIMELINE

Year	Event
1057 TH	The Horror Whisper manifests in Throal and is defeated through the efforts of several of the kingdom's adepts.
1160 TH	King Varulus I of Throal dies at age 270. He is succeeded by his son, Varulus II.
1262 TH	The wooden kaer of Wyrm Wood collapses. The desperate Ritual of Thorns turns the forest into Blood Wood.
1270 TH	The *Council Compact* is completed after twenty years of work.
1373 TH	King Varulus II of Throal dies at age 258. He is succeeded by his son Varulus III.
1399 TH	Thera believed to have opened its citadel.

the world over learn the true benefits of the spell matrices devised by the Therans. Mindless herds of destructive Horrors roam the land, consuming every scrap of life they can find. Other, more intelligent Horrors probe existing defenses, and batter their way through weaker ones. Still others infiltrate society and slip with the people into their kaers. They wait and reveal themselves, violently or subtly, after the kaer has been sealed.

Throal and Parlainth

In Barsaive, the great powers of Throal and Parlainth, the Theran provincial capital, brace themselves against the Horrors and remain open and accessible for as long as they can. Both provide shelter for refugees until the last possible moment. Throal's kaer, though of Theran design, includes additional mystical dwarf craftsmanship. Parlainth intends to use a radical method of isolation: its magicians will cast a great spell to shift Parlainth from this world to another in the netherworlds, one out of reach of the Horrors. To further keep the city safe, part of the spell will reach out across Barsaive and wipe the memory of Parlainth from the mind of every living person. With no memory of Parlainth, no one will betray either its existence or its disappearance to the Horrors. (The tale of Parlainth holds both great deeds and great tragedy, and is best fully told elsewhere.) Ironically, at the last minute, the Theran Overlord of Barsaive loses faith in the plan he sponsored and flees to Throal with his staff. Parlainth seals itself off, disappears, and leaves the memory of Barsaive for nearly four hundred years. Supposedly safe in Throal, the Theran Overlord and much of his staff are killed when a portion of the Throal kaer collapses only a few months after Throal has sealed itself up.

In the years just before the Scourge, the dwarfs of Throal do not remain idle. Years of administering Barsaive under Theran domination have taught them much. They know that during the projected time of the Scourge, six hundred years, much of society and culture will wither within the kaers. The Theran plan prepared for every aspect of physical survival; they provided for magical plant nurturing, air and waste recirculation, and breeding cycles. However, the Therans had neglected the less tangible things.

To this end, the dwarfs created *The Book of Tomorrow*. In this book they set down the history of Barsaive and Thera, the great tales of the day and others past. They wrote out the dwarf language in its entirety so that children in the kaers could learn to speak, read, and write a common tongue. The book told them how to rebuild their homes and lands once the Horrors had gone. The book told them how to use arts and crafts as a continuing sign that one was free from the influence of a Horror, for the dwarfs had learned that a person Horror-tainted could not create things of art and beauty. And most important it told the dwarfs how to tell when the dark days of the Scourge were over.

Finally, in the year 1050 TH, Throal sealed itself off and prepared for the worst. Throal's leaders were virtually certain that some Horrors had entered the kaer with the refugees, and knew they would soon reveal themselves. Though the story has been lost to the mists of time, the strength of the dwarfs enabled them to discover and defeat one Horror before it could ravage the kaer. The time of the Scourge brought suffering and hardship, but the people of Throal endured through their physical strength and will to survive. During that time, other things change in Throal as well. The dwarfs as a people, and their friends inside with them, look forward to the future. Discussions begin about what the world will be like after the Scourge. In the court of King Varulus II, dwarf common sense links with imagination to provide a new vision of the world.

Philosophers, soldiers, priests, scholars, craftsmen, and nobles argue for years until a rough consensus emerges. For the first time the rights of an individual are argued and defined. The dwarfs write down these rights and the logic that bred them in the *Council Compact* of 1270 TH. This document will serve as a guide to forming the new dwarf society and that of their neighbors in the years after the Scourge. In broad terms, it defines individual rights, property rights, and the role of law.

For example, the section on individual rights contains the following passage:

> *We have shown that rights to property are a necessary good for an orderly society. What of the issue of slavery, the ownership of another person?*
>
> *Persons can certainly be considered property. But who owns a person? Our common sense dictates that the spirit born into the body owns the body. That spirit contains its movement, its thoughts, its actions. The spirit makes active use of the body it owns. Our language supports this view—an evil spirit who inhabits and controls a body is said to have "possessed" the body; this possession is seen as unnatural. The evil spirit has stolen the body from its rightful owner.*
>
> *Slavery removes the control of an individual's body from its natural spirit to the slaveowner. This transfer is made without compensation to the spirit, the true owner of the body. Involuntary servitude also steals the body.*
>
> *It is a crime.*

The *Council Compact* is a rigorously thought-out statement of principles. Its goal is to develop a fair, orderly society to aid the conduct of commerce. The *Compact* embodies common sense, and can serve as a shared belief among all people. During the time in the kaer, the *Compact* circulates among dwarf nobles who accept it without reservation. Those who believe in the *Compact* decide that the world following the Scourge will be different from the one that had existed before, and very different from the one the Therans expect.

Blood Wood

In 1262 TH, the wooden kaer of the Elven Court begins to fail. The loss of protection is slow, but inexorable. Panic strikes within the kaer as the elves desperately seek alternative means of protection. They haven't enough time to construct underground kaers, nor do they have sufficient reserves of True air or earth. Desperation and depression set in as the Horrors begin to break through. The elves create roving militia squads to respond quickly to breaks in the kaer barriers as Elementalists strive to repair the existing breaks and shore up other weakening sections.

Then the elves of the Wood make a startling and ultimately terrifying discovery. Of those Horrors that break through, those most intelligent, most devious, and most difficult to destroy all but ignore elves who are already mad or in extreme, constant pain. The advisors to Queen Alachia are quick to realize that these Horrors need to inflict madness and pain themselves in order to feed. Existing

madness and pain are not enough for them. A horrible seed begins to grow in the heart of the Wyrm Wood, a plan for protection so terrible that its implementation will be as heinous as anything the Horrors themselves can inflict.

Finally, with the Horrors on the verge of complete penetration of the elven kaer, the elves enact their desperate plan. Elementalists perform a twisted blood ritual that forces a physical change upon the surviving elves of Wyrm Wood. Thorns begin to grow out of their skin, ripping and tearing, leaving the elf in constant, excruciating, overpowering pain. The initial Ritual of Thorns kills many of the elves in Wyrm Wood, but those who survive learn to live with the pain and even draw upon it for strength. For the Horrors, nothing they want remains in Wyrm Wood. Some of the more bestial Horrors continue to attack and attempt to break through, but the more diabolical ones who feed on pain and suffering leave to find their nurture elsewhere. The elves of what has become the Blood Wood have found a way to survive, but at a terrible price.

The Time of Hiding

Centuries pass as the people within the kaers and citadels huddle in fear and gradually learn to cope, all the while longing for the touch of sunlight and the taste of clean air. The inhabitants of many kaers will not live to see the sun again. Horrors batter or guile their way into more kaers than anyone even in their darkest thoughts believed possible. Whole cities are lost to the Horrors, entire societies and civilizations gone forever.

In Barsaive, the greatest loss may be the city of Parlainth, though none would remember her grandeur until many years after the end of the Scourge. We now know that sometime during the Scourge, Horrors somehow entered Parlainth. All anyone knows for certain comes from the tale of J'Role, the Honorable Thief, and his companions. By the time they found the magical Longing Ring, learned its secrets, and used it to return forgotten Parlainth to this world, all the city's inhabitants were dead or gone. Explorers found few bodies; unknown Horrors had left the city desolate. In the years following the Scourge, Parlainth became a center of adventure and danger as brave souls from all over Barsaive came there to find her lost treasures and unlock her dark secrets. But even after the Scourge, terrible things still walk the streets of Parlainth and hide in her darkest corners, and most of her secrets remain hidden to this day.

Those kaers that hold copies of the Throalic *Book of Tomorrow* know the magic ritual that will tell them when they may safely re-enter the world. Those lacking this ritual must guess and hope. The magic itself is basic: a simple ball of True earth is enchanted and placed over a dish of True water. The magics of the ritual keep the ball suspended over the water. As the strength of the world's magical aura wanes, and the Horrors are forced to retreat, the ball of True earth descends until it finally touches the True water and the two mix.

All across Barsaive, the people in the kaers watch the ball descend. Slowly, ever so slowly, it drops toward the water. Finally, in the fourteen hundred and fifteenth year of the Throalic Calendar the ball stops falling, hanging an inch above water. Shocked scholars and magicians watch in wonder and dread. It is too soon by hundreds of years for the Scourge to have abated. And why had the ball stopped? No one knew the answer then, and no one knows to this day. We only know that for some reason on that day the mystical aura of our world stabilized and has remained constant from that point forward.

A few years pass and the people in the kaers begin to believe that the ball will not descend any further. The doors of the kaers begin to open into a bright, sunlit world ravaged by the Horrors. Most, though not all, of the Horrors are gone.

TIMELINE

Year	Event
1409 TH	First Throalic scouting party heads outside. It is destroyed within hours of emerging.
~1410 TH	Crystal raiders emerge from their kaers in the Twilight Peaks.
1412 TH	Vaare Longfang returns from first successful scouting mission outside Throal
1415 TH	The magic level of the world stabilizes for some unknown reason. Elemental clocks cease to drop.
1416 TH	The first voyage of the *Earthdawn*.
1418 TH	During its second voyage, the *Earthdawn* disappears without a trace.
1420 TH	Throal opens its gates and begins to resettle the mountains.
~1430 TH	The city of Urupa is founded on the shores of the Aras Sea.
1442 TH	The Therans reconquer Vivane.
1449 TH	Theran vessels return to Barsaive, starting the First Theran War. The t'skrang House K'tenshin awakens.

The Return

Throal begins the first, tentative return to the outside world just prior to the cessation of the ball's drop. Throalic scholars and magicians believe that the strength of the world's magical aura may have dropped enough that most of the more powerful Horrors have already begun to flee. They doubt the accuracy of the Theran calculations of the Scourge's length, believing the Therans to have erred conservatively so that they might enter the new world first, and dominate it.

In 1409 TH the first scouting party sent outside Throal is destroyed within hours. Each year after that Throal sends out another scouting party, none of whom at first return. In 1412 TH the scouting party led by the female troll Vaare Longfang returns alive and intact. She reports that the Horrors are still present, but they are fewer and less active. Throal's leaders decide to launch a greater expedition to learn the extent of the Horrors' ravaging. They outfit an airship, give it magical protection and an elite crew, and offer Vaare Longfang command.

The Earthdawn

In 1416 TH, just after the world's aura has apparently stabilized, the expedition sets sail in the refitted airship, christened the *Earthdawn*. Its mission lasts almost a year. The battle-scarred *Earthdawn* returns to Throal with an exhausted but exhilarated crew. Vaare has charted most of Barsaive and found it predominately free of the Horrors. Those that remain have retreated into pockets of higher magic where they find it easier to exist. Few live in the open. A jubilant Throal prepares to emerge into the world.

In 1418 TH, Vaare again takes command of the *Earthdawn*, to begin contacting the nations of Barsaive and inform them that the worst is over. The mission proceeds slowly, for the people of the kaers and citadels assume the troll and her crew are some trick of the Horrors. After one year, only two kaers of twenty-one visited have opened their doors. King Varulus alters Vaare's mission, and orders her to take the *Earthdawn* to the largest kingdoms first.

The ship sails for Landis, but never arrives. Horrors attack and take control of the vessel, and the crew disappears. The haunted hulk of the *Earthdawn* sails through parts of Barsaive, but usually vanishes from sight shortly after being spotted.

THROAL OPENS

Despite this loss, King Varulus III orders the doors of Throal opened in the summer of 1420 TH. Patrols and magical surveillance remain high, to guard against unknown Horrors. No one leaves Throal for nearly sixteen months. Varulus then issues a proclamation granting land to those who farm, mine, forest, or otherwise make productive use of it. A trickle of brave souls turns into a flood of opportunists. Despite setbacks and encounters with some remaining Horrors, the resettlement of the Throal Mountains begins.

Over the next few years, merchants organize expeditions to reestablish trade routes with nearby communities. They find some kaers whose people refuse to open their doors; at those places they leave a small tent camp to wait patiently for the kaer to open. The traders find other kaers and citadels whose defenses have been breached; they mark these as dangerous and to be avoided. Many others open their doors; the merchants give them copies of the *Council Compact* and ask them to join the new world Throal envisions. As the merchants make more and more contacts, they expand their efforts deeper into Barsaive and into the areas held exclusively by humans, trolls, t'skrang, orks, and other races.

They move quickly, for they know that the Therans will return to Barsaive as soon as they can.

CONFLICT OF DESTINIES

Thera herself does not move as quickly as feared. Little word comes to Barsaive concerning the condition of the island or its immediate resources, but Thera's unexpected absence leads many to believe that Thera did not escape the Scourge as unbruised as her leaders had hoped. The first Theran vessels do not arrive in Barsaive until 1449 TH, fifty years after Thera is believed to have opened herself to the new world.

The Theran emissaries meet with little welcome. The time of the Scourge and the few years immediately after have given the people of Barsaive the opportunity to live free of the Theran yoke, and they like the taste of freedom. The Theran emissaries, unprepared for anything but respect and cooperation, threaten Barsaive with violence. In answer, local Barsaivians burn the three Theran vedettes anchored at Sky Point and put their crews to the sword.



Theran First Governor Nikodus names Fallan Pavelis as the new Overlord of Barsaive. He orders Pavelis to reestablish Theran supremacy in Barsaive, for the Therans believe that the land is still their province. Pavelis chooses the strong hand over the soft voice. Theran vedettes conduct slaving runs over isolated villages. Shipborne troops attack coastal cities and seize "forgotten tribute." Ork mercenaries in Theran pay conduct bandit raids against kingdoms that resist Thera. Human tribal leaders are assassinated and replaced with more amenable rulers.

Besieged, the people of Barsaive turn to Throal for help. The dwarf kingdom has all but promised rebellion with the *Council Compact*; surely the dwarfs will counter the Therans and end the Empire's domination? In Throal, though all believe that the Therans must be stopped, the dwarfs realize bitterly how little they can do on their own. Throal has not the strength to defeat a combined force of Theran air and ground forces, nor does any other single power in Barsaive. Together, though, the combined will and might of all the peoples of Barsaive may prevail.

King Varulus III sends messengers and emissaries to the rulers of Barsaive. Together, his message says, Barsaive must either stand free or else fall into oppression and slavery. Though his words stir the hearts of many, the sight of Theran airships attacking and raiding at will stills their actions.

An act by the Therans themselves finally turns the tide. The First Governor has learned of the *Council Compact*, receiving a copy from Pavelis. Enraged by its contents, Nikodus sends a damning message to his Overlord of Barsaive. The message tells Pavelis that the dwarf logic of commerce and ownership outlined in the *Compact* makes it clear that every man, woman, and child in Barsaive owes their survival from the Horrors to Thera and the First Governor personally. This blood debt makes all the people of Barsaive the personal slaves of the First Governor, and his to do with as he wishes. He instructs Pavelis to begin the systematic destruction of all Barsaivian cities not vital to elemental trade or gathering. The first target will be Throal.

As the First Governor shifts troops to Barsaive and Pavelis gathers them into the largest Theran armada ever assembled, Barsaive loyalists within the Overlord's palace in Sky Point obtain a copy of the message. They duplicate it and distribute it across Barsaive. The message raises anger strong enough to banish fear; the peoples of Barsaive no longer question that they must and will fight.

His army assembled, Pavelis moves on Throal. Though the dwarf kingdom is unprepared to fight the kind of war Thera brings to them, the rest of Barsaive is not. Goaded by such heroes as the human J'Role and the t'skrang Westhrall, Barsaive comes to the aid of Throal. Troll crystal raiders duplicate their ancestors' successes of the Orichalcum Wars and attack Theran ships. T'skrang riverboats run blockades and intercept supplies. Ork cavalry and elven bowmen assault supply convoys and base camps, and then vanish into the night. Windling thieves infiltrate Theran command ships and camps and learn valuable information, leaving behind nasty magical surprises.

Harassed and battered continuously from all sides, Pavelis takes a desperate gamble to settle the issue before Nikodus' patience runs out. He masses his forces for a frontal assault on Throal, but the hit-and-run fighters of Barsaive cut down half the armada and destroy its supplies. Facing disaster, the armada breaks and the Therans withdraw to Sky Point.

THE THERAN BEHEMOTH

The first war with Thera ends, leaving an uneasy truce between Thera and the province of Barsaive in its place. Theran First Governor Nikodus is succeeded by the obsidiman Kanidris, who continues to believe that Barsaive is part of the Theran Empire. Still, most of Barsaive's people—led by the Kingdom of Throal—claim their independence. For a long time after the war, Theran troops engage small resistance cells

and Throalic forces in minor skirmishes, but no large-scale battles are fought.

Almost five decades later, Kanidris and his advisors begin to believe that Pavelis' successor—Overgovernor Kypros—has failed to quell the growing anti-Theran resistance activities in Barsaive. The lack of a strong, military presence aids Throal's attempts to unite the powers of Barsaive into an independent nation and gives the people of Barsaive a taste of freedom. Thera pushes for a military solution; fortunately for Barsaive, conditions in Thera's other territories prevent the Empire from bringing its full military power to bear on the province.

Despite the problems with Thera's other provinces it still possesses a mighty force. Deciding that a display of such force is the way to finally bring the upstart province of Barsaive in line, the First Governor sends a military expedition. This expedition includes the ancient behemoth *Triumph* and is commanded by General Nikar, a t'skrang of House Carinci. The force moves to establish a permanent military base in Barsaive. To this end Carinci's forces bring the massive floating fortress to the shores of Lake Ban, landing it on top of the most famous and revered obsidiman Liferock in the entire province: Ayodhya. Through elemental magics the behemoth *Triumph* is reinforced and strengthened with elemental earth; the fortress becoming fastened to Ayodhya, trapping almost the entire Brotherhood of obsidimen inside.

Like a stone thrown into a pond, the landing of *Triumph* and the arrival of the Theran forces cause ripples that travel throughout the province. The Kingdom of Throal and the t'skrang houses of V'strimon and Syrtis begin to marshal their forces, waiting for the Therans to make the first move. Tension grows between the t'skrang houses when House K'tenshin demonstrates the renewal of its historical alliance with Thera by claiming a neutral part of the Serpent River separating them from their nearest rivals, House V'strimon, thereby breaking the *Free Trade Compact* that had ended hostilities between the t'skrang houses after House K'tenshin's involvement in the siege of Throal half a century earlier.

Ayodhya was carefully chosen by Thera's leaders, who hoped to demoralize and intimidate the people of Barsaive by turning it into a fortified city. Ayodhya is a place of great importance for the Namegivers of Barsaive; not only obsidimen, but also the t'skrang, for whom Ayodhya marks the beginning of their sacred pilgrimage route. But an unforeseen event causes the Theran plan to have the opposite effect intended.

The obsidiman merchant Omasu, owner of the prestigious Overland Trading Company, has avoided politics all his life. As a member of the Ayodhya Brotherhood, the landing of Triumph enrages him. Faced with the slow death of his Liferock, and his brothers along with it, Omasu devotes the considerable resources of his company to build up resistance—the Liferock Rebellion. General Nikar's reluctance to stop caravans and trade ships, to avoid strangling trade in the region, combined with the vast wealth of Omasu, allows the rebellion to operate virtually unopposed. They become a serious thorn in the side of Thera's Barsaivian forces.

The King is Dead

Rumors of King Varulus III's failing health make their rounds throughout the province for many months. The rumors are true: King Varulus III has been suffering from a malaise of unknown origin for a long time. Concerned that his enemies might capitalize on his weakened condition, Varulus decides to keep his illness a secret and delegates as much of his authority as he can to his heir, Prince Neden. Despite the heavy toll of the mysterious illness it is not this that kills him. He is murdered whilst he is alone, albeit only briefly. The Kingdom of Throal is shocked to its very foundations.

Convinced that his father was killed by agents of Thera, the newly crowned King Neden I readies his armies to attack the Theran fortress at Ayodhya—disregarding the warnings of his advisors, who fear that Throal lacks the power to directly confront the Empire. General Nikar Carinci does not wish a war with Throal—not yet, in any case. His forces are considerable, but remain isolated from the bulk of Thera's military strength. On the other hand, he does not intend to let an upstart Throalic king force Thera's hand. Carinci tries to convince Neden that the Empire is not responsible for his father's assassination, but fails miserably. Soon, a hastily assembled Throalic strike force marches toward Triumph.

The battle at the fortress city—known to historians as the Battle of Prajjor's Field—ends with massive losses for the dwarf kingdom. During the fighting, however, King Neden I learns that the Denairastas of Iopos, not the Therans, were the engineers of his father's death. Throal has long considered the Denairastas as a minor power, but the exposure of the real culprits behind King Varulus III's assassination transforms the Denairastas, and Iopos, into the kingdom's most immediate and dangerous enemy virtually overnight. Because neither side has made a formal declaration of war, the Battle of Prajjor's Field remains a humiliation for both Thera and Throal. Tension continues to rise between Throal and Thera—but, fortunately for the dwarfs, retaliation and war are not part of General Nikar Carinci's assignment.

King Neden's preoccupation with the Therans continues to cloud his judgement and results in other priorities falling by the wayside. To restore Throal's prestige and pride, Neden covertly authorizes a program to destabilize Theran forces and allies in Barsaive. A ruthless wave of assassinations against suspected Theran and Iopan spies washes over Bartertown, contributing to the growing lawlessness and violating the town's independent status. Enraged

TIMELINE

Year	Event
1452 TH	Parlainth rediscovered by Garlthik One-Eye and J'Role the Honorable Thief.
1456 TH	Theran Overgovernor Pavelis attempts to destroy the Floating City of House V'strimon, but fails miserably.
1458 TH	War with Thera ends with the Therans retreating to Vivane.
1474 TH	Prince Neden, only child of Varulus III, is born.
1484 TH	The Death Rebellion. Prince Neden of Throal is kidnapped by the Theran Nethermancer Mordom, who attempts to infect him with a Horror. Neden is rescued by J'Role the Honorable Thief and healed by the great dragon Mountainshadow.
1485 TH	The troll adventurer Torgak and his associates begin clearing the south-eastern corner of Parlainth to establish a permanent base of operations.
1488 TH	House Ishkarat seizes the Island of Filen from House Syrtis.
1491 TH	Haven officially opens in the south-eastern corner of Parlainth.
1497 TH	The Guild of Guildmasters created in Throal.
1498 TH	House T'kambras appears on the Tylon River, led by Jedaiyen Westhrall.
1502 TH	Battles between the t'skrang Houses Ishkarat and Syrtis end with the Battle of Sejanus. Seven-year old child becomes new *Shivalahala* Syrtis and becomes known as the Prophetess.
1507 TH	Varulus III travels to visit the Prophetess. The meeting ends with Varulus flying into an uncharacteristic rage and leaving hastily.

citizens spawn virulent anti-Throal sentiments, and known agents of Throal are faced with open hostility.

Facing two enemies leaves Throal shaken. While King Neden campaigns for greater spending on mercenaries and airships, the citizenry divides on the question. A slim majority wants to go to war and erase Throal's shame. Others advocate some type of accommodation with Thera that will enable them to resume business in a peaceful province. Perhaps most important of all, public discontent with King Neden emboldens his rivals among the Throalic nobility, forcing him to govern more cautiously.

As Neden's power wanes, the influence of his greatest rival grows. Selenda, leader of the old-guard of the dwarf nobility, encourages her conservative followers to whittle away at the edges of the *Council Compact*. As she strives to gain the crown for herself, the most influential power in Barsaive drifts closer and closer to the brink of civil war.

The Dragons Intervene

Although the dragons of Barsaive make no announcement of an official alliance with Throal, they begin to make life in Barsaive extremely uncomfortable for the Therans. Sightings of great dragons gliding lazily over Barsaive increase, and, every so often, they search out and pounce on a tasty-looking Theran trade or military caravan. Many believe that the great dragon Icewing is behind this open hostility.

When the gnawed and broken bones of *Triumph's* chief magician Hefera are personally delivered to General Nikar, it becomes clear that this is Icewing's none-too-subtle signal for his open wrath against Thera. But the message is just the tip of the iceberg: a partial glimpse of a war fought behind the curtain of events in the province.

The Rise of Cara Fahd

Once known as a proud kingdom of warriors, the ork nation of Cara Fahd lay in ruins since the end of the Orichalcum Wars. The ork tribes remain scattered throughout Barsaive, wandering the hinterlands and raiding settlements—some even hiring themselves out as mercenary cavalry. Ancient feuds divide these tribes, and ever since the fall of the kingdom, no leader has proven wise and strong enough to unite them and rebuild the ork kingdom—that is, until now.

With the help of the Passions, a series of letters, called the *Seeds of Nation*, arrives in Barsaive. Word of this manifesto spreads like wildfire among Barsaive's orks—from scorcher tribes to city-dwellers. The letters re-ignite the dream of Cara Fahd among those who had almost forgotten it, and convince the scorcher tribes that the time of the orks is at hand. As excitement and hope reaches a fever pitch among Barsaive's orks, the author of the letters returns to Barsaive—an ork Named Krathis Gron.

As a descendant of the legendary ork hero Hrak Gron, Krathis becomes the living embodiment of the ork's love of freedom. Like Hrak Gron, who once freed the ork race from slavery, Krathis Gron is expected to lead them to unity. Hailed by the orks of Barsaive, she begins to preach her vision of a new ork nation. Krathis Gron was sent by the Passions, who visited her in a vision while she was in the desert. Bestowing her with the task of rebuilding Cara Fahd the Passions rejuvenate the vigor of her youth. She spends many years in distant Cathay, preparing herself for the task and, with the help of many scholars, magicians, and adepts, masters many new talents.

Intoxicated with their impending freedom, the orks of Barsaive start to migrate to the lands of ancient Cara Fahd along the southern edge of the Delaris Mountains. Finally, it seems that the time has come to reclaim their birthright. Nothing stands in the way of the new ork nation—especially since the new king of Throal has proven to be somewhat of a weakling.

Months later, the orks have consolidated their power under the rule of Krathis Gron. When Throalic and Theran forces clash in a minor skirmish at Claw Ridge, thousands of ork warriors appear on the surrounding hills, forcing both armies to surrender their weapons. Appearing at the head of the ork forces, Krathis Gron announces the rebirth and the sovereignty of Cara Fahd. Outnumbered and unarmed, the forces of Throal and Thera are forced to leave, reporting the news of the event to their leaders. Although the dwarfs of Throal are natural allies in the fight against Theran oppression, the young ork nation begins to fight for its own place in the world.

A Different World

The world after the Scourge is truly different, in ways the sages and scholars did not imagine. Our world's magical aura does not diminish, as all of our learning tells us it should, but instead remains strong. We see this as proof of our survival; the world goes on, holding a steady course into the future. Faced with a renewed Theran threat, the nations of Barsaive struggle to survive the great war looming on the horizon. The arrival of the Theran behemoth has divided the t'skrang houses of the great Serpent River, whose daily life of trading, pirating, and engaging in occasional raids, is now supplemented by the bitter taste of death in war.

Enraged by the humiliation brought upon the liferock of Ayodhya, the durable, earth-bound obsidimen roam Barsaive in search for retaliation against the Therans. Weakened by internal politics, the dwarf kingdom of Throal fights a new, dangerous enemy close to their homeland. The elves of Blood Wood have survived the Horrors in their own way; a dark way that has divided the entire race of elves. In the south, troll crystal raiders battle among themselves and build airships for future raids on the lowlands, and on Theran and Throalic airships passing too close to their domains. The ork tribes of Cara Fahd enjoy a new-found unity and roam the land mounted on fierce chargers, finding danger and adventure where they can. Only the windlings continue to enjoy their freedom and live life to its fullest, despite the long shadows of war.

But still more danger lies just off the trade roads, along with the lure of the treasures amassed and hidden away by now-forgotten people. The Horrors have receded, but they still hold fast in the darker places of the world. Some wait within conquered citadels, curled upon the sprawling wealth of the vanquished. Others roam the world, their magic weakened, but still powerful enough to wreak havoc on anyone and anything that crosses their paths.

In this, the fifteen hundred and tenth year since the founding of Throal, the world looks vastly different from the one those early pioneers saw when they looked south across the plains. Only the brave dare explore this world. Only heroes can carve a future from the ruins of the past.

TIMELINE

Year	Event
1509 TH	The Therans return to Barsaive and land the giant behemoth Triumph on top of the Ayodhya Liferock. King Varulus III is assassinated. His son, Prince Neden ascends the throne and makes the Therans responsible for the loss. Throal withdraws with heavy losses from the Battle of Prajjor's Field near the fortress. The ork nation of Cara Fahd is rebuilt and declares its sovereignty.
1510 TH	Now.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SCOURGE

With this work, I intend to provide the history necessary to understand the Barsaive of our time. It is the workings of the present world I wish to preserve, and this history makes those workings clear. I have added to the account of the Scourge an excerpt from A Concordia of History, *a generational text constantly updated by the librarians of Throal. Readers interested in a detailed history of Barsaive and the ancient lands that became our province should peruse that volume. A similarly detailed history of Barsaive may also be found in the transcripts of the speakings of storymaster Jallo Redbeard, an account preserved in the Library of Throal.*

• Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records •

According to the tales the Therans tell, many hundreds of years ago, an elven scholar Named Elianar Messias discovered ancient texts predicting an invasion of the world by creatures from a certain plane of astral space. These documents claimed that the creatures would ravage the Earth for nearly five hundred years and then return, sated, to their own plane of existence. The truth of this discovery drove Elianar to madness and a bloody death. Years later, Messias' colleague Kearos Navarim founded a school dedicated to the study of this prophecy on an island in the Selestrean Sea. A hundred years passed, during which time the school attracted talented magicians and adepts from all fields. The school taught all kinds of magical theory and practice, but turned its best minds toward finding a way to stop the invasion of our world by its astral enemies.

At that time, the area now known as Barsaive comprised a jumble of different peoples: the dwarfs in the mountains, the t'skrang along the Serpent River, the orks and trolls on the plains, the elves in the woods, humans in stone towns and a few cities, and so on. Different communities had little commerce with one another, and the dialects of each region varied enough to make communication between different groups almost impossible. Little, if any, trading went on between regions, or even between towns. Despite this staggering degree of isolation, travelers and adventurers from faraway places gradually carried tales of the extraordinary school for magic to the people of other lands, and many magicians and adepts traveled south to seek the school.

After a century of existence, the school had grown so large that its eldest members founded a city to house it, which they Named Thera. With magicians and adepts as half of its citizens, the island that would become the Theran Empire claimed its place as the most powerful city in the world.

Word of the coming attack of the astral creatures, now referred to by all races as the Horrors, had begun to spread through the lands around Thera. When the distant elven kingdom of Shosara heard of the impending disaster, they sent messengers to Thera asking for guidance in defending against the approaching invaders. In their studies of ways to defeat or forestall the Horrors, the Therans had devised several methods of protection. Rather than simply giving this information to the elves of Shosara, however, they demanded favorable trade agreements in exchange for the knowledge. The elves accepted these terms, and soon other realms throughout the world followed suit, giving their riches to the Therans in return for the precious knowledge that the magical scholars held.

The Shosaran treaties marked the beginning of the Theran Empire. Soon after their success with the Shosaran elves, the Therans sent envoys to all the nearby lands, warning all of impending doom and selling the secrets of safety from the Horrors to all who could afford them. With every new bargain they made, their island city grew in power, until the Therans' reach stretched around the globe.

As trading increased, the various factions of the region that would become Barsaive took on common traits. The area's diverse people now shared much that they had not before: a fear of the Horrors, a need to build strongholds against them, and a distaste for Theran influence. This dislike bonded the races and factions together more tightly than any other. The Therans tried to impose their calendar, their style of dress, and their architecture on the region; they also brought with them the barbarism of slavery. Though not everyone suffered under the lash of the slaver's whip, everyone knew and feared that they might. Some groups worked together to stop the practice of slavery; others aided the Therans in a desperate attempt to buy continued freedom.

When the Therans arrived as Barsaive's conquerors, the dwarf kingdom of Throal was the largest realm in the region, and so the Therans delegated to them much of the day-to-day government. The dwarf language became the official language of trade, superseding the Theran tongue. Through their administrative responsibilities, the dwarfs exerted considerable influence over the area.

For one hundred years, Theran power grew. Using their magical arts to unite their new possession under a common Name, the Therans officially created the province of Barsaive. They searched the world for Barsaive's pattern items, knowing that the study of these items gave them an advantage in all places not already Named by those living in the province. What they did to Barsaive, they repeated throughout their empire, creating new Names and dividing the world they ruled into different provinces.

At the northeastern corner of Barsaive, the Therans built the sprawling city of Parlainth, intended as both the provincial capital of Barsaive and the gateway to the "uncivilized" world that lay beyond. Once the Horrors left the plane of the world, the Therans hoped to return to Barsaive and resume imperial rule. As the Therans worked their great magics to protect their island heart from the Scourge, people throughout the Theran Empire constructed shelters against the Horrors as the Theran magicians had taught them. Some of these shelters, built underground, were called kaers. Large shelters built above ground were called citadels. Many of the human-inhabited cities became citadels.

As the time of the invasion approached, strange monsters began to stalk the countryside. Far worse than the griffins, giant serpents, and fire dogs common to Barsaive, these misshapen monstrosities struck terror into the hearts of all who saw them, attacking with a perverse delight in their victims' pain. Some of these early-arriving Horrors looked like moving mass graves, single beings composed of a dozen corpses stitched together. Others wielded finely crafted instruments of torture embedded in their own skin. Some were misshapen lizards twenty feet long. Some attacked the body with teeth and claws; others attacked the victim's very thoughts.

Within a short time, the Horrors' attacks became bolder and more frequent. Creatures stormed villages; smaller Horrors swarmed forests and grasslands, consuming everything in their path. Flocks of birds vanished within hours. Herds of cattle disappeared, relentlessly pursued by Horrors. Barsaive's people tried to fight back, but the creatures' ferocity and overwhelming numbers finally drove the terrified people to seek protection within their kaers and citadels. They sealed themselves behind doors inscribed with wards and glyphs to ward the Horrors away, taking up residence in tomb-like places that would be their homes for hundreds of years.

Within the kaers, magical lights lit the underground darkness and magical crops and springs fed the hiding populations. For four centuries, generations were born, lived, and died within the shelters, waiting for the day when they could return to the world their ancestors left behind. At the end of four hundred years, a full century earlier than the Theran magicians had predicted, the magical devices created by the Therans to herald the end of the Scourge revealed that the awaited time had come. Under the earth and in their walled towers, Barsaive's people waited, afraid to leave the safety of their shelters too soon. Finally, driven near to madness by the longing to leave their self-imposed imprisonment, the people began to unseal the doors of their kaers and citadels. Outside, they discovered a corrupted and barren world.



... The Passions no longer heed me; what have I done? I am a good king ... this I know, for my subjects love me. Never, they say, never has Scytha had such a gracious and loving sovereign as King Cardok the Peacemaker.

Or so they said once. Now they raise their eyes to the heavens and cry out against the injustice of the world, begging the Passions to tell them wherein they have erred. And I, even I, the king, can do no more than raise my voice with theirs. I cannot stop the evil that has befallen Scytha. I cannot keep their children from dying.

I cannot keep my son from dying.

Every day he slips a little further away from me, my only son who almost cost his mother her life at his birthing. His illness began scarcely a week after his first breath, with a low fever and a dryness of the skin. Then a cough, harsh and hard as though the dust of a desert clogged his infant throat. He cries from the pain, but sheds no tears; he has not enough water left in his body to make his eyes wet. They stare upward at the ceiling and inward at nothing, crusted with the last tears that dried against his lashes like the salt ring on a barrel of fish. His voice comes out as a thin whine, often broken by coughs. Blood from his lungs dries on his parched lips, and his breath rattles in his throat. Ancient bones might make such a sound, raised to a horrid mockery of life by a nethermancer. In this last week, his skin has begun to wrinkle; my grandsire's leather saddle, ridden on to countless wars and cracked with age, feels more smooth and supple than the flesh of my son. I stroked his hair last night to calm him as he wailed, and pieces of it broke off and crumbled to nothing in my hands.

My son has lived for less than three weeks. He looks like a shriveled root, a dying old man.

Of all the children born in Scytha since the last year's harvest, none has yet lived a month. Something has sucked the life from them, some monstrous evil borne by the very air. With each tortured breath my child takes, I can hear the evil's footfall. With each passing day, I feel its nearness. We are dying, and we know not why ...

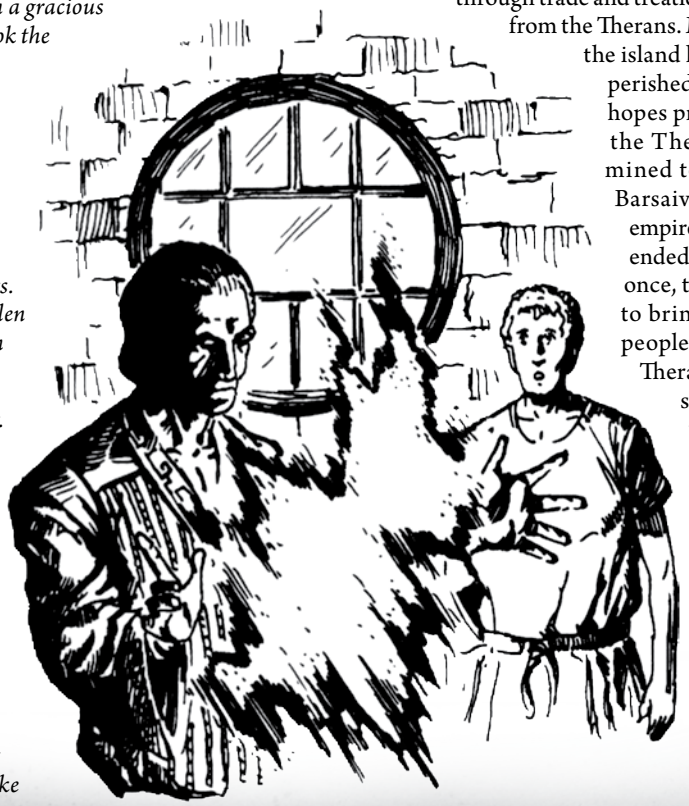
—From the diary of King Cardok of Scytha



Some shelters did not survive the Scourge. Horrors entered some of the kaers and citadels, crashing physically through the walls or invading the minds of those hiding within, possessing them and making them do the Horrors' bidding. Whenever the creatures could breach a kaer's defenses, they fed well in the shelters; the victims within had nowhere to run and nothing to do but die.

As people emerged from hiding, they moved back onto the land, using magical arts to turn the world green again. Though the Horrors ended their assault on the world one hundred years earlier than the Therans had predicted, some especially powerful Horrors remained. To this day, they take every opportunity to shatter the fragile peace.

For the first fifty years after the opening of the kaers, the dwarfs of Throal worked to reunite Barsaive's scattered villages and towns through trade and treaties. In all that time, no word came from the Therans. Many believed, even hoped, that the island heart of the Theran Empire had perished during the Scourge. Alas, such hopes proved fruitless. Forty years ago the Therans returned in force, determined to lay claim to the province of Barsaive once more. The return of the empire sparked the Theran War, which ended in a massive siege of Throal. For once, the Therans' armed might failed to bring them victory, however. The people of Barsaive united against the Therans and drove them back to the southwest corner of Barsaive, where they still hold sway.



Barsaive in the present day is a land still recovering from the devastation of astral invasion, its people only beginning to reclaim their world. The Kingdom of Throal and the Theran Empire remain poised in conflict. Through widespread raiding, the Therans have brought back slavery to a land taking its first free breaths under the idealistic laws



of the dwarf kingdom. The land is rife with unopened shelters, some reportedly still filled with people who refuse to believe the Scourge over, and monsters roam the hills in search of victims.

Upon this stage, with these players and props, the struggle for Barsaive and perhaps the future of our world will be acted out. If the Therans prevail, the world will turn one way; if the Kingdom of Throal prevails, the world will turn down a different path. Between these two great powers lie constant smaller struggles, each leaving its own mark, large or small, upon the shape of our world's destiny.

We cannot hope to completely understand the Barsaive of our own day without understanding how the Scourge affected the land and its people. Both the threat of the Scourge and its arrival changed Barsaive in ways unimaginable to our ancestors. From a vibrant land of many tribes and kingdoms, Barsaive became a subject province of the oppressive Theran Empire, which owed its existence to the world's need for powerful magic to survive the coming disaster.

The Scourge itself drove the people underground and laid waste to the land, and Barsaive has yet to fully recover.

The Books of Harrow

Ever since the long-ago days when the elven scholar Kearos Navarim determined that creatures from another astral plane would one day roam the world, leaving destruction and corruption in their wake, this invasion has been called the Scourge.

The first glimmer of knowledge that such creatures as the Horrors existed came when Elianar Messias, now known as the Martyr Scholar, unearthed the *Books of Harrow* in the catacombs beneath an ancient monastery in the Delaris Mountains.

After extensive study of these six volumes, Messias learned the nature of the Horrors, a discovery that drove him mad. Whether his madness or some other force killed him, no one knows. Before he died, he scrawled a note that read:

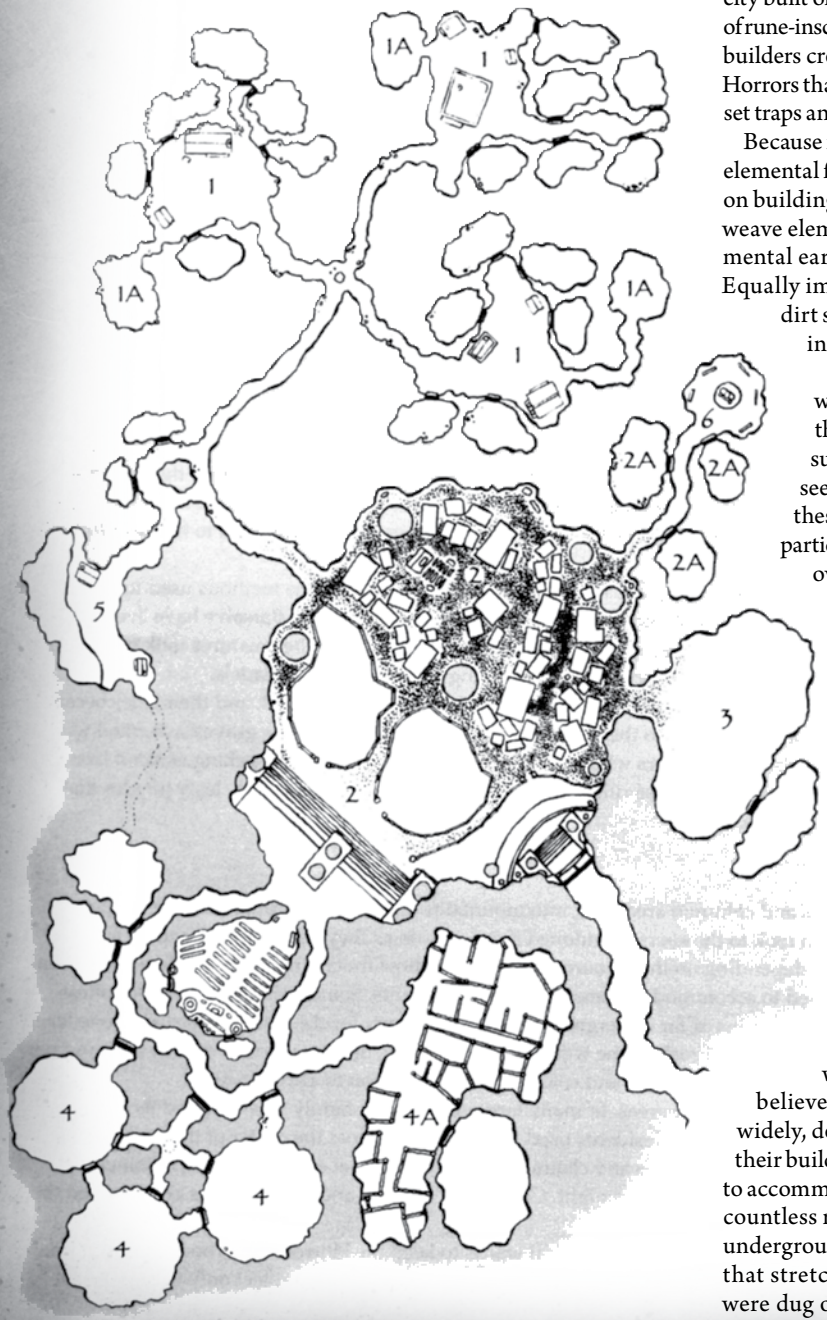
> *These are the* Books of Harrow.
> *They are our doom and our salvation.*
> *Learn from them, or we will all perish.*

Cryptic and unsettling, this note provided the first clue to the coming of the Scourge. After the death of Elianar Messias, an elven scholar and colleague Named Kearos Navarim took the *Books of*

Harrow and traveled with several fellow scholars to an island in the Selestrean Sea. Sequestering themselves for many years on the island that would one day become Thera, Navarim and his fellows studied to unlock the secrets the volumes held.

The final translation of the first *Book of Harrow*, completed a century and a half after they first came to light, revealed that the magic level of the world would increase until it reached a peak, at which time rapacious creatures from astral space would enter our world and ravage it. Navarim and his fellows, all scholars at the newly christened School of Shadows, also learned when this fearsome event would take place and calculated precisely how much time they had to discover a way to protect the world and its people from the Horrors.

After translating several more of the *Books of Harrow* and studying them closely, Navarim wrote the *Rites of Protection and Passage*. With this collection of plans for shelters to hide people from the Horrors and theories for creating magical protection against them, the Therans could counsel the rest of the world on how to prepare for and survive the Scourge.



On the Building of the Shelters

The Theran *Rites of Protection and Passage* instructed the people of Barsaive on how to construct two types of shelters: kaers and citadels. Though both share many features, each has unique aspects.

Citadels

The term citadel carries two common meanings. The earlier meaning, which we survivors of the Scourge have begun to use again, refers to a large, walled city that also serves as a fortress. Barsaive has many such citadels, most built before the Scourge. Some of these suffered the ravages of time, war, and the Horrors; many others provide glowing testimonials to the builders' art and craft. Today, members of many of the Namegiving races inhabit these large cities, having resettled them after the Scourge.

The second meaning originated with the Scourge and refers to a city built or strengthened to withstand the Horrors. Massive domes of rune-inscribed stone usually surrounded such citadels, though some builders created domes of elemental air and fire. To protect against Horrors that might break through the first line of defense, magicians set traps and magical defenses at the edges of these fortified cities.

Because it is easier to build shelters from stone and dirt than from elemental fire, wood, water, and air, the Theran magicians focused on building with elemental earth. In the same way that magicians weave elemental air into the design when building an airship, elemental earth could be easily woven into the walls of the shelters. Equally important, the commonplace nature of small stone and dirt shelters made it easy to develop plans for larger shelters intended to house entire villages.

Castles and other shelters woven from elemental air, fire, water, and wood still exist, but the methods used to build those structures died with their architects. Few such citadels survived the Scourge intact, and few in Barsaive have ever seen one. Many believe that the Horrors enjoyed destroying these shelters more than any others, that the creatures took particular pleasure in crushing those who flaunted their control over magic by building such impressive citadels.

The people who lived in the citadels that survived the Scourge remained in them after it ended, and their cities became a part of the new Barsaive. The citadels that succumbed to the Horrors are little more than massive graveyards filled with the bones and treasures of their luckless inhabitants. Horrors who remained on this plane, creatures seeking isolated lairs, and roaming bands of nomads and ruffians often live in these ruined citadels, hidden from view in thick, leafy jungles that shield the remains even from passing airships.

Kaers

The kaers consisted of living quarters and common areas dug into mountains or under the ground. Unlike the people who sheltered in the citadels, most who took to the kaers abandoned them as soon as they believed it safe to do so. Kaer designs across Barsaive varied widely, depending on the resources at hand and how much time their builders had to construct them. All, however, were designed to accommodate generations of inhabitants. Some kaers, with their countless rooms and chambers, lay deep inside mountains or far underground. Some had many levels; others consisted of one level that stretched a long distance under the earth and rock. Some were dug out roughly, like the warrens of rats, long and narrow

with winding passages; others boasted the clean lines and colossal design common to Throalic cities.

Most kaers were divided into common and private areas. In many larger kaers, each family was assigned its own quarters; smaller kaers built communal sleeping quarters. Residents used the large chamber at the center of the kaer for meetings and celebrations. Other vast rooms filled with tables and chairs served as communal eating facilities, adjoined by kitchens built to feed hundreds and set up to work day and night. Communal cooking and eating rooms also allowed the kaer's leaders to keep a watchful eye on food supplies.

As with the citadels, most kaer builders created traps and magical wards to keep the Horrors out. Though many kaers survived, many still remain sealed because of their inhabitants' fear. Other still-sealed kaers protect only the corpses of inhabitants long dead, their treasures still guarded by the traps and wards designed to repel the Horrors.

Living Quarters (1)

A large area containing many smaller rooms wherein each family slept. Most also included a communal bathing chamber. (1A)

Central Chamber (2)

In this vast chamber, lit by magical moss to create the illusion of day and night, the people gathered for ceremonies and meetings. Merchants set up shops all around the perimeter, and the village's leading citizens attended to the smooth running of the kaer from offices also built in this place (2A).

Dining Areas (3)

Here the kaer's residents ate and drank together, at times chosen by the village leaders. Every member of the kaer shared in cooking the meal and cleaning.

Food Growth/Preparation Chambers (4)

Here the villagers grew food for the kaer when the stored supplies ran out. Larger kaers set aside additional space to raise livestock (4A), but most kaers grew only vegetables and fruits. Generations of gardeners and farmers worked to feed the kaer, experimenting with water and light cycles and hybrids to produce heartier plants.

Water Source (5)

The water that kept the kaer alive often came from an underground river. A few villages built springs in their kaers that drew water from the elemental water plane.

Statue of Garlen (6)

The Passion of Hearth and Healing, Garlen spoke to the people's hearts more strongly than ever during the fearful years of the Scourge. Almost every kaer built in Barsaive raised a statue to Garlen, though the statues vary in likeness.

Of the Rites of Protection and Passage

The Theran *Rites of Protection and Passage* offered the people of Barsaive several ways to protect themselves from the Horrors. All Horrors possess both astral and physical forms, though they manifest in different ways. Some only manifest in astral form, while others manifest only in physical form. Because of the Horrors' dual nature, the Theran protections needed to work against both astral and physical attacks.

Astral Protection

The Theran *Rites* offered astral protection from the Horrors in two ways. The natural materials used to create the kaers and citadels offered one kind of protection; in addition to that natural barrier, the Therans created wards built of runes designed to drive the Horrors away. The protections worked in the following manner.

All living things, including animals, plants, and the earth itself, have a "solid" presence in astral space. Astral manifestations cannot pass through astral creatures or the astral aspects of other living things. Because of this property, the underground kaers posed a virtually impenetrable barrier to the astral forms of the Horrors.

Not content with a single layer of protection against such fearsome beings, the Therans also researched the runes most effective against Horrors, intending to use them to create magical barriers called wards that would block astral incursions. The people of Barsaive inscribed these runes on the outer walls of kaers and the domes of citadels. In many kaers, the builders also inscribed the inner walls with runes, creating still more magical wards as an additional layer of protection. This forethought saved many kaers, because too many Horrors found ways to penetrate the kaers' outer walls.

Potentially the weakest part of a shelter's defense, and therefore the most heavily protected, was the door. Because the entrance and exit of a kaer could not be made of elemental earth, the builders took extra care to protect these openings with additional magics, inscribing the doors with intricate runes and often lining them with orichalcum.

Physical Protection

In addition to the sheer mass and thickness of rock and earth, magical reinforcement of these materials offered physical protection from the Horrors. The creators of the citadels and kaers reinforced their domes and walls with elemental earth to strengthen them against the physical might of the Horrors, but this was a costly practice.

The builders of kaers that lacked sufficient resources simply took advantage of areas offering naturally strong, thick walls. These people built many kaers in abandoned mines and other places deep beneath the earth, thus providing the strongest physical protection short of reinforcement with elemental earth. Builders also used elemental earth to reinforce the doors and entranceways of both kaers and citadels.

In addition to reinforcing walls and building magical wards, many kaers and citadels also set physical traps throughout their shelters as a layered defense against any Horrors that managed to penetrate the outer protections. Constructing even the smallest shelters presented a monumental task; some kaers and citadels required more than two hundred years to complete.

Despite the protections devised by the Therans, the Horrors managed to penetrate far too many kaers and citadels. In some cases, the Horror simply proved stronger than the protections set to repel it, and easily penetrated the shelter's defenses. Other Horrors, blocked on the astral plane, were patient enough to dig through the walls of a kaer until they broke through. Still other Horrors used their magical powers to render inert the astral defenses of a kaer and then attacked the shelter's residents.

Of Life During the Scourge

As might be expected, the people of Barsaive found life in the underground kaers and sealed citadels drastically different from their former existence and often difficult.

Moving an entire civilization underground required people to greatly change the way they lived their lives, and many found these changes daunting to face.

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To create a truly accurate portrayal of this complex subject, I have relied on the words of one long dead who lived through the first years of hiding. He left behind a journal from which I took the following entry. As a scholar, I am grateful for this and other such precious records of our history.

—Daron Fenn, Scholar of the Library of Throal

… Almost three weeks have passed since the good people of Ar Dham granted me admittance to their kaer, but I still feel as lonely as I did during the bleakest days of my wanderings. Suspicious glances and halfhearted words of greeting are the only replies my overtures elicit, and mothers whisk their children out of my path as I walk through the narrow avenues and hallways of this subterranean world. Still, I am more than grateful that these good folk have granted me sanctuary, and I cannot begrudge them their fear of Horror-touched strangers. And when I think of the stories I have heard of other kaers, where the fear and suspicion turn lifelong neighbors against one another and spawn the frenzied stonings of innocents, I consider the people of Ar Dham quite compassionate and myself Passion-blessed.

Despite my loneliness, my life has developed a strangely comforting rhythm here. Each day, we all receive a portion of vegetables from the kaer's carefully tended gardens. And on special occasions, the elders slaughter one of the precious goats, and everyone shares in the feast. I stroll through the avenues under the steady light of the glowing moss that lines the kaer walls and always seem to pass by the kaer's large signal at the same time every day. There I pause and join the others who watch the bowl of elemental water and the small sphere of elemental earth that floats in the air above it. We gaze at it in silence, all dreaming of that far-off day when the earth and water again shall meet and the Scourge will become no more than a painful memory.

Evenings are my favorite time, however. After supper a crowd always gathers for the storytelling around the fire in the center of the kaer. Mothers cradle sleeping babes in their arms, children sit in rapt attention, young lovers hold each other in easy embraces and listen to the storytellers weave eloquent tapestries of cool mountain brooks and warm summer breezes, emerald meadows and quiet orchards, fiery surprises and bird song and soft autumn evenings when the moonlight spills across the golden fields …

—From the journal of Dralacid, Swordmaster of Genve



On Life Outside the Shelters

Though life went on inside the kaers and citadels, the Horrors were ravaging the world without. Swarms of Horrors tore across the landscape, devouring everything in their paths. Where once lush forests had stood, the Horrors left little but gnawed, burnt roots and twigs. The Horrors fed so voraciously that at times the sound of the devastation penetrated even the walls of the shelters. This unbearable noise alternated with silence so profound that a few daring or desperate souls persuaded themselves that the Horrors had gone.

Those who dared left the kaers many years before the Scourge ended, hoping to find fresh meat or longing to once more see the sun. Of these hardy (and foolhardy) souls, only a handful returned to the safety of the shelters. Most ended their days as food for the Horrors; others the Horrors touched and sent back to their kaers, thereby gaining access to fresh supplies of victims. Many records found in deserted kaers imply that opening their doors was the last action the residents took. The following journal excerpt describes the fate of one kaer that opened its doors too soon.



… Not until long after Jaro's death did we learn of his corruption. When the wizards proclaimed that the Scourge had ended, he, I, and three others broke open the seals on the doors and walked outside. We had hoped to find a new world, but the one we found came close to breaking our hearts.

Before us stretched a barren land, devoid of almost all life. In what our storytellers had always described as a lush valley, we found a bleak and wasted landscape where only a few insects and small plants still struggled to survive. As we looked about us, the voice came. We all heard it—in our heads, not in our ears. As quick as thought, the sky grew dark with creatures, their attack nearly overwhelming us. We fought our way back into the kaer, just barely preventing the creatures from entering. Of the five of us that left, three died outside the kaer's doors.

We thought ourselves safe, but we had not kept all the Horrors out. We soon learned that a Horror had entered the mind of Jaro and in that way penetrated the safety of our kaer …

—From the journal of Mallem, 1401 TH, found in the ruins of Kaer Frohn near the Tylon Mountains



On the Ending of the Scourge

Though Theran scholars had predicted that the Scourge would last for five centuries, it ended one hundred years early, marked by an inexplicable occurrence. Contrary to the predictions of Theran magical theory, the fall of magical energy simply stopped long before it should have, a phenomenon recorded in the kaers and citadels by magic-level indicators of Theran devising. Scholars and magicians still cannot explain this discrepancy, except as a misinterpretation of the *Books of Harrow*.



This discrepancy between Theran prediction and reality has caused many scholars in Throal to dispute other so-called "revelations" by Thera's magicians.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records



Based on their studies of the *Books of Harrow*, the original scholars at Thera's Eternal Library had concluded that the magical energy of the world determined the arrival and departure of the Horrors. As the level of ambient magic rose, the Horrors could breach the astral barriers between their plane of existence and ours. When the magic level subsided, the Horrors could no longer maintain the link between the two worlds and retreated to their native astral plane.

The magicians inside the shelters kept close watch as the world's magical energy slowly declined. At some point, they accepted the fact that the magic levels had seemingly ceased to drop, stopping short of the projected safe level. Though they suspected that the magic had receded enough to force most of the Horrors back to their own plane, they also guessed that an unwelcome number of especially powerful Horrors would remain.

Following the counsel of their magicians and village leaders, ever-increasing numbers of kaers and citadels pronounced the end of the Scourge and emerged to reclaim and re-tame their world. At long last, we seem to be winning that difficult struggle. However, many kaers and citadels still do not believe that the Scourge has ended. These people remain hidden, waiting patiently for a sign that they may re-enter the world their ancestors left behind.

Leaving the Shelters

Though the Scourge had ended, for many the battle for freedom had just begun. Most people had known only life in the kaer or citadel, and they feared to leave the safety of their shelters and face unknown danger.

Barsaivians left their shelters in a trickle, the shelters opening up one by one as the people spread cautiously across the land. By the time the dwarfs in Throal had organized a fleet of messengers to spread the news of the Scourge's end across Barsaive, the people

of most kaers had rejoined the outside world. What greeted them little resembled the world described in legend. The Scourge may have ended, but four centuries of devastation had changed the world almost beyond recognition.

… I was among the first to leave my kaer. All my life, I had longed to breathe fresh air, see the mountains, leave the kaer's cramped confines. My first glance at the world outside dashed my hopes for a wondrous life. At first, I thought the tales told by the kaer's storytellers had grown into myth during four centuries underground. As I looked about, I began to see the truth. It was not the stories that had lied. Instead, the world had changed.

Towering oaks had become twisted husks, monstrous mockeries of trees. The mountains, once breathtaking, forested slopes, were now barren rock. I breathed in deeply, hoping to find at least the outside air uncorrupted. It tasted harsh and bitter and burned my throat. I fell to the ground gasping, hoping that I smelled the odor from the rotting trees nearby. I was wrong …

—From the journal of Me'gana of Kaer Lowilla, 1495 TH

On How the Scourge Changed Us

The Scourge left its mark on every aspect of life in Barsaive. The physical devastation was the most obvious change; once-lush forests withered and rotting, towns and cities obliterated, villages forever enslaved by Horrors. The Scourge had also changed people's hearts. The Barsaivians of our time have become a fearful lot, often preferring to hide from the future rather than face it. Though this may be understandable after our four hundred years in hiding, such a closing of the heart and mind bodes ill for the healing of our land.

The Scourge may never truly be ended for it utterly changed Barsaive and its people in every possible way: physically, mentally, spiritually, and magically.

On the Changes in the Land

The physical effects of the Scourge remain the most noticeable, for the very face of Barsaive is changed. The ravages of the Horrors left whole cities and towns in ruins. Some succumbed during the Scourge; others fell victim to the depredations of Horrors that remained in our world after the kaers opened. Entire villages were swept away, leaving no evidence that anyone had ever lived in those regions. The Horrors devastated much of the landscape as well, leaving it stripped of life except for plants and animals too small to capture the Horrors' deadly interest. In most cases, the little life that remained was forever corrupted; in the patches of forest left standing, the trees had become twisted and gnarled in a perverse reflection of their former glory. In some areas, even the air was tainted, choking the survivors who breathed it.

The worst devastation occurred in those areas now known as the Badlands and the Wastes. The Scourge altered the land irrevocably in these areas, transforming fertile farmland into barren ground, devoid of all life save the Horrors and the creatures that served them. A land once full of towns and villages became a bare and windswept plain shadowed by thick, ash-like clouds.

We must be careful with our generalizations. Rumor has it that Mountainshadow lairs within the Badlands.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

The effects of the Scourge in these areas teach us a lesson regarding the power we wield as Namegivers. By Naming these areas the Badlands and the Wastes, we have created True Patterns for these areas that define them in terms of what they are now, not what they once were or what they might become. As heroes continue to explore these areas and learn more about them, their true patterns grow stronger. Thus, as scholars and magicians debate the best method by which to heal these regions, their very study of them as the Badlands and the Wastes strengthens these True Patterns. Even as we seek knowledge with which to heal, we make the healing process more difficult.

—Derrat, Wizard of the City of Yistaine

On the Changes in Living and Thought

The effects of the Scourge on the minds and hearts of its survivors are much less obvious than the changes in the land, but in many ways far more significant. These changes fall into two broad categories: cultural changes and changes in behavior.

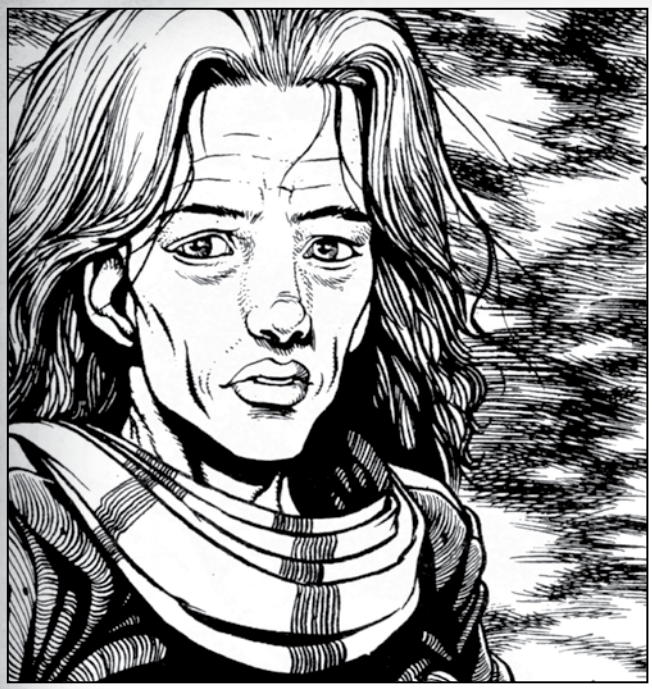
On the Changes in Culture

Strangely enough, the Scourge wrought some good in Barsaivian culture. Before the Scourge, the Namegiver races maintained separate cultures. The end of the Scourge, however, brought representatives of all the Namegiver races together in the same communities. When the people of Barsaive returned to the surface of the world to rebuild it, they reasoned that larger settlements might bring safety because a greater population provided a larger number of people to be trained as warriors. As groups of Barsaivians traveled across the province to establish new settlements, they realized that maintaining distinctions between races was far less important than building a strong community able to defend itself and thus chose to live as neighbors rather than enemies.

In contrast to this new acceptance between the races, though no less beneficial in its way, the isolation created by four centuries of hiding gave rise to a multitude of different customs. Before the Scourge, communities that traded with each other and intermarried developed similar cultures, possessing the same customs, modes of dress, folklore and legends, and spiritual beliefs. During four hundred years of isolation, however, each community developed a unique culture. The resulting variety of customs, styles, and legends has given Barsaive society a color and richness badly needed to heal the darkness left by the Scourge. Barsaive now boasts so many different cultures that travelers no longer know what to expect when they arrive in a new settlement.

Though these changes have made Barsaive a far more dynamic place, this cultural explosion also creates the risk of us encountering beliefs and customs different from our own.

—Daron Fenn, Scholar of the Library of Throal



On the Changes in People

Though the wider cultural changes wrought by the Scourge seem to have brought us great good, changes in our individual thought and action often appear to counteract them. The people of Barsaive can accept differences in race and culture far more readily than did our ancestors because fear demands that we band together; yet this same fear has made Barsaivians mistrustful of everyone they meet.

The years of self-imprisonment fostered a strong streak of suspicion in most Barsaivians. Countless tales describing the dangers of the Horrors helped keep the residents of the shelters safe through constant vigilance, but many people took this caution to extremes. Family members often became as suspect as strangers, and anyone who showed even the slightest difference from "normal" behavior risked being stoned to death at the hands of frightened fellow kaersmen.

When they left the shelters, people carried their fears with them, and intense suspicion became a fact of everyday life in Barsaive. Small towns and villages rarely welcome strangers. The occasional stranger who stops for a night or several days finds himself the object of universal scrutiny and suspicion. This is true even for visitors to larger cities, whose residents are determined not to be duped by those possessed by a Horror. Travelers often feel as if everyone in the city or town is watching them.

In some ways, fear of the Horrors and the desire to avoid their influence has done more harm to Barsaive than have the Horrors themselves. The Horrors did not inflict the Ritual of the Thorns on the elves of the Blood Wood, for one. The Elven Court chose to walk that path rather than face destruction by the Horrors and did themselves greater, irretrievable harm than could the Horrors. In the same way, blood magic has often saved someone from the Horrors, but the price we pay for purchasing our safety through such gruesome means is often too high to justify the ends.



In an ironic corollary to this paranoia rampant in our society, travelers who feel watched in other cities almost always watch strangers in the same way when at home.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records



On the Changes in the Passions and Their Followers

The Passions, powerless to prevent the Scourge (though many scholars and questors doubt they would have, even given the chance), stood by and watched the Horrors devastate their world and people. Of the twelve Passions, nine survived the Scourge intact. The remaining three—Dis, Raggok, and Vestrial—were driven mad by the corruption. Now known as the Mad Passions, these three have had a profound spiritual effect on their followers. Where once the Passions lived peacefully side by side, the three Mad Passions now work to destroy the other Passions, sowing discord and forcing the remaining Passions to fight off these attacks. This discord among the Passions led their questors to create the first organizations devoted to the ideals of the individual Passions. The desire of the Mad Passions to conquer and destroy the other Passions prompted their questors to create hierarchies within the ranks of devotees, the better to serve their crazed gods' purposes.

On the Changes in Magic

Though less visible than the changes in the land and less disruptive than the Scourge's spiritual effects, the changes the Scourge has wrought on magic are potentially the most profound.

Before the Scourge, magicians could draw magical energy directly from astral space to power their spells with little risk. Though careless spellcasters using magic in such a way often suffered damage, most experienced magicians could cast raw magic with no ill effects. But the Horrors warped and corrupted astral space when traveling through it during the Scourge, just as they did the rest of the world. To avoid the dangers of making direct contact with this polluted magical energy, magicians developed safer methods of powering their spells. Those few magicians still willing to cast raw magic risk being noticed and marked by a Horror.

The pollution of astral space gravely concerns many magical theorists. Though most of the world's corruption has begun to heal itself, the damage to astral space shows no signs of healing. Many observers fear that the corruption of astral space is permanent. Given the pervasive nature of magic in Barsaive, this taint irrevocably alters the way we live our lives.



Some magicians attribute the current steady level of magic to the effects of the Scourge. This theory has few supporters, though none of its detractors can conclusively prove the idea wrong.

—Derrat, Wizard of the City of Yistaine



On the Legacy of the Scourge

The Scourge left an indelible mark on our world. Though as a people we are determined to reclaim and rebuild our land, memories of the Scourge and its lasting effects make this task tremendously difficult.

Many troubadours and historians insist that the Therans' original prediction of a five-hundred-year Scourge was correct. Though Barsaive's people emerged from the kaers and citadels after only four hundred years, this last century might easily be considered the final stage of the Scourge.

Only now, after a century of healing, do we seem to have moved away from its dark shadow. Only now can we truly begin to rebuild our world in the hope of restoring it to its former beauty and glory.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE LAND OF BARSAIVE

Given the importance of the task, I thought myself the best candidate to write a condensed overview on the land of Barsaive. My work, culled from a vast array of material collected for this book, is as complete as I could manage, given the time and space constraints under which I labored. I can, however, personally vouch for the accuracy of information given.

• Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records •

In some ways, this chapter serves as a primer on Barsaive, providing enough information to prepare the reader for travel across the province, but not so much that it becomes overwhelming. Descriptions of Barsaive's languages, customs, economy, spiritual beliefs, and so on give the reader some notion of what to expect in different towns and cities, and also offer insights into Barsaive's many cultures.

OF THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE

The vast land mass of Barsaive is bounded on the South by the Death's Sea, on the East by the Aras Sea, on the North by the Blood Wood, and on the West by the Wastes. Barsaive takes weeks to cross even on the back of a war horse. The journey from the northern boundary to the southern takes 40 days on foot, 25 on horseback—the journey from east to west requires 60 days on foot, 38 days on horseback.

Barsaive's southern boundary is Death's Sea, a huge body of molten stone so hot that only elementals, Horrors, and those with magical protection may travel over it. The heat from the sea has transformed the surrounding land into a vast expanse of barren sand and rock. Legend says that enough blood spilled into the earth will quench the fire, and the sea will turn to water.

At Barsaive's northern boundary lies Blood Wood, a lush forest many days' ride across wherein the elven Queen and her corrupt court reside. Many elves outside Blood Wood no longer give their allegiance to the elven Queen, considering her as monstrous as the Horrors. The elves of Blood Wood have never lost their ability to perform intricate magic, however. The Queen's palace, supported by eight great trees, is a magical wonder to behold.

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For my part, I agree. But I must add that many years ago I visited Blood Wood and, despite the horrible things the elves did to themselves during the Scourge, they are still a beautiful people. A terrible beauty, perhaps, but undeniably so.

—Karon Foll, Historian of Throal

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In the west of Barsaive lie the Wastes, where little magic has yet touched the land to renew it after the Scourge. Most scholars believe that the Horrors entered more shelters built in the Wastes than elsewhere, and so fewer people survived to re-emerge. Nowadays, little exists in the region other than monsters, Horrors, and a few small plants and animals. If the scholars are correct, then the Wastes must be dotted with more unopened, undiscovered kaers and citadels than exist in the rest of Barsaive. Because of the Wastes' reputation as a storehouse of undiscovered wonders, bands of adventurers often journey there in search of ancient treasure and magical artifacts. Unfortunately, few ever return.

The Aras Sea marks the eastern border of Barsaive. This large, saltwater ocean connects Barsaive to lands beyond the province and to the expanse of the Theran Empire. From the city of Urupa and other coastal towns, scores of seagoing ships sail from port to port, trading Barsaivian goods for those from other lands.

Other major trading ports lie along the Serpent River, a majestic waterway that cuts Barsaive into two uneven parts as it winds its way from north of the Wastes down to the Death's Sea. For most of its length the Serpent River is so wide that a riverboat takes an hour to traverse it. Save by magical means or on a well-designed ship, it is impossible to cross. The river creates the most fertile land in Barsaive, and the wide, long valley sloping up from its banks contains countless villages and towns. The reptilian t'skrang, who live in half-submerged towns alongside and in the river and sail their riverboats from port to port, conduct most trade along the Serpent River. Many t'skrang maintain trade agreements with the Kingdom of Throal and work to promote unity among the people along the Serpent. Other t'skrang captains use their ships for piracy and raiding.

The Serpent River winds its way around the Throal Mountains, a large range whose peaks reach into the clouds. So huge that they are almost a province unto themselves; the mountains are home to nomadic tribes who hunt the wild beasts that roam the slopes.

ON POLITICS

In fact, though every community harbors racist factions, most of Barsaive's cities, towns, and villages gladly accept neighbors of many races. The dwarf Kingdom of Throal, which encourages members of all races to settle within its borders and builds homes for immigrants, is the greatest power in the province, followed by the elves of Blood Wood and the t'skrang of the Serpent River (though the latter suffer from the continual problem of infighting).

The next strongest power lies in various cities scattered across the land, followed by independent military groups such as the crystal raiders and the ork scorchers. The orks of the new-found nation of Cara Fahd struggle for their sovereignty, and the elusive Denairastas of Iopos seek to rule over Barsaive on their own. Many cities also wish to establish themselves as rivals to Throal, and the trollmoots have been trying for decades to make of their diverse tribes a cohesive political force.

On the Theran Empire

The Therans, whose lands adjoin Barsaive at its southwestern edge, claim Barsaive as part of their empire. Many Barsaivians steadfastly resist this Theran incursion. The people of Barsaive are not united in their allegiances, however. Some pledge loyalty to the Kingdom of Throal, upholding its egalitarian laws and ideal of freedom for everyone. Others, believing that the dwarfs will not give up power and authority easily, fear that in time Throal may become as oppressive as the Theran Empire. This stark contradiction between the perceptions of Barsaive's people and its would-be overlords creates much of the conflict between Thera and Barsaive.

In order to expand their empire farther north, and reclaim what was once theirs, the Therans established the fortress of *Triumph* close to the center of our province. The Therans Named the province of Barsaive almost six hundred years ago, before the Scourge began. Once they had Named it, the Therans were content to let the internal politics of the province continue without interference, as long as those politics did not affect their own plans. As token ruler and watchdog over the province, the Therans created the position of Overgovernor, making the holder of that office responsible for shaping policy in the province to meet Thera's needs.

By Theran reckoning, Overgovernor Kypros is currently in charge of the province of Barsaive. In truth, his influence extends only over the province's southwestern corner, the area around the Sky Point outpost and the Theran-controlled city of Vivane. When Thera's leaders came to the conclusion that Overgovernor Kypros had failed to quell the anti-Theran resistance activities in Barsaive, they shifted the center of Theran presence in Barsaive to the shores of Lake Ban. While Sky Point remains Kypros' fortress, the recently established outpost *Triumph*, commanded by General Nikar Carinci, is the current focus of Thera's attention.

Both outposts are actively involved in sending Theran troops and airships deep into Barsaive to establish Trade agreements and capture slaves. Though the rulers of Barsaive's various cities and regions do not recognized the Theran's authority, they have been able to negotiate with certain non-official parties in some of the large cities of Barsaive's southern regions.

On the Varying Customs of Barsaive

Despite Barsaive's bewildering variety of cultures, certain customs and conventions such as the Nameday, belief in the Passions, and the use of Throalic and Theran calendars are common to many communities. The institution of slavery, a Theran barbarity imposed on Barsaive rather than a native practice, has unfortunately become enough a part of Barsaive society to rate inclusion in this section.

On the Passing of Days and Months

The people of Barsaive mark time according to one of two calendars: Theran or Throalic. The Throalic calendar was used before the Scourge, and most of Barsaive continues to use it. People living in areas under Theran rule use the Theran calendar, often under threat of punishment. In the city of Vivane, with the largest population in Barsaive under the yoke of Thera, authorities have outlawed Throalic calendars; anyone found using them must pay a heavy fine.

The Calendar of Throal

The Throalic calendar divides the year into twelve months of thirty days each, each month beginning near or on a new lunar cycle. The months are Strassa, Veltom, Charassa, Rua, Mawag, Gahmil, Raquas, Sollus, Riag, Teayu, Borrum, and Doddul.

Between the months of Gahmil and Raquas, the Throalic calendar sets aside five days to celebrate the Earth. This five-day holiday reflects the calendar's dwarf origin. Though the dwarfs use the moon cycle to count the passage of days, they also wish to pay respect to their true home underground. With their preference for subterranean life, the dwarfs seldom see the moon. Indeed, their use of its cycles is more for convenience than because of any spiritual attachment to it.

Across Barsaive, people use these five days for many purposes. Throal sponsors holidays featuring contests of crafts involving stonework, primarily gem-cutting and sculpting. The contest winners earn seats of honor at local feasts. In many cities, residents indulge in revelry during these days, and the wealthy often sponsor enormous parties for the less fortunate.

Farming towns and villages also use the five days to celebrate the Earth, but focus their ceremonies on the fertility of the soil. Pageants and rituals celebrate birth, growth, decay, and death—the cycle of all life.



No Theran-controlled territory or city, including Vivane, recognizes the five celebration days.

—Kern Redhand, Historian of Throal



The Throalic calendar takes the date of Throal's founding as its beginning. According to this calendar, the current year is 1510 TH.

The Calendar of Thera

Each Theran day begins and ends according to the cycle of the sun, and the Therans arrange their calendar in 73 five-day weeks rather than according to the lunar cycle. The Therans do not, however, worship the sun; they adopted a solar-based calendar simply for ease of use. Each week is numbered rather than named, and each day is designated by its week number and position in the week: for example, "fifth week, second day." When written, this date appears as 5/2, sometimes followed by the year. The Therans begin their calendar with the founding of the city of Thera; by their reckoning, the current year is 1070 TE.



Most Barsaivians assume that the Theran government adopted their calendar in order to more frequently tax their citizens. The Therans collect taxes every fourth week, or twenty days.

—Ardinn Tero, Scholar of the Library of Throal



On the Feast of the Name-Day

Because our ability to Name things separates Namegivers from the other creations of the universe, the Naming of our own offspring becomes a significant event. Every culture and every race in Barsaive and in the whole world performs a Naming ritual for its children; even the Therans practice a Naming ritual, and slaves brought to Thera and Barsaive from other lands describe similar ceremonies common to their homelands.

Naming makes a person significant in our world. Though every person, place, and thing possesses a pattern that lets it interact with magic, Naming creates a true pattern and focuses the magic of the world into that pattern. By the act of Naming, Namegivers separate themselves from the formless void of the universe.

Most Nameday ceremonies take place within the first week of a child's life, though some people celebrate the Nameday during the child's adolescence. All children receive at least a simple nick-Name soon after birth. Children who perform the Nameday ritual

during adolescence receive a second Name to signify their Naming according to the proper ritual.

Most communities create a true pattern for their place of Naming by setting aside one location for the Naming ceremony. The family of the child to be Named prepares this place for the Naming according to local custom. In the morning of the third day of the child's life, the parents bring him or her to the Naming place, usually a windowless room. They carry the child into the room and close the door, plunging the room into darkness. The scent of burning incense soon fills the room, calming those present and helping to make the coming ceremony the focus of their thoughts.

By magic or other means, a candle is lit. This single point of light illuminates the faces of all present—the baby, the parents, and friends of the family. Their illuminated faces and bodies seem to float in the surrounding darkness, and in that moment all present turn their hearts and minds toward the child.

One of the parents says to the child:

"On this your Nameday, I Name you so you may be known. This Name is not who you are, but who you will be. It is not a limit, but a vessel you shall fill."

The other parent then says:

"When people think of you, they will think not of your Name, but of the Passions that Name represents. You are not bound to this Name, for you are a Namegiver. We give you this Name. From now on, you will Name."

The parent not holding the child then picks up a candle and lights it from the flame. As the wick catches fire, both parents speak the first syllable of the Name in unison, then place the candle on a small table in the center of the room. The parents continue to light candles as they speak each syllable of the Name until they have spoken each separate syllable. When the couple has lit candles for each syllable of the child's Name, their friends open the door of the room just as the gathered group speaks the whole Name in unison. The light from outside the room rushes in, joining the light produced by the candles and driving out the void.

On Common Spiritual Beliefs

Barsaivians believe that the Passions of the world are the living embodiments of the life force of the universe. Much as an adept draws on the magic of the universe to perform great deeds, the Passions grant similar strength, power, and abilities to their questors, who in turn live out the ideals of the Passions in the eyes of the rest of the world.

Questors devote their lives to living as their chosen Passion would have them do and to teaching others about that Passion. Most questors wield power equivalent to that of magicians and adepts, but receive their power as a gift from their chosen Passion, rather than drawing it directly from the universe. Living his life according to a given Passion's ideals focuses a questor's power much as a Discipline focuses an adept's. The questor's life becomes a metaphor of the ideals that the Passions embody.

As their Name implies, questors spend their lives pursuing a mission, the nature of which depends on the Passion the questor serves. As with magicians and adepts, the actions of most questors add color and vibrancy to the world.

On the Theran Abomination of Slavery

The evil of slavery came to Barsaive with the Therans, who began to deal in slaves as a valuable commodity before the Scourge. In those long-ago times a slave was educated, held a certain status in society, and could eventually earn the means to purchase his freedom. Though no one could ever view slavery as a good condition of life, a slave's lot in the Theran Empire would be enviable compared to the plight of a slave in our day.

Theran slavery weighed heavily on the citizens of Barsaive, especially the dwarfs of Throal. During the Scourge, the dwarfs decided to outlaw the practice of slavery in any form. They also vowed to enforce this sanction in Throal or in any other place where the shameful practice existed once the Scourge had ended.

In stark contrast to the Therans' view of slavery before the Scourge, the Therans of our time no longer believe that the Passions deign to inspire slaves and deny the unique nature each slave possesses as a Namegiver. They see slaves as less valuable than tools. While the Therans take special care of their tools, slaves they treat no better than coals and dry wood tossed into a fire and consumed. Once used, these materials turn to ash and burn away as waste.

Theran law sets forth certain conditions that make it legal to sell an individual into slavery, the foremost of which is criminal activity. Theft, murder, assault, or destruction of property can be punished by slavery. In cases involving Therans, Theran judges determine a criminal's fate. For cases involving Barsaivians, local judges pass sentence. Theran criminals receive a sentence of slavery only when they commit one of the aforementioned crimes against another Theran. By contrast, non-Theran criminals may be sentenced to slavery for almost any crime, regardless of the motive or victim.

In short, Theran law inverts Throalic justice, which states that the wealthier and more powerful the criminal, the greater the punishment. Theran law also ignores the fact that few Barsaivian communities other than Throal possess a legal system as complex as their own. The legal accountability that Therans take for granted simply does not exist throughout most of Barsaive. When a band of slavers arrives at *Triumph* or Sky Point herding two dozen prisoners they claim murderers, the Therans do not bother to ascertain whether or not the prisoners received a fair trial and deserve their fate. They simply assume it is so, pay the slavers for their property, and set the slaves to work.

This attitude encourages slavers to roam the land in search of the powerless and isolated for capture and sale. Attracted by the prospect of making profits at little risk, some Barsaivians have also begun to kidnap and sell their fellow citizens to the Therans. Scorcher tribes, neighboring villages, and others level spurious claims of criminal activity against each other in a desperate attempt to earn money or to avoid becoming slaves.

Theran slaves perform the work of household and personal servants, soldiers, farmers, miners, airship rowers, builders of ships and buildings, and innumerable other difficult or menial tasks. Because they receive little food, water, or rest, most slaves die within a few years of capture.

In an effort to prevent slaves from rebelling against their captivity, the Therans usually put them to work far from where they were captured. Though much of the slave trade is made up of unfortunates from communities too small to know Throalic or even be aware of the Theran Empire, the Therans make sure their slave gangs are composed only of individuals from various far-flung places, people who do not share a common language, culture, or knowledge of the nearby land.

Theran slave-owners also control their slaves by offering them a chance at freedom in return for information about planned revolts and escapes. We do not know, however, if the Therans reward such behavior by keeping their promises.

Regardless of the debatable morality of slavery, its continued existence in Barsaive seems a certainty for several years to come.



Years ago when I was enslaved, I rowed a Theran mining ship alongside people who spoke words I had never heard before. I never knew how many of my fellow sufferers were from Barsaive and how many had been dragged countless miles to suffer in my homeland.

—J'Role the Honorable Thief





On Our Diverse Languages

Barsaive's diverse population speaks several languages, some of them more widely used than others. The following discussion touches on each of the major languages.

On the Language of Throal

Throalic, the most common language in Barsaive, is a corrupted version of the ancient tongue used by the dwarfs of the Throal Mountains centuries ago.

When the Theran Empire conquered Barsaive before the Scourge, its leaders encouraged the dwarfs of Throal to establish trade routes throughout the province. Of all the native groups in Barsaive, the dwarfs alone could match the Therans in prosperity. Realizing that the dwarfs were helping to create trading ties throughout the land, which would only make the Theran Empire stronger, the Therans gave the dwarf merchants almost free rein.

For hundreds of years dwarf traders traveled throughout Barsaive, eventually establishing their language as the language of trade. Throalic words described the standard for measurements, weights, money, and the accepted terms of negotiation. The spread of language worked both ways, however. As the dwarfs went about their business in towns and villages across Barsaive, they incorporated many words from those communities into the Throalic tongue.

The Throalic dwarfs have always been adept at weaving other people's customs, words, and ideas into their own ways, instinctively choosing whatever will make their own kingdom and people more appealing to others. Of course, many claim that the dwarfs just as instinctively take credit for these customs, words, and ideas, conveniently forgetting that they originally borrowed them. I cannot dispute this claim.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

On Throalic as the Common Tongue

Because Throalic is a relatively easy language to master, and because over time it incorporated so many pan-Barsaivian words, increasing numbers of people found it expedient to use the language for purposes other than trade.

Because rule by the Theran Empire made trade and travel safer and easier before the Scourge, people from all walks of life and areas of the province were encountering each other on the road, in cities, and everywhere else people could meet. The only language they had in common was bits and pieces of Throalic. In this way, Throalic eventually became the most widespread provincial tongue. Later the dwarfs began to record and standardize their language, thus ensuring its continued prominence as the common tongue of Barsaive and furthering the spread of dwarf culture.

How the Book of Tomorrow Came to Be

As part of this effort, a group of linguists headed by the legendary dwarf scribe Mabbon Destroggus created a book listing all the Throalic words in common use in Barsaive at that time, adding the rules of grammar according to dwarf custom. As the time of the Scourge drew near, the purpose of this book changed to eventually include the history of Barsaive and Thera, the province's tales and legends, and the knowledge that Throal possessed concerning the coming Scourge. What began as a book of language became the *Book of Tomorrow*, offering Barsaivians counsel on surviving the coming Scourge and how they might one day resume their normal life after the Horrors departed our world.

King Varulus II commissioned countless scribes to copy out this tome so that the book could be sent to communities all over Barsaive—cities, trading towns, t'skrang crew covenants, farming towns and villages, ork tribes, and so on—until nearly every settlement, big or small, had received a copy.

Most communities received their copy just as the Scourge was about to strike, and so the people carried the *Book of Tomorrow* with them into their kaers and citadels. During the four hundred years of hiding, the *Book of Tomorrow* became a symbol of hope for the people of Barsaive, a link to their past and the promise of a brighter future.

Those of us now living in Barsaive must understand that the people who sealed themselves away in the shelters—even those who knew no other way of life—never accepted that state of affairs as natural. People hid because of the Horrors; the Horrors were terrible, and therefore living in shelters was terrible. Each generation told its children stories of life before the Scourge, of living in a world with a warm yellow sun, vast green jungles, blue skies, trails of white clouds, and grassy expanses that stretched as far as the distant horizon.

The *Book of Tomorrow* reminded people of what they had lost and what they would someday regain. The word for "sun" was clearly defined in the book, so that every day people could open the book and know that the sun existed! Every day people could read and speak words that referred to things they had never experienced, things that they had lost generations before when the Horrors tore the world apart. Sky. Mountains. Farms. Airships. Flowers. Riverboats. Races not represented in certain kaers were remembered as well: elves, dwarfs, orks, windlings, and so on. Though the people in their kaers and citadels had little firsthand knowledge of the wonders described, the *Book of Tomorrow* ensured that little was forgotten. As generations passed, the words for things in the world they had lost took on the mystique of magical talismans. And gradually, the peoples of Barsaive developed a deep reverence for the land they could only dream of.

Generation after generation learned the language of the dwarfs. As the *Book of Tomorrow* gained mythic proportions, entire communities began to adopt the tongue that spoke of the promised land we would find once the Horrors retreated to their own astral plane. Pronunciation varied wildly, of course, as each community spoke according to its own way. But when the people began to emerge from hiding again, a common language with which to communicate made it easier for Barsaive to begin its long road to recovery from the Scourge.



As a boy, I learned much about the world that I could not verify as true. The warmth of the sun, the majesty of the airships, and the beauty of the elves all seemed too fabulous to be believed. And neither had anyone I knew ever seen these things, for the last people to see the sun had died centuries before.

—J'Role the Honorable Thief



A Few Remaining Curiosities

Because written Throalic is a complicated language, formed by pictures adorned with elaborate symbols, only a few, well-educated people in any community could read and write it. These more literate folk took on the task of teaching the spoken language to the rest of their communities. The inability of most ordinary citizens to read Throalic added to the mystique of the *Book of Tomorrow* and of the words within it.

Almost universal access to the *Book of Tomorrow* had another unexpected effect. Because the book described many dwarf customs, attributes, and ideals, most Barsaivians emerged from the kaers and citadels already feeling a comfortable familiarity with the dwarfs and their ways. Though generations had passed without contact, the *Book of Tomorrow* established the dwarfs in the hopes and dreams of their countrymen. It was that which allowed the small subterranean people of the Throal Mountains to play such an important role in unifying the land and attracting other races to their cities after the Scourge.

On the Theran Tongue

Prior to the Scourge, the Therans attempted to teach their language to the wealthy and educated citizens of Barsaive, and records show that the Theran language enjoyed widespread use hundreds of years ago. However, it was the *Book of Tomorrow* that sustained the people of Barsaive during the terrible time of the Scourge; the Theran language quickly fell into disuse. Only a few stories tell of communities that spoke Theran when they emerged from their shelters.

Except for the many Theran words adopted by the dwarfs before the Scourge, Theran is rarely heard in Barsaive. As part of the Therans' attempt to re-conquer Barsaive, they are once again attempting to teach us their tongue, but find their task even harder now. When the Theran Empire dominated Barsaive centuries ago, no common language unified the people. Now the Therans must grapple with a cultural identity that they helped forge, only to have it work against them.

In general only Theran bureaucrats learn Throalic, and then simply to communicate more easily with the local population. The Theran government has not given up its goal of establishing Theran as the official language of Barsaive and the rest of its empire, however.

On Racial and Local Languages

Barsaive's unification has made racial and local languages rare, but a few such tongues are still spoken. Countless farming villages and towns, some cut off completely from the political turmoil that has gripped Barsaive in recent years, still speak their ancient languages. Lacking copies of the *Book of Tomorrow*, these communities did not learn of the Throalic language and therefore continued to speak the tongue of their ancestors while in hiding.

Even the best-prepared heroes re-exploring our land may find themselves unable to communicate verbally with such people. Some communities use more than one language. The crystal raiders and ork scorcher tribes speak their own ancient tongues as their primary languages and in some cases also speak fluent Throalic.

The t'skrang of the Serpent River, members of the Elven Court, and other single-race communities also preserve their racial languages, but tend to use them as formal, almost ritual tongues, reserving them for official functions. Only the elite of such communities learn these ancient tongues, and many fear that these venerable languages will one day be lost to time.

Of course, racial languages only remain pure in racially pure communities. The t'skrang crew covenants and the Elven Court of Blood Wood are two examples of this increasingly rare phenomenon, notable exceptions to the interracial communities that make up the bulk of Barsaive. In this modern day, most Namegivers define themselves by where they live rather than by race.



My task of compiling notes describing all the known denizens of Barsaive began easily enough, then quickly became more difficult than I had expected. The known denizens of our province include not only the Namegiver races, but also dragons, mundane creatures, and the Horrors. Documenting these three latter groups took a heavy toll on my already precarious health. Members of each Namegiving race gladly provided information regarding their own people. However, I found listening to their stories and recording everything in the proper order extremely taxing. In fact, I accumulated so much information that I intend to begin writing one or more volumes fully describing the character and unique qualities of each Namegiver race once I complete this current task. If I am granted a life long enough to complete such a monumental undertaking, that is.

—Humbly offered to the reader by Jerriv Forrim, Scribe and Scholar of the Library of Throal



Regarding the Namegiver Races

Eight Namegiver races live in Barsaive: dwarf, elf, human, obsidiman, ork, troll, t'skrang, and windling. In view of the mountains of information I gathered for this book, I have dispensed with physical descriptions of the races. Instead, I offer each race's own words about its ways, customs, and place in Barsaive's society.

On the Ways of the Dwarfs

—Transcribed from the speaking of Lunas Ironhand, Weaponsmith

We dwarfs are the most numerous people of Barsaive, numbering nearly a third of the province's inhabitants. Though half our people live in the Kingdom of Throal, the rest (such as myself) live in villages and cities throughout the land. To give you an idea of how many dwarfs live outside Throal, our numbers nearly equal those of the trolls, orks, and humans in Barsaive. Elves, obsidimen, and windlings are far fewer than we.

Out brethren in Throal have given Barsaive freedom from Theran rule and are leading the land back to greatness. All dwarfs, in Throal and outside it, know our place as Barsaive's chief citizens and feel kinship with all of its peoples and places. We are our fellow races' elder brothers and have a duty to live ourselves as we would have them live. Unlike the Therans, who oppressed us, we dwarfs lead by example.

All of Barsaive is home to a dwarf. We go where we will, and all welcome us. The Caucavic Mountains, the Serpent River, it matters not. Wherever we go, we remain dwarfs and are proud to be so.

Our nature as builders makes us dwarfs. We build everything: weapons, jewelry, roads, farms, houses, ships, carts, and everything else we—or others—need. In Throal, we have even built a new society! Of course, our pride in building carries its price, as does any gift. A dwarf measures himself by what he makes, by its beauty and its quantity, and by what he can endure in the making. I have seen fellow dwarfs exhaust themselves in labor to earn the respect of neighbors.



You ask me if the Kingdom of Throal holds the same place in a dwarf's heart as Blood Wood holds for an elf, and I tell you it does not. Though built by dwarfs, Throal is not a dwarf land. Most dwarfs in Barsaive take pride in the kingdom and its growing power, but we know well that many races other than dwarfs live inside its boundaries. And so it should be, for what is Barsaive itself but the common home of many peoples? Those of us who live outside Throal wish it well, but it is not our home. Like any other Namegiver, a dwarf's home is his city, town, or village.

In the interests of honesty, I must confess to you that some dwarf villages view Throal with suspicion. Not many, mind; those of us who know how to think know that Throal has done well by Barsaive. But some dwarfs with suspicious minds fear that Throal's military and political power will lead it to oppress the people of Barsaive once we have driven the hated Therans from our land.

Ironhand quaffed dwarf stout ale throughout the interview. He insisted that I drink some, which I did, against my better judgment. It was delicious, but later made me quite sick to my stomach.

—Jerriv Forrim, Scribe and Scholar of the Library of Throal



On the Ways of the Elves

—Transcribed from the Speaking of R'iallan ni Mar, Merchant of Travar

Of course you wish to know of Blood Wood. Why would anyone who speaks to an elf wish to know of anything else? No matter that throughout Barsaive live many elves who refused to take shelter in the Elven Queen's Court during the Scourge and so were saved from corruption. No matter that we are set apart from those now known as the Blood Elves. No matter that, like all the Namegiver races throughout Barsaive, we uncorrupted elves live in harmony and peace with non-elven neighbors. No matter that we do not look to the Elven Queen's Court to guide our existence. No matter that we live our lives like any of our neighbors, whether we live in a great city such as Travar or a small farming village buried deep in a jungle. People see us and think of the Blood Wood and must know what we think of it.

To my sorrow, I cannot claim that Blood Wood has no hold on me. Though it causes me great pain, I must speak truthfully of this matter. (There you have what it is to be an elf, chronicler. We follow the path of honor though we may die for it. See that you write that, when you tell our tale.) We cannot help but remember in every waking moment that in the northern reaches of Barsaive live a community of elves that most of Barsaive regards as monsters. And yet, these monsters are of one flesh with us—or were, ages ago. Our loyalty is torn. We recognize that the elves of Blood Wood did an abominable thing to themselves during the Scourge, yet cannot wholly renounce them. How can we renounce them, remembering that the Elven Queen's Court was once the heart of all elves? When it was Wyrm Wood, it was our glory; in it we gave voice to higher ideals and shape to finer beauty than any other Namegiver race has ever created. When Wyrm Wood became Blood Wood, it perverted these ideals and this beauty. And yet, it remains an exquisite place.

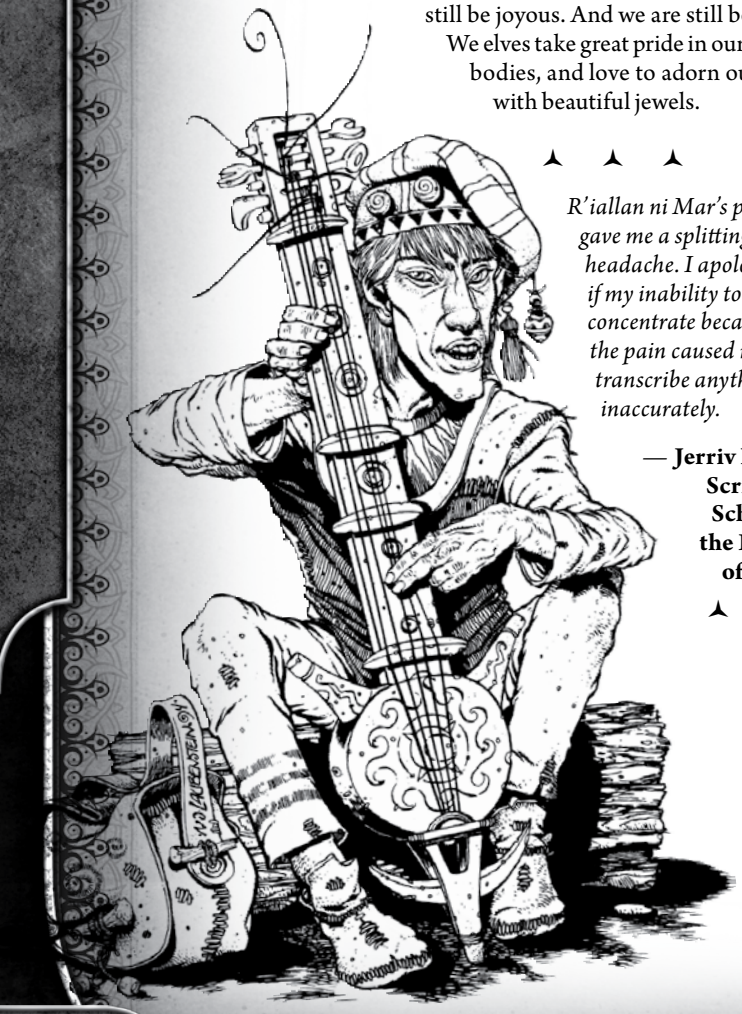
This change has worked its ill upon us. Where once elves strode across the land with heads held high, our bearing now at times reveals shame. Some elves let their shame weaken their pride in their heritage, walking with their eyes downcast and doing all they can to forget that they are elves. Other elves hide their shame by sneering at the ways of other races, belittling them and striving to show that elven ways are

best. They do not truly believe this, of course; if they felt pride in being elves, they would feel no need to sneer and bully.

We uncorrupted elves firmly believe that we can and must someday return Blood Wood to its former purity and glory. Many of us devote our lives to working toward this day, some alone and some as members of the Seekers of the Heart. We reveal this hope in a short poem recited at the evening meal, spoken aloud among our own and silently in the presence of non-elves. An elven Troubadour wrote it 50 years ago. Your ears, chronicler, are the first non-elven ones ever to hear it.

My woodland heart is by its children killed,
In mocking life its voice forever stilled.
The sweet rose has become a cankered bud;
Its thorns have drowned the blossom deep in blood.
In memory, I see your beauties clear,
Each tree inclining gladly toward the sun
That in its turn rained down each golden tear
Till green and gold met, joined, became as one.
It lives within you still, each tree, each flower;
Each joyous elf, to reclaim with love's power.
Until that day, this world I'll not depart;
And to its coming, I do pledge my heart.

Besides the duty to purify Blood Wood, all elves have an obligation to protect nature. Even those of us who live in the cities must do what we can to heal the ravages of the Scourge. I know that many other races view elves as a reserved people, and so we are when alone. But in large gatherings, elves can become quite raucous. We sing, dance, drink wine, and carouse through all hours of the night. Despite the pain of Blood Wood's corruption, we can still be joyous. And we are still beautiful. We elves take great pride in our elegant bodies, and love to adorn ourselves with beautiful jewels.

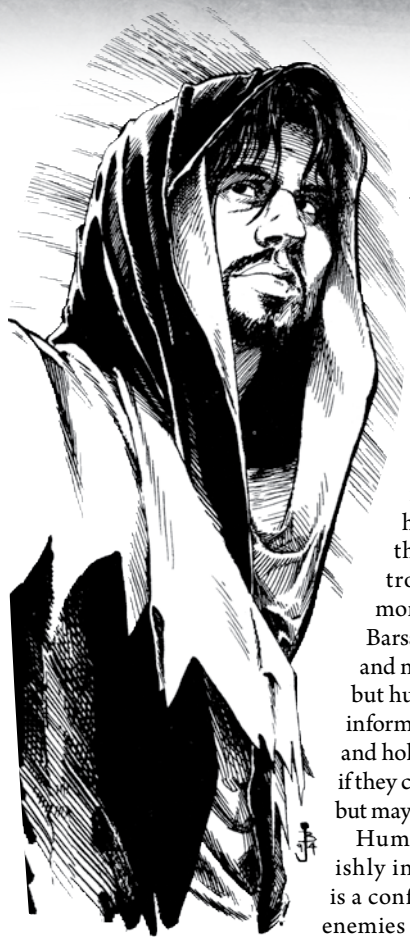


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R'iallan ni Mar's perfume gave me a splitting headache. I apologize if my inability to concentrate because of the pain caused me to transcribe anything inaccurately.

— Jerriv Forrim, Scribe and Scholar of the Library of Throal

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On the Ways of the Humans

—Transcribed from the speaking of Tel Kour, Thief of Kratas

Let me tell you about my fellow humans, friend. We would like to swagger through the world with as much bravado as orks and trolls, but humans haven't enough bulk to back up rude behavior. Instead, we humans accomplish our ends through manipulation, controlling magic, politics, and money. True, everyone else in Barsaive also uses magic, politics, and money to get what they want, but humans excel at it. We gather information, influence, and wealth and hold it close. Others may share if they can persuade us to trust them, but may not own what we have.

Humans, especially men, foolishly insist on believing that life is a conflict. He who refuses to see enemies everywhere will lose all to them, and so must strike others before they strike him. You must have listened to many a human conversation; you know the truth of what I say. Every discussion that does not turn on how best to do ill to someone else will invariably fall into gossip. Women gossip about personal matters—people in the village, who is wearing what these days. Men gossip about more general matters—people in power, who is dictating to whom these days. We humans rarely get to the heart of whatever business is at hand. Determining and establishing status, in any form, lies at the root of all our dealings.

Humans play these games of prestige and power in many ways. Some humans make sure the world knows that they have power. They seek positions of rank, flaunt their wealth, and lord it over everyone they meet. Others traffick in secrets, worming information from confidants, gathering influence and resources secretly, and revealing them only when they must.

I find it amusing when other Namegivers lump humans together with orks and trolls, as if we had much in common with those great louts. I find it even more amusing when my fellow humans take the comparison seriously. More than once, I have seen other humans display ridiculous physical bravado to prove that they are as tough as trolls and orks. Often, trolls and orks pick fights with hot-headed humans, knowing that the human will enter the fray to preserve his pride. As might be expected, the human always loses. But in the strange world view held by my race, such a human wins. The simple fact that he accepted the challenge allows him to go back to his friends and boast that he stood up to the aggressor, gaining him much honor among his peers.

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Of course, many humans will back down from a fight—and then arrange for ruffians to set upon the ork or troll later that night, or have the local authorities fine the bully until he has no coin or possessions to his Name.

— Jerriv Forrim, Scribe and Scholar of the Library of Throal

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On the Ways of the Obsidimen

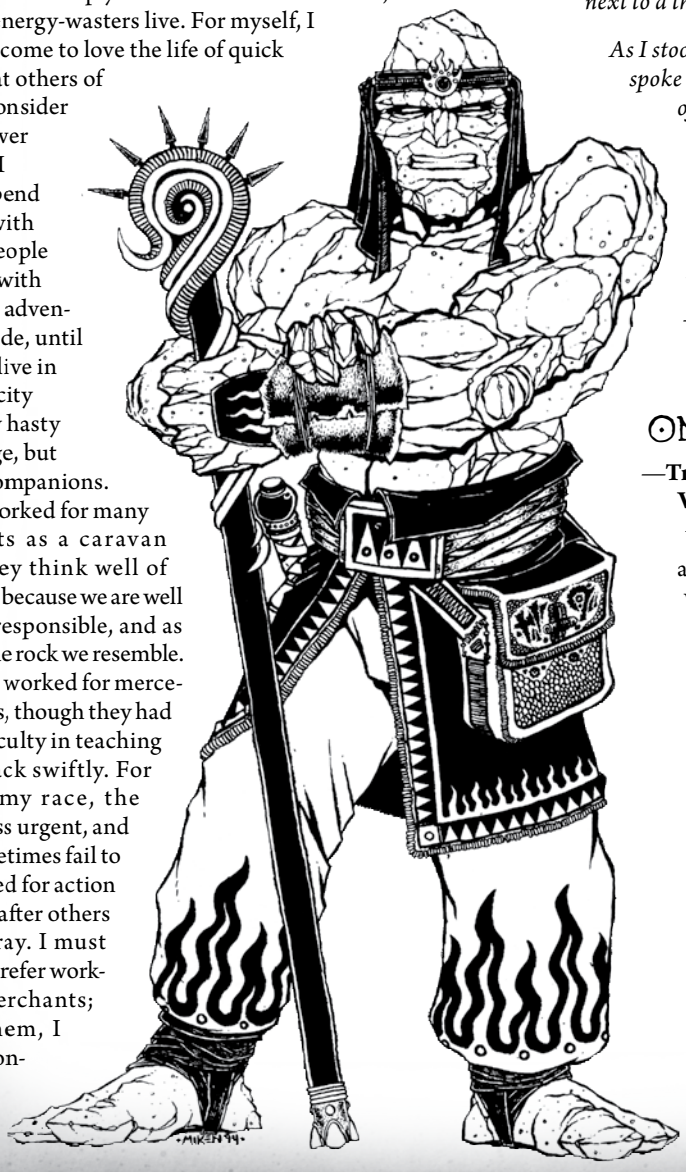
—Transcribed from the speaking of Omeyras, Troubadour of Urupa

We obsidimen have a slow and steady nature, tied to balance. We believe that all things should remain stable at all times, like the tranquil life of a mountain. Time and rain and wind may alter a mountain, but the mountain does not make the changes. It changes slowly, simply by being.

Unlike our fellow races, we obsidimen are not easily moved by the Passions. Our strength is that of the rock and we can easily defend against any attack, but we do not understand conflict. Fighting and war, these things do not belong to us. Those who fight become imbalanced, a thing we abhor. An obsidiman forced to fight strides up to his opponent and strikes a decisive blow, ending the fight and its imbalance in the same moment. Obsidimen rarely feel excitement, but when they do, those around them should seek cover. As the proverb says, when the ground shakes, everyone falls.

Most often, we find our contentment in standing motionless, among each other and in the elements. We gather in groups to stand silent and draw comfort from each other's presence. When we stand so, we see and hear and feel only each other, only the earth and rock and air and rain. These things become our whole world, unless some foolish one threatens us.

Some obsidimen like myself become adventurers, seeking out other races simply to see how the imbalanced, frenzied, energy-wasters live. For myself, I have even come to love the life of quick energy that others of our race consider useless. Over the years, I came to spend less time with my own people and more with those who adventure by trade, until I chose to live in this great city among my hasty and strange, but beloved companions.



I have worked for many merchants as a caravan guard; they think well of obsidimen because we are well behaved, responsible, and as tough as the rock we resemble. I have also worked for mercenary bands, though they had some difficulty in teaching me to attack swiftly. For those of my race, the world is less urgent, and so we sometimes fail to see the need for action until long after others join the fray. I must confess I prefer working for merchants; among them, I face less conflict and imbalance.

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Obsidimen are rare in Barsaive, though some students of the race conjecture that they may live in greater numbers in other parts of the world. Needless to say, I had a difficult time finding one to speak to. The effort of traveling to Urupa to speak with the Troubadour Omeyras sent me to my pallet for a week.

— Jerriv Forrim, Scribe and Scholar of the Library of Throal

… We walked toward a rocky outcropping, led by Grinache, my obsidiman companion. I was sure we were in the wrong place. He had said we were looking for his Liferock, where he and his family enter their "time of thought," as he called it. Surely, I thought, this outsized rock formation couldn't be his Liferock. What's a tumbled lot of boulders got to do with life? I mean, rock's never been alive, has it? I asked him why he was stopping. "Because we are here," he said.

I'd nothing to say to that. Just blinked at him and kept my mouth shut. I couldn't believe that a heap of ordinary, reddish-brown rock could be anything special to anyone.

But then, as I watched him move toward it, I saw the shape of an obsidiman begin to form in the stone. As I looked even closer, I realized that the shape had been there all along; I just hadn't seen it. To the left of the first shape I saw another obsidiman, curled up tight next to a third who was sitting.

As I stood mesmerized by the shapes in the Liferock, Grinache spoke to me. His deep voice, as always, reminded me just a little of muffled thunder. "Thank you for coming home with me, Rinn. I'll be staying for a time."

I stayed and watched. He leaned against the outcropping, not truly rock but his obsidiman brothers, and over the next several hours became one with the Liferock …

—From the journal of Rinnthal of Travar, 1506 TH

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On the Ways of the Orks

—Transcribed from the speaking of V'Gogh Bonecracker, innkeeper

We orks have ambition, we do. We work hard at a task and never quit until it is done. Show me the puny human who works half as hard or does half as much! One in five of all Barsaivians is ork. Outside of Throal, more of us live in Barsaive than any other single race. We live everywhere, we do: in villages, towns, and the greatest cities. We farm, we sell, we soldier, we lead the people, and we protect innocent folk. Plenty trust us these days; some still spit on the ground we walk on, but that only shows how stupid they are. As for us, we care nothing for what they think. Why should we? They are not ork.

Know what sticks in my throat, friend? We work so hard and do so much for Barsaive, yet other races still belittle us. They refuse us their respect. It isn't right. Every ork child grows up and goes off on his own, working hard to succeed as a farmer or merchant or even to strike it rich in a deserted kaer. Yet even if they get respect for what they have done, they get it in spite of being orks. Their so-called betters overlook their race, as if being ork were like being diseased.



Ironically, this hardened individualism is exactly what keeps orks from gaining power and respect as a group. However, with the recent re-founding of Cara Fahd, that might change.

— Jerriv Forrim, Scribe and Scholar of the Library of Throal

No matter what, an ork strives to succeed. Any ork worth the name will do almost anything to reach his goal. Most of us call this good, but sometimes it turns us bad. Honest orks work hard enough to make a dwarf jealous. In a dishonest ork, this striving to succeed at any cost can produce a thief, a murderer, or worse. Lucky for Barsaive, most of us are good people. Even the scorcher bands only want respect and a good living … well, most do. After all, why shouldn't orks charge tolls for the roads? Didn't we build most of them?

We built those roads, we did, with a stamina that no one else can claim. Orks can endure any pain if we must. Failure is not an end to an ork, only a wayside stop on the road to success.

Our children learn ambition through the stories we tell each generation. Ork lore tells us that in ancient times almost every race in the world used orks as slaves. We were Namegivers, yet they treated us as mindless animals. We didn't stand for it, we didn't. We won our freedom with our blood; we fought hard for it. We made them see us as Namegivers, just like themselves. They hated us for it. The looking-down-the-nose started back then. Strange to tell, it was the Therans who made things better for us. They enslaved all races in Barsaive, and only then did our fellow Namegivers begin to understand, just a little, what they had done to us.

When it came time to build the kaers and citadels, we orks built more and faster than anyone; that earned us heartfelt thanks, if nothing else. But not respect, oh no. Not for the lowly ork. I tell you, friend, sometimes it's enough to drive an ork to plunder and murder. If I have a treasure and you have nothing, you must respect me, right?

The food served at the inn in the Tylon foothills made me break out in spots. I cannot speak well of his cook.

— Jerriv Forrim, Scribe and Scholar of the Library of Throal

On the Ways of the Trolls

—Transcribed from the speaking of Haschem, leader of Kahlor

On behalf of my village, I welcome you, Jerriv Forrim. I say this so that you will know we are civilized.

First, let me say that we are not cousins to the obsidimen. True, we are large; true, many of us dig homes deep into the sides of mountains. We value the obsidimen, as we do all Namegiver races, but the rumor that we are kin is false.

It is sad that we trolls so confuse our fellow Namegivers. They see us impassioned, impatient, intemperate, and driven to extraordinary physical exertion; then they see us fall as suddenly still as an obsidiman when contemplating a sunset or the sparkle of sunlight against a mountain stream. They know not what to make of a race both fierce and gentle, and too often this confusion makes them fearful. To understand, they need only remember that we trolls have strong ties to the earth and nature. Nature itself is fierce and still, noisy and silent. As is nature, so are we.

Many also fail to understand that there is more than one kind of troll. The trolls of the highlands have become a crude stereotype of our people; they live in hard-to-reach mountaintop villages and live off the land, often herding goats and other animals for sustenance and barter. The crystal raiders are the best known of the highland dwellers, though many highland trolls do not fly airships. Compared to those of us in the lowlands, highland trolls have primitive laws; among them, might makes right, and they venerate the warlike Passion Thystonius above all others.

Sadly, most Barsaivians believe that all trolls act like highland trolls. Like all stereotypes, this notion is unfair and untrue. A troll family such as my own that has lived for generations in the lowlands has only its race in common with the highland trolls. To assume that we too are brash, violent, and driven by a need to plunder represents the worst sort of ignorance. We are a people like any other; we live peacefully in villages, towns, and cities, and some of us even achieve positions of power. Because many of our neighbors fail to fully accept us, however, most of us appear socially awkward in their eyes.

The greatest trouble we face in Barsaive society is our size—or rather, the failure of others to accommodate our size. As we lowland trolls are few in number, architects and other craftsmen rarely build corridors, doorways, chairs, tables, and tools large enough for troll bodies. In any city, a troll rarely finds a room to rent that he can fit in comfortably.



Rarer still does a troll find a chair at a tavern that he will not crush by attempting to sit in it or a mug large enough to hold with any semblance of grace. Because we are large and the world is built small, everywhere we go we trolls appear ungainly, clumsy, and destructive. This is not our nature, but simply the fate of those living in a world not made for our comfort. Despite, or perhaps because of, these difficulties, we lowland trolls take pride in working to prove our worth to the towns and villages we live in.

On the Ways of the T'skrang

—Transcribed from the speaking of Dariinaeus, captain of the *Swiftwater*

The Serpent River is the mother of the t'skrang. We sail her waters in our riverboats and profit from trade, with which we enrich our crew covenants. To us, a crew covenant means a family: those we eat with, play with, squabble with, care for, and fight for. Though many t'skrang leave the river and wander the width and breadth of Barsaive, they return in their hearts to the ways they learned growing up along the Serpent. And well they should; there's no life like it, and no race like the t'skrang.

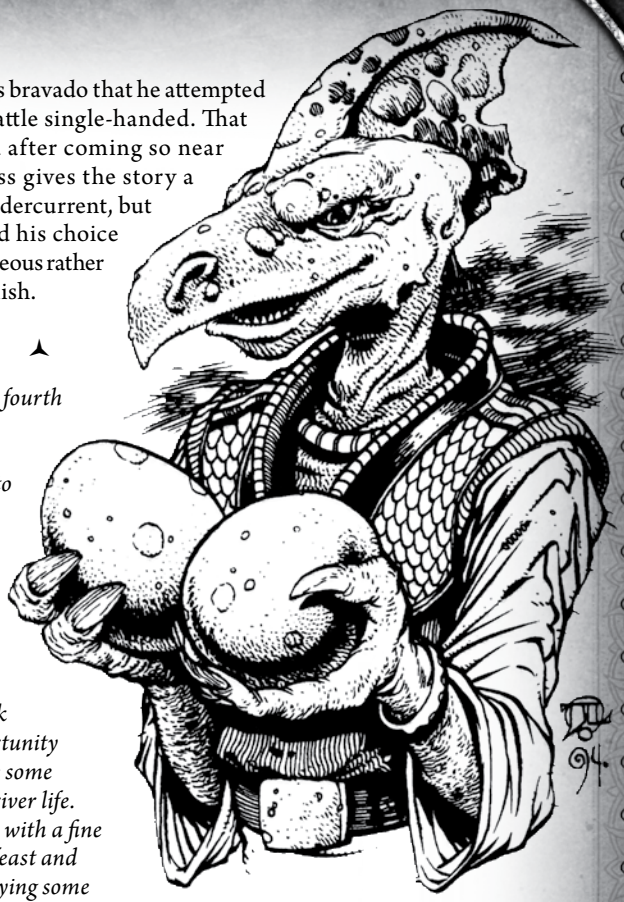
We value bravado above all other things. Only a t'skrang truly understands bravado; we live it and breathe it as no one else does. Oh, a few individuals may, but as a race … (Here the t'skrang shrugged.)

I will give you what explanation I can, of course. Gladly! Every t'skrang tries to fill his life with as many personal challenges as possible—day to day, moment to moment. Some journey on fantastic quests. Others choose new, difficult feats to attempt each day—swinging from ropes, turning back-flips, and such. If there is a simple way to do a thing and a flashy way to do the same thing, a t'skrang chooses flash every time. Other t'skrang follow those who show the most bravado, regarding the bravest and flashiest as the best teacher from whom to learn bravado.

Many people believe that the t'skrang express bravado only through fighting, but this is not so. Feats of dexterity, endurance, public oration, impromptu storytelling, blunt flirtation, and even convincing a man to give away all his goods count as impressive acts of bravado.

The other races of Barsaive laugh at us, but like true t'skrang we take that which is intended as good-natured contempt and make it a point of pride. Perhaps we are reckless, absurd, and fit to be laughed at—but after all, what is life without daring and amusement? We provide these things for you duller creatures; you'd die of boredom without us.

Understand, however, that t'skrang culture is more than showing off. We t'skrang are fiercely loyal to those around us—whether members of our crew covenant, neighbors in a city, or companions on an adventure. We balance our recklessness against the community's survival and safety, and each t'skrang must choose his or her own way to do this in the heat of the moment.



Captain Dariinaeus pressed me to accept some of the famous t'skrang spiced fish. Surprisingly, it agreed with me. I recommend it.

— Jerriv Forrim, Scribe and Scholar of the Library of Throal

Let me explain this by way of a story. We have a great, epic poem—the tale of Yustraa Piaan, most beloved among ancient t'skrang heroes. The climax pits Yustraa against just that conflict: should he return home alone, armed only with a bow and a quiver of arrows, to rescue his wife from the importunate attentions of suitors who have taken over his home? Or should he hire mercenaries to drive the suitors out? In the tale, he goes back alone and kills all the suitors, but both Yustraa Piaan and his wife also die. Many might consider this a tragic legend; we see it as a testament to the hero's bravado that he attempted such a battle single-handed. That he failed after coming so near to success gives the story a tragic undercurrent, but we regard his choice as courageous rather than foolish.

… On the fourth day, our riverboat pulled into the port town of T'uurl to take on supplies, and Nadalya and I took the opportunity to sample some t'skrang river life. We began with a fine t'skrang feast and were enjoying some music in a local tavern when we were unexpectedly treated to a taste of the infamous t'skrang bravado.

It all started innocently enough when an extravagantly dressed t'skrang riverman struck up a conversation with us. We both found his outrageous boasting amusing and soon were exchanging toasts of vinlo, an exquisitely spiced t'skrang wine with a kick like an ork war horse. Eventually the t'skrang's near-constant patter turned to Nadalya's physical charms, which didn't really bother me at first. But when I spied the lizard-man's tail begin snaking its way under the hem of my Nadalya's skirt, I decided enough was enough.

"All right, fish-face, that's it. Keep your tail where it belongs or I'll do it for you."

"What's wrong, little man?" he replied. "I'm only trying to show this beautiful lady some t'skrang hospitality. After all, such a fine young flower obviously cannot be satisfied by a tail-less freak such as yourself."

I must admit I lost my head at that point. I began to close with the t'skrang, and when he began to reach for the bejeweled handle of his sword, I sprang inside his reach, pinning his arm against his side and stepping down on his slimy green tail with all my weight. He immediately dropped to the ground, wailing like a wounded crakbill and cradling his scaly appendage.

I grabbed Nadalya by the hand and we flew like frightened windlings from the tavern, not stopping until we had reached the safety of our riverboat. When she finally caught her breath, Nadalya let loose with a string of obscenities the likes of which I'd never heard before. Apparently she thought I had over-reacted!

Three full days passed before she would speak to me again …

—From the journal of Paalo of Travar

On the Ways of the Windlings

—Transcribed from the speaking of Tyrwhill, Archer of Clan Whaele

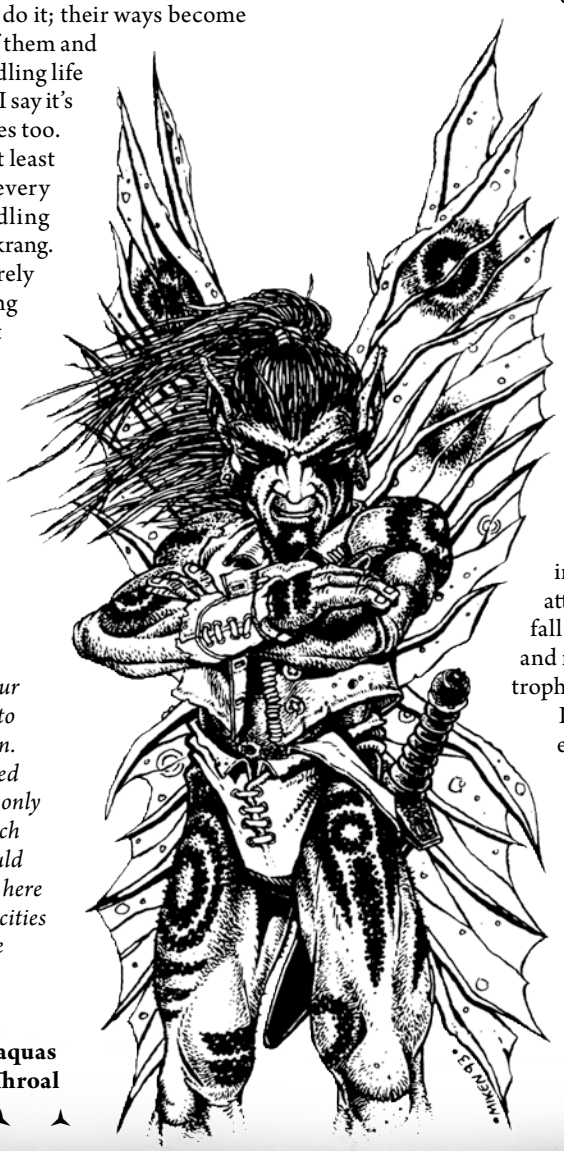
Change, change, change —that is the nature of windlings. Change is what we love, and change is what we will have. One generation may borrow the martial trappings of the highland trolls, the next dedicates themselves to peace. We watch everything and everyone; nothing escapes a windling's eye. We borrow what we will from the ways of others, shifting from one to the next as quickly and easily as the wealthy change their wardrobe to keep up with fashion. As we windlings often say, "Why live one way if there are hundreds of ways waiting for you?"

Children we love most of all. Few of us bear them, and so we cherish them and raise them with great care. A child is change made flesh. As the child windling sees the world through fascinated eyes, so do grown windlings try to recapture and sharpen our own feelings of wonder and enjoyment of the world.

We raise our children in clans of 30 windlings or so, four adults for each child. All grown windlings share care for all the children as if each were his or her own. Some doubtless think us too frivolous for parenting, but we take that task more seriously than any other. Any creature or person who threatens a windling can expect no quarter, and our small size belies our fierceness.

We windlings love to travel across Barsaive, meeting different races and telling stories back home of what we have seen and done. If we like what another race does, we do it; their ways become windling ways, at least until we tire of them and make up new ones. They say that windling life changes dramatically every ten years. I say it's more like six or seven, but that changes too.

A windling will try anything new at least once, laughing all the way through every new experience. Some call this windling daring bravado, comparing us to the t'skrang. Unlike the river people, windlings rarely care if we succeed or fail at something new. A t'skrang might feel shame at failure; not so a windling, except in matters of life and death. Windlings possess a fierce desire to live and will take fewer risks than a t'skrang. What matters most to us is not succeeding, but simply doing.



The task of describing the places in which the people of Barsaive live fell to me. In some respects, I found my task an easy one; many people have visited our land's great cities, and most were eager to describe them for anyone willing to listen. Because this information could have filled an entire volume by itself, I have chosen only the most important or best-known of each city's or town's features. The reader should also note that the descriptions provided here can serve only as an introduction to the cities and towns of Barsaive. More exhaustive information is available in the Throal Encyclopedia, 1509 TH

—Written on the Eighth Day of Raquas by Kern Redhand, Historian of Throal

Where the Peoples of Barsaive Dwell

Though each of the Namegiver races contributes to Barsaivian culture, the influence of each race on a given area differs according to its numbers in that area. The province of Barsaive can be divided into three broad regions: the Kingdom of Throal, including its recently constructed cities; the lowlands, which include most of the province's jungles, the Serpent River, and so on; and the highlands, which include all the mountains and plateaus of the province. All Barsaivian cities outside of Throal lie in the lowlands; many smaller villages and towns lie in the highlands.

One third of the province's population lives in the Kingdom of Throal. Half the population lives in the lowlands, with half of this number residing in the cities. This means that the great lowland jungles of Barsaive support slightly more than a fourth of the province's population. Though the Scourge ended more than a century ago and we can now travel the land freely, most people, from habit or wisdom, prefer to cluster together.

Towns and Villages

Hundreds of villages and towns dot the landscape of Barsaive; this volume will describe them only in general terms. The only difference between villages and towns is the number of people living in them. Though no hard and fast rule exists to determine when a village becomes a town, as a rule of thumb, a settlement whose population numbers tens or hundreds is considered a village, while one numbering in the high hundreds to the thousands is considered a town. Some feel that the distinction has less to do with numbers than with the way in which each settlement sees itself.

The discourse in these pages refers mainly to Barsaive's villages, towns, and a few nomadic groups that have ties of trade and politics with other settlements. As part of the devastating legacy of the Scourge, most towns and villages scattered throughout the jungles and hills of the province show little interest in their neighbors—except when attacked, of course. Those settlements that fall victim to attack do their best to rebuild and return to the life they lived before catastrophe befell them.

In fact, most people in Barsaive live their entire lives in the communities in which they were born; never having the need or desire for trade or travel. They learn a trade, which is usually farming; grow to adulthood, marry, and raise children. They teach their children the knowledge they accumulated in a lifetime, grow old, and die.

For villages and towns engaged in commerce, even if only that of hosting travelers in settlements that lie near roads, a select few townspeople usually deal with the outside world. Their fellow citizens consider travelers quite

brave, though somewhat suspect, for to leave home one must abandon for a time one's family, village, and magical protections. Those with an aptitude for dealing with strangers often establish inns, creating a gathering place for the community and providing a few rooms for travelers to rent for a small fee. An inn allows those few individuals who are curious about the outside world, hungry for tales of strange places and peculiar adventures, to satisfy their curiosity in a relatively safe manner. Most villagers shun travelers, however. The Horrors still live in the world, and if even a trusted friend can become an enemy without warning, how can an unknown visitor be trusted?

Towns and villages that engage in commerce can be distinguished by their accessibility to and interest in the larger, outside world. Settlements that lie along major trade routes, or are connected to major roads by trails usually conduct at least a little trade with travelers and other communities.

Occasionally, people from neighboring villages or towns marry, but only if relations between the communities are very good.



I and others I know believe that gathering with other people represents the best means to secure safety, but common sense comes in many forms. To each his own.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

Most towns and villages lie far from established roads, many isolated ever since the time of the Scourge. When the Scourge ended, the people who left their shelters sought above all a place in the world safe from danger. Beyond that, they wished for nothing else. Even today, nearly a century later, some still believe that cutting off all ties with the rest of the world is the best means to guarantee their safety.

Though no town or village can depend entirely on trade for its survival, those communities accessible to regular trade routes often possess a greater variety of trinkets and clothes, and have more interest in strangers than do many more isolated farming communities. They also have a greater appetite for new ideas and trade goods, and show interest in novelties from far away (or not so far away, depending on the inhabitants' definition of distance).

Farming Communities

In contrast, farming communities usually keep to themselves. The people farm the hilly land, producing rice, fruit, and vegetables, and raise livestock, including sheep, cows, and goats. Because wide expanses of flat ground are rare in Barsaive except in the lowlands, many farmers plant crops in a series of irrigated ledges that follow the contours of the hills. The ledges resemble large wet steps.

Most villages and towns build their houses on the ground, using stone, mud, and wood. Others are more exotic. Some villages in Barsaive build their homes on stilts that raise the buildings several feet above deep ponds and lakes. In these settlements, the villagers use canoes or boats to travel around the village. Other towns and villages build their homes in the trees. Many such treehouses become quite elaborate, their massive structures connected by rope bridges spanning hundreds of feet between trees.

A word of warning for the cautious traveler: as the following journal entry shows, many isolated communities prefer to remain so. Keeping this in mind, the traveler should remember that many people in Barsaive still regard strangers with extreme hostility, despite the visitor's good intentions. An explorer will improve his chances of surviving the adventures that fall his way by making his first contact with isolated villages very cautiously.

… I'll not go adventuring again. Mad for it, we were—my brother M'kael, our cousins D'nal and Rekera, and me, Melias. Runt of the litter, they called me. Funny, isn't it? In a tippy boat that D'nal had built from the memory of a t'skrang riverboat he'd seen once, we set out down the river our folk call Twistwater. Above our village it goes through bends and even rapids, and so we headed downriver toward calm waters. Safer there, we thought.

All we wanted was a little adventure, something to tell grandchildren by the bonfire on the village green …

But the story turned out much differently.

A storm blew up one night, sending us down a river channel none of us knew. Morning saw us drifting among tall, thick reed beds, where the water smelled of hot sunlight and rotting weeds. We paddled around a bend and saw a little village, 20 round houses on stilts with a little canoe tied up by each one. A sudden wind brought us the scent of fish roasting, and we paddled closer hoping to obtain a bite to eat.

A canoe drifted close, in which sat a ragged, skinny boy cutting reeds with a large knife. D'nal shouted hello. The boy turned, and screamed at the sight of us—the kind of scream you give when your house is burning down or a nightmare chokes your throat so hard that you must wake or go mad. Then whip-quick, he hurled his knife at D'nal. The point struck D'nal in the chest, taking him down in a shower of blood. The rest of us grabbed oars and tried to paddle away, M'kael cursing as the prow caught in the weeds. Too slow, we were. Too slow. A dozen canoes came after us, the villagers shooting arrows and slinging stones. An arrow took Rekera in the throat before M'kael and I went under as the weight of the stones capsized our boat. Poor M'kael never had learned to swim.

Seems they don't like strangers down the Twistwater.

—From the journal of Melias Mahoaryl of the Village of Danadal

T'skrang River Villages

Many t'skrang villages line the banks of the Serpent River. In these villages live the t'skrang crew covenants, that race's form of extended family. The crew covenant serves many functions for the t'skrang living in these riverside villages. Though t'skrang sailors love to travel up and down the river, they also enjoy long stays in their villages. The t'skrang love of children and their strong family ties make them value a safe haven in their riverside communities.

T'skrang villages are made up of four to twenty extended families, called foundations because they are the base on which t'skrang society is built. Each foundation is ruled by its oldest female elder, called the *lahala*.



These villages lie partly buried under the muddy bottom of the Serpent and rise slightly above it. Constructed of stone and shaped like domes, t'skrang homes are connected by underground tunnels. The domes vary in size, with at least one dome in every village large enough to hold the entire population for meetings and celebrations. Each foundation also builds a dome where its members communally eat and sleep. For every foundation formed, another dome must be built.

The t'skrang love to climb and swing on ropes. Where space permits, foundation members string ropes along walls and ceilings, forming some into ladders and dangling others from high ceilings. The play of t'skrang children consists almost entirely of chasing each other around on these ropes.

Society within each village is matriarchal. When two t'skrang marry, the man enters the woman's foundation. Decisions within each foundation as to the sharing of food, clothes, novelties, and so on are made by a council comprising the women of the foundation, led by its lahala. Men do not attend these meetings, but their wives and sisters usually solicit their opinions before the council meeting.

All members over the age of 15 have a voice in making decisions affecting the entire crew covenant (that is, the entire village). Monthly meetings take place in the large dome at the center of the village, though the council may call an unscheduled meeting if an emergency warrants it. The meetings reflect the nature of the t'skrang themselves: loud, boisterous, energetic, and full of motion. Impassioned t'skrang often climb the ropeworks of the dome during a meeting, scrambling over each other to reach the highest points in the room and shout each other down.

On the Building and Function of Towers

In every t'skrang village, large, thick spires extend upward from the river floor, usually four to twenty per village. Each of these towers belongs to one of the village's foundations. Rising above the surface of the Serpent, the towers resemble round rocks with flat tops from the shore. The towers are sturdily made to withstand the powerful, fast current of the Serpent and the constant pounding of the waves against the upriver face of the towers. A steady spray of water boils off the face of the tower and crashes back into the river, making for an interesting hazard when sailing.

These towers serve several purposes. They allow easy access between the village and the surface of the river, serve as docks for t'skrang riverboats, and protect the village from pirate attacks.

To defend against attack, the t'skrang mount on the towers the same fire cannons used on the riverboats. They also erect magical barricades called *refselenika* or *refs* that radiate from the towers. Lying invisible just below the surface of the water, *refs* consist of elemental water shaped into thick spikes that can tear open the hull of any riverboat passing above. Tower sentries raise and lower the *refs* to allow friendly riverboats to pass safely and covenant boats to leave or approach the tower. Because all towers are surrounded by *refs*, all riverboats steer clear of tower tops unless invited in by the towers' crew covenant.

To raise and lower the *refs* takes five minutes or so, leaving the village exposed to hostile riverboats for that length of time. Before lowering the *refs*, guards scan the Serpent carefully for unknown ships. Because the Serpent meanders in gentle curves, the tower guards can see farther than a ship can travel in five minutes, making it unlikely that an enemy ship can reach the village before the *refs* go down. Extraordinary as it may seem, however, more than one

t'skrang captain has managed to bypass the *refs* of another village. Captain Patrochian of the *Breeton* accomplished this feat by arranging for a powerful spell of invisibility to be placed over her ship and waiting only yards away from a tower while the *refs* were lowered. Another captain, so the story goes, fueled his engines with so much elemental fire that he was able to charge down the Serpent from his hiding place around a bend in a scant three minutes. His engines exploded as he reached the village, but his story is remembered because he successfully passed his riverboat over the *refs*.

The t'skrang place especial importance on protecting the towers furthest upstream from the village, because ships that control those towers control access to the village. Once docked at a tower, the crew of a hostile ship can storm it and from there make their way to the helpless village. Because the village's best fighters and sailors go with the riverboats, the village is at its lowest strength when the village boats are out on the river. A raided village can only surrender, hope for rescue, or die fighting.

Allowing enemies to control even one tower gives them access to the rest of the village, and the t'skrang have few choices in such dire straits. Though they are uniformly good swimmers, the river is swift and strong; few t'skrang can leave their village from the riverbed, swim to the surface, and end up where they wish to be. Of course, enemy t'skrang who try to reach a village by swimming rather than through the towers face the same obstacle. If hostile ships control all of a village's towers, its citizens may starve to death. Most supplies come from the village's riverboats, either through trade or piracy. Those supplies move from boats and the shore to the village through the towers.



The cities of Barsaive house many more people than do villages and towns, usually many thousands. As in all of Barsaive, each city features unique customs and culture. A common practice in Urupa, for example, may be a punishable offense in Iopos. In the following pages, I describe the most famed cities in Barsaive. I have organized the information given for each in such a manner as to best express the individual character of each city.

—Kern Redhand, Historian of Throal

ON THE MAJOR CITIES

Barsaive is home to many cities and large settlements. This section provides an overview of the major urban population centers of the Province.

URUPA

The city of Urupa lies 23 days' walk or 15 days' ride from Throal. Situated on the shore of the Aras Sea near the end of a tributary of the Serpent River, Urupa stands alone among the cities of Barsaive. A relatively new city, Urupa was founded almost 90 years ago, shortly after the end of the Scourge.

The residents of seven nearby kaers and citadels located along the shore of the Aras Sea established Urupa, believing that safety lay in numbers. Each community had reached this conclusion independently during the Scourge, and so readily pooled their resources and moved north after the Scourge toward the current site of the city. Intending to create the most advantageous trading arrangement possible, they positioned their new city on the coast of the Aras Sea and near a tributary of the Serpent River, planning that has brought them much good.

The city lies at the base of a high, sheer cliff, on a peninsula between the shores of the Serpent River and the Aras Sea. The 1,500-foot-high cliff discourages attacks on the city from above, and a twenty-foot-high wall broken by five watchtowers helps defend against all other attacks. Part of the city's militia of 2,000 troops serves as crew for an airfleet of three galleys and five drakkars. Though these ships double as trading vessels, five are always docked along the southern wall of the city, near the city's shipyards.

Urupa also boasts a fleet of five sea vessels that serve as both trading and military ships. The city maintains a regularly scheduled trade route to several ports along the shore of the Aras Sea, both in the known regions of Barsaive and along unexplored stretches of the sea's distant shores.

On the Rulers of Urupa

A seven-member Leadership Council, created by the city's founders, governs Urupa. The first council consisted of the leaders of the seven towns and villages that banded together to found the city. Every two years the council elects a leader, called the chief councilor, who oversees the council's activities. At the end of a term, the council may re-elect the current chief councilor to another term. It is a tribute to the Council's wisdom that the chief councilor rarely loses his office. A serious political or financial blunder or unwarranted action against another councilor has on occasion forced a chief councilor to lose the support of the remaining councilors and so be enjoined to step down, but most chief councilors have served in that office for life.

The present chief councilor, a woman Named Fellidra Jer, has been head of the Leadership Council for the past eight years and still enjoys the popular support of the city's residents.

... And as the river wound around the rocks, we came in view of Urupa, nestled between the shores of the Serpent River and the Aras Sea. Our riverboat pulled up along the docks on the Serpent side of the city, where the t'skrang boatmen docked the ship to unload cargo.

As we looked across the city, we could see the tall masts of the water ships moored at the sea docks.

We walked through the heart of the city until we came to the docks, as busy as any on the Serpent. Many water ships of all sorts and sizes were moored there, bearing flags of Urupa as well as places unknown to us.

We spied a caravan moving toward us from the dock, heading for the residential section of the city. At the head of the caravan walked a huge obsidiman, wearing ornate attire and attended by nearly a dozen servants. I and my traveling companions watched in fascination as he led his entourage through the city. Here, we realized, was a citizen of power and wealth.

—From the journal of Loran Redstone, 1506 TH

The alliance between the kaers that founded Urupa marks the city as unique in Barsaive. Whereas most Barsaivians emerging from their kaers and citadels could barely set aside their suspicions long enough to help themselves and other communities rebuild, the people of Urupa emerged determined to find like-minded souls and create a new, safe haven. With the exception of the final resistance effort by which the people of Barsaive defeated the Therans and ended the Theran War, the races of this province have never before shown such mutual trust.

Because of its location, Urupa enjoys the distinction of being one of the only cities to regularly welcome people from outside of Barsaive. Trading ships travel to Urupa across the Aras Sea twice annually, with every journey introducing unique goods and treasure to Barsaive.

The Kingdom of Throal has recently decided to send envoys across the Aras Sea in hopes of contacting those who live outside of Barsaive, and so lie beyond the reach of the Theran Empire. King Neden hopes that these people will look favorably on establishing political ties with Throal. He also hopes to learn how they protected themselves from the Horrors during the Scourge. The king's magicians are especially curious to learn how the Scourge affected other areas of the world, and perhaps to learn non-Theran forms of magical protection.

—Kern Redhand, Historian of Throal

TRAVAR

The city of Travar lies 22 days' walk or 13 days' ride from Throal. Travar is a beautiful city, full of gleaming white buildings, towers, and spires. Of all the cities in Barsaive that survived the Scourge, Travar alone still possesses its original splendor and grace. Its golden roofs catch the sun's light, reflecting its brilliance in all directions. Its location on the Byrose River gives Travar access to the t'skrang traders of the Serpent River and to the Kingdom of Throal. Its proximity to Death's Sea and the Servos Jungle allows easy access to both mundane goods and magical supplies. Travar builds most airships sold in Barsaive, and its own fleet now boasts four galleys and six drakkars. As the wealthiest city outside of Throal, Travar and its citizens enjoy the prosperous lives that accompany brisk trade and wise leadership.

The city's population hovers somewhere near 95,000 citizens, ranging in wealth from those rich enough to wear robes made of gold even to bed to those who sleep in the city's back alleys with only a few utensils and a dirty mat as possessions. Nowhere else in Barsaive do so many craftsmen and merchants gather as in Travar, and even among the poor are many skilled artisans and merchants who have not been fortunate enough to crack the city's market.

Like wealthy people everywhere, the citizens of Travar desire peace. Unfortunately, only the wealthiest members wield the clout to demand peace, and they often choose the terms and definition of that peace. Often, it seems to come at the expense of justice for the less fortunate. Despite the city's close ties with Throal, the magistrates continue to keep Travar's government separate from that of the dwarf kingdom, perhaps because some citizens are unwilling or unable to accept the equal justice that King Neden promises to bring to the world.

The people of Travar are merchants by nature; they will sell anything, procure anything, and buy anything as long as they believe that by doing so they are getting the better end of the bargain. The city's energy is infectious. Visitors who walk its streets suddenly quicken their stride, gain a sense of purpose, and begin to act like someone not to be trifled with, even when they have no purpose and are more than willing to be trifled with! This is the marvelous illusion of Travar: everyone in the city believes himself destined for greatness, even when the truth shows only enough room at the top for a few of the city's people.

On the Rulers of Travar

A council of three magistrates rules Travar, each magistrate serving for three years. Every year one magistrate steps down from his position, and those interested in serving as magistrate must hire a champion to compete in a tournament called the Founding. If a magistrate wishes to hold his post for three consecutive years, his champion must win the Founding. Magistrates often lose their position by losing the tournament, but regain the office in a later year.

The Founding is one of the most peculiar political institutions in Barsaive. Each year a group of magicians known as the Body of Five devises a spectacular tournament involving magic, wild beasts, puzzles, and traps. This huge affair lasts more than two weeks, when the citizens of Travar crowd into a great arena at the center of the city. Seating is limited, and the city's best efforts to control ticket distribution are always swept aside by theft, bribery, and skyrocketing prices. Games of finance are the principal sport of Travar, and lie at the heart of the Founding. Why should tickets for the Founding be exempt?

Persons who want to become magistrates must hire a champion to represent them in the Founding. Every year, candidates secure their champions of choice months before the tournament and spend the intervening time on rigorous training and instruction. Champions come from the ranks of adepts, for the Body of Five creates difficult and subtle tests. No one can predict from year to year what skills and abilities will be needed in order to succeed. Because of this uncertainty, most who seek the magistrate's office hire more than one champion, often choosing several who possess a variety of talents.

The champions compete against one another and against the puzzles created by the Body of Five for two weeks without rest. The crowd watches every event with unbridled glee, always waiting for the contests to reach greater heights of humiliation. Invariably, they do.

Though the outcomes of these contests never depend on bloodshed, little can be done to stop overzealous competitors from harming or killing their opponents once the contest has begun. The Founding allows competitors a sanctioned opportunity to give in to their fiercest instincts, should they choose to.

Every year, 50 or more men and women vie for the office of magistrate. Because training and paying champions is expensive, only the wealthy citizens of Travar can afford to run for the office. This expense, however, deters few; a magistrate exerts great influence over the city's trade and tax laws, and a crafty magistrate can double or quadruple his profits within a year's time.

Approximately 150 adepts register as champions each year. By a clever provision in the law governing the selection of magistrates, all officially registered champions must make themselves available to serve the city at all times. This creates a veritable army of heroes drawn from a broad range of talents standing ready to defend the city's interests. Because individuals support each champion, the citizens are spared the expense of supporting an army, and even ork scorchers or crystal raiders are unwilling to attack a city so well defended.

Having resided in Travar during the Founding, I have witnessed some truly bizarre contests. With my own eyes I have seen combat fought with unusual weapons of magical origin; contests fought from the backs of huge, greased pigs; competitions played out on long logs strung over pits of molten lava drawn from the Death's Sea; races through elaborate mazes formed from whirling walls of flame; games of strategy where the champions are living "pieces" on a large playing board; riddle contests; tests requiring the champions to create impromptu songs on spontaneously chosen themes; and many more.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

KRATAS

Kratas lies 15 days' walk or 9 days' ride from Throal. Located in the center of Barsaive, the city of Kratas serves as a crossroads of information and stolen goods. Despite its location near almost all major trade routes, few honest merchants pass through the city, for Kratas is ruled and run by thieves. Its people are the clever and desperate, the illegally wealthy and the horribly destitute of our province.

The site of an ancient citadel that fell to the Horrors during the Scourge, Kratas was crammed with treasures both magical and mundane when adventurers rediscovered it, empty of survivors, soon after the end of the Scourge. Rumors of its treasures led countless expeditions of heroes and treasure-seekers to scour the ruins bare of wealth and monsters. Within a few years, the dark buildings became home to bandits seeking a home base between their raiding activities. Over time the bandits and thieves began to feel themselves a community, though a true government did not form in Kratas until the outbreak of the Theran War.

In the early days of the occupation, the Theran army demanded obedience from the thousands of thieves and cutthroats that called the ruins home. When Throal organized the resistance that routed the Therans, the famous ork thief adept Garlthik One-Eye called together an army of his fellow thieves and chased the Therans out of Kratas. In their place, he appointed himself the city's ruler and has served the city well despite his unconventional rise to power.

The self-interested nature of the criminals that populate the city prevents Kratas from taking advantage of its accessibility to trade, and thus keeps it from developing into a true political power. Though the citadel of Kratas could easily hold some 100,000 people, Kratas' population remains at roughly half that number. Bands of thieves conceal their activities by constantly moving between empty neighborhoods, and only about a fifth of the population lives in fixed residences.

Kratas' streets are dirty, shadowed by cracked and leaning stone and wood buildings. Though the city is inhabited by tens of thousands of people, the secretive nature of Kratas' citizens often make the streets look deserted. Travelers can walk or ride hundreds of yards in the middle of the day and see nary a soul, yet experience the eerie feeling that the shuttered windows and dark doorways have hundreds of eyes.

A strange loyalty binds the outlaws of Kratas together and directs their mistrust and deceit against the rest of Barsaive. Odd as it may seem to honest citizens, most inhabitants of Kratas live there because it is the only place in Barsaive where they feel safe.

Besides the city's many thieves and mercenaries, numerous craftsmen, merchants, and artisans also live in Kratas. These more law-abiding citizens live in fear of attacks that rarely come, but remain there despite the dangers because their services are more amply rewarded in Kratas than in other cities. The thieves of Kratas recognize that their city needs these people to sustain it, and so they leave these honest citizens alone in their fierce competitions for control over the city's neighborhoods. Merchants and craftsmen must remain carefully neutral in their dealings, however. More than one unfortunate ally of a bandit leader or witness to a terrible deed has ended his days lying in a dark back alley with his throat slit.

The city also supports a thriving black market for secrets and for stolen goods, especially elemental magic items. Spies who report to the leaders of Kratas are everywhere. Indeed, it is often said that "every secret in Barsaive is gossip in Kratas." The only trade not permitted in Kratas is slavery.



…Today we entered Kratas, a miserable den of ruffians. I can scarce believe that I have come to this place, where tumbledown shacks lean over the litter-ridden streets like crippled old men and the very air smells of deceit. Did I not have a debt of honor to settle, I would ride straight home to father. But then again it is likely my hired "companions" would follow me and kill me for my purse unless I pay them.

We rode through an iron gate set into crumbling walls of lichen-eaten stone, paying ten silver pieces each for the privilege. That princely sum, of course, came from my pocket. The dirty streets smelled of rotting food. I saw a band of urchins splashing in the filthy sluice that ran down one side street; another band ran after us, shouting for coin. One grabbed my horse's saddlebag and tried to swing herself up behind me, but lost her grip and tumbled to the dirt. When she sat up, I saw she was laughing. The scrofulous little beast shouted something after me, though I know not what. I swear they picked my pocket; I am missing a purse full of copper. I have scarce enough money left to pay the innkeeper, a surly sort who looks like he would as soon murder me as breathe.

Someone is at the door. Catulla the windling? Surely not—he cannot know that I have come to pay my debt. Who would dare disturb a gentleman at this dead hour of the night?

—From the journal of Shiellen Woodsong, eldest son of the Second Magistrate of Travar, found dead in the Drunken Dragon Inn



On the Ruler of Kratas

A pragmatic Thief, Garlthik One-Eye rules his city in a pragmatic fashion. When it suits the city to help Throal, Garlthik supplies whatever is needed. If it better suits their purposes to rob a dwarf caravan, Garlthik's subjects gladly loot and pillage.

Many gangs of thieves live in the city, some using it as a safe headquarters from which to raid the surrounding lands. Others steal only from those living within the city walls. Because it is their nature to covet what their neighbor has, gangs of thieves draw boundaries for territory that they claim as their own, denying others the opportunity to steal or operate within those boundaries. Outsiders may wonder at territorial wars fought within a half-deserted city, but violent disputes break out regularly. The two most powerful gangs of thieves in Kratas are the Force of the Eye and Brocher's Brood.

Force of the Eye

The most influential gang in Kratas, the Force of the Eye owes its existence and allegiance to the venerable ork thief, Garlthik One-Eye. Garlthik uses his gang to maintain the upper hand in Kratas; his anti-slavery, anti-Theran policies only carry weight because he has the strength to back them. Though none openly oppose Garlthik's decrees, many traders in Kratas would undoubtedly welcome the chance to reap the awesome profits of the slave trade.

The Force of the Eye has nearly 1,000 members, made up mostly of orks and elves, though it also includes members from the other Namegiver races. Garlthik regularly assigns about one quarter of his gang to work for him elsewhere in Barsaive, but retains several hundred informants throughout Kratas. These spies hold no official position in the Force of the Eye, but their ability to slip in and out of the city's many criminal factions makes them useful.

Garlthik's chief counsel is Terricia, a windling Thief rumored to be responsible for the recent deaths of several of Garlthik's most strident opponents.

Brocher's Brood

A particularly bloody gang of thieves, Brocher's Brood is Garlthik's chief rival for control of Kratas. Led by Vistrosh, a corrupted elf and former Blood Warder to the Elven Queen Alachia, this gang heads the illegal slave market in Kratas. The Brood numbers some 600 members, each of whom must swear an oath of personal loyalty to Vistrosh. The gang is rife with assassins, and few who dare to cross the Brood will escape its relentless pursuit.



VIVANE

The city of Vivane lies 49 days' walk or 29 days' ride from Throal. Isolated in the southwest corner of Barsaive, Vivane represents Thera's greatest conquest.

Decades ago, Vivane was the most beautiful city in the province. When the Therans returned to Barsaive following the Scourge, Vivane surrendered to the invaders, hoping to save the freedom and wealth its people enjoyed. Pleased by the picture of wealth and beauty that Vivane's bright blue spires and golden domes created, the Therans made the city their new provincial capital, bringing their slave laws with them. Vivane's bazaars soon filled with prisoners from throughout Barsaive, all torn from their homes by no law but greed.

During the Theran War, Vivane was a primary target. As the heart of Theran slave trade, it was also home to numerous Theran officials. Many airships and fire cannons fought the battle for Vivane, and much of the city's beauty was destroyed as its proud towers and spires crumbled to the streets. An underground resistance supported the air war, and the Therans were routed from the city.

Though Vivane enjoyed a brief period of freedom from Thera about 60 years ago, the Therans refused to accept defeat and have since reclaimed the city. However, they do not take their control of the city for granted. Overgovernor Kypros keeps a tight rein on the puppet government, and a well-trained and fanatical militia drawn from the city's population patrols the streets to stamp out even the slightest whisper of rebellion. Overgovernor Kypros often docks the massive airship *Ascendancy* in Vivane, and other Theran officials view the city as their personal possession.

Only a small corner of the city has been rebuilt since the Theran War. Named the Theran Quarter because Theran money rebuilt it, it will accept as residents only Therans and those Barsaivians most loyal to them. A new wall separates the Theran Quarter from the rest of the city, its single entrance well guarded by the city's militia. Only the Quarter's citizens and those with guest passes can gain entrance. Anyone caught in the Quarter without a pass is immediately arrested and may be thrown in prison or summarily executed.

The rest of the city alternates between solid, well-crafted buildings and the ruins of towers, spires, and homes. Though the rubble was cleared long ago, the remnants of shattered towers and walls still stand, their broken walls reaching toward the sky in a mockery of their former grace.

Vivane has a population of 95,000, of which 20,000 are slaves. The city has no airships, for the Therans dare not risk giving the citizens access to power. Entry into the city is carefully restricted, and the militia stays alert for known agitators. According to rumor, the underground resistance born during the Theran War still exists, and has even become more active since the landing of the behemoth. However, the resistance's leaders and operatives remain hidden too deep for the Therans to ferret out.

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... To pick the Fearful Feather's pocket and live to tell the tale! Such a glorious endeavor! Not that Fearful's much to worry on ... it's his Theran guard you've got to watch for. Sharp spears, they've got, and a few have sharp eyes and minds to match. Lucky for me, most are as thick as posts. Ah, it's grand being a Thief.

I spent the morn lurking near the wall between the Theran Quarter and the rest of Vivane, hoping to spot a mark. Not many Therans carry money outside the Quarter any more. Seems even a Theran can learn sense, if you give him long enough. Folk carry money in, where they can spend it among clean streets, white marble walls, and pretty gold and blue towers and spires. No mess or rubble for the Therans, thank you. They leave that for us, their lessers.

I hoped a visiting merchant might go to see His Honorableness (hah!), the Theran puppet governor. Lucky me—after an hour or two Fearful himself came out, ringed by spear-toting Therans and carrying a heavy leather bag. None too tight a grip, neither—guards must make you careless. I couldn't resist it.

Using my Thief magic, I picked my way silent and unseen over the cracked cobbles and followed Fearful's entourage to one of the few shops outside the wall in good repair. Wine shop, as it happened. A guard stumbled on a broken stone, and I saw my chance. Snatched the bag then vanished before Fearful even felt it leave his fingers. By the time they raised a shout, I was spending my ill-gotten gains in my favorite tavern, the Dirty Dwarf.

Who says you can't make a living in Vivane?

—From the journal of Thysel, Thief

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On the Ruler of Vivane

In keeping with Barsaive traditions, Vivane is ruled by a magistrate, the Honorable Quarique Oathstone. The discontented of the city call him the Fearful Feather, for a feather's weight is the extent of his political power. Appointed by Overgovernor Kypros, Oathstone spends his days pretending to be a true ruler, but in reality the only thing he does without consulting one Theran offical or another is to choose the menus for his meals of the day.

JERRIS

The city of Jerris lies some 38 days' walk or 23 days' ride from Throal. Jerris occupies a peculiar place in the physical and spiritual geography of Barsaive. Located at the western edge of the province, the city huddles between the edge of the vast Wastes that cut us off from the rest of the world on one side and a huge, unexplored jungle on the other. Because the city borders on so much unexplored land, many people wonder if Jerris marks the border of Horror-filled lands, or perhaps actually lies within them.

The dark smoke that blows from the Wastes swirls perpetually through the streets of Jerris, rarely allowing the sun to shine brightly upon its citizens. The smoke looks and feels ashy, though no one has yet discovered its true nature. Visitors to Jerris who walk through the shadowed streets quickly discover an odd taste on their tongue, as if they had eaten cinders.

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To me, the taste suggests something indefinable—perhaps the taste of nightmares. This observation lacks any real relevance to the discussion of ashes, I know, but there it is!

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

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The people of Jerris are a brooding, temperamental lot. As in any other city, the streets of Jerris are usually filled with people, but unlike the throngs in other cities, the people of Jerris walk silently with their gaze turned toward the ground. This habit seems to infect everyone who stays too long within the city's walls. An air of listlessness seems to hang over the city, but make no mistake: however tired the people of Jerris may appear, they are easily moved to extremes of passion. Tears flow freely, whether of sorrow or joy. Blades are drawn easily and blood swiftly spilled, whether for money or love. Oddly, these passionate actions rarely inspire the slightest interest from people witnessing such outbursts.

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Many scholars, and certain less-educated groups, have suggested that the city is cursed in some way. According to one rumor, the Hand of Corruption believes that the city rests on a wound in the earth and is a physical manifestation of a spiritual illness in our world. The Seekers of Pure Flesh, a gruesome living legend cult, agree with this theory. They suggest that the city can be saved by gathering bits of flesh from those who died for love. The Seekers have brought bucketfuls of flayed skin to Jerris, where it is stored in a pit under the town hall. So far, however, the magistrate of Jerris has refused to allow them to perform their homespun ritual. Those of a more pragmatic bent believe that the ash filtering over the city from the Wastes has blighted the people's hearts. None of these theories, however, can tell us what the ash is or from where it blows among the Wastes.

—Kern Redhand, Historian of Throal

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Common wisdom in Barsaive says that strange creatures—perhaps Horrors—roam the city's streets at night, unnoticed by the people of Jerris, who cannot see these creatures through some strange effect peculiar to the city. Strange incidents support these stories. For example, certain tales say that every week ten people simply vanish in the night. Though such a claim is undoubtedly an exaggeration—the city would soon be empty if it were true—it is an exaggeration of truth. People do vanish in Jerris. Yet another mystery shrouds those rare occasions when someone is found murdered in their sleep, torn apart with what appear to be sharp daggers—or claws.

Why do people live in Jerris if they must suffer such miseries? In a word: money. Despite its grim aspect and filthy appearance, the city is home to wealthy merchants and airship builders. Though far from Barsaive's main trade routes, the city transports many goods from place to place throughout the province. Because strong air currents pass over Jerris, a merchant's ships can reach stops on the main trade routes quickly. This advantage allows the merchants of Jerris to serve both the t'skrang and the Kingdom of Throal as hired shipping agents. The airship builders also sell drakkars to towns and private merchants throughout the province. The city also makes considerable profit mining elemental air.

Not everyone is content with business in Jerris, however. The trading houses seek to stop the airship builders from selling drakkars outside of the city, fearing (with reason) that if airships become commonly available elsewhere in Barsaive, no longer will their services as shippers be in demand. The city's elemental air mining operations face constant threats from crystal raiders and the Therans; though the Therans are the greater threat of the two. Rather than simply raiding for cargo, the Therans try to sink new

airships as soon as they float, most likely in an attempt to control Barsaive's ability to defend against or attack the Theran armada. Before establishing the fortress of *Triumph*, the Therans launched several air attacks against Jerris, to which the city responded by imposing a new tax on its citizens to finance construction of an airship fleet designed to protect the city.

At this writing, the city's fleet consists of one galley and four drakkars. The merchant fleets total another 15 drakkars, which the magistrate can command to defend Jerris. The total population of the city numbers 80,000.



Iopos

Iopos lies some 38 days' walk and 23 days' ride from Throal. Crouched on the northern edge of the province, Iopos presents the greatest internal threat to the power of Throal (the Theran Empire is, of course, the greatest external threat). The city is ruled by a family of magicians Named the Denairastas, an ancient bloodline whose members governed the city through the Scourge. Their success in keeping the city safe bound the loyalty of the city's people to their magically gifted overlords. To this day, the Denairastas can do whatever they please with nary a word of complaint from the populace.

Those few who dare protest are quickly crushed by the Holders of Trust, retainers loyal to the Denairastas who serve as both guards and informers. The guards of the Holders of Trust wear silver armor and carry large swords, presenting a visible and constant reminder of the family's power and authority. These guards will punish any accused dissenters brought to them by their spies. Charged with seeking out dissent, these spies are not formally identified as Holders of Trust, but walk as ordinary citizens among the people, ever alert for signs of complaint or dissatisfaction with the rule of the Denairastas. At a word from the informants, the guards move swiftly to arrest or kill all known or suspected dissidents.

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To see this city is to see what our world would look like if the Scourge had never befallen us. The buildings seem to sparkle in the sunlight; the streets are clean, the people happy. No one speaks ill of anything, and all extol the grandeur and beauty of Iopos over any other place in Barsaive. From its outward appearance, Iopos seems a city in which the Passions dwell.

As pleasant as this city seems, darkness lies beneath its shining surface. As you know, I am nothing if not cautious. I have more than once felt as if someone were shadowing me, which is most strange, for I have done nothing but act the role of the rich merchant. By neither word nor deed have I behaved in such a manner as to arouse suspicion.

The Holders of Trust—the city militia, army, and secret police—are everywhere. All on the same day I saw two visiting merchants arrested, tried, and beheaded in the city center for not observing the law that one must give one percent of all profits to city leader Uhl Denairastas with the pledge, "Uhl is our leader, our beacon, our all." They gave the money gladly, but refused to make the pledge. And it was one of their own workers who turned them in. These merchants came from Jerris and have never been to Iopos before! I tell you, I have not seen such brutality in the guise of order since the dark days of Theran rule!

—From the last missive of Slock, Thief and Spy of Kratas

♟ ♟ ♟

The Holders of Trust have few occasions to punish offenders, however. Most citizens of Iopos feel loyalty to the point of fanaticism for their rulers; people commonly compare members of the Denairastas family to the Passions. When outsiders question this exaggeration, the citizens simply smile, as if they alone know the answer to a deep and important secret.

I advise visitors to the city to keep any questions or criticisms of Denairastas family politics to themselves.

♟ ♟ ♟

More than one adventurer who volunteered to research Iopos was arrested, tried, and sentenced to death all within two short hours for no greater offense than seeking a firmer understanding of how the Denairastas command such loyalty.

—Kern Redhand, Historian of Throal

♟ ♟ ♟

The Denairastas willfully abuse the worship of their subjects. Whereas cruel Theran masters whip their slaves to death, the people of Iopos work themselves to death of their own free will. Whatever the Denairastas family asks, the people will give, and the Denairastas demand a great deal. Scores of men and women die while mining magical elements, and the city's army is nearly suicidal in its valor. Parents compete to offer their own children for the blood magic rites the Denairastas sometimes practice.

♟ ♟ ♟

I saw dozens of workers collapse from exhaustion while building a new palace for Uhl Denairastas. I learned later that two of them had actually died in service to their ruler.

—J'Role the Honorable Thief

♟ ♟ ♟

The Denairastas have sworn to defeat both Throal and Thera, to take their power for themselves. Throal had long considered the Denairastas as a minor power, but the exposure of the real culprits behind King Varulus III's assassination transformed them into the kingdom's most immediate and dangerous enemy virtually overnight. Because Iopos lies so far from Theran influence, the city has turned its attention to disrupting the trade and state negotiations that King Neden's agents are conducting in his effort to unite Barsaive. The Holders of Trust form Iopos' front line in this effort, going into communities across Barsaive and sowing discontent through murder and destruction. They are skilled at disguising their work to look like the random violence of ork scorchers or crystal raiders, and choose their victims carefully.

The Denairastas' special interest in magic leads some Throalic scholars to speculate that certain living legend cults may be fronts for the family's goals, by which the Denairastas draw unwary people

into their scheme of acquiring lost artifacts and knowledge. Iopos possesses a rich reserve of magical elements, collected by airships sent across Barsaive to mine elemental fire from Death's Sea and elemental air from the skies. The city's supply of elemental earth and wood hints at secret expeditions into the Blood Wood, though I dared not seek proof for fear of arrest for asking the wrong questions.

More than 100,000 people live in Iopos. The city's fleet of airships consists of three galleys and six drakkars. Three shipping companies also do business within the city, giving Denairastas another additional six drakkars should he require their services.

Haven

Haven lies some 21 days walking and 13 days riding from Throal. A small, rough town, Haven lies in the southeastern corner of the ruins of the Forgotten City of Parlainth. Ork and troll adventurers led by the famed troll Torgak founded the town of Haven almost two decades ago, after spending three years carefully exploring a small corner of Parlainth's ruins. After ridding that area of monsters and Horrors, the adventurers set up a permanent settlement from which to conduct further explorations. Other adventurers traveling to the Forgotten City began stopping in the safe area, by this time known as the Haven, to ask what portions of the city had yet to be explored and to hear the most current rumors of monsters and Horrors living in the ruins.

Eventually abandoning their own treasure-hunting efforts in favor of providing services to other adventurers, Torgak and his fellows rebuilt certain ruins into an inn they named the Restless Troll, and later a trading post called Torgak's Supplies and Goods. Because the ruins themselves are so impressive, the Restless Troll and Torgak's are spectacular establishments, featuring high ceilings, wide corridors, and marble steps down to the street; in many ways, they rival some of the buildings in the Kingdom of Throal. Their opulence provides an incongruous contrast to the rough-and-tumble spirit of Haven.

Haven boasts a permanent population of just over one thousand, including several dozen families. As many races live in Haven as in Throal, peacefully and amicably. Most trouble in Haven comes from outsiders. Of course, outsiders constantly travel to Haven, and so opportunities to stir up friction abound. A few years after the town achieved a stable population, other people interested in the opportunities to make a profit in Haven built onto the town, expanding away from the ruins. The first neighborhood constructed during this time is now known as the Old Neighborhood, though several sections of the town predate it.

On the Ruler of Haven

Haven is ruled by Torgak, founder of the trading post. A benevolent dictator, Torgak can use the strength of well-armed orks and trolls to enforce his will when necessary, but he has rarely needed to resort to this measure. His chief concerns are to increase trade and traffic through Haven and to keep the peace. Now that Torgak is getting on in years, he no longer craves adventure or the possibility of encountering violent situations. Outsiders who come to Haven intent on brewing trouble are often hauled before Torgak for a lecture; sometimes, he gives them a beating as well.

Despite Torgak's personal desire for peace, Haven still reflects the nature of the ork and troll adventurers who founded it. The town is noisy, rowdy, and rough, and both visitors and citizens alike can indulge in much brawling or other violence before anyone interferes to stop them.

The Defense of Haven

Given the quarrelsome nature of many of its inhabitants, only a town full of warriors ready for a fight could enforce the law in Haven. And despite its peaceful name, the community sits on the edge of a ruined city whose shadows hide countless dangers. Beneath the ancient cracked and bleached-white structures lie dark cellars and long, empty corridors in which monsters prowl and Horrors nest. Indeed, masses of monstrous creatures have attacked the city several times each year since its founding. The circumstances behind such coordinated attacks remain a mystery, but most Haveners suspect that one or more Horrors are behind them. The Horrors living in the ruins are those powerful enough to remain on our plane after the drop in magic that forced most of their kind from our world. Many are intelligent enough to make mental attacks so subtle that they can cause untold damage before being detected. Horrors can compel people to kill friends and family in their sleep, possess individual members of adventuring bands so that the pawn will lead his companions into a trap deep within the ruins of Parlainth, and perpetrate other unspeakably dreadful acts.

Rumor says that Haven also houses Theran spies and informants who look for ancient Theran treasure that remains in Parlainth and report any unusual activities within the Forgotten City to the Overgovernor at Sky Point. This rumor seems likely to be true. Parlainth was once a Theran city, and probably holds many secrets of Thera's past.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records



On Haven and Other Communities

Citizens of Haven have begun to develop working relationships with representatives of both Throal and the Blood Wood, currently the two largest political powers near Parlainth. Both King Neden and the Blood Warders of Blood Wood hunger for artifacts, information, and magic from the ruins, and will pay well any adventurers who can secure such items. Both the elves of Blood Wood and the king of Throal will often hire adventurers to enter and search any ruins rumored to contain an ancient treasure. Would-be heroes venturing into Parlainth from Haven must often contend not only with the monsters, Horrors, and ancient magical traps scattered throughout the ruins, but also other adventurers racing to claim their prize.

You might imagine the task of gathering information about the Kingdom of Throal would prove an easy one. And in many ways, it was: I found numerous sources readily available, well-organized and complete historical records, and an orderly kingdom to survey. The challenge lay in choosing what to include, and what to leave for further works. As I may take up only a few pages of this work for my subject, I provide the most basic information and encourage interested readers to study further.

—Inscribed by Jaron of Bethabal,
Scholar of the Library of Throal



On the Kingdom of Throal

The entrance to the Kingdom of Throal stands on the south face of the Throal Mountain range. To reach Throal, one must pass through Bartertown, the sprawling city of merchants and traders that has grown around the entrance to the kingdom ever since the time of the Scourge's end.

On Bartertown

A vast, bewildering maze of a city that 50,000 people call home, Bartertown lies just outside the gates to the Kingdom of Throal. Sprawling in front of the three giant arches leading into the mountain kingdom, Bartertown grew out of a bazaar the dwarfs established years ago at the entrance to Throal.

Merchants, traders, and visitors gathered there over the years, and the town became a favorite destination for those who wished to take advantage of the dwarf kingdom's trade policies without feeling obligated to pledge loyalty to Throal. Huts and other permanent structures eventually replaced the open market bazaars and tents and were in turn replaced by larger, more comfortable buildings. As of this writing, it seems nothing can stop Bartertown's growth. During a busy trading season, the city's already large population can double in size.

The closer one approaches to Bartertown, the clearer its ramshackle nature and origins become. One can look up from any place in Bartertown and see the blue-misted mountains soaring high into the clouds, the peaks so enormous that they fill one's vision. The colossal mountains seem to lean down over Bartertown, almost giving one the sensation that the towering slopes might momentarily topple down upon the ramshackle city. At the base of the mountains, the three towering arches leading into the kingdom catch the sun's light and glimmer bright gold. These arches seem to stand guard over Bartertown, which tumbles away from the mountains like sharp, angular foothills.

The wide, smooth Royal Road cuts through Bartertown, leading visitors straight to the gates of Throal. King Varulus III ordered that this road be kept in continually pristine condition, a decree held up by his successor. The journey through Bartertown permits one a fascinating glimpse of the countless Barsaivian cultures and races that come to trade with Throal. Merchants, beggars, and charlatans fill the streets, wares of every sort are displayed for trade, and criers call out for mercenaries to guard shipments across the province. Truly, Bartertown is an awesome, overwhelming sight; yet even its colorful chaos takes second place to the majestic Throal Mountains.

On the Ruler of Bartertown

A magistrate chosen by the Council of Merchants rules Bartertown. The right to choose this magistrate became a thorny issue several years ago when King Varulus III of Throal and Bartertown's leading merchants wrangled over the power of appointment. Suddenly realizing how large and prosperous Bartertown had become, the king wished to appoint his own magistrate, presumably to extend his sovereignty over the city. Unwilling to relinquish their power, the merchants waved their original charter in the king's face until he was forced to relent.

To their misfortune, the merchants' stubbornness prompted King Varulus III to stop supplying money and military might to support the city. In the last 15 years the city has been forced to impose taxes to build better buildings and provide city guards, but many of the citizens simply ignore or cheat on their taxes, which has made the king's withdrawal of support a matter of serious concern. Bartertown's fate has yet to be determined, but already some citizens want the Council of Merchants to relinquish authority to King Neden. Many more citizens believe that pride demands that Bartertown succeed on its own. These good people consider the city their home and want it to become as independent and wealthy as any other city of Barsaive.

However, the absence of a system of checks and balances and a recent explosion of black market activities has allowed the current magistrate to accumulate unprecedented power. Magistrate Clystone is no longer accountable to anyone; even the Council of Merchants, made up of prominent merchants from Bartertown's early days, are bullied by the man they appointed.

On the Unique Features of Bartertown

Reflecting its origins as an open-air market, Bartertown is unlike the other great cities of Barsaive. Most other cities, built generations ago with the aid of the Theran Empire, boast massive stone buildings, towers and spires plated with gold, wide domes that glow the blue of a beautiful dusk, and intricate patterns carved into stone walls laced with gold and silver. Even though the Scourge, the Theran War, and time have reduced many of these cities to ruins, and though the cities still inhabited reflect only a shadow of their former glory, their beauty eclipses the ramshackle streets and lively chaos of Bartertown.

Bartertown boasts no buildings higher than three stories; most stand only two stories tall. Lying as it does next to Throal and the mountains; the city's lack of stonework is immediately noticeable. The buildings of Bartertown are constructed of wood, covered with white plaster, and lack the sense of security that stone shelters provide. Despite the city's size, Bartertown gives more the impression of a small wilderness town that just happens to lie along trade routes. Bartertown owns no airships and maintains a minimal city guard.

The wide, smooth Royal Road bisects Bartertown, providing all visitors with a clear view of the arches carved out of the mountain ahead. Three-story buildings line both sides of the road, all adorned with colorful paint and bright signs proclaiming the sale of various wares, goods, and services. The Royal Road is clean and well kept, creating a sense of order that makes the city seem pleasant, if provincial. As visitors pass beneath the arches, they enter the Throal Bazaar—the dwarf kingdom's official trading area, housed in a huge cavern filled with countless stalls and merchants. Tunnels lead out of the bazaar into the kingdom itself.

Visitors who turn aside from the Royal Road and onto one of Bartertown's roads quickly see the true nature of this city. Its architecture resembles a child's version of a city, hundreds of buildings placed next to or on top of one another. A closer look shows that some shelters consist of nothing more than heavy cloth draped between two buildings. Visitors who venture further into Bartertown encounter a sea of jostling crowds in the streets and a cacophony of voices. Workers move their wares from craft shops in the inner recesses of the city to shops set up on or near the Royal Road, where traders from all over Barsaive scour the streets looking for bargains. Visiting airships dock at spires, their shadows falling across the crowded streets as their crews unload goods carried from as far away as towns and villages near Death's Sea or the Twilight Peaks. Pickpockets and thieves work the crowds as well, finding easy pickings among those who become careless in Bartertown's bustle and din.

The city is full of merchant houses busily making fabrics, dyes, magical potions, and every other imaginable good. Even if a product is not made in Bartertown, it can still be found within the city's shops and stalls. Customers seeking specific items must be prepared to spend considerable time sorting through the city's chaotic layout and willing to wait for information if finding the item requires that merchants contact other merchants. Items not immediately available can often be found and brought to Bartertown for a customer, though sometimes the seeker of a rare herb or exotic perfume is simply told in what remote comer of Barsaive he can find the thing he desires.

On the Origins of Bartertown

How did such an unplanned and sometimes ugly city come to lie at the gates of the magnificent Kingdom of Throal, itself a testament to planning and order? This question plagues the dwarfs, for it suggests that chaos can triumph despite their best efforts and that all their grandest plans may yet come to nothing.

The nature of the dwarfs themselves, so well suited to planning and organizing, gave Bartertown its beginnings. Many traders and visitors simply wanted a place where they could trade and otherwise deal with the dwarfs without being subject to the laws of Throal. To fulfill this desire, King Varulus III granted a charter of land to a few merchants in order to create a community of merchants and traders outside of Throal. He wanted to encourage the presence of traders, but recognized that Throal's might could well frighten away the timid or those suspicious of any great power.



The other force behind Bartertown's swift growth came out of the physical nature of the dwarf kingdom. Many visitors to Throal, especially those of younger generations, simply disliked the idea of sleeping under a mountain. Though hundreds of thousands of people came—and still come—to populate the cities the dwarfs built within Throal, many others wished to be near the kingdom, but not of it. For these people, Bartertown provides the perfect home.

King Varulus III gave the city only its charter, nothing more; he pledged it no support or defense. Nonetheless, it continued to grow unchecked. Even the merchants who received the original charter intended to establish only a few trading houses, never envisioning the development of such a vast city. Because half of Bartertown's population at any given time is transient, the city still lacks a true sense of community, and permanent residents are in the awkward position of serving as an adjunct to Throal. Bartertown is neither a truly separate power, nor fully a part of the dwarf kingdom.

On the Dwarf Kingdom

As one approaches the mountains, the gates of the Kingdom of Throal are a welcome sight, perhaps because they relieve some of the breathtaking grandeur of the setting. These proofs of Namegiver habitation are reminders that the huge mountains can be tamed after all. The entrance to Throal lies through three massive arches carved into the mountains, their edges plated with gold. Because the mountains are so enormous, it is only from directly under the arches that one can truly appreciate the vastness of the gates. They tower overhead; people who look directly up at their golden curves often suffer the momentary sensation of falling over backward.

The three arches open into a vaulted chamber hundreds of feet high, which serves as the official entrance to the kingdom. Here is the place known as the Bazaar, where merchants who obtain licenses from the Kingdom of Throal can set up their booths. Throalic guards patrol the Bazaar, watching for questionable business practices and keeping a sharp eye out for thieves.

On the Halls of Throal

From the Bazaar, nine huge hallways lead into the heart of the mountains. All along their length, these hallways branch off into smaller corridors, leading into a maze that winds its way through the mountain range. Its myriad corridors and passageways extend a distance of many days' walk, branching off to other, seemingly endless corridors. Massive chambers and caverns filled with Throal's huge inner cities lie along these passages, as do all of the kingdom's important areas.

The winding halls of Throal and the living and working spaces which they connect represent unique dwarf construction styles. The countless wide tunnels reach some twelve feet high and wind through the mountains for a distance of many days' travel. These passages make up the old sections of the kingdom. Most citizens of Throal live here, preferring to dwell in the underground chambers where they feel most comfortable. Light quartz crystals line the walls of these corridors, illuminating their shadowy depths.

The old part of Throal, which served as the kingdom's kaer during the Scourge, is divided between residences and chambers used for trade, work, and research. Countless homes line the residential corridors, many-roomed dwellings that lie behind thick, wooden doors. In the trade and work spaces, the people of Throal conduct business, the making of goods, and scholarly research. These areas serve as workshops for craftspeople, provide meeting places for those who deal in importing and exporting goods, and contain the Great Library.

Long stairways carved from the mountain lead from certain tunnels, providing access between the different levels of Throal. The landings of some of the longer stairways feature small parks where people can rest, for the walk between levels can sometimes take an hour or more. In some of the parks are fountains of magical water especially enchanted to refresh those who partake of it. Unfortunately, the water loses its healing property when carried out of the city.

On the Great Library

Within the kingdom lies the Great Library of Throal, the most complete and inclusive library in the province. Its stone walls house the collective literary, artistic, and scholarly works of the people of Barsaive. Given the great numbers who dwell in Throal and the dwarf kingdom's extensive history, this priceless collection has grown over the centuries to a size almost beyond comprehension. In addition to gathering scholarly and literary works, the librarians are constantly adding to the record of Barsaive's history, from the province's beginnings to the present day.

Among the many ways the librarians accomplish this goal is by hiring adventurers to seek the truth behind certain legends and rumors and to verify events reported from every region of Barsaive. Rather than relying on memory alone, the librarians require these adventurers to keep journals of their travels, recording each day the perils and wonders they have faced. In addition, the library purchases the journals of adventurers who have explored all areas of the province.

The library makes a formal acquisition of journals once a year, during the months of Sollus and Riag. Thousands of adventurers descend on Throal at this time, all hoping to sell their stories and become a part of Barsaive's history. Some adventurers earn enough from the library to continue their journey or to return home; however, no adventurer or group can expect to earn a fortune in this way.

The Master of the Hall of Records, currently my colleague Merrox, administers the library. At any time, roughly two dozen librarians and scholars assist the Master, each taking charge of a general area of study: topography, city lore, history (this subject requires five librarians), and so on. The library also catalogues maps of the entire province as well as of the smaller regions within it.



All of the manuscripts and papers stored in the library are exhaustively indexed and coded so that visiting scholars and travelers can easily find what they are looking for. Visitors may use the library for a fee of twenty silver pieces a day, which includes assistance from the librarians, scribes, and research scholars.

The Chambers of the Inner Kingdom

Certain tunnels lead to the chambers wherein the King and his court conduct the day-to-day business of Throal and Barsaive. These rooms include the king's audience chamber and banquet hall, where formal functions and ceremonies take place; the private chambers of the king, his family, and his court; and the vaults of the kingdom, which contain Throal's treasure and valuable, magical artifacts.

Because it houses what we of Throal hold most dear, this Inner Kingdom remains under heavy guard at all times. Without exception, those venturing into this area without an authorized escort are detained.

On the Mines

The endless tunnels of Throal also provide access to Throal's most important natural resources: the magical and mundane minerals drawn from the mining tunnels and shafts that wind through the deepest heart of the Throal Mountains. Though many of Throal's dwarfs immerse themselves in the theory and practice of governing a kingdom, the vast majority prefer to delve into the earth and uncover its treasures.

Such work carries risks; cave-ins may occur at any time, as may attack by creatures that roam the tunnels. Some of these are mundane animals that have crept into the tunnels from the surface of the Throal Mountains. Other, more dangerous creatures emerge from the elemental plane of earth and attack the miners to prevent them from gathering elemental earth.

Several different mining companies work within Throal, constantly searching for new, rich sources of raw material and more efficient means to mine it. The level of competition for the market and the companies' unsurpassed ability to work the mines effectively puts the prices of minerals and elemental earth in constant flux.

On the Caverns and Cities

More recent additions to Throal include the massive cities built in huge caverns throughout the Throal Mountains. City architecture differs considerably from the building style of the old kaer, reflecting the present-day variety among Throal's citizens. When King Varulus III invited people of all races from across Barsaive to take up residence in the Kingdom of Throal, the officials in charge of housing the anticipated influx of people decided that the newcomers would adjust to their homes more quickly if their new residences resembled the homes they had left. Accordingly, Throalic engineers set about building roads, towers, and storied residences on the wide floors of the vast caverns. As was common in the kaers, these areas are illuminated by a magical, glowing moss that lines the roof of the caverns, supplemented by light-quartz crystals around the outer walls of each city.

The cities the dwarfs built inside the caverns, though generally smaller than cities in the rest of Barsaive, are no less splendid in design. Each houses approximately 25,000 people of many different races. Each city is ruled by a baron or baroness, also of a variety of races, who has sworn loyalty to King Neden. The city's noble families hold their titles for the life of the current baron or baroness. Upon the death of a city's ruler, the king may allow an heir to assume the place of his or her father or mother, or he may place a new ruler in charge of the city. In general, the king considers the current ruling family's popularity among the citizens when making this decision. If the people find their current rulers satisfactory, that family continues to rule. If the people feel otherwise, the king gives the stewardship of the city to a new noble family.

At this writing, the dwarfs have completed seven subterranean cities: Bethabal, Hustane, Valvria, Wishon, Tirtarga, Oshane, and Yistane. These cities are filled with a mix of races who chose to become citizens of Throal. Bethabal is famed for the garden that seems to float near the roof of that city's giant cave, planted on an observation platform built during the city's construction.

Six stone walkways now lead to the garden from various parts of the cavern, each affording a spectacular view of Bethabal. Two more cities, Raithabal and Thurdane, are in the final stages of construction. No residents have yet settled there, and only a few dwarfs still work in the quiet cities. Walking through their streets is an eerie experience, almost like exploring an empty kaer or citadel.

On the King and the Noble Houses

Several families have ruled Throal during its 1,500-year history. The current ruler, King Neden, is the last heir of House Avalus. **House Avalus** has been dwindling since the early days of the Scourge, and following the assassination of King Varulus III. The kingdom is a heartbeat away from a dynastic change, and in Throal such changes are rarely peaceful.

Throal has a total of twenty-eight noble houses, each privileged to select a courtier to attend the king. Three of these houses may send two courtiers each. Countless minor free trading houses also exist in the dwarf kingdom, but only six of them have real economic clout. Unlike noble houses, free traders do not customarily use "House" as part of their business name. Though most houses belong to a given political faction, not all houses are equally dedicated to that faction's goals. The two largest factions are the conservative old guard and the loyalist reformers. Whether old guard or reformist, the noble houses are all run by extended families.

House Chaozun is run by a group of old guard spinsters known as the Five Sisters. The house specializes in the sale of weapons and armor, and Throal's military is one of its chief customers.

House Garsun is the largest and richest of the noble houses, and many communities in Barsaive still associate the Name Garsun with stability and honesty; they remembered the name of the trading house through all the years of the Scourge. House leader Lomron is a popular figurehead of the old guard faction.

The remarkably successful **House Ludi** is run by a family dedicated to the Passion Chorrolis. This old guard house is notorious for tricky contracts and other practices that just fall short of fraud.

"Trust is the foundation" is the motto of **House Mikul**, a prosperous family that has always believed in the long view and prides itself on their honest and above-board approach to business.

A prime example of a trading house that withered during the Scourge is **House Pa'vas**, which spent their fortunes during the long night and recently sold its noble heritage and allowed a greedy trader to become house leader.

House Ueraven is the nemesis to the royal family and built its business empire on a trade monopoly with Iopos. However, the revelation that the Denairastas were responsible for the assassination of King Varulus III dealt a serious blow to House Ueraven's reputation.

The loyal reformist **House Byril'ah** maintains close ties to the king and specializes in the sale of luxury items such as sculptures, paintings, and jewelry. This house produced more than its share of philosophers, diplomats and politicians.

House Elcomi does little business outside of Throal nowadays. The reformist house remains a major force in Throal and is a prominent financier of ventures by many other reformist and old guard houses.

The rapidly expanding **House Neumani** is actively involved in building new trade routes and relies heavily on adepts and adventurers these days. Close friends of the royal family, the flashing swords of House Neumani are swift defenders of King Neden.

A quiet but staunch supporter of the king, **House Sarafica's** true motivation remains a mystery. House leader Zendes is remarkably young and has shown a talent for spotting and exploiting weaknesses in the competition.

The family of **House Yilwaz** decided to use its trading operations against the Therans, promoting anti-slavery agitators. Needless to say, House Yilwaz is more strident in its opposition to the Therans than the king himself.

On Trade and the Flow of Goods

Though many self-sufficient villages remain scattered throughout Barsaive's remote regions, trade has once again begun to generate wealth in most of the province. Since the emergence from the shelters, burgeoning trade has created both rich and poor and given rise to various standards of living ranging from squalid to wealthy.

The Mercantile Exploits of Torkel of Barsaive as recorded by Thelonius, scribe of Bartertown, on the First Day of Raquas, 1506 TH

['Tis truly a sad day, Thelonius, when a learned scribe such as yourself is reduced to recording the daily life of a common trader. But you have only yourself to blame, after all. And Bonecrusher cannot remain angry forever. In a few weeks the Swordmaster will calm down and surely understand when you explain you had no idea the young lady was his niece. In the meantime, where were we? Ah yes, Torkel.]

The beneficent merchant Torkel set out from the gates of Bartertown at dawn, leading a caravan of three camels, two oxen, swords and shields—a virtual cornucopia of fine merchandise …

[Yes, quite a "cornucopia"—one long sword; two shields; three dwarf-weave rugs; assorted spearheads; a week's worth of dwarf rations; a mold-covered old keg, the contents of which I cared not to learn; 27 copper pieces; and a weathered old troll war helm fashioned from the skull of a thundra beast. The trader seemed especially proud of this last item.]

By midday our caravan reached Larken, a small village in the foothills of the Throal Mountains. Several young children ran out to greet us as we arrived, and Torkel puffed out his chest like a victorious warrior returning from battle. A small crowd had gathered in the town square, bringing sheep, wool and cotton, pelts of exotic creatures, and other sundries to exchange. Torkel's spearheads and rugs attracted immediate attention, and after much haggling he had exchanged six of the dwarf points and one rug for a small espagra hide, two bolts of cotton, and a basket of fresh apples and walnuts from the orchards and hills outside of town. The villagers insisted we stay for lunch to celebrate our transaction.

[Torkel accepted immediately, apparently not the type to turn down a free meal, no matter how crude the cuisine.]

Afterward, the magnanimous merchant treated our hosts to a round of the "finest dwarf stout" in a display of his unending generosity …

[He had one of the crew pour the toast from the mysterious mold-covered keg. The villagers apparently didn't know the difference or were ashamed to admit they had never tasted the rare dwarf brew, for they quaffed the vile liquid as though it were fine t'skrang vinlo.]

… The remainder of the day passed uneventfully. We stopped at two other villages, where Torkel traded several more spearheads for incense, more fruit and nuts, and some primitive but not unpleasing jewelry.

By noon of the second day, we had reached one of the lush green valleys that surround the Serpent's upper tributaries. We followed the road, winding our way through the vineyards that lined the hillsides until we reached a settlement of dwarfs and trolls nestled along the river's edge. Torkel spent the rest of the day trading, and by evening he had exchanged the two oxen, the two remaining rugs, the bolts of cotton, and the rest of his spearheads for six large kegs of the valley's strong red wine.

Then, in yet another display of his uncommon generosity, Torkel treated your scribe, the caravan crew, and several of his dwarf and troll clients to a feast of roast pig at the local inn …

[Well, one could easily have mistaken the lavish repast for a display of generosity, until Torkel subjected his captive guests to an interminable discourse on the unrecognized importance of the merchant class in the life of the province. Some of my dinner mates had apparently heard it before, for they seemed to instinctively reach



for the wine jugs as soon as he raised his cup and launched into his address. By evening's end, all present—save the magnanimous merchant—wore the same droopy-eyed expression.]

… On the third day we followed the river south as it gradually widened. We continued along the well-worn path, the camels straining under the weight of the heavy wine casks, until we reached the small river port called New Parlainth. The town did not look very impressive at first, but then we came on the docks along the river's edge, where t'skrang rivermen had tied their paddlewheelers and set out their wares. The exquisite aromas of trikella, ustander, pestain, and other rare t'skrang spices filled the air, piles of spiced fish towered taller than a troll, finely detailed silks rippled in the breeze. Several of the boisterous lizard-men shouted greetings to Torkel, making offers of silver and gold coins, exotic clothing and jewelry, finely carved flutes, crying statues and chameleon rings, and other t'skrang magical novelties in exchange for his wine casks.

Torkel, cunning merchant that he is, only smiled and nodded. After he sent the crew off to secure the camels and their cargo for the night, he explained that he would let the demand for his wine casks grow until the next day, when they would fetch twice the price. Then we made our way to a riverside tavern, where he treated me to a feast that surpassed even the previous evening's abundance.

[I excused myself, citing fatigue from the morning's travel, when Torkel began asking one of the t'skrang dancers if she had ever contemplated the vital contribution to cultural exchange made by Barsaive's merchants.]

… At midmorning of the fourth day, Torkel departed the port of New Parlainth in triumph. In an amazing stroke of good fortune, he said, he had made the chance acquaintance of a t'skrang dancer the previous evening—a dancer whose uncle just happened to possess the last remaining stock of genuine t'skrang kalydospheres in New Parlainth! Unwilling to risk the chance that another buyer might snatch up the precious wares the next morning, he had cleverly concluded an agreement with the dancer that same evening and gained possession of the magical treasures for a mere six casks of wine, two shields, a sword, and assorted merchandise.

Thus our caravan departed the t'skrang river port, our camels laden with six hundred elemental water balls that change color when shaken …

—From the journal of Torkel,
caravan trader of Northern Barsaive

TRADE ON THE SERPENT RIVER

The t'skrang use their riverboats mainly for trade. These ships carry goods produced by t'skrang villages up and down the river, selling them to villages and towns on the fertile banks of the Serpent or to merchants, who buy them at docks along the river and carry them throughout Barsaive to sell at a profit.

The t'skrang owners of the goods sometimes travel with their merchandise, selling it themselves when the riverboat docks at a likely market. Sometimes merchants hire t'skrang to carry their goods to the other side of the river, a nearly impossible feat without a riverboat. Occasionally, the t'skrang crew purchases goods along their journey and sells those goods elsewhere, effectively acting as merchants.

Some crews without the patience for trade and careful bargaining turn to stealing from other riverboats. Piracy is not common along the entire Serpent, but certain stretches are regularly plagued by pirates.

… The first time I laid eyes upon the Serpent River, I watched one t'skrang riverboat attack another. The immense size of the Serpent had stunned me, and the strange vessels floating on its surface surprised me even more. A blue and green riverboat, smoke billowing from its two chimneys, moved upriver, its massive paddlewheel pushing it forward. Another ship, covered with gold and red, sailed downstream toward it. Suddenly the gold and red riverboat turned to starboard and unleashed a volley of fireballs from its fire cannons.

The red balls of fire, trailing plumes of flame behind them, arced over the intervening water toward the blue and green ship. Some of the fireballs crashed into the water, sending pillars of steam dozens of yards into the air. Others smashed into the upper decks of the riverboat, sending t'skrang sailors scrambling for buckets of water to quench the quickly growing fires. Their garments, sometimes a dozen colors of clothing scraps thrown on haphazardly, caught the sunlight and shimmered like iridescent flowers—green vests, red bandannas, wide-legged scarlet pants, and such. In the fiery light of their burning ship, their scales glowed bright emerald.

The blue and green ship turned to face the gold and red ship, smoke billowing thickly from its chimneys. As it charged forward, the red and gold ship continued to fire. However, because the blue and green ship faced the red and gold ship head-on, it offered a narrower target, and the fireballs fell to either side of it. When the second volley had passed, the blue and green ship turned hard to port. The red and gold ship could not fire, because the crew was still working hard to reload the fire cannons from the last volley. The green and blue ship, now almost on top of the red and gold ship, its starboard side lined up against the port side of the other ship, let loose its own barrage of shots. The fireballs slammed into the red and gold ship, sending flames racing along the upper decks.

Badly damaged from the fight, the red and gold ship wheeled away. On both ships, dozens of t'skrang armed with swords shook their fists at each other and swore oaths of vengeance. I know now that if the ships had passed just a few feet closer, sailors from both ships would have grabbed ropes and tried to swing over to the enemy ship to engage those crew members. But the red and gold ship turned around and headed toward the shore. The captain of the blue and green ship, not willing to risk additional damage to her craft, continued upriver.

—From the journal of J'Role the Honorable Thief

On Spiced Fish

The backbone of the t'skrang livelihood is a specially prepared fish that only they produce. Though the subtleties of taste and texture vary from village to village, this delicacy is always in demand. The t'skrang catch fish from the Serpent using elaborate mazes of nets strung across the riverbed, usually between two village towers. The nets trap any fish that swims into them, because all directions within the net maze lead to dead ends.

Every few hours t'skrang fishermen and women work their way along the nets and harvest the trapped fish, gathering them in large rope sacks. The t'skrang designed the nets to capture fish of a certain size; those small enough to escape simply grow big enough to be caught later.

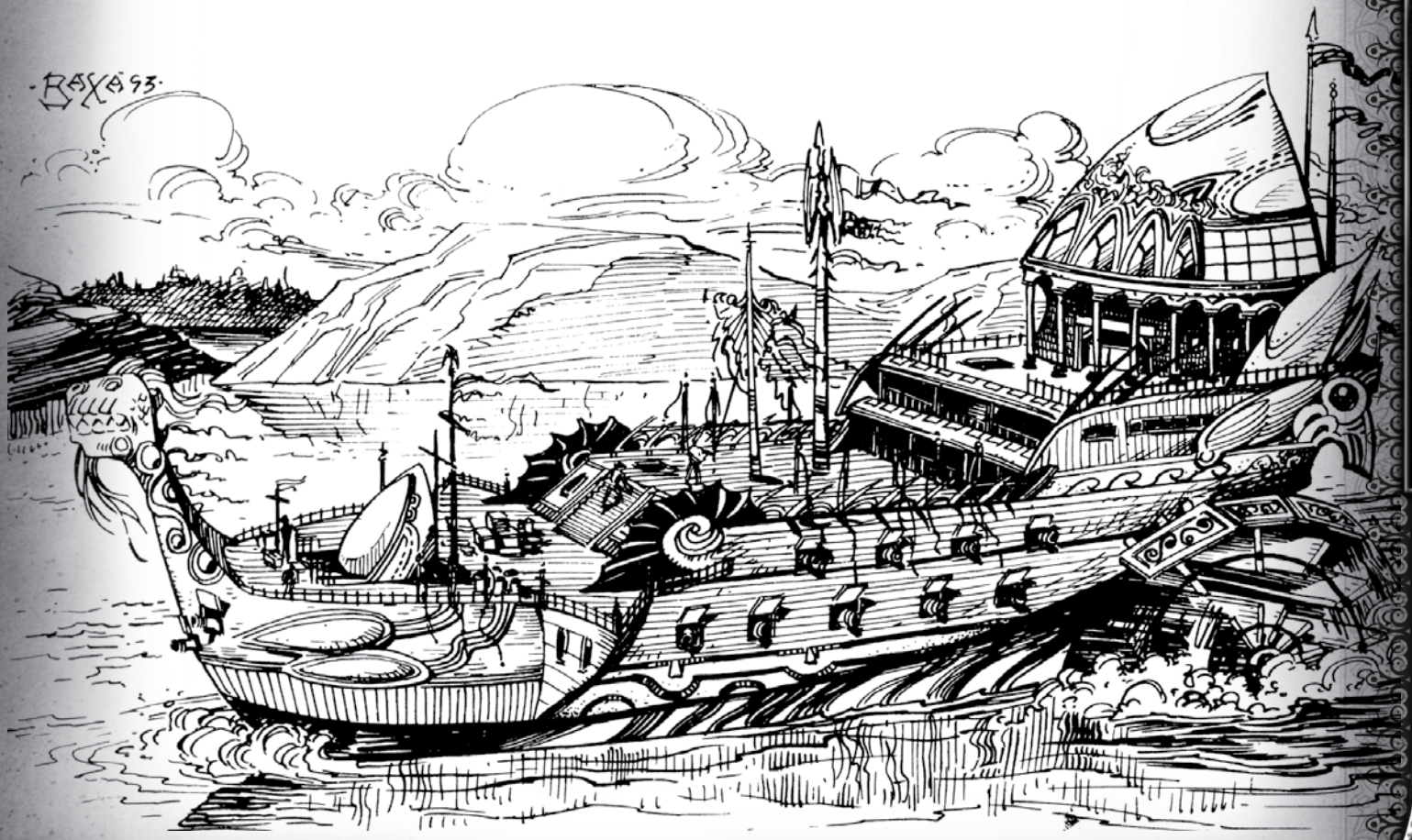
Every member of the village helps to prepare the fish. The secret t'skrang recipes use unique spices collected from the river bottom, and both spices and recipes differ from village to village. Preparations combine spices with magic, creating a mouth-watering delicacy that retains its taste and freshness anywhere from two weeks to two months.

On many occasions, usually as a guest at the court of King Varulus III, I have had the pleasure of eating fish prepared by the t'skrang, and I believe it is the most wonderful food I have ever been privileged to taste. Ork scorchers and other bandits often attack caravans rumored to carry t'skrang fish, simply to savor that delicacy. Vicious rumors allege that the t'skrang spices and magic actually make the fish addictive; the t'skrang vehemently deny this, and I refuse to believe it.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

Though t'skrang often fight among themselves and steal from one another, no circumstance could ever prompt a t'skrang to reveal the secrets of preparing fish. Such an offense is punishable by death according to t'skrang law, but this threat is a mere formality. The t'skrang possess too much racial pride and loyalty, and need the support of their fellows too much, to ever betray their own people in this way. The t'skrang willingly sell the spices harvested from the plants that grow on the river bottom; these spices are among their most profitable trade goods.

The plants yield leaves and seeds that the t'skrang prepare in several forms, using some to produce their prepared fish and selling the rest. Though the spices alone do not produce the same extraordinary taste one finds in the t'skrang fish, cooks throughout Barsaive consider t'skrang spices the finest available.



CHAPTER FOUR

PLACES OF LEGEND AND PERIL

I somehow earned the distinct privilege of compiling the information on travel in Barsaive. I have always enjoyed traveling, even under the most difficult conditions, and working on this part of our book gave me the opportunity to travel (free of charge, I must add!) by land, water, and air. Researching by doing rather than by taking someone else's word for the experience may sound like a sensible method of discovering the truth of any given matter, but not all of my fellow scholars enjoyed this luxury. For example, Merrox himself did not have the opportunity to visit Thera to research that chapter of this guide.

Describing Barsaive's legendary and perilous places brought me many delights, especially the opportunity to study at length the original maps of our province drawn by Shantaya Nightstar. Using these maps, exquisite in every detail, made my task much simpler and more satisfying. I now understand why travelers over all of Barsaive praise the work of this great explorer. Legends say that Shantaya ventured beyond the borders of Barsaive and mapped those regions with equal care and thoroughness. If this legend is true, these maps have a home in some other place than the Royal Library of Throal. According to the same legend, Shantaya is a descendant of the ancient elven kingdom of Shosara, proclaimed forever sundered from the Elven Court centuries ago by Queen Alachia's predecessor, Queen Failla. If Shosara still exists, perhaps Shantaya's legendary maps reside there? It is my devout hope that Merrox will send me in search of these additional maps as my next task.

• Thom Edrull, Archivist and Scribe of the Hall of Records •

Travel is an unending concern for all merchants, traders, explorers, and adventurers who live and ply their trades in Barsaive. Even with our command of magic, travel in Barsaive remains a perilous task at best. Villages, town, and cities lie far apart, and traveling from one place to another often requires long journeys. The weather, landscape, plant and animal life force travelers to be cautious, as does the hazard of encountering a Horror. Those who must travel across Barsaive can choose to do so by land, by air, or by river.

A DISCOURSE ON MAPS

To reach their destinations and avoid dangerous areas, travelers over land need a map. The province of Barsaive covers great distances, but all maps of the province show many areas left unexplored. In addition, the Scourge changed the land drastically by obliterating many towns and cities, forcing some to rebuild elsewhere and destroying many landmarks such as rivers, lakes, forests, and so on. Even the famous voyage of the *Earthdawn* made no provision for mapping Barsaive, and so no reliable maps have existed since the Scourge. Most maps only show the best-known landmarks still in existence, such as the larger mountain ranges, the ruins of Parlainth, the Theran outpost at Sky Point, the Serpent River, Death's Sea, the great cities of Iopos, Travar, Jerris, and Kratas, and the Kingdom of Throal. Some more costly maps also show the main trade routes across the province, but most of these maps are commissioned by traders and few can be found for sale.

Most mapmakers in Barsaive draw their maps for use with a device called Shantaya's sextant. Shantaya Nightstar was an elven Troubadour who traveled the province and mapped it in the years before the Scourge. To make her work easy for others to use and copy, she developed a device to chart distance and bearings using the maps she drew. By aligning the sextant with certain landmarks and using the constellations on the margins of the map, a traveler can determine the bearing and distance in days walking or riding to almost any place in Barsaive. Also, by sighting the stars at night with the sextant, a traveler can determine his location. The most prominent landmarks on Shantaya's maps include Throal, Sky Point, Blood Wood (Named Wyrm Wood on her map), the Death's Sea, and the Dragon Mountains.

ON TRAVELING OVER LAND

Most Barsaivians travel over land either on foot or mounted. In the interests of safety and to avoid losing their way, land travelers usually follow roads and established trade routes.

Those who journey by land normally travel for eight to ten hours each day, including stops for rest and meals. Travel during daylight is much preferred. Travel by night increases the chance of becoming lost or of succumbing to attacks by fearsome creatures and Horrors.

ON DETERMINING SAFE ROUTES AND PLACES

Because most of Barsaive remains unexplored, travelers with legitimate itineraries consider only the areas immediately surrounding most cities and a few established trading routes to be safe. Accidentally wandering away from these safe areas or deliberately traveling off the main paths can prove hazardous.

Small villages and farming towns surround most major cities, many no further than three hours' ride away. These towns supply the cities with foodstuffs in exchange for protection, usually regular patrols and quick defense by available armed forces, and favor-

able trade agreements. As the towns lie close to the city, brief trips between the city and the farming communities are common. Heavily settled and well-protected relative to the rest of Barsaive, the land between major cities and outlying villages offers travelers safe passage, but even these areas contain desolate and dangerous spots.

Other safe areas follow Barsaive's well-traveled trade routes, which connect great cities with trading ports along the Serpent River. The landmarks for these routes change occasionally, based on the most recent travelers' tales of their encounters. However, every trade route crosses unexplored regions; travelers who stray as little as a thousand yards off the trade route may stumble into unmapped regions and areas unexplored even before the Scourge.

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… We were three days out of Travar when the storm hit us. Gray clouds had been drifting across the sky all morning, and by mid-afternoon they had formed a black mass that blotted out the sun. The torrent began with a crack of thunder that reverberated across the plains, and within minutes rain was falling so heavily I could barely make out the man in front of me. Soon the trail became no more than a pool of mud, but the merchant insisted we keep moving, so we pushed on blindly. When the wagons could no longer negotiate the knee-deep muck, we drew them into a circle and stopped to wait out the tempest. Hours passed before the rains finally subsided and the horizon revealed itself again.

"Aurance! Aurance, we've lost the trail! Damn the Passions! We've lost the …"

The scorchers ripped through us like the claws of a mighty dragon, scattering the wagons and sending sprays of crimson and severed limbs into the air. Guttural war cries and the pitiful screams of dying men blended into a horrible music, and when the man beside me fell to the ground, clutching the spear shaft protruding from his chest, I grabbed his sword and began swinging wildly at any movement within range.

I cannot tell you how long I carried on so or how long that terrible night lasted, for the next thing I recall was waking to the sound of vultures tearing at the corpses that lay all around me …

—From the diary of Aurance, Swordmaster of Baku

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On the Recognition of Distance Markers

As trade routes proliferated across Barsaive, King Varulus III saw the wisdom of marking those routes used most often by merchants traveling to and from Throal. These markers would also help travelers find the dwarf kingdom.

The route markers look like small stone monoliths standing some six to seven feet high. Triangular and pointed at the top, each side of the post shows the distance in days' travel on foot and by horse to Throal and other significant cities in Barsaive, such as Iopos, Travar, Haven, and Urupa. The markers also bear the symbol of the Kingdom of Throal. Travelers can use these markers in conjunction with maps to plot distance and direction.

On the Perils of Land Travel

In addition to the expected hazards of traveling outside areas considered safe, land travel in Barsaive holds other dangers. Trouble can also befall the traveler who loses his way, encounters Theran slavers, runs across hostile villages, or meets a band of ork scorchers.

Regarding the Hazards of Getting Lost

Any number of circumstances can cause travelers to lose their way. A fierce storm might force them to travel in the wrong direction, or a small caravan might lose its bearings while making a detour to avoid a band of ork scorchers. Because so much of Barsaive's landscape changed beyond recognition during the Scourge, even the newly installed route markers may not prevent travelers from getting lost, especially if they wander through areas inadequately mapped before the Scourge.

Losing one's way poses enormous risks for the unlucky traveler. Adventurers may roam certain areas of Barsaive for years without encountering civilized settlements, and many small towns and villages are so isolated that they know nothing of the nearest village, let alone landmarks or trade routes.

On the Dangers of Trespass Among Strangers

Though the people of many kaers and citadels chose to come out of hiding long ago, and have reestablished their villages and towns under the bright light of day, travelers can still find sealed kaers and citadels. The residents of some are dead, while others still live in fear, trapped by Horrors or unaware that the Scourge is over.

Many small towns and villages rebuilt near their kaers, using their former homes as a shelters in emergencies or for extra storage. Most communities have simply let their kaers fall into disrepair, however, hoping that memories of the Scourge will disintegrate along with the kaers' walls. Most citadels have removed the domes that shielded them from the Horrors, and these proud castles and strongholds stand as they did before the Scourge. Despite the people of Barsaive's bold steps into the new world, however, the fear brought by the Scourge still lives in their hearts.

Between their terror of being Horror-touched and their isolation, the people of small villages and towns regard strangers with suspicion. If travelers wish to remain safe, they must understand the reasons for the hostility shown them and be prepared to answer probing questions with politeness and patience.

On the Predations of Theran Slavers

Travelers in the hinterlands of Barsaive face a danger unique to that region. The Therans are known to hire mercenary bands



which roam the countryside, capturing unwary travelers and hapless townspeople from the surrounding villages to serve as slaves. Many of these pass through the slave market of Servalen, close to the fortress of *Triumph*.



My son,

As your mother informed you, I am not pleased with your decision to form your own caravan and establish a trade route to the t'skrang of Lake Vors in partnership with this guide you call Welis. I can already hear you mutter that you led three caravans from Kratas to Bartertown and are well-versed in the ways and means of commerce, and doubtless you will tell me that your friend Welis has great knowledge of the pathways through the mountains of Tylon and the plains beyond. Well, my son, your fine words matter nothing, and I shall tell you why.

The route to Kratas that you have so bravely traversed has been well established for more than twenty years. Posting houses and towns dot the route. An injured man can quickly be delivered into the hands of a questor of Garlen, not left to die in a desolate spot along the road. Break a wagon's axle and a wheelwright arrives in half a day. Lame beasts can easily be exchanged for fit and hale animals, and the lances of Throal hold scorchers at bay.

Nothing of this ilk exists in the wilds that you wish to travel. You will need to live on what you carry and protect yourself from man, beast, and Horror. I question you on the thoroughness of your preparations. Have you food for a hundred days, a questor of Garlen, huttawas, horses, herders, drivers, guards led by Warriors of at least the Second Circle? And will the profit you make exceed the cost?

I also question your guide, Welis. Does he have a sextant of Shantaya? Does his rutter contain knowledge of the land as it is, or only as it was in the past? Can he find Vestrial at his darkest height even with the sun overhead, or must he sight the star at night? Does he know which scorcher tribes will grant safe passage for a flask of white water crystals, and which tribes desire blood for their dark magics?

You are well beyond the age of consent, so I cannot demand that you give up this foolishness. But listen to my questions and answer them truthfully.

May Chorrolis guide you in your paths.

—Letter from the merchant Dollwan to his son

On Ork Scorchers

Ork scorchers are bands of nomads that travel the lands of Barsaive. Divided between cavalry and raiders, ork scorchers travel mounted on all manner of beasts, including horses, thundra beasts, and large, horned animals called *stajian*. Most ork scorcher warriors are also skilled adepts, capable of performing complex acrobatic feats and specialized attacks while riding. Both types of scorchers regard each other with deep animosity. The cavalry scorchers find the undisciplined, randomly violent lifestyle of the raiders embarrassing, partly because many Barsaivians make no distinction between the raiders and scorcher cavalries. As for the raiders, they detest what they consider the affectations of discipline and directed violence the cavalry scorchers have adopted.

Scorcher cavalry and raiders both sprang from orks who escaped slavery in the centuries before the Scourge. These escaped slaves banded together into small tribes, living as nomads in order to avoid recapture. Many orks found themselves surprisingly skilled at taming wild beasts and used this gift to create herds of animals trained to carry the tribes on their travels. The ork tribes raided isolated villages and farms for enough supplies to keep them going from day to day, sneaking in to take what they needed when discovery seemed least likely. As the tribes grew larger, these raids grew bolder and more devastating to the victims, because the orks' need for supplies became greater.

As the orks grew stronger, they began to believe that they could resist any attempts to return them to slavery. Their supply raids changed from desperate acts of survival to punishment inflicted on all other Namegiver races for the injustice the orks had suffered. As the centuries passed, even this justification gave way to the sheer pleasure of destruction and the desire to deprive the privileged of their prized possessions. The ork culture became a constant round of violence and wild celebration of successful, devastating raids. Their lightning attacks cut a wide swath of death and destruction, and their victims called them scorchers for the barren lives they left behind.

During the Scourge, each scorcher tribe established a separate kaer. No longer able to perform glorious feats in battle, the scorchers kept their traditions alive through legends of their great heroes. The first scorchers to leave the kaers found little worth raiding, but immediately took up the lives of their ancestors and waited for Barsaive to rebuild.

Only recently, most of the scorcher tribes have united under the leadership of Krathis Gron. The orks have begun constructing several permanent settlements in southwestern Barsaive, including the fortress city at Claw Ridge to commemorate the founding of new Cara Fahd. The young nation's borders are spreading, and have absorbed several of the region's existing towns and villages, including a few Theran-dominated settlements. The absorption of the latter has already led to several battles and skirmishes between Theran and ork forces.

On Scorcher Cavalry

Shortly after the united people of Barsaive defeated the Theran Empire and ended the Theran War, the leader of the Thunderers

scorcher tribe decided that his people should earn their way in the world by offering their finely honed fighting skills to other groups. Though the tribe resisted, their leader had seen the coming importance of trade to Barsaive, and eventually prevailed. Other tribes followed in his footsteps; they abandoned raiding and instead formed cavalries, selling their skills to the highest bidder. From their earliest days, some ork cavalries lived by strict rules that pledged each rider's loyalty to one side of a conflict, while others changed sides from one week to the next. This dichotomy remains in our own day.

Ork cavalries range in size from ten scorchers to 100, built around groupings of nine riders and one sergeant. Overall command of larger forces falls to a captain.

Individual cavalries identify themselves with symbols such as bloody teeth, torn pennants, or bloody horns affixed to their shields, breastplates, or helmets. This particular custom is one they share with the scorcher raiders, though in general the cavalries wear well-kept armor and maintain their weapons in good repair. As they travel, they often adopt the clothing styles of the towns and cities they encounter, adding robes, fine leather boots, and other luxuries to their wardrobes.

Only a rare few scorchers read and write, though many units contain adepts whose Disciplines include this talent. Because an ork leader may not have this ability, contracts are sealed verbally after the conclusion of negotiations. The cavalries offer a unique service, and so most prospective allies agree to even the most outrageous demands.

Because they love combat above all other things, scorcher cavalries usually attach themselves to frontline troops and wait for the first volleys of enemy arrows and spells to cross the field. Then, armed with thick lances and riding their powerful mounts, the orks race across the battlefield to engage the enemy, running down anything in their paths. The mere sight of charging ork cavalry is often enough to break the opposing army.

Families travel with the cavalries, taking care of such day-to-day concerns as repairing weapons, cooking food, and tending the wounded. Once a cavalry has fulfilled its contract, the riders and their families camp outside the walls of major cities, using this excellent vantage point to sniff out political conflicts that might provide more work. Whenever they learn of battle brewing, the cavalries break camp and ride to the battlefield. Because all cavalries find work in the same way, the cavalry that arrives first has the best chance of winning the assignment. When work is particularly scarce, cavalries fight each other for contracts.

Cavalry units obey their own code of law. Warriors by profession, they treat other warriors as they themselves wish to be treated. Prisoners taken are held until the end of the conflict, when they are ransomed or simply returned to their army. Anything of value captured during battle goes to the winner. Once hired, most orks throw themselves completely behind the side that is paying them. Though some can be bribed to change sides, most scorcher cavalries units only abandon their employers when ordered to engage in suicidal attacks, or if the conflict escalates beyond the terms of the original contract. Should this happen, employers who refuse to renegotiate will swiftly lose their fine ork soldiers.

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… As we traveled across the lands near the ancient kingdom of Landis, we came upon a massive ork tribe camped for the night. Spotted by their sentries, we were escorted to the leader's quarters, where we met Titanstroke Greybeard. He cordially invited us to rest with the Thunderers scorcher tribe. That night we heard many legends of ork battles against Theran armies in which Theran slavers fared worst at the hands of the Thunderers.

Their terrible fierceness against slavers has its origins in our distant past, when orks were the only Namegiver race enslaved …

—From the journal of Freestone's Fighters, 1505 TH

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On Scorcher Raiders

Ork raiders live in much the same primitive way that their ancestors did before the Scourge drove them into the kaers. They take pride in their shabby, dirty clothes, their inability to read and write, and the constant squabbling that goes on within and between tribes. They choose victims (whether persons, caravans, or communities) to raid based on known or rumored wealth and treat their victims according to how well they are dressed. Those who look wealthier are more likely to be killed or tortured. Balancing this savagery, the raiders often help the poorer people in society, sometimes aiding rebellions against cruel, wealthy merchants or slave owners.

The raiders travel the land in tribes numbering from 50 to 300 orks. Like the cavalry scorchers, their prominent warriors are riders. Their nomadic life with its constant travel allows them to take what they want from anyone they meet. They rarely stop for more than seven days, pitching their conical tents and feasting and dancing around huge fires until dawn.

Fierce warriors, the scorcher raiders take pride in their physical prowess and skill in combat. Even their games often involve hitting, biting, clawing, and other physical attacks. One popular pastime, *tussdi*, requires players to move a ball (made from an animal's skull wrapped in cloth) up and down a playing field. The players use heavy poles measuring some six feet in length to manipulate the ball, but can also use the poles to hit anything else on the field, including other players. *Tussdi* is bloody and sometimes fatal, but the raiders laugh throughout the game. In a well-played game, every player suffers serious bruises, and serious wounds are seen as a badge of honor.

Most raiders wear furs and unfinished leathers, decorating their clothes and hair with bones and feathers. They wield crude weapons and often their first goal in a battle or raid is to acquire better ones.

On the Joys and Dangers of River Travel

Those who must travel great distances often arrange for transport down the Serpent River that crosses the length of Barsaive. Because few ordinary citizens own boats, most travelers must buy passage on a t'skrang riverboat.

At this writing, passage on a t'skrang riverboat costs an average of five silver pieces per person per day. Most ship captains demand full payment before beginning the voyage, though some accept partial payment in advance with the remainder due upon reaching the traveler's destination. Though the captain of my ship did not do so with me, I saw her charge certain passengers more than the average price, then encourage the passenger to bargain for the sheer joy of the exchange. Mounted travelers can arrange to transport their mounts on the same craft, but must pay an additional five silver pieces per day per animal.

Travelers determined to reach their destination but short on ready coin may pay for their passage by working as a crew member during the voyage. I traveled this way, wishing to help my t'skrang hosts with the work of the ship. Each day that a passenger works for the crew earns him an average of three silver pieces, though pay rates are negotiable based on the person's skills. Instead of paying coin, some captains simply exchange passage for the traveler's time and labor. As I did, a passenger can usually work off most or all of the cost of his trip in this manner.

Swift and riverworthy, t'skrang riverboats cover vast distances in the sixteen hours per day that they travel, stopping all along

the river to deliver and take on goods and passengers. Most riverboats sail through the night without stopping, laying over at ports until morning only if night sailing would take the boat past its destination.

Concerning Acts of Piracy

Pirates also travel the Serpent River, attacking riverboats that carry passengers or any kind of cargo. Passengers who help fight off these marauders often receive a partial refund of their passage payment from a grateful captain.

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… Gyllina and I set out this morning aboard the Pride of Upandal. *Our captain, Yrogerg, sniggered when I offered to lend the crew a hand, and so after a quick breakfast of the spiced fish for which the t'skrang are so rightly famous, I climbed to the top deck of the Pride to better enjoy the beautiful morning. From my perch, the dark blue waters of the Serpent seemed to dance with a life of their own, and I began to understand the almost mystical awe the river inspires among the river folk.*

Suddenly, the roar of fire cannon drowned out the gentle splashing of the Pride's paddlewheel. Startled, I peered over the edge of the deck and saw the t'skrang crew swinging about on the Pride's pole lines, their swords flashing as they grappled with the crew of a broken down riverboat that had pulled alongside our craft.

My heart nearly stopped when I saw Gyllina in the clutches of a pirate.

"Val! Val!" she cried out as the lizard-man leapt to the pirate vessel.

I grabbed the nearest pole line and was halfway to the paddlewheeler when a t'skrang tail caught me in the side of the head and I fell into the wine-dark waters of the Serpent …

—From the journal of Val, Troubadour of Klestra

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Of the Wonders of Airship Travel

Because of the difficulty and expense of arranging airship passage, people only travel across Barsaive in this manner when they must reach their destination swiftly. Travel aboard airships can be unpleasant; most lack space for passengers, and airship captains and crews are rarely disposed kindly toward strangers aboard their vessels.

Most airships in Barsaive belong to the troll crystal raiders. Small and swift, these ships are made for combat and raiding, giving the captains even less reason to want the burden of passengers. Travelers who find troll raiders willing to give them passage should negotiate the terms of travel with extreme caution. Ideally, travelers seeking airship passage should track down the owner of a galley, most of which belong to trading companies. A galley captain will welcome passengers with less distaste than his fellow captains and flies his ship into fewer perilous situations.

Speed is air travel's greatest advantage. In the course of sixteen hours, an airship can travel a distance of six days' ride on a mount. Most airships do not fly through the night, except in battles or raids. Airships carrying passengers rarely go raiding unless the passengers agree to fight for the ship as part of the terms of passage.

On the Perils of Air Travel

The greatest danger of traveling by airship is the risk of encountering crystal raiders and Theran slave ships. The crystal raiders fly small, maneuverable, and well-armed ships that they call drakkars. Though the trolls most often raid near their homes in the Twilight Peaks, they sometimes range as far as one hundred days' ride away. The huge stone slave ships of the Theran Empire prey most often over the Southeast reaches of Barsaive, capturing slaves and then ferrying them back to the Theran stronghold at Sky Point or to the nearby Theran-controlled city of Vivane. Theran slave ships often attack other airships as well as people on the ground in their quest to capture slaves for the empire.



… I did not see my first airship until I was thirty years old. It was a Theran fortress—a castle made of shimmering white stone that could fly just beneath the clouds, then land on the ground and serve as a fortress. A true magical wonder, it was.

Like everyone in Barsaive, I had heard of the troll airships, but they were said to have the shape of seagoing vessels. This Theran marvel was a gleaming pile of stone upon stone, built into chambers and corridors and stairways without number. And still, for all its vastness and heaviness, it floated on the wind as lightly as a feather.

The wonder held me even though I first saw the ship as a helpless captive—but the wonder lasted only until Overgovernor Pavelis put me aboard a mining ship. Shackled to a hard stone rowers' bench in the dimly lit belly of the mining vessel, I no longer found the magic so splendid. The magic that propelled the vessel drew on the life of the slaves to keep the ship aloft as we searched the sky for pockets of elemental air. To this day, I hear the sound of the rowing drum in my nightmares. Intended to help us keep time, by some dreadful magic it kept us rowing far beyond our strength. Even those who had died on their benches kept rowing, rowing, rowing.

Thankfully a troll raid cut short my time aboard the slave ship. The crystal raiders also use life force to power their vessels, but they know the air currents above Barsaive well. Their light raiding ships darted quickly and easily through the sky, surrounding the Theran mining vessel like gnats around a dying crakbill.

—From the journal of J'Role the Honorable Thief

On Crystal Raiders

For centuries, countless troll clans have claimed the Twilight Peaks as home. The tall mountain range put welcome distance between the trolls and the other Namegiving races and offered them deep caves and caverns in which to live. Before the Scourge, the Twilight Peaks abounded in life. Rich flora covered the mountains, even above the tree line in other areas of similar elevation. Careless of their prosperity, the troll clans gave little thought to farming and agriculture, neglecting the Passion Jaspree in favor of Thystonius, Passion of conflict.

The crystal raiders gained their Name from their use of weapons and armor carved from living crystal mined from the high mountain peaks they call home. These dazzling weapons and armor of solid crystal weigh far too much to be wielded by anyone with less strength than a troll, and the raiders use their unique crystal armaments with great skill. The sight of a ship full of trolls waving crystal-edged axes, spears and swords; clad in crystal armor; and protected by crystal shields gleaming in the reddish light of the Twilight Peaks can strike fear into the heart of the most seasoned solider or veteran air sailor.

Few other races possessed the brute strength required to wield and wear such heavy, ornate items, and the trolls took pride in their unique weapons. They also built drakkars—long, wooden airships in which they sailed around the mountain peaks, fighting great battles against their own kind in the sweeping mountain slopes. These trolls were not the raiders we know today, who fight others as well as their own.

Like every other place in Barsaive, the Scourge changed the Twilight Peaks almost beyond recognition. Most of the trolls survived the Scourge buried deep in their mountain kaers, but their land fared far worse. Where once trees and grass, and fruits and vegetables grew wild, the Horrors left only barren ground and gray stone. The surviving trolls, inexperienced at working the land, have so far proved unable (some say unwilling) to re-plant the vegetation that flourished in earlier days. Instead of learning to use elemental earth and mundane tools for farming, they began to raid surrounding towns and villages in their drakkars, taking the food and supplies they needed.

Over the past 90 or so years, the trolls of the Twilight Peaks developed a new culture based on raiding and created customs and rituals to support their changed way of life. Their trollmoots have grown larger, some two hundred to a thousand strong. Though such numbers give the trolls an advantage in their constant warring, they have grown too numerous for the Twilight Peaks; the mountains cannot sustain the number of trolls attempting to live off the barren landscape. This crowding only worsens the lack of food and supplies and drives the trolls out on ever-increasing raids.

Crystal raider trollmoots vary greatly in temperament and fighting styles. They still fight among themselves in the mountains, but are as likely to attack Theran airships, farming communities, and caravans. Some, such as the Bloodlores, are the most ruthless of beings. The Stoneclaws, by contrast, are rumored to have offered shelter to those less fortunate than themselves during the Theran War.

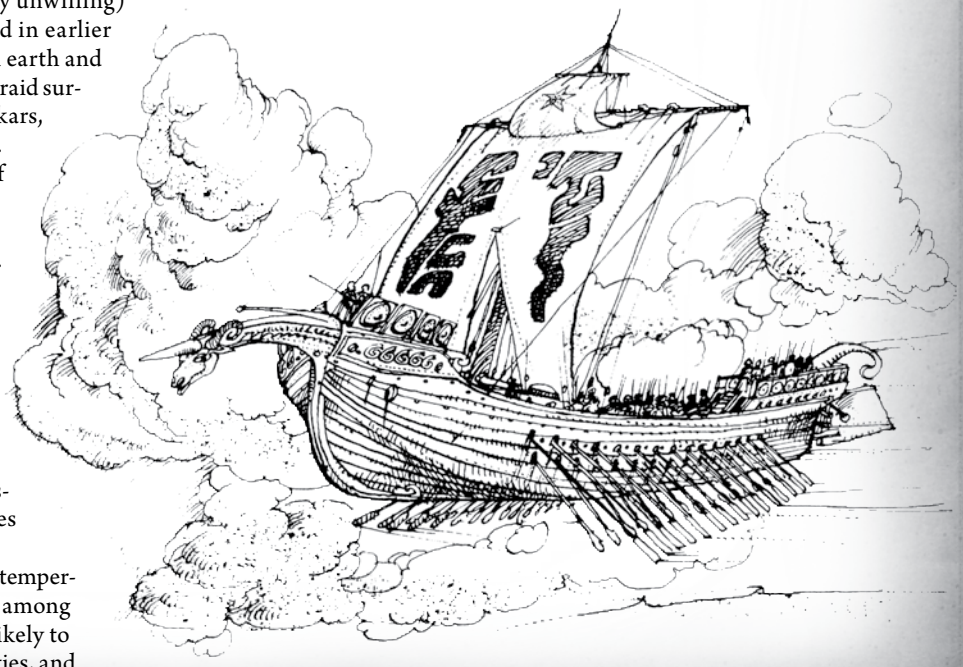
On the Customs of the Crystal Raiders

Crystal raider society is organized around the trollmoot, two or more troll clans that have banded together to share their lands, labor, and the rewards of raids. When two or more clan chiefs agree to join forces, the clans perform the *Ritual of the Trollmoot*, a rite of blood magic that requires the clan leaders to swear a blood promise to one another, forever proclaiming the loyalty of their two clans. Each trollmoot controls a large region of territory centered around its *alheim,* or moothome, which is used for meetings between the chiefs of the clans, as well as for meetings between different moots. Meeting another trollmoot at their moothome, however, acknowledges that moot's superiority and power, and so most meetings between trollmoots convene in a neutral place.

The many different trollmoots share a few common traditions. A chieftain leads each crystal raider trollmoot, usually the troll most feared by the other trolls. Anyone who believes he or she can best the chieftain may challenge him or her to one-on-one combat. The chieftain sets the terms of victory; most often, the battle continues until one troll falls down, bleeds, falls unconscious, or dies. The challenger chooses the method of combat, barehanded or armed. If the fight is set to continue only until one of the trolls is knocked down, the combatants usually forswear weapons. However, many challengers choose to fight with weapons regardless of the victory conditions in the hope that they can slay the reigning chieftain and take his or her place.

Work and danger fill the lives of crystal raider trollmoots. When they desire entertainment, they mount celebrations that rival any others in Barsaive for energy and frenzy. The mountain trolls love to move, whether in combat or while dancing around the great bonfires they build. In their wild dancing they call on Floranuus, Passion of revelry, victory, and motion.

Traditionally, all trollmoots treat each other as rivals, constantly raiding and fighting over both territory and wealth. Some trollmoots choose to focus their efforts on targets other than their trollmoot neighbors, but the longstanding tradition of interclan raiding still continues. Despite this apparent lack of interest in



cooperation, a complex system of alliances, oaths, and debts of honor bind the trollmoots together in a firmly tangled web that makes it all but impossible to consider one trollmoot separately from the others.

Crystal Raider Ships

Trollmoot activities center on airships and raiding. Crystal raiders use drakkars, the smallest type of wooden airships in Barsaive. These ships boast ornately decorated hulls, finely carved with runes by clan raiders. Narrow caves near the trollmoot's village serve as concealed mooring places; within them, the trolls care for and repair their swift vessels.

The chieftain of the trollmoot appoints a captain for each drakkar the trollmoot owns. The captain of the ship commands the crew of the vessel and makes decisions whenever the chieftain cannot bespeak the ship. For his own ship, the chieftain chooses a *vig* (second-in-command), ensuring a swift and smooth transfer of command should the chieftain die in battle. A few of the prouder warlords refuse to do this, annoyed by the suggestion that they might not survive a fight. Everyone else on the airship serves as crew, works the oars, or joins the warriors who will strike first. These fortunates sit in the center of the boat, swords in hand, ready to engage in combat at a single word.

The trolls left behind are either too young or too old for combat; sometimes they stay behind because the clan does not have enough airships to hold them. These members of the trollmoot build weapons, make repairs, and care for the young.

On the Place of *Newot*s in Society

Over the past decades, the crystal raiders began abducting people from the towns, villages, and ships they raided. These prisoners, called *newot*s, prepare food and perform other menial tasks for the trollmoot. Escape is difficult. Even trolls find it difficult to scale the Twilight Peaks, and a *newot* who escapes one trollmoot faces likely capture by another trollmoot during the climb down to the foot of the mountains.

The crystal raiders make a sharp distinction between their taking of *newot*s and the Therans' taking of slaves, though only they understand the difference. They base their claim on the fact that the Therans trade and sell slaves, while the trolls capture *newot*s only for their own use. They consider the *newot*s members of their community, albeit members with no power, authority, or respect within the trollmoot.

A *newot* who survives the rigorous life of the trollmoot long enough may be formally invited by its chieftain to join the trollmoot as a full member. If the *newot* accepts the invitation, he or she undergoes the initiation rites of an adolescent troll. If the initiate survives the rituals, he or she receives all the rights of a member of the trollmoot.



In truth, the distinction between newots and slaves eludes most scholars. Of course, few scholars would dare openly say so for fear of angering a crystal raider.

— Jerriv Forrim, Scribe and Scholar of the Library of Throal

On Crystal Weapons and Armor

Besides being master craftsmen of their drakkar airships, the crystal raiders produce some of the most extraordinary weapons and armor in all of Barsaive, perhaps in all of the world. It is from these trappings of war that they take their name, which suits them better than any other. Though the raiders also use conventional arms made of metal and leather, a great many wield swords and spears made of blue-tinted crystal or wear armor thickly encrusted with jagged crystal shards.

The trolls cannot use natural crystal alone to produce such weapons and armor, because they would shatter during combat. Instead, they carve these beautiful but deadly weapons from crystals native to the Twilight Peaks, and then lace them with elemental earth to make them as strong as metal.

The Twilight Peaks offer two resources that make such craftsmanship possible. In deep caverns at the heart of the mountains lie a great supply of crystals called ice stones, so named because they are cold to the touch, and a rich supply of elemental earth. The caverns remain largely unexplored and unsettled, for they are rife with strange and dangerous creatures from the elemental plane of earth. The raiders, fierce and eager for combat at almost all other times, make expeditions into the caverns with uncharacteristic timidity. Though they greatly desire the treasures contained therein, they also believe that they are trespassing by intruding into these cares.

... The entire moot came out to see us off, the little ones gathering in the shadows of the mighty airships as I had done only a few years before. The moot elders, grizzled old men and women proudly bearing the scars of long-ago raids, bade farewell to their battle-girded sons and daughters with the traditional admonition to "Return victorious—or draped across your shield."

At the deep, rich sound of a b'ruar, fashioned from the horn of a thundra beast, we 500 warriors formed a column. A second bellowing call sent us marching toward the drakkars. We moved as a great terrible beast, bristling with the gleaming points of crystal-tipped spears and swords. Others wielded finely-wrought battle-axes fitted with ice-stone heads the size of thundra skulls. Still others carried flails and maces, laced with elemental earth for strength. Some even wore elaborate helms and armor of jagged crystal, and all bore large ice-stone shields that flashed in the harsh mountain sun like dragon scales.

As the last warriors boarded the drakkars, the crowd fell silent. Then the slow, steady beat of spears against shields announced the beginning of the h'kradt, the ancient raider ritual. Slowly, the beat grew louder and faster until it grew into a thunder that filled the sky.

The crowd answered with war cries and cheers. Then, as the last echoes of the h'kradt reverberated through the mountain passes, the drakkars of the Stoneclaws rose toward the clouds …

—From the journal of Zurc of the Stoneclaws

Crystal weapons and armor offer the same protection in battle as metal weapons or armor and seldom have magical properties. Few other than trolls use them, as it takes troll-like strength to wield such heavy armaments. However, a troll Weaponsmith occasionally creates a truly extraordinary weapon, by accident or design. Such items that we know to exist include an enchanted crystal sword that inflicts more harm than any other sword of comparable weight and size, crystal spiked maces that emit a blazing blue light to blind the wielder's opponent, and suits of crystal armor that weigh as little as leather armor.

Many warriors throughout Barsaive covet such wondrous items; the raiders often become the raided when bands of adventurers attempt to slip into a trollmoot and steal such armor and weapons. Other heroes make desperate attempts to stop the trolls in mid-attack in the hope of seizing enchanted items from their fallen foes.

Most of the following comes to us from Nevear of Travar, an expert on the history of Barsaive and the changes wrought by the Scourge. Nevear's work has drawn praise from many of his fellow scholars, as well as from our late King Varulus III, who corresponded with him on occasion.

—Humbly presented for the edification of the reader by Thom Edrull, Archivist and Scribe of the Hall of Records

On the Land and Its Places

Barsaive is home to great wonder—sites of surpassing beauty, cities that are monuments to the artistry of the Namegivers who built them—as well as places of terror and suffering. Our land still bears the scars of the Scourge, and they will heal slowly, if at all. These perilous places have but one virtue, in the minds of our province's heroes—they promise adventure to both the brave and the foolhardy going there to make their fortunes.

On the Landscape and Weather

Hilly uplands, plateaus, and low mountains cover most of Barsaive, giving the province often beautiful and always dramatic scenery. A few exceptionally large mountain ranges interrupt this rolling landscape, most notably the Throal Mountains and the Twilight Peaks, which rise to heights of more than 15,000 feet above the sea. The hill lands rise to some 2,600 feet above the sea, with plateaus and lower mountain ranges averaging 3,000 to 4,000 feet above sea level. The need for constant climbing and forcing one's way through lush jungles and forests makes travel difficult. Barsaive's few finished roads wind up and down hills and around plateaus and mountains, making even journeys along established routes arduous.

Nothing grew in Barsaive in the years immediately following the Scourge, which had the effect of causing dramatic and frequent shifts in temperature and rainfall. Once the people began to emerge from their kaers, however, they used magic to regenerate the world's greenery at a phenomenal rate.

Within a decade of the end of the Scourge, Barsaive enjoyed a year-round, temperate climate with moderate rainfall. Rainfall in most of southern Barsaive is heavier than the 40 to 60 inches common in the rest of the province, but the area surrounding Death's Sea suffers continual drought. Most of the year's rainfall occurs during the first six months.

Of the Serpent River

The long, winding Serpent River runs through the heart of Barsaive, dividing it in two. Home of the t'skrang and their villages, the river supports hundreds of tributaries and delivers fresh water to most of the people of Barsaive.

The river received its Name from the dwarfs of the ancient Kingdom of Scytha. It begins in the Northern mountains well beyond the borders of Barsaive, entering the province near the city of Iopos and winding through the land, passing just south of the Scol Mountains that feed spring water into the river. From the Scol foothills, the Serpent passes through Lake Vors and winds around the massive Throal Mountains, which also add to its strength with fresh water. The river then flows through Lake Ban before passing through Lake Pyros in the Servos Jungle. It then enters the Mist Swamps, where it meets the molten stone of the Death's Sea.

The Serpent is wide, nearly an hour's crossing by riverboat at most points, and flows with a deceptively strong current. One cannot cross the river and arrive at a specific place without either magical aid or a boat. Swimming across the Serpent is considered an amazing feat of strength; most t'skrang villages hold a yearly swimming contest for those brave (or foolish) enough to attempt such a crossing. According to t'skrang tales, only one or two persons have ever accomplished this deed.



... As our airship cleared the last foothills of the Caucavic Mountains, the cool blue waters of the Serpent River appeared below us, the bright summer sun bouncing off her whitecaps and making them look like jewels. Fields of deep emerald and gold lined the river's gently sloping banks, pressing against her life-giving waters as if in a lover's embrace. As we drifted along, following the river's meandering path, two t'skrang paddlewheelers appeared, like gems set in her shimmering blue waters. As we watched, the boats began to close. They spewed tiny plumes of white into the air, the telltale signs of fire cannons. Farther down the river, the fields gave way to small trading ports, where brightly colored barges formed ever-changing mosaics along the riverbanks.

For days we followed the Great Serpent, as her blue waters flowed through Lake Ban, then under the dark canopy of the Servos Jungle, until they finally disappeared into the foul darkness of the Mist Swamps.

—From the journal of Yevad, Troubadour of Tirtarga

The t'skrang villages that trade up and down the length of the Serpent River control the activities of all ships plying the river. Sections of the Serpent lie under the jurisdiction of the great t'skrang trading houses, or *aropagoi*, formed by coalitions of several villages along each particular stretch of the river. The villages work together to manage trade and discourage piracy, joining their resources to create fleets of riverboats that can prevent pirate attacks along their portions of the river.

The strength of the *aropagoi* deters pirates from excessive raiding along most of the Serpent. But along sparsely populated stretches, such as through the Servos Jungle, piracy poses a great danger to travelers still.

Of the Lowlands and Plains

Coarse, tall grass covers Barsaive's broad, lowland plains, which become drowned in flood waters during heavy rains. Above the grasses, scattered trees rise like long-necked beasts. Traveling across the savanna on clear days is a delightful experience. The sharp blue of the sky and the touch of the cool wind brushing the tops of the long grass are soothing to the spirit, not to mention that passage through the grasses is much easier than through the tangled brush of the jungle. From all directions comes the constant buzz of insects, and occasionally travelers might catch sight of something larger through the grass—snakes, rodents, and sometimes large animals such as tigers and lions.



During the dry months, tribes of herders all across Barsaive stake out ranges for their animals. At this time of year, one often sees plumes of smoke rising out of the grass in the distance, signs of the camps of herders settled in for the season. These men and women must constantly be on the watch for thieves who would steal their cattle or predators ready to rip the herds apart to feed their young.

During the rains, travel across the grasslands becomes unpleasant. With every step, a man's feet or a beast's hooves sink an inch or two into the water-soaked land. Sometimes, travelers find themselves ankle-deep in mud and water. On such occasions it becomes necessary to lead one's animals on foot because the added burden of a rider would totally mire the average horse or mule. The grass stalks droop from the weight of the water, drenching one's skin and clothing with their heavy moisture. While plodding along in cold, wet misery, a traveler could too easily forget to be on the alert for the constant danger of stalking creatures or roving ork scorcher bands possibly lurking beyond the next hill.

Of the Creatures of Barsaive

Barsaive's abundant fauna includes small animals such as mice and frogs that are visible everywhere in the province. More dangerous animals usually stay hidden, sometimes allowing travelers to pass unmolested, other times pouncing at the last moment to take their victim by surprise.

Most creatures in Barsaive pose little danger to travelers or attack only when threatened. These creatures—monkeys, sloths, aardvarks, boars, snakes, parrots, hawks, peacocks, tortoises, and so on—have no magic. Other creatures, both mundane and magically endowed, pose a greater danger: tigers, rhinoceros, lions, bears, wild dogs, griffins, giant snakes, leopards, and so on. Greatest of all threats are the Horrors still roaming the world, of course. As everyone knows, we Namegivers have little natural defense against them.

On the Jungles and Forests

Records show that before the Scourge, tall trees with broad leaves shut out the sunlight from the floor of Barsaive's jungles and forests and so kept them clear of underbrush. In our time, through some combination of magic, intent, circumstance, and natural growth, jungles and forests grow thick with low vegetation that weaves between the tall trees, thriving with or without sunlight. Perhaps in reaction to the barrenness of the Scourge, Barsaive's jungles and forests now teem with animal and plant life. Magicians, questors, and others endlessly debate explanations for this rampant fertility, but have yet to reach a consensus.

Both jungle and forest flora range from ground-covering bushes to the tallest trees, which soar to heights of three hundred feet and are scattered throughout the woodlands. Trees that stand one hundred to two hundred feet tall form the canopy of leafy branches that blocks much of the sunlight and conceals the ground from the view of airships and flying creatures.

The next tallest trees rise fifty to eighty feet high. Their trunks, branches, twigs, and foliage grow together into an apparently impenetrable mass that sometimes extends down to the ground. Though whole groups of travelers may be able to walk freely through some areas of the forests and jungles, at other times the draping vines can conceal someone a mere step away.

The wetter, southern part of Barsaive boasts jungles filled with dense stands of bright, green broad-leaved trees and woody,

stemmed vines whose brilliant flowers blossom year round. The abundant vines festoon the trees and snake across the jungle floor, often winding their way through trees for a distance of several days' ride. The dampness also fosters the growth of mosses that hang from the trees and spring from dead plants. The variety of plant life in these jungles is astounding; questors of Jaspree estimate that thousands of varieties of plants and trees grow within a single day's ride in any direction.

In some areas, foliage is so thick that one must hack a path through the vines and small trees growing on the jungle floor. The overgrowth allows only a murky, green-gray light to filter through the thick canopy of leaves, turning the traveler's path into an eerie, twilight journey at any time of day.

Other sections of Barsaive's wooded lands provide easier and brighter passage, but no truly clear paths. As soon as a traveler cuts a passage and leaves it behind, the trees and growth begin crowding in again. Splashes of sunlight, beams of light so startlingly bright that they look like fire burning its way through the dimness, sometimes illuminate remnants of other explorers' trails.

The dense plant life makes the jungle a dangerous place for Namegivers and all manner of mundane creatures. Large predators often await their prey in branches high above the jungle paths or in the shadow of underbrush. Often, more vulnerable creatures use the abundant flora to hide. The air echoes with bird song, the hum of insects, and the occasional roar of larger animals challenging trespassers or warning off scavengers hoping to share their kill. The temperature is the only comfortable part of traveling through Barsaive's forests and jungles; it is rarely hot, and may even be cold during the rainy season. Among the great trees, travelers can always find a dry spot to wait out the weather.

Farmers and herders all across Barsaive have begun to settle along the edges of the forests and jungles, felling trees and chopping away vines to make room for homes, crops, and grazing land. In clearing the land, they always create a border between the settlement and the thick tangle of the surrounding trees in hopes of avoiding surprise attacks by the predators and monstrous creatures hiding in the leafy green shadows.

Of the Liaj Jungle

The Liaj Jungle, dense and sparsely populated with Namegiver settlements, presents three distinct dangers to those who enter it. The first is Usun, one of the great dragons. No one knows the precise location of Usun's lair, but most people avoid the area entirely because the dragon is rumored to prowl the entire jungle looking for prey.

The second danger is the jungle's large, predatory animals. Within the thick stands of trees and layers of green, leafy vines live tigers, lions, bears, and giant snakes. Though the great dragon Usun strikes more fear into the heart, these more mundane animals pose the greater immediate danger.

The third danger is a tribe of humans and elves, some 200 strong, which have broken with civilization and instead roam the jungle. They call themselves Tamers, a Name that refers somewhat to their ability to bond with the jungle animals, but more strongly proclaims their own victory in refusing to weaken themselves with civilized living.

The Tamers have no permanent home and live by foraging for edible plants and small animals. Usun has not given them permission to live in his jungle, and they must constantly watch for the dragon's presence. The tribe boasts many Beastmaster adepts, as well as several questors of Jaspree.

The Tamers reject clothing, tools, and trade goods, instead modeling their lives on the animals with which they live. They trust no one from outside the jungle, and deliberately lead in circles



anyone who tries to enter Liaj, eventually leaving them on the edge of the jungle.

Those who wish to speak to the Tamers must first prove themselves worthy of respect in the tribe's eyes. Earning Tamer respect requires that one adopt Tamer ways, forgoing all luxuries of everyday life. This respect is not easily earned, but once given it is not easily lost.



... We set out at dawn, heading east from Jerris. At the end of the first day we had reached the edge of the Liaj Jungle, where we pitched camp for the night. After all, only the very brave—or foolhardy—would dare enter the dark recesses of the Liaj after nightfall.

Soon after the last rays of the sun had disappeared, the jungle came to life. Far in the distance, the lone roar of a brithan pierced the air, followed by the sudden high-pitched cries of a crakbill flock. Just below these sounds ran a low hum that seemed to emanate from the jungle itself, the song of her countless insects.

Most disturbing were the rustlings we heard just outside our camp, which called to mind the nocturnal predators prowling under the thick canopy of the Liaj—storm wolves, lightninq lizards, giant serpents the size of airships, as well as more mundane but equally deadly beasts such as tigers and bears. Even worse, somewhere in the blackness lurked the dragon called Usun, a fearsome beast with a taste for the flesh of men.

Suddenly our campfire seemed very small indeed.

—From the journal of Aicila of Iopos



Of the Poison Forest

The Poison Forest is a vast jungle that lies between the city of Jerris and the Wastes. Many Barsaivians believe that the mysterious black soot that blows from the Wastes across Barsaive's western edge adversely affects the bodies and minds of the citizens of Jerris. They also believe that the soot has created the bizarre condition of the Poison Forest.

At first glance, the jungle appears dead. Traveling through it is an unpleasant experience; only rotting trunks, withered vines, and dry, decayed leaves meet the eye. The black and gray of the scene is unrelieved by a single blade of grass or leaf shining with the green of life. The sky is clearly visible above, the bright blue of a clear day contrasting sharply with the stark,

blackened branches. The lack of a jungle canopy is disconcerting. One expects to journey through murky green, but instead travels exposed to the sky and elements.

The silence of the jungle seems to beat on one's ears, for no truly living creature roams there. No birds flutter by; no predators roar out warnings to keep rivals away from their territory. Though the jungle is filled with vaguely familiar shapes, nothing bears any true resemblance to the living world outside the forest.

Yet the forest lives, in its own perverse fashion. The trees, vines, and leaves may seem dead, but they are not. The pools of dank, standing water smell fetid and incapable of sustaining life, yet they seem to sustain the forest in a perpetual state of decay. Though no birds sing, animals crawl over the ground and sluggishly climb the rotting trees.

The paradox is this: the forest is not dead, but dying. As far as anyone can tell, it will continue to die till the end of time.

Each animal, each tree, each vine moves infinitesimally closer to death each day, but never truly dies. Because the trees never die, they do not fall and rot, making way for new life to take their place. For whatever reason, the Poison Forest cannot complete the natural cycle of death, decay, and rebirth.

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… Today we finally reached the end of this accursed place, thanks to the Passions. Now I truly know why it is called the Poison Forest, for even now its all-pervasive stench of a thousand dying animals clings to our clothing as if the forest itself held us in a death grip.

I cannot forget the sight of the unholy creatures that roam the forest's lifeless gray floor—half-dead beasts draped in decaying flesh, hideous abominations that should never see the light of day. On our second day wandering through the blackened trees we encountered one such beast, a massive tiger whose putrid flesh crawled with thousands of tiny maggots.

I can scarcely wait to be out of this place. For it is not life, but some blasphemous mockery of life that is not from this world …

—From the journal of Yllom of Oshane

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This unnatural state holds the animals of the forest in its thrall as well. They wander the jungle, alive, but dying, their natural instincts to mate, hunt, and sleep ruined. They make little noise, but exist in a twilight between life and death, so confused that they no longer know how to live.

Though half-decayed and caught between living and dying, the animals apparently still possess the instinct to attack. Stories abound of those who somehow wander into the Poison Forest barely surviving savage attacks by rotting tigers or assaults by flocks of featherless, putrefying raptors. Some suggest that the animals' hatred is all that remains alive or that perhaps something grants them the passion of jealousy, but no evidence can be found to support this conjecture.

These dangers are minor compared to the darker claims that the ever-dying jungle can exert its unnatural power over those who tarry within its miasma. A wanderer who stays too long in the forest may begin to decay, losing his or her sense of life, passion, and intelligence. Over time he, too, will enter the twilight between life and death, unable to fully live but also unable to die. As the victim's body and soul withers, he becomes a creature jealous of the living, striking out against those who enter the forest. Other stories tell of travelers who pass safely through the forest only to begin wasting away as they continue their travels.

Of course, we do not know enough to prove the stories' truth, but the only cure ever mentioned in legend for those afflicted is to perform a bold act inspired by each of the Passions.

Of the Servos Jungle

The Servos Jungle spreads its shade near the center of Barsaive, just south of the Throal Mountains. To walk from one side of the Servos to the other takes more than ten days. The jungle's apt Name comes from the human word meaning isolated, or separated from. Though the Servos exists within the borders of Barsaive, those who enter the jungle's boundaries leave Barsaive behind, in more than just name.

The jungle is dark and eerie, and many prefer to travel around rather than through it. Stories abound of the dangers in the Servos, and its fearsome reputation has spread across Barsaive. As with other jungles, untold creatures within it stalk unwary prey and the tribes of humans who apparently survived the Scourge under the Servos' canopy. Knowing what we do of the corrupted blood elves, most Barsaivians suspect that any group that lacked Theran protection against the Horrors must be Horror-touched.

The Serpent River is the largest of many rivers that crisscross the Servos Jungle. Even here, the rivers are home to many tribes of t'skrang and other Namegivers, though these tribes are more savage than those in Barsaive proper. Indeed, some are even cannibals. Lake Pyros and the stretch of the Serpent River that crosses the Servos Jungle are plagued by piracy, and no heroes have yet dared to break the pirates' hold on the few villages in the jungle.

On the Mountains of Barsaive

Barsaive holds far too many mountain ranges to describe them all in this document. Therefore, I describe only the major ranges here. I write a little from my own, limited knowledge, and in many cases also use accounts written by adventurers who traveled in, on, or near each mountain range.



Of the Caucavic Mountains

The Caucavic Mountains in the Northeast corner of Barsaive lie roughly five days' walk from Haven and Parlainth. The mountains' Name, derived from the troll word for *feral* or *ferocious*, is particularly apt, for the Caucavic Mountains are the most treacherous in all Barsaive. Steep cliffs, deep valleys, and plunging gullies are said to hide all manner of creatures and even Horrors that somehow managed to survive among the barren rocks. The tree line ends only 1,500 feet above the base of the mountains; beyond that point, the terrain is unstable and prone to rockslides and quakes.

According to rumor, the Caucavics are the home of savage tribes that attack all intruders. These tribes, which are said to be survivors of the Scourge, live in caverns near the base of the mountain range. Though all the Namegivers races can be found among the tribes, most of their numbers are humans, orks, and dwarfs.

Of the Delaris Mountains

The Delaris Mountains lie near the Western border of Barsaive, roughly ten days' walk south of Jerris and twelve days' walk north of Vivane and Sky Point. The Name of these mountains comes from the elven word for *quiet* or *serene*.

Breathtaking in their beauty and tranquility, the Delaris Mountains possess an odd, almost eerie quality. The drowsy peace of the mountains seems to envelop all those within a day's walk of their foothills, muffling all sound. Though animals of all kinds live in, on, and near the mountains, the creature sounds one might expect to hear simply do not exist.

Though a place without sound might seem a wonderful retreat for those seeking solitude, it presents certain hazards for the ordinary traveler. People who lose their way or find themselves in danger cannot call for help or otherwise draw attention to their plight. The muffling of noise also allows creatures to move silently, enabling them to attack their prey without warning.

According to legend, the Delaris Mountains shelter the monastery to which Elianar Messias, the Martyr Scholar, was banished for opposing the Elven Queen Failla's Declaration of Separation from the elven nation Shosara. Messias found the *Books of Harrow*, which foretold the coming of the Horrors, in a nearby cavern in the Delaris foothills. The legends say that the mountains conspired to give Messias the silence he needed to study the books and so save the world.

Regardless of the truth of this tale, the quiet is real. Though many have tried, no adventurers have yet found the monastery spoken of as the abode of the Martyr Scholar. Many believe it was destroyed during the Scourge; others claim it never existed, and consider the story of the Martyr Scholar nothing more than an excellent fiction.

Two major trollmoots call these mountains home: the Rockhorns to the East and the Skyseekers to the West.

Of the Dragon Mountains

The Dragon Mountains stand in the far southeast corner of Barsaive between the Aras and Death's seas, roughly ten days' ride from the city of Travar. The southern tip of the region known as the Badlands ends where the foothills of the Dragon Mountains begin.

The Dragon Mountains earned their Name because the great dragon Mountainshadow chose to lair in their peaks. The lair lies in a deep cave adjacent to a large plateau on the tallest peak of the mountain range. In addition to housing the dragon, Mountainshadow's lair is said to also shelter a community of Namegivers whose ancestors sought refuge with Mountainshadow during the Scourge. To this day, their descendants supposedly continue to live under the wing of the dragon. Persistent rumors also insist that a race of shape-changing creatures called drakes live in this mountain range. According to legend, these small, dragon-like creatures can change into the shape of any Namegiver race. The great dragons supposedly created the drakes to serve them, but no record of their shape-changing powers exists in the Library of Throal. Records do, however, offer reports of six- to eight-foot dragon-like creatures lairing in the foothills and gullies of the Dragon Mountains.



The Dragon Mountains are cold as death. I alone am left; the others have all died. Food ran out weeks ago, and these barren slopes hold nothing an elf can eat. I will die soon. 'Tis strange, but of all the things I might wish for as I lie here on the frozen stone, I want most to see a dragon before my last breath.

The intense desire to see one of these creatures with my own eyes is why I set out on this journey in the first place. I thought they lived in the Dragon Mountains, but I have seen nothing living save my companions and a few hardy lichens. These I tried to eat, but their bitter taste galled my tongue and turned my stomach. Nothing exists in these crags but chill mists, bitter plants, and cold stone.

… I scarce have strength to write, but I have seen a dragon! Floating over the highest peak, the one that stabs the sky like an accusing finger, I saw a dragon …

—From the journal of Fomhair Evensong, Troubadour



Of the Scol Mountains

The Scol Mountains lie in northwest Barsaive between the Serpent River and Blood Wood, ten days' walk from Iopos and fifteen days from Jerris. The mountains' Name means *ancient*, and comes from the troll tongue.

According to troll folklore and legend, the Scol Mountains are the birthplace of the trolls who built and ruled the ancient kingdom of Ustrect. Unfortunately, no one has yet mounted a successful expedition to verify the truth of these legends. The best evidence to support the trolls' claim are the many isolated troll clans currently living in the Scol Mountains who speak a strange dialect of the troll language unknown anywhere else in Barsaive. Chief among them is the brutal and unforgiving Firescale trollmoot; known for killing strangers on sight. Though they have little save race in common with the crystal raiders, some of these troll clans also survive by raiding; they travel on large mounts similar to thundra beasts, but more savage.

The Stoneclaw trollmoot has often attempted to contact these tribes of trolls, possibly to negotiate an alliance, but to no avail. Scouting parties sent into the Scol Mountains always limp out again, with many wounded and dead. From this, it seems that these tribes intend to remain apart from Barsaivian society.

Of the Scytha Mountains

The Scytha Mountains occupy the Northern region of Barsaive, lying just north of the Kingdom of Throal and southeast of the Elven Queen's Palace in Blood Wood. The Name Scytha comes from the dwarf language, and like the troll word *scol*, means *old* or *ancient*. Within the Scytha Mountains long ago, the dwarfs built their first kingdom in the land that would one day become Barsaive. The dwarf Kingdom of Scytha pre-dates the founding of Throal by many years, having been in existence long before Elianar Messias was banished to the Delaris Mountains.

The Kingdom of Scytha survived the Orichalcum Wars, though its prosperity began to decline with the arrival of the Therans and the establishment of the Theran Empire. Scytha quickly fell to the

superior Theran military, and was forced to swear allegiance to the empire. Though both poverty and Theran oppression weakened the Scythan kingdom, neither was the cause of its downfall.

Perhaps a hundred years before the coming of the Scourge, creatures now thought to be the first of the Horrors began to infest the caverns and passageways of Scytha. In time, these creatures drove the dwarfs from their home. The Scythan dwarfs traveled south to Throal, requesting haven in that kingdom. King Varulus I welcomed them graciously, and none have ever returned to their former homeland.

Long abandoned by the Namegiver races, the Scytha Mountains are now thought to be haunted by the vengeful spirits of the founders of Scytha. Despite these rumors, persistent tales of the vast wealth left behind by the dwarfs in their haste to depart the Horror-infested kingdom continue to draw adventurers to the mountains.

Recent expeditions to the Scytha Mountains have brought back reports of strange, dangerous creatures still prowling the caverns of the ancient dwarf kingdom. Every adventurer who returns relates a different description of these creatures; some insist that they are another manifestation of the Horrors, while others say the creatures appear in a guise never before seen.

The Scytha Mountains are the domain of the Great Dragon Vasdenjas, who has been known to give audiences on Mount Wyrmspire.

Of the Thunder Mountains

The Thunder Mountains cover the Southeastern area of Barsaive, just north of the Dragon Mountains and a day's walk from Travar. Just south of Travar, the Western edge of the Thunder Mountains meets the Eastern edge of the Badlands.

The Name of the Thunder Mountains comes from the dwarf word for the thunderous sounds that roll out of the peaks and valleys during the months of Strassa, Veltom, and Charassa. No widely accepted explanation exists for these booming rumbles. Some legends say that a great dragon was trapped beneath the mountains before the Scourge, and the thunder is his roar. Others suggest that Verjigorm, the Horror also called Hunter of Great Dragons, is trapped beneath the mountains.

Still others, among them many questors, insist that the sounds are those of Death, still imprisoned beneath Death's Sea, calling out to remind the world of his presence. The last (and most likely) explanation is that the Thunder Mountains lie over a crack between the land masses that make up Barsaive, and the roars are the grinding of earth and rock as the land masses shift.

Other than the distinctive roar that comes from these mountains, the Thunder Mountains have few noteworthy characteristics.

Like most mountain ranges in Barsaive, they are home to all manner of wildlife and most likely a few Horrors.

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... The Thunder Mountains looked like any others. Rock. More rock than the mind could comprehend. We were five days out of Travar, heading to the Aras Sea. We had heard the rumblings on our first day, but they seemed far away then, like thunder over the horizon. Today, without warning, the rumbling started again. At first it sounded like falling rocks in the distance, then grew to the sound of a million hammers forging a million blades. Under our feet the ground danced.

Anonlic, our overly superstitious Swordmaster, shouted, "Death has returned and we are to be its first meal!" Not to be outdone, our archer Mejox screeched, "The Dragon Lord is released!" Those of us closer to the earth realize that neither case was true, yet fear of these tales paralyzed my companions. They shook more than the rock they were standing on. I pulled them aside to keep them from getting crushed by falling rock or swallowed up by the widening crack in the ground. Breaths held, we waited for the quaking to cease. The roar drowned out my companions' mad cries of doom as we watched the earth open.

As quickly as it had begun, it ended. The dust was choking us. Fearing to move too soon, I made my companions wait. When the dust settled, the Thunder Mountains still stood, though the path we had followed no longer existed. Death did not return, nor did the Dragon Lord. Mercifully, my hearing has not yet returned either. At least for today, I need not listen to my companions whining about the certain death that just barely passed us by ...

—From the journal of Caron Lev, dwarf Illusionist

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Of the Throal Mountains

The Throal Mountains, rising up through the clouds and extending across the heart of Barsaive, seem impossibly large. Indeed, as one approaches the Throal Mountains, their image fills one's sight. Maps of Barsaive fail to do justice to the sheer size of the peaks, for maps can show only the width of the mountains. In fact, if the surface area of the range could be laid out flat, it would cover one quarter of Barsaive.

The tremendous wasteland across the surface of the mountains provides a stark contrast to the orderly Kingdom of Throal, buried deep within the rocky slopes. The dwarfs devote no time or forces to policing the upper reaches of their mountains, and so the surface remains untamed, much as it was following the Scourge.

Travelers who walk across the mountainous wastes are struck by the cold blue tint of the soil. Myriad small stones cover the ground underfoot, making the trek awkward and threatening one with a turned ankle or twisted knee at every step.

Two-thirds of the way up the slopes, the air is so cold that exhaled breath turns to mist, and only thick furs will enable a visitor to survive the night. All manner of strange creatures roam the mountains. Many of them are solitary, like the feather serpents, which seek out food to bring back to their broods. Others, like the ice wolves, travel in packs. The numerous large boulders and tall outcroppings can hide any kind of ambusher. With food so scarce in the mountains, the few living predators and people must constantly struggle to kill for food or die of starvation.

Of ever greater danger for travelers are the savages that roam the slopes. Several primitive tribes of humans, orks, trolls, and even dwarfs live on the surface of the mountains, survivors of the Scourge. No one knows how these people lived through the Horrors' reign without the Rites of Protection and Passage. The most oft-told tales say that these tribes made deals with the Horrors, worshipping them as we worship the Passions. If true, some attacks on unwary travelers may be the work of questors of a Horror, but we cannot verify that these people consider themselves to be such.

The Great Dragon Icewing lairs on top of Mount Vapor; high above the clouds. Icewing is one of the few Great Dragons known to give audiences.

Of the Twilight Peaks

The Twilight Peaks lie in southern Barsaive along the edge of the Death's Sea and received their Name for the spectacular view they provide onlookers during the twilight hours. Crystal deposits growing on the far side of the mountains reflect and heighten the glow from the Death's Sea, creating a warm-colored aura that can be seen for miles around the mountains every eve at twilight.

The Twilight Peaks were Named by dwarf merchants traveling from Throal to Sky Point during the years immediately after the Orichalcum Wars. The dwarfs, from their vantage point along the trade route, could see the glowing mountains from miles away, but as they neared the mountains, the glow disappeared. Further investigation revealed the Death's Sea as the cause of the glow.

Barsaive's crystal raider trollmoots live on the slopes of the Twilight Peaks, away from the heat of the nearby Death's Sea. The major trollmoots are the Stoneclaws and the Swiftwinds to the East, the Bloodlores and Blackfangs to the West, and the Ironmongers and



Thundersky trollmoots in the central peaks. As the trolls discovered long ago, the peaks are Barsaive's largest source of living crystal, which they use in forging their crystal armor, shields, and weapons. The living crystal from the Twilight Peaks is vastly superior to that found in other mountain ranges. Though no one has been able to explain why this is so, many Weaponsmiths claim that the intense heat of the Death's Sea tempers the crystal, making it stronger and more durable. Others insist that the Twilight Peaks are also rich in elemental earth, which gives the crystal its special qualities.

Though most of the crystal mined from Twilight Peaks is taken from caverns far underground, the numerous surface deposits on the far side of the mountains near the Death's Sea can also be gathered by particularly enterprising adventurers.

Taking crystal from the mountainsides is hazardous, however. The heat of the sea of molten lava can burn or sicken those who come too near it, and many strange and dangerous creatures lair in the crystal caves.

Of the Tylon Mountains

The Tylon Mountains lie almost in the very heart of Barsaive, only one day's walk from Kratas and ten days' riding on horseback from Throal. The Tylons are Named for their improbably tall spires (tylons, in the ork tongue), which rise from each of the twelve peaks in the mountain range. These spires rival the Throal Mountains in height, and pierce the clouds beyond the sight of travelers standing at their foot.

Some slopes and glens of the Tylons are only barren rock, while others are covered with thick forest and brush. Unlike the Caucavic Mountains, which have a very low tree line, the Tylons' tree line ends quite high up. Above that point, the terrain becomes craggy and difficult to traverse.

The spires, or tylons, serve as the source of many fascinating legends and myths. According to ork legend, the twelve spires of the Tylon Mountains are the twelve Passions, frozen in time as they reach toward the universe, the source of all that is in the world. This legend says that when the Passions learned of the coming Scourge, they sought protection for their world. Unable to accept that the Horrors, like all things, were a part of the universe, they pled with the universe to stop the Horrors. Sadly, the universe cannot stop what has begun—all things must occur in their own time, whether good or ill.

Because the Passions refused to accept the way of the world, they were frozen in time and space as they reached in supplication toward the sky, forced to watch as the Scourge ravaged their world and helpless to aid those who called for their assistance.

This legend suggests that the Passions are no longer active in Barsaive. Ork storytellers, anxious to explain this legend to modern scholars in a way that does not imply denial of the living Passions, say that the story illustrates the pitfalls of relying on others for aid, and teaches us to rely on ourselves. Skeptics believe that the legend originated with an inventive storyteller, who saw the twelve spires and likened them to the Passions to make a good tale.



The legend of the Spires of the Passions clearly reveals the orks' view of the world. The legend's message says that the events of the world will unfold as they will, and even the universe itself cannot change the outcome of those events. This view explains the ork philosophy of living life to the fullest. Because they feel powerless to alter the fate of the world, they are determined to grasp every emotion and opportunity life has to offer while they have the chance.

— Thom Edrull, Archivist and Scribe of the Great Library



On the Badlands

Stretching from the shores of the Scarlet Sea and west toward the Byrose River and the city of Travar, the Badlands are one of the most desolate and forbidding places in Barsaive. Home to Horrors and all manner of wild creatures, the Badlands also house lost kaers and ruins. Ancient records tell us that these kaers were among the richest in Barsaive, and they draw all manner of adventurers in search of treasures and secrets.

The recent illegal Theran settlement near Lake Ban has only increased the Badlands' attraction for treasure-hunters. Bands of Therans and Barsaivians alike now scour the region for hidden entrances to ruined kaers, hoping to find magical treasures left behind by the Theran settlers and envoys said to have sheltered here during the Scourge. Merchants from Travar have also sent adepts into the Badlands, to scout out suitable new airship routes to the West.

… This night is too silent; I cannot sleep. I wish I had never come to the Badlands. I try to believe that Jaspree guides my steps to a safe haven here, but each day sorely tests my faith.

Jagged rocks lie loose on the ground, giving way at every step. This morning, a rockslide threw me down. Had I not caught a withered tree as I rolled past, I would now lie dead at the bottom of a ravine. My boots are torn, and I cannot mend them. I passed a kaer a few hours' walk away and thought to beg supplies from its folk, but could not make myself walk toward it. Its very stones seemed shrouded in darkness, and the wind blowing from its direction seemed to carry the stench of a charnel house. I am afraid; the roaring of wild beasts and the growing sense of evil paralyze me. The Passions save me, but I cannot go on. I cannot go back, either. There is no road, and I do not know the way.

Jaspree, Passion of growth and the land, if ever you have heeded your questors, hear me now. Guard me from the evils that may befall me, and guide me out of this benighted land …

—From the journal of Tallis Treynar, questor of Jaspree

On the Origins of the Badlands

In the time before the Scourge, this region was among the loveliest in Barsaive. Warmed by the fiery glow of Death's Sea and watered by the life-giving Serpent River, the rich soil of the area was once the finest farmland in our province. Almost anything would grow here, and the abundant arable land gave rise to many cities and towns. The ancient Kingdom of Scavia to the West, traded heavily with the people of the Badlands for their crops, offering True earth from mines in the Twilight Peaks and True fire from Death's Sea to fuel forges and smithworks. In time, the local smiths and metalworkers earned fame throughout ancient Barsaive for their fine creations of gold, iron, steel and orichalcum. (Reportedly, the finest of these treasures remain in the lost kaers of the Badlands.)

When the Theran Empire claimed Barsaive, Therans began arriving in the region and built their own settlements, including seven sizable river villages along the Serpent for trading with their t'skrang allies of House K'tenshin. The Therans also brought knowledge of kaer-building, which they shared with the region's inhabitants as the Scourge approached.

Unfortunately, the people's faith in Theran magical protections proved sadly misplaced.

Perhaps attracted by the land's beauty and its people's obvious prosperity, the Horrors descended on the region in hordes. They took special delight in devastating the once-lovely countryside and elegant cities, turning the hopes of the people to ashes and the land into a barren waste. When the famed airship *Earthdawn* traveled to this region in the first days after the Scourge's end, Captain Vaare Longfang saw the devastation the Horrors had wrought and Named the region the Badlands. That Name has gained strength over the years as more and more Namegivers came to this place and witnessed its devastation. Some say the Name has altered the very nature of the place, perhaps forever. Names have great power, and it may be that by constantly using the Name Badlands for this region, we are only strengthening the corruption that has befallen it. One thing is certain—the Horrors could not have created a region more reflective of their own abominable natures if they had done so by design.

Certain questors of Jaspree in the town of Trosk, which lies along the Serpent River on the edge of the Badlands, are rumored to be seeking the Badlands' pattern items, to better understand what happened to the area and perhaps heal its wounds. The questors believe that the devastation of the Badlands reaches deep into the land itself. This, they say, is why the Badlands have not recovered from the Scourge as Barsaive's great jungles and forests have. No one is certain of the precise truth, but adventurers' journals and the writings of Throalic Traveled Scholars tell us that the Badlands seem to be growing.

The barrenness is creeping outward by a few feet each year; our records suggest that this has been happening since the end of the Scourge, and that the rate of growth is increasing. If our best current estimates are correct, the Badlands could reach the borders of Travar within two generations. To reverse this worrisome trend will take a deed of great courage and powerful life magic.



TRAVELING THE BADLANDS

The Badlands is a harsh place. The land itself does not welcome intruders. Rocky ground, narrow gullies and gorges, and high cliffs wear down the feet of travelers. The sun bakes the traveler by day, and the hard, unyielding ground makes a poor bed on which to pass the cold night. Not even the fires of Death's Sea to the West and south can penetrate the night-time chill.

Travel through the Badlands is difficult, even on foot. Wagons and carts cannot cross the rocky ground—their wheels split on the stones, or else their weight sends them crashing down a ravine or cliff side when the brittle stone gives way underneath.

Mounts fare little better. Only the thick-skinned stajian favored by the Southern ork tribes can walk for long on the rough ground. Other mounts suffer from torn feet and broken hooves and go lame within a scant few miles. Lame mounts in this desolate area must be put down to become meat for scavengers. Travel at night is even more hazardous than by day. The day's heat keeps most of the Badlands' predators deep in their lairs, asleep; but when the temperature drops with the setting of the sun, the night hunters emerge to stalk their prey. The gullies and ravines distort and magnify the hunters' roars and cries, making them seem closer or more distant than they are.

Little water exists in the Badlands, save for the banks of the Serpent and the River of Bones, a small tributary of the Iontos River that cuts through the region. This river is small and shallow, and its waters are said to taste of metal. Its Name comes from the treacherous whitewater that makes up most of its length; the rapids have slain so many that the river is virtually useless for travel. Occasional pools of still water appear elsewhere in the Badlands, but travelers should avoid them at all costs. The water is most likely diseased, or afflicted with dread iota—Horrors too small to see, which corrupt water sources and mark those who ingest them.

The heat in the Badlands leeches water from every source, including the bodies of Namegivers who travel there. The dry air and baked soil seem to suck moisture from everything they touch, and even a traveler who has taken precautions feels weak from water loss after a short time. Water is more precious than silver in the Badlands, where it can mean the difference between life and death. To die of thirst is a terrible fate. The body burns slowly from within as the vital element withdraws, leaving behind a desiccated shell. Travelers should take care to protect their water supplies and drink regularly to keep their body's internal elements in proper balance.

Few Namegivers can go for more than a week without water. T'skrang especially need their native element; prolonged periods without bathing in water make the river folk irritable and ill. Certain magical items and spells can provide water, but these do not always work reliably in the Badlands. A few plants store water in their bodies, and a traveler in dire need can harvest water from such plants. Be warned, however, that getting to the stored water is not easy. Some succulents native to the Badlands are poisonous—the bell-shaped cactus that we dwarfs call *resk'ko* is one such. Even wholesome plants such as the *tre'kora*, or "three-limbed" cactus, must be harvested carefully. All such plants protect their water stores with thick-growing spines that bite deep into the skin and inflame it. Many also have a thick outer rind that even a sharp knife cannot easily cut through, the plant's water lies in its soft, inner flesh, which can be scooped out and eaten or sucked dry.

Sunlight, so beneficial to us in more temperate climes, is an enemy in the Badlands. The landscape provides little shelter from its merciless rays, and those who travel by day through the Badlands often suffer painful burns from the sunlight and hot stone. The simplest and best protection from the sun's fire is clothing—specifically, a light, loose covering that hides the skin from the sun's touch but allows heat to escape as the body grows warmer. Paler colors repel sunlight, so it is best to wear white or some other light shade. At night, additional layers of clothing will protect the traveler from the bone-chilling cold and retain some of the day's heat in their folds.

Food, like water, is scarce in the Badlands. Most of the creatures native to it spend their days well-hidden from even the sharpest-eyed scout and emerge only in the relative safety of darkness. Hunting is poor, and any creature a hunter might bring down is likely to be unpalatable at best, poisonous at worst. Few edible plants grow in the region; native flora tends toward stunted trees with spiky leaves, dry razor grass, and other hardy breeds that can survive with little water.

ON NATIVE CREATURES AND OTHER DENIZENS

As one might expect, dwellers in the Badlands are well suited to their desolate surroundings. The creatures of the area can survive with little water, feeding off other native species or the few scrub plants worth eating. Common beasts in the Badlands include lightning lizards, brocchas (near the edges of Death's Sea), basilisks, chimeras, hell hounds, hydras, and molgrims.

Horrors and their constructs infest the many broken and ruined kaers; those most often encountered by unlucky adventurers include shadows, jehuthras, and plagues. Ruined kaers and citadels are also often infested with cadaver men and ghouls. The few large exploring parties that have ventured into the Badlands report night raids on their camps by large numbers of these creatures, which suggests that some of the more powerful Horrors may have considerable forces of undead at their command.

Some tales tell of strange Horror constructs seen nowhere else in Barsaive. The vektha is one such—a shambling monstrosity made of the animated bones of creatures and Namegivers who have died of thirst in this terrible region. No two vektha look alike, and the bones are arranged in no sensible order; there may be a shinbone where the head should be, jawbones for feet, breast bones in place of arm-bones, and the like. The vektha seems to shimmer as it moves, as if seen through a heat haze. All who look upon it feel a terrible thirst, even if they have just drained a full waterskin. The thirst vanishes if you turn your eyes away; but the vektha compels its victims to gaze at it, and breaking that compulsion is far easier said than done. It is said that all who stand within twenty or so feet of the thing continue to feel raging thirst until they move out of its circle of influence. Often, the only warning of a vektha's approach is the rattling of its bones as it walks.

The Horrors of the Badlands rarely venture forth from their lairs, though some weaker Horrors reportedly roam about looking for sustenance or victims to torture. The more powerful Horrors remain hidden, often animating the dead to rebuild or restructure the kaers in which they dwell. No one yet knows why the Horrors remain tied to the Badlands; this remains one of the many mysteries of this dreaded place. Isam Derr of Throal speculates that the Horrors may have created the Badlands through a terrible act of blood magic, and that they remain to sustain it. He further theorizes that the Horrors are spreading the blood magic's warped influence, giving themselves both a haven and a means to extend the duration of the Scourge over this limited area. If this theory is true, all efforts to restore the Badlands will fail until the Horrors are cleared out—a monumental task, worthy of the greatest heroes.

A few settlements exist along the banks of the Serpent River, just outside the Badlands proper. Their inhabitants scratch out a living through farming and trade. According to several accounts, escapees from slave raids along the Southern Serpent often find haven in these tiny villages. The questors of Jaspree living in Trosk frequently venture into the Badlands, seeking to heal the blight upon the land; scholarly studies of their findings have told us much of what we now know about the region.

Other stories of Namegivers inhabiting the Badlands are likely little more than fireside tales. Stories abound of magicians who have built citadels in the depths of the Badlands or taken ancient kaers as their private domains. Such individuals are said to desire the solitude that only a place as desolate as the Badlands can provide and are rumored to experiment with Horrors and Horror constructs—toward what end, none can say. However, no one has yet proved that such evil-minded magicians exist; and if they do, they are taking fatal risks by working magic in such a Horror-infested place.

On Mountainshadow's Lair

One tale of particular interest claims that the great dragon Mountainshadow lairs somewhere in the Badlands' desolate reaches. The seed of this tale is the Death Rebellion, which occurred in Throal many years ago. During the rebellion, Theran agents kidnapped Prince Neden and took him to the Badlands, where they inflicted terrible tortures upon him. After J'Role the Honorable Thief rescued the prince, he supposedly took him to Mountainshadow's lair, where the dragon aided J'Role and King Varulus III in restoring the prince to health.

It remains a mystery why Mountainshadow would choose to lair in a place like the Badlands. His usual lairing place in the Dragon Mountains is close by, and it is possible that J'Role took Prince Neden there to recover from his ordeal. In support of the story, however, the noted scholar Jerik Gol of Jerris has suggested that the great dragon may be studying the Badlands, perhaps to learn more about the Horrors and their workings. He cites the common knowledge that unknown persons have engaged adepts to explore and map parts of the Badlands, asking them to bring back parts of creatures they have encountered and slain along with plants, rocks and soil.

These unknown employers invariably vanish shortly after paying for the adepts' services, and Jerik suggests that they might be in the service of Mountainshadow. Of course, these individuals might just as easily be questors from Trosk or representatives of some other party with an interest in the Badlands. Unless one of them makes himself known, we cannot be sure.

Of Death's Sea

Death's Sea, an ocean of molten rock in the Southern reaches of Barsaive, marks the Southern border of the province. The fiery sea is ringed with black stone hills and cliffs that rise fifty to a hundred feet above its surface. It has existed for all of recorded history, and ancient legends claim that the Passions placed Death in its waters to spare Namegivers some part of Death's sting.

Many tales describe the origins of Death's Sea; here I relate the most renowned: *The Imprisonment of Death*.

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The Death Sea is happy today. Its bright red glow mocks us, mocks our unsuccessful attempts to find its elemental fire and mocks the five crewmen who died today.

Two new sailors were killed when four viraas attacked them. The presence of viraas told us we were near a huge pocket of elemental fire. Of course, the attack panicked the new recruits. They tangled the rescue ropes, and I had to risk the life of four others to rescue them. We nearly had them out, when one slipped from the grip of a rescuer and was instantly devoured. A fire wraith took the second in a blaze of flame that engulfed him instantly. We chose to leave that pocket of elemental fire, and instead check out a fool's island that had remained solid longer than most.

On the fool's island, we lost Nob, Skatz, and my good friend Llink. It is always a gamble to land men on a fools island; I know it better than most, for I lost a foot to one years ago. It seems the Death's Sea knows when someone has trespassed on it. The fool's island stayed together nearly all day until Nob and Skatz landed on it, and only then did it begin to pull apart. Llink died trying to save them; an explosion blasted up from the sea, charring all three instantly. I have never done anything so difficult as cutting the rope that held my companion of these last six years, then watching his body fall into that red death.

—From the log of Qui Kyak, Captain of the airship *Angry Troll*

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The Imprisonment of Death

In ancient times, before the Theran Empire came to Barsaive, our ancestors lived in harmony with the land and the Passions. But they did not always live in harmony with each other. Throughout the many kingdoms, Namegiver fought Namegiver for land, wealth, and power, killing their fellows to gain their own selfish desires.

Now those who loved the slain mourned them bitterly and cried out to the Passion Garlen for comfort against the senselessness of Death. Garlen loves all Namegivers as a mother loves her children, and the tears of the bereaved found fertile soil in her tender heart. So she gave them what comfort she could. But it was never enough to take away the pain Death inflicted on the living.

Finally, Garlen asked her fellow Passions to meet in her dwelling place by the sea. When they came, Garlen told them of the suffering that Namegivers endured because of Death. *"The Universe loves life above all,"* she said, *"because life holds the joy and wonder that give the Universe meaning. We must protect life, or all will sink into despair."* The other Passions, moved by Garlen's words, discussed the matter. For a long time, they could not agree on how best to protect life. Then the Passion Jaspree suggested imprisoning Death.

At first, the Passions disputed furiously among themselves. Lochost, unwilling to see anyone imprisoned, argued against the plan, while Garlen spoke eloquently of the Namegivers' plight. Then wise Mynbruje offered a compromise. The Passions would imprison Death, thereby sparing Namegivers its worst sting and satisfying Garlen. But to satisfy Lochost, Death would have a chance to win freedom.

Clever Vestrial devised a way to entrap Death, while Upandal the Builder suggested a way to keep Death prisoner. The other Passions traveled to the distant comers of the world to gather the things they would need. When they returned to Garlen's house, they brought with them the burning forge, a warm hearth, and fire. They brought fire from the blazing sun; fire from a scholar's mind, a lover's heart, and a warrior's spirit. They brought fires of love, desire, and revelry; fires of comfort, growth, change, and compassion; fires of strength, courage, creation, and wit. They brought all the fires that were the essence of Passion.

All these fires Upandal placed in his forge, until it glowed with the mighty heat of the sun. Upandal plunged his hands into the fire and worked it with skill and cunning, weaving it into an ocean of flame strong enough to hold Death. When Upandal had finished, Chorrolis took a copper coin from his bulging purse. As clever Vestrial had planned, Chorrolis and the gentle Astendar both touched the coin and invested the spirits of desire within it. Then Chorrolis cast the coin into the sea near Garlen's dwelling.

With all in readiness, Vestrial went forth at the direction of Thystonius—who always seemed to know where Death was—and found Death overlooking a battlefield.

"Greetings," the Clever One said with a bow. *"I regret interrupting your important work, but I wished to bring a certain matter to your attention."*

Death turned from the spectacle of the battle. *"Say on,"* Death said, in a voice like a cold wind.

Vestrial hesitated. *"Now that I think of it, I'm not sure I should,"* he replied. *"I don't wish to cast aspersions on your noble work, nor*



to question your competence. It is best forgotten." So saying, the Passion turned to depart.

"Wait," Death commanded. *"How can you question my competence? I am Death. I know the measure of every life, and none escapes my touch."*

Vestrial bowed profoundly. *"Begging your pardon,"* He said, *"but that is not so. My siblings and I have discovered a life past its time that has not been collected. But this means nothing, I'm sure. You have so much to do, keeping track of all the lives in the world—no doubt you simply overlooked this one. It is no great matter, surely, for one life to go uncounted?"*

"Where is this life?" Death asked.

"A foolish sailor who drowned in the sea," the Clever One said. *"Beneath your notice, truly."*

"Show me," Death demanded. Vestrial nodded with great respect; but behind his solemn face, he was laughing.

Followed closely by Death, Vestrial sped toward Garlen's home by the edge of the sea. When they arrived, the other Passions were gathered by the shore. Vestrial pointed to the shimmering blue depths. Far below lay the coin that Chorrolis had dropped, glimmering with the power of desire.

"There is the poor soul," Vestrial said, *"awaiting the release that only Death can bring him."*

Death gazed through the shimmering waters to where the coin lay. It appeared to Death that the coin was a life uncollected, and so Death plunged beneath the waters.

When Death's hands touched the bottom, Upandal drew forth from his forge the fiery shield he had woven and cast it out over the sea. The flames stretched from shore to shore, engulfing the waters in fire. The gathered Passions each shed a drop of blood upon the flames. At the touch of the blood, the fire became a sea of molten rock, trapping Death below it.

Then Lochost spoke the spell of binding. *"By fire and blood you are bound; by blood and fire you may be freed. Each drop of Namegiver blood shed upon the land will wear away at your shackles, as water wears away stone."*

Death struggled against the binding, but could not escape from beneath the fiery sea. Thus, the Passions freed Namegivers from Death's grasp, until that time when our own folly might free Death to walk among us again. And from that day on, the fire-ocean has been Named Death's Sea.

CAN DEATH BE FREED?

The ongoing strife between Namegiver and Namegiver—in war, in city streets, on high roads through the wilds—is proof enough that Namegivers have not given up the shedding of blood. Many scholars and sages have wondered how much blood must be spilled before Death breaks free. Has not a great deal of blood been spilled throughout our history? How much more is required to free Death—and how close are we to reaching that terrifying threshold? Some sages, such as Rosethal of Travar, believe Death cannot escape or it would already have happened. If the blood shed by the Scourge was not sufficient, reasons Rosethal, what disaster could possibly be terrible enough to free Death? Other scholars say that only blood spilled by Namegivers in conflict with each other can break Death's bonds. The blood of beasts, or blood shed by the Horrors (which are not from this world), have no effect. Still others, Vestrinka of Vivane among them, suggest that the story of Death's Sea is simply a metaphor—that any time one Namegiver kills another, he has let Death walk among us.

The accounts of Namegivers who have purportedly entered Death's kingdom and returned, however, would seem to suggest that Death does, indeed, live under the sea; they all describe a place deep beneath a sea of fire. Whether historical fact or myth, the tale of Death's imprisonment clearly states that killing our brethren will bring our own destruction upon us. King Varulus I once said to his soldiers, *"Know in your heart that the next drop of blood you shed could be the key to Death's prison, and weigh your actions against that knowledge."*

All Namegivers would do well to heed those words.

The following account, transcribed by Archivist Ela Pono, comes from Armin Erys, retired captain of the fire miner Flamedancer. Erys now lives in Travar, where he produces fine embroidered sailcloth. We found Erys's account so marvelously entertaining and instructive that we chose to use it here in lieu of Nevear's text.

—Thom Edrull, Archivist and Scribe of the Great Library



A FIRE MINER'S ADVICE

Surviving Death's Sea? Easier said than done, as anyone with half their wits might expect. It's a terrible, beautiful place, Death's Sea. It'll break your heart with wonder and kill you the second you stop watching out for it. That's the real secret to surviving over the fiery ocean—pay attention to it. Every heartbeat. A few seconds' lapse at the wrong time, and you're done for.

You can see Death's Sea from days away, lighting up the Twilight Peaks with its fire. That's how the Peaks got their Name, you know. The glow from Death's Sea makes it twilight in those mountains, even when it's full black night everywhere else. It never gets dark over the Sea; the light of the churning fires reflects back off the clouds, and you feel like you're flying into the heart of a piece of True fire.

Speaking of True fire, let me lay a bit of so-called common wisdom to rest. Folk who've never been to the Sea think it's a huge, boiling ocean of True fire, or maybe ordinary flames with bits of True fire mixed in. The second notion's closer to the truth, but neither's quite right. Death's Sea is made of molten stone—stone turned into liquid fire, if you will—called magma.



Hot enough to melt metal, this stuff, and a quick death to any living thing unlucky enough to fall into it. (Except for those few strange beasts that live in liquid fire—but I'll get to them in a bit. You lot from the Library like your records all orderly and logical, or so I've heard. So first things first, eh?) Kernels of True fire, like white-hot sparks, glitter and gleam in the red-orange ripples of molten stone. Those white sparkles bring a good price, and so we mine as much True fire from Death's prison as we can.

Now, mining anything from a lake of burning liquid rock, so hot it'll melt flesh at a mere touch, is no simple thing. But miners like me know the Sea and its ways. And we've our own ways of getting round the fearful dangers. We fly over the Sea in airships, of course. But you can't just fly out in your little wooden vedette, drop down toward the Sea and let the miners reach over the side to scoop up the True fire. Any captain fool enough to try that would find his airship going up in smoke. The air gets hotter the closer you get to the magma, so the airship's got to stay at a certain height—usually fifty feet or so. Skilled fire-ship captains learn to tell by instinct how close they can get to the surface without risking the airship.

When the ship's crew finds a suitable spot, the sailors make the ship hover while the miner goes down, and does the really dangerous work. A suitable spot is any place with plenty of True fire, all within a net's cast of what we call a fool's island. Where the burning rock touches the air, the magma hardens into chunks of black stone called *clenkas*—fool's islands are the biggest of these, big enough for a Namegiver to stand on. The miner shinnies down a fire-proof rope onto a fool's island that looks stable enough to hold for a bit. He wears thick boots and gloves to protect his hands and feet from the searing heat of the black stone (but not much else save a loincloth, or he'd boil to death inside his clothes). Once down, the miner casts an enchanted net woven with orichalcum into the magma to catch and haul out the kernels of True fire. Full nets—and the miner—are hauled back up to the ship. Last of all, the crew puts the True fire into orichalcum vessels. It'll burn its way through anything else and burn up the airship soon after. The greatest danger at this point is a ruptured net, which can spill True fire all across the deck and set the airship ablaze. (True fire's a rare and dangerous element, nothing to fool about with.)

Now, there's a reason that fool's islands have such a Name. They're not like islands in an ocean of water. The swirling fires of Death's Sea are always churning and can break up fool's islands in an eyeblink just like the smaller *clenkas*. A miner who happens to be standing on one at the time is dead, of course. No rope-hauler can move quickly enough to pull him to safety. So a good miner learns to spot approaching magma currents and feel the subtle tremors that warn of a crack-up. At any of these warning signs, he's up the rope quick as a blood monkey up a vine, and to blazes with the True fire (pardon an old miner's joke). After all, not much use to mine the stuff if you're not alive to share in the profits, is it?

There's other dangers as well, of course—some you'd expect, others you'd not. Flying near and over Death's Sea is like traveling through the Badlands or the Wastes; the heat'll kill you slowly, unless you guard against it. Bring plenty of water and drink often, or you'll dry out and faint—not something you want to do halfway down a rope to a fool's island! The hot air makes food spoil quickly if you stay for too long, so don't linger if you can help it. Otherwise, you may face a choice between starving or eating spoiled rations. An airship crew that comes down sick from bad food can leave you stranded, easy prey for whatever finds you.

The heat is a miner's worst enemy. It's not so bad while you're moving along high above the surface, but when you skim to a stop ten man-lengths above a fool's island, you feel like you're being slow-roasted on a spit. Standing on the fool's islands, it's even worse. Most folk can't handle that kind of heat for as long as one candlemark before passing out. We fire miners have a saying: *"Move quick in Death's domain, or Death will find you."* That's the truth of it. Death's Sea is no place for sightseeing. You do what you came to do quick as you can, and then you get out of there. Anything else is just asking for trouble.

You've also got to watch out for eruptions. Sometimes the magma leaps up from the surface like a geyser, and not with much warning, either. One of those can cripple your ship and send you crashing

into the sea before you've even got time to yell *"Help!"* Eruptions happen whenever Death struggles against his chains (may the Passions hold him bound forever). Sometimes they're caused by magma beasts, or other terrible fire-creatures looking to make a meal out of you. And sometimes we create them on purpose, though it's a risky way to mine, if you ask me. A miner throws a bit of True air down onto the magma, which erupts the second the True air touches it. The eruption stirs up the magma all around, bringing kernels of True fire to the surface where we can get at them. Of course, eruptions can also damage airships that are hovering too close. Worse, they weaken the nearby fool's islands, making them more likely to break up when the miners are lowered onto them.

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For the remainder of this document, we return to Nevear's extensive work.

—Thom Edrull, Archivist and Scribe of the Great Library

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On the Denizens of Death's Sea

All sorts of strange beasties live in Death's Sea, and most have a taste for Namegivers. A mining ship looks as good to them as a pocketful of sweets to a greedy child. They'll attack any airship they see, sure as the sunrise. Even if they don't capsize it, they can cripple it and then come back with friends to finish it off. My ship got snagged once by a flock of fire eagles that scorched our sail before we drove them away, and we had to row hard out of there before they came back. Thank Floranuus we were close to shore where sensible mining crews stay. You can't row for long in that kind of heat without tiring out. If we'd gone as far from the shoreline as some fool folk do, we'd never have made it. Most ships that go far across the Sea looking for the True fire mother lode are never heard from again.

Creatures of elemental fire often come through the many passages between the Death's Sea and their home plane and choose to remain because the sea provides such a suitable home for them. Other magical creatures with a supreme resistance to heat and flame dwell in the molten rock of the sea and on the floating *clenkas* and fool's islands.

More creatures live on the Sea's edge than in its fiery depths. Fire eagles nest in the black hills and cliffs, soaring over the magma on the hot winds to hunt for food. I've heard tell of dragons gliding on those same winds, hunting or doing whatever else dragons get up to (though I don't believe for a minute the mad stories of dragons mining elemental fire from Death's Sea to fuel their fiery breaths). Thought I saw a dragon once, but it was so far away, it might just have been light-dazzle.

Out in the depths live truly strange creatures, like lava fish and salamanders. These odd beasts are cousins to the fish and reptiles most folk know of, but they can swim through molten stone like ordinary fish through water. Firebirds nest on *clenkas* and fool's islands, though you'll hardly ever see one. They can change color, you see, to hide from predators. (Though what would prey on a big, fierce flying creature like a firebird, I can't imagine. Dragons, maybe.) Fireworms crawl through the hollow pockets and tunnels of the *clenkas*, and packs of magma beasts surface every now and again to devour anything within reach. A magma beast—something between a lizard and human, with the nastier characteristics of each—can attack its prey with spurts of magma. Of all the fire creatures, they're the most dangerous, except for Horrors.

You'd not think Horrors would find a home in a sea of molten rock, would you? But some do. The scholars tell us that some Horrors are drawn to the magical nature of Death's Sea, what with all the True fire in its depths. The terrible heat doesn't trouble them at all. They hide in the depths of the magma and lie in wait for Namegivers to pass their way. They mark and stalk any prey that comes near them, sometimes for years. Tale upon tale tells of fire miners being marked by Horrors. I've seen some strange things in my time, and I'm sure some of the tales are true.

Fire spirits and sprites live in the Sea, where they play in the boiling lava like fish sporting in an ocean. Lots of them love to set fire to wooden airships and watch the crews scramble to put out the flames. Some do it for their own twisted amusement, while others hate Namegivers and attack any airships that enter their territory. I've heard tell of powerful fire spirits as vast as Theran kilas that live in the heart of the Sea, but they supposedly never leave the burning depths of their home. Given how powerful they're said to be, I say thank the Passions they stay put!

I have seen fire wraiths in my time, shadowy spirits of living fire. Legend says the wraiths are the spirits of the Namegivers who died at the moment when the Passions imprisoned Death. The spirits were set ablaze by Upandal's fiery shield; ever since, they've been doomed to dwell on the surface of Death's Sea, trapped between life and death in fire and rage. I've never fought one myself, but countless sailors swear that fire wraiths will attack Namegivers at every opportunity. And many sailors claim that destroying a fire wraith is impossible, because a broken-up wraith can simply reassemble itself with flames from the Sea.

Pirates and Magicians

A mining ship is a rich prize—even a small load of True fire can fetch plenty of gold in the right markets. So it's no surprise that pirates ply the airways near Death's Sea, just as their fellows elsewhere in Barsaive ply the Serpent River and other waterways in search of laden vessels. Most often, these privateers lie in wait on the shore and attack passing mining ships as they head for home.

Plenty of these brigands are Therans, but more than a few are a mixed bag of Barsaivians not worthy of the Name. My own ship nearly fell afoul of a Theran privateer—we knew they were Theran because they were flying a huge stone ship. It moved much faster than we expected, and only the chance appearance of another mining ship closer to the Therans' course saved us. The pirates veered off to take the easier prey, and we flew away as fast as we could. Our luck was our fellow miners' loss, of course—may Thystonius rot the Therans' bones!

The crystal raiders from the Twilight Peaks don't often attack mining ships, despite being so close to such a rich source of plunder. They say Death's Sea is cursed, and they want nothing to do with stealing from it. No one runs into them, except inexperienced captains foolish enough to fly across their territory.

There're stories galore of permanent islands in Death's Sea, kept from breaking up by powerful magic. (I'll not judge how true they are.) According to the tales, these islands are the fortresses of powerful magicians. Of course, the one thing the tales don't take into account is the fearful risk of using magic anywhere near Death's Sea. Any magician casting a spell while over the Sea must take great care, or he'll find himself marked for life by a terrible Horror.

Some tales claim these islands are prisons—though for whom, they don't say. Other stories tell of pirate bases, Theran fortresses and even citadels built by the Passions. So far as I know, though, no explorer has yet charted a permanent island in Death's Sea.

On the Scarlet Sea

The Scarlet Sea lies just north of Death's Sea, with a narrow strait called Dead Man's Gullet running between them. The Scarlet Sea is another magma ocean, but its fires are cooler than the raging inferno of Death's Sea. The Scarlet Sea is covered with *clenkas* and fool's islands, all larger and more stable than those in Death's Sea, and it's also less prone to eruptions and lava bursts. Much safer for mining all around, but the Scarlet Sea's True fire deposits are nowhere near as rich or numerous as those in Death's Sea. The best pockets of True fire are also much harder

to get to, seeing as you first have to break through the hard crust of the *clenkas*. Nowadays, of course, the richest pockets have been mined out already—and competition for what's left is fierce. But that's just the way of the world, eh?

The reason for the differences is the Serpent River, which pours its waters over the Northern edge of the Scarlet Sea. The sea's heat turns the water into thick clouds of warm mist that float over the Mist Swamps and make the heavy rains that blow westward to fall over the Servos Jungle and the South Reach.

Fire eagles and their larger firebird cousins are common sights on the Scarlet Sea, as are broccha—reptiles that live on the drifting *clenkas*.

Of Mount Bloodfire and the Caves of Death

In the middle of Dead Man's Gullet lies a huge volcano, its sides red with lava and its base surrounded by a narrow ring of black stone. Black clouds of smoke and ash obscure the peak of the volcano, which the crystal raiders have Named Mount Bloodfire. Creatures of all sorts from Death's Sea nest along Bloodfire's craggy shores, and a few pirate bands likely live in the caves that honeycomb the mountain. (They've got to come from somewhere nearby, and some of those caves are large enough to hide a small airship.)

According to legend, Mount Bloodfire is a secret entrance into Death's realm. It's certain that the caves and tunnels—the so called Caves of Death—lead deep into the earth. Whether they reach as deep as the Kingdom of Death, no one knows. (I've never been down them that far, nor has anyone else I know, so you'll pardon me for being a bit skeptical.) Other legends say that Garlen's house, where the Passions hatched their plan to imprison Death, once stood on the island—which was a green and pleasant place in those distant days.

As the story goes, Garlen sacrificed her home as the price of her fellow Passions' aid, and her essence is said to linger on the island. Something's there, that's certain. Many a fire miner shipwrecked on the slopes of Bloodfire has talked over a pint of fine ale of being saved by a mysterious woman, dressed in white and wearing a veil over her face. They say Garlen appeared to them and protected them until help could arrive, keeping her children out of Death's grasp on Death's own doorstep. No one knows the truth of that, either—but stranger things do happen in this world, don't they?

On the Mist Swamps

The Mist Swamps mark the end of the mighty Serpent River. Near the Easternmost finger of the Twilight Peaks, the Serpent splits into numerous smaller branches that fork over and over and over again into hundreds of rivulets that form a gigantic marshland. When this river delta meets the hot shores of the Scarlet Sea, the water turns to steam that blankets the delta and the land surrounding it. The hot mists slow the flow of the river and produce heavy rains over the delta, which pool in low-lying areas and keep the soil constantly drenched.

The Mist Swamps have existed in Barsaive since recorded history began, and perhaps for longer. Ancient myths say that the Scarlet Sea and Death's Sea were once bodies of water; if so, the land that is now the forbidding Mist Swamps may once have been home to thriving settlements of Namegivers. One such settlement, the so-called Lost City, is among the most persistent lost-treasure legends in Barsaive.

In the days when the Scarlet Sea was water instead of liquid fire (assuming the old myths are fact), the delta where the Serpent River empties into it would have made an excellent site for a good-sized city. Some people, scholars among them, believe (or are willing to grant) that such a city actually existed and thrived for centuries before Death's Sea and the Scarlet Sea became the oceans of fire we know today.

On the Lost City

The first speculations about the Lost City arose in Throal during the Scourge, when archivists of the Great Library discovered a map that appeared to depict ancient Barsaive. Though the Southern portion of our province was not pictured, an arrow drawn near the bottom pointed south toward a place Named Yrns Morgath. The direction and placement of the arrow corresponded with the site of the Mist Swamps. Copious research over the years turned up additional cryptic references to Yrns Morgath in ancient documents, at least one of which called it "the Great City of the South."

This discovery led the inhabitants of Throal to tell tales about a "lost city" hidden in the Mist Swamps. At first, the stories were mere speculation; but over time, people came to accept them as factual accounts. The stories also grew in the telling; each version of the tale described more and more fabulous treasures allegedly waiting in the lost city for some enterprising explorer to find them. Throalic scholars are still studying the folk tales told during the Scourge, piecing them together with ancient written records to extract truth from fiction regarding Yrns Morgath and its location.

In the years since the Scourge ended, many explorers have traveled to the Mist Swamps seeking the fabled Lost City, but so far as I know, none have found it. Some adepts have made tantalizing discoveries, however—statues and other stone artifacts, apparently of great age, that might confirm stories of an ancient ruin hidden under the marshes. Of course, it is also possible that the artifacts are less ancient than they appear. Immersion in the hot waters of the Mist Swamps may have weathered the stone prematurely; some scholars suggest that the statues and such could have come from ships of our own time run aground in the swamps.

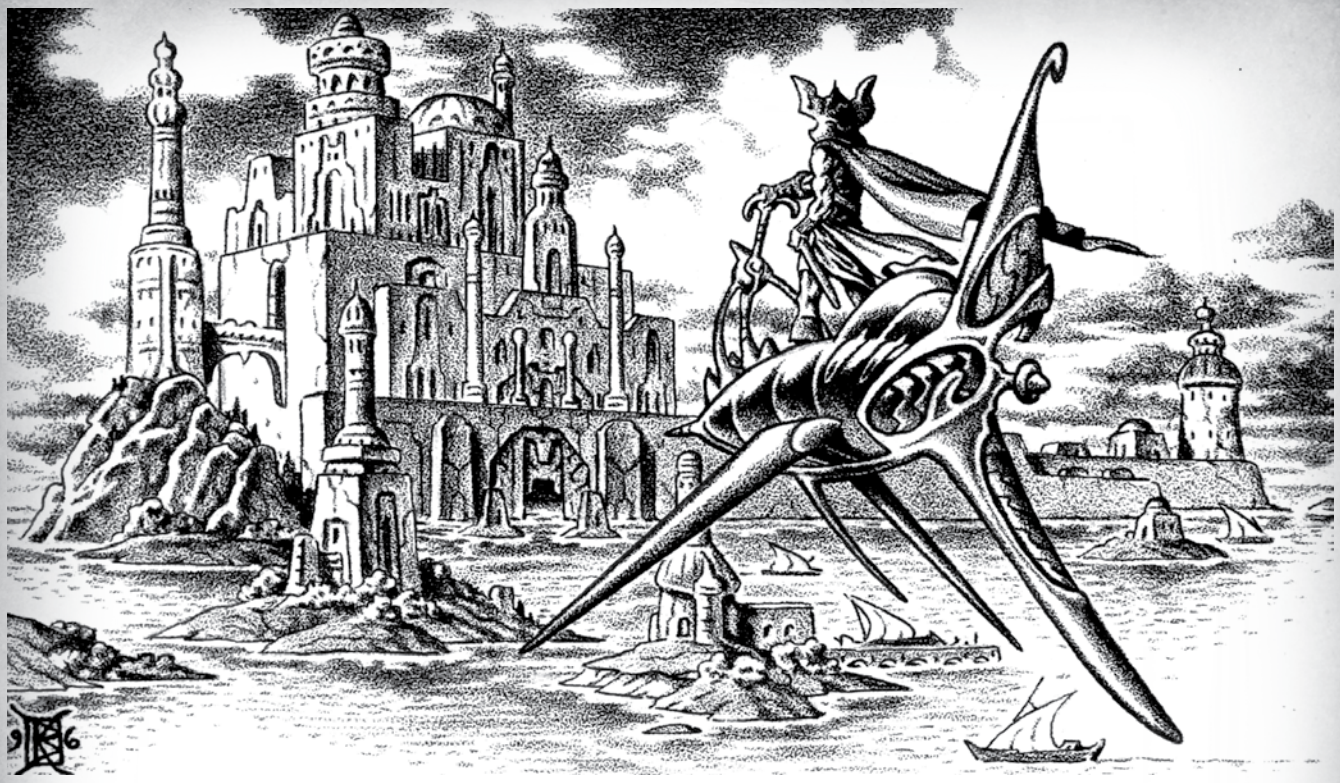
Scholarship continues to provide evidence for both sides of the argument. Scholars who believe in the antiquity of the finds point out, quite accurately, that the Southernmost stretch of the Serpent River flows past the Badlands—a route not commonly traveled by merchant vessels full of art objects and other luxurious items. And certainly no ship would sail into the Mist Swamps nowadays, where it is certain to run aground and become stranded. The perils of the swamps are known to most Barsaivians, especially those who make their livings plying the Serpent River's trade routes.

Those who remain skeptical of the Lost City offer pirates as an explanation for the finds. They point out—again, quite accurately—that pirate bands in the South Reach might hide their treasures in the Mist Swamps. If the pirates are later captured or killed in battle, their treasure would eventually rot away in the marshy ground, save for long-lived items like stone statues and vessels. This theory, however, fails to explain why no gold or gemstones—which likewise do not decay—have been found along with the statuary and other fragments. And of course, pirate vessels would have as much difficulty as any other ships navigating safely in the swampland.

Many scholars now accept the notion that some kind of ruins do exist, but they continue to debate whether the ruins are of an ancient city or merely of a small trade outpost along the shores of the Scarlet Sea. A few scholars go so far as to say that the ruins in the Mist Swamps date all the way back to the Age of Dragons—a wild claim, but one that might explain the Mist Swamps' most famous inhabitant.



… You smell the Mist Swamps before you see them. Smell them and feel them, the heat soaking into your bones and making the very marrow feel heavy and wet. Ever smelled bad vegetables, cooked and eaten because you'd nothing more wholesome? That's what the swamps smell like. They say there's treasure buried deep in the muck, and I half believed it till I smelled the place. I just wonder what that rotting-vegetable water does to gold or gems? If the treasures smell like that, let the swamps keep them.



We reached the edge of the swamps today and spent a bewitched hour watching the steam rise off the water. Through the mist, I could see dim, hulking shapes: trees, I think. I hope. Splashes and strange cries came from all around, echoing so much that I couldn't tell how far away they were.

The vines and hanging mosses that drape the gnarled trees seem to move as you watch them. Gave me the creeping terrors, they did. We set up camp on the other side of the trees, out of sight of the swamps. With night falling, none of us cares to camp too near the cursed place. Only the Passions know what might creep out of the bog, after all.

—From the journal of Negik Silverhand, Swordmaster of Throal

On the Great Dragon Aban

The great dragon Aban lairs somewhere in the depths of the Mist Swamps and claims the swamps as her territory. Most of Barsaive's people have wisely chosen to respect this claim, especially as they find the Mist Swamps of little use or interest.

Like most dragons, Aban seems to enjoy the solitude of this isolated place. Occasional travelers near the region, mostly riverboat crews on the Southern Serpent, have reported seeing the dragon —usually from a great distance—as a dark shape flying low in the mists. As for how much of a threat Aban poses to those few Namegivers who enter the Mist Swamps in defiance of her territorial claim, no one knows for certain. It is true that many adventurers enter the swamps and never come out—but the Mist Swamps are full of hazards that can claim a careless adventurer's life. Still, tales abound of explorers and adventurers devoured by Aban for the crime of invading her privacy. Adding fuel to the fires of speculation, the Therans who recently arrived at Lake Ban have sent expeditions ever deeper into the Mist Swamps. Though we do not know their purpose, many people believe that the Therans are searching for the Lost City. Rumor also has it that at least one Theran exploratory party failed to return to the fortress at Lake Ban, and that Aban sent a warning to the Theran commander that she will not tolerate Theran intruders in her domain. The Therans appear to be ignoring these threats and so may be courting disaster.

Interestingly, many of the unexplained disappearances—and the few known encounters with Aban—have involved explorers who entered the Mist Swamps in search of the Lost City, Perhaps Aban wishes to guard the ruins from intruders. The ravings of one survivor suggest another, more sinister explanation. Some people have taken the poor victim's fevered tales of giant insect-men as evidence that a colony of invae have settled in the swamps and are seizing those Namegivers foolish enough to venture near their territory. The evidence is thin, however, and it seems unlikely that Aban would tolerate the presence of the insect-men.

Of the Castle of Assassins

Another curious tale of the Mist Swamps comes from adventurers who have traveled through the swamps' northern reaches, near the foothills of the Twilight Peaks. Here, floating ash from the peaks blends with the mists to produce a sooty gray smoke that envelops the area in perpetual gloom. In the depths of this endless night lies the legendary Castle of Assassins. According to the tales, its dark towers and walls are cut from the black stone of the mountains and adorned with leering gargoyles that also act as guardians. Though some travelers claim to have seen the castle, none have apparently drawn close enough to get a good look at it—or if they have, none have returned to share the tale. As its Name implies, the Castle of Assassins is reputed to be the secret training ground of various bands of killers, from Horror-worshipping cults to the vile criminals known as the Hand of Corruption. Indeed, the Hand of Corruption is the favorite villain of these stories. In the isolated halls of their alleged stronghold, the Hand is rumored to train assassins in the arts of stealth, subterfuge, and murder. They intend thereby to complete the work of the Scourge by scouring all life from the world. The riverfolk tell tales of Hand agents abducting young children, to be taken to the castle and raised as perfect killers without conscience or remorse. Most likely these tales are devices used by parents to frighten recalcitrant children—but no atrocity is beyond the Hand. On the other hand, it seems unlikely that Aban would tolerate such killers so near her domain.



On the Aras Sea

The Aras Sea, located on the Eastern edge of Barsaive, is a large saltwater ocean that reaches beyond the borders of Barsaive to unexplored lands. The Coil River, the largest tributary of the Serpent River, flows into the Aras Sea near the city of Urupa, the only city of any size located on the shoreline. The coast stretching south from Urupa also harbors many smaller cities and towns. Traders from Barsaive and from across the sea frequent Urupa and her neighboring ports. Urupa boasts a fortress-like embassy belonging to the people from across the Aras Sea, who frequent Urupa for trade. Only a handful of the wealthier citizens have been invited inside the fortress-like building.

The Aras can become violent without warning. Storms, some magical in nature, occasionally spring up on the Aras Sea and eventually travel to shore, where their destructive power causes great damage.

The sea is also home to abundant animal life, including magical creatures and a few water-dwelling Horrors. Reports of these dreadful creatures are few and far between, but those who journey on the Aras Sea should know that even crossing the waters requires caution.



... After only five days in Urupa, my companions and I were hired by a trading company. It was, oddly enough, the Overland Trading Company, owned by the obsidiman we had encountered on our first day in the city. In the service of our new employers, we were to travel on a water ship over the Aras Sea to a smaller city along its western shore, assisting the ship's crew during the journey, and working as guards during the trade negotiations.

On the second night of our five-day voyage, a drunken sailor stumbled across the deck and fell overboard. A team of ten men worked to hoist the crewman out of the sea, but just as the man's waist cleared the water, a huge tentacle surged up and grabbed him. He screamed horribly, his body pulled in two directions by the creature and the rope. The tentacle briefly loosened its grip, and we thought it might let the crewman go. Then it tightened around him again and gave a mighty yank that pulled the first five members of the rope crew over the rail. Their screams echoed across the water as the creature fed on them, one by one ...

—From the journal of Loran Redstone, 1506 TH



On the Wastes

The Wastes, those blighted lands that form Barsaive's western boundary, represent one of the greatest tragedies wrought during the Scourge. Like the Badlands, the Wastes were once green and fertile, with rich soil suitable for farming. Then the Horrors descended on the land and left the Wastes desolate. Nothing lives there now, save for a few powerful Horrors and their twisted spawn.

As with the Badlands, however, the Wastes hold their share of treasures in lost and hidden kaers. And the mysteries of those lost kaers, as well as the hope of unearthing valuable secrets, draws explorers into this terrible, perilous land. The Wastes are said to hold more lost kaers than any other place in Barsaive, even more than the Badlands, and fabulous finds brought back from the Wastes have inspired many adepts to travel there and seek their own fame and fortune.

The greatest wealth of the Wastes is said to lie not in gold or silver, but in enchanted items and legendary artifacts. Centuries ago, magicians from nearby provinces of the Theran Empire, among them Vivane and Rugaria, allegedly founded towns and even schools in the Wastes, and many of their magical treasures are presumed to have survived the Scourge. Stories abound of this or that legendary item, supposedly created by some famed Wizard or Elementalist or Nethermancer, lost in a kaer deep in the Wastes. So compelling are some of the tales that His Majesty's Exploratory Force has even sent out a few large expeditions in search of magical artifacts. Despite such efforts, the vast majority of the Wastes' lost kaers remain undiscovered, waiting to yield up their secrets and their wealth to whoever finds them.

Others travel into the Wastes in search of knowledge. The terrible corruption of these lands may have serious implications for all of Barsaive, and certain adepts and questors have devoted their lives to discover its cause. In this way, they hope to undo the harm the Horrors inflicted and prevent the devastation of the Wastes from befalling any other area of Barsaive. Through their efforts, we may also gain knowledge of the Horrors that might enable us to drive them from Barsaive forever and perhaps even cleanse the astral realm of their taint.



... Today our galley passed over Jerris and then westward over the Wastes, a forsaken place that truly resembles the end of this world. Mercifully, a maelstrom of swirling, gray dust obscured the abominable land from the eyes of our crew; they surely would have mutinied had they seen the forbidding landscape below us. For the

Wastes are still ruled by Horrors, those unholy entities from the Great Void of the netherworlds, terrible abominations that existed long before the Books of Harrow *were even a dream in the tortured mind of the Martyr Scholar.*

No creatures of the light would dare set foot in the Wastes. The rancid air supports only the Horrors and their spawn: wormskulls, despairthoughts, bloatforms and jehuthras, swarms of krilworms, and other Nameless creatures that feed on the souls of Namegivers.

—From the journal of Derleth, Nethermancer of Ar Kham

On the Creation of the Wastes

The Wastes lie to the Northwest of the Delaris Mountains, just west of the Liaj Jungle. Settlers who came to Barsaive in ancient times from other parts of the Theran Empire were drawn to the Wastes by the richness of the land and its nearness to other Theran provinces. The city of Jerris, on the other side of the mountains, served as a gateway to the rest of Barsaive for the towns and villages of the Wastes.

How many villages there were, we can only guess, based on fragmentary records preserved in the Great Library. The accounts we have suggest that more than a hundred kaers were breached and destroyed, and thousands upon thousands of Namegivers slain. If so few sources tell of so much destruction, we can safely surmise that the kaers destroyed in the Wastes are as numerous as the stars in the sky. Ever since those dreadful days, the Wastes have been a place of darkness and despair, casting their shroud over the mountains and covering even the city of Jerris in their pall.

Interestingly, the little evidence we have suggests that the widespread destruction of kaers may not have been entirely the work of the Horrors—or if it was, the Horrors of the Wastes were more subtle and diabolical than their fellows elsewhere in Barsaive. Scattered records and other information recovered by explorers suggest that many kaers were overcome by a mysterious and terrible wasting disease. Fragments of ancient journals tell of children dying slowly, coughing up their lungs like water; of men and women turning into thin, pale ghosts of their former selves before finally withering away into nothing.

Some scholars believe this plague is simply the subtle workings of a Horror; other scholars think it a natural plague, taken into the kaers by the first inhabitants or somehow spawned during the centuries underground. Against this second possibility, however, is one frightening fact. The plague struck many kaers that lay a great distance apart, and given the isolation of the kaerfolk, it is difficult to see how such an illness could have been spread. The notion that it arose independently in so many different locations is likewise difficult to credit. A few scholars have suggested a connection with the mysterious black ash that falls over the Wastes, but as yet we have no more idea of what the ash is than we do of the illness.

The Black Ash and Other Hazards

Dark clouds hover perpetually over the Wastes, blocking out the sun and plunging the region into eternal night. The clouds are not made of air and water, as ordinary clouds are, nor yet are they smoke of any kind we might recognize. They are made of fine black powder, like wood or paper ash. Like a black snowfall, the ash covers the Wastes in a thin layer, blown about by the moaning winds into small drifts and choking eddies. Small ravines and depressions in the ground are filled with the stuff; many of these appear solid from a distance, but will quickly drag down and suffocate any unfortunate who steps into them.

The ash makes travel difficult and unpleasant, to say the least. Horses and other pack animals will enter the Wastes only with much coaxing, and carts and wagons often bog down where the silt has drifted deep. The ashfall also taints what little water exists in the Wastes, turning it brackish and foul-tasting. Ash-polluted springs and pools may also be a source of sickness. Travelers in these parts should therefore bring plenty of their own water and keep it tightly sealed in waterskins or other containers.

Magicians and scholars alike have studied samples of the ash and still have no idea what it really is or where it is coming from. It may stem from a Horror-curse on the land or may even be part of some strange kind of Horror-flakes of its body, perhaps, or tiny parts that make up a larger whole whose true appearance we can only guess at. Most people believe that the constant ashfall is the cause of the Wastes' desolation and the darkness of soul that hangs like a shroud over Jerris.

Food is scarce in this blighted land; no rain falls on it to nourish plants, and most of the creatures that live in the Wastes are Horrors or their constructs. The few other beasts native to the place are often disease-ridden or otherwise unwholesome—whether because of the Horrors, the black ash or both together, no one can be sure. Adventurers' rations are frequently the only edible thing to be found for miles and may attract hungry scavengers unless properly sealed away from the air.

Despite these desolate conditions, life has found a foothold even in this largely lifeless region. Molgrims, leech rats, plague lizards, krilworms, and other foul beasts live and even thrive in the Wastes. Unlike their fellows in other parts of Barsaive, creatures native to the Wastes all seem to be colored a dark, dirty gray or tan, either



to blend with the terrain or because the ashfall blankets their fur and skin. Explorers have also described encounters with numerous other creatures that dwell nowhere else in Barsaive. Many of these animals resemble such familiar beasts as brithans, thundras, lions, and deer, but are often corrupted in some way or possess bizarre magical powers. Some magicians believe that the corruption of the Wastes has transformed these beasts into taint- ed versions of their common kin, like the pitiful creatures of the Poison Forest. Minor Horrors also abound in the Wastes; adventurers' journals tell of gnashers, kreescra, and slipshades, more numerous in the Wastes than anywhere else in Barsaive. Few have reported seeing powerful Named Horrors, but their work is evident in the blighted land and its shattered kaers. In the kaers' depths, other adepts have encountered wormskulls, bloatforms, despairthoughts, plagues, and wingflayers.

According to some wild tales making the rounds in Jerris, a strange tribe of Namegivers is reputed to dwell in the Wastes. The so-called Gray Folk—feral and barbaric Namegivers of human, ork, or elven stock—supposedly wander the Wastes and savagely attack anyone they meet. Travelers have described them as dirty gray in color, wearing primitive clothing and wielding weapons of stone, bone, and occasionally metal (salvaged from shattered kaers, undoubtedly). Some rumors claim that the Gray Folk serve a powerful Horror, which has a mysterious and sinister plan for them. No one knows the truth of these tales, though it is just possible that an isolated kaer or two might have survived the Scourge and fallen into barbarism. It is also possible that the Gray Folk are simply bandits or raiders who smear themselves with gray ash and assault travelers for their goods.

Of the Wastes' Twisted Magic

The most disturbing aspect of the corruption of the Wastes is its strange effect on magic. Everyone knows that the Horrors warped astral space wherever they traveled. In Horror-haunted ruins such as Parlainth, the astral taint is so thick that even looking into astral space is dangerous; as for using raw magic, one may as well slit one's own throat. These effects are even more pronounced in the Wastes, where the astral fabric is twisted and tattered, full of gaping black holes like an old blanket eaten by moths. Where the astral plane is intact, objects and distances look strangely distorted, as if viewed through ill-made glass full of bubbles and streaks.

Scholars have been trying to discover what this particular corruption of astral space might mean for the Wastes and for Barsaive, but study of these phenomena is difficult. The twisted astral space takes its toll on magicians who look upon it for too long, and the holes and distortions warp the use of magic in the Wastes in ways Namegivers can scarcely comprehend. Many travelers report that the climate of the Wastes grows increasingly hotter as one travels west, and some magicians theorize that the distortions of astral space may be related to this phenomenon. So far, the exact nature of such a connection remains a mystery.

Spell magic in the Wastes is often more powerful than elsewhere, but also more dangerously unpredictable. Spells gain energy, but are difficult to control and may veer off course or have other unexpected effects. Even using magical talents can damage an adept by exposing him to the corrupt energies in nearby astral space. Powerful spells and talents also reputedly draw the attention of Horrors even more quickly than in other regions of Barsaive. Spell matrices and other protections dampen the effects somewhat, but not nearly enough in many cases. And those few adepts foolish enough to use raw magic or travel astrally in the Wastes have never been heard from again.



After countless days of travel, many of my companions became convinced that we had become hopelessly lost. Though we had followed to the letter the directions given us in Throal, the Forgotten City was still nowhere in sight. I was determined to find the place and so resolved to continue on alone if need be. Fortunately my resolve was never tested, for only three days later we found it.

We were walking through a partially wooded area, the trees covering the top of a large hill. As we reached the hilltop, we saw the spires of ruined Parlainth spread out below us like a shattered mosaic. The descriptions we had read in the journals of J'Role the Thief and in the Library of Throal told of the shattered splendor of the Forgotten City, but I had foolishly considered this description exaggerated. The sight of the ruins taught me that words alone could not convey the awe and sadness one feels when face to face with the ruins of Parlainth.

The city lay smothered in tangled vines and overgrown plants. Once-tall spires and pyramids had crumbled into piles of broken stone, mute testimony to the destructive power and corruption of the Horrors.

Parlainth was like no city I had ever seen. I had been an explorer of sorts for years before that journey, and had discovered more than a dozen lost cities and kaers, but none as magnificent and sad as this. The ruins had a majesty to them, as if to say that neither the Horrors nor time itself could mar their beauty. But for all its grandeur, the place held a cold and uninviting presence …

—From the journal of Torgak, 1465 TH
(transcribed by Lorin of Throal)



On the Forgotten City of Parlainth

Built with Theran labor and money long ago, the great city of Parlainth marks the far northeast corner of Barsaive. In the time before the Scourge, it served as the First Theran Empire's provincial capital and the home of the Overgovernor. In the days of its triumph, Parlainth had opulence and splendor unmatched even by present-day Travar.

What we know of Parlainth's past in our time comes mostly from exploration of its ruins, and from legends and stories that occasionally resurface in the remotest areas of Barsaive. We know that before the Scourge, the city was the Theran provincial capital of Barsaive. To protect their fair city from the Scourge, the Therans did not transform it into a citadel, as did many other cities, but chose a different method of protection. They shifted the entire city into one of the netherworlds of astral space, wiping knowledge of its existence from every citizen's mind, believing that this was the only way to keep Parlainth safe from the Horrors.

Despite this great feat of magic, the Horrors still managed somehow to detect and invade the city during the Scourge, destroying the legendary Parlainth just as they had destroyed so many other cities.

Through the efforts of J'role the Honorable Thief and the Elementalist Releana, the Forgotten City of Parlainth was restored to earthly existence in Barsaive after the Scourge. It is true that its ruins harbor frightful creatures and Horrors, but they also contain countless treasures. The city itself is a wilderness to be explored and tamed, for the tall spires and dozens of substructures deep underground hide myriad creatures and traps for the unwary.

The small town of Haven occupies the ruined city's southeast corner. The founders of the town cleared this small portion of Parlainth of both monsters and treasure, and Haven now serves as a trading post and way station for adventurers journeying deep into the fabulous ruins in search of Parlainth's marvelous treasures.



… After about a day's ride northeast of the Caucavics, we reached Haven, where we purchased a moth-eaten adventuring log from a dwarf merchant. Using the directions supplied in its yellowing pages, we made our way to the outskirts of Parlainth, the fabled Forgotten City and the ancient Theran capital of Barsaive.

We saw the great citadel where mighty airships had once docked. Nearby, on a high hill overlooking the city, stood the monumental palace where the governor had once lived. Temples and great houses, market places and amphitheaters all spread out from the citadel. Deep green vines and mosses covered much of their fine, white stone walls, as if the jungle itself had conspired with Parlainth's original inhabitants to hide the great city. Though the wind and rain of many years had left the white stone pockmarked and pitted, close inspection revealed intricately carved designs and glyphs, a silent testament to the skill of Parlainth's artisans.

We carefully made our way toward the city center, on constant watch for the numerous Horrors still inhabiting the dead city.

Suddenly, we froze in our tracks. Before us lay a rectangular courtyard the size of ten Theran kilas, a courtyard whose white stone walls still bore the brown stains of blood spilled long ago. We had found the ancient Theran slave market.

—From the journal of Sargon of Urupa

Haven may provide refuge against the dangers of Parlainth, but its inhabitants—adventurers, thieves, swindlers, mad wizards, and even Horrors disguised as any of the above—often prove as formidable a challenge as the traps and monsters of the Forgotten City.

It seems certain that the Therans have spies within Haven, keeping watch over Parlainth and any explorers who plunder its ruins. Speculations about their aims range from Theran plans to reclaim Parlainth and retrieve its treasures for their empire to tracking or even waylaying treasure-seekers brave enough to explore its depths.

— Kern Redhand, Historian of Throal

ON BLOOD WOOD

Blood Wood, a place both miraculous and unsettling, marks the Northern boundary of Barsaive. Though life has returned to much of the world since the end of the Scourge, no place is so rich with life as the legendary Blood Wood. Revived and magically rejuvenated by the corrupted elves of the North, the forest has grown to enormous proportions and now stands as a testament to the beauty that elves, corrupted or not, can create.

If you have ever experienced mixed feelings, such as pain and pleasure, joy and sadness, or pride and shame, then you know what I felt being given the task of compiling information about Blood Wood and the Elven Court. Of course, many non-elves in Barsaive also feel as I do, and I know that my racial background should have no bearing on my work as a scholar, but I could not help but wonder what would have been my fate had I been born in Wyrm Wood instead of in a kaer. Might I have ended up as a blood elf? I cannot say, and do not wish to know.

—Set down on the Third Day of Rua, 1505 TH, by Karon Foll, elven Scholar

Blood Wood grows thick with green- and red-leafed undergrowth that brushes against a visitor's legs. Tall, thick-trunked birch trees overgrown with layers of furry moss lean down overhead, their leaves blocking most of the sun's light and turning the forest into an endless cavern of undergrowth. Thick vines hang in long loops from the canopy overhead down to the ground. Animal life is equally abundant in the forest. Though a traveler sometimes crosses an eerily silent section of the woodland—more terrifying than any constant sound—the animals of the Blood Wood chatter and call and whistle. Many of the smaller animals prey on each other, posing no threat to travelers. Other animals are very dangerous; the small but deadly blood monkey, the fierce witherfang, the sly giant python, and others all wait to hunt down the careless traveler.

But these mundane plants and animals are not the greatest danger within Blood Wood, nor are they its most interesting inhabitants. This magnificent forest is home to the largest elven population in Barsaive, the corrupted elves who still worship the Elven Queen Alachia as their High Queen and the guardian of elven culture.

… I remember my first sight of Blood Wood, decades ago. A shimmering island of green amid a barren, brown plain, its beauty both attracted and terrified me. Never in my life had I seen so many trees, hick covered the land like a monstrous army of alien growing things. The sheer abundance of life all around me made my heart stop beating and tore the breath from my throat. Knowing I must enter whether I would or not, the emerald beauty of the leaves became dark and menacing, and the thick maze of branches and trunks became a single, powerful creature that might easily devour me. Until that day, I had seen only the stark, gray interior of my kaer and the mountainous brown horizon that surrounded my meager farming village. When I entered Blood Wood, I came upon a different land; even in my dreams I had never imagined such a place, and the difference of it paralyzed me with fear and longing.

—From the journal of J'Role the Honorable Thief

How Blood Wood Came to Be

In the days before the Scourge, the Elven Queen ruled all the elves of Barsaive and other lands. All elves pledged their loyalty to her court, though many lived their entire lives without ever paying their respects to her in person. Over time, the Elven Queen lost the power to rule any but the elves. Her kingdom, however, remained the most important and linked the realms of faerie with the mundane world. No matter where they lived, all elves owed and still owe their greatest loyalty to the Court of the Elven Queen, a tradition that continues undiminished to this day.

In return for their loyalty, the Elven Queen kept safe all elves in the world. With few exceptions, every Elven Queen has fulfilled this duty to her utmost. Keeping abreast of events in the world outside her northern forest kingdom by requiring reports on the outside world from all visitors to her kingdom, each Elven Queen learned where to focus her attention to guarantee the continued welfare of her subjects.

How the Schism Occured

Even such ingrained traditions, however, could not withstand the challenge of the Horrors. Seven hundred years ago, as the world discovered the impending onslaught of the Horrors and the rulers of Thera created the Rites of Protection and Passage, Thera demanded that all citizens swear loyalty to its empire in exchange for protection from the Scourge. All elves knew that their first loyalty lay with the Elven Queen, and most expected Queen Alachia to agree to these terms. But the Queen rejected the Theran demands, and with them the Rites of Protection and Passage. Many of the elves in Barsaive, fearing they could not survive the coming Scourge without the Theran Rites, forswore Queen Alachia and joined communities that had learned the Rites of Protection and Passage.

The elves called this time of turning away the Schism. Even as thousands of elves threw in their lot with Barsaive's other races and went into hiding in the kaers and citadels, the elven folk still loyal to the Elven Queen gathered around her in the giant Wyrm Wood for the hundred years preceding the Scourge. Bitterness settled upon them, and their hearts became closed and dark. They felt betrayed not only by their own kind, but by the world itself, which demanded that people make such unforgivable choices.

The Corruption of the Elves

Unlike most communities, whose people built their kaers and citadels from the stone and earth they knew so well, the elves of Wyrm Wood drew on elemental magic to build shelters of trees and plants. The Elven Queen and her court sealed Wyrm Wood under a thick canopy of vines and leaves, placing magical wards within the trees of their forest just as other people placed wards on the stones of their kaers and citadels.

But their wards did not hold. Slowly, the Horrors ate away at the outer defenses of Wyrm Wood. Even as the beleaguered elves tried to shore up their magical defenses, the Horrors slipped in, possessing elves, attacking those who lived within the failed kaer, and arousing untold terror. In desperation, the elves began to dig deep tunnels to escape the Horrors, but the creatures had entrenched themselves in Wyrm Wood. Before long, the elves began to lose the battle in earnest. In this darkest hour of elven history, the magicians of Wyrm Wood stumbled across a possible means of salvation. Rather than fighting the Horrors, they would simply make themselves unappealing to the creatures. Because the Horrors feed on the pain they inflict on their victims, the Court chose to drive them away by inflicting agony on themselves. By twisting elemental magic, they created the Ritual of the Thorns, which made sharp thorns grow out of their bodies and cut through their flesh. With their bodies and minds awash in constant, agonizing pain on which the Horrors could not feed, the elves forced the Horrors to leave the woodland alone.

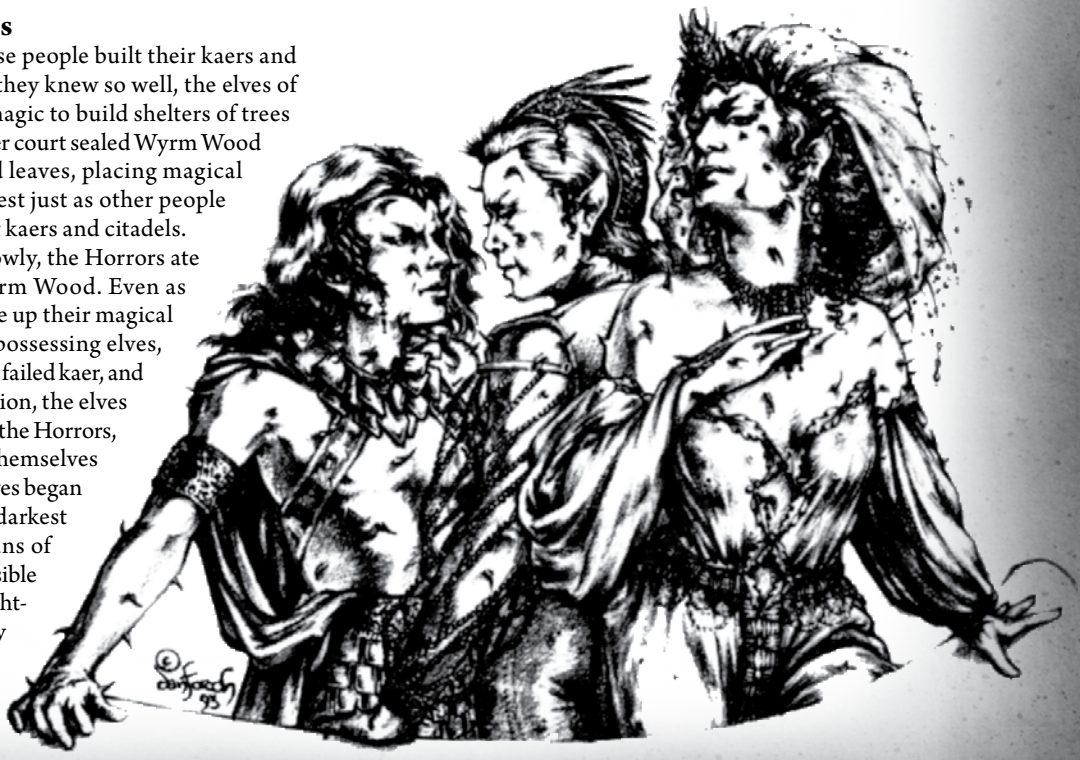
Because the Horrors also consider despair, fear, and other anguish of the heart a delicacy, the elves of the Court disciplined themselves to feel little. They feel enough to still be considered Namegivers, but are capable of only so much emotion. The blood elves, as they came to be called, can feel love and concern for others, but only to a limited degree. Like the rest of us, they have hopes, dreams, and fears—but these, too, have limits.

The terrible plan worked; the hastily dug underground shelters combined with the self-inflicted mental and physical torture kept the elves from succumbing to the Horrors. For their survival, however, they paid a dreadful price.

Some say that though the elves saved their own lives, what they did to themselves rendered their lives as empty as if they had died. Even the elves themselves cannot deny that they twisted their nature into something horrible. Still breathtakingly beautiful in their own way, the blood elves of the Queen's Court also evoke overwhelming pain and sorrow.

Though they rarely speak of it, the members of the Elven Court feel torn by their current state. The elves who survived the Scourge take great pride in their victory over the Horrors. Some continue to celebrate the extreme choice they made, scoffing at those who are repelled by their cold and masochistic existence. However, each member of the Elven Court also recognizes that he or she has become alien to the rest of the world. Though their longing is unspoken, they remember with regret the days when they lived without the constant pain and stifled emotions they now suffer.

With time and help, the Court may discover a way to reverse the Ritual of the Thorns. Of course, they will never ask for such help. In a display of elven arrogance sadly common to my race, their perverse pride in their condition prevents them from acting to achieve the changes that some small remnant of their hearts so desperately craves. They remain as they became during the Scourge; safe from the Horrors, but cut off from the world.



On Queen and Court

The life of the Court revolves around the Elven Queen's Palace, a tower of eight giant trees in a clearing in the heart of Blood Wood. The trees grow in a circle, their trunks as thick as taverns. The branches wind around each other, linking the trees in intricate patterns, as if they had been grown to create this order, and through the order, to become beautiful.

At the head of the Court is the Elven Queen. She holds ultimate power within the Court, and exerts considerable influence over elven folk outside Blood Wood who still owe her loyalty. The Elven Queen's first duty is to protect the Court, Blood Wood, and other forests across the world. Because its power and influence have eroded over the past several hundred years, the Court now finds it impossible to maintain its distance from the complicated politics of the world. If they are to survive, they must gain power by playing the same political games as every other realm.

The current Elven Queen, Alachia, has involved the Court in intrigues throughout Barsaive. Thus far, her attempts are marred by the Court's lack of experience in the affairs of other races. In centuries past, the Elven Queen and the elves of Blood Wood could command instant respect and awe; but few in Barsaive feel the same reverence since the elves carried out their self-inflicted corruption. The late King Varulus III of Throal made his antipathy toward the corrupted Court of Blood Wood quite apparent.

Those who know anything about Blood Wood and its inhabitants speculate that many years will pass before the Queen successfully replaces her imperious directness with the silent, unseen maneuvering necessary in our time.

Queen Alachia appoints eight advisors and courtiers, called *consortis*, one for each of the massive trees that supports the palace. The Elven Queen often dismisses a *consortis* and then appoints a new one with little warning or apparent logic. Her whims have prompted her to dismiss and reappoint some members of the court several times. As might be expected from this description, the *consortis* wield little actual power, but on occasion may influence the Elven Queen.

In the hierarchy of the Elven Court, the Court magicians are next in power to the Elven Queen and the *consortis*. Known as Blood Warders, the Court magicians continue to practice the twisted magics created during the Scourge. They create the thorn men, fire hounds, and other strange creatures that patrol Blood Wood. They advise the Elven Queen on various matters, and she listens carefully to their counsel. Though the Blood Warders often act independently of the Elven Queen's knowledge in the political sphere, the rest of the Court rarely protests their actions. The elves seem to have given the Blood Warders sole responsibility for keeping their perverse traditions alive without practicing the traditions themselves, knowing that it brings them considerable freedom to act.

Members of the Queen's personal guard are called *Exolashers*, adepts in martial magics. Fiercely loyal to the Queen, they will gladly die upon her command.

On Relations With Other Elves and Races

At the time of this writing, the Elven Court's relations with elves outside Blood Wood remain strained. The blood elves' self-inflicted corruption gives other elves pause, and the Court's strange pride in its tainted condition only increases the suspicion felt by elves not of Blood Wood. The Court frequently sends emissaries from Blood Wood to meet with other elves, whom the Elven Queen considers "lost" members of her Court, in hopes of persuading these elven communities to renew their old loyalty to the Elven Queen. On rare occasions an elf from outside returns to Blood Wood and submits him or herself to the Ritual of the Thorns. The magic of the Blood Warders corrupts these elves in the same way that all inhabitants of Blood Wood have been corrupted.

As for relations with other races and powers, the Queen has publicly decreed that the Court will undertake dealings with non-elves only when absolutely necessary. Of course, in a place such as the Elven Court, full of elves who breathe intrigue as other races breathe air, the word "necessary" has many definitions. According to one particularly interesting report, certain factions among the Blood Warders seek alliance with other realms, but must work covertly for fear of the Queen's wrath. She has, on occasion, been known to slay those who dare oppose her too openly. One rumor speaks of a Nameless Blood Warder who even engaged in secret correspondence with the Theran Empire.

On the Theran Presence in Barsaive

The arrival of the *Triumph* came as a surprise for Barsaive's Overgovernor Kypros, who has been left behind with his garrison at Sky Point as a testament to his failure to quell the anti-Theran resistance activities in Barsaive. While Overgovernor Kypros is currently in charge of the province of Barsaive, his influence is limited to the area around the Sky Point outpost and the Theran-controlled city of Vivane.

The vast majority of Theran forces in Barsaive are controlled by General Nikar Carinci, who had been selected by the First Governor to establish a large, permanent military installation in Barsaive's heartland. The fortress of *Triumph* serves this purpose, reminding all people of Barsaive of the power of the Theran Empire.

Of Barsaivian Land Under Theran Control

Though the Theran Empire once ruled all of Barsaive, in our time Thera controls only a portion of Barsaivian land. The regions currently under the control of Thera lie in Barsaive's heartland near Lake Ban and in the Southwestern corner of the province, extending north to the Delaris Mountains and east to Death's Sea, touching the edge of the Twilight Peaks.

The largest city in the Theran-controlled area of Barsaive is Vivane, which lies completely under the empire's thumb. Though this city has a Barsaivian native loyal to Thera as its nominal leader, it is commonly understood that this Barsaivian magistrate is nothing more than a puppet controlled by Overgovernor Kypros. Clearly visible from the military base at Sky Point, Vivane is the Theran playground, and many Therans regard it as their new provincial capital.

Every town and city close to Vivane and Sky Point has Theran representatives and administrators living within its boundaries. These official representatives of the Theran Empire often receive a small contingent of soldiers to be stationed in the town, usually numbering from five to fifty troops.

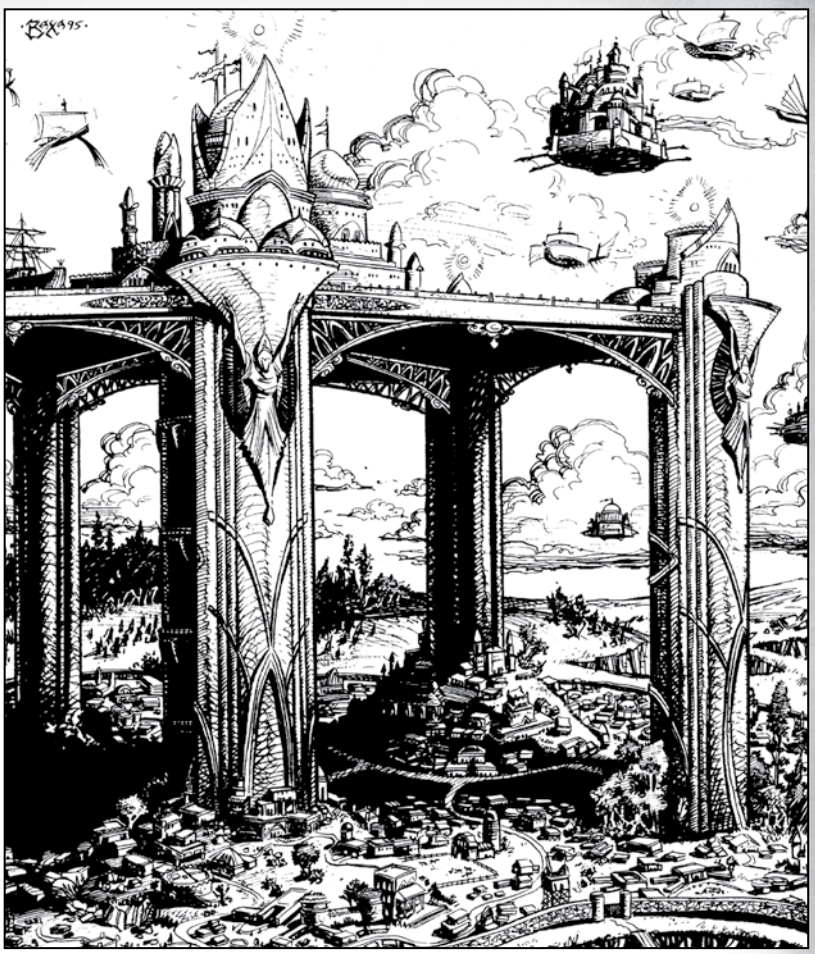


You ask me what it is to live under Theran rule? By your words it sounds as if you expect me to horrify you with tales of terrible perversions, of public slaughter, of arrogance, treachery, and oppression. It is not so.

Yes, the Therans can be harsh masters. As I write this, I sit in the shadow of the Overgovernor's airship Ascendancy, *which is once again docked at the Basalt Spire. It is here as a warning that the riots in the Broken Quarter must stop. Tonight, Theran guardsmen will bring that warning down into the streets, dealing with lawbreakers most harshly. But if a man breaks the law, should he not be punished?*

Vivane is quiet, my friend. More quiet now than before the Therans returned. Yes, days and nights of fire and blood nearly consumed the city before the people recognized the truth before them. But I, for one, am pleased they are here. I feel safe. For as long as they remain, no Horror would dare come here, nor would any ork scorcher or raider. I feel safe, too, from the thieves that once peered in my windows at night, lusting after my wares and my children. The Therans have made Vivane safe for myself and my daughters. What more can I ask?

—From a letter by Adrak Erraom, liquid jewel merchant of Vivane, TE 1008



On Sky Point

Sky Point, one of the two Theran military strongholds within Barsaive's borders, is a huge platform elevated hundreds of feet above the ground by thick stone pillars. Overgovernor Kypros rules Sky Point through a group of Theran functionaries who see to the efficient running of the base. One can only reach the platform by airship or through spells or magical items designed to levitate people or objects through the air. No stairs or other mechanical means provide access to Sky Point, which makes the platform safe from most attackers. Each of the pillars is 300 feet thick and built to sustain a great deal of damage without breaking.

At all hours of the day and night Theran mining ships, crewed by slaves, float off the platform to search for elemental air. The Therans use bursts of elemental fire to breach the barriers between planes and reveal pockets of the precious material. These mining bursts can sometimes be seen as far north as Throal, and serve as a constant reminder of the Theran presence. The mining ships are a common target for the crystal raiders, and the Therans exert serious efforts to keeping their mining operations safe from raiders and saboteurs.

Of Vrontok

Under the shadow of the Sky Point platform lies Vrontok, a settlement comprised mostly of humans who have thrown in their lot with the Therans. These unscrupulous people range all over Barsaive, capturing other sentient beings to sell to the Therans as slaves in exchange for Theran protection and certain magical items.

The settlement numbers some 20,000 inhabitants. Its dwellings huddle around two of the platform's pillars; many of them are built against the pillars themselves, rising on top of each other like moss climbing up a tree. Of course, these dwellings do not reach high enough to allow access to the platform.

Sky Point and Vrontok are surrounded by a series of trenches and pickets to foil attack from the ground. Several drawbridges allow access to the land beneath the platform, each heavily guarded. Theran soldier units live in camps beneath the platform, where the troops conduct maneuvers designed to repulse any invasion by land.

Of the Ascendancy

Kypros holds court from his personal kila, the *Ascendancy*, which is usually docked at Sky Point or the city of Vivane. Kypros regularly flies over the Southwest section of the province to keep his Barsaivian allies in line and strike fear into the hearts of those who dare resist him.

From observation and the reports of escaped slaves, we know a little about the *Ascendancy*. The vessel is shaped like a square, two hundred feet to a side. At each corner stands a circular, fifty-foot-tall tower. The towers widen at the base, and this splayed plinth makes battering down the walls a difficult task.

The ship carries 170 sailors and 300 Theran soldiers. One out of every ten soldiers is an adept in a Discipline of martial combat. The *Ascendancy* carries approximately 200 close combat warriors and 100 archers and crossbowmen. The walls of the kila enclose the *Ascendancy's* Great Tower, which stands almost 70 feet tall and nearly 50 feet across. The walls are eight feet thick, and support a spiral staircase built into the side facing the kila's courtyard. The first floor of the Great Tower is the great hall, which contains a cooking hearth and serves as Kypros' council chamber and feast hall.

Kypros' quarters—a hall furnished with tables and chairs, a master bedroom, and a library—occupy the second floor. The stairway continues to a third floor, and from there to the roof. We do not yet know what the third floor contains, though rumors claim it is an elaborate shrine to the Mad Passion Dis. Slaves taken to the third floor never return, leading us to suspect that the Therans practice live sacrifice even though the Passions forbade such barbaric offerings generations ago.

Of Lankarden

The Theran garrison of Lankarden serves as a way station and staging area for military operations into northeastern Barsaive, Cara Fahd, and Landis. Although the town holds only 2,000 people, the Theran Empire stations four hundred soldiers in Lankarden and keeps at least two vedettes moored at the twin 250-foot airship towers inside the walls. Gaping metal chutes for dumping elemental fire and oil on enemy forces stand at regular intervals on the battlements, along with two vast catapults and several ballista platforms.

Newcomers immediately notice Lankarden's precise and military atmosphere, as the Therans remain rigorously suspicious of outsiders. Lankarden's fine smithies churn out armor, weapons, airship accessories, and other material of war at a prodigious rate. The army also pays for the upkeep of several large farmsteads nearby that raise fine horses for the cavalry. While Lankarden supports a minor trade in animal skins and similar booty from hunter-gatherers, this commerce is much less organized than similar trading elsewhere. The Therans in Lankarden frequently employ mercenaries to bring back maps and information regarding the current state of affairs in Cara Fahd.

Local people rely on Vivane for provisions and rather devote their own efforts to capturing and selling slaves. A majority of slavers in this area of the province bring their captives to Lankarden and load them aboard airships en route to Sky Point. Mercenaries and ork scorchers occasionally bring their slave trains directly to the town, though the Therans prefer to deal with these people elsewhere and transport the slaves in their own airships.

Because Landis was largely unprotected from the Scourge, the Horrors ran rampant through that region's hills and mountains. Horror-possessed victims have entered Lankarden in the past, making local authorities wary of newcomers. As a form of defense, a small cabal of Theran Nethermancers lives in Lankarden, including at least one of considerable power. This magician's identity is known only to a handful of senior Theran military personnel, including the rulers of Vivane. From time to time, General Crotias or General Tularch visits this outpost personally rather than relying on reports from subordinate officers.

On Triumph

Clearly visible from the Serpent River, the grounded behemoth *Triumph* towers over the nearby landscape. The central part of the behemoth-turned-fortress includes the keep and towers from the former airship. Elemental magic was used to anchor the vessel's walls once it landed to provide additional stability. Also, the foundations of the towers and walls extend deep into the hillside to provide a strong defense and (so rumor has it) numerous secret tunnels and passages under the fortress city.

The city contains considerable room for expansion, and slaves are imported daily to work on fortifying the citadel. The Theran's life-draining magic has been depleting the energies of the Ayodhya Liferock underneath the fortress ever since the ship landed. A number of obsidimen trapped inside the Liferock are forever imprisoned, and the spirit of Ayodhya is doomed to wither away to nothing.

Of Theran Military Forces

The Theran Empire maintains a substantial military presence in Barsaive, which is split between the outposts of Sky Point and *Triumph*.

The Theran Airship Fleet

The fortress city of *Triumph* is home to an air fleet composed of two Theran kilas and six stone vedettes, all with full crew complements. Most often, the kila known as the *Righteous* is stationed over the confluence of the South Reach of the Serpent River and Lake Ban, and the vedettes transport crewmen and supplies between the kila and the fortress city as needed. The second kila, known as the *Defiant*, typically patrols the length of the South Serpent River.

The vedettes stationed at the fortress city include four vessels from the Seventh Fleet at Sky Point: two mining ships, the *Amethyst* and the *Moonstone*; and two combat vedettes, the *Dauntless* and the *Ferocious*. Generally, three vedettes patrol the perimeter of the fortress city, while the other three perform elemental mining and courier duties. From time to time, the vedettes also escort Theran ground forces or K'tenshin riverboats on trips to some of the less hospitable regions of the Serpent River. The Naval Commander of Triumph is Captain Drak Windsearcher, a troll as well as an old friend of General Nikar.

Two additional kila, stationed at Sky Point, patrol within the borders of Barsaive, the *Prestige* and the *Regal*, both commanded by Provincial Admiral Tularch, the former Overgovernor of Barsaive. The *Prestige* is a circular kila, 120 feet across with five towers built into the ship's wall. One of the towers serves as the great hall and Tularch's personal chambers. The *Regal* is a triangular kila, smaller than the *Prestige*, with a tower at each corner. Tularch also commands a dozen vedettes outfitted for combat and another dozen outfitted for mining. The admiral enjoys complete freedom to use the fleet as she wishes, but must report all maneuvers to Kypros.

Theran Ground Forces

Theran soldiers in Barsaive consist of the Fifth and Eighth Theran Legion. Within the legions are units called divisions, each made up of 120 troops in twelve files and ten ranks. A single division usually handles garrison duties and patrols the area around Sky Point.

A legion is also divided into larger units called cohorts. Four divisions form a cohort, numbering 480 soldiers. The foot soldiers are a mix of heavy infantry for close combat and light infantry armed with projectile weapons. The heavy infantry outnumber the light infantry three to one, and one out of every ten soldiers is an adept in martial combat. When a great battle is planned, all the divisions combine into cohorts, and the cohorts combine into a legion of 4,200 troops. Outside of such large-scale battles, cohorts often receive orders to engage in smaller skirmishes on their own.

The commander of a division is called a *strategos*, the commander of a cohort a *polemarch*. On paper, a General also commands the soldiers posted to the airships in addition to the soldiers of the legion. However, an unspoken rule gives ship's officers the power of command in combat, meaning that an Admiral commands her own soldiers in practice.

When combined into its full force, a legion is arranged as follows: twenty divisions draw up into two lines of ten divisions each, composed of heavy infantry. A gap of 20 yards, equal to each division's width, separates the units. The units of the second line fall in behind the spaces of the first line, allowing the second line to easily advance to the first or the first to fall back to the second. This arrangement gives the troops extra mobility when marching in two lines and solidarity when they combine to fight. The combined 20 divisions have a depth of ten ranks and a front line of 1,200 feet. Completing the legion is a third line of ten units of light foot soldiers, alternated with ten units of reserve troops. Each light foot unit numbers 120, and each reserve unit numbers sixty.

The fortress city of *Triumph* houses two full cohorts of Theran soldiers—nearly a thousand warriors. Half of these are from the Theran Eighth Legion stationed at Sky Point; the remainder are from the Fifth Legion transported to Barsaive aboard General Nikar's flotilla. General Nikar Carinci has led a long and glorious career in the service of the Theran Empire. Even though he is technically outranked by Overgovernor Kypros, the arrogant t'skrang can do whatever he wants in Barsaive—and Kypros must comply because Nikar enjoys the favor of the First Governor and the empire.

The remainder of the Eighth Legion stationed at Sky Point is complemented by 700 cavalry. The troops stationed at Sky Point are under the command of General Crotias. A veteran of several campaigns in the South of the Theran Empire, Crotias arrived in Barsaive only half a decade ago, in 1504 TH.

CHAPTER SIX

GAMEMASTERING

Rules are meant to be broken, or at least twisted into a more pleasing shape. But the Passions protect their rules. Those you had best obey, lad, as courteously as you can.

• Garlthik One-Eye, Ork Thief •

The **gamemaster** determines how the rules of the game work, and makes sure everyone follows the same ground rules and interpretations. Though not easy, the gamemaster's role can be the most enjoyable part of playing roleplaying games. The gamemaster also awards the characters Legend Points for successfully completing an adventure, rewarding the player for roleplaying and the character for meeting goals, acting skillfully, and surviving.

The information in this chapter mostly benefits the gamemaster, but players may find it interesting as well. After playing a game for a while, the gamemaster and another player may want to trade places; the gamemaster becomes a player and creates his own character, and the player takes on the responsibilities of the gamemaster.

But before we delve into the down-and-dirty methods and tactics for gamemastering **Earthdawn**, we would like to point out a few things to keep in mind while running **Earthdawn**, or any roleplaying game for that matter. Remembering these few ideas may make running the game a whole lot easier. As with all the rules in this book and the ***Player's Guide***, treat the following as a guideline.

GROUND RULES

All roleplaying games have rules. Without them, the gamemaster would have a difficult time figuring out whether or not a character succeeds at an action and determining the outcome of a multitude of other events and situations. In addition to the rules specific to each different game, all roleplaying games share the following ground rules.

GAMEMASTER'S AUTHORITY

The gamemaster is the final authority. He accepted the responsibility for running the game, and therefore has the right to make the final decisions about what works and what doesn't. We guarantee that during the course of a game, the players will disagree with a decision made by the gamemaster. Don't worry about it. If the players are uncomfortable with a decision, discuss it after the game session ends, or before the next game session. Stopping in the middle of a game to discuss the rules interrupts the flow of the action and makes it difficult to resume play at the same level. It also makes more sense to discuss rules disagreements after everyone has had a chance to calm down—explaining how the device that killed a character works may not make much of an impression on a player who just lost Barsaive's most legendary obsidiman Illusionist.

To effectively shoulder his responsibilities, the gamemaster must keep track of what happens during the game. If the gamemaster does not know that a character is taking an action, he may decide that that action didn't happen. For example, if a character wants to visit the marketplace to purchase new equipment, the player must tell the gamemaster what his character intends to do. He cannot simply say, *"I went to the marketplace and bought some new equipment."* The gamemaster may simply reply, *"No, you didn't,"* and his decision stands whether the player likes it or not. Keep in mind that the gamemaster's authority does not exist to allow the gamemaster to micromanage each player's character, or to ignore actions that throw off his plans. It simply prompts players to inform the gamemaster of any and all actions they want their characters to take. After all, the gamemaster cannot keep track of events unless he knows they are occurring.

MAKE IT FUN

Roleplaying games are first and foremost a form of entertainment. Think about it. Why do you play roleplaying games? To get together with some friends and have a good time. But it's easy, in the heat of the moment, to forget that you are playing the game to enjoy yourself. Some players pout when the adventure doesn't go the way they want it to. Some players get mad when their characters are injured or killed.

If at some point you discover that the group is no longer having fun playing **Earthdawn** (we hope this never happens), then stop. Talk it over with the rest of the players, and try to figure out why you are no longer enjoying yourselves. Maybe you just need a break. There's no harm in stopping a game session early to go out for pizza. Or maybe you're tired of gamemastering, and want to try playing instead. As well as giving another player the chance to be the gamemaster, this gives you a chance to learn what it's like on the other side of the gamemaster screen.

ON THE NATURE OF RULES

The world of **Earthdawn** is a fictional world—and the rules and mechanics presented reflect that fictional universe. The mechanics for doing things in **Earthdawn** are abstract guidelines for all of a character's actions, including combat, magic, and even social interactions. While we took real world concepts and abstracted them into game mechanics, the rules of a game like this cannot take into account all conditions or factors that constitute a given situation. In some cases this means certain game mechanics are there to make the game fun and entertaining rather than to reflect how things would work in reality—and in all cases, the rules have to abstract things we take for granted in daily life.

At the same time, we guarantee that two people playing **Earthdawn**, whether player or gamemaster, will read the same rule in this book and interpret it two different ways. For example, a player might declare that his character intends to resolve a situation using a talent that you, the gamemaster, consider inappropriate to the task at hand. You reread the talent description, and tell the player, *"The description doesn't say that you can do that with this talent."* The player may retort, *"Well, it doesn't say I can't."* Who's right?

Hundreds of individual abilities create a lot of rules to keep track of, and so questions of interpretation will arise. In most cases, the gamemaster decides how the rule works. As a rule of thumb, the **Earthdawn** rules describe what your character can do, rather than what he cannot, and so in the example above, the gamemaster's interpretation of the rule would be correct. While we've tried to deal individually with most of the rules that we feel may pose problems, we cannot anticipate every possible question. We recommend resolving disputes over rule interpretations as they arise, on a case-by-case basis. Because of the vast array of possibilities presented in these rules, no single rule of thumb covers everything.



Changing the Rules

As the gamemaster, you are in control. If a particular game mechanic doesn't fit your style of play or doesn't make sense to you, feel free to come up with something else you think works better. The rules of the **Earthdawn** game are there to help tell good stories—when the rules get in the way of telling the story, ignore them. Getting bogged down in rules disputes is counterproductive—it is always important to keep the plot moving, so be encouraged to improvise things on the spot.

If you create a new rule to resolve a specific situation that arises during a game, decide later whether or not you want to keep using it. You might decide to make it a "house rule" that will always apply in the future, or a one-shot solution that only applies in a similar situation. As with disputes over rules or decisions, wait until the game session ends to talk about the new rule: the middle of an adventure is no place to discuss the fine points of game mechanics. Gamemasters and players should play by the rules, so that everyone works with the same set of assumptions; but in case you change rules, make sure everyone knows the new version.

When Not to Use the Dice

Action Tests should only be required when the situation demands it. Encourage your players to roleplay a situation instead of rolling the dice to randomly determine the outcome of their attempts. More often than not, the gamemaster can tell what the outcome of a given situation is. If it isn't important to the story, don't even bother to make a test. In these situations, the gamemaster can simply provide a description of the outcome of a character's action—just go for the most dramatic or most amusing result and move on.

Play Fair

Needless to say, everyone playing the game should play fair. Players should be honest (and good-natured) about lousy dice rolls, and admit it when a character falls unconscious. Cheating at a roleplaying game is like cheating at solitaire. Any victory won by cheating is an empty one. The gamemaster is the only one allowed to ignore his own die rolls, but only when the rules get in the way of fun (see **Death and Earthdawn**, p.86, for some additional advice).

Always remember that the players and gamemasters know far more about what is happening than the characters they play. A player may learn how his character should behave in Throal to avoid getting into trouble, or may develop more effective combat tactics against specific creatures. However, his character may not be privy to this information, and during the game the player should avoid having his character take actions based on information the character would not actually know. Likewise, the gamemaster knows the player characters' skills, weapons, spells, and so on, but the band of ork scorchers waiting in ambush on the edge of the forest should not.

Allowing gamemaster characters to respond to the player characters and make plans based on the gamemaster's knowledge is unfair to players, and makes for a frustrating game.

Mistakes

Everyone makes mistakes—players and gamemasters both. As you play **Earthdawn**, you may misinterpret how we intended some of the rules to work. By using the rules, playing the game, and comparing notes with other players and gamemasters, you may discover these mistakes. Don't agonize over goof-ups, but do explain the mistake to the players, especially if changing the use of a rule drastically affects the game universe or mechanics as your players know them.

Mistakes don't have to be a big deal. If you make a mistake, don't waste your time trying to figure out how it happened. Just admit the error, apologize to the players, and correct it if you can.

Customizing Earthdawn

Every **Earthdawn** game should be unique. The rules and information about the world that we publish should serve as a starting point: from there, it's up to you to present the world to your players in an interesting and appropriate way. A few suggestions for how to use the various aspects of the world of **Earthdawn** to make it your own appear below.

But before we begin, a word of warning: we have a firm idea of how the world of **Earthdawn** works and how it will develop, and we plan to publish **Earthdawn** material according to that vision. It may happen that material in one of our future products contradicts something you've developed on your own or changed in your game. You must decide how to resolve such contradictions, since we can only consider our version of the universe for purposes of continuity and other issues in our products. You can decide which ideas you like from your version and the published information and integrate both worlds into your next unique adventure or campaign. We don't think that is a problem, and neither should you. You can ignore what we've written or take it and change it to make it the game you want to play—the way the world of **Earthdawn** comes to life for you and your players is up to you. While we don't expect you to completely rewrite the rules, you are invited to tweak them here and there so that the game plays the way you like. **Earthdawn** will become your own world as a result.

Creatures and Horrors

If you don't like the creature or Horror descriptions we provide, feel free to change them and their game statistics. Keep in mind, however, that the Legend Point Awards for the creatures are calculated according to a system that takes into account their game statistics and abilities. If you change the statistics, review the ratio of the creature's power to the size of the Legend Point Award. The ***Gamemaster's Companion*** contains details on how to do that.

The least risky thing to change about creatures and Horrors is their activity cycle and habitats. If it suits your adventure for a wormskull to be found in a wet, marshy swamp, then that's where it should be. We don't mind. Once again, what we publish should serve as the starting point; the base from which the rest of the game grows. It's up to you to aid that growth.

Treasure

Earthdawn encourages its gamemasters to customize magical treasures. Even the treasures provided in this book present only about half the information you need to use them in your adventure or campaign—you must supply the remainder of the information. This includes the specifics of Key Knowledges known as Research Knowledge. The open-ended system we created for magical treasure allows you to take what we provide and fill in the details in the way best suited to your group and adventure. In this area more than others, **Earthdawn** becomes your game. The **Magical Treasures** chapter (p.130) covers all you need to know about developing and customizing magical treasure.



Therans

In our version of **Earthdawn**, the Theran Empire plays an important role in the setting of the game. They present a threat to the province of Barsaive, constantly plotting and working to reclaim what was once theirs. They have a network of spies in place across Barsaive to implement their plans and work toward their ends, and they have landed the fortress of *Triumph* in the middle of the province as part of their plan.

If you don't like the idea of the Therans, and political intrigue and scheming is not the type of game you like to run, pretend the Therans don't exist or that they never returned after the first Theran War. Feel free to ignore them and scratch the fortress of *Triumph* off the map. On the other hand, you may want more information about the Therans now, because you want them to play a central role in your very first campaign. In that case, play up their role in Barsaive or raise the stakes for the players in your group. For example, if one of your players wants to play an obsidiman, make him part of the Ayodhya brotherhood. That way, he will have an active interest in working against the Therans.

Tone and Mood

As discussed in the **Adventures and Campaigns** chapter on p.99, there are many ways to create the right mood for your **Earthdawn** adventures. But the game itself may be played using one of several different moods.

Earthdawn can be a game of heroic fantasy, where the characters strive to reclaim the world from the evils of the Horrors and the Therans that threaten it. **Earthdawn** can also be a world of discovery and wonder, where the characters are constantly surprised and amazed by each new discovery. This **Earthdawn** is full of unexplored lands and hidden secrets—some of which offer knowledge, others danger.

Earthdawn may also be a dark, injured world where the characters continually discover the scars the Horrors left on the world through their own efforts and through those corrupted by the Scourge. This dark mood of corruption can be easily related to a Horror theme, where people use whatever means necessary to protect themselves from the Horrors without regard for the consequences.

Choosing a specific mood and tone for your game is another way to make your **Earthdawn** unique.

Blood Magic

Blood magic is one of the most disturbing elements of the world of **Earthdawn.** How you decide to use it in your campaign is important. Blood magic is very powerful; the blood charms and blood oaths in the ***Player's Guide*** represent powerful forces in the game. The gamemaster should also recognize that blood magic is one of the after-effects of the Scourge, and as such is inherently dangerous.

People turned to blood magic in an attempt to protect themselves from the Horrors before the Scourge. Though people have used it less in the years since the Scourge ended, blood magic still has a strong presence in Barsaive. Many people consider blood magic a constant reminder of the days of the Scourge, a time that most people would like to forget, and so the majority of the population shuns these magics. See the **New Blood Magic** chapter in the ***Gamemaster's Companion*** for more information.

Goods and Services

The **Goods and Services** chapter on p.247 of the ***Player's Guide*** offered some guidelines for assigning Availability ratings to equipment and services in Barsaive. Availability provides another area in which you can customize your game. By making different goods and services more or less easy to obtain, you are altering the world to match your vision.

You may decide that blood charms are available, but only on the black market at outrageous prices. Perhaps you think that magical healing aids should be readily available nearly everywhere in Barsaive. Certain weapons and armor may only be available in certain marketplaces, or be sold only by traveling peddlers. These and other choices further define your game and make it different from others.

Player Ideas

Your best source of ideas for customizing your **Earthdawn** game could be your players. We're confident that they will be able to tell you exactly what they want and don't want in their game, down to specific items, rules, talents, and spells. Asking for this input may

result in more information than you actually wanted or needed, but will serve two purposes: it lets you know how they would like to see the game tailored, and lets you know what type of game they want to play. If you create a campaign with a dark, gritty mood, but they tell you they want heroic fantasy, you may want to reevaluate your approach.

If you give the players what they want, they're likely to stay with your game longer, and everyone will have a better time playing. However, you are the gamemaster, and, ultimately, you decide how your game will be played. We don't suggest that you alienate your players by insisting that everything be done your way, but they should also be willing to compromise and try something different. After all, that's why you picked up a new game in the first place—because it offered something different. But remember, having fun is the reason you chose to play **Earthdawn** in the first place.

GAMEMASTERING GUIDELINES

The world of **Earthdawn** is an exciting place filled with dangers and plenty of opportunity for adventure. Whether fighting a Horror, running a campaign against the Therans, protecting a merchant caravan from marauding ork scorchers, or rescuing a t'skrang *lahala* from the clutches of a mad questor—the player characters are the heroes.

An **Earthdawn** game session should challenge the players' wits, and the gamemaster should reward good roleplaying. The following guidelines will help the gamemaster to run a challenging, exciting game.

BE AWARE!

The gamemaster has a lot to keep in mind when running a game—the major events of an adventure or campaign, the flow of the story at hand, and all the little details that make the world of **Earthdawn** come alive for the players. He must listen to what the players say and keep track of both the player and gamemaster characters: their whereabouts, their plans, and so on. Organizing all this information is a good idea—always keep a pad handy for jotting down notes on these things as the adventure moves along.

As soon as a gamemaster assembles a group of players, he should determine their interests so that he can tailor adventures to appeal to them. A gamemaster who creates adventures solely for his own enjoyment may find that his adventures flop. But because the players probably know less about the game universe than the gamemaster, they may have only vague ideas about what they want to do—don't expect complexity and depth at first. Your carefully crafted adventure may lead the characters on a wild goose chase, but if they would rather go straight for the treasure than explore the world around them and they find a way to do so, you as the gamemaster must let them play it their way. Once they get a few adventures under their belts, and their characters' life stories take shape, the players will gradually develop better-defined goals and ideas. Rather than just looking for treasure, taking on a Horror, or dealing with the Blood Elves, they may want to hunt down a particular enemy, find a lost love, take revenge on a troll moot that did them dirty, or find a specific teacher or special piece of equipment. The gamemaster can and should build his players' ideas about and goals for their characters into major themes in his adventures.

Encourage the players to write out their characters' histories, including background on each character's family and friends. In addition to using other sources, the gamemaster can draw on those histories to develop adventures that get everyone involved.

Creating detailed notes of the events of each game session will help keep important information straight and consistent. Players might perceive the game differently than the gamemaster, and knowing their perspective and interests will help keep the adventure running. Keeping Adventure Logs is a great tool to recap past events at the start of a session (see the **Building Your Legend** chapter on p.236 of the ***Player's Guide***).

By tracking important events, you can also make both campaigns and adventures increasingly deep and complex. Because the events of your adventures can and will alter the game world, the more adventures your characters take part in, the more a part of the world they become. The world will be dynamic because of the characters in your group, not simply because we publish a certain sourcebook or adventure.

BE KNOWLEDGEABLE!

The gamemaster must be familiar with the whole game. This does not mean memorizing the rulebooks word for word, but he should know them well enough to be able to find a particular rule quickly when needed. The gamemaster should also have a solid working knowledge of the basic game mechanics.

Keep a written outline of the adventure handy for quick reference. Experienced gamemasters usually improvise quite a bit as situations arise, but gamemasters working through their first adventures usually find it best to think the entire story through in advance and keep the plot relatively simple. This technique also helps gamemasters avoid those deadly lulls when the characters come face to face with a monstrous Horror, turn as one to look at the gamemaster to see what the creature does, and hear, *"Um—I just had it right here."*

Because anything can happen in a roleplaying game session, gamemasters may want to outline several possible outcomes for each adventure.



BE REALISTIC!

Remember that the gamemaster characters are people, too, with their own fears, needs, hopes, and desires. By giving the gamemaster characters lives and personalities, the stories of the game have more depth and become more memorable for everyone involved.

In the same way, play creatures as real creatures. Many gamemasters ignore the fact that most animals do not kill for pleasure. They fight only when they need to eat, protect their young, or save their hides. Keep in mind that creatures usually live where they can find food and shelter—so your player characters shouldn't run into a flock of harpies unless there is a good reason for them to be there.

BE FLEXIBLE!

Keep in mind that as the gamemaster, you 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. If a player wants to do something not explicitly covered in the rules, don't refuse to allow it on principle. Don't state that they can't attempt a specific action—this will make the game less exciting. Instead, find a creative way to resolve the attempted action. Decide what talent, skill, or Attribute applies

to the situation and inform the player that his chances are good, indifferent, or terrible. Don't reveal the precise Difficulty Number, just hint at whether or not the intended action or move is possible and how tough it might be to pull off. This way, the players can set their characters' own limitations based on their experiences with past failures.

To keep the players connected to the action, ask *"What do you do?"* each time you describe a new scene to them. By describing what they want their characters to do, the players help tell the story and add to their own enjoyment. If the players wander from the story line, you can drop hints to nudge them back in the right direction. Keep it subtle, however. A good gamemaster guides the players, he does not tell them what to do. Generally, players forced into situations they are trying to avoid are likely to end up resenting the gamemaster for not letting them play out the adventure their way.

Players always have their own ideas to solve a given situation—and every once in a while, there will be one that wrecks your carefully laid-out plans. That is not necessarily a bad thing. If the player characters act in a way you didn't consider, go with the flow and see where it leads—the results can be very rewarding. Adjusting your plans to account for the players' unexpected actions not only lets the players tell the story, but also gives inspiration for future events and further plot lines. An average game session only lasts for a few hours—allowing you to adjust your adventure between sessions.

Be Tough, But Kind!

Challenge the players. Give them obstacles and threats they can't defeat with one hand tied behind their backs. If the player characters haven't worked hard for their Legend Points, then they haven't earned them. For example, two orks armed with short swords would not be the only guards at a city's gate, and few Horrors retreat from battle after taking just a single Wound.

Once everyone becomes comfortable with the way the rules work, the gamemaster can fine-tune the "threat level" of an adventure to suit his particular group of players. On a really rough adventure, the player characters should succeed by the skin of their teeth, and may not achieve all their goals exactly as they intended. However, the gamemaster shouldn't make the adventure so tough that only one or two characters survive. The gamemaster needs to challenge the players, but not overwhelm them.

A gamemaster can kill off a character anytime. He can continue to throw enormous risks at the player characters until their luck runs out and they fail a test. But only cheap bullies do that. Gamemasters who measure their success in trashed characters soon find themselves without players. Better to be too easy on the characters than too rough.

As a failsafe option, when the player characters get in over their heads, remember that bad guys like to take prisoners. Prisoners can be made to talk. Prisoners make great hostages. Prisoners can also pay ransom to enrich their captors. Most important, prisoners may escape and live to fight another day. Fictional villains like to gloat, and they can act stupid; if villains were smart enough to kill off the heroes at the first opportunity, then every adventure movie ever made would end after the first ten minutes.

Death and Earthdawn

Death is a touchy subject in any roleplaying game. Nobody likes it when their favorite character pushes up daisies. In **Earthdawn**, flowers can spring up almost anytime and anyplace. Characters can die before they even figure out what is happening. Despite all the special rules designed to guard against dying, and despite the advantages of magic, player characters will die during an adventure.

If necessary, the gamemaster may cheat to keep characters alive. If the gamemaster believes that a character did everything right and the player just had bad luck rolling dice, the character need not die. Knock the character out! Break one of his limbs! Whatever! Don't let a well-developed character die just because the player rolled a 4 when the character needed a 5. The gamemaster can and should decide that such a character survives long enough to get medical aid.

The same goes for the best gamemaster characters. If a villain you spent hours designing gets hit by a lucky blow, bury the body under a collapsing building or make it suffer some other disaster that *"no one could possibly survive."* Then bring the villain back a few months later, ready to wreak revenge against the player characters. (Remember, if you didn't find the body, he isn't necessarily dead.)

Storytelling

Roleplaying games are a form of storytelling, the difference between a printed story and a roleplaying adventure being that in roleplaying, the whole group of players tells the story, not just the author.

For example, an author writing a story creates all the characters, the setting of the story, and the plot. He also writes all the characters' dialogue himself. The author knows the way the story will end, and the consequences of the story's final events. This style of storytelling could be called "independent storytelling."

Storytelling in a roleplaying adventure is very different. No one person creates every element of the story; instead, the players create the central characters of the story, while the gamemaster decides on the setting, creates the plot, and creates the secondary characters. Both the gamemaster and the players act out the character dialogue. This type of storytelling could be called "interactive storytelling." That is, the story unfolds through interaction between the players and the gamemaster.

This is not to say that no-one controls the story. The gamemaster must take charge, controlling the pacing of the story and determining who the players' characters meet. In order to do this successfully, the gamemaster must learn the finer points of storytelling, including creating a good plot, interesting gamemaster characters, and so on. As described above, a good adventure provides objectives, motivation, and opposition. A good gamemaster also fleshes out his adventures by adding color to the story (using theme, mood, and other elements mentioned above). The gamemaster can synthesize the story elements suggested in this section into storytelling by using roleplaying, pacing, secrecy, and drama.

Roleplaying

The gamemaster should try to roleplay each gamemaster character as fully as a player would roleplay his character. This can mean keeping track of a lot of characters, but the effort is worthwhile. Work up to fully realizing all your gamemaster characters by rounding out just the key characters in the story; for example, the village leader who asks the heroes to protect his village from the Horror that threatens it, or the Theran slaver who captures the characters and plans to sell them as slaves in Sky Point.

As soon as you feel comfortable roleplaying the major gamemaster characters, gradually expand your repertoire until you can roleplay all the gamemaster characters as individuals. Because you will almost certainly create too many characters to remember, keep notes about the gamemaster characters that will appear in the adventure. Usually a few lines on each, a description of their prominent personality traits or what they know about the adventure, is enough to jog your memory.

The gamemaster should also create well-rounded recurring gamemaster characters—those characters who appear more than once during a campaign. Recurring characters most often represent

friendly or neutral characters like merchants or teachers, though enemies or villains may also make repeat appearances.

Pacing

If you have ever read a story that seemed to drag on with no clear end in sight, or one filled with non-stop action that barely gave you time to catch a breath, you have seen examples of various styles of pacing. You can use any of these styles or many others to pace your stories; the difficult part is judging the best pacing for each adventure and your group.

One way to pace your adventures is to follow your players' lead. In other words, match the pace of the story to the players' mood. Are they bored, or do they need a break in the action? For example, if the group is preparing to make a cross-Barsaive trek and you allow them to spend the first three hours of the game session buying supplies, the players may get restless waiting for something to happen. This is when you should pick up the pace. Invent a minor incident to distract the characters and serve as a transition to their next action. For example, a fight between two farmers would draw the characters out of the various shops they were visiting and into the street. The gamemaster could take that opportunity to announce that all purchases have been made and ask what the characters intend to do next.

At the other end of the scale, if your adventure feels like one big fight after another, the players may need a break in the action to let their characters heal some damage or plan their next action.

The pacing of an adventure can also be used to emphasize some of the other elements discussed above. For example, an adventure with a creepy, dark atmosphere works well if run at a slow, steady pace. An adventure whose theme is action or heroism works best when run at a quick and lively pace.

Secrecy

Many situations in an **Earthdawn** game benefit from a bit of secrecy. Sometimes simply announcing a Difficulty Number for a particular test tells the players an important piece of information that they shouldn't know. One way to avoid revealing the gamemaster's secrets in such a case is to have the player roll the appropriate dice for the test and announce the results. Without disclosing the Difficulty Number, the gamemaster then determines if the test is successful and describes what happens.

However, even asking a player to make a dice roll can give away information. For example, if the gamemaster only asks for a Perception Test when the characters are about to trigger a trap or ambush, the players will soon figure out that connection and will know what to expect the next time the gamemaster asks for the test. To keep the players guessing, it doesn't hurt to occasionally ask every player to roll dice for no reason at all: nod sagely at the results, or say *"Huh, I thought so."* A little secrecy can be a powerful tool for helping a gamemaster stay ahead of his players.

You can also keep the players guessing by avoiding too much detail in describing important people or things. A wealth of detail about an object, person, or place tips off the players that the gamemaster spent a lot of time designing him, her, or it, and may let them know what to watch for before the gamemaster wants them to know. For example, when the players meet three gamemaster characters, one of whom is the villain and the other two are just his goons, refrain from saying, "You meet three fighters from the troll clan. The one on the left is wearing expensive, well-made clothes and an opal ring on his left ring finger, and is carrying a large battle-axe. The other two? Oh, uh, they're obviously fighters, too." This kind of description immediately tells the characters to watch out for the troll on the left. Either describe all three in relative detail, not revealing which character to watch, or introduce all three as "troll fighters; you've seen one, you've seen them all," and let the players ask for more information.

Drama

Drama can be a very effective tool to bring your players into the world of **Earthdawn**. The stories told in roleplaying games tend to be dramatic. Usually somewhat short on humor (though not always), these tales tell of heroes and danger, the very stuff of drama (or even melodrama). Don't be afraid to describe scenes to your players dramatically, or to dramatize when roleplaying your gamemaster characters. When a character you control offers his help to someone in need, don't just say, *"I'll help."* Instead, have the character declaim, *"Fear not, for I shall aid you in this time of need."* It may sound corny, but dramatic roleplaying gives your characters personality.

Remember that as a gamemaster, one of your most important responsibilities is to entertain your players. After all, the first ground rule of roleplaying is to have fun. One way of accomplishing this is through drama. If all your characters sound the same, then the players will begin to think they are the same.

Storytelling Techniques

The main techniques we recommend for storytelling in **Earthdawn** are **dreams**, **foreshadowing**, and **the tale**. Most authors use these techniques to accomplish certain things when telling stories and, while common, they are difficult to use effectively, especially the first time. For example, if you try to foreshadow events in your adventure and discover that you've been too subtle, or given the story away, don't think that you've failed and refuse to try again. Try to figure out what didn't work and learn from that mistake. You'll be better prepared to try using that technique again in the future.

Dreams

The gamemaster can use dreams to give a character (and player) a hint about something that might occur during the coming adventure. Dreams are a classic storytelling technique, often used in television shows and movies. Dreams can be used as a form of foreshadowing (see below), or to give the characters insight into a current or upcoming situation. Dreams let the player (and character) know that an event or situation is important.

Exactly how you use the dream to present information is another matter. The dream's message may be obvious, such as an accurate enactment of an upcoming event in the adventure. A dream may send a more subtle message, providing obscure clues that hint vaguely at the true situation through a metaphor or by wrapping symbolism around an event in a character's life.

Foreshadowing

In foreshadowing, an event early in the story hints at a similar, more important event later on. For example, the heroes may enter a town at the beginning of an adventure and see a child who has trapped and is torturing a small animal. The child isn't particularly cruel, he just doesn't know any better. It may even occur to the characters that perhaps the child is imitating something he's seen or heard about, or is subconsciously acting out something his conscious mind has suppressed. That event can foreshadow the heart of the adventure, when the heroes discover that a Theran slaver recently raided the town and made off with a few of the townsfolk. When the heroes track down the Theran and break into his stronghold or ship, they find that he is torturing his captives for information about a nearby town. The encounter with the small child foreshadows the heroes discovering the slaver torturing his captives.

The Tale

The world of **Earthdawn** is rich in oral tradition. Many stories and legends were passed down through the generations when Barsaive hid within the kaers and citadels to escape the Scourge. A gamemaster character sharing a tale or story with the player characters is an effective way to involve the characters in the adventure and provide the background for the story at the same time. The tale could be the legend of a long-lost magical treasure, the story of a town ravaged by a Horror that has yet to be defeated, or any number of other stories. The tale is a convenient way to tailor an adventure to your group's interests and the player characters' lives.

The players and their characters can also use the tale. The world's strong oral tradition of tales and legends should encourage adventurers to share the stories of their adventures with the people they meet throughout Barsaive. Characters may tell their stories to prove their credentials, as payment for lodging, food, or other supplies or favors, or simply to entertain the locals. And of course, the more people who know of them, the higher their Legendary Status.

Players may prefer to simply say "We tell our story while we're in town" or something to that effect. The players may also be willing to actually tell the story out loud with the drama appropriate to a heroic saga. As the gamemaster you know what happened in the last (and previous) adventures, but you may never have heard the players' version of events. If they will tell you (the gamemaster characters) the story as they remember it, you learn about events from their perspective and their view of the adventure's outcome (or the version they choose to tell strangers). This can be important if you want to build future adventures on the events of a past adventure. When the player characters tell their tale, you learn what the characters know (or remember) and can base your adventure on that information. What the player characters know may not represent the whole truth, of course.

In addition to using a gamemaster character's tale to draw the player characters into the adventure, you can base adventures on the player characters' own tale. For example, suppose you create an adventure in which the characters discover a smuggling ring in the city of Jerris. The smuggling ring is actually run by one of the city's rulers, but the players never discover that fact. They think they've found the ringleaders and smashed the smuggling operation, but the true powers behind the ring remain free to begin again. Later, you decide to create an adventure linked in some way to the smuggling adventure. The background for this adventure should not reveal the name of that city leader in connection with the ring; the characters didn't know about his involvement before and so should not learn about it now. If the goal of this new adventure is to uncover the city leader's complicity in the smuggling ring, the player characters must discover it through the usual channels.

If the gamemaster keeps careful records of everything that happens during an adventure, he will probably know what information the characters have and what they don't. But by hearing the players tell the tale of the adventure, you'll find out how they remember the adventure, and that's what's important. This knowledge allows you to build on their perception of the world, which in turn helps you maintain the illusion that the world is real.

Game Aids

To make an adventure run smoothly, the gamemaster can use several strategies to keep track of story lines, gamemaster characters, combat, treasures, and the million and one other things that go into an adventure. The following describes the most useful aids in running a game.

Displays

Visual aids are the most useful game aid a gamemaster can have. They allow the players to see exactly where they are at any point during the adventure, and help settle the inevitable (and distracting) arguments about who stands where, who got hit by what spell or weapon, and so on. Draw the area or location of your adventure on a big pad of paper, or use any of the various plastic mats made for gaming that feature hexagonal or square grids. To show the placement of characters, enemies, creatures, and so on, use counters or metal miniatures. These add a lot of atmospheric detail and are small enough that you don't need an auditorium to display a battle.

Handouts

Players love handouts and props. When possible, try to create handouts for the players to look at: letters, puzzles, character drawings, and so on. While handouts are cool, they should be relevant to the game one way or the other. For example, the price list of a trading post increases the mood of the adventure only if the characters have to do business at the post. Additionally, handouts are perfect to hold hidden clues vital to the adventure. The trading posts price list could feature an item that you want the players to purchase, for instance, or contain a secret message intended for a "special" customer.

Maps

Maps are powerful tools. A map of the area where the adventure takes place, even just a simple sketch with shapes showing landmarks, is darn near essential to the smooth running of a game. Try using two maps: one to show the explored area that everyone knows (share this with the players) and another that shows the locations of all those secret places you want to send the characters (keep this one to yourself). As the group discovers these secret locations, they can add them to the "public knowledge" map.

Maps of smaller places in which certain events take place (buildings, neighborhoods, and so on) are also important. Draw them or borrow them from elsewhere. Don't be afraid to re-use them—just as in the real world, many buildings in **Earthdawn** have similar floor plans. Heck, if you've seen one cheap inn, you've seen them all.

Gamemaster Character Files

Complete dossiers on generic gamemaster characters and/or the major gamemaster characters in a specific adventure can also help the gamemaster a great deal. Use a card file, notebook, computer database, or any other efficient system to store profiles for supporters, family members, lovers, people with special skills or talents (magicians, merchants, sages), important gamemaster characters in your game, or any other character likely to play recurring roles in adventures. Easy access to these characters lets the gamemaster throw his players plausible left curves and helps keep the game moving.

If published profiles keep showing up as characters or opponents again and again, players eventually become familiar enough with the bad guys' stats to defeat them regularly, so creating your own variations on such character profiles pays off for your game.

Assistants

Instead of keeping track of everything himself, the gamemaster can ask his players to assist him in running the game. For example, one of the players can keep track of everyone's Initiative during combat—the "Initiative Master" would be in charge to organize a combat round by asking for and announcing each player's (and the gamemaster's) turns and keep track of the duration of magical effects. Likewise, one or more players can take the role of non-vital gamemaster characters in scenes where their own characters aren't present. For example, if the group's Thief is caught by the town

watch, the gamemaster can have the other players take the role of the watchmen—doing so involves everyone in the game and takes some of the pressure off the gamemaster (since he doesn't have to play all the gamemaster characters himself). Beside the change of pace, it adds flavor to the setting and is a lot of fun. On the same note, dead or unconscious player characters can take over creatures or characters of the opposition during combat.

Creating Difficulty Numbers

Difficulty Numbers usually derive from an opponent's characteristics or abilities. However, characters often want to perform actions or tasks that do not involve another being or use of magic or a skill. These situations offer no obvious values on which to base a Difficulty Number. This section explains how to create Difficulty Numbers for these situations.

Who Can Do It?

The key to the system for creating Difficulty Numbers described below is deciding what type of person would normally perform the activity being attempted. Might an ordinary person take this action? Would a low level of skill or talent suffice to accomplish it? Is it a task that only a highly skilled practitioner would dare try? This system sets up five levels of expertise by assigning Difficulty Number Ranges to five classes of characters: Ordinary, Novice, Journeyman, Warden, and Master. Note that, while these classes directly correlate to the status levels of adepts, they also apply to non-adepts.

An **Ordinary** character has no special skill or talent with which to perform the task.

A **Novice** character possesses some skill or talent particularly suited for the task, though not at an outstanding level. Novices include those characters with beginning and average skills (Rank 1–4) and adepts from First to Fourth Circle.

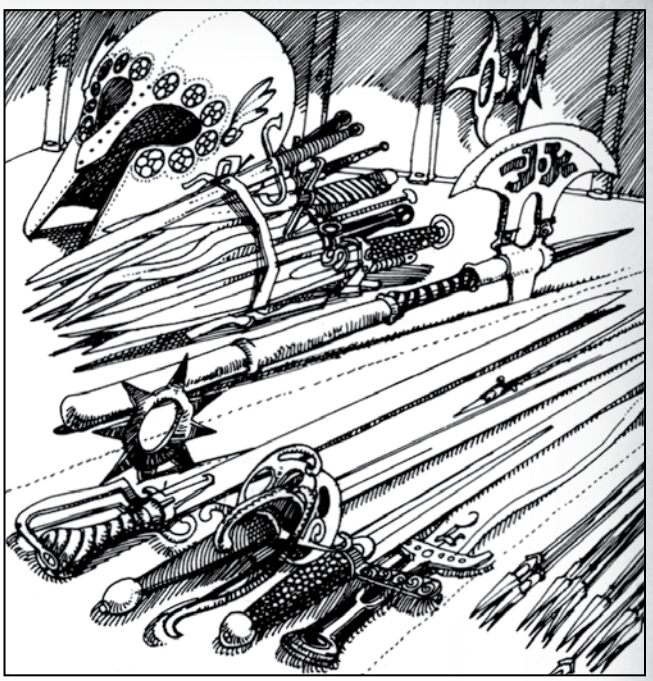
A **Journeyman** character is a seasoned veteran who knows the ropes and has climbed more than his share. Tasks that seem almost inconceivable for an Ordinary character, a Journeyman character considers merely difficult. The Journeyman category includes characters with above-average skills (Rank 5–8) and adepts from Fifth to Eighth Circle.

A **Warden** character enjoys a reputation as one of the best in his field, maybe even in the history of his field. His prowess has made him famous; others in his area of expertise speak with awe of his deeds. The Warden category includes characters with high-level skills (Rank 9–10) and adepts from Ninth to Twelfth Circle.

A **Master** character is legendary. Ordinary people know tales of his deeds, and tell them in awestruck whispers by the hearth fire. He is an example of the best that is, was, and ever will be. Tasks that he accomplishes with ease every day are the stuff of dreams to mundane characters. The Master category includes adepts from Thirteenth to Fifteenth Circle.

DIFFICULTY NUMBER TABLE

Acting Character	Easy	Average	Hard	Very Hard	Heroic
Ordinary	1–2	3–5	6–9	10–12	13–15
Novice	1–2	3–7	8–12	13–16	17–20
Journeyman	3–6	7–12	13–18	19–22	23–27
Warden	6–8	12–16	18–24	25–29	30–35
Master	8–11	17–20	25–28	29–34	35–41



Task Difficulty

Once you choose the class of character that would normally perform a task, you decide how hard that task would be for the player character actually attempting it: Easy, Average, Hard, Very Hard, or Heroic. The Difficulty Number Table lists the five classes of characters in the Acting Character column and the 5 levels of Difficulty in the Difficulty Row across the top of the table. Each entry gives a range of Difficulty Numbers appropriate for a given class of character and Difficulty level.

A character makes his first visit to the city of Jerris. He wants to find a Weaponsmith, but decides to reduce the chances of anyone remembering him by not asking for directions. To determine the Difficulty Number of finding the Weaponsmith, the gamemaster reasons that many newcomers to Jerris need to purchase goods or services. Most of them would eventually find the appropriate shops, but would also ask directions. The gamemaster decides that finding the Weaponsmith is usually an average task for ordinary folks, made a hard task by refusing to ask directions. Consulting the Difficulty Number Table, the gamemaster reads across the Ordinary row to the Hard column, which gives a Difficulty Number range of 6–9.

Finding the Difficulty Number

From the appropriate range, choose the Difficulty Number that you think fits the situation best. If you are worried about making the task too difficult, choose the lower end of the range. Keep in mind that assigning a Difficulty Number is an art, not a science. Remember that your most important job is to come up with a reasonable number quickly. Getting a number wrong might create a small ripple in the flow of your game; agonizing over the correct number for too long can stop it cold. Don't agonize. Pick a number you feel is reasonable, explain your reasoning if appropriate, and have the players roll the dice. You have our official permission to make an occasional mistake.

Adjusting Difficulty Numbers

A gamemaster has three options for further adjusting the difficulty of a given task. He can use modifiers that affect a player's

RESULT LEVEL TABLE

Task Difficulty Result Level Difficulty Number	Very Easy Pathetic	Easy Poor	Average Average	Hard Good	Very Hard Excellent	Heroic Extraordinary
2	*	1	2–4	5–6	7–8	9+
3	*	1–2	3–5	6–7	8–9	10+
4	*	1–3	4–6	7–9	10–11	12+
5	1	2–4	5–7	8–10	11–13	14+
6	1	2–5	6–8	9–12	13–16	17+
7	1–2	3–6	7–10	11–14	15–18	19+
8	1–3	4–7	8–12	13–15	16–19	20+
9	1–4	5–8	9–14	15–17	18–21	22+
10	1–5	6–9	10–15	16–19	20–22	24+
11	1–5	6–10	11–16	17–20	21–24	25+
12	1–6	7–11	12–17	18–22	23–26	27+
13	1–6	7–12	13–19	20–24	25–28	29+
14	1–7	8–13	14–20	21–25	26–30	32+
15	1–8	9–14	15–22	23–26	27–30	33+
16	1–9	10–15	16–23	24–27	28–32	35+
17	1–10	11–16	17–24	25–29	30–33	37+
18	1–11	12–17	18–25	26–30	31–35	38+
19	1–11	12–18	19–27	28–32	33–36	39+
20	1–12	13–19	20–28	29–33	34–38	41+
21	1–13	14–20	21–29	30–35	36–40	42+
22	1–14	15–21	22–30	31–36	37–41	44+
23	1–15	16–22	23–32	33–37	38–42	45+
24	1–15	16–23	24–33	34–38	39–43	47+
25	1–16	17–24	25–34	35–40	41–45	48+
26	1–17	18–25	26–35	36–41	42–46	49+
27	1–18	19–26	27–36	37–42	43–48	51+
28	1–18	19–27	28–38	39–44	45–49	52+
29	1–20	21–28	29–39	40–45	46–50	54+
30	1–20	21–29	30–40	41–46	47–52	55+
31	1–21	22–30	31–41	42–47	48–53	56+
32	1–22	23–31	32–42	43–48	49–54	58+
33	1–23	24–32	33–44	45–50	51–56	59+
34	1–23	24–33	34–45	46–51	52–57	61+
35	1–24	25–34	35–46	47–52	53–59	62+
36	1–25	26–35	36–47	48–53	54–59	64+
37	1–26	27–36	37–48	49–55	56–61	65+
38	1–27	28–37	38–50	51–56	57–62	67+
39	1–28	29–38	39–51	52–57	58–63	68+
40	1–29	30–39	40–52	53–58	59–65	70+
41	1–28	29–40	41–52	53-60	61–70	71+
42	1–29	30–41	42–53	54-61	62–71	72+
43	1–30	31–42	43–54	55-63	64–72	73+
44	1–31	32–43	44–55	56-64	65–74	75+
45	1–31	32–44	45–57	58-66	67–76	77+

* A Pathetic result only occurs on a roll of all ones on the Action Dice (see the **Game Concepts** chapter on p. 15 of the ***Player's Guide***).

Action Test result (see **Bonuses and Penalties** in the **Game Concepts** chapter on p.14 of the ***Player's Guide***), adjust the Difficulty Number directly, or use a result level other than Average. The first two options allow the gamemaster to fine-tune the Difficulty Number, while modifying result levels provides a universal, but more coarse-grained, approach.

Modifiers vs. Difficulty Numbers

There is a difference between applying modifiers to a test result and modifying the Difficulty Number directly, although it is a small one. But how do you decide what's best in a given situation? Our rule of thumb is: if the effect is **temporary**, modify the character's test result; if the effect is **permanent**, adjust the Difficulty Number.

For example, when a character is under pressure or making a decision to do something different, his test result should be modified accordingly. If the character is facing a task that will be the same working under any circumstances (such as finding a Weaponsmith without asking for directions in the example above), a higher Difficulty Number will do the trick.

Climbing the rigging of a ship sailing on the Aras Sea is an Average task for Novice class characters (Difficulty Number 3–7). Now consider the ship being caught in a fierce storm—blinding spray, howling winds, and crashing waves make being above deck a lot more dangerous. This situation is not permanent, so the gamemaster applies a –4 modifier to the test result of any character trying to get up the rigging. Using the rigging to swing across the deck and snatch the hat off a passenger's head is a different story. Ordinary and Novice characters shouldn't be capable of performing this task, but experienced sailors (Journeymen characters) should. Consulting the table, the gamemaster sees that an Average task for a Journeyman character has a Difficulty Number range of 7–12. The gamemaster decides that a Difficulty Number of 10 is appropriate for this particular task.

Result Levels

As a third option, the gamemaster can also use the Result Level Table to determine how difficult a task is to perform depending on the current conditions or situation. This works in any situation, but is much more coarse-grained.

To do this, the gamemaster determines the Difficulty Number of the task under normal (Average) circumstances using the methods described above, then determines the revised level of Difficulty he wishes to assign to the task (Easy, Hard, Very Hard, or Heroic). Once the gamemaster has chosen one of these levels of Difficulty, he finds that level on the Task Difficulty line (the top line of the expanded Result Level Table) and reads down the appropriate column until he reaches the row for the base Difficulty Number.

The numbers at the intersection point of the column and the row give the range of modified Difficulty Numbers appropriate for a given class of character and Difficulty level. As always, choose the Difficulty Number from the appropriate range that you think fits the situation best.

While trying to pick a door lock, Poorht the Thief triggers a trap which pours hot water down on him. Under normal circumstances, the Difficulty Number for picking a lock is 9. However, because of the extreme discomfort and distraction caused by picking a lock under a shower of hot water, the gamemaster decides that the task is Hard. Consulting the Result

PERCEPTION DIFFICULTY TABLE

Situation	Typical Difficulty Number
Hidden target	Target's Dexterity step
Locate trap	Trap Detection Difficulty
Spot secret doors	8+
Notice clues	5+
Notice anything unusual about surroundings	6

PERCEPTION MODIFIERS TABLE

Environmental Condition	Difficulty Modifier
Sight:	
Dusk/dawn	+2
Darkness:*	
Partial	+1
Full	+2
Complete	+3
Light rain/precipitation	+1
Heavy rain/precipitation	+3
Target concealed:	
Partial	+2
Full	+4
Complete	+6
Target camouflaged, same color as surroundings	+3
Target color contrasts with surroundings	–3
Target uniquely shaped compared to surroundings	–2
Viewer knows what to look for, i.e., has seen specific object or character before	–2
Sound:	
Soft background noise	+1
People talking	+2
Boisterous talk/singing	+3
Loud noises/battle sounds:	
10–20 yards away	+1
21–50 yards away	+2
More than 50 yards away	+4
Sound lower in pitch than background noise	+2
Sound higher in pitch than background noise	–2
Sound has steady rhythm that contrasts with background noise	–2
Listener heard sound before and recognizes it	–2
Listener trying to identify the only audible sound	–3
Smell:	
Obvious odor	–2
Other odors present	+2
Touch:	
Extreme temperature (hot or cold)	–3
Perceiver is wearing gloves	+3
Taste:	
Taste is obvious	–3
Perceiver has a cold	+3
Astral Sensing (see the **Workings of Magic** chapter of the ***Player's Guide***)	Varies

* In addition to any Action Test penalties (see **Situation Modifiers** on p. 226 of the **Combat** chapter of the ***Player's Guide***).

Level Table, the gamemaster finds 9 on the Difficulty Number column, then finds Hard on the Difficulty of Task line. Reading down and across, the gamemaster finds the modified Difficulty Number range (15–17). He decides to go with the lower end of the range—15 in this case.

Perception Tests

In **Earthdawn**, much of what happens during an adventure depends on what the player characters notice around them. The adventure may hinge on the Thief waiting to ambush the characters, a clue left behind by an assassin, or the scent of a creature or person.

The Difficulty Number for a Perception Test derives from the object of the test. For example, a Perception Test made to determine whether or not the characters see a Thief hiding in ambush, uses the Thief's Dexterity Step as the Difficulty Number. The Difficulty Number for spotting traps is the Detection Difficulty of the trap in question.

The Perception Difficulty Table lists common situations requiring Perception Tests and the typical Difficulty Number for the different tests. The gamemaster should adjust these numbers to fit the situation at hand.

When to Make Perception Tests

When the gamemaster needs to know whether or not a character notices something, he asks the player to make a Perception Test for his character. Characters use their Perception Step to make Perception Tests, unless they have a talent or skill appropriate for the task.

A group of adventurers is cautiously exploring the entrance of a kaer. The gamemaster wants to see if they notice the trap ahead in the corridor, so he asks each player to make a Perception Test for his character. Most of the characters use their Perception step, but the Thief wants to use his Detect Traps Step instead. Because this talent is appropriate to the situation, the gamemaster agrees.

Sometimes the gamemaster may wish to make a Perception Test for a character, usually to keep the result hidden from the player. The gamemaster should keep a record of each character's Perception Step handy to make this task easier (and less obvious).

Perception Test Result Levels

Perception Tests allow characters to notice things. The amount of information a Perception Test reveals depends on the result level of the test. An Average result simply tells the observing character that he notices something; a Good result means the character notices something, and has some idea of what it is; an Excellent result means the character knows what type of object or person he has noticed, and can guess at its exact nature; an Extraordinary result means the character knows precisely what he is looking at—until he can examine the object or meet the person, however, the character does not learn any more specific information about it.

Perception Test Modifiers

Of course, not all Perception Test Difficulty Numbers are as clear-cut as the examples given above show. The examples given assume that no distracting sights, sounds, or other environmental conditions make it more difficult for characters to make observations. In reality, many factors can affect a character's physical ability to see or the likelihood of their noticing any given person or object. Though characters can make Perception Tests for any of the five senses—sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste—environmental conditions can modify the Difficulty Number of any Perception Test. The Perception Modifiers Table suggests ways for gamemasters to take various environmental factors into account when players are making Perception Tests. Apply the suggested modifiers to the Difficulty Number of the test.



Gamemaster Character Attitudes

All social interactions with gamemaster characters are based on the characters' attitudes toward the player characters. Their attitudes determine how difficult or easy it is for your character to influence a gamemaster character or otherwise achieve a goal requiring cooperation.

Like all characters, gamemaster characters have their own personalities. Each has a unique way of viewing the world and your character. The gamemaster may give each of his characters a detailed personality, or he may decide to accomplish the same ends using a kind of shorthand referred to as the character's Attitude. This attitude represents the gamemaster character's basic point of view about other characters and affects every type of interaction other than combat.

A gamemaster may assign one of seven basic attitudes to his characters: Awestruck, Loyal, Friendly, Neutral, Unfriendly, Hostile, and Enemy. Gamemaster characters, like most people, hold different attitudes toward different people. Your character need only be concerned with a gamemaster character's attitude toward him. A servant who is Loyal to the king, for example, might be Hostile to you. Player characters should not judge gamemaster characters' attitudes toward themselves by their attitudes toward other player or gamemaster characters.

AWESTRUCK

When a gamemaster character is **Awestruck** by your character, he thinks your character is the most wonderful person in the world. He may worship your character as a hero or fall head over heels in love with your character. An Awestruck gamemaster character willingly makes great sacrifices to please the object of his worship, and will take great risks, giving little or no thought to the consequences of his actions. He may even sacrifice his own life to save the life of your character.

LOYAL

A gamemaster character who is **Loyal** to your character firmly believes in your character's worth. A Loyal character might look up to you or devote himself to a cause you serve; harbor a strong, quiet love for your character; be a close friend; or serve faithfully as a long-time employee. A Loyal character looks out for your character's best interests and expects to have his loyalty returned, but waits patiently even if this doesn't happen immediately.

A Loyal gamemaster character will take great risks for your character as long as he considers your character's actions and behavior worthy of his loyalty, and he will betray your character only under extreme duress.

FRIENDLY

A **Friendly** gamemaster character enjoys your character's companionship and values your character as a person. The Friendly attitude encompasses friendships formed through time, the relationships of employers and respected employees, and the solidarity of characters who share a common bond, such as a group of t'skrang meeting in an all-dwarf area of Throal. Friendly characters expect a mutually beneficial relationship over the short term as well as the long term.

A Friendly gamemaster character readily does small favors as long as those favors are returned. Your character may convince a Friendly character to take considerable risks for him, but only rarely and with much difficulty.

NEUTRAL

A **Neutral** gamemaster character takes a "live-and-let-live" attitude toward your character. He will not go out of his way to accommodate your character, but usually takes action if he sees someone violate another's right to live and let live. Neutral characters include neighbors and merchants—people who know your character but consider him no more than an acquaintance. A Neutral character might help a player character to fight an immediate, obvious injustice such as a mugging from a gang of thugs. He might not intervene, however, if he thinks your character started the fight. A Neutral character is more dispassionate than indifferent. If he sees values that he holds dear being trampled, he will involve himself in other people's affairs, but he will not go out of his way to make life better for others.

Neutral gamemaster characters can be convinced to do small favors for your character, but they will not take significant risks without the promise of equally significant rewards.

UNFRIENDLY

An **Unfriendly** character, on the other hand, is out for himself. He holds a "live-and-let-die" attitude toward your character. A greedy merchant, suspicious authorities, or a gamemaster character who supports a cause your character opposes would all be Unfriendly.

An Unfriendly character will take advantage of your character but without openly harming him, and will gladly deceive him. He may often act politely and feign friendliness to gain your character's trust. An Unfriendly character cannot be persuaded to do even a small favor for your character, unless he clearly gains from doing so. Convincing an Unfriendly character to take risks for your character will prove extremely difficult, and he will weasel out of any commitment at the first opportunity.

HOSTILE

A **Hostile** character is out for himself, and will not hesitate to harm your character if doing so will better his station in life. Hostile characters include thieves and other criminals and most creatures. As with Unfriendly characters, Hostile characters may pretend friendliness to gain your character's trust in order to take advantage of him. However, most won't even bother with that pretence, openly and immediately attacking any character they judge incapable of defending himself. Your character will find it almost impossible to convince a Hostile character to take any positive action on his behalf, and convincing one to take significant risks is out of the question.

ENEMY

An **Enemy** character harbors a personal vendetta against your character. The enemy may try to fake friendliness, but usually the best he can manage is a chilly politeness. An Enemy character takes great delight in contemplating and planning ways of harming your character and cannot be convinced to do your character any favors. An Enemy will mock any attempts at persuading him to take risks for your character.

BETTER AND WORSE ATTITUDES

Awestruck is the most favorable attitude a gamemaster character can have toward your character. Enemy is the least favorable. An attitude is "better" if it lies closer to Awestruck than the character's current attitude. An attitude is worse if it lies closer to Enemy. Thus, when the rules specify "an attitude of Unfriendly or better," this includes the Unfriendly, Neutral, Friendly, Loyal, and Awestruck attitudes. An attitude of "Neutral or worse" includes Neutral, Unfriendly, Hostile, and Enemy. An attitude that improves from Neutral to Friendly has improved by one degree. Some interactions, such as Favors, work only within a limited range of character attitudes, as explained below.

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

This section provides rules on how player characters interact with gamemaster characters to accomplish ordinary tasks in the course of questing for a goal—in other words, those times a player character is not casting a spell or swinging a weapon. These social interactions are grouped into two general categories: roleplaying and making Interaction Tests.

ROLEPLAYING

Roleplaying is perhaps the best way to resolve interactions with gamemaster characters. Players speak for their characters and describe their actions and reactions to the gamemaster characters. The gamemaster does the same for the gamemaster characters. The players and the gamemaster continue in this manner until they resolve the scene or reach an impasse. If you roleplay your way through the scene, congratulations—your character has succeeded at continuing his adventure through wit rather than dice rolls. If you reach an impasse, you can try another avenue.

When roleplaying an interaction, imagine yourself in the scene. What are your surroundings? Who are the gamemaster characters you are dealing with? What do they want, and can you give it to them and still get what you want? Draw on books and movies for inspiration—clever lines have saved the hides of many fictional heroes. And be daring—even the failure of a bold plan is more fun than a successful, but timid ploy.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Roleplay interactions between player and gamemaster characters whenever possible, because this frees characters from the random roll of the dice and involves the players in the game at the same time. Here's an example of play:

Charlie is playing an elven Archer Named Delthrien, and Sam is playing a dwarf Sky Raider Named Grolk. The two characters wish to speak to a legendary Thief, Garlthik One-Eye, and have approached the entrance to Garlthik's stronghold in Kratas. Garlthik is not expecting them, and so the ten ork guards stationed at the gate have no instructions to allow them to pass. The two characters have a pendant that once belonged to Garlthik, however, and hope it will help them persuade the guards to let them pass.

In the exchange below, the players are speaking as their characters when noted.

***Gamemaster**: You round the corner, leaving the well-lit boulevard for Carrion Row. Three light crystals struggle to illuminate the street, the old enchantments flickering near the end of their usefulness. You see a group of orks stationed in front of a bronze-bound double door, and you know you've arrived at Garlthik's home.*

***Sam**: How many orks?*

***Gamemaster**: Nine or ten.*

***Sam**: Not a problem, we can take them.*

***Charlie**: And then what, chew on the door?*

***Charlie** [as Delthrien]: Evening to you, orks. We need to talk to Garlthik.*

***Gamemaster** [as ork guard]: Well, fancy that—an elf who can tell the time of day!*

***Sam**: Grolk is fingering the haft of his axe.*

***Gamemaster** [as second ork]: Yeah, and a dwarf with more beard than brains.*

***Sam**: That's it! Grolk is drawing his weapon.*

***Gamemaster**: The orks draw their weapons.*

***Charlie** [as Delthrien]: Hold, my friend. Don't give in to the enchantment so easily.*

***Gamemaster** [as ork guard]: Huh?*

***Charlie**: I am taking out the pendant.*

***Charlie** [as Delthrien]: You see, Grolk here was put under an enchantment to return this pendant to Garlthik. The spell was none too subtle, and simply specified that he should let nothing stand in his way.*

***Sam**: Grolk gets a crazy gleam in his eye.*

***Sam** [as Grolk]: It sure looks like you men are in my way.*

***Charlie** [as Delthrien]: Please Grolk, not again. I just had this cloak cleaned. Now then, you look like resourceful orks, surely there is some way we can see Garlthik.*

***Gamemaster**: The orks cautiously start to surround the two of you. They are currently in a crescent formation with you at the center.*

***Gamemaster** [as ork guard]: Face it dwarf, we'll get you before you get all of us.*

***Charlie**: Delthrien carefully examines the fingernails of his right hand, as if he had nothing more important to do right then.*

***Charlie** [as Delthrien]: That you died holding such a belief will be little comfort to your family and heirs, ork.*

***Sam** [as Grolk]: I dunno, Delthrien, I say we find out.*

***Sam**: Grolk raises the axe to its full height.*

***Sam** [as Grolk]: Blood soon! Blood soon!*

***Charlie**: Delthrien rolls his eyes, then sighs.*

***Charlie** [as Delthrien]: Not again. Look ork, even if you live, you will spend the rest of the night hauling bodies and body parts to wherever it is you dispose of such things. What an unpleasant way to spend an evening! Not to mention Garlthik's wrath when he discovers that you turned away the pendant when it had arrived at his very gate.*

***Sam** [as Grolk]: Bashings and smashings! Cuttings and severings!*

***Gamemaster** [as ork guard]: All right, all right. Can you control him?*

***Charlie** [as Delthrien]: Yes. For a time, anyway.*

***Gamemaster** [as ork guard]: I will be right back. I need to check this with the head of the night watch.*

***Charlie** [as Delthrien]: Be quick about it, then.*

***Sam** [as Grolk]: Crushing, snapping, pulpings!*

***Charlie** [as Delthrien]: Grolk, stop that!*

***Sam** [as Grolk]: Rippings and stompings!*

***Charlie** [as Delthrien]: Down Grolk!*

***Sam** [as Grolk]: Grrrrrrr—*

***Charlie** [as Delthrien]: Good Grolk.*

***Gamemaster**: A few minutes pass. The remaining orks shift nervously from foot to foot, watching Grolk closely. The ork guard reappears.*

***Gamemaster** [as ork guard]: The head watch says you can go in. Follow the green carpet to the staircase. Go up. Someone will meet you. Don't dawdle. You will be watched.*

***Charlie** [as Delthrien]: Thank you. Most kind of you. Come along, Grolk.*

***Sam**: Grolk is foaming slightly around the edges of his mouth. He keeps growling.*

***Charlie** [as Delthrien]: And leave the orks with their parts intact.*

***Sam** [as Grolk]: Whimper.*

The players gained entry into Garlthik's stronghold strictly by roleplaying. The players and the gamemaster created the scene by imagining the encounter from the viewpoints of their characters. Charlie's and Sam's characters wanted to see Garlthik. They might have been powerful enough to simply barge in, but killing the ork guards would almost certainly have angered Garlthik, making him very dangerous and difficult to deal with.

The gamemaster characters were concerned about angering their employer. By presenting the pendant, Delthrien demonstrated that Garlthik might have a reason to see them. The enchantment story was plausible, and the dwarf was acting more than a little strange. Though the orks would not simply allow the player characters to enter the hold, they were willing to check with a higher authority, rather than risk dying in a battle that Garlthik may not have wanted them to fight in the first place.

In the end, both groups got what they wanted, at least in the short run. This is the key to most roleplaying solutions: both sides have to gain something from an exchange. A player should try to figure out what a gamemaster character wants out of a situation, and manipulate the circumstances so that he can provide that and achieve his own goal at the same time.

INTERACTION TESTS

Even the most imaginative roleplaying sometimes ends in an impasse between player and gamemaster characters. To resolve such an impasse, a player character can use his Charisma Step to make an **Interaction Test**. Five basic Interaction Tests can be resolved this way: Deceit, Insight, Intimidation, Making an Impression, and Favors. Most social interactions characters need to make in the **Earthdawn** game fall into one of these categories.

To resolve interactions, a character makes an Interaction Test against the target's Social Defense. The result level of the test determines the outcome, good or bad.

If a character has a talent or skill appropriate to a situation where interaction is required, he can make a Talent or Skill Test in place of the Interaction Test, otherwise he makes a Charisma Test. Many talents add bonuses to your character's Interaction Tests. When your character uses these talents when interacting with gamemaster characters, the rules given for the talent supersede the interaction rules detailed in this section.

Talents often provide better results than Interaction Tests, but have a limited range of applications when compared to the Interaction Test rules. For example, talents can rarely be used when requesting favors or using Intimidation to coerce a character. As a rule of thumb, the gamemaster should limit the use of talents to the applications described in the talent's description.

To find the minimum result levels required for each different type of Interaction Test, see the Interaction Success Table.

INTERACTION SUCCESS TABLE

Type of Interaction Test	Result Level
Deceit:	
Exaggeration	Average
Fabrication	Good
Half-Truth	Average
Insight:	
Detect basic emotions	Average
Detect deception	Good
Detect deception when target's features are obscured	Excellent
Intimidation:	
Do nothing	Average
Take action	Good
Make an Impression:	
Improve target's attitude by one level	Average+
Worsen target's attitude by one level	Poor–
Ask for a Favor:	
Refer to the Favor Success Table	Varies

Deceit

Your character can attempt to convince another character of something that isn't true. This type of interaction is called **Deceit**. Deceit covers everything from the typical "little white lie" to the darkest moment of betrayal. Some types of Deceit are easier to accomplish than others. In order to deceive another target character, a character must speak to—and must be understood by—the character he is trying to deceive.

A Deceived character remains so until presented with facts or evidence that contradict the deception, which immediately ends the deception.

There are three different types of Deceit: Exaggeration, Fabrication, and Half-Truth.

Exaggeration: An Exaggeration is a stretching of the truth, perhaps changing details of a story to make it more impressive in some way. For example, telling your superior that you were ambushed by a dozen orks, rather than by the five who actually jumped you, would be an Exaggeration. Claiming that the orks were armed with fire swords, or misstating the size of a creature that got away—whether claiming it was larger or smaller than its actual size—would also be an Exaggeration. To make an Exaggeration, a character makes an Interaction Test against the target character's Social Defense. If the test is successful, the target believes the Exaggeration to be true.

Fabrication: A Fabrication is an outright lie cut from whole cloth. The story, or important parts of the story, have no basis in truth. Lies that contradict actual events are Fabrications. For example, reporting to your superior that no ambush attempt took place, even after dispatching the five orks who jumped you, would be a Fabrication. Saying you have no treasure map when you actually do, or making up stories about a lost city, would also count as Fabrications. To tell a Fabrication, a character makes an Interaction Test against the target character's Social Defense. An Average result causes the target to suspect the truth of the character's Fabrication—the character must come up with another good reason for his Fabrication to be believed to allow another Interaction Test to be made to convince the target character; a Good result means the target believes the Fabrication to be true.

Half-Truth: A Half-Truth reveals a sizable portion of the truth, while withholding at least one vital piece of information. A character telling a Half-Truth is speaking the truth, but in such as way as to mislead the listener. For example, telling someone you found more than 800 silver pieces when you actually found closer to 3,000 silver pieces would be a Half-Truth. Or telling authorities you saw nothing at the scene of a crime, when you heard the cries of the victim, would also be a Half-Truth. To tell a Half-Truth, a character makes an Interaction Test against the target character's Social Defense. If the test is successful, the target believes the Half-Truth to be true.

Insight

A character can attempt to determine the intentions of another character through a type of interaction called **Insight**. Insight gives the character information on what the target character is trying to accomplish in an interaction.

Basic Emotions: A character can use Insight to judge another target character's surface emotions or state of mind. Insight can allow a character to detect such emotions as anger, love, fear, lust, hunger, tranquility, or nervousness. To detect basic emotions, a character makes an Interaction Test against the target character's Social Defense. If the test is successful, the character successfully reads the target's feelings.

Detect Deception: Insight also allows the character to determine whether or not an opponent is trying to Deceive him (see **Deceit**, above). To use Insight in this way, a character must observe the target character as he speaks. If the character cannot see the target character speaking, he cannot use Insight to detect the deception. To detect a deception, a character makes an Interaction Test against the target character's Social Defense. A Good result means the character detected the deception, seeing right through it. If the target character's features are obscured by a mask or helmet, an Excellent result is needed to detect the deception.

Intimidation

Player characters can also try to influence an interaction with another character by **Intimidation**. Generally, your character may only attempt Intimidation if the target character understands your character's speech and is within line of sight. The gamemaster may allow non-verbal or indirect Intimidation in some cases.

Intimidation often creates resentment in the target character. A successful use of Intimidation against a target character makes all subsequent Favor attempts aimed at that same character at least one degree more difficult.

Intimidation works best against characters who have a reason to fear, and who hold Unfriendly or worse attitudes toward, your character. To use Intimidation, make an Interaction Test against the target character's Social Defense. The result level determines how successful the attempt is.

Stopping Actions: Your character can use Intimidation to order a character to refrain from performing an action, or do nothing. Examples of the first include orders such as "don't touch that," "stop dead in your tracks," or "leave her alone." An Average result on the Interaction Test makes a target character stop their action for one round. An Extraordinary result convinces the target character to refrain from a forbidden action as long as the intimidator is within sight. Your character cannot use Intimidation to make a target character stop an action he performs simply by existing. You cannot, for example, order a character to stop breathing.

Forcing Actions: Intimidation can also be used to force a character into taking an action, but the target character will not take an action he believes is more dangerous than resisting the Intimidation. A Good result on the Interaction Test will convince the target character to spill secrets, walk ahead in a corridor, or cast a spell. An intimidated character stops performing the requested action as soon as he is out of the intimidator's sight.

Making an Impression

Sometimes player characters want to impress gamemaster characters immediately upon meeting them. Player characters cannot simply impress anyone they choose to, however. For example, your character cannot impress characters who are already Awestruck, Loyal, or Enemies of your character.

When your character first meets another character, you must declare your intention to **Make an Impression** on the target character. To make an impression, make an Interaction Test against the target character's Social Defense. An Average result improves the character's Attitude by one degree—an Unfriendly character becomes Neutral, a Neutral character becomes Friendly, and so on. A Pathetic result worsens the character's Attitude by one degree—for example, an Unfriendly character becomes Hostile. The effects of Making an Impression last for one day.

Each time your character interacts with the impressed character in a Neutral, Unfriendly, or Hostile manner (determined by the gamemaster), the favorable impression may wear off. In this case, the impressed character makes a Willpower Test against your character's Social Defense. If the result level of the Willpower Test is equal to or greater than the result level of your Interaction Test, the impression fades. Any openly hostile act your character commits against the impressed character immediately erases the impression.

Delthrien Makes an Impression on an Unfriendly troll bruiser in a tavern. He gets a Good result on his Interaction Test, and the troll takes a Neutral attitude toward him. In an effort to trick the troll into an ambush, the elven Archer tries to talk him into going to another tavern. The troll makes a Willpower Test against Delthrien's Social Defense and gets a Good result. Because his result level matched Delthrien's, the troll's attitude reverts to Unfriendly.

Favors

Your character may to try to convince another character to take an action through logical argument, flattery, appeals to friendship, or "buttering up" the target character in other ways. As long as the target character understands your character's speech, your character may try to persuade him to do a **favor** for your character. In some cases the gamemaster may allow non-verbal attempts at such persuasion.

The target character's attitude can alter the result level required to persuade him to do a favor. This type of persuasion works best on characters who harbor a Neutral or better attitude toward your character. A character whose attitude is Unfriendly or worse can be persuaded to perform a favor only if he believes that doing so will benefit him.

Favors are grants of time, money, or resources that benefit your character, or actions performed on behalf of your character. The result level needed to gain a favor depends on the attitude of the gamemaster character from whom you request the boon. Consult the Favor Success Table to determine the result level required.

Small Favor: Your character can request small favors and large favors from other characters. Small favors include such things as holding a character's place in a queue, buying a round of drinks, or bringing water to a character's cell. As a rule of thumb, small favors cannot endanger a character or require more than 30 minutes of extra effort from him (as determined by the gamemaster). Small favors cannot cost a character more than 5 silver pieces, a few hours' earnings, or 1 percent of his cash on hand, whichever amount is largest. Characters holding an Unfriendly or better attitude toward your character can be persuaded to do small favors.

Large Favor: Large favors include giving loans (which your character must usually repay within three days), delivering a package across town into a questionable neighborhood, giving your character a place to stay for a few days, untying your character, and so on. As a rule of thumb, large favors cannot cost a character more than a day's earnings or 3 percent of his total cash savings. Loans provided as large favors cannot exceed a character's weekly earnings or 15 percent of his total savings. A large favor cannot require more than 8 hours of extra effort from a character, though it can pose physical, mental, or emotional risks. Keep in mind that only characters Loyal or Awestruck toward your character will agree to obviously dangerous favors.

Your character can persuade characters with a Friendly or better attitude toward him to do large or small favors over an extended period. For example, the tavern owner who always has your favorite ale on tap is doing you a small favor over time.

Friendly characters may let small favors go unreturned, but expect large favors to be repaid in kind. They expect your character to repay borrowed funds and items promptly, and will not extend more than one large favor until your character has done them a large favor in return.

Characters holding Loyal and Awestruck attitudes toward your character are more lenient in their accounting and will extend your character credit for two or even three large favors. They still expect favors in return, but will wait several months for repayment. Hostile or Enemy characters will do your character no favors unless prompted by their own ulterior motives.

Making Favor Tests

Except at the gamemaster's discretion, your character can request only one favor per day from a gamemaster character. To request a favor, the player character uses his Charisma Step to make a Favor Test against the gamemaster character's Social Defense. The gamemaster character's attitude toward your character determines the result level required for success, as shown in the Favor Success Table. If the test fails, your character cannot repeat the request or ask that character for another favor for 24 hours.

Increasing the Likelihood of Favors

Your character can increase the likelihood of getting favors from a gamemaster character by "sweetening the deal": that is, adjusting your request for the favor or offering something in return. For example, you may offer to perform a small favor in exchange for a small favor, or a large favor for a large favor. If he accepts this deal,



FAVOR SUCCESS TABLE

Target Attitude	Small Favor	Large Favor
Awestruck	Poor	Average
Loyal	Average	Good
Friendly	Good	Excellent
Neutral	Excellent	Extraordinary
Unfriendly	Extraordinary	NA
Hostile	NA	NA
Enemy	NA	NA

the gamemaster character must perform his favor first. Your character may make two consecutive Interaction Tests to persuade the gamemaster character to perform the favor.

Alternatively, you may propose the same "favor for favor" exchange, but have your character offer to perform a favor first. For the purposes of the Interaction Tests in this instance, the gamemaster character's attitude toward your character improves one degree. For example, an Unfriendly guard becomes Neutral when you try to persuade him to do you a small favor, if you do him a small favor first. As noted above, in this case your character can make two consecutive Interaction Tests to try to persuade the gamemaster character.

Your character may also offer to perform a large favor in return for a small favor, with the gamemaster character performing his favor first. For purposes of the Interaction Test in this case, the gamemaster character's attitude improves two degrees.

Finally, your character may offer to perform a large favor in return for a small favor at a later date. Your character may make two consecutive Interaction Tests to persuade the gamemaster character, whose attitude improves two degrees for the purposes of the tests.

AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

Players use Legend Points to improve their characters by increasing Attribute Values, adding Ranks to talents, buying skills, advancing to a higher Circle, and so on. They earn Legend Points according to a system called Legend Awards.

When designing an adventure, the gamemaster calculates the potential number of Legend Points each character may earn for the whole adventure by taking into account four elements: completing the game session goal, conflicts, acquiring treasure, and completing the overall adventure goal.

Depending on how well the characters fulfill these elements, characters earn Legend Awards, a number of Legend Points determined by the character's Circle. Characters also earn Legend Awards for creative roleplaying and heroics, but the gamemaster determines these awards at the end of each session, rather than when designing the adventure. (See **Assigning Legend Awards**, below).

The gamemaster awards Legend Points at the end of each game session, determining how much of the calculated Legend Award each player character has actually earned based on the events that took place during the session and how the characters handled those events.

ASSIGNING LEGEND AWARDS

The Legend Award Table provides the gamemaster with a standard for determining the Legend Point value of the four elements mentioned above, and for evaluating characters' creative roleplaying and heroics during the session in terms of Legend Awards. Guidelines for determining specific Legend Award numbers for any of these elements appear in the descriptions of those elements following.

Based on a character's Circle, a single Legend Award should award a number of Legend Points that falls within the range given in the **Legend Award** column. For example, a Second Circle character should always receive from 100 to 300 Legend Points per Legend Award.

The total number of Legend Points received from all Legend Awards in any one game session should not exceed the upper limit given in the **Total Legend Points Awarded Per Session** column.

For each game session, the gamemaster should design a Legend Award for each character for each of the following elements:

❶ Completing Session Goals
❷ Conflicts
❸ Gathering Magical Treasure
❹ Individual Deeds
❺ Roleplaying

Additionally, on completion of the adventure, each character gets a Legend Award for the following:

❻ Achieving the Adventure Goal

Completing Session Goals

Most adventures last for more than one game session. A session goal functions like a chapter break in a book; the story has not been resolved, but the current action reaches a conclusion. Session goals may be simple objectives such as the following:

- Reach Parlainth
- Contact the Guild agent in Bartertown
- Win the airship race
- Eat supper with the Prince without committing a serious social blunder.

Sessions may also be cliff-hanger ending points, rather than objectives. Some examples include:

- Discovering the secret door leading down into the labyrinth.
- Flying the airship into the heart of a storm to shake off Theran pursuit.
- Uncovering the identity of the traitor in the ork scorcher tribe.

When the characters reach a session goal, the session ends. If this leaves your players clamoring for more, then you have them right where you want them—but not until next session.

Conflicts

Characters receive Legend Points for surviving conflicts. This is often a matter of defeating creatures and opponents—defeating them does not necessarily mean killing them, however. If the characters defeat creatures that you have set up as their opposition, award Legend Points for defeating them. If the player characters engage in wanton butchery of creatures or gamemaster characters never intended as opponents, you may cheerfully ignore their indignant pleas for Legend Points.

LEGEND AWARD TABLE

Current Circle	Legend Award*	Total Legend Points Awarded Per Session*
1	25–75 (50)	100–300 (200)
2	100–300 (200)	400–1,200 (800)
3	200–500 (350)	800–2,000 (1,400)
4	250–700 (475)	1,000–2,800 (1,900)
5	500–1,500 (1,000)	2,000–6,000 (4,000)
6	900–2,700 (1,800)	3,600–10,800 (7,200)
7	1,650–4,900 (3,275)	6,600–19,600 (13,100)
8	2,350–7,000 (4,675)	9,400–28,000 (18,700)
9	4,800–14,200 (9,500)	19,200–56,800 (38,000)
10	8,600–25,800 (17,250)	34,400–103,200 (68,800)
11	15,450–46,350 (30,900)	61,800–185,400 (123,600)
12	22,950–68,850 (45,900)	91,800–275,400 (183,600)
13	42,500–127,500 (85,000)	170,000–510,000 (340,000)
14	77,500–232,500 (155,000)	310,000–930,000 (620,000)
15	120,000–360,000 (240,000)	480,000–1,440,000 (960,000)

* The Average Award for each Circle is shown in parentheses.

Each session should provide about a Legend Award's worth of Conflict Legend Points per character. The ranges given on the Legend Award Table provide a benchmark, with the average award shown in parentheses. All opponents come with a "Legend Award" entry in their game statistics, denoting how many Legend Points are awarded to the characters after defeating them. See the **Creatures** chapter on p.145 for more information.

Gathering Magical Treasure

Everything your player characters carry away from defeated creatures or other opponents is loot. However, treasure is the only kind of loot worth Legend Points. Characters acquire treasure through heroic acts; characters who claim legendary treasures soon become legends themselves. Treasure is represented by goodies that people expect heroes to acquire: bits of nasty monsters, forgotten items from legend, magical weapons or talismans, gems snatched from the hoard of a Horror.

Every sentient inhabitant of the world of **Earthdawn** recognizes the presence and power of magic, and regards those who wield magic weapons and talismans with the awe and wonder befitting a living legend. Characters do not acquire treasure by lopping off an ork mercenary's head for his pay. That isn't heroic, so that silver doesn't count as treasure—it's plain old loot, and carries no Legend Points.

An adventure should provide a payoff of one Legend Award's worth of Treasure Legend Points per character, and should include the treasures that many creatures possess. When you are deciding what creatures you want the characters to meet, remember to note any treasure those creatures carry and include it in your total Treasure Legend Points. Creature treasure is listed in each creature's description.

Individual Deeds

Players sometimes play their characters with particular zest, entertaining the group with their antics and coming up with ingenious ways out of difficult situations. If you feel a player contributed something special to the game session, award his character a number of Legend Points up to one half of a Legend Award for that contribution.

Individual deeds are the heroic actions of high adventure; running underground rapids rather than taking the roadway, or holding off orks by setting a bridge on fire and then fighting the enemy on the burning bridge until the last possible moment. This is the stuff adrenaline rushes are made of. The gamemaster may build opportunities for heroics into the adventure, or the players may discover them on their own. Any character who throws himself into heroics should earn up to one half of a Legend Award.

Roleplaying

Roleplaying includes coming up with creative ideas, plans, or tactics for the group. Players who deliver a magnificent line at the right moment, solve the puzzle, or discover a particularly twisted use for a spell would all qualify for this bonus.

Gamemasters can also give characters bonus Legend Awards for sticking to their character's personality traits even when doing so puts the character at risk. A player who keeps his character true to himself only when it is safe to do so is missing part of the point of roleplaying.

Award characters up to a full Legend Award for a convincing roleplaying performance.

Achieving the Adventure Goal

The gamemaster should design adventures around goals toward which the player characters strive, and each game session should bring them closer to achieving these ends. The overall adventure goal could be retrieving a specific treasure, producing evidence of treachery, discovering the identity of a murderer, or convincing an ork cavalry tribe to work for your village rather than for a rival. Achieving the goal is the climax of the adventure.

Give your players the Adventure Legend Award at the end of the session in which the characters accomplish the adventure goal. Do not award a Session Legend Award in the same session in which you bestow the Adventure Legend Award; the adventure goal becomes the goal for that game session. Because most session goals represent steps on the way toward fulfilling the larger adventure goal, accomplishing the adventure goal earns the characters 2 Legend Awards.

Total Legend Awards

The gamemaster should give Legend Awards for reaching session goals, defeating creatures, obtaining treasures, and creative roleplaying/heroics on a session-by-session basis. Give the adventure goal Legend Award only at the end of the story; don't give partial Awards for approaching the adventure goal. This "lump sum" Legend Award emphasizes the story's climax; the big finale gets the big award.

Each character should earn between 2 and 5 Legend Awards per game session. Characters can only earn the maximum of 6 Legend Awards in the session in which they accomplish the adventure goal, and then only if all of the characters play well. On average, players should earn 3 or 4 Legend Awards per session, including one for achieving the session goal, one for defeating creatures and opponents, one for acquiring treasure, and one for character heroics and creative roleplaying.

Adjust the Legend Awards to suit your gaming style; for example, you might want to award more than the suggested Legend Points for acquiring treasure and fewer for conflicts. Remember, however, that keeping the per-character Legend Award total within the bounds described here will help you maintain the balance of your game.

Faster or Slower Character Advancement

The average award shown in parentheses in the Legend Award Table provides the benchmark for character advancement in **Earthdawn**. For faster advancement, increase the average Legend Award towards the top end of the range given. Conversely, for slower advancement, reduce the average Legend Award toward the bottom end of the range given.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ADVENTURES AND CAMPAIGNS

Adventure? Bah! Over-rated if you ask me.

• Garlthik One-Eye, Ork Thief •

The denizens of **Earthdawn** live in an exciting, dangerous time filled with opportunity for adventure. The player characters live for adventure; the prospect of journeying into danger and triumphing over it lures them like the song of a siren. Whether searching for a forgotten kaer, guarding an embattled prince against enemies, or confronting a Horror in its lair, the player characters prove themselves the heroes of this age. A gamemaster must create adventures that challenge the players' wits even more than their characters' swords and spells, and should reward good roleplaying as generously as lucky dice-rolling.

This section provides information for gamemasters on different approaches they can use for their adventures. Gamemasters may use themes, subplots, storytelling, roleplaying, and other techniques to create, change, or enhance adventures and campaigns. The techniques defined below provide examples of their use. This section also offers suggestions for creating and maintaining an ongoing **Earthdawn** campaign and guidelines for making your **Earthdawn** game unique.

USING PUBLISHED ADVENTURES

Many gamemasters will try and play **Earthdawn** by running published adventures as written. Published adventures that provide the appropriate opposition level for every diverse group of player characters are a myth, however. Some groups are inherently more powerful than others, so gamemasters will have to "tweak" those adventures to suit their group or style of play. Therefore, gamemasters may need to adjust the game statistics and capabilities of an adventure's opposition to provide his players with an appropriate challenge.

CONVERTING ADVENTURES

You will find a lot of adventures available in printed or electronic format from publishers of other fantasy games. Of course, even though these may not have been written specifically for **Earthdawn**, they are likely to contain good ideas which can be easily converted into an **Earthdawn** story. All you need to do is use them as blueprints to develop adventures of your own.

If a story works well except for a glitch here and there, modify the plot or events to make the adventure a better one. Come up with game statistics for the gamemaster characters and creatures contained in that adventure and replace the names and locations with **Earthdawn**-specific ones.

This works with most, but not all, fantasy adventures. While we want you to keep your eyes open for new, original material, you should be aware that **RedBrick Limited** is not the only source of ideas for **Earthdawn**.

CREATING ADVENTURES

Though experience is by far the best way to learn how to write a good adventure, the following suggestions and tips may help the gamemaster take care of certain vital story elements. The main elements of an adventure include the adventure background, a plot synopsis, objectives, motivations, and opposition. Though these represent the most important elements of a good story, a good adventure also includes other elements such as atmosphere, mood, conflicts and challenges, themes, subplots, and storytelling.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The **adventure background** describes the overall plot up to the point where the player characters get involved (and often hints at what can happen after that).

PLOT SYNOPSIS

This summary of events describes the scale of the adventure, creates the setting and hints at the adventure's theme. In a large-scale adventure, the player characters might become pawns in a province-wide conspiracy, while a small-scale adventure might involve taking on a single villain in a town or city. The setting determines where the story will take place—one or more locations, such as the city-state of Travar, a small town in the southern foothills of Throal, a distant valley in the Dragon Mountains, or a journey that leads the adventurers from Throal to the Scytha Mountains.

OBJECTIVES

The most basic **objective** of every player character in an adventure is usually survival. Beyond that, the group often accepts a specific task: find a lost artifact, rescue a kidnap victim, pay off a debt, kill or capture a villain, or foil a villain's plan.

The stated objective may differ from the real objective; in fact, the group will often change its goal in mid-adventure. For example, an adventuring group might believe they were hired to accompany an emissary from Throal to a trollmoot in the Twilight Peaks, until they discover that the emissary plans to betray the clan. If one of the characters belongs to that moot, and perhaps even if not, the group may decide to adopt a new objective: foil the emissary's plan.

When writing an adventure, keep track of the group's objectives and give characters a chance to meet them. Offer them assignments or let them find clues that reveal the objectives. Characters who accomplish their objectives earn Legend Points, therefore fulfilling objectives becomes an important aspect of the game.

MOTIVATION

Suppose the gamemaster creates an adventure and sends a messenger to the group with an offer that will catapult them right into the middle of it. After listening to the messenger, the

characters say, *"Thank you for the intriguing offer, but we cannot accept at this time."*

If this happens, the gamemaster needs to ask the players why they don't want to tackle the adventure. Is it too dangerous? Does it offer too little reward? Some characters might prefer payment in kind to silver. Magicians may ask for teachers or supplies, Adepts may want training—a Weaponsmith might bargain for the use of a smithy—and so on. If the premise of the adventure bores the players silly, it may be better to scrap the game in favor of a bull session on the kinds of adventures the players want their characters to get involved in.

The more information players give the gamemaster about their characters' lives, beliefs, and psychology, the more material the gamemaster can work with to build motivation into the adventures. As the players get more involved in the game, their characters will acquire friends, enemies, and obligations, and probably develop quirks. All these factors make good motivators for the adventurers, and the gamemaster should keep them in mind.

Opposition

Most adventures involve opposition, and the world of **Earthdawn** provides a wide array. In some adventures, the opposition may be as impersonal as an impenetrable forest, a curmudgeonly innkeeper, or an obscure magical effect; these obstacles may have nothing to do with the goal the adventurers strive for, but simply exist to make their lives difficult. In other adventures, the group may need to face and defeat a personal enemy in order to achieve their objectives.

Opposition from individuals or small groups roughly equal in size and power to the adventuring group can get personal very quickly, and a good enemy becomes a valuable resource for the gamemaster in writing future adventures. Depending on how thoroughly the adventurers trounced him, such a foe may want to repeatedly oppose the group simply to get revenge. A personal enemy can turn adventures into a series of duels between the player characters and their relentless foe, building up to a final showdown. The same enemy may also show up in unrelated adventures, just to strike at the characters any way he can.

Gamemasters may find the following descriptions of typical opposition useful. This list is by no means exhaustive, and lists only the biggest threats. Creatures, ork scorcher tribes, and troll-moots also make for great opposition, as do dwarf merchant houses or t'skrang *aropagoi*.

The Horrors

The most obvious and probably most frequent opposition in **Earthdawn** are the Horrors. These dreadful, other-dimensional beings ravaged the world during the Scourge, and many of them managed to remain behind after the world's magic ebbed. Though most Horrors have a bestial shape and nature, they possess great intelligence and cunning. They create schemes, lure victims into danger, and perpetrate a multitude of evil acts. The Horrors know no bounds.

Tragically, a number of people have felt the Horrors' touch and some have succumbed to these corrupt masters. These foul folk act toward ends no one understands, and often their seemingly innocent behavior lures adventurers to their doom.

The Theran Empire

Though the Therans no longer have free rein to force their rule, customs, and desires on the people of Barsaive, they remain a strong presence in the southern part of the province. The Therans control most of Barsaive's south-western corner and have a strong influence on the province due to their recently established fortress of *Triumph*. They gather reports on the rest of the province from numerous spies and agents working undercover in Barsaivian cities and towns. The Therans want to regain total political control over Barsaive, and will attempt any action that might advance their goal of domination.



The Mad Passions

Though your player characters would stand no chance against the Mad Passions themselves, they may meet and battle questors of the Mad Passions who work toward wicked ends. The questors of Dis, Raggok, and Vestrial willingly use whatever methods necessary to promote worship of their patron Passions. Though not a common situation, some questors of the Mad Passions serve Horrors. Some of these individuals have been corrupted by a Horror, and some simply follow their own misguided ambitions.

Atmosphere and Mood

The atmosphere of an adventure goes beyond its physical setting to include such elements as the attitudes of unfamiliar gamemaster characters, their actions, and the impression, or "feeling" the characters receive from their environment. The atmosphere of an adventure taking place during the day in a big city should be very different than the atmosphere of an adventure set at night near the Blood Wood or in the Badlands. In a big city during the day, the characters may feel relatively safe from surprise attack by anyone (or anything). Characters in the Blood Wood or the Badlands, on the other hand, can never be too careful.

In addition to the atmosphere evoked by a particular setting, an adventure should also have an overall "feel," or mood. Is the adventure a light-hearted journey to a big city or a dark, serious tale of evil and corruption? By defining the mood of an adventure, you sum up the overall emotional impression it should leave on the characters. You can establish the mood of an adventure quite easily by creating an atmosphere that conveys the feeling you want. For example, if the adventure is the tale of a village's corruption into sacrificing its own to a Horror, the overall atmosphere should be dark and gloomy with a touch of despair (the mood). Mood also relates closely to an adventure's theme (see below).

Conflicts and Challenges

Good adventures present the characters with conflicts other than combat against opposition. Conflicts can be emotional, intellectual, or moral or ethical. For example, an adventure may revolve around the inevitable conflict of heroes manipulated by a servitor of a Horror. The heroes start out believing that their noble goal is to destroy the evil questor of Vestrial, but when they finally encounter the questor, they discover that, in reality, he has been fighting to prevent a Horror from devastating a nearby town. By the time the characters realize they've been duped by their employer, they must choose between two evils.

Using non-combat conflict in your adventures forces your players to think carefully about their characters' actions.

Most conflicts can be resolved. In the above example, the characters can resolve the conflict in at least two ways. If they let the questor live, they allow him to continue his activities in the name of the Mad Passion Vestrial. If they kill the questor, they must deal with the Horror threatening the small town. Conflict resolution represents the wider consequences of an adventure.

Each adventure may offer several conflicts and resolutions. If an adventure takes several game sessions to complete, each ses-

sion should have a goal (see **Awarding Legend Points** in the **Gamemastering** chapter on p.97), which may be the resolution to one or more conflicts. A conflict need not always have a resolution, though the players and characters may find too many loose ends frustrating. Strike a balance between conflicts that can be resolved, continuing plotlines, and situations that simply offer no satisfactory conclusion.

Good adventures challenge the characters in different ways. Some challenges take the form of an opposing gamemaster character or creature, but some are less direct. Sometimes the greatest challenge in an adventure is the journey across an unexplored area of Barsaive. Successfully completing the adventure may require the characters to solve a puzzle of some sort, presenting an intellectual challenge rather than a physical one.

Sometimes, the atmosphere itself can be the adventure's challenge. By virtue of its location, characters will find an adventure set in the Blood Wood more challenging than one set in a mundane forest. After all, most forests do not have patrols of thorn men and blood elves looking for trespassers.

Theme

A theme allows you to focus the details of an adventure around one central idea or concept that describes what the adventure is about—is it about exploring the dark caverns of a lost kaer? The betrayal wrought against the population of a mining town? Or a story of war, where the dwarfs of Throal try to find a way to get rid of the Theran occupation? For example, if an adventure centers on the activities of a ring of Theran spies working in the city-state of Travar, the theme might be intrigue. If the characters become involved in one trollmoot's revenge against a rival moot, the adventure's theme might be vengeance.

Of course, not all adventures need themes. The purpose of an adventure may be simply to get the characters from one place to another in an interesting way. For example, the courier job the characters are hired for may actually be a straightforward pickup and delivery, with no betrayal or double-cross awaiting the characters at the end.

Gamemasters can use mood, atmosphere, and conflicts to support the adventure's theme by creating specific elements or events that emphasize in different ways the main thrust of the characters' involvement.

Betrayal, vengeance, intrigue, and heroism all make suitable themes for adventures in **Earthdawn**; every gamemaster is sure to discover many others. As an illustration of one use of a theme, consider the commonly used theme of conflict with the Horrors.

Horror Theme

The word Horror as used here does not refer to the horror genre. It refers to the creatures from astral space that ravaged the world of **Earthdawn** during the Scourge. The Horror theme is a way of describing one of the overriding reasons heroes adventure in **Earthdawn**. These themes are usually complex enough to weave the plot of an adventure or tie together a series of adventures.

In one way, an adventure with a Horror theme may be the best way to initiate the players into the world of **Earthdawn**. Historically, the Horrors affected most of Barsaive in the same way; they ravaged the land and people, forcing all sentient beings to find a way to protect themselves. Even the magics provided by the Therans proved ineffective against some Horrors, and the communities that hid themselves in kaers and citadels found themselves forced to create new forms of protection, either to save themselves or to protect the rest of the world from the threat they faced.

These new protections sometimes took forms that required the people to perform actions as bad as or worse than those the Horrors themselves perpetrated; when those communities realized the truth of what they had done, they sought to leave those events in the past or to somehow redeem their actions.

The gamemaster may decide to provide a common history for the player characters by placing them all in the same kaer or citadel, then creating for them or allowing the players to invent the history and events of that hiding place. The adventure would begin as the characters re-emerge into the world, and the theme might revolve around their efforts to cleanse themselves of the actions they took against the Horrors while in the kaer, or, if nothing untoward happened during their time of hiding, to help free other Barsaivians from the influence of the Horrors.

The Horror theme as described above consists of four basic elements:

1. Characters somehow isolate themselves in an effort to protect themselves from the Horrors. This isolation is not always physical. For example, the Ritual of Thorns used by the elves of Blood Wood to fend off the Horrors is simply another form of isolation. In fact, most uses of blood magic in the days before the Scourge represented similar attempts at isolation.
2. The characters emerge from their self-imposed isolation when certain signs indicate that the Horrors are gone or less powerful than before. In most cases, this meant simply emerging from kaers and citadels. But the isolation sometimes affected a community as deeply as the Horrors themselves, and the physical emergence became only a first step to truly rejoining the world.



3. The characters realize that the isolation they believed would protect them has, in fact, corrupted their community on a deep level. At this point a character may realize that the means did not justify the ends.
4. The characters begin their efforts to recover what they once were, to redeem their actions, to grow beyond the damage done. Success in these efforts may take unexpected forms—redemption may involve more than performing ever-greater heroics …

Adventuring the Horror Theme

Rather than starting the characters at the beginning of the story-inside the kaer or citadel-the gamemaster may decide to begin the adventure when the characters emerge from the kaer, when they recognize the consequences of what they have done, or as they begin their quest for redemption. Rather than creating an elaborate history at this point, the gamemaster may simply give the characters a mission or other compelling reason to leave the kaer, then reveal the story behind their flight bit by bit as the adventure unfolds or allow the players to make up their characters' history. Again, if the group of characters goes through all four stages of the Horror theme, the gamemaster may set up their isolation as another type of protection from a Horror (or other danger) rather than the more common retreat to a kaer or citadel. The characters would still move through the same four stages: isolation, emergence, realization, and redemption; the focus would simply be slightly different.

The Horror Theme can also be used as the overall theme of a campaign, with different adventures dealing with each of the four stages. The Horror theme may also tie together a campaign through a series of subplots woven in and through the main stories and adventures.

SUBPLOTS

Subplots create a second, less important story that serves as a counterpoint or provides subtle emphasis to the main story of the adventure. Subplots can provide comic relief or serve as a device to accomplish something in the main story of the adventure. For example, a subplot could center on a young child who follows a group of heroes around the city during an adventure and always manages to be in the way at inopportune times. The child may have nothing to do with the story at all and may be just a harmless annoyance. Or he may turn out to be the son of the very Nethermancer the characters are trying to find.

Subplots can also help establish mood and atmosphere, or emphasize the theme of an adventure. For example, if the adventure's theme is vengeance, then a subplot about a gamemaster character from a past adventure seeking revenge against one of the players' characters would serve to support the overall theme.

FLESHING OUT THE STORY

Now that you've written out the basic building blocks of your adventure, you need to bring it to life. Adding color, controlling the characters' preparation time, creating gamemaster characters to fit various situations that may come up, and deciding how much to tell the characters about what's really going on will help turn your story outline into an exciting roleplaying adventure.

Adding Color

A good roleplaying adventure must engage the players' imaginations. Use descriptions that relate to more than one or two of the characters' senses when describing encounters. Describing the odor of a particular place or the texture of the ground can help convey atmosphere to your players. The skill of imaginatively describing the atmosphere of your adventures is well worth developing. It will enhance the quality of your game and your players will thank you for your time and effort. Players need to see the



scenery, hear the thwack of an arrow striking near their heads, feel the sweat trickling down their necks. Some players embrace this part of the game and end up doing most of the work. Other players refuse to play along, and make the gamemaster want to tear out his hair. Most players fall somewhere between these two extremes.

A wise old gamemaster once said, *"Don't tell them what's happening; show them!"* Avoid reciting descriptions in a dull monotone. Overact! Ham it up! The way in which the gamemaster describes the setting of an adventure helps establish the atmosphere by giving the characters a specific, powerful impression of their surroundings. A description of the Blood Wood as *"a big forest that is almost always dark and gloomy,"* does not create the same type of atmosphere as, *"the dark woods stretch for miles in all directions. Twisted trees and plants create the unsettling illusion that the entire forest is writhing. The corruption that pervades this place goes beyond the mere visual to permeate your every sense."* The first description helps create the setting of the adventure, but, unlike the second description, fails to evoke much imagination or feeling. The second description not only provides visual information, but gives the player an idea of how his character feels.

When possible, illustrate the characters' surroundings using a display with miniatures. It takes much less effort to draw a wall with a door in it than to explain the layout verbally. Visual aids will help the players keep track of where they are, and cuts down on the arguments about who is standing where, who gets trapped by the Fire Wall when the magician casts it, and so on.

Use props to add a realistic feel to the game. For example, when the group finds a scroll outlining an evil Nethermancer's plans, don't just read it to them. Write it out before the adventure and hand it to them. If it suits your own plans or allows a character to use a skill, make parts of it illegible or missing. Every such prop speeds up play and adds color.

Make the gamemaster characters as colorful as possible. A lot of gamemasters act out their gamemaster characters, complete with funny voices. Being a ham helps. Steal material, attitudes, and speaking styles wholeheartedly from comic books, movies, television, and fiction. If you want to play one of a character's supporters as Groucho Marx, go ahead.

The way the players roleplay their characters should also add color to the game. Players should try to create a distinct character and stay in it. Adventures can also incorporate subplots to advance the adventurers' life stories when they are not fighting Horrors or researching magical items. Does a certain character have a love life? If not, does he want one? Who do the characters hang around with? How do they spend their spare time? Try to develop a few of these details in each adventure to add color and depth to your story.

Masterminds and Equalizers

The gamemaster can create two specific types of gamemaster characters: masterminds, to add complexity to the story, and equalizers, to give himself options for getting players out of a tough jam.

Consider making every adventure you write, even the small ones, part of some vast conspiracy. The mastermind behind the conspiracy could be an individual or an organization. Drop occasional clues for the player characters that hint at such conspiracies, even if a particular adventure has nothing to do with any far-reaching dastardly scheme. As ideas for the mastermind present themselves, make notes. Eventually, the group may encounter the mastermind directly, and will be more than a little surprised to find that their latest opponent already hates their guts because they have unknowingly spent months foiling his plans.

Sometimes the characters get into more trouble than they can handle alone. If the gamemaster wants to bail them out, he can add an equalizer to the adventure. An equalizer can be a friendly member of an angry mob, a wandering Swordmaster, a former enemy turned traitor, and so on. The gamemaster should have a set of pre-generated characters able to step in and tip the balance in favor of the player characters should an emergency situation arise.

The equalizer can also cover for missing players in a pinch. Say the player who runs the group's magician is sick and does not show up. If the group stands to land in serious trouble without a magician, the gamemaster can substitute a handy gamemaster character magician to work with the group.

The gamemaster may try letting a player run the equalizer, but should be ready to take control of the equalizer's actions if the player does not remain in character.

Preparation Time

Once the characters receive the message (or see the injustice, or meet the maiden in distress) and accept the objective, the players will want time to prepare for the adventure. By this time, of course, the gamemaster should have finished all his preparation. Most players want to spend a lot of time getting ready to take on anything that looks like a tough job. If allowed, they may easily spend a whole game session just getting ready. Don't let them.

In the world of roleplaying games, player characters rarely book adventures in advance. Most adventures take place in response to a message of distress or some urgent matter. In these cases, the gamemaster should limit the players' preparation time to make the game more realistic. But even for adventures that the characters plan for their own benefit, shortening the actual time spent preparing makes the game more immediate and therefore more exciting to play. Unless the players really enjoy the research-and-report process, and you don't mind giving them that opportunity, have a certain amount of information available for them. Rather than letting them spend time hunting for it, pass it on through a supporter or a friend. If the characters want to double-check what they hear or do their own research, compress the time in which this occurs. Have a character who wants to conduct research or talk to supporters make an appropriate test and use the result to decide how much info he finds. Then cast some doubt on the credibility of the information. Like most people, characters must guess at whether or not what they've seen or learned represents the truth. If characters want to acquire special equipment to deal with a potential problem, send them to the shops and decide for them whether or not they find the desired equipment in the time available.

Ideally, you should give the group a little prep time, but don't let them keep the curtain from rising. If they're working under a time limit, let them know. After all, how long will it take the hypothetical evil Nethermancer to complete his summoning ritual? The characters can't wait too long to stop him. If they're not moving fast enough, turn up the heat. Give them an overriding reason to get the heck out of town. Perhaps they are one jump ahead of arrest and execution for a crime they can't prove they didn't commit, or perhaps some deadly enemy has discovered their whereabouts and is closing in. Whatever the reason, make the group want to get going as fast as possible.

Integrating New Player Characters

Few gaming groups are willing to start a new campaign just to add a new player or player character. Every time a new player wants to join the game, however, or a new player character needs to join the group because a former character retired or died or because the group is lacking a necessary skill, the players must find a way to successfully integrate new characters into the existing story.

Gamemasters can use nearly any element already present in their campaigns to get a new player onto an existing adventuring group. Using a befriended gamemaster character is one of the simplest ways of introducing a new player character to a group. This friend might introduce the new character at virtually any time and place. Gamemasters can easily fill the first adventure for the new group member with interesting and fun surprises, because he will probably be unfamiliar with the group's talents, skills, methods, personalities, and vice versa.

Adventure Ideas

The world of **Earthdawn** abounds with adventuring opportunities. Given the size of Barsaive and the conflicts that exist between its citizens, the possibilities for stories appear practically limitless.

To keep you from being overwhelmed by the possibilities, we present some of the major elements of **Earthdawn** below and suggest a few adventure ideas for each.

Horrors

The Horrors represent perhaps the most obvious source of adventures in **Earthdawn**. The characters may battle the Horrors that remain since the Scourge, or fight to right the damage left by the Scourge. Many Horrors still dominate towns and villages, feeding off their captives' fears and other strong emotions. Adventures and campaigns centered on the Horror theme usually fall into this category.

Therans

Though they don't rule the province of Barsaive anymore, the Theran Empire remains a very real threat and has a strong influence on the province due to their recently established fortress of *Triumph*. The Therans support a network of spies scattered throughout the larger province that works to subvert local governments. In this way the Therans hope to pave the way for eventual re-domination. The Therans show particular interest in Parlainth, once the provincial capital of Barsaive. Known Theran spies work in Haven, in the outlying areas of Parlainth, but their identities and agenda remain unknown.

Passions and Questors

The people of Barsaive turn to their Passions, the embodiment of the emotions and feelings of the people, for spiritual support. Because of their central role in peoples' lives, the Passions can serve as inspiration for many adventures. In particular, an examination of how the questors of the Passions interact with the people of Barsaive makes for good stories. Because most questors believe that serving their patron Passion is the only important goal in life, and many would fight to the death to do so, simply imagine the potential clash between questors of the same Passion pursuing similar goals but with different methods of achieving those goals.

The Mad Passions and their questors present the most adventure possibilities. The Mad Passions work individually (so far) to destroy the other Passions, giving no thought to the consequences. The result of a battle between the questors of a Mad Passion and the questors of any other Passion could be devastating.

Exploring Legends

Another key element of **Earthdawn** is the legends of that world and time. As the characters adventure across Barsaive, they will learn many legends of heroes, treasure, Horrors, and other monsters. These make ideal sources of adventures for your game. Share legends with the characters that will intrigue them and pique their curiosity, then use these legends to spark new adventures. For example, unfold to the characters the legend of the Crystal Spear, rumored to still lie within a kaer in the Badlands. The legend could serve as the focus of an adventure in which the heroes explore the Badlands and discover what lies within its borders.

Exploring Kaers and Citadels

Kaers and citadels dot the landscape of Barsaive. Most have been abandoned, though some remain inhabited by people still unwilling to believe that the Scourge has ended. Kaers and citadels generally make good adventuring sites, usually to find and use what was left behind. Kaers and citadels also make a good setting for an adventure or campaign with a Horror theme.

Mapping Barsaive

Barsaive changed significantly during the years of the Scourge. Many towns, villages, and cities were completely destroyed and others relocated to escape the Horrors. Most of the natural terrain remains as it was, but even some geographic formations have been transformed.

As a result, few accurate maps of Barsaive exist. As a change of pace from battle, some person or organization may hire the characters to map an area of Barsaive. This task could lead the characters to uncover a city long-forgotten from before the Scourge, or simply afford them the satisfaction of a job well done.

Treasures

In the same way that adventures that focus on legends are important to the people of Barsaive, adventures based on magical treasure benefit the denizens of **Earthdawn**. The histories of magical items contain the history of the people of Barsaive. Because these items can reveal to characters so much information about the history of Barsaive, they make a practical foundation for adventures and campaigns. In order for the characters to learn an item's past, they must inevitably travel from one end of Barsaive to the other; these travels can lead to any number of adventures.

Because the rules for using magical treasure require that characters seek out an item's Key Knowledges, gamemasters can easily use the task of discovering all the Key Knowledges of an item as the objective or motivation for several adventures or a campaign.

Communities

In addition to kaers and citadels, countless cities, towns, and villages also dot the landscape of Barsaive and provide almost endless possibilities for adventures. Adventures set in or near communities can involve thievery, political intrigue, the Horror theme, and so on.

Several of the major cities of Barsaive are briefly described in this book and in the ***Player's Guide***, but these only represent those known to the Kingdom of Throal. Many communities of various sizes wait to be rediscovered.

Creating Campaigns

Gamemasters may want to send their group of player characters through a campaign—a series of linked adventures featuring the same player characters, and usually the same players and gamemaster. Campaigns offer several gaming advantages, and we designed the world of **Earthdawn** to be played in this fashion. A campaign featuring the same characters allows the players and gamemaster to watch the characters grow more capable and powerful, becoming the heroes of legend by recognizing and achieving goals. While many situations in **Earthdawn** work well as individual adventures, many of the underlying political and magical themes in **Earthdawn** lend themselves to use as the backdrop for a longer series of stories. One familiar and pervasive example is the Theran Empire's continuing efforts to regain political control of Barsaive. A story this complex may stretch over many adventures, perhaps spanning years of the characters' lives. One adventure is simply not enough to explore the Theran storyline.

By definition, a campaign may be nothing more than a series of unrelated adventures connected by the fact that the same characters appear in all of them. However, you may find that it's more fun to plot storylines that require several adventures to resolve. For example, suppose you design an adventure in which the characters must seek out and kill a very powerful Horror, a task that can only be accomplished using a special magical weapon. Rather than creating an adventure in which the heroes simply find the weapon and attack the Horror, you can create a campaign made up of several steps, each of which is a separate adventure.

The characters learn that the Great Dragon Icewing has the magical weapon they need to kill the Horror. The characters travel to Icewing's lair to ask for the weapon. The dragon agrees, but asks in return that they retrieve a certain magical treasure for him, said to lie in the Badlands. Before the characters can go to the Badlands, they will need a map of the area. Maps of the Badlands are very hard to find—in fact, they can only be obtained from the Library in the Kingdom of Throal. One adventure expanded into a series of adventures with little difficulty.

Campaign Elements

An **Earthdawn** campaign can be a simple matter of running a series of adventures one after another, all featuring the same player characters. However, recurring player or gamemaster characters may not be enough to make an interesting connection between the stories in each adventure.

Subplots, motivation, objectives, and opposition all serve as excellent techniques for creating an interesting, engaging campaign.

Subplots

The gamemaster can use subplots to create continuity through several adventures to make a campaign. Secondary to the main story of the campaign, subplots relate adventures to one another through a minor storyline, character, or series of events. Subplots can hint at upcoming adventures or refer to past events.

For example, you might set the stage for an upcoming adventure by incorporating two or three scenes into the present adventure that relate to future events. When you run the new adventure, the characters (and players) will already have some information about or be familiar with the present situation. Continuity through subplots helps maintain the illusion that the world of the game is a living place that changes over time.

In the previous example, instead of simply setting the characters down in the village where the Horror lived, the gamemaster may have begun the campaign by enlisting the characters' help to rid a village of a Horror. In the first adventure of the campaign, the characters travel to that village, staying at more than one inn on the way. At each resting place they hear a tale or a snippet of information about Icewing the dragon. In a later adventure, when they discover that they must deal with Icewing to reach their goal, they realize that they already have some helpful information about this formidable adversary. Icewing has become a subplot of the campaign.

Subplots may also occur in a more haphazard fashion, though this use of the technique requires more complex planning. The gamemaster creates several apparently unrelated and unimportant events that the players and characters either witness or take part in during one or more adventures in a campaign. The end of the adventures fails to reveal whether or not these events held any importance; the players and characters may forget they even happened. In fact, these apparently unrelated and unimportant events form the basis of an adventure you plan to run in the near future, probably as part of the campaign.

When you get ready to run the adventure based on the subplot, review your notes on the events you used to hint at the new adventure and be sure to refer to those events during the adventure. The characters and players will have an 'aha!' reaction as everything suddenly makes sense, and once again you convince your players that your game world is a real place where people and situations change and grow.

Objectives

Most campaigns benefit from a planned objective. This is certainly true of campaigns built by expanding on one storyline, as in the example above. However, the campaign objective may be more abstract than simply achieving a single goal. For example, a legitimate but more long-term campaign objective may be to explore Barsaive and free it from the remaining Horrors.

As long as each adventure in a campaign has a clear objective, you need not create a campaign objective. But building an objective into your campaign will help focus the campaign and help you create a basis on which to build adventures.



Motivation

Campaigns also benefit from an overriding motivation. The campaign motivation may be the same as the motivation for an individual adventure, but is usually the overall reason that the characters continue their adventures. They may want to free the world from the Horrors, or spread the legends of the heroes of the world, or build their own legends. The motivation for a campaign may also be more practical. The characters may want to track down and rescue a person captured by Theran slavers or a Horror, seek knowledge of a specific race or place, or be determined to solve the puzzle of a family heirloom.

It is important to tie your adventures to the player characters' campaign motivation because it allows the characters to feel as if they are acting on personal motivation.

Opposition

An ongoing campaign also benefits from large-scale or very powerful opposition, usually characterized by an enemy or foe too large to handle in one or two adventures. This opposition may continue to combat the characters over a long period of time, such as a villain, a powerful Horror that consistently evades destruction, or agents of the Theran Empire.

A long-term campaign centered on a specific opponent also gives the characters an opportunity to find one or more of that opponent's Pattern Items and so become more likely to defeat him (or it).

Continuity and Change

Campaigns should be dynamic; that is, they should change over time. Some changes in a campaign are the direct result of the characters' actions; a gamemaster must be prepared to incorporate these changes into the planned storyline, and must also alter his story to fit the new circumstances. For example, if an important gamemaster character dies unexpectedly in one adventure, he should not show up in a subsequent adventure in the campaign no matter how vital he is to the gamemaster's plan, unless the gamemaster manipulated events so that the characters did not find a body.

Dead characters suddenly coming back to life is an extreme example of a lack of continuity, but a common failing. With everything that can occur during a campaign, it is easy to lose track of minor details.

The gamemaster needs to demonstrate to the players and characters that the world of **Earthdawn** continues to change. This can be accomplished in many ways. A friendly gamemaster character may grow older, become sick, or gradually experience a change of heart about one or more of the player characters. The gamemaster can also show changes in the game world by allowing gamemaster characters to share stories of the world from places the characters have never been. You could pass on rumors during the adventure, then update them for the characters from time to time.

If you offer the characters an adventure that they leave for another set of heroes to complete, reveal the result of their inaction later on. Gamemasters should feel free to invent other ways of demonstrating change in the characters' world.

Because the characters in your campaign will change over time, continually earning Legend Points and gaining different and better abilities, your campaign must change to accommodate this growth. As the characters grow in power and experience, you and the players will become more familiar with the rules of the game, which in turn may impact on how well both the player and gamemaster characters perform in the game.

As the gamemaster and players become more familiar with how the rules work, they will make better-informed choices and eventually maximize their characters' potential. Gamemasters will learn how to create campaigns suitable for higher-Circle characters with time and experience, but in early campaigns may have to adjust the planned events and opponents more drastically to account for changes in the characters.

Another important way in which your game may change over time will be a result of the characters (and players) learning more about the world of **Earthdawn** and how that world works. As you create adventures that deal with the various elements of the game, the players and their characters will learn and remember more about the world, and that knowledge will show in the way they play the game. This particular change is a natural one, and should be welcome; part of the excitement of all roleplaying games, and **Earthdawn** in particular, is discovering a new world.

Greater familiarity with the rules of the game and the game world allows both players and gamemaster to use those rules and that knowledge more creatively and with greater complexity.

CAMPAIGN IDEAS

The following are some ideas for different campaigns that can be run in **Earthdawn**. The gamemaster is encouraged to expand or even mix and match these ideas in any way he sees fit.

CARAVAN CAMPAIGN

Trade moves throughout Barsaive over land, water, and air, as merchants transport goods from one place to the next quickly and safely enough to secure a profit (if Chorrolis is kind). The constant demand for new trade routes gives explorers and adventurers a ready-made excuse to blaze new trails through the wilderness.

A caravan campaign can begin with a wealthy merchant or merchant company hiring player characters to explore new routes. One such potential employer is His Majesty's Trade Commission, the informal cooperative of merchant companies in the Kingdom of Throal. In addition to the various hazards of wilderness travel, the characters may also face competition from agents of other, rival merchant groups seeking similar routes or attempting to curry favor with the various settlements along a new trade route.

Once a route has been established, merchant caravans require skilled guides and adepts to protect them from the various hazards of the road. Eventually, player characters can even establish their own merchant companies to seek profits and adventure in the far reaches of Barsaive. Establishing a company exposes characters to the machinations of treacherous competitors as well as all the other dangers of shepherding caravans through the wilds.

DELVING CAMPAIGN

Gamemasters can use Barsaive's unique history to flavor campaigns based on exploring ruined kaers and other underground tunnels and caves. In addition to seeking treasure, adepts and explorers might investigate ruined kaers in search of information, artifacts and stories thought lost during the Scourge. Adepts can aid scholars and historians, such as those of the Great Library of Throal, in digging up these lost secrets. Ruined kaers might also hold valuable magical knowledge, such as spells created by long-dead magicians or Key Knowledges of various thread items and magical treasures that characters discovered in previous adventures.

Areas thick with ruins, such as the Forgotten City of Parlainth or the Wastes, might even spawn "delvers' guilds"—alliances of explorers and adepts who systematically explore, map, and loot the local ruins. Such groups might harass adepts who are not members of their organizations. This situation already exists in Parlainth, where the Loyal Order of Delvers and the Association of Unaffiliated Explorers compete with one another to snatch the spoils of the Forgotten City's ruins. Similarly, characters may find themselves competing with other independent groups over the same ruins.

EXPLORATION CAMPAIGN

The Scourge altered much of Barsaive beyond recognition, and many areas of the province remain unknown to most present-day Namegivers. Many kingdoms and factions are interested in learning about these unexplored regions for the secrets and treasures they may contain or simply to expand their own knowledge. His Majesty's Exploratory Force is one example of an organization that employs adepts to explore Barsaive's distant wilds.

Exploration campaigns give characters the opportunity to travel to places no Namegiver has visited since long before the Scourge. Consequently, characters are likely to discover lost kaers and ancient ruins, potential new trade routes, isolated civilizations and unfamiliar dangers, of course. The Kingdom of Throal also uses its explorer troops as special agents. Other parties that hire explorers might do the same, thus providing a convenient way to involve player characters in Barsaive's political intrigues.

KAER CAMPAIGN

The kaer campaign provides an excellent way to introduce new players to the world of **Earthdawn** and give players and player characters a chance to explore a new world at the same time—thus enhancing the players' sense of wonder and discovery.

This type of campaign begins inside a kaer still sealed from the outside world. The kaer's residents, including the player characters, are initially unaware that the Scourge is over. After the residents open their kaer, the player characters become the first inhabitants to emerge and explore the world. No doubt they will be in for some surprises—among them the devastation wrought by the Scourge, Barsaive's independence from the Theran Empire, and the various political intrigues between Throal, Thera, Iopos, and Barsaive's other great cities and powers.

MILITARY CAMPAIGN

The characters are part of a military organization, such as the Throalic army, a Theran legion, an ork scorcher band or cavalry, a *shimoram's* crew on the Serpent River, or even a drakkar crew of trolls. The objective of such a campaign is usually straightforward; and involves doing whatever the government, house, tribe, or trollmoot needs the characters to do. The characters could also serve as spies or scouts rather than in large-scale conflicts, or as a group suited for 'special' operations.

A military campaign focuses on the warring factions of Barsaive, and usually involves a lot of combat. The gamemaster determines the assignments the characters have to follow, so he usually doesn't have to worry about motivation. The players, on the other hand, trade their freedom—but have the chance to become legendary war heroes commanding their own troops.

POLITICAL CAMPAIGN

A political campaign focuses on diplomacy and negotiation rather than fighting. The characters are involved in the day-to-day running of a particular government as court or council members, advisors, nobles, or influential merchants. When necessary they use their adept powers to negotiate with emissaries from other kingdoms or fight off threats to their land and population from within and from without.

On the smallest scale, the players form the ruling body of a small town or village attempting to expand. As the town grows, ork scorchers may threaten to become a constant threat requiring the characters to find allies for protection. On a larger scale, the characters might be involved to run a great city like Urupa or Travar, or even advise the dwarf king in governing Throal.



RESTORATION CAMPAIGN

The Scourge left scars on the face of Barsaive that have yet to be healed. Many different factions of Namegivers, especially questors of Jaspree, seek to restore wholeness to the land and its people and erase the taint of the Horrors forever. Places such as the Badlands, the Wastes, and the Poison Forest are all good sites for the work of would-be restorers, such as the colony of questors from the town of Trosk on the edges of the Badlands.

Characters in a restoration campaign may have the backing of a patron or a living legend cult but will also face powerful opponents-such as Horrors in the region or other Namegivers who prefer the status quo. A restoration campaign that focuses on curing the corruption of Barsaive's people rather than the land might involve members of secret societies or cults, who might also make good patrons.

Player characters in such campaigns are likely to come into conflict with corrupted Namegivers such as the Hand of Corruption and the Elven Court of Blood Wood.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ADVENTURING

Of course, it's a stupid idea! Some of our best plans started with stupid ideas.

• Seethian, Windling Thief •

The heroes of **Earthdawn** pit their skills and courage against supernatural creatures and Horrors on a regular basis and confront their fears as a matter of course. Heroes brave the forgotten kaers and citadels left unexplored after the Scourge, or travel across Barsaive, facing nomadic ork scorchers and deadly crystal raiders, fighting to protect their world from the Horrors that remain. The heroes of **Earthdawn** strive to reclaim their world from both the ravages of the Horrors and the tyranny of others, such as the Theran Empire. As characters explore the world of **Earthdawn**, they will also face many everyday dangers that bear no relation to the plotting or malice of villains and creatures. Sometimes just surviving is a challenge.

This chapter offers guidelines for dealing with the everyday perils of adventuring, including climbing, traps, poison, diseases, curses, travel, and so on. Also described are many of the dangers of adventuring life, along with rules and suggestions for determining whether or not a character survives them. If the gamemaster finds dealing with all the situations outlined in this section bewildering, he should simply use the examples and guidelines presented until he feels more confident of his own judgment. These rules should help the gamemaster run his adventure, not get in his way.

Keep in mind that the gamemaster is still responsible for choosing the exact Difficulty Numbers required and determines how successfully a character performs various actions. No matter what a player may desire as an outcome for his character, the gamemaster always has the final say.

BARRIERS AND STRUCTURES

During most adventures, player characters will eventually find themselves outside a structure they want to get into or inside a structure but determined to get out. Lacking a key or a handy magic word, the characters will need to break through a barrier to get in or out. To determine how successfully characters storm a barrier, the gamemaster must know the structural capacity of different types of barriers.

Every barrier has two characteristics: a **Physical Armor** and a **Death Rating**. In this case, a barrier's Death Rating indicates the amount of damage it can take before it breaks, crumbles, or falls apart. The Physical Armor rating serves the same purpose as armor worn by characters: it reduces the damage done by attacks. However, unlike physical armor worn by characters, Armor-Defeating Hits cannot be made against a barrier. Being inanimate, physical barriers and structures are immune to any damage or effects that are reduced by Mystic Armor.

Characters make Attack Tests against barriers using a Difficulty Number of 7. If successful, the character makes a Damage Test as normal, subtracting the barrier's Physical Armor from the result, otherwise, the blow glances off the barrier and causes no harm.

BARRIER RATING TABLE

Barrier Material	Physical Armor	Death Rating
Blood Ivy	3	15
Cave or Natural Wall	30	150
Wood (up to 2 inches thick)	7	20
Wood (more than 2 inches thick)	9	30
Stone Wall (mortared)	12	45
Stone Block	20	85

The Barrier Rating Table suggests Physical Armor and Death Ratings for common building materials. The gamemaster should use these as the basis for determining similar ratings for other materials.

CLIMBING

Many situations require a character to clamber his way out of (or into) trouble. He may have to climb out of a pit he has fallen into, or scramble down a mountainside to escape a band of ork scorchers, or scale a wall in order to launch a surprise attack. The rules for climbing apply whenever a character chooses or is forced to climb up or down a vertical surface. A character who attempts to climb a vertical surface makes a Climbing Test against a Climbing Difficulty based on the type of surface. The Climbing Difficulty Table suggests typical Difficulty Numbers for the gamemaster to use as a guide.

Climbing uses a Standard Action in every round spent climbing, but a Climbing Test is only made when the surface condition changes or at the gamemaster's discretion.

Climbing characters move up or down a number of yards equal to their Climbing Rank each round (to a maximum equal to his Movement Rate in yards, not hexes).

When climbing on a treacherous surface, or under adverse conditions (such as in a rainstorm, or while under missile fire), the gamemaster may decide the character climbs more slowly—at half his normal climbing rate, for instance (1 yard per 2 Climbing Ranks).

Me'gana knows the Climbing talent at Rank 6. She can climb up or down 6 yards per round with a successful Climbing Test. As her Movement Rate is 7, her climbing speed would benefit from a Climbing Rank increase to 7, but not from an increase to 8—you can climb only so fast, no matter how good you are!

Creatures and Climbing

Some creatures climb as easily as they travel on the ground. While they have a Climbing skill and make Climbing Tests as normal, they use the Movement Rates shown in their descriptions to determine how fast they climb. They effectively use their normal Movement Rate while climbing, instead of halving it, and may use the Running combat option to climb at double their Movement Rates.

Climbing Gear

The Difficulty Numbers given in the Climbing Difficulty Table assume the character is climbing the surface freehand—without using climbing gear. A character using ropes and pitons, or other suitable climbing gear, gains a +4 Climbing Test bonus.

Corvis wants to climb down a cliff to reach the entrance of a long-forgotten kaer. He does not possess knowledge of the Climbing talent or skill, so the rules for Default Skill Use apply (***Player's Guide***, p.87) and he uses only his Dexterity Step of 6, requiring a Good Result, for his Climbing Step. If he uses rope and pitons, he gains a +4 bonus to his Climbing Tests, making the climb easier and his chances of falling less likely.

Failing a Climbing Test

If a character's Climbing Test succeeds, he is able to safely climb that surface. But what happens if the character fails?

On a Poor Result, the character simply fails to make any progress. Unless he has some sort of preventative measure in place (roped to another character, or fastened to a piton), a character who fails a Climbing Test with a Pathetic Result loses his grip and plummets to the ground, taking Falling damage based on the distance fallen (see below).



Falling Damage

It is a fact of life in **Earthdawn** that characters will fall, usually from high places. When a character takes a dive, use the Falling Damage Table to determine how much damage he receives. No armor protects against falling damage. The value in parentheses in the Damage Step column is the number of Damage Tests the player makes for his character's fall.

A character who falls from a height of 110 yards makes four Step 30/3D12+D8+D6 Damage Tests to determine how much falling damage he takes, without the benefit of armor to protect him. Even if he survives, he will probably suffer at least 4 Wounds, and is unlikely to walk away from the fall.

CLIMBING DIFFICULTY TABLE

Surface	Difficulty Number
Tree	5
Pole	7
Rocky Cliff	9
Wall	12
Sheer Surface	15

FALLING DAMAGE TABLE

Distance Fallen	Damage Step
2–3 yards	5
4–6 yards	10
7–10 yards	15
11–20 yards	(2) 20
21–30 yards	(2) 25
31–50 yards	(3) 25
51–100 yards	(3) 30
101–150 yards	(4) 30
151–200 yards	(4) 35
201+ yards	(5) 35

FIRE DAMAGE TABLE

Size of Fire	Damage Step
Campfire (small)	6 (touch)
Campfire (large)	8 (touch)
House Fire	10
Forest Fire	12
Torch	4 (touch)

Drowning

Characters who cannot breathe underwater will eventually drown if they become trapped beneath the surface of the water, or if they score a Pathetic result on their Swimming Tests. A character can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to his Toughness value. T'skrang possess rudimentary gills, which allow them to breathe underwater for a number of minutes equal to their Toughness Steps. As soon as he runs out of breath, the character begins to take damage from drowning. At this point, the gamemaster makes a Damage Test each round to determine how much damage the character takes. In the first round of drowning, the character takes Step 4 damage. Each round thereafter, the Damage Step is increased by +2 steps until the character dies, is rescued, or somehow reaches the surface of the water. No armor protects against this damage.

Characters can try to reach the surface again by making Swimming Tests, adding the last drowning Damage Step to the Difficulty Number.

Fire

Characters occasionally find themselves in situations where they may take damage from fire. Smoke detectors do not exist in **Earthdawn**. In addition to the regular occurrence of fireballs and other fire-based spells, natural disaster or sabotage remain likely events. This section provides guidelines for determining how much damage fire can inflict. The size of a fire determines how much damage it causes. The Fire Damage Table suggests Damage Steps for fires of varying sizes. Like the Climbing Difficulty Table, this list is not exhaustive; it simply serves as an example for the gamemaster. Smaller fires, like a torch or campfire, must be touched in order to cause damage. Larger fires, like a burning house, can

harm any character who happens to be near, from the high temperature alone. For each combat round a character remains adjacent to such a fire—up to 2 yards away—he takes damage appropriate to the fire's size. At the gamemaster's discretion, a fire may be hot enough for the heat to harm characters even further away. For these instances, the gamemaster reduces the fire's Damage Step by –5 for each hex that lies between the character and the fire (every 2 yards after the first 2 yards).

While Physical Armor normally provides protection from fire damage, the gamemaster may decide to ignore armor protection completely if a character is exposed to especially large or fierce fires, or where he touches a fire with an unprotected body part, or in situations where the character is completely surrounded by flame. Armor does not protect against pure heat, but some magical abilities may convey an Armor Rating that protects against heat damage.

When wielded as melee weapons, unlit torches use the same Damage Step as clubs (Step 3); they become Damage Step 4 weapons when ablaze. At the gamemaster's discretion, a Pathetic Attack Test result extinguishes a lit torch.

Thom Hammerblade is fighting an ork scorcher who is wielding a lit torch. If the torch were unlit, the ork would make a Step 8/2D6 Damage Test (Strength Step 5 + Damage Step 3 for the torch). The fact that the torch is burning makes it a Damage Step 4 weapon, for a Damage Step of 9 (5+4=9).

Farliv the Archer wakes to find the once-comfortable Crakbill Inn an inferno. The gamemaster decides that the inn fire is already hotter than a house fire, and sets the Damage Step at 11/D10+D8. Based on the position of his room, it will take Farliv four combat rounds to get out of the inn. Each round, he takes Step 11/D10+D8 damage. Ouch! Once outside, the Archer is standing 2 hexes (4 yards) away from the Crakbill Inn. The gamemaster decides the fire is now so hot that it causes heat damage to everyone standing too close. If Farliv stood next to the fire, he would take Step 11/D10+D8 damage as before. Being one hex further away, this Damage Step is reduced to 6/D10 (11 – 5 = 6).

Secret Doors

Secret doors usually lead to areas used as hiding places, treasure rooms, and defensive strongholds. During the Scourge, hiding places provided boltholes in which the residents of kaers could hide from an invading Horror or creature.

Treasure rooms keep valuables safe, and offer the most tempting targets for adventurers. Defensive areas are small rooms where people can take prepared defensive positions against invaders. These rooms commonly include safe places from which bowmen could fire at their opponents, or rooms from which magicians could safely cast spells. Some secret doors conceal magical or alchemical laboratories, smith shops, and even temples to one or more of the Passions.

Detecting Secret Doors

A character attempting to detect a secret door makes a Perception Test against a Detection Difficulty based on how well the door is hidden. Suggested Difficulty Numbers are given in the Detection Difficulty Table. If the character's Perception Test is successful, he finds the secret door. The gamemaster should vary the Detection Difficulty for secret doors to reflect how carefully the characters are looking for them. If the characters look for a secret door in every room, hoping to get lucky, use the same Detection Difficulty for every door. If the characters minutely examine every inch of wall space, the gamemaster might subtract –2 or –3 from the Difficulty Number to reflect this meticulous searching.

DETECTION DIFFICULTY TABLE

Detection Difficulty	Difficulty Number
Easy	5
Average	9
Hard	15
Very Hard	21
Heroic	25

Opening Secret Doors

Successfully spotting a secret door does not mean a character knows how to open it. Some secret doors open when pushed against. Others slide into slots carved into the walls. Still others open when a character works some type of mechanism.

The gamemaster decides how a secret door opens at the same time that he determines the purpose of the door and how well it is hidden. Characters may succeed in opening the door on the first try, or they may open it only after a process of trial and error.

Traps

Shortly after people began to create goods worth keeping, they designed traps to protect them. Traps come in all shapes and sizes. They may lie concealed in small treasure chests, or guard the entrances to kaers and citadels. Those who built the kaers before the Scourge constructed traps that they hoped would stop those Horrors able to penetrate the magical protections guarding the entrances.

Characters may still encounter many of the traps placed in those kaers that remain sealed, either abandoned or filled with people who have yet to hear that the Scourge has ended.

The following terms describe how traps work in the game.

Detection: A character making a Perception or Talent Test to see or otherwise sense a trap uses the trap's Detection Difficulty as the Difficulty Number. Most traps have a Detection Difficulty of 5, though some traps are so obvious that the Detection Difficulty is NA (automatic)—in effect, the owner of the trapped goods or treasure is saying, "Look, stupid, this thing is trapped. So why don't you go steal someone else's stuff?" For magical traps, use the trap's Spell Defense as the Detection Difficulty.

Disarm: This figure is the Difficulty Number for disarming the trap. If a character does not have the Disarm Trap skill or talent, he cannot disarm the trap. The best a character lacking the appropriate talent or skill can hope for is to keep from triggering the trap when he opens the door, steps on the pressure plate, or takes some other action that would normally activate the trap.

A character attempting to avoid triggering a trap must make a Dexterity Test to avoid mechanical traps and a Perception Test to avoid magical traps. The Disarm Difficulty of the trap becomes the Difficulty Number for these tests. Most mechanical traps have a Disarm Difficulty of 7 to 9. The Disarm Difficulty of most magical traps is 8 or more.

The only other way a character can avoid a trap is to achieve a higher Test Result than the triggered trap on an Initiative Test.

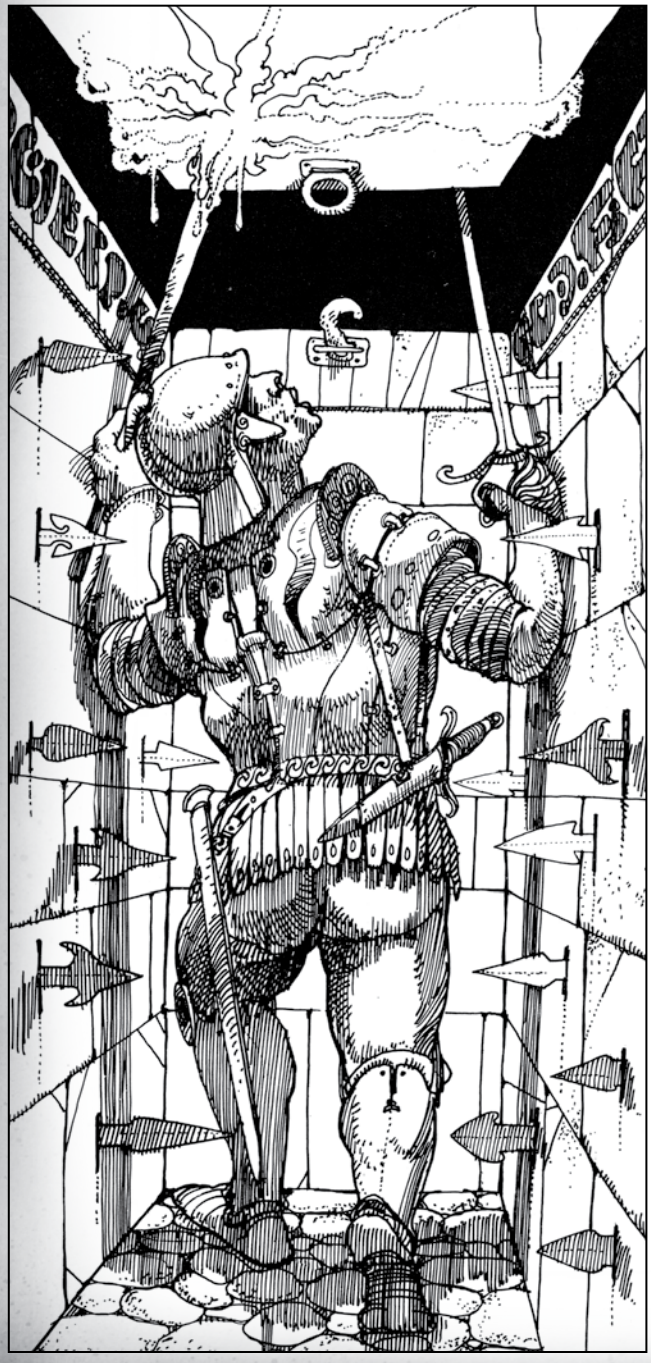
Spell Defense: This number is the trap's Spell Defense. Only magical traps have a Spell Defense Rating, which also serves as their Detection Difficulty. The Spell Defense Rating of most magical traps is equal to the Spell Defense of the character who built the trap.

Initiative: This figure is the trap's Initiative Step Number. Most mechanical traps have an Initiative Step of 8 to 10. Magical traps often have a higher Initiative Step. When a character triggers a trap, the gamemaster immediately makes an Initiative Test for the trap using the Trap Initiative Step. All characters within range of the trap also make Initiative Tests. Those who achieve a higher result than

the trap may be able to act to get out of harm's way. Those whose Initiative Test results are lower than or equal to the trap's Initiative succumb to its effect. The Trap Initiative talent (***Player's Guide***, p.84) allows characters to react to traps more quickly than normal.

Trigger: This entry describes the mechanism or action that triggers the trap. Stepping on a pressure plate, lifting the lid of a chest, and opening a door are common examples of trigger conditions for mechanical traps. Characters using talents or spells within a certain range may trigger magical traps.

Effect: The trap effect entry describes the type and steps of damage the trap inflicts. For example, some traps restrain their targets, others mark them with a magical stain, and still others may put a spell on the character that takes effect after a delay. A trap may have any effect conjured by the imagination and resources of the character building the trap. The type of damage the trap inflicts determines its Damage Step. For example, the trap effect of a simple pit trap might be only Damage Step 4, while a trap designed to smash an intruder might have a trap effect of Damage Step 10 or more.



Trap Descriptions

Here are descriptions for several typical traps, which can be adjusted to almost any situation by the gamemaster.

Blade Trap

Blade traps generally feature several sharp blades set to slit a victim's throat or cut him across his legs. In old ruins or kaers the blades may be centuries old and rusted or corroded. These rusty blades can cause infected Wounds or be so weakened that they do less damage than a clean, new blade. Use the following statistics for a typical blade trap:

Detection: 7 **Disarm:** 9
Initiative: 17/D12+2D8

Trigger: A pressure plate, trip wire, or moving a specific object or stone.

Effect: One or more blades spring from the ground beneath the victim or from the walls, each causing Step 13/D12+D10 damage (Physical Armor provides protection). Most blades are rusty and break easily. If armor prevents a blade from causing any damage, it shatters. If the blade causes a Wound there is a chance that blood poisoning sets in. The gamemaster makes a Step 5/D8 Poison Test against the victim's Toughness Step. If successful, the Wound becomes infected and the victim is treated as if he were affected by a debilitating poison (see **Poison**, p.123). Three to five days after receiving the Wound, fever, delirium, and nausea overcome the victim. The infected Wound heals only if it is treated and the victim rests for at least three days or it is cured by a magical healing aid.

Dart Trap

Three spring-loaded darts fly at the target. The darts are often coated with a poison (see **Poison**, p.123). A typical dart trap uses the following statistics:

Detection: 15 **Disarm:** 8
Initiative: 13/D12+D10

Trigger: Opening the box lid.

Effect: One or more darts strike the victim, each causing Step 6/D10 damage (Physical Armor provides protection). If the victim takes any damage, the poison takes effect.

Kaer Ward

A kaer ward is a magical trap designed to protect a kaer from intruders. A typical kaer ward uses the following statistics:

Detection: 5 **Disarm:** 19
Spell Defense: 19 **Initiative:** 30/3D12+D8+D6

Trigger: The gamemaster makes a Step 17/D12+2D8 Spellcasting Test against the Spell Defense of any character within 1 hex (2 yards) of the trap. If successful, the character triggers the trap.

Effect: The trap casts a spell against the victim who triggered it, causing Effect Step 23/2D12+D8+D6 damage per round for ten rounds (Mystic Armor provides protection).

Mantrap

Often disguised by magic, a character who steps on one of these ghastly things triggers serrated metal jaws that spring up and grip his leg. This example has been disguised with magic, making it semi-invisible, and therefore extremely difficult to detect:

Detection: 16 (12 for Illusionists) **Disarm:** 12
Initiative: 13/D12+D10

Trigger: A pressure plate.

Effect: Jaws spring shut on the victim's leg, causing Step 20/2D12+D10 damage (Physical Armor provides protection) and trapping him. Until freed, the victim is considered Harried and suffers 1 Damage Point each round (no armor provides protection). The gamemaster may also decide that a mantrap is poisoned, to further add to the victim's misery. The victim can be freed if one or two untrapped characters prise open the metal jaws. Add the Strength Steps of the characters together to determine the Step Number and make a Strength (12) Test. If successful, the victim is freed.

Pit Trap

A pit trap consists of a pit filled with stakes, hidden by a section of false floor. A typical pit trap uses the following statistics:

Detection: 7 **Disarm:** 7
Initiative: 10/2D8

Trigger: A pressure plate or trip wire.

Effect: A section of floor drops away, dumping the victim into a 6-yard-deep pit with stakes at the bottom. The fall causes Step 10/2D8 damage (no armor provides protection) and the victim is struck by D4 stakes, each causing Step 12/2D10 damage (Physical Armor provides protection).

Spike Trap

Spikes are sometimes hidden in the gaps between stones in some ruins or kaers. A thin layer of mortar conceals the spikes, making them difficult to detect. A typical spike trap uses the following statistics:

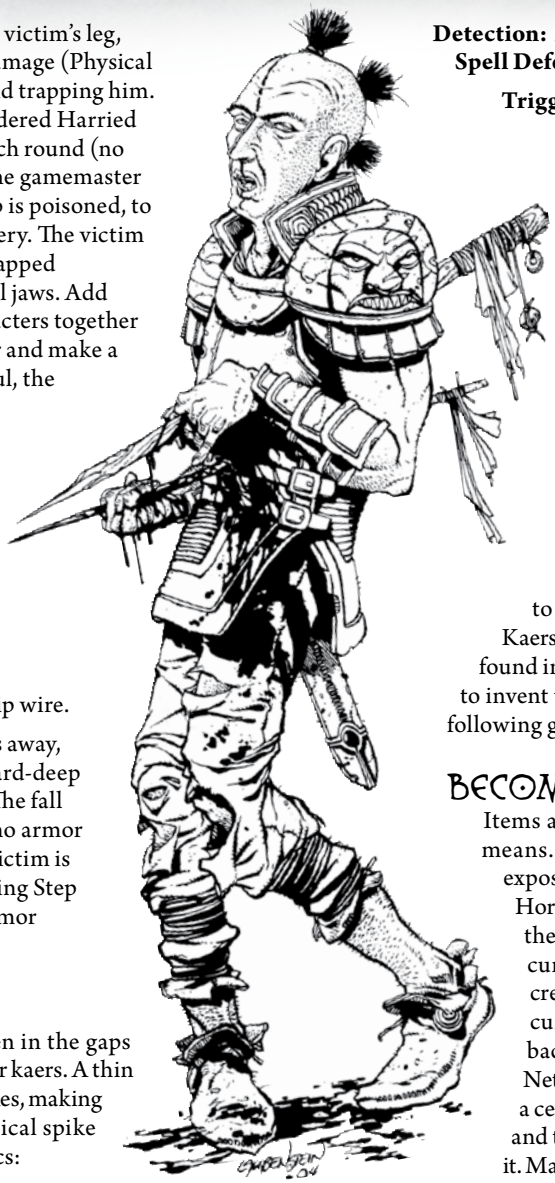
Detection: 15 **Disarm:** 15
Initiative: 25/2D12+D10+D8

Trigger: A pressure plate or trip wire.

Effect: One or more spikes shoots out from cracks in the walls, striking the victim who tripped the trap with incredible force. Each spike causes Step 23/2D12+D8+D6 damage (Physical Armor provides protection). If the victim receives a Wound, he is impaled on the spike and is consider Knocked Down. One or two other characters may attempt to ease the victim off the spike. Add the Dexterity Steps of the characters together to determine the Step Number and make a Dexterity (15) Test. If successful, the spike is safely removed. If the test fails, the victim takes Step 6/D10 damage (no armor provides protection) and remains impaled. Corridor spike traps block passage, once triggered. To push the spikes back into the walls, a character must make a successful Disarm Trap or Dexterity Test against a Difficulty Number of 15.

Ward Trap

A ward is a magical trap designed to keep people from entering certain areas. Magicians often set wards to detect and ignore certain beings (for example, the ward's creator), and to spring into existence only if an unauthorized person attempts to pass the ward. A typical ward uses the following statistics:



Detection: 10 **Disarm:** 12
Spell Defense: 10 **Initiative:** 30/3D12+D8+D6

Trigger: The gamemaster makes a Step 16/D12+D8+D6 Spellcasting Test against the Spell Defense of any character passing through the ward. If successful, the trap triggers its spell effect.

Trap **Effect:** A spell of the gamemaster's choice affects the victim. The spell is considered to have a Willpower Step 16 for determining its effect.

Curses

Curses are negative magical effects attached to items and places. They often affect those characters that come into contact with the cursed item or place. The effects of a curse can range from sickness to a penalty when performing actions to damage. Kaers and citadels, certain rooms within them, or items found inside often carry curses. The gamemaster is free to invent the specific effects of curses, but we suggest the following guidelines for creating and implementing them.

Becoming Cursed

Items and places can become cursed through various means. The most common way is through prolonged exposure to the evil and corrupt magical powers of the Horrors. Sometimes a place becomes cursed through the efforts of a questor of the Mad Passions. Many cursed items result from a magical mishap by their creator. The details of how an item or place became cursed often make up an important element in the background of an adventure. For example, an evil Nethermancer may once have summoned a Horror in a certain place, causing that place to become cursed and to inflict illness on all who enter or pass through it. Many Barsaivians believe that Blood Wood is cursed and the Blood Elves are victims of that curse.

The denizens of **Earthdawn** may be affected by three different types of curses: minor curses, major curses, and Horror curses.

Minor Curses

The effects of **minor curses** usually range from inflicting a –2 or –3 penalty to a character's Action Tests, to affecting the character as a debilitating poison might (see **Poison**, p.123). Minor curses are most often associated with magical items rather than places.

The effects of a minor curse should handicap a character, but not threaten his life. Curses whose effects prove more than a minor handicap or irritant are considered major curses.

Major Curses

The effects of **major curses** should seriously impair characters that come into contact with the cursed item or place. For example, a major curse might affect a character by temporarily lowering one of his Attribute values. If the curse affects a character's Strength value, he might still be able to fight as skillfully, but his blows would no longer cause as much damage. Another major curse might create a runic scar across a character's face that causes other characters to fear him.

Major curses can be associated with both items and places; the curse's effect lasts as long as the character remains in contact with

the cursed item or place. Characters affected by major curses must usually appeal to a powerful magician to help free them from the curse's effects.

Horror Curses

Horror curses represent the most powerful curses in **Earthdawn**. A Horror-cursed place or item functions in the same way as a Horror Mark: a Horror establishes a link to the item or place, and can use its powers against any characters that come into contact with that item or place. However, because the Horror must work indirectly through the cursed item or place, its powers become less effective.

Resolve the use of the Horror's powers as described in the **Horrors** chapter, keeping in mind the weakening effect of the indirect attack. A good rule of thumb is to apply a –5 or –10 penalty to a Horror's powers when it uses them through a cursed item or place. The gamemaster may wish to adjust the strength of the effect higher or lower than the suggested level.

Horror curses can be powerful, and very dangerous to characters. In order to break a curse, the characters must usually kill the Horror who marked the item or place. Their desire for pain and suffering prompts most Horrors to channel their powers carefully through cursed items or places, using only those powers that will not so alarm the living that they abandon the places or objects.

Horrors can, and frequently do, use Horror-cursed items or places as a channel through which to Horror-mark victims. This method of Horror-marking provides an exception to the usual line-of-sight restriction on the Horror Mark power. For more information, see the **Horror Mark** power, p.273.

Curse Effects

When a character comes into contact with a cursed item or place, the gamemaster should make a Curse Test against the character's Spell Defense Rating to see if the curse affects the character. The curse's Step Number depends on the type of curse: minor curses use a Step Number of 7 or 8; major curses use a Step Number from 9 to 15; Horror curses use the Horror's Spellcasting Step. If successful, the curse affects the character.

The Curse Table summarizes the suggested Step Numbers and effects for each of the three curse types. Again, the gamemaster should use this table as a guideline. Each individual curse is unique, and no two will necessarily affect a character in the same way.

Though the gamemaster may create any effect for a curse, he should be careful to make the curse work within the adventure, and avoid making the effects of the curse overwhelmingly powerful. When designing cursed items and places, the gamemaster should remember that curses are meant to challenge and hinder the player characters, and must be carefully thought out.

CURSE TABLE

Curse Type	Step Number*	Effect
Minor	7–8	Reduced steps, minor damage
Major	9–15	Scars, reduced Attribute Values
Horror	Horror's Spellcasting step	Horror-marked items or characters, use of Horror powers through item

* The step number used to determine if a curse affects a character.

Loot

During the course of an adventure, your character will discover many opportunities for gathering loot and should grab those opportunities with both hands. Loot may be money or gemstones snatched from fallen enemies, precious objects found in a creature's lair, pieces of a creature brought back as trophies, or magical items.

Earthdawn loot comes in two distinct varieties: **loot worth money** and **treasure**.

Loot Worth Money

Ancient gold pieces, precious stones, elemental coins, items that can be sold for silver, or silver pieces filched from a hidden hoard all qualify as loot worth money. Characters can gather immediately usable money from dead opponents or from the lairs of creatures and Horrors. Other forms of loot must be converted to cash. The gamemaster ultimately decides the amount of potential loot available in any given adventure. He must tailor the amount of money or other loot the characters find or acquire to the type of game he wants to run.

Note that characters can also earn money in **Earthdawn**. A town, organization, or individual may hire the characters to perform a certain task for payment, or once they achieve higher Circles, characters can train younger adepts for a fee.

A somewhat unorthodox method of turning loot into money is to sell equipment that belonged to deceased opponents. This requires a certain amount of caution; adventurers who leave town in the morning and return later that same day carrying various bits of equipment to sell that they didn't have before tend to draw the attention of the local constabulary.

However, not every town frowns on such activity. Several towns and cities in Barsaive—Kratas chief among them—regard the sale of used equipment as their primary local industry.

Treasure

In addition to loot worth money, adventurers in **Earthdawn** can also find treasure, the objects legendary heroes acquire during their adventures. Treasure comes in two forms: **magical treasure**, such as magical weapons and items, and **creature treasure**.





Magical Treasure

Magical treasure includes the magical weapons and other items that characters seek or find during their adventures. Characters can learn to use magical items through study, and, after reaching a certain level of knowledge, can use the item to gain information during an adventure. See the ***Gamemaster's Companion*** to find out how to create and use magical treasure in your game.

Creature Treasure

Heroes of legend often take bits and pieces of the creatures they battle as proof of the encounter and of their prowess. These trophies represent a kind of treasure that increases a hero's legendary status. Because only heroes normally collect bits and pieces of vanquished creatures, characters in **Earthdawn** often collect such trophies to prove that they are heroes.

TRAVELING

Like all adventurers, characters in **Earthdawn** will spend many days traveling from place to place and searching the land for new adventures across Barsaive's nearly 1.5 million square miles. Population centers are spread out across the land, often requiring long journeys simply to get from one place to the next. Most player characters end up traveling overland, either on foot or mounted. For long distances or otherwise appropriate situations, player characters may also travel by riverboat or airship (the latter for those who can afford it, or who must move with the speed an airship offers). Whatever mode of travel they choose, adventuring parties are likely to spend a great deal of time getting from one place to another in Barsaive. The information in this section outlines modes of transport, needed supplies, and ways of dealing with the weather and other potential travel hazards.

TRAVEL TIME

Travel time in Barsaive is most often measured in days or hours. Most maps made in Barsaive (and in most published **Earthdawn** products) contain scales for determining distance, and travel rates are provided in the Travel Rate Table. Characters can calculate travel times by dividing the distance of the trip by their travel rate. For example, a single horseman could make a 100-mile journey in two and a half days.

Characters on foot or mounted usually travel for eight hours a day, with occasional stops along the way to rest and eat. Every few hours, travelers should also stop briefly to check their location and verify that they are still on the correct route. Characters can attempt to travel for longer than eight hours per day but may become fatigued (see **Fatigue and Injury**, p.121). If characters with mounts travel for longer than eight hours, their mounts also suffer fatigue. Additionally, each hour of travel beyond eight causes 3 Strain to the mount. Thus, a careless traveler can keep a mount going until it falls unconscious. Cavalrymen, who know how to deal with their animals, make sure not to run their mounts too ragged. On long rides, they often use their Blood Share talent to restore a flagging mount's vigor.

Riverboats and airships can travel for longer than the standard eight hours by rotating their crews (which requires them to carry enough crewmen for an extra shift). Except for occasional stops to repair and take on supplies, such vessels can travel almost indefinitely.

OVERLAND TRAVEL

Most adventurers travel through Barsaive over land, either on foot or mounted. Characters traveling on foot can cover roughly 25 miles per day, assuming they travel for eight hours each day, with only occasional rest and food breaks. The rough terrain throughout most of Barsaive precludes any faster rate of travel on foot. Injured characters and those carrying encumbering loads, may travel more slowly, perhaps only 20 miles per day.

Characters riding mounts can travel roughly 45 miles per day, again assuming eight hours of travel with occasional breaks. If the mounts are carrying encumbering loads, they may only be able to cover 30 to 35 miles per day. Occasionally, characters travel with merchant or trader caravans, either as guards or as fellow travelers. Most caravans travel at a rate of 30 miles per day when mounted, or 20 miles per day on foot.

Safe Areas

Because most of Barsaive remains unexplored, the law-abiding inhabitants of the land consider only the areas immediately surrounding most cities and a few established trading routes to be safe. Wandering away from these safe areas can prove hazardous to travelers (see **Wilderness**, below, and **Travel Hazards**, p.118). Several smaller farming towns and villages surround most major cities within a radius of approximately 15 miles. These communities supply the city with agricultural goods in exchange for protection, usually in the form of favorable trade agreements and regular patrols by available armed forces. Their proximity to the city makes brief trips between the city and the farming communities feasible, and many towns arrange two-day journeys to trade their goods to the cities. Heavily settled and well-protected (relative to the rest of Barsaive), most of the territory within fifteen miles of a major city remains safe for travelers, but even these areas encompass desolate and dangerous spots.

Barsaive's major trade routes connect major cities and specific points along the Serpent River. These routes change occasionally, based on the most recent travelers' tales of their encounters along the established route. Well-traveled, often by caravans employing seasoned Warriors, the trade routes are safe for travelers. Keep in mind, however, that every trade route crosses unexplored territories; travelers who stray as little as a thousand yards off the trade route may stumble into unmapped regions and areas unexplored even before the Scourge.

Wilderness

Much of the time, adventurers in **Earthdawn** travel through wilderness. Even established trade routes often cut through regions

TRAVEL RATE TABLE

Method of Travel	Travel Rate
Airship	255 miles (per 16 hour day)
Caravan (foot)	20 miles (per 8 hour day)
Caravan (mounted)	30 miles (per 8 hour day)
Namegiver (foot)	25 miles (per 8 hour day)
Namegiver (mounted)	45 miles (per 8 hour day)
Riverboat	160 miles (per 16 hour day)

that remain wild and largely unexplored. Whether traveling through jungles, mountain ranges or sparsely inhabited plains, adventuring characters must obtain adequate food, water, and shelter—which can be just as challenging as dealing with hazardous terrain and dangerous creatures.

Though adventuring characters will likely carry rations and water with them, they may well need to live off the land if and when their supplies run out—if the characters get lost, for example, and subsequently take longer than they'd planned to get where they're going. The Fishing, Hunting, and Wilderness Survival skills allow characters to catch food, find water, and make shelter in the wilderness.

Avoiding Attention

In many situations, traveling characters may wish to avoid the notice of patrols, guards, creatures, suspicious locals and other potential threats. Moving through an area unobtrusively reduces the chances that someone will spot a character or group of characters, but it also reduces the characters' travel rate by half. If a group of adventurers is making no attempt at concealment, the Difficulty Number for guards, other gamemaster characters, or creatures attempting to detect them is equal to the lowest Dexterity Step of all the player characters in the group, appropriately modified for visibility and other factors. If characters traveling overland take steps to avoid attracting attention, however—sneaking past a walled village rather than walking up to the front gate, keeping to less-traveled roads, and so on—the Difficulty Number for spotting them is the highest Dexterity Step of the group (with appropriate modifiers).

Despite the penalty to travel rate, player characters may well find this benefit desirable, especially when approaching areas prone to conflict (territory being fought over by rival scorcher tribes, for example) or traveling to cities known for their harsh treatment of strangers (such as Iopos). The gamemaster should consider such factors when determining if anyone spots the adventurers.

Encounters Along the Road

Traveling characters may have any number of interesting encounters during their journeys. Among other things, they may notice or encounter various creatures, other travelers, natural hazards such as rivers or streams to be crossed, potential rockslides, precarious bridges, and so on. To liven up a road trip, have the characters make Perception Tests whenever they might spot anything of potential interest, whether dangerous or not. When characters make Perception Tests outdoors, use the guidelines for Perception Test modifiers given in the **Gamemastering** chapter, p.92. Note that followers of several Disciplines—particularly Scouts and Archers—can also use various talents and abilities to improve their awareness and extend their range of vision.

Social Interaction

Characters may meet any number of different people along the road—fellow travelers, local townspeople, bandits and raiders, and so on. In some cases they may fight, but combat is not the only or even the best way for adventurers to deal with their fellow Namegivers. Through social interaction, gamemasters can offer player characters some challenges in areas other than combat. Complex negotiations, political maneuvering, and intrigue can also form the basis of adventures or campaigns in civilized settings, such as the great cities of Barsaive or the Kingdom of Throal. The rules for Social Interaction and Interaction Tests outlined in the **Gamemastering** chapter, p.93, offer useful guidelines for encounters with gamemaster characters on the road. While these rules are no substitute for good roleplaying on the part of the players, they can help the gamemaster determine how gamemaster characters might respond to player characters' actions.

Greeting Rituals

In many isolated regions of Barsaive, local inhabitants remain wary of the dangers posed by lingering Horrors. In such areas, inhabitants commonly require that strangers use their Artisan skills to prove that they do not carry Horror taint. Consequently, player characters can expect many opportunities to demonstrate their artisan abilities. A character using an Artisan skill as part of such a greeting ritual should make his Artisan Skill Test against a Difficulty Number of 5. If successful, the character proves himself free of Horror taint and the locals will likely accept him.

Gamemasters can also treat the Artisan Skill Test as a method of **Making an Impression** (p.95) to determine how people respond to the character. To do so, compare the Artisan Skill Test result against the highest Social Defense among the gamemaster characters present. An Average Result improves their Attitudes by one degree; a Poor Result worsens their Attitude by one degree, and may even lead people to believe that the player character is Horror-touched.

River Travel

Often, when a group of adventurers must travel long distances, they arrange transport on the Serpent River that crosses all of Barsaive. Because few characters own their own riverboats, most adventurers traveling up- or down-river must buy passage on a t'skrang riverboat.

Passage on a t'skrang riverboat costs an average of 5 silver pieces per person per day. Most ship captains demand full advance payment, though some accept partial payment in advance, the remainder due on arrival at the character's destination. Some captains charge more than the average price, often bargaining with the characters to determine the fee. Characters can arrange to transport their mounts on the same craft, but must pay an additional 5 silver pieces per day for each animal.

Characters lacking ready funds may pay for their riverboat passage by working as members of the crew during the voyage. Each day that a character works for the crew earns him an average of 3 silver pieces, though pay rates are negotiable based on the character's skills. Some captains, instead of paying out silver, simply exchange passage for the character's time and labor. A character can usually work off most or all of the cost of his trip in this manner.

T'skrang riverboats travel roughly 100 miles and 16 hours per day, stopping along the river to pick up and drop off goods and passengers. Most riverboats stop only during daylight, usually sailing through the night, but occasionally laying over at a port until morning. Pirates, as well as legitimate traders, often travel on the Serpent River. Pirates routinely attack riverboats; those characters who help fight off these marauders often receive a partial refund of their passage payment.

Airship Travel

Airships are the least common method of travel in Barsaive. Only a few dozen airships exist in all of Barsaive, and most of those are military or merchant craft. Consequently, gaining passage on an airship is usually an expensive and difficult proposition. Because

of the difficulty and expense of arranging airship passage (see below), characters only travel across Barsaive by airship when speed is vital. Speed gives air travel its greatest advantage. An airship can fly up to 300 miles in 16 hours of travel per day. Most airships do not fly throughout the night, except in battles or raids. Airships carrying passengers rarely engage in raiding unless the characters agree to help raid as part of the terms of their passage.

The greatest hazard of traveling by airship is the risk of encountering crystal raiders and Theran slave ships. The crystal raiders fly drakkars, small airships built for combat and raiding. The huge slave ships of the Theran Empire carry captives to the Theran stronghold at Sky Point and the nearby Theran-controlled city of Vivane. The crystal raiders tend to stay near their home turf in the Twilight Peaks, but may range as far as 500 miles away from that area. The Theran slave ships hunt in the southwest reaches of Barsaive nearest to the empire's outposts, openly attacking other airships to capture slaves for the Theran Empire.

Airship Passage

Travel aboard airships can be unpleasant; most airships lack passenger space, and many airship captains dislike the idea of strangers aboard their vessels. The majority of airships in Barsaive belong to the troll crystal raiders, making it a tough prospect for the characters to find an airship captain and convince him to transport them. Ideally, adventurers seeking passage on airships should track down the owner of a galley, the type of ship used by the trading companies that operate across Barsaive. Dealing with a galley captain, the characters stand a better chance not only of booking passage, but of surviving it. Characters who find troll raiders willing to take on passengers should negotiate with extreme caution.

Passage aboard an airship usually runs about 30 silver pieces per day for cramped quarters and a no-frills meal. Adepts may be able to negotiate this rate with airship captains if they can provide services the ship will need. In most cases, adepts offer to help protect airships from raiders, slavers and airborne creatures that might attack during the trip. Some airship captains are also willing to take on skilled Air Sailors or Sky Raiders as temporary crewmembers, though the two Disciplines rarely mix well. Captains might also lower their prices for Elementalists or skilled navigators. However, airship captains are notoriously difficult to negotiate with—most of them are troll crystal raiders, with deservedly fearsome reputations, or overburdened merchant captains—so they drive hard bargains.

Cargo space on airships is at a premium, so airship passengers are rarely allowed to bring along more than their personal equipment. Bringing a mount aboard could cost 50 silvers or more, with the price going way up for especially large mounts. For obvious reasons, many airship captains won't hear of having a mount the size of a thundra beast aboard their ships. Trunks, chests, and other large pieces of luggage cost at least 10 silvers apiece to bring aboard, with larger pieces costing more at the gamemaster's discretion.

Underground Travel

Characters in **Earthdawn** are bound to explore an abandoned or ruined kaer at least once during their adventuring careers. In addition to kaer-crawls, characters may venture underground in search of True Earth, while tracking down creatures or Horrors, or seeking shelter from storms. The following passages provide rules that reflect the myriad hazards of underground travel and kaer exploration.

Movement Underground

Movement underground is somewhat slower than movement aboveground. Characters going underground will almost always travel on foot, simply because the ceilings of most tunnels and caves are too low to accommodate mounted characters, and few mounts can navigate the slopes and sharp inclines commonly found beneath



the earth's surface. Additionally, characters must follow the paths already formed by natural tunnels and caves. Not being made by Namegivers, as roads are, many of these paths do not represent the most direct route from place to place. In most circumstances, characters can travel at a rate roughly half to three-quarters of their surface travel rate—about 10–15 miles every 8 hours.

Most tunnels are narrow and have uneven floors covered with loose rocks and dirt. Characters should take their time traveling through these areas, as it is easy to slip and fall if they move too quickly. In particularly rough spots, gamemasters may call for Dexterity Tests against a Difficulty Number no higher than 5. A failed test usually results in either a few points of damage (which armor does not protect against) or a minor injury (see **Fatigue and Injury**, p.121).

Furthermore, many tunnels and caves slope upward or downward, restricting movement even more. Some inclines can be so extreme that characters must make Dexterity Tests to safely traverse them. Set the Difficulty Number for these tests between 5 and 7, depending on the grade of the slope. A failed test can cause either a minor injury (for example, a sprained ankle or strained muscle), or falling damage if the slope is steep enough.

Unbreathable Air

Whenever characters enter areas containing stale air or poison gas, allow each character to make a Perception Test to detect any odor or taste that might alert them to the danger. Base the Difficulty Number on the specific conditions that have rendered the air unfit to breathe. Oxygen-poor air is very difficult to detect, and so tests to detect it should have a Difficulty Number of 10 to 12. Air tainted with toxic gases is more likely to smell or taste odd, and so the Difficulty Number might be 6 to 9. A successful Perception Test alerts a character that something is wrong with the air but does not tell him the cause of the problem.

Characters with skills appropriate to underground travel and exploration, such as Natural Science, Geology or Mining, can identify the problem by making an appropriate Skill Test against the same Difficulty Number as the Perception Test. A success enables the character to recognize the specific hazard in the air and suggest an appropriate precaution (wearing cloths over their mouths, running like blazes, and so on). Some animals, especially birds and rodents, are more sensitive to bad air than most Namegivers. Characters with familiars or Beastmasters with animal companions often rely on these to help them detect hazardous air when traveling underground.

Characters traveling through regions with stale air will suffer from suffocation. Extended travel through these areas can also impose a –1 penalty to a character's Fatigue Tests (if applicable, see **Fatigue and Injury**, p.121).

Poison Gas

Traveling through areas containing poison gas can cause damage to the character beyond suffocation. Gamemasters determine the Damage Step of any poison gas that characters encounter, to a maximum of Step 6. Characters suffer this damage each round they remain in the toxic area. No armor protects against this damage.

Explosive Gas

Many natural gases are highly flammable and explode when exposed to open flames such as torches and candles. Treat explosive gas buildup as a trap (see **Traps**, p.110). The following sample statistics offer suggested ratings for explosive gas traps.

Explosive Gas Trap

Detection: 7–12 **Disarm:** See text
Initiative: 6–9

Trigger: Exposure to open flame.

Effect: The gas explodes, causing Step 10–20 damage to all characters within the area of effect (Physical Armor provides protection). Characters can detect explosive gas by making successful Perception Tests against a Difficulty Number equal to the Detection Difficulty of the gas. If characters detect explosive gas, they can attempt to douse all fire sources before accidentally triggering an explosion. To do so, each character carrying a fire source must make an Initiative Test against the Trap Initiative of the gas. If successful, the character manages to douse his flame in time. If one or more of the tests fail, the gas ignites and causes the damage listed under Trap Effect.

Cave-Ins and Collapses

At best, cave-ins and collapses impede characters' progress by blocking the way ahead. At worst, they can trap characters under tons of dirt and stone. Collisions with walls or braces or even loud noises in an unstable area can trigger cave-ins. Combat, especially using spells such as Fireball or Air Blast, can trigger a collapse; gas explosions and natural tremors can also trigger them (though these are far less frequent).

Characters entering an area where a collapse may be imminent should make a Perception Test to notice cracks in tunnel walls and ceilings, or weakened or rotting braces in the case of mine or kaer tunnels. Base the Difficulty Number for such tests on the visibility of the cracks or other faults. Characters with Knowledge skills associated with mining or underground exploration, such as Geology or Mining, may make appropriate Skill Tests in place of (or to add a bonus to) Perception Tests. Characters can detect potential cave-ins or collapses by sensing minor shifts and tremors in the earth. Typically, these shifts are harder to detect than a crack in a wall but are often a much more reliable warning of an impending collapse.

An imminent collapse cannot really be disarmed, except through elemental magic or the aid of an earth spirit at the gamemaster's discretion. The best thing for characters to do is leave the dangerous area or find shelter from the falling rocks. In the event of a cave-in or collapse, each character should make an Initiative Test and compare the result to the result of a Trap Initiative Test. If the character's result is higher, he escapes from the unstable area in time to escape the collapse. Any character whose test fails takes damage from the falling rocks and earth.

Treat cave-ins and collapsing tunnels as traps (see **Traps**, p.110). The following sample provides suggested ranges for the characteristics of this type of trap.

Cave-In Trap

Detection: 6–10 **Disarm:** See preceding text
Initiative: 7–12

Trigger: A collision or loud noise.

Effect: The ceiling collapses, causing Step 12–18 damage to characters trapped in the fall (Physical Armor provides protection). Besides causing damage, cave-ins can also trap characters underground by blocking their way out of a cave or mine or burying them in rocks. In the latter case, trapped characters may also have to contend with a limited supply of fresh air. Gamemasters must determine how much air any trapped characters have and how long it will last before they begin to suffocate. If the trapped characters attempt to dig themselves out, they must make a Strength Test each round against a Difficulty Number from 5 to 7, to reflect the difficulty of moving the fallen rock aside without triggering a second collapse. If the characters have talents, spells, or skills that the gamemaster deems appropriate for digging out, he may allow them to use those abilities in place of the Strength Tests. On a Poor Result, the trapped characters make no progress freeing themselves. A Pathetic Result causes a minor collapse that

inflicts Step 7/D12 damage to each of the characters doing the digging (no armor provides protection). It takes an average of 10 Result Levels to dig out, though gamemasters may adjust this number as they see fit. Each Result Level achieved counts as 1 success. Each minor collapse reduces the character's accumulated-success tally by –1. For example, a character achieves an Excellent Result on his Strength Test to dig out of a collapse, which counts as 3 successes. However, on the next round he gets a Pathetic Result, causing a minor collapse and costing him 1 success, leaving him with just 2. He must achieve 8 more successes to free himself.

TRAVEL HAZARDS

Adventurers face serious risks traveling across Barsaive, especially when traveling over land. In many ways, the impersonal forces of nature can present a threat more challenging than any Horror or creature that characters might encounter. To survive in harsh conditions, characters must frequently use their wits and all the skills and talents at their command.

Here are several common hazards that await adventurers as they travel through Barsaive's wilderness.

EXPOSURE AND FROSTBITE

Exposure to severe cold can seriously injure Namegivers. If a character spends time exposed to the cold without adequate protection (warm clothing or some kind of magic), he runs the risk of frostbite.

For every half hour of exposure, the character suffers Step 4 damage. No armor protects against this damage. The gamemaster may increase the Damage Step for exceptionally harsh conditions such as snowstorms or being buried beneath an avalanche. If the character remains in the cold long enough, he will eventually fall unconscious and freeze to death.

If any single Damage Test for exposure to cold exceeds the character's Wound Threshold, he suffers minor frostbite. Apply a –1 penalty to the character's Dexterity- or Strength-based Action Tests, depending on the affected body part. For example, a frostbitten finger would affect Dexterity, while a frostbitten calf might affect Strength.

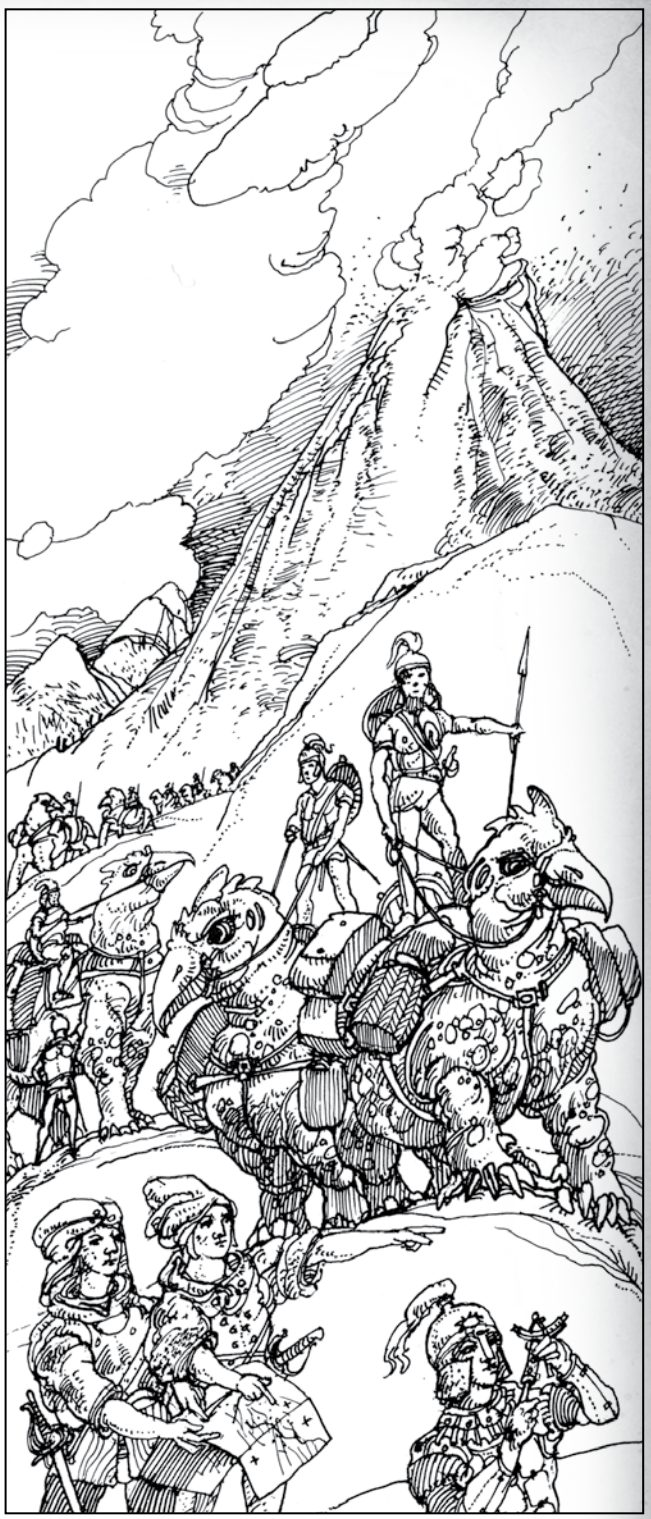
If the character does not get to shelter within two hours of being frostbitten, he suffers from severe frostbite. At this point, the injury is considered a Wound and must be healed magically. (Any method of magical healing applicable to Wounds—such as a healing potion—will eliminate frostbite.) If left untreated, the frozen portions of flesh begin to rot and become infected. Unless infected portions are amputated, the character may die.

HIGH ALTITUDES

Double all Strain costs for characters operating at high altitudes to reflect the difficulty of breathing at such altitudes. Characters also tire more quickly at high altitudes. To reflect this, all characters—except for highland trolls, who are accustomed to the mountain environment—receive a –1 penalty to Fatigue Tests made in high mountain regions (see **Fatigue and Injury**, p.121).

HEAT EXPOSURE

Exposure to intense heat, such as that of Death's Sea or underground volcanoes, can cause damage to characters lacking adequate protection. Such a character suffers Step 4/D6 damage per hour of exposure (no armor provides protection) and may also suffer dehydration if he is not carrying enough water. If heat exposure results in a Wound, treat it as a serious burn that will blister and require appropriate treatment. Extreme heat also causes fatigue. To reflect this, double all Strain costs and apply a –1 penalty to all Fatigue Tests in hot environments (see **Fatigue and Injury**, p.121). Characters wearing armor heavy enough to impose an Initiative Penalty take Strain equal to the Initiative Penalty for every hour they travel in the armor, as well as every minute spent fighting in it.



DEHYDRATION

A human-sized Namegiver needs to drink at least one quart of water each day, assuming he doesn't get involved in any strenuous activity. Other Namegivers require less or more water, proportionate to their size. For each day that a character does not get sufficient water, he takes 3 Damage Points from dehydration (no armor provides protection). Additionally, he receives a penalty to

his Recovery Tests equal to the number of days he has gone without adequate water. This damage may be added to any damage inflicted by heat exposure.

Alternatively, the gamemaster may treat dehydration as an injury and impose a –1 penalty to all Strength- or Toughness-based Action Tests (see **Fatigue and Injury**, p.121).

Suffocation and Drowning

Characters begin to suffocate whenever they cannot get sufficient oxygen into their lungs. Insufficient or depleted air in a mine shaft, being buried under snow, having a 500-pound troll sit on one's chest—these are just a few examples of such situations.

A character can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to his Toughness Step. After that, he begins to take suffocation damage. In the first round that a character is suffocating, he takes Step 2 damage. This damage increases by +1 step during each subsequent round. No armor protects against this damage; suffocation damage does not cause Wounds, however. Strain-causing actions, such as combat, speed up the rate at which the character suffocates. Suffocating characters are considered Harried and their Movement rates are halved. Magical spells and effects that inflict suffocation (Suffocating Paste or Suffocation, for example) cause additional damage because of their magical nature. For these spells, use the effect as given in place of these rules.

Drowning occurs when a character cannot get sufficient oxygen because he is immersed in water. Rules for drowning appear in the **Adventuring** chapter, p.109.

Survival

Whether on foot or on horseback, traveling across Barsaive takes time. In order to survive extended periods of travel, characters must buy or otherwise acquire sufficient food and water. Though characters occasionally have the time to gather ample supplies of food and water for their trip, often circumstances force them to leave in a hurry. Taking off on an adventure or bolting out of town without sufficient food or water can quickly land a character in trouble. Characters can use the Wilderness Survival skill to find water while in the wild.

Weather

Another challenge of traveling outdoors is surviving the elements. The gamemaster should use the weather to challenge his player characters from time to time. For example, as the characters travel through a ravine, the gamemaster might whip up a heavy storm that forces the characters to seek shelter, or he might mention the possibility of flash floods. The effects of weather may have more to do with the story than with game mechanics. For example, a thunderstorm might spook mounts, causing them to throw their riders and flee; the detour to find shelter from the storm may range so far off the path that the group gets lost. Neither circumstance is life-threatening, though the mounts may run off with much-needed supplies, or the delay may allow the evil Nethermancer more time to prepare a nasty surprise for the characters. Only extreme temperatures and heavy precipitation need produce game mechanic effects.

Precipitation most often causes problems with visibility, discussed below. Extreme temperatures may cause minor damage to the characters. For example, severe arctic temperatures on top of the Throal Mountains might cause Step 4 or 5 damage (no armor provides protection) to characters dressed in inadequate clothing. Extreme heat, such as that encountered near Death's Sea, might cause the same level of damage, or might damage a character in the same way as dehydration. The gamemaster should determine the impact he wants weather to have in his game, and apply any game mechanics accordingly.

Visibility

Visibility rarely poses a problem during the day under a bright sun. But how far and how well can characters see at night? Or in the darkened rooms of a kaer? Or during a torrential rainstorm? During daylight hours, with the sun overhead, a character can see clearly for several miles, depending on the terrain. On a bright, sunny day over clear terrain, for example, a character can see the Throal Mountains from up to 150 miles away, but would see only their outlines and virtually no details. To distinguish details, a character must be much closer to what he is looking at. Obviously, jungles and forests also limit characters' vision.

In order to notice someone or something, a character must be within at least 750 yards of the person or object. Beyond that distance, images begin to blur, losing distinguishing characteristics and markings. As a character approaches closer to an object or person, more details become visible. A character within 200 yards of a target can determine the identity of a person he knows or the type of creature or the race of the target. Spotting specific details requires a character to be within 20 yards of what he is looking at. As a rule of thumb, long-range visibility extends out to 750 yards, medium range to 200 yards, and short range to 20 yards from the object of a character's gaze.

Note that the terms long, medium, and short range are used to simplify the discussion of visibility. These ranges do not correspond to the Ranges of missile and throwing weapons described in the ***Player's Guide***.

The distances listed above represent visibility ranges during normal daylight hours, in clear weather; in other words, under ideal conditions. Both the weather and time of day can reduce visibility ranges. The Visibility Table suggests guidelines for determining visibility ranges under various conditions.

Darkness

The Visibility Table suggests visibility ranges for the natural darkness of night, which is often partially alleviated by a moon or stars. Characters within a cave or kaer must cope with total darkness that completely eliminates visibility. Without a light source, a character functions as if blind and suffers the movement and action penalties described for Darkness in the Combat chapter of the ***Player's Guide***. Typical light sources include campfires, torches, and lanterns. The Light Source Visibility Table suggests the effective ranges of light that these sources can provide. From these examples, the gamemaster can extrapolate the effectiveness of other light sources.

Note that these are the effective visibility ranges. The character can see up to twice the distance shown, but incurs a Partial darkness penalty unless he possesses Low-Light Vision or a similar ability.

VISIBILITY TABLE

Condition	Short Range	Medium Range	Long Range
Daylight	20	200	750
Dawn/Dusk	15	125	500
Light fog	10	75	250
Heavy fog	2	5	10
Light rain/drizzle	15	175	350
Heavy rain	10	50	100
Night with moon	5	60	200
Night with no moon	5	15	30

Getting Lost

Any number of circumstances can cause characters to lose their way. A fierce storm might force a group of adventurers to travel in the wrong direction, or the adventurers might detour to avoid a band of ork scorchers and lose their bearings. Because so much of Barsaive's landscape changed during the Scourge, even travelers following maps may get lost, especially if they are wandering in areas inadequately mapped before the Scourge. Getting lost poses potentially enormous risks for the unlucky traveler. Adventurers may wander around certain areas of Barsaive for years without encountering civilized settlements, and many small towns and villages are so isolated that they may know nothing of the nearest village, let alone major landmarks or trade routes.

LIGHT SOURCE VISIBILITY TABLE

Light Source	Radius
Candle	2 yards
Torch	5 yards
Campfire	10 yards
Lantern	10 yards
Light Quartz	5 yards

The gamemaster should only force the characters out of their way to move the adventure forward. Having a group get lost just to watch them survive in the wild is only fun once, and may seriously frustrate the players. If, on the other hand, the characters get lost and happen to wander into a town being terrorized by a Horror, then throwing the characters off the track served a valid purpose and advanced the story. The gamemaster should be careful of using this technique too often, as it may make players feel manipulated.

Theran Slavers

Travelers in the region surrounding the fortress Triumph and southwestern Barsaive face a danger unique to that region. The Therans who control the area hire mercenary bands to roam the countryside and capture hapless townspeople from the surrounding villages, to serve as slaves in Thera. Since the return of the Therans, slavery represents a very real danger in the region near those imperial outposts.

Wild Animals, Creatures, and Horrors

One of the most common perils of adventuring in **Earthdawn** is confronting the creatures and Horrors that inhabit the world. Many of Barsaive's wild beasts are little more than part of the scenery, but others are potentially dangerous opponents. Though some creatures are evil and attack characters on sight, others only attack to protect their young or to feed. Whatever the reason, characters will often find themselves fighting off creatures. On the other hand, some animals and magical creatures can be useful to player characters if properly trained.

For more information on animals, creatures, and their powers, see the **Creatures** chapter, p.145.

Encountering Wild Animals and Creatures

Characters traveling through the wilderness most often encounter beasts in their natural habitats. This gives many beasts a camouflage bonus that increases the difficulty of spotting them. This holds particularly true for predators that sneak up on their prey. Additionally, heavy foliage, rain, and darkness often provide cover for animals and enable creatures to approach characters unseen.

Detecting a creature or animal in the wilderness requires a successful Perception Test against the creature's or beast's Dexterity Step, appropriately modified for the surrounding conditions. Natural camouflage usually adds +3 to the Difficulty Number. Heavy forest or jungle foliage adds +5, and heavy rain or darkness adds +7. If the creature is a predator stalking the characters, the gamemaster makes an Action Test for the creature, using its Dexterity Step or an adequate power. The result of that test, plus any appropriate modifier, is the Difficulty Number for detecting the animal. If the creature remains undetected, it may strike the characters with the advantage of Surprise (***Player's Guide***, p.228).

When planning creature encounters, keep in mind that mundane animals are far more common than magical creatures or Horrors.

Fighting Wild Beasts

Wild animals and creatures can use many of the same combat options open to characters. Most animals favor charging or swooping attacks; they often Attack to Knockdown on their first attack and then follow up while their opponent lies prone. If characters enrage them—by trespassing on their lairs, nests, or hunting grounds, for example—animals may attack quite aggressively. Generally, animals and creatures attempt surprise attacks, so apply Blindsided bonuses to their initial attack. Also, packs or flocks often attack a single opponent, which gives the opponent a Harried penalty.

Intelligent beasts can use many of the combat options and tactics described in the Combat chapter of the ***Player's Guide***, and they always use their surroundings to give themselves an advantage over intruders. Such a creature may also set traps or have various servitor creatures protecting the approaches to its lair.

Animal Training

The process of winning an animal's trust and training it to perform various tricks on command is described by the Animal Bond and Animal Training talents (***Player's Guide***, p.60 and p.61, respectively). Both of these talents have a skill equivalent, and any character seeking to develop an animal companion should learn them to properly establish a rapport through which he can train an animal.

Keep a close eye on the number of animal companions that characters—especially Beastmasters—acquire. Animal companions are not pieces of equipment. They are living creatures that must be treated as friends, just as if they were fellow adepts. Animal companions need food, water, shelter, attention, and affection from their Namegiver comrades, and failure to provide these things will have negative consequences.

A neglected animal will become more demanding, bothering the character sfor food, affection, and attention at the most inopportune times. Neglect will also tend to make the companion less and less willing to do as the character asks. If seriously neglected or mistreated, a beast will either leave or turn on its former friend.

Stress the requirements of a training bond between character and animal companion to remind the player of the responsibilities his character is taking on. Such reminders become even more important if a character intends to take the animal as a familiar. A character must swear a Blood Oath to the familiar and will suffer the consequences of neglecting or mistreating it.

At the gamemaster's option, certain domesticated animals can become Loyal to a character without his using the Animal Bond skill or talent. Dogs and cats, which have long lived with Namegivers, can become Loyal through feeding and kind treatment. Horses and other domesticated mounts may also form bonds with Namegivers this way. Wild animals and magical creatures, on the other hand, must always be tamed and taught to respect their trainer before any training can take place.

Horrors

Unlike most creatures, the Horrors and their evil servants and constructs often deliberately attack characters. The Horrors enjoy inflicting pain and suffering on those around them, and isolated, sometimes foolish adventurers make excellent targets for their powers. However, not all Horrors attack their victims directly. Dreadfully patient, Horrors often use subtle means to draw more pain and agony from the victim than would result from a direct attack. For more information on Horrors, their minions, and their powers, see the **Horrors** chapter, p.265.

EXPLORING KAERS AND CITADELS

Kaers and citadels lie scattered across Barsaive. In the aftermath of the Scourge, most kaers have opened, and their populations live in nearby towns and villages. The residents use the underground retreat as a shelter when needed or for storage. Most citadels have removed their protective domes and stand as they did before the Scourge, as castles and strongholds against attack. Adventurers should recognize that the citizens of small towns and villages may fear them simply because they are strangers. The scars of the Scourge are too fresh for people to easily accept the unknown. Most of the kaers that adventurers are likely to explore have already been opened, either breached during the Scourge by a Horror or opened voluntarily by the kaer's inhabitants after the Scourge ended. Opened kaers that survived the Scourge are the least appealing to explorers; in most cases, they contain nothing of value, unless the kaer's former residents use the place for storage.

Some kaers remain closed, their residents either dead or unaware that the Scourge has ended. These abandoned and dead kaers and citadels hold countless treasures and loot. Naturally, tales of these riches draw every adventurer ever to set foot outside his own community. In addition to fantastic wealth, these abandoned strongholds are also riddled with danger. Many serve as lairs for the creatures and Horrors that still lurk within, and offer other threats and challenges as well. Kaers that succumbed to Horrors or some other calamity during the Scourge are far more interesting to the average adventurer. Many such kaers have since become the lairs of various nasty creatures, from stingers and shadowmants to brithans and gargoyles. These creatures defend their homes aggressively, attacking characters who try to enter.

SEALED KAERS

Occasionally, explorers may find an unopened kaer with intact magical wards and defenses. Such kaers may still hold Namegivers unaware that the Scourge has ended and too afraid to emerge. Alternatively, the inhabitants may have died of plague or internal strife, in which case the kaer's treasures are undisturbed. Kaers were designed to keep out the Horrors, who are both physically and magically powerful, and so entering a sealed kaer is no easy task. The greatest obstacles to entering a sealed kaer are its wards, or sealing spells, which shield the kaer from outside magical influences and keep out Horrors, spirits, and other astral beings.

The rituals used to seal most kaers used Named spells, and so dispelling them is tough. Typically, adepts attempting to dispel Named spells must obtain pattern items. But in the case of kaer-sealing spells, characters can study the runes that make up the wards and learn enough of a sealing spell's pattern to dispel the spell without a pattern item. To obtain the necessary information from ward runes, a character must spend at least one hour studying the runes and make a successful Read/Write Magic Test or Item History Test against the sealing spell's Dispel Difficulty. Most kaer-builders typically used Twelfth Circle sealing spells. However, gamemasters may decide that some kaers used spells of higher or lower Circles. After obtaining the necessary pattern information, the character may make a Dispel Magic Test against the sealing spell's Dispel Difficulty. If successful, the ward is dispelled and the kaer doors can be opened—often a difficult task in itself. If the test fails, the character can try again after a day. Most kaers were protected by multiple wards and doors, therefore the process of opening even a basic kaer can be time consuming and, when considering the presence of traps, often dangerous. Kaer wards also make it quite difficult for anyone outside the kaer to communicate with anyone inside. However, members of His Majesty's Exploratory Force of Throal have developed special magic to get around this problem, including the Kaer Knocking and Kaer Pictographs spells.

Dealing With Traps

After entering a kaer, explorers must get past the many traps set by the kaer's original residents. Kaer-builders commonly filled kaer entryways with traps of all kinds intended to incapacitate or drive off Horrors that might manage to penetrate the kaer's wards and outer seals. In sealed kaers, many such traps are still in place and functioning; others may have been repaired or even improved by new inhabitants. Spike traps, blade traps, pits, and crushing traps are the most common physical traps found in kaers. Magical traps were also frequently employed as well, such as those that cast terrible spells like Onion Blood and Skin Shift on their victims. See **Traps**, on p. 110, for more information and sample traps.



Dangerous Kaer Dwellers

Horrors and other intelligent inhabitants of ruined kaers may set traps, wards, and other barriers to capture, harass, or incapacitate intruders in and around the entrance of their lair. For example, the Named Horror Artificer is well known for the fiendish traps it lays for unsuspecting explorers.

Though most of these kaer-dwellers are Horrors or Horror constructs, some kaers have become havens for Namegiver cults such as the Horror-worshipping Cult of the Great Hunter. Many kaers inhabited by Horrors or cults set cadaver men to guard entry tunnels; most often, these guards are the re-animated corpses of the kaer's former residents. In some instances, Named Horrors use Horror constructs as guards. Jehuthra, bone shamblers, black mantises, and blood bees are among their favorites.

See the **Horrors** chapter, p. 265, for more information.

FATIGUE AND INJURY

The rules for dealing with damage in **Earthdawn** are designed to reflect significant injuries inflicted in combat with creatures, Horrors, or enemy Namegivers. Even without combat, however, journeying through Barsaive's wilderness is often risky and arduous. Several days of relatively uneventful travel can often leave characters fatigued or injured. The

following rules allow players and gamemasters to incorporate fatigue and minor injuries such as sprained ankles, burns, and other impairments into their games.

Generally, minor injuries such as sprained ankles, severe blisters from ill-fitting footwear, serious sunburns, and so on inflict a –1 penalty to any Action Tests involving one appropriate Attribute of the injured character. The gamemaster determines which Attribute is affected by which type of injury. Some common minor injuries are described below. Minor ailments such as colds and mild fevers are considered injuries for purposes of these rules. This list does not describe all possible minor injuries characters may suffer—gamemasters can create additional injuries if desired, patterned on the following examples.

Bad Food or Water

A character who eats bad food or drinks unsafe water may suffer from any number of maladies, from nausea to diarrhea to fever and/or flu. Most often, a character who eats bad food or drinks bad water suffers a –1 penalty to his Toughness Step, though this penalty can affect a character's Strength or Perception step instead, at the gamemaster's discretion.

Impose this type of injury only when a character eats or drinks something potentially dangerous (such as eating a poisonous animal or drinking obviously dirty water) without taking precautions. Recovering from the effects of bad food or water takes at least 2 days.

Burns

Burns are typically difficult to treat, prone to infection, and slow to heal completely. Minor burns (heat-exposure damage below a character's Wound Threshold) are considered injuries and impose a –1 penalty to the afflicted character's Strength Tests.

At the gamemaster's discretion, a character may also receive a Wound per standard rules if he suffers fire- or heat-related damage that exceeds his Wound Threshold. Burn Wounds heal twice as slowly as normal Wounds (requiring two Recovery Tests, or the equivalent in healing magic) and must be carefully treated with clean dressings and poultices to keep them from becoming infected. Many of the healing herbs described in **The Healing Arts** chapter of the **Gamemaster's Companion** can help prevent infection and speed the healing of burns.

Cold

Characters getting caught in a torrential downpour or other severe weather can catch colds, especially if they are ill-prepared for rain and/or travel through terrain prone to rain and snowstorms, such as the high mountain slopes. As with bad food or water, impose this injury only on characters who take few or no preventive measures when planning a trip through territory with bad weather.

Colds are debilitating. A character who catches a cold suffers a –1 penalty to any or all of his Strength, Toughness, Dexterity, or Perception steps, at the gamemaster's discretion. The character will take at least 5 days to recover.

Fatigue

Characters normally travel 8 hours per day when walking or riding, but in some instances may need to travel for longer durations. A character or mount (or both) that travels for more than 8 hours per day can suffer from fatigue, depending on how hard the character pushes himself. In addition to fatigue, mounts also suffer the effects described above.

Each level of fatigue causes a – 1 penalty to all of the character's Action Tests (including further Fatigue Tests). For example, a character with 1 level of fatigue suffers a –1 penalty to all of his Action Tests, while a character with 3 levels of fatigue suffers a –3 penalty.



For every 2 hours (or portion thereof) beyond 8 that a character travels in a single day, that character must make a Toughness (7) Test as a Fatigue Test. If the test fails, the character suffers 1 level of fatigue. This rule also applies to mounts.

Fever

Fevers often accompany colds but can also occur when a character is exposed to other diseases or when a wound becomes infected. Characters succumb to fevers most often when traveling through the jungles, where they are often bitten by disease-carrying insects. A fever makes a character light-headed and nauseous, and so an adventurer who catches a fever suffers a –1 penalty to all Action Tests based on Perception. Recovery from a fever takes at least three days.

Severe Blisters

Characters with inadequate or improper footwear often blister their feet. If left unattended, blisters can become infected. This severely limits a character's mobility, not to mention hurting a lot! Blisters impose a –1 penalty to all Action Tests based on an affected character's Dexterity and take at least 1 day to heal.

Strained Arm or Wrist Muscle

Much like a sprained ankle, a strained arm or wrist muscle can occur when a character missteps and falls or over-exerts himself. In game terms, this kind of strain occurs when a character rolls a Pathetic Result on a Strength Test to lift a heavy object, or while performing some other Strength Test where the possibility of injury exists—such as breaking down doors, raising fallen tree trunks, lifting (or trying to lift) an unconscious or semi-conscious obsidiman, and so on.

A character who strains a muscle suffers a –1 penalty to all Action Tests based on Strength. The muscle takes at least 2 days to heal.

Sprained Ankle

Characters can sprain an ankle when traveling in rough or rocky terrain. To cross a stretch of rough ground, the gamemaster may have all the characters make Dexterity Tests against a Difficulty Number between 4 and 6, depending on the specific terrain. Characters whose tests fail sprain their ankles and receive a –1 penalty to all Action Tests based on Dexterity. A sprained ankle takes at least 2 days to heal.

Sunburn

Characters who spend a lot of time in the sun without wearing protective clothing can get badly sunburned, especially in and around the Badlands, the hinterlands or when traveling by airship or riverboat. A badly sunburned character suffers a –1 penalty to all Action Tests based on Strength or Toughness, at the gamemaster's discretion. Extremely severe sunburns can also result in heat stroke (see **Heat Exposure**, p.118). A sunburn takes at least 2 days to heal.

Recovering from Injuries

Characters can heal a minor injury with one night's uninterrupted sleep (8 hours) and a Recovery Test. Before healing, however, the character must wait the minimum number of days listed in the appropriate injury description. For example, a character who suffers a sprained ankle must wait at least 2 days before he can make a Recovery Test to heal it.

After the required sleep, a character can make his Recovery Test and heal one injury. The character must spend a Recovery Test to heal the injury even if he has taken no other damage. Injuries do not affect the healing of Wounds, nor do Wounds prevent the healing of injuries.

Characters using appropriate healing aids need not wait to sleep before healing themselves. The magic of healing aids speeds up the healing process. Unless noted otherwise, a character can automatically heal one injury for each booster or healing potion he uses.

Recovering from Fatigue

To recover from fatigue, a character must rest for 4 hours for each level of fatigue suffered. (These 4 hours are in addition to the normal 8 hours of rest that most Namegivers require each day.) During this time, characters attempting to recover from fatigue cannot take any strenuous actions, such as practicing talents or skills, foraging, or hunting.

POISON TABLE

Poison Type	Spell Defense/ Step Number	Onset Time	Duration
Damage	5–9	Instant/1–2 days	1–6 rounds
Debilitation	5–7	Instant	Effect Test days
Paralysis	5–9	Instant	Effect Test hours
Death	10–13	Instant/1–2 days	Instant

Brief exertion, such as quickly fighting off creatures attacking a character's camp, does not interrupt this rest unless the combat lasts for more than 15 or 20 minutes.

Poison

Several creatures in the world of **Earthdawn** use poisonous bite and sting attacks, and assassins and thieves often use poison on their weapons. The game mechanics of poison depend on three parameters: effect, onset time, and duration.

Effect

Poisons can have a number of different effects. Most commonly, the poison directly inflicts damage on its victim. Other poisons paralyze, debilitate, or instantly kill their victims. Most poisons have a **Spell Defense** and a **Step Number**. The Spell Defense measures how well the poison resists magical treatment by ability, spell, or magical item. Most poisons have a Spell Defense of 6 or more—a good rule of thumb is that the Spell Defense of a poison equals the poison's Step Number. A poison's Step Number is used for Effect Tests. When poison affects a character, either by injection, ingestion, or contact, the gamemaster makes an Effect Test for the poison and interprets the Test Result according to the poison's type of **Effect:** paralysis, debilitation, damage, or instant death.

Paralysis

For a character affected by paralytic poison, compare the poison's Effect Test result against the victim's Spell Defense. An Average Result causes a –1 penalty to the victim's Action Tests for the poison's duration; a Good Result causes a –2 penalty to the victim's Action Tests for the poison's duration; an Excellent Result paralyzes the victim for a number of hours equal to the Test Result (or longer or shorter as the gamemaster wishes).

Debilitation

Debilitating poisons create more severe adverse effects than paralytic poisons. For a character affected by a debilitating poison, compare the poison's Effect Test result against the victim's Toughness Step. If successful, the victim suffers a –1 penalty to his Action Tests for each Result Level achieved for a number of days equal to the Test Result. If he wishes, the gamemaster may lengthen or shorten the duration.

Damage

Most poisons used cause actual damage rather than simply creating a disadvantage for the affected character. The Effect Test result is the number of Damage Points the victim takes. Mystic Armor does not usually provide protection against poison, though the gamemaster may allow it against certain magical poisons.

Death

Poisons that cause instant death must be handled in a different way to other toxins. In this case, the Toughness Test a character makes to resist a poison determines whether the character lives or dies, rather than simply determining how severely the poison affects him. For death poisons, the character makes a Toughness Test against the poison's Spell Defense.

If the test fails, the character dies. On an Average Result, he remains alive, but takes 2 Wounds from the poison. On a Good Result, the character takes 1 Wound, but otherwise remains unharmed. If the character gets an Excellent Result, the poison does not affect him.

Some poisons that cause death take a long time to kill their victims. A character affected by this type of poison begins to die when he fails his Toughness Test (as described above). Each day the character becomes weaker and weaker, suffering from effects

similar to a debilitating poison, until he is dead. Poisons that cause instant death remain rare in Barsaive.

Onset Time

The onset time describes how quickly a poison affects a character. Most poisons affect the character immediately upon exposure. Other poisons take longer to affect a character; for example, many debilitating poisons have onset times as long as several days.

Duration

Some poisons affect characters over a prolonged period, referred to as the poison's duration. For example, many poisons that cause damage affect a character for a specific number of combat rounds. A debilitating poison might affect a character once a week for 4 weeks. Though most death poisons affect characters immediately, some death poisons can be used to slowly kill the victim over several days. The descriptions of the poisons below include each type's typical duration.

Methods of Exposure

Characters can be exposed to poison in a variety of ways. The most common is through the bite or sting of a poisonous creature. Weapons covered in poison must usually cause a Wound for the poison to take effect. Some poisons work only when ingested; the poison must be mixed with a person's food or drink in order to affect him. Other poisons work on contact, taking effect when a character touches the toxin.

The poisons described suggest standard Step Numbers, onset times, and durations. This list is not exhaustive; it only gives the gamemaster a guideline for dealing with poison in his game.

Poison Resistance Tests

When a poison enters a character's body, the character must make a Toughness Test against the Spell Defense of the poison. If successful, the character has resisted the effects of the poison. If the character fails the test, the character suffers the effects of the poison. The gamemaster makes an Effect Test for the poison, interpreting the results according to the poison effect types described below.

If a poison affects a character for more than a round, he may make a Toughness Test each round to resist the effects of the poison. Poisons that affect a character for a number of hours or days allow a character to make a Toughness Test each hour or day, respectively. As soon as the character makes a successful Toughness Test, the poison no longer affects him.

Antidotes and Poultices

Fortunately for the characters, antidotes exist that counter the effects of many poisons. Characters usually use one of two types of concoctions to counter poisons: antidotes and poultices. Antidotes are potions that halt the effects of a specific type of poison, such as snake venom, dragon venom, and so on. Poultices work as salves to counter the effects of all types of poisons. See the **Goods and Services** chapter on p.265 of the ***Player's Guide*** for the effects of specific antidotes and poultices.

Poison Descriptions

Namegivers have a sad talent for turning Nature's bounty into weapons against each other, and medicinal herbs and other substances are no exception. From the lethal experiments of the ill intentioned and the insatiable but thoughtless curiosity of those Namegivers foolish enough to try untested herbs or remedies without proper caution, we derive our knowledge of poisons. Of the many different poisons known, only a handful see regular use. Some typical poisons are described below.

Black Brine

Type: Debilitation
Onset Time: 2 rounds
Duration: 2 hours
Spell Defense: 6
Step Number: 9

Black brine, a dark oil that smells strongly of salted fish, is extracted from the shelgar fish native to Lake Vors. Black brine may be ingested but is more commonly used on the tips of weapons. Certain t'skrang of House Ishkarat dip their arrowheads and dagger blades in black brine, and rumor has it that it is quite popular among the secret societies who use it to advance their unknown ends. Black brine causes muscle weakness and a painful stiffness in the tendons, making it difficult to move quickly or perform any feats of strength such as fighting or running. The toxin wears off within a few hours.

Black Mercy

Type: Paralysis
Onset Time: Instant
Duration: 6 hours
Spell Defense: 8
Step Number: 11

This poison comes from the pollen of the black mercy flower. When the flower reproduces, its pollen often attracts animals, which soon die; their decomposing bodies enrich the soil around the plant. When ingested or inhaled, black mercy induces a powerful sense of euphoria and vivid hallucinations in which the victim imagines his fondest wishes granted. While under the poison's influence, the victim is unaware of the world around him. If he is given regular doses—for example, if he unwisely lingers near enough to the plant to keep breathing the pollen—he will eventually die from starvation or thirst. A single dose, however, wears off in a matter of hours with no lasting effect.

Elfbane

Type: Death (see text)
Onset Time: 1 hour
Duration: Permanent
Spell Defense: 8
Step Number: 10

This rare flower grows in the northern reaches of Barsaive, just north of the Serpent River. The blossoms are pale blue with three petals, each roughly the size of a human's thumb. They contain a poison that affects only elves; it is commonly extracted by boiling the flowers and rendering their juices down to a thin, bitter-smelling liquid that can be mixed with wine or poured on the edges of weapons. Elfbane causes wracking joint pain, muscle spasms, and eventual death unless counteracted by an antidote such as the mahogany trinrose. According to legend, during the Separation of the Elven Court before the Scourge, bitter feelings ran high on both sides. Many elves cast out by Queen Alachia's decrees were so heartsick at being torn from the heart of elven culture that they preferred to die rather than obey, and so they took their own lives. The clumps of elfbane that grow in small patches throughout northern Barsaive are said to have grown where the exiles spilled their blood.

Eyebite

Type: Special (see text)
Onset Time: 3 rounds
Duration: 4 hours
Spell Defense: 6
Step Number: 8

Eyebite is a greasy, dark liquid drawn from the boiled roots of the corak shrub, a hardy plant that grows in patches in and around Barsaive's mountain ranges. Eyebite must be ingested and mixes well with many foods, though not with drink. Only a few drops are needed to affect most Namegivers; trolls and obsidimen require a small cupful, on account of their greater size. The poison's bitter, burnt taste is most often disguised in spiced meat dishes or savory sauces. Eyebite causes temporary blindness; a victim's eyes appear

to have no pupils, merely irises. When the drug wears off, usually within a few hours, the victim's eyesight returns. According to certain adventurers' accounts in the Great Library, eyebite is sometimes administered to imprisoned magicians and adepts to prevent them from using spells and talents that require clear vision.



Fireleaf

Type: Damage
Onset Time: 1 round
Duration: 1 round (see text)
Spell Defense: 6
Step Number: 8

This ground creeper bears small, dark, and glossy, arrow-shaped leaves that some say resemble tongues of dark flame. The leaves produce a colorless oil that severely irritates the skin, causing a red, itching rash similar to a mild burn. Though uncomfortable, the rash is largely harmless. Distillations of fireleaf oil can cause more serious burns, blistering and scarring where they touch bare skin. The pain and itching of fireleaf can be relieved with soothing poultices of aloe and mist blossoms, both of which help to keep down swelling and promote swift healing.

Hemlock

Type: Death
Onset Time: 10 minutes
Duration: Permanent
Spell Defense: 7
Step Number: 11

The juices of this fleshy plant are a deadly poison. When consumed, they cause nausea, chills, convulsions and, eventually, death. Victims of hemlock poisoning often feel cold and lethargic when the toxin begins to work. Hemlock grows in cool, damp places and is most prevalent along the Serpent River and its tributaries.

Keesra

Type: Paralysis (see text)
Onset Time: Instant
Duration: Effect Test hours
Spell Defense: 7
Step Number: 10

Keesra is most often made by windlings from the same berries that they use for keesris wine. Victims who absorb keesra through their skin fall into a deep sleep and awaken some hours later with splitting headaches and smelling of overripe berries. Windling Warriors use keesra on the nets in which they capture their enemies.

Laésal

Type: Paralysis (see text)
Onset Time: 5 rounds
Duration: Effect Test hours
Spell Defense: 8
Step Number: 12

Native to the Blood Wood, the laésal tree bears a fruit similar to a golden cherry. Eaten fresh, laésal fruit is sweet and produces feelings of mild euphoria. The fleshy red center of the fruit is filled with small, dark seeds in place of a cherry's hard pit, however. The seeds can be ground into a powder that dissolves easily in food or liquids (wine is particularly effective, especially wine made from laésal fruit). When consumed, laésal powder causes the victim to fall into a deep sleep for a brief time; when he wakes, he has forgotten the experiences of the past several hours. There is no known way for a victim to recover these lost memories. Laésal is often used by blood warders when removing intruders that they do not wish to imprison or kill outright from the Blood Wood.

Night Pollen

Type: Damage
Onset Time: 1 round
Duration: 3 rounds
Spell Defense: 6
Step Number: 10

This fine, gray powder comes from the night-blooming moon creeper that grows from tree to tree throughout the Servos Jungle. Inhaling night pollen causes irritation of the throat and lungs, severe coughing and shortness of breath. Some victims of this poison may suffocate, but most recover soon after exposure. Warriors of the Servos tribes sometimes use night pollen as a weapon, blowing it from hollow tubes into the faces of their enemies.

Padendra

Type: Paralysis, Death
Spell Defense: 7
Onset Time: 2 rounds
Step Number: 10
Duration: Effect Test hours (Paralysis); Permanent (Death)

The only fatal poison known to be used by windlings, padendra may be injected or ingested. It causes nausea and painful muscle cramps, which paralyze the victim until he dies. Because windlings prize life so highly, they never use padendra lightly, and carefully guard the secret of its production. Some scholars of healing believe that the poison comes from the same insect that produces the less-deadly whadrya venom.

Remis Berries

Type: Paralysis, Death **Spell Defense:** 7
Onset Time: 2 hours **Step Number:** 9
Duration: Effect Test hours (Paralysis); Permanent (Death)

The small white berries of the remis bush are gathered in the dark of the moon, when they reach their full potency. Pressing the berries yields a milky juice that can cause painful muscle cramps when ingested, eventually leading to paralysis and death. The human Dinganni tribes collect remis berries on their travels and frequently sell them to traders. "Whiteberry wine," or "mother's milk," as the potion is mockingly called in some circles, is commonly sold in the markets of Kratas to assassins and poisoners.

Shadowmant Venom

Type: Damage **Spell Defense:** 8
Onset Time: Instant **Step Number:** 9
Duration: 10 rounds

This dark, syrupy liquid drips from the stinger in a shadowmant's tail. Highly toxic when mingled with a victim's blood, shadowmant venom is the favored poison for coating spear points and sword blades. Shadowmant venom is so virulent that it can kill any Namegiver in a matter of minutes. It also resists all treatments other than strong healing magic. Thankfully, the dangers involved in acquiring shadowmant venom keep this toxin expensive and rare. In fact, many would-be venom collectors end up sampling their potential wares firsthand in the dark caves where the creatures hunt.

Whadrya Venom

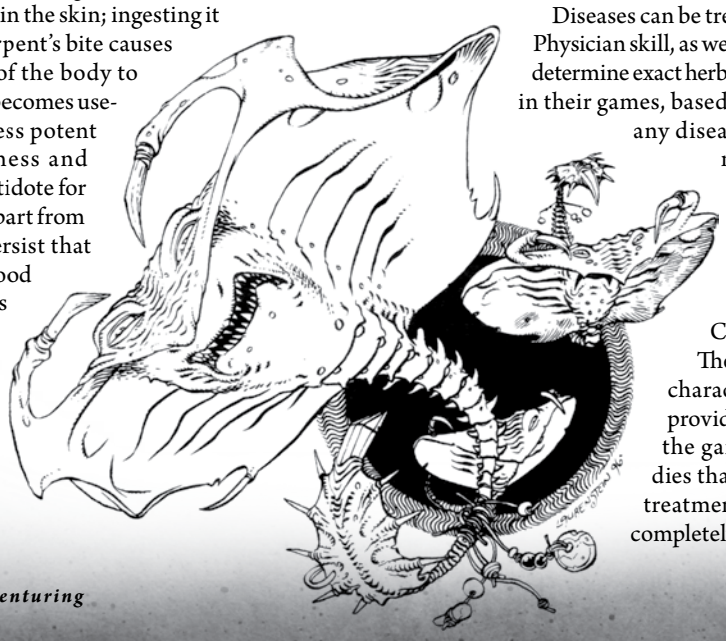
Type: Paralysis **Spell Defense:** 6
Onset Time: Instant **Step Number:** 10
Duration: 1 hour

Whadrya venom is derived from the natural venom of the common wasp. The venom seeps through the skin of its victims and temporarily paralyzes them. Windlings often use it to tip blowgun darts. It must be handled carefully, as even small amounts absorbed through the skin will affect the user.

Witherfang Venom

Type: Special (see text) **Spell Defense:** 7
Onset Time: Instant **Step Number:** 12
Duration: Permanent

This thin, clear liquid comes from the stinger of the witherfang serpent, a creature found in and around the Blood Wood. When properly stored in an airtight container, the poison retains its potency for up to a year. Witherfang venom must enter the victim's bloodstream through a cut in the skin; ingesting it produces no effect. The serpent's bite causes the affected limb or area of the body to wither and weaken until it becomes useless. The venom alone is less potent but causes severe weakness and muscle pain. No known antidote for witherfang venom exists, apart from healing magic. Rumors persist that some Archers among the blood elves coat their arrowheads with witherfang venom.



Disease

Many diseases exist in Barsaive, including some that have been known from the beginnings of history. Other illnesses vanished during the Scourge, but more have emerged since the Scourge's end to take their place. Thus, the diagnosis of disease remains a difficult and challenging art, all the more so because so much priceless knowledge was lost during the Scourge.

Diseases in **Earthdawn** work like poisons. Each disease has a standard onset time, a given duration, a specific effect, a Spell Defense Rating, and an Effect Step. See **Poison**, p.123, for more information on these terms.

Methods of Exposure

Most reputable healers recognize the following basic truths about diseases. First, Namegivers usually contract illnesses by eating or drinking tainted food or water or by touching someone who is infected. Less often, diseases are spread by breathing the air near an infected person or being bitten by vermin that carry infection with them. And many diseases have an affinity with dirt and filth, and so cleanliness of body and surroundings is every Namegiver's strongest weapon against infection. Characters can catch a disease from exposure to a disease-carrying Namegiver or creature, or from disease-prone environments such as jungles and swamps. A character exposed to a disease must make an immediate Toughness Test against the disease's Spell Defense to determine if he has become infected. If successful, the character resists the disease. If the test fails, the character comes down with the illness, which begins to take effect after the onset time has expired.

Many diseases cause minor symptoms during onset that allow other characters to detect and diagnose them. However, some diseases produce no visible symptoms until the character has developed a full-blown case. After the initial infection (the first failed Toughness Test), an infected character may make up to two more Toughness Tests to throw off the disease. The first test is made when the onset time expires, the second halfway through the disease's duration. If either test succeeds, the character recovers after the duration listed in the disease description. If both tests fail, the character and his companions can only let the disease run its course and hope for the best. If the disease is Deadly, the character may very well die at the end of the disease's duration unless he receives additional treatment.

Disease Treatments

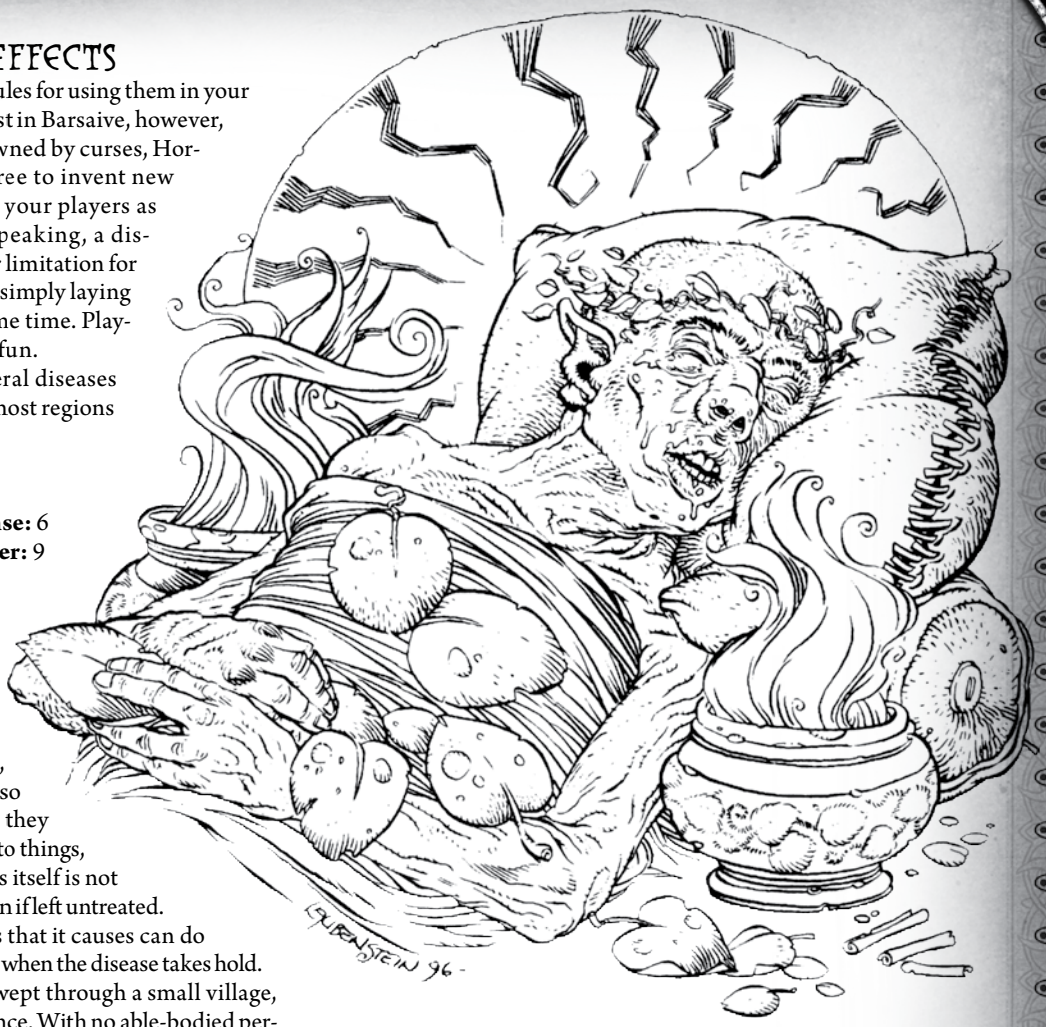
Diseases can be treated with herbal medicines and the Physician skill, as well as by magic. Gamemasters should determine exact herbal treatments for the various diseases in their games, based on the following guidelines. First, any disease whose effects act like a poison may be treated with any remedy that works against poisons. For example, dragon's tongue, serpent vine, and star root can all be used to treat disease (see **The Healing Arts** chapter of the Gamemaster's Companion).

These simple remedies give an infected character additional Toughness Tests or provide a bonus for these tests. If desired, the gamemaster may create other remedies that work in the same manner. Other treatments, such as magical ones, can also completely cure a disease if applied correctly.

Diseases and Their Effects

The diseases listed below provide rules for using them in your games. Many additional diseases exist in Barsaive, however, along with plagues and illnesses spawned by curses, Horrors, and magic gone wrong. Feel free to invent new and insidious diseases to inflict on your players as they explore Barsaive. Generally speaking, a disease should provide some obstacle or limitation for a character to overcome, rather than simply laying him flat on his back for a week of game time. Playing sick for a whole game isn't much fun.

Following are descriptions of several diseases and treatments known to healers in most regions of Barsaive.



Bone Plague

Type: Debilitation **Spell Defense:** 6
Onset Time: 2–3 days **Step Number:** 9
Duration: 3–4 weeks

Bone plague begins with a mild fever, a feeling of listlessness, and pains in the joints. Over the course of a few days, the victim becomes progressively more fatigued, and his joints turn rubbery. In serious cases, the victim's joints and bones become so weak that they no longer function as they should; he cannot stand, walk, hold onto things, or lift so much as a feather. The illness itself is not fatal and passes within a few weeks even if left untreated. However, the weakness and paralysis that it causes can do great harm if the victim is far from help when the disease takes hold. There are cases where bone plague swept through a small village, striking down everyone virtually at once. With no able-bodied persons to help the sufferers eat and drink, many poor victims starved to death. Those recovering from bone plague require a week's rest and hearty food to fully regain their strength. Increased appetite is a sure sign that the disease is departing.

Effect: Each week that a character is infected with bone plague, make a Disease Effect Test against the character's Toughness Step. While the effect of the illness is treated like a Debilitating Poison, the penalty only affects tests for physical actions. If the penalty is equal to or greater than the character's Strength or Dexterity Step, the character becomes too weak to stand or move on his own. Penalties are recovered at a rate of 1 point per day of rest after the end of the bone plague's duration.

Death's Caress

Type: Death **Spell Defense:** 8
Onset Time: 3–6 hours **Step Number:** 12
Duration: 4–5 days

Also called fire plague in some areas of Barsaive, Death's caress is the most deadly and virulent plague known to us. It can be passed in water or food or from touching an infected person; the blood and other body fluids of victims are especially dangerous. Death's caress brings high fever, sweating, chills, and painful muscle cramps. Victims become extremely sensitive to touch, smell, sound, and light. Often, they must be placed on the softest possible surface in a darkened and quiet room, lest their own tortured senses drive them mad. If the illness is left untreated, the fever burns the victim up from the inside until no more moisture remains in his body. Many victims see visions of Death's fiery kingdom while afflicted by this plague, and some scholars speculate that Death created the disease to avenge his imprisonment. Places where outbreaks of Death's caress are known to have occurred are shunned by the wise, to prevent infection. The bodies and clothing of victims are usually burned. There is no known cure for Death's caress, save for powerful healing magic. Certain methods of treatment offer comfort to the sufferer and may even give him strength enough to hold on to life while the illness runs its course—but this happens rarely. Most victims of Death's caress succumb within days of first displaying the symptoms. The principal treatment is to bring the fever down, using cool water or even ice (if it can be had). The patient must also be made to drink as much water as possible, to keep the proper balance between the elements in his body.

Effect: Death's caress is one of the few deadly diseases listed here. A character who fails all tests to overcome this illness is likely to die at the end of the disease's duration without powerful magical healing.

Horrorfever

Type: Debilitation **Spell Defense:** 12
Onset Time: 20 days **Step Number:** 12
Duration: 12 hours (or more; see text)

A cyclical fever, this affliction earned its name because the victim experiences nightmares and night terrors in the illness's active phases. The disease is actually spread by flies and other disgusting insects, not by Horrors.

Effect: The gamemaster makes a disease Effect Test every 20 days against the character's Toughness Step. If successful, the Result Level determines the duration of the fever. Each feverish episode lasts for a minimum of 12 hours, +12 additional hours for each Result Level above Average. The afflicted character suffers a –6 penalty to all of his Action Tests during the fever bouts, and sus-

tained mental effort is impossible; the character cannot cast spells, read, engage in meaningful discussions, and so on. Administering the right antidote counters the disease's effects.

Lung-Rot

Type: Debilitation **Spell Defense:** 7
Onset Time: 1–4 months **Step Number:** 7
Duration: Chronic (see text)

Lung-rot—sometimes called galloping lung-rot—seems particularly prevalent in cold and damp regions. After the initial infection, it takes a few months to manifest—its marks are congestion of the chest, coughing, labored breathing and a mild fever. Those fortunate enough to contract a mild case of lung-rot usually recover within ten days or so, though they may suffer permanent damage if the illness is left untreated. Such patients often suffer from shortness of breath and a weakened constitution for the rest of their lives. In serious cases, the fever rises to dangerous levels, and the victim becomes gradually weaker until he no longer has sufficient strength to breathe. The best-known treatment for lung-rot is Rianna's fan, a small forest-dwelling plant that grows in clusters around trees and stumps. The plant is Named for its broad, fan-shaped leaves, which are said to be the same shade of dark green as the legendary elf healer's eyes. Boiling the leaves produces steam that relieves congestion and eases breathing, as well giving off a strong, clean odor that freshens and cleanses the air.

Effect: Each month that a character suffers from lung-rot, make a Disease Effect Test against the character's Toughness Step. Treat the effect as a Debilitating Poison, with a maximum penalty of –2 per test. This penalty affects only physical Attributes: Dexterity, Strength and Toughness. If the penalty becomes equal to or higher than the character's Toughness Step, the character dies. The disease is chronic, and so its effects continue until the character is healed by mundane or magical treatment. Once the disease is cured, make a final Disease Effect Test against the character's Toughness Step. If the test yields an Excellent or better result, the disease scars the character's lungs and permanently reduces his Dexterity, Strength and Toughness values by –3 each.

Quaking Fever

Type: Debilitation **Spell Defense:** 6
Onset Time: 1–3 days **Step Number:** 6
Duration: 7–10 days

Quaking fever generally breaks out in regions full of marshes and stagnant waters, such as the Mist Swamps and the Servos Jungle. Symptoms include swelling in the throat, fever, trembling limbs, an irritated nose and throat, and coughing fits. As this disease is not contagious, touching or being near victims of it poses no danger to others. There is no specific cure for quaking fever, but it is not fatal unless the sufferer is already severely weakened in some way. In most cases, it passes within seven to ten days. In the meantime, many common plants may help alleviate the coughing fits and running nose (which are universally acknowledged to be the most troublesome of the symptoms).

Effect: Treat the effects of quaking fever like a Debilitating Poison. This disease is never fatal.

Smiling Death

Type: Debilitation **Spell Defense:** 6
Onset Time: 1 week **Step Number:** 10
Duration: 2 weeks

This strange disease can be caught from tainted water or from contact with an infected person; even breathing the air too near an infected person may expose one to contagion. The marks of smiling death, which appear about a week after infection, include headaches, blurred vision, high fever, sweating, and muscle cramps severe enough to incapacitate the patient. A few days after the illness sets in, victims suffer from facial grimaces and respiratory spasms that resemble smiling and faint laughter. In the most serious cases, victims lapse into unconsciousness after a week or so and die a few days afterward. In the disease's early stages, patients must be kept warm, made to rest and given plenty of fluids, along with herbal teas to purge the body. Usually, healing magic can cure smiling death even after the patient has lapsed into a coma, provided the healer is powerful enough and the patient has been unconscious for no more than two days.

Effect: Make a Disease Effect Test every three days for characters infected with smiling death. Treat the disease's effect like a Debilitating Poison. If the penalty becomes equal or greater than the character's Toughness Step, the character dies. Otherwise, he eventually recovers. Enforced rest and plenty of fluids allow an afflicted character to recover and remove the penalty at a rate of 1 point per day, which should be enough to keep the character alive in most cases.

Stenchfoot

Type: Debilitation **Spell Defense:** 6
Onset Time: 1–4 days **Step Number:** 8
Duration: 1–2 weeks (see text)

This grisly parasitic disease usually affects lower extremities first, as it is most often contracted by walking in boggy ground and picking up parasites through the feet. This disease causes flesh to rot, with blood poisoning eventually setting in.

Effect: The gamemaster must make a Disease Effect Test for the afflicted character every 48 hours in jungle or swamp conditions, but may be more lenient in other climes. For example, if a character escapes the jungle or bog to a cool and dry environment, the test might only be necessary every one to two weeks. If the Result Level achieved by the disease is Good or better, the disease progresses. A Good Result reduces the character's Toughness and Charisma steps by –2 each. After a minimum of two reductions to the character's Toughness Step, the gamemaster makes an extra test for the disease against the character and an Average or better Result Level means the character loses an extremity. Most often the extremity lost is the place where the disease first manifested, but can be anywhere on the body: a foot, a hand, the nose, an ear, and so on. The gamemaster must improvise the results of this loss, but some effects are obvious. For example, a character with one hand cannot use a bow, will use a shield strapped to his arm with difficulty, and so on. A character cannot replace lost body parts by healing the disease, but other effects of the disease disappear once it is healed.

Walking Fever

Type: Death **Spell Defense:** 7
Onset Time: 1–2 days **Step Number:** 9
Duration: 3 weeks

Some scholars of the healing arts question whether walking fever is a true disease or not, but the illness strikes down unfortunate victims just the same. The fever is caused by exposure to the spores of the darkbloom fungus, which grows only in damp caves or dark patches of forest where sunlight does not reach under logs. At a certain point, the fungus releases a cloud of spores. Anyone who breathes in the spores develops the symptoms of walking fever within the next day or two: a sore throat, headaches, and a mild fever. The fever progressively worsens until the victim eventually falls unconscious. If the victim has strength enough to fight off the infection, he will awaken during



the next day or two with no symptoms and will recover fully in a matter of days. A victim who succumbs to infection will also awaken after a day or so, but his skin is hot to the touch and he becomes unusually sensitive to bright light. Such victims will seek shelter in some dark, dank place, and anyone who comes too near them for the next ten to fourteen days risks infection from the spores that they disgorge with every breath. At the end of that time, the victim dies and his body becomes host to new sprouts of darkbloom fungus.

Effect: If a character exposed to darkbloom spores fails his first Toughness Test, he becomes infected and begins to develop symptoms. The second Toughness Test, made halfway through the disease's duration, determines if the character lives or dies. If the second test succeeds, the character throws off the infection and awakens. If the test fails, the character succumbs to the infection and becomes a gamemaster character.

Victims seek shelter in a dark, dank place. Anyone coming into contact with them for the next 10 to 14 days risks infection from the spores the infected character bears. At the end of that time, the victim dies and his body becomes host to a new collection of darkbloom fungus, which will quickly begin sprouting.

Yellow Jig

Type: Special (see text)
Onset Time: 2–4 days
Duration: 2–4 weeks
Spell Defense: 6
Step Number: 8

Yellow jig can be caught from tainted water or by touching an infected victim. Initially, the disease causes a slight yellowing of the victim's skin, the whites of the eyes, and underside of the tongue. Within two to four days of these signs, the victim experiences weakness and trembling limbs. Victims also suffer from random fits of jerky, uncontrollable muscle spasms; they move as if engaged in some macabre dance, much like the effects of certain nethermantic spells. The disease itself is not fatal, though some have died from accidents caused by convulsions at precisely the wrong moment. A popular tale mentions an ancient hero who broke his neck when a spasm shook him at the top of a steep flight of stairs. Yellow jig commonly passes within two to four weeks, during which time various potions and elixirs can be used to ease the spasms and provide the patient with much-needed rest.

Effect: Each day after the onset time expires, make a Disease Effect Test against the afflicted character's Toughness Step. An Average Result suffers a –1 penalty to all of the character's Action Tests; a Good Result suffers a –2 penalty; an Excellent or better result suffers a –2 penalty and indicates that the character will have 1–4 convulsive episodes that day, each lasting 2–12 combat rounds. Treat a convulsing character as if he is affected by a Bone Dance spell (***Player's Guide***, p.155), using the disease's Effect Test result as the spell's Effect Test result.

CHAPTER NINE

MAGICAL TREASURES

Keep that gleam in your eye, boy. Treasure such as I have seen gleams even more. See what I have seen and you too will risk death to hold it, to call it yours.

• Garlthik One-Eye, Ork Thief •

The world of **Earthdawn** is filled with fantastic magical treasures. These treasures are precious not only for their uniqueness, but because they hold within them the history of Barsaive. These treasures hold the key to the past, and allow the heroes of today to become the legends of tomorrow.

The quest for magical treasure is an important **Earthdawn** adventure goal. Though the characters will often seek out and destroy Horrors that remain in their world, the search for magical weapons to use against the Horrors is an equally important goal. The characters' heroic status makes them perfect candidates for researching and learning about magical items, and through these items rediscovering the history of Barsaive and its people.

This section provides specific rules for using thread magic to learn about and use magical weapons and items. The gamemaster may find it useful to review the **Thread Magic** chapter of the ***Player's Guide***, p.113). The information provided therein explains how players research items to be able to weave threads to them, which in turn allows the access to an item's powers. The **Thread Items** section in the **Goods and Services** chapter of the ***Player's Guide***, p.275, provides an alternate description of thread item characteristics.

USING TREASURES IN ADVENTURES AND CAMPAIGNS

Threaded magical items fall into three broad categories, with the different categories influencing how a gamemaster can use the item in his campaign:

Thread Items, while often used as the general term for all threaded items, describes simple, manufactured threaded items sometimes available on Barsaive's open markets. They are described in the ***Player's Guide***, p.275, and some players can use the **Enchanting** rules from the ***Player's Companion*** to produce them.

General Treasure is more powerful than Thread Items. While not unique, General Treasures are limited in number, as they are difficult to produce and the process of their creation might have been lost with their creators. Because General Treasure is more closely linked to its creator or circumstances of creation, an item's history plays a role in unlocking its secrets. Most of the items in this chapter are General Treasure, as they are more appropriate to low-Circle characters than Legendary Treasures.

Legendary Treasure refers to unique items, not created by intent but circumstance. They are truly one of a kind. As they were shaped by legendary deeds and received their powers through interaction with the magical world. As such, their histories are very important in the process of unlocking their secrets, more so than with General Treasure. They cannot be produced by Enchanting, and are not bound by the conventions normally applying to Thread Items or General Treasure. More information on Legendary Treasures can be found in the ***Gamemaster's Companion***.

FINDING KEY KNOWLEDGES

When a gamemaster introduces a magical treasure into his game, he must determine the Research Knowledges of each of its Key Knowledges. Each Research Knowledge can serve as the objective of a short adventure, and these adventures may make up a campaign to fully understand a weapon and wield it at its fullest power—probably to kill that pesky Horror that keeps getting in the characters' way. The gamemaster can set up such adventures in any way he finds appropriate, but the following guidelines may also be helpful.

Finding the Research Knowledge of a Key Knowledge should require effort on the part of the characters seeking the knowledge. The characters should not get something for nothing. For example, a character should have to undertake a journey of some distance to find a tome that has the information he seeks, rather than merely walking to the nearest collection of books and flipping through the pages for a few minutes. Once he arrives at his destination, he might also have to persuade the caretaker of the collection to allow him to look through the tome. To accomplish that, he may have to agree to do a favor.

The character must understand how the Key Knowledge fits into the history of the item. For example, if a character must learn the Name of the jungle that produced the wood used to create a staff, it isn't enough for him to guess the name of the jungle, even if he manages to guess correctly. The character may research different kinds of wood to pinpoint the type used to make the staff, in the process learning about where different types of trees grow, then discovering important stands or forests of those trees. Through this process, he will understand the significance of the wood used to make the staff.

The gamemaster must take care to create a way for the characters to obtain the Key Knowledges through clever roleplaying or unusual plans of action. The key is to create information that is difficult, but not impossible, to obtain. The risk or cost of obtaining the information must be worth the new ability of the item. For example, having to enter the lair of a dragon to earn the Key Knowledge for a Rank 2 Thread is probably too high a cost; and asking a character to learn whether the person who created an item was left- or right-handed is likely to be an impossible task. A good guideline is to base the difficulty of the task required to purchase the Thread Rank on the Legend Point cost of that Rank. For example, if it costs 2,100 Legend Points to purchase the next Thread Rank for an item, the adventure to obtain the Key Knowledge should award the character approximately that many Legend Points.

TREASURE GAME INFORMATION

Each treasure description provides the item's game information and history. The following information explains the terms used in each item description.

Maximum Threads: A character may only weave one thread to a magic item. However, many items hold more than one thread, so they may act magically for more than one character. If more than one character attaches a thread to an item, the character touching the item gets to use it. If an item already has the maximum number of threads woven to it and another character attaches a new thread, the thread of the lowest Thread Rank is replaced. For example, if two threads are woven to an item, one to Thread Rank Four and one to Thread Rank Two, the Thread Rank Two thread is displaced by the Thread Rank One thread of another person that weaves a thread to the item. Most General Treasures allow 2 threads to be attached to them. Note that in almost all instances, only the character actively using the item gains its benefits. This means that while most items allow two characters to share an item by both weaving a thread to it, only one of them can benefit from it at a time.

Spell Defense: The item's Spell Defense is the Difficulty Number used by a character attempting to use talents (such as Item History) to learn an item's history or examine it astrally. It also serves as the Difficulty Number for spells or talents used against the item. The Spell Defense of most General Treasures is 14—18.

Legend Point Cost: Determines the amount of Legend Points a character has to spend to weave the individual Thread Ranks. These correlate to the Cost for increasing Talent Ranks. For example, if an item lists "Journeyman" as its Legend Point Cost, the first Thread Rank costs as many Legend Points to weave to as learning Rank 1 for a talent of Fifth Circle (200 Legend Points), the second Thread Rank costs as many Legend Points as increasing that talent to Rank 2 (300 Legend Points), and so on. Most items in this chapter use the Legend Point Cost of Journeyman talents.

Thread Ranks: This lists the Key Knowledges or Deeds required to weave a thread to the Rank in question as well as the Effect weaving that thread has. Each item has a maximum number of Thread Ranks. A character cannot increase the Rank of the thread he weaves to an item beyond the maximum listed Rank. For example, a character with a Bracers of Aras may only increase the Rank of the thread attached to the bracers to Rank 6. It is simply not possible to weave a Rank 7 thread to a Bracers of Aras. Any attempt to weave a thread with a Rank higher than the maximum automatically fails.

Effects listed at a Rank either indicate a new power, ability, or bonus the character receives while using the item, or they increase a previous one. For example, weaving a thread to Thread Rank Two of the Bracers of Aras increases the previous +1 bonus to the wearer's Physical Defense, the bonuses are not added together, they do not provide a +3 bonus. When weaving a thread to Thread Rank Three, however, the character receives a new bonus to Spell Defense. This bonus does not replace the Physical Defense bonus, it is a new bonus that comes in addition to it. So once a character has woven Thread Rank Four of the Bracers of Aras, he receives a +2 bonus to both his Physical and Spell Defense. Thread Rank Effects for some items do not convey bonuses, but change their characteristics and properties. Most often, this concerns weapons, shields, and armor. A weapon with a Damage Step of 5 that is supposed to increase its damage as a Thread Rank Effect does not gain "a +1 bonus to Damage Tests," but "becomes Damage Step 6." It is treated as a weapon with a Damage Step of 6 for all intents and purposes now, and abilities and effects that use a weapon's Damage Step use this new Step of 6 when interacting with the item.

Note that some Thread Ranks provide a bonus to a character's Rank in a talent (but never skill), a "+1 Rank Bonus to the Avoid Blow talent" for example. If the character does not know the talent in question, he now knows it at the indicated Rank, but cannot increase its Rank by spending Legend Points. If he knows the talent, he increases it without counting the bonus, a talent known



at Rank 3 with a +2 Rank Bonus from a Thread Rank Effect is increased to Talent Rank 4 by spending the Legend Points necessary to increase it to Rank 4, not to Rank 6. Rank Bonuses to Discipline Talents do not count towards meeting the requirements for Circle Advancement.

Some Thread Rank Effects allow the wielder of the item to cast a Spell. This spell is considered to be cast from a matrix (which is part of the item's design, but cannot be attuned to another spell, unless otherwise noted). Threads usually need not be woven, the wielder takes Strain instead. Many items provide the wielder with the means to cast the spell using his Perception Step only if he does not know the Spellcasting talent. He uses his own Willpower or Willforce to determine the spell's effect if not otherwise noted.

General Treasures

This section describes magical items of a general type—more than one item of each type exhibiting the same magical properties exists. Unlike the common Thread Items found in the ***Player's Guide***, these treasures are rarely, if ever, offered for sale.



Bracers of Aras

Maximum Threads: 3 **Spell Defense**: 14
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

Bracers of Aras are made of flexible, silvery metal that wraps around the wrists and forearms of the wearer. The flexibility is a result of the elemental water that has been forged into the bracers. The elemental water pieces used in the crafting of the bracers resemble aquamarine gems, each piece approximately 1 inch in diameter. These arm bands are made from metals found only in mines located along the shore of the Aras Sea, and are encrusted with pieces of elemental water. The color of the elemental water gems constantly changes, oscillating with a swirling effect across the spectrum from deep aqua to bright blue.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: Each set of bracers is Named by their creator. The wearer must learn the Name of the bracers.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the mine from which came the metals used to create the bracers.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: As mundane water contains oxygen, elemental water contains elemental air. The creators of the Bracers of Aras formed the gems from a mixture of elemental air and water. The ratio of water to air varies for each set of bracers. The wearer must learn the ratio of water to air used to create the bracers he wears.

Effect: The bracers allow the wearer to cast the Gills Spell on himself by taking 2 Strain.



Counterspell Staff

Maximum Threads: 2 **Spell Defense**: 16
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

A counterspell staff is a quarterstaff, topped with a finely carved crystal. The crystal is carved into one of any number of shapes or figures, depending on the whim of the staff's creator. Counterspell staffs are most commonly made of wood, usually mahogany, but on occasion maple, oak, or ebony.

With no threads attached to it, a counterspell staff has the same characteristics as a normal quarterstaff.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the staff's Name.

Effect: The wielder adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Two

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn where the crystal atop the staff came from.

Effect: The staff is now Damage Step 5. The staff allows the wielder to cast the Counterspell spell up to Thread Rank times each day. The wielder may use his Perception Step to make the Spellcasting Test.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the artisan who carved the crystal on the staff.

Effect: The Counterspell's Effect improves to +3 per Result Level.

Thread Rank Four

Deed: The wielder binds his magical energy to the staff, using blood magic to increase the effectiveness, taking 2 Blood Magic Damage. The ritual leaves the wielder with a scar that occasionally oozes a drop of blood. The drop of blood is magically drawn to a notch in the staff; the notch glistens red for three hours after the drop touches it. As soon as the glisten fades, another drop of blood falls from the scar. This Deed must be performed in the jungle or forest where the wood that the staff was created from was grown.

Effect: The staff is now Damage Step 6. The Counterspell's Effect improves to +4 per Result Level.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the magician who created the staff.

Effect: The Counterspell's Effect improves to +5 per Result Level.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The staff is now Damage Step 7. The Counterspell's Effect improves to +6 per Result Level.

Crystal Spear

Maximum Threads: 2 **Spell Defense**: 18
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

Crystal spears were created by troll Weaponsmiths in ancient times to arm crystal raiders in their attacks against Theran ships. No one knows how many were created or remain intact. Crystal spears typically came as an honorary gift for an individual troll as a reward for his accomplishments, and were awarded prior to a major assault. As the name indicates, these magical items are spears made of solid crystal. The shafts of the spears are pentagonal and polished to a fine sheen. The magic of the spear keeps its crystal the blade razor sharp, despite is rough finish.

With no threads attached, the crystal spear has the same characteristics as a normal spear.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the spear's Name.

Effect: The spear is now Damage Step 7.

Thread Rank Two

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the spear's creator.

Effect: The spear is now Damage Step 8.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the troll Sky Raider for whom the spear was created (the spear's first owner).

Effect: The spear's thrown Range increases by one quarter for each Range category.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The wielder adds a +1 bonus to his Initiative Step.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn what historic assault the spear was crafted for, and for which first wielder.

Effect: For 2 Strain, the wielder adds +2 to his Physical and Spell Defense for a number of rounds equal to the wielder's Thread Rank or until he makes an Attack Test with the spear, whichever comes first. The spear glows pale blue while this bonus is in effect.

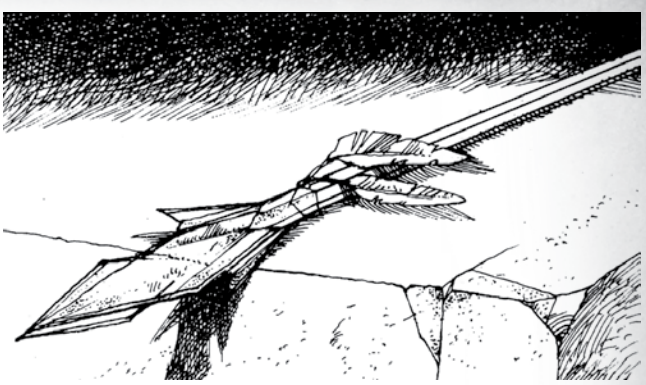
Thread Rank Six

Effect: For 1 Strain, the wielder gains a +3 bonus to the next Damage Test he makes with the spear. The spear glows a bright red when this bonus is in effect.

Thread Rank Seven

Deed: The wielder must make a pilgrimage to the trollmoot to which the spear's creator, and most likely, first owner, belonged. At the trollmoot, the character must swear a Blood Oath with the trollmoot's leader. The damage taken for this Oath is Permanent Damage instead of Blood Magic Damage. If the wielder violates the Oath, the spear immediately shatters, destroyed beyond repair.

Effect: Lower the result level required to deliver an Armor-Defeating Hit by one level (from Excellent to Good, for example). For 3 Strain, the spear causes 1 additional Wound on its next Damage Test, so long as it inflicts at least 1 Damage Point.



Thread Rank Eight

Deed: The wielder must command an airship in an attack. During the attack he must invoke the Names of the weapon's creator, the original owner, and the trollmoot from which they came.

Effect: For 5 Strain, the wielder can cause fear in his enemies and rally his own troops. This effect causes the spear to glow bright white, the light pulsing like a heartbeat. All of the wielder's allies within 100 yards receive the following: +1 bonus to Initiative and Attack Tests and +1 to Physical, Spell, and Social Defense. Additionally, increase the result level required to hit the spear's wielder by one level (from Average to Good, for example). The effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to the wielder's Thread Rank or until he makes an attack with the spear, whichever comes first.

Crystal Spell Box

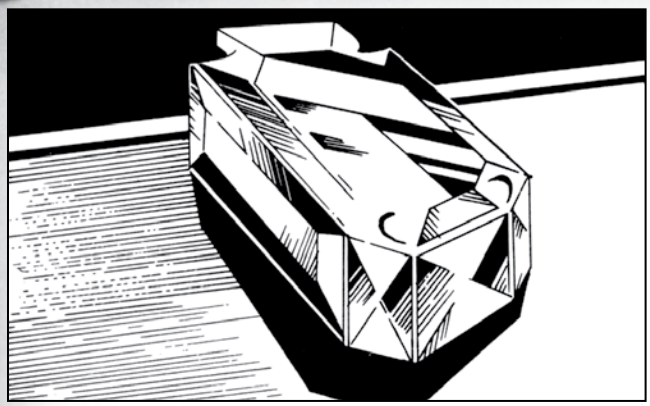
Maximum Threads: 2 **Spell Defense**: 15
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

Crystal spell boxes are small boxes made of crystal and metal. The sides, top, and bottom are all solid pieces of crystal, with the seams between the pieces made of precious metals, most often silver or gold. The boxes are not designed to be opened. The crystal used is usually deep amber in color, though clear or blackened crystal is used occasionally. A crystal spell box measures roughly 8 inches long by 5 inches wide by 3 inches high. Crystal spell boxes were designed by the great mage Masym. The spell boxes capture spells cast by enemies, and store them for later release. Whenever the box contains the maximum number of spells, a spell currently in the box must be released before another spell can be captured. When a box contains a spell, it radiates a faint glow, which intensifies as more spells are captured within it.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the box's Name.

Effect: The wielder can capture a spell that is being cast by making a Spellcasting Test against the caster's Spellcasting Test result (this requires the wielder to act when the spell is being cast, taking a Reserved Action; it also prevents him from capturing his own spells, as he cannot take two Standard Actions in the same round). If successful, the wielder has captured the spell in the box. The box can hold 1 spell, and the held spell can be released by making a Spellcasting Test as normal (no threads need be woven, and the spell is considered to be cast from a Matrix); the wielder determines the spell's effect as if he had cast it himself. Once released, the spell is gone; a new spell may be captured.



Thread Rank Two

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 Rank Bonus to his Spellcasting talent when capturing spells into or casting spells from the box.

Thread Rank Three

Deed: Masym did not personally build every box. Apprentices worked for hundreds of hours to build the rudiments of a single box; Masym chose to complete only the best of those boxes. The wielder must discover the Name of an apprentice and then take the box to the grave (or final resting place) of the apprentice and leave an offering of thanks.

Effect: The box can now hold up to 2 spells.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The wielder gains a +4 Rank Bonus to his Spellcasting talent when capturing spells into or casting spells from the box.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the mountain from which the crystal originated.

Effect: The box can now hold up to 3 spells.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The wielder gains a +6 Rank Bonus to his Spellcasting talent when capturing spells into or casting spells from the box.

Thread Rank Seven

Deed: The wielder must learn the Name of the person who commissioned the box.

Effect: The box can now hold up to 4 spells.

Elemental Long-Spear

Maximum Threads: 2 **Spell Defense**: 16
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

These six- to eight-foot-long wooden long-spears incorporate each of the five True Elements. The shafts are woven with True Wood, the hollow cores are filled with True Air, and the spears' metal tips are woven with True Earth. Each spear is then soaked in liquid rich in True Water and hardened in flames fueled by True Fire. The spears float in water. With no threads attached, they have the same characteristics as a normal long-spear.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the spear's Name.

Effect: The spear is now Damage Step 10. It becomes immune to damage from fire and from the effects of spells or abilities that damage it. This latter property also keeps the spear from splintering when leveled against an opponent when making Charging Attacks.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The wielder adds a +2 bonus to his Initiative Tests.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the spear's creator.

Effect: The spear is now Damage Step 11. Its tip glows red hot and gives the wielder a power similar to the Flameweapon spell. For 1 Strain the wielder rolls a separate Step 4/D6 Flame Die with the weapon's Damage Tests that round. Unlike the Flameweapon spell, the Flame Die Result never harms the wielder.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The spear is now Damage Step 12. The wielder gains a +1 Rank Bonus to his Riposte talent.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn what type of wood the spear haft is constructed from and where it was grown.

Effect: The spear is now Damage Step 13. It becomes extremely resilient; tremendous force can bend, but not break, it. Even the strength of a dragon twisting the spear in its talons cannot harm the spear. The wielder adds a +1 Rank Bonus to his Wound Balance talent.

Espagra Boots

Maximum Threads: 2 **Spell Defense**: 17
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

These fine boots are made from the hides of espagra, dragon-like, flying predators. Because of their origin, espagra boots are usually bright blue, interwoven with brown leather. The espagra scales also give the boots a brilliant luster, a trademark of espagra-skin products. Similar in appearance to espagra saddles, these boots are often worn by those whose work requires stealth, secrecy, or great agility.

In present times worn mostly by thieves and rogues seeking an advantage of stealth and secrecy, legends tell that Theran soldiers and mercenaries wore this type of boots in the years before the Scourge. These legends contradict those stories that say these boots were first made in the city of Kratas, commissioned by the legendary ork Thief Garlthik One-Eye.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the boots' Name.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 Rank Bonus to his Avoid Blow talent.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 Rank Bonus to his Avoid Blow talent.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the person who created the boots.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 Rank Bonus to his Silent Walk talent.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 Rank Bonus to his Silent Walk talent.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the number of espagra hides used to create the boots.

Effect: The wearer gains a +3 Rank Bonus to his Avoid Blow and Silent Walk talents.

Thread Rank Six

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the place where the espagra whose hide was used for the boots originally made its home.

Effect: For 2 Strain per round, the wearer gains the ability to fly at a Movement Rate of 5. He may spend additional Strain, adding +2 to this Movement Rate for every 1 Strain. This ability cannot be combined with talents or skills allowing increased movement (but allows using the Running combat option).

Espagra Saddle

Maximum Threads: 2 **Spell Defense**: 14
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

These saddles are constructed using a combination of the hide and scales of the flying, dragon-like predators known as espagra. The shimmering blue espagra scales give these saddles a beautiful luster that makes them immediately recognizable. The hanging flaps of an espagra saddle are made entirely of the creatures' hide. One saddle typically requires three to seven hides to make.

Cavalrymen and others who depend upon their mounts covet these saddles. Legend says that Guyak Jorann used the first espagra saddle, but these saddles were probably being stitched and enchanted centuries before the ork hero was born.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The rider must learn the saddle's Name.

Effect: The mount adds +1 to its Movement Rate at the rider's choice.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The mount adds +1 to its Physical Armor while the rider is seated in the saddle.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The rider must learn how many espagra hides the maker used to create the saddle.

Effect: The mount now adds up to +2 to its Movement Rate at the rider's choice.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The mount adds +2 to its Physical Armor and +1 to its Physical Defense while the rider is seated in the saddle. The rider adds +1 to his Physical Armor while he is seated in the saddle.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The rider must learn the Name of the person who made the saddle.

Effect: The mount gains the ability to fly through the air at its natural Movement Rate while carrying the rider, with the rider taking 2 Strain per round of flight.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: Both rider and mount add +1 Recovery Test per day. The saddle must be used by both parties for at least an hour each day to gain this bonus.

Thread Rank Seven

Key Knowledge: The rider must discover the Name of the person who commissioned the saddle.

Effect: The mount is able to fly at increased speed, it now adds the Movement rate bonuses conferred by lower Thread Ranks when flying, at the rider's choice. The mount adds +5 to its Physical Armor while the rider is seated in the saddle.

Thread Rank Eight

Effect: Both rider and mount add +2 to their Physical, Spell, and Social Defense while the rider is seated in the saddle.

Forest Robes

Maximum Threads: 1 **Spell Defense**: 16
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

Before the Scourge, forest robes were popular among the elf magicians of Wyrm Wood, Shosara, and other major elf settlements. Though most favored by Elementalists, the robes were worn by followers of all magician Disciplines. Forest robes take their collective name from the woodland patterns with which they are decorated. Additionally, individual robes were often Named after their creator or owner.

Typically, robe patterns appear three-dimensional, as if one might reach inside and touch branches and leaves. Each robe looks slightly different from every other; the designs often depict the native forest of the creator or wearer, or display a jewelers' collage of branches, leaves, and vines. A forest robe can be worn over armor without any ill effects.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the robe's Name.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 Rank Bonus to his Spellcasting talent.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The robe is now Mystic Armor 1. The wearer adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn when and where the robe was made.

Effect: The robe is now Mystic Armor 2. The wearer adds +2 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The robe holds a spell matrix that is permanently attuned to the Earth Blend spell. The wearer may cast it from the matrix per standard rules.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the robe's creator.

Effect: The robe is now Mystic Armor 3. The wearer adds +3 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Six

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the types of plants depicted in the robe's pattern.

Effect: The wearer may hide objects (no greater than 6 feet long and 3 feet wide) within the robe. The robe wraps itself around the hidden objects, and its three-dimensional pattern helps conceal them. To hide something within the robe, the wearer must make a successful Thread Weaving Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the number of objects hidden in the robe + 9. A robe can conceal a maximum of four objects at one time. The wearer can remove an object from the robe anytime he wants; however, replacing the object requires him to make another successful Thread Weaving Test. Characters other than the wearer can only remove hidden objects by achieving a Good Result with a Willpower Test against the robe's Spell Defense. The robe's Spell Defense is used as the Detection Difficulty for noticing objects hidden within its folds.

Frost Pouch

Maximum Threads: 2 **Spell Defense**: 15
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

These are small pouches, usually 3 by 5 inches in size and made of white or blue cloth. The pouches always feel cool to the touch. Air elementals are essential for making a frost pouch.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the pouch's Name.

Effect: The pouch allows the owner to hurl bits of frost at an opponent. The owner reaches into the pouch, grabs a handful of frost, then hurls it at his opponent, making a thrown Attack Test against the target. If the test succeeds, the owner makes a Willpower+5 Effect Test as his Damage Test. Physical Armor protects against this damage. Each use of a frost pouch causes the owner 1 Strain. The thrown Range of a handful of frost equals that of a dagger.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The thrown Range of the frost equals that of a throwing dagger.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The frost in the pouch originally came from mountain snow or glacier ice. The owner must learn the Name of the mountain or glacier.

Effect: The frost now has an Effect Step of Willpower+6.

Thread Rank Four

Deed: Return to the mountain or glacier of origin and fill the pouch with snow or ice.

Effect: The frost becomes more powerful; it now gains a power called *Freezing Frost*. The owner may choose to use this power instead of a normal frost attack. If the Attack Test is successful, the owner compares the Effect Test result against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the target takes no damage, but is instead locked into position as if he were frozen; the target can take no Actions while in this state and is otherwise considered Knocked Down for all actions except Willpower Tests to break free. The effect of the Freezing Frost lasts for a number of rounds equal to the Thread Rank. Each round, the frozen victim makes a Willpower Test against the frost's Effect Step. If the test succeeds, the character breaks free. A successful Dispel Magic Test against the pouch's Spell Defense will also end the effect of the Freezing Frost.

Thread Rank Five

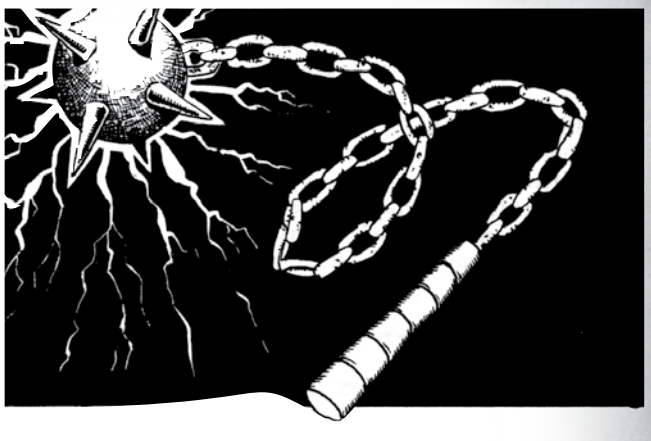
Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the Name of the air elemental who lent its power to the pouch.

Effect: The frost now has an Effect Step of Willpower+7.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The frost now has an Effect Step of Willpower+8.





Lightning Mace

Maximum Threads: 2 **Spell Defense**: 14
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

Lightning maces can be of as many different shapes and sizes as normal maces. The head of a lightning mace is always made of metal and often shows many small burn marks. When the wielder of a lightning mace activates its magic, the head of the mace crackles with small bolts of lightning. With no threads attached to them, lightning maces have the same characteristics as normal maces.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the mace's Name.

Effect: The mace is now Damage Step 7.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: For 1 Strain, the mace crackles with lightning; the wielder gains a +3 bonus to his Damage Tests for a number of rounds equal to the Thread Rank.

Thread Rank Three

Deed: The wielder must visit the site where the previous owner lost the weapon. The wielder must make a pledge to never part with the mace, using blood magic to seal the blood oath (see the **Blood Magic** chapter of the ***Player's Guide***).

Effect: The mace is now Damage Step 8.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: For 2 Strain, the wielder may shoot bolts of lightning from the mace. Each lightning bolt is directed toward a different target, to a maximum number of bolts equal to the Thread Rank. The wielder makes a Spellcasting Test and compares the result against the Spell Defense of each target. The wielder may use his Perception Step to make the Spellcasting Test instead if he does not know the Spellcasting talent. If the test succeeds, the lightning bolt hits. The wielder makes a Willpower+5 Effect Test to determine how much damage is inflicted on each target struck. Non-metal Physical Armor protects against this damage.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the mace's creator.

Effect: The lightning bolt Effect Step is now Willpower+7.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The mace produces flashes of lightning that deflect physical and magical attacks. The wielder adds +1 to his Physical and Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Seven

Key Knowledge: The enchantment of lightning maces is always completed during a severe storm. The wielder must learn about the storm during which the mace was completed.

Effect: The mace is now Damage Step 9.

Thread Rank Eight

Effect: The flashes of lightning increase in intensity. The wielder adds +2 to his Physical and Spell Defense. The lightning bolt Effect Step is now Willpower+9.

Naga-Scale Brooch

Maximum Threads: 2 **Spell Defense**: 15
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

These brooches are made from the scales of a naga. Each brooch is crafted from a single naga scale, set into a gold or silver backing that is often engraved with a serpent motif. The scale changes color to blend with the wearer's clothing. Any other piece of jewelry that contains a naga scale will exhibit the same magical effect. Such jewelry reputedly gives the wearer some of the naga's power to entrance those who observe it.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: Naga-scale brooches can be made only with scales willingly donated by a naga. Each brooch is Named after the naga from whom its scale came. The wearer must learn the brooch's Name.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 bonus to Charisma-only Tests.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 bonus to Charisma-only Tests.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: Nagas only give their scales to those who are neither ensnared by their entrancing powers, nor repulsed by their unnatural looks. The wearer must learn the Name of the person who obtained the scale and created the brooch.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Social Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Key Knowledge: Nagas are territorial creatures; their homes are very important to them. The wielder must learn where the naga who supplied the scales for the brooch lived.

Effect: The wearer gains a +3 bonus to Charisma-only Tests.

Thread Rank Five

Deed: The character must befriend a naga.

Effect: The brooch grants the wearer a power similar to the naga's power of entrancement. The wearer gains a +1 Rank Bonus to the Hypnotize talent.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 Rank Bonus to the Hypnotize talent and adds +2 to his Social Defense.

Oratory Necklace

Maximum Threads: 5 **Spell Defense**: 14
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

Oratory necklaces are strings of eight to twelve semi-precious stones such as turquoise or tourmaline. Each stone measures roughly half an inch in diameter. The stones of most oratory necklaces vary widely in color, making each necklace unique.

The creator of an oratory necklace usually uses silver and semi-precious stones to make this magical item, though only five of the stones are magically active. The wearer must attach his thread to one of those five stones.

One of the first recorded uses of an oratory necklace was by the Troubadour Eustacia. Disguising herself as a dwarf, she whipped a placid gathering of dwarfs into a howling mob demanding rough justice for their overlord. The exact nature of the injustices the overlord supposedly perpetrated were never recorded. Eustacia fell behind as the vengeful crowd moved on the overlord's manor. The mob caught the household unprepared and quickly carved their way through the manor's defenses. As they dragged the overlord out to hang him, Eustacia dropped her disguise and appeared as herself. Masterfully playing on the crowd's emotions, her speech calmed the crowd and saved the beleaguered overlord, who made Eustacia his most trusted advisor, as she "really knew how to handle people."

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the necklace's Name.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 bonus to Charisma-only Tests.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Social Defense.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the necklace's creator.

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 bonus to Charisma-only Tests.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The wearer may spend 1 Karma Point on Charisma-only Tests.

Thread Rank Five

Deed: The wearer must convince a group of at least 20 people to take a certain action. As they go about the action, the wearer must convince the same group to take a different action.

Effect: When using an ability, crowds of at least 20 Namegivers react as if their Attitude were one degree more favorable toward the wearer, or the wearer adds a +3 bonus to a Test made against a group of at least 20 Namegivers, at the character's choice.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Social Defense and gains a +3 bonus to Charisma-only Tests. For 1 Strain, the wearer gains a +1 bonus to any Charisma-based Tests.

Thread Rank Seven

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the last owner of the necklace.

Effect: The wearer gains a +4 bonus to Charisma-only Tests. For 2 Strain, the wearer gains a +2 bonus to any Charisma-based Tests.

Thread Rank Eight

Effect: The wearer adds +3 to his Social Defense.

Orichalcum Shield

Maximum Threads: 1 **Spell Defense**: 18
Legend Point Cost: Master

Similar in size and shape to crystal raider shields, orichalcum shields are made of orichalcum-lined wooden and metal plates. Crafting these shields requires the combined efforts of a Weaponsmith and an Elementalist. With no threads attached, an orichalcum shield is Physical Armor 4, Mystic Armor 4, Initiative Penalty 3, and Deflection Bonus 5. Orichalcum shields are extremely powerful, but so expensive to make they have reportedly been traded in for entire airships.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the shield's Name.

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 6 and Mystic Armor 6.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The shield is now Initiative Penalty 2.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Names of both the Weaponsmith and Elementalist who created the shield.

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 7 and Mystic Armor 7. The wielder adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The shield is now Initiative Penalty 1 and Deflection Bonus 7.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the place where the shield was created.

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 8 and Mystic Armor 8. The wielder adds +2 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The shield does not have an Initiative Penalty, it is now Deflection Bonus 9.

POTION OF LIFE

Maximum Threads: 2 **Spell Defense**: 14
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

Potions of life vary greatly in color and consistency, depending on the alchemists who create them. A potion of life is stored in a magical flask. The containers holding these potions are most often porcelain, but are sometimes made from glass or metal.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the flask's Name.

Effect: The owner tosses a silver coin over his shoulder, proposing a toast to the alchemist. The flask then fills with a healing potion (***Player's Guide***, p.265) that has only a +6 bonus instead of the usual +8. The potion must be consumed immediately. No other magic can enhance the Recovery Test the potion is used to enhance. The flask can produce two potions per day.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The healing potion now has a bonus of +8.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the Name of the alchemist who created the potion.

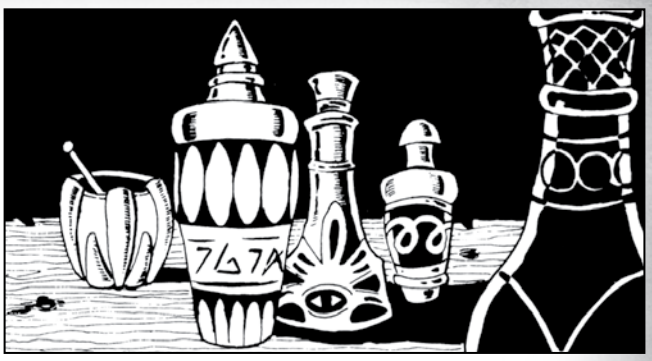
Effect: The healing potion now has a bonus of +10. The flask can now also produce a Cure Disease Potion, the owner cannot use any other magic to enhance a test enhanced by this potion. The flask can produce three potions per day.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The healing potion has a bonus of +10, the cure disease potion of +6.

Thread Rank Five

Effect: The cure disease potion now has a bonus of +7. The flask can now also produce a cleanse poison potion, the owner cannot



use any other magic to enhance a test granted by this potion. The flask can produce five potions per day.

PUPPET FAMILIAR

Maximum Threads: 2 **Spell Defense**: 15
Legend Point Cost: Warden

Puppet familiars consist of small puppets formed in the shape of one of the Namegiver races. The puppets usually measure only 12 to 18 inches in height. The faces of puppet familiars usually express an exaggerated emotion, ranging from astonishment to fear to joy.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The character must learn the puppet's Name.

Effect: The puppet familiar is an inanimate puppet whose enchanted wood has been shaped to hold a spell matrix of a Rank equal to the Thread Rank. The owner uses this as any other matrix.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The familiar now contains two spell matrices of a Rank equal to the Thread Rank.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The character must learn the Name of the person who created the puppet familiar.

Effect: One of the puppet familiar's spell matrices is improved, the familiar now holds 1 spell matrix and 1 enhanced matrix.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The remaining spell matrix is improved. The puppet familiar now holds 2 enhanced matrices.

Thread Rank Five

Deed The character must re-Name the puppet familiar. This blood magic ritual animates the puppet for a year and a day. The owner Names the puppet, and sacrifices six drops of blood that cause 1 Blood Magic Damage. The owner may repeat the ritual at the end of its duration, but need not re-Name the puppet.

Effect: The puppet comes to life, but has no talents other than its spell matrices. Its Attribute steps are equal to the owner's corresponding natural Attribute step–2 (i.e., if the owner has a Strength Step of 6, the puppet has a Strength Step of 4). The puppet has the same Death Rating and Wound Threshold as its owner and shares its owner's Recovery Tests. The puppet is completely loyal to its owner, though may also possess many of its owner's personality traits, for better or worse.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The puppet familiar's spell matrices are now Armored Matrices.

Thread Rank Seven

Key Knowledge: Puppet familiars are made from enchanted wood. The character must learn what type of wood was used and the Name of the forest or woods where the wood originated.

Effect: By performing an hour-long ritual and taking 1 Blood Magic Damage, the owner can convert one of the puppet's Armored Matrices into a Shared Matrix; another ritual is required to turn it back into an Armored Matrix, allowing the owner to heal the damage.

Purse Ever Bountiful

Maximum Threads: 5 **Spell Defense**: 14
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

These small leather purses close with a drawstring. Very ordinary looking, these purses in no way reveal their magical properties. For unexplained reasons, purses ever bountiful created near the peak of the magic cycle are more powerful than those created long before or after the peak. Less powerful purses end with Thread Rank Three.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the purse's Name.

Effect: The owner places a copper coin inside the purse, then takes 1 Strain and makes a Willpower Test. The purse duplicates the coin, it creates a number of duplicates equal to the Willpower Test result.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The owner makes a Willpower+1 Test to determine how many duplicate coins are created.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the Name of the Elementalist who created the purse.

Effect: The purse can now duplicate silver coins, this causes 2 Strain. The owner makes a Willpower+2 Test to determine how many duplicate coins are created.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The owner makes a Willpower+4 Test to determine how many duplicate coins are created.

Thread Rank Five

Deed: The wielder must learn the type of coin that the purse first duplicated. The owner must obtain one of those coins minted in the same era and of the same denomination, and duplicate it with the purse.

Effect: The owner makes a Willpower+5 Test to determine how many duplicate coins are created.

Thread Rank Six

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the last person to own the purse.



Effect: The purse can now duplicate gold coins, this causes 3 Strain. The owner makes a Willpower+6 Test to determine how many duplicate coins are created.

Rapier of Wit

Maximum Threads: 2 **Spell Defense**: 16
Legend Point Cost: Warden

If legends are to be believed, the queen of windlings has held an annual Swordmaster tournament at her palace ever since the end of the Scourge, in mockery of the tournament held in Blood Wood. The winner is said to receive a special threaded windling sword, tapering to so thin a point it can split a hair with a thrust. Either this story is true or it is the fabrication of the finest Weaponsmith among windlings, if not all Namegivers, for the purpose of being left alone to work in peace. Without a thread attached to it, the weapon is treated as a windling sword.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the weapon's Name.

Effect: The weapon's Damage Step is now 5. Any windling can wield it, regardless of Strength.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The wielder receives a +2 Rank Bonus to the Taunt talent.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the weapon's creator.

Effect: The weapon is now Damage Step 6, it counts as Size 3 for the purpose of determining its bonus to Parry Tests.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The weapon is now Damage Step 7.

Thread Rank Five

Deed: The wielder must learn a skill that conveys knowledge of weapon design or construction, such as a Knowledge skill or the Craft Weapon skill.

Effect: The result level required to achieve an Armor-Defeating Hit is reduced by one (usually from Excellent to Good).

Savage Hides

Maximum Threads: 2 **Spell Defense**: 16
Legend Point Cost: Warden

Savage hides are enchanted hide armor, usually using bear, brithan, or skeorx hides. The beast's head acts as a helmet, the paws as gloves that cover the top of the hand. Only the best pieces of hide are chosen for the enchantment, and usually an extremely large and dangerous specimen provides the material. Savage hides are common among tribes living in the hinterlands, whether in the mountains, steppes, or jungles. They are often made for war chiefs and exceptional hunters. Without a thread attached, savage hides are treated as normal hide armor.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the armor's Name.

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 8 and Mystic Armor 2.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The armor has no Initiative Penalty; the Deflection Bonus of the "helmet" is now +3 without causing a Perception penalty.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the tribe that is the source of the armor.

Effect: The claws on the hide's paws can be used as weapons in unarmed combat; their Damage Step is 3.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 9 and Mystic Armor 3.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the tale of the hunt for the animal that provided the hide.

Effect: The wielder gains a +3 bonus to Hunting Tests and a +2 bonus to Tracking Tests. He gains a +1 Rank Bonus to the Surprise Strike and Mystic Aim talents.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 10 and Mystic Armor 4.

Thread Rank Seven

Key Knowledge: The wielder must single-handedly hunt and kill an animal of the type that provided its hide for the armor.

Effect: The Rank Bonuses to Surprise Strike and Mystic Aim are now at +3.

Silvered Shield

Maximum Threads: 4 **Spell Defense**: 18
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

A silvered shield is typically a footman's shield. Crafted from elementally charged earth, the shield gains some of its power from an earth elemental. Silvered Shields have fine silver lines decorating their edges, making them appear of more than average worth. Many of these shields have sigils and designs outlined in silver. With no threads woven to it, the shield has the same characteristics as a normal footman's shield, but with a Mystic Armor of 1.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the shield's Name.

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 5 and Mystic Armor 2.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The shield is now Mystic Armor 2.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the shield's creator.

Effect: For 1 Strain, the wielder may use his Standard Action to deflect a visible combat spell directed at him (this requires him to Reserve his action until the spell is cast). The wielder makes a Spellcasting Test against the spell caster's Spellcasting Test result. The wielder may use his Perception Step to make the Spellcasting Test instead if he does not know the Spellcasting talent. If the test succeeds, the spell is directed back against its caster; use the wielder's Spellcasting Test result to determine if the spell affects the original caster.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The shield has no Initiative Penalty.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must determine the source of the elemental earth used in the creation of the shield.

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Spellcasting Test when using the shield to deflect a spell.



Thread Rank Six

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 bonus to his Spellcasting Test when using the shield to deflect a spell. The shield also grants elemental fortitude; the wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Recovery Tests.

Thread Rank Seven

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the earth elemental who helped create the shield.

Effect: The shield is now Physical and Mystic Armor 5.

Thread Rank Eight

Deed: The wielder must find the earth elemental who imbued the shield with some of its power. The wielder pledges to defend the elemental against all enemies and to help protect elemental earth from those who would steal its power without permission, such as wildcat miners and Therans. The wielder makes a blood oath to seal the pact (see **Blood Magic** in the ***Player's Guide***). The damage from the Oath counts as Permanent Damage instead of Blood Magic Damage. If the wielder ever breaks the oath, the shield immediately shatters, destroyed beyond repair.

Effect: The blood magic improves the quality of the shield's overall protection. Increase the result level required to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on the wielder by one level (from Excellent to Extraordinary, for example).

Spell Sword

Maximum Threads: 3 **Spell Defense**: 15
Legend Point Cost: Warden

Spell swords come in differing styles and sizes, though most are broadswords. The elemental earth and air used to forge these swords mark the flat sides of their blades with an unusual swirled appearance. With no threads woven to it, the sword has the same characteristics as a normal broadsword.

The people of Barsaive no longer possess the art of making spell swords, though rumors say that the Therans have revived the art. These broadswords are created from a delicate mix of forged steel, elemental earth, and elemental air.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the sword's Name.

Effect: The sword now contains a spell matrix of a Rank equal to the Thread Rank. Any magician may place a spell in the matrix and the wielder may cast that spell as if casting from a spell matrix.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 6.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the sword's creator.

Effect: The sword now holds a second spell matrix. The Rank of each spell matrix equals the Thread Rank.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 7.

Thread Rank Five

Deed: The wielder must decide upon a Deed to perform using the blade and then publicly declare his intention of doing the Deed.

Effect: The wielder adds +1 to his Physical and Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Six

Key Knowledge: The wielder must determine the exact percentages of the magical elements used to create the sword.

Effect: The weapon is now Damage Step 8. The sword now holds 3 spell matrices. The Rank of each matrix equals the Thread Rank.

Spike Bomb

Maximum Threads: 2 **Spell Defense**: 14
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

Spike bombs were invented during the previous Scourge to help battle the Horrors. The bombs are small, four-inch-diameter, metal balls covered with magical symbols. These symbols are usually arcane markings of no particular significance. Spike bombs were first invented by the t'skrang alchemist Vreesfyr, but the technique eventually spread throughout Barsaive.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the bomb's Name.

Effect: The wielder may use the bomb as a throwing weapon with Ranges equal to that of a dagger. If an Attack Test is successful, the bomb explodes, driving fragments of mystic energy into the target, causing damage with a Willpower+6 Effect Test. Mystic Armor protects against this damage. The bomb is temporarily destroyed. The wielder makes an immediate Willpower (8) Test to recreate the bomb in his hand. If unsuccessful, he may try again, taking 1 Strain for each retry.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The Effect Step is now Willpower+8.

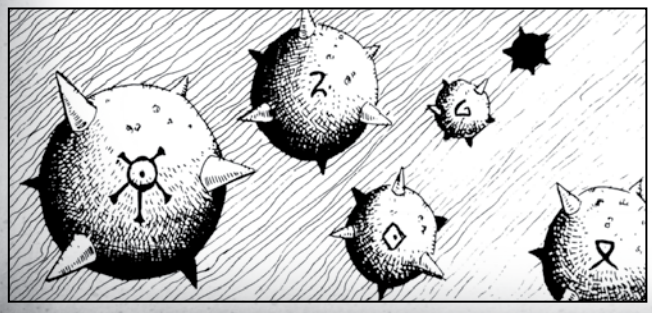
Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the alchemist who created the spike bomb.

Effect: The spike bomb now affects multiple targets. If the attack succeeds, the wielder compares the Attack Test result against the Physical Defense of all characters within 2 hexes of the target. On a Good result, the target character is affected by the explosion and takes damage equal to the result of the Effect Test, Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The thrown Range increases to that of a throwing dagger.



Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the meaning of the arcane symbols on the bomb, and if they have any significance.

Effect: The Effect Step is now Willpower+10.

Thread Rank Six

Deed: The wielder must Wound a Horror or Horror construct with the spike bomb.

Effect: The thrown Range is now that of a flight dagger.

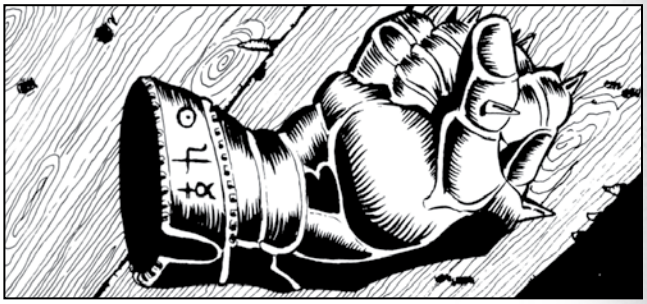
Thread Rank Seven

Effect: The Effect Step is now Willpower+12.

Spike Gauntlets

Maximum Threads: 2 **Spell Defense**: 14
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

Spike gauntlets are metal gauntlets bristling with many small, slender, steel spikes. These spikes are usually highly polished and sharply pointed. Spike gauntlets are made from metal mined in the Caucavic Mountains, despite earth elemental objections to the mining activities. The gauntlets draw power from the mountains themselves.



Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the gauntlets' Name.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the person who created the gauntlets.

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Physical and Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: For 1 Strain, the gauntlets increase the length of the spikes for one attack when using the gauntlets as a weapon. The wearer gains a +4 bonus to his Damage Test for that attack. The wearer may also try to increase his chance of making an Armor-Defeating Hit by taking additional Strain damage. For each Strain he takes, the wearer gains a +1 bonus to the result of his successful Attack Test. The maximum amount of Strain that the wearer can spend each round is equal to the gauntlets' Thread Rank.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the mountain that produced the metal used to create the gauntlets.

Effect: The wearer adds +3 to his Physical and Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: For 1 Strain, the wearer now gains a +6 bonus to his Damage Test for one attack.

Thread Rank Seven

Deed: The wearer must make contact with an earth elemental living near the mountain the metal came from, arguing why the deeds he performed with the gauntlets' help justify the metal's mining.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Social Defense and +4 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Eight

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Social Defense and +4 to his Physical Defense.

Talisman Statue

Maximum Threads: 2 **Spell Defense**: 15
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

Talisman statues are small statuettes, usually 3 to 4 inches tall, fashioned from stone, wood, or clay. Some rare statues measure up to 7 inches tall. Their creators usually carve intricate runes into talisman statues; some creators make their statues even rarer by embedding small gems into the statuette's eyes.

Talisman statues can enhance the magical abilities of spellcasters. The owner must wear the statuette in order to benefit from its power (many owners wear their talisman statues around their necks, on leather thongs or metal chains).

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the statue's Name.

Effect: The owner gains a +1 bonus to his Spellcasting Tests.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The owner gains a +1 bonus to his Thread Weaving Tests.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the Name of the statue's creator.

Effect: The owner adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The owner adds +2 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the Name of the mountain, mine, or forest from which the material used to create the talisman statue originated.

Effect: The owner adds +2 to his Mystic Armor.

Thread Rank Six

Deed: The owner must bind the statue to the part of his pattern that holds his spellcasting abilities. This takes an hour-long ritual ending in a successful Thread Weaving (22) Test. Completing the ritual causes 1 point of Permanent Damage.

Effect: The owner gains a +1 bonus to his Karma Step when using Karma to enhance Spellcasting, Effect, or Thread Weaving Tests.

Thorn Man Spear

Maximum Threads: 1 **Spell Defense**: 15
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

These are the spears wielded by the thorn men that guard the Blood Wood. Though the size and shape of these spears is unremarkable, thorn men spears sprout wicked thorns up and down their lengths. Unless the wielder is immune to the effects (like thorn men or blood elves), the thorns cause 1 Damage Point each round the spear is used. No armor protects against this damage.

When wielded by thorn men, the spears are used as if the thorn man had a thread woven to it. When used by others, the damage is based on the Thread Rank woven to the spear. These spears are created by the same ritual used to create thorn men. They can only be obtained by slaying a thorn man.

Over the years, a number of these spears have been acquired by members of the Exolashers and Blood Warders of Blood Wood, who use them as thread weapons.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the spear's Name.

Effect: The spear is now Damage Step 7.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The spear is now Damage Step 8.

Thread Rank Three

Effect: The spear is now Damage Step 9.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The spear is now Damage Step 10. The wielder no longer takes damage from the thorns protecting the spear's haft.

Three-Axe

Maximum Threads: 2 **Spell Defense**: 16
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

The three-axe is a fearsome, triple-bladed weapon. They are clumsy to use in combat: until he weaves a thread to the weapon, the wielder is considered Harried while using the axe (***Player's Guide***, p.227). Otherwise, with no threads attached to them, three-axes have characteristics of normal battle-axes.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the axe's Name.

Effect: The axe is now Damage Step 10.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The axe is now Damage Step 11.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the axe's creator.

Effect: For 1 Strain, the wielder may focus the energy of all three blades into just a single blade. Two of the blades become incorporeal, glowing a faint blue. When the wielder next strikes an opponent he gains a +3 bonus to his Damage Test; the axe then returns to its normal shape.

Thread Rank Four

Effect The axe is now Damage Step 12.

Thread Rank Five

Deed: The wielder must Wound an equal or superior opponent while using the focusing ability of the axe

Effect: When focusing the energy of the blades, the bonus to the Damage Test is now +6. In a round in qhich the focusing ability is used, the wielder adds +3 to his Wound Threshold.

War Helm of Landis

Maximum Threads: 2 **Spell Defense**: 16
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

The War Helm of Landis is a metal helmet adorned with the symbol of the ancient human kingdom of Landis. Mages and Weaponsmiths worked together to provide this protection to impor-



tant military commanders of the kingdom of Landis. Many of these helmets were lost in the battles against the mindless ravagers who were the forerunners of the Horrors and marked the beginning of the Scourge. The helm has a faceplate that can swing down or up, depending on whether the wearer wants to protect his face or simply wants to see better.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the helmet's Name.

Deed: The wearer must polish and repair the helmet. Replacing the unit insignia on the helmet reactivates its magic.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Physical Armor, +1 to his Social Defense, and gains a +1 bonus to Charisma-only Tests.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Social Defense, and gains a +2 bonus to Charisma-only Tests.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wearer must find out what military unit was under the command of the helmet's original owner.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Physical Armor, and the helmet does not cause a Perception Test penalty when worn any more.

Whip of Defense

Maximum Threads: 2 **Spell Defense**: 15
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

The main cord of a Whip of Defense is 12 feet long, composed of several strands of skin braided together. The whip can be made from a variety of different materials. The most common is leather, but some are made of espagra skin, lizard skin, and very infrequently, dragon skin. On certain rare whips, each strand is made from a different skin, giving the whipcord an unusual appearance.

With no threads attached, the Whip of Defense has the same characteristics as a normal whip.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the whip's Name.

Effect: The whip produces a number of cords of vibrant magical energy, helping the wielder deflect or block attacks while he is using the whip. The whip produces one cord, which adds +1 to the wielder's Physical Defense against 1 attack per combat round. The whip is now Damage Step 4.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The whip now produces two energy cords, which add +2 to the wielder's Physical Defense against 2 attacks per combat round.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the whip's creator.

Effect: The wielder adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The whip is now Damage Step 5. The whip now produces three energy cords, which add +3 to the wielder's Physical Defense against 3 attacks per combat round.

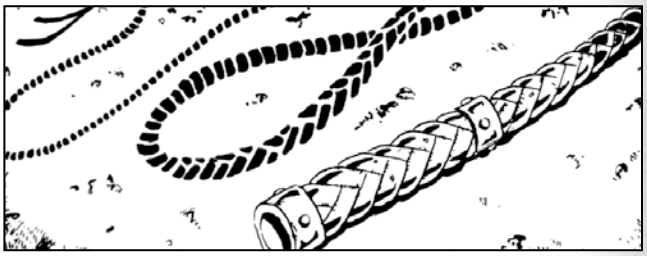
Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the types of skins used to make the whip.

Effect: The wielder adds +2 to his Spell Defense. The whip now produces four energy cords, which add +4 to the wielder's Physical Defense against 4 attacks per combat round.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The wielder adds +3 to his Spell Defense. The whip now produces five energy cords, which add +5 to the wielder's Physical Defense against 5 attacks per combat round.



Windling Cup of Friendship

Maximum Threads: 5 **Spell Defense**: 16
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

These small (windling-sized), carved wooden cups each sit atop a long wooden stem. Thin woven cords of various colors are braided around the stem, usually in shades of green and brown, though brighter colors such as blue, red, and yellow sometimes are used. They are made by windling villages all across Barsaive for use in community ceremonies. Though the cups were originally used only by windlings, that race has recently begun crafting friendship cups to use when solidifying relations with other Namegiver races. Each cup is Named when created; once in windling, and again in another tongue.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: Each cup has a non-windling Name. The cup holder must learn that Name.

Effect: For 1 Strain, the cup fills on command with either clear water or windling *keesris* wine when its Name is spoken.

Thread Rank Two

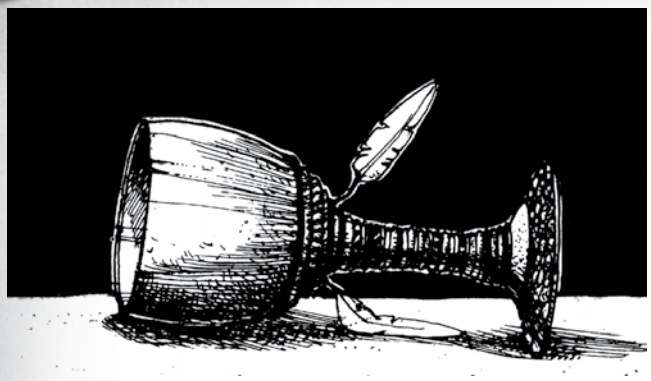
Key Knowledge: The cup holder must discover the windling clan or tribe from which the cup originated.

Effect: The cup holder gains a +1 bonus to any Charisma-based Tests made against any non-windling Namegiver races.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: Each cup has a special windling Name. The cup holder must learn that Name.

Effect: The cup holder gains a +1 bonus to any Charisma-based Tests made against windlings.



Thread Rank Four

Effect: The cup holder gains a +2 bonus to Charisma-based Tests made against windlings.

Thread Rank Five

Deed: The cup holder must share a drink with a windling he has never met, both parties drinking from the same cup. The Deed is only successful if the two part as friends who have shared tales with one another.

Effect: If the cup holder shares wine from the cup with a stranger, the stranger's Attitude toward the cup holder improves by one degree.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The cup holder gains a +3 bonus to Charisma-based Tests made against windlings.

Thread Rank Seven

Key Knowledge: Each cup has a special command word in the windling language. The cup holder must discover that word.

Effect: By sacrificing one of his Recovery Tests, the cup holder may command the cup to fill with a healing potion. The potion must be consumed from the cup within an hour or it loses its effect.

Thread Rank Eight

Deed: The cup holder must visit the village or clan where the cup was fashioned and return the cup to the village elders. In a formal ritual known as the windling friendship cup ceremony, the owner receives the cup back from the village elders. This is not automatic, however. The village may require that a second Deed be accomplished before the ceremony takes place to allow the cup's holder to prove his worthiness to own the cup. The cup ceremony is an elaborate ritual, originally used by windling villages when joining with or swearing loyalty to another village. Since the Scourge most windling villages remain isolated. They view all who approach as enemies rather than potential friends and so the ceremony has been largely forgotten. Part of the Deed is to convince the villagers to perform the ritual, which involves blood magic oaths (most often a Blood Sworn Oath between the two villages' leaders). In this case, the cup's holder must take this oath with the village's leader. The ritual concludes with a wind dance, a three-hour long celebration in which participants dance both on land and in the air. Namegivers bound to the ground can only perform the land-based movements of the dance, but are asked to mimic the flying movements as best they can.

Effect: The cup grants its owner temporary versions of many windling racial abilities. These versions are less powerful than the racial ability being mimicked, and the cup holder must take Strain to use them (unlike the windlings, who use them naturally). In this sense, the abilities granted are temporary. These abilities include: Increased Physical Defense, Astral Sight, and Flight. The cup holder can only use one of these abilities at a time and each use causes the holder 2 Strain. The abilities function as follows:

Increased Physical Defense: The cup holder adds +2 to his Physical Defense for a number of rounds equal to the Thread Rank.

Astral Sight: The cup holder gains a +5 Rank Bonus to the Astral Sight talent for a number of rounds equal to the Thread Rank.

Flight: This is a limited version of the windling ability to fly. The cup holder may fly at Movement Rate of 6 for a number of rounds equal to the Thread Rank. This ability can only be used once per day.

WRIST CARVER

Maximum Threads: 2 **Spell Defense**: 14
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

A wrist carver is a curved, jagged blade attached to a bracer, worn on the wielder's wrist. Its ugly teeth can cause nasty Wounds. With no threads attached, wrist carvers have the same characteristics as daggers, but are treated as an attached weapon. The wrist carver leaves the wearer free use of his hands, but Attack Tests receive a –1 penalty for every 2 pounds the wearer holds in his hand.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the wrist carver's Name.

Effect: The wrist carver is now Damage Step 3.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: For 1 Strain, the wielder gains a +3 bonus to the next Attack Test he makes with the wrist carver.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the wrist carver's creator.

Effect: The wrist carver is now Damage Step 4. For 1 Strain the wielder may attempt to cause a Bleeding Wound on his opponent. The wielder must decide to do this before he makes his Attack Test with the wrist carver. If the wielder inflicts a Wound, the wrist carver rips into his opponent, creating a gaping, bleeding injury, and causing the victim to take an additional 2 Damage Points at the end of each round, until he makes a successful Recovery Test, receives medical attention, or dies from blood loss. No armor protects against this damage.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The wrist carver can be used to deflect incoming blows, the wielder gains a +1 Rank Bonus to the Parry talent. The wrist carver now counts as a Size 3 weapon when determining weapon Size bonus to Parry Tests.

Thread Rank Five

Effect: The wrist carver is now Damage Step 5.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: For 2 Strain, the wielder adds +3 to all Damage Tests made until the end of the round.

CREATURES

The jungle crawled with horrific creatures, both of this world and others…

• Ardiss Foarr, Wizard, to a gathering of the village of Tardim •

A wide array of magical and mundane creatures inhabit the world of **Earthdawn**. The animals and plants of the forests and jungles, creatures magical and mundane, all roam the lands of Barsaive, and many pose real dangers to the unwary traveler or adventurer.

USING CREATURES IN ADVENTURES AND CAMPAIGNS

Creatures can provide a major source of adventure ideas in **Earthdawn**, and encounters with creatures can give players and their characters a wide variety of challenges. This section explains the format in which creatures are presented and includes guidelines for running creature encounters.

CREATURE ENTRY FORMAT

The statistics in this chapter describe "average" members of each type of creature, unless otherwise noted. There is no such thing as an "average" creature, however—they are all as unique and individual as Namegivers. See the ***Gamemaster's Companion*** for details on how to alter creature statistics and powers.

Statistics

Attributes: Each creature has a Step Number for the following Attributes: Dexterity (DEX), Strength (STR), Toughness (TOU), Perception (PER), Willpower (WIL), and Charisma (CHA). Use the Action Dice for this Step Number when making Attribute Tests.

Initiative: The Step Number used to make Initiative Tests.

Actions: The number of Standard Actions the creature may make each combat round.

Attack: The Step Number used to make Attack Tests. If the creature can make more than one type of attack, the Step Number for each is listed separately.

Damage: The Step Number used to make Damage Tests for successful attacks. Separate Damage Steps are given for each type of attack the creature can make.

Death: This is the creature's Death Rating. If the creature has Durability, this is included in the total.

Unconsciousness: This is the creature's Unconsciousness Rating. If the creature has Durability, this is included in the total. "None" means the creature never falls unconscious.

Wound Threshold: This is the creature's Wound Threshold. "None" means that the creature cannot be Wounded.

Legend Award: This is the Circle of the Legend Award Table (see p.97) that should be used when the creature is defeated. Most opponents are meant to be one-on-one opposition. Some opponents are meant as one opponent per 2 player characters (denoted as: 1 per 2 PC). On average a group of five characters can defeat 2 to 3 of these creatures. Other opponents are meant to challenge an entire group of characters (denoted as: Group). When the characters defeat such a creature, they each earn an amount of Legend Points equal to the Legend Award of that Circle. For example, when the characters defeat a group of five First Circle creatures, they each earn a First Circle Legend Award (an average of 50 LP). When the characters defeat two to three Second Circle creatures with a 1 per 2 PC denotation, they each earn a Second Circle Legend Award (an average of 200 LP). When the characters defeat a single Fourth Circle Group opponent, they each earn a Fourth Circle Legend Award (an average of 475 LP).

Physical Defense: This is the creature's Physical Defense.

Spell Defense: This is the creature's Spell Defense.

Social Defense: This is the creature's Social Defense. Characters must be able to communicate to use social abilities against the creature. Battle Shout, Taunt, and other non-verbal talents work against most creatures.

Physical Armor: This is the creature's natural Physical Armor Rating. Most often, this is tough skin, thick fur, or some other body covering, however, some magical abilities can determine or affect this number.

Mystic Armor: This is the creature's Mystic Armor Rating.

Recovery Tests: This is the number of Recovery Tests the creature may make each day. Most creatures use their Toughness Step for Recovery Tests. If a different Recovery Step is used, it appears in parentheses.

Knockdown: The Step Number used to make Knockdown Tests. "None" means the creature cannot be knocked down. "NA" or "Not Applicable" means the creature cannot resist Knockdown; the creature is knocked down any time it suffers a Wound.

Movement: This is the number of hexes a creature can move in a combat round using a Simple Action. Unless noted otherwise, this form of movement is considered to be ground based.

Karma Points; Karma Step: Only magical creatures can use Karma to enhance their abilities. However, not all magical creatures necessarily have Karma. The number of points and the Step Number are listed with the creature's entry.

Powers: This entry lists all the powers and abilities possessed by the creature. For detailed information on how these powers work, see the individual **Powers** sections, on p.149, and in the **Spirits** (p.213), **Dragons** (p.245), and **Horrors** (p.270) chapters. For those powers that require an Action Test, a Step Number is also listed. Some spell-like powers require a Spellcasting Test, which is listed as a separate power; for most powers the Spellcasting Test meets the action requirement for that power.

Spells: This entry lists the spells available to the creature. The spells listed work as described in the ***Player's Guide***. Some creatures have access to and may cast all spells from the Discipline specified, up to the listed Circle.

CARRYING CAPACITY

While not generally part of the creature statistics, every creature also has a **Carrying Capacity**, determined the same way as you would for player characters (see p.29, ***Player's Guide***). Quadrupeds can carry twice that amount.

Equipment: This notation refers to any weapons, armor, magical items, and the like, which the creature possesses. At the gamemaster's discretion, a creature may have more or better equipment than what is listed.

Loot: This notation lists the valuable items or body parts the creature possesses, including items worth Legend Points. (For more information on treasure and Legend Points, see the **Building Your Legend** chapter of the ***Player's Guide***.)

CREATURE ENCOUNTERS

With the possible exception of large towns and cities, player characters may encounter creatures almost anywhere in Barsaive. Some areas of the province, however, have more creatures prowling around them than others. For example, the ruins of Parlainth provide lairs and hiding places for all manner of Barsaivian beasts, including various nasty carnivores and Horror-twisted animals. Many creatures also nest in caves and the entrances of abandoned kaers.

In general, creature encounters should have some connection to the characters' current adventure rather than occurring at random. However, the encounters need not be connected to the adventure's main plot. For example, an adventure that takes the characters into the Servos Jungle might plausibly lead them to any number of encounters with creatures inhabiting the Servos. In this case, the setting of the adventure provides the connection.

Which Creatures Should I Use?

Creatures work best in an adventure if you choose them based on the size of your player group and the average Circle of the members' characters. For example, sending a group of six Second Circle characters against a wyvern would be inappropriate because the characters stand no chance against such a beast—it will kill them and end the adventure very quickly. A group of seven Sixth Circle characters, on the other hand, might need a more hefty challenge. Sending them against three or four ice flyers wouldn't give them the chance to even work up a sweat.

The Legend Award for each creature is also intended as a quick guideline to their difficulty for a character of the same Circle as the specified Legend Award. As you get to know your party, you may find they are slightly behind or ahead of these indications and you can adjust them slightly as they advance.

How Many Creatures Should I Use?

The number of creatures to include in an encounter also depends on the average abilities of the characters in your player group. Most of the creature descriptions in **Earthdawn** products suggest the number of any given creature that characters can normally expect to encounter, but the gamemaster should always consider these suggestions with an eye toward game balance. For example, blood monkeys often attack in swarms of up to 100, but only the most powerful characters could possibly survive such an attack. Unless your players' characters are incredibly powerful, don't send the maximum number of blood monkeys against them—instead, send whatever number they can feasibly handle. The **Legend Award** notation (see above) in a creature's description offers suggestions on how many of the creature you should use against a certain Circle of characters.

Why Do Creatures Attack?

Creatures rarely attack because they are nasty, evil entities that want to wipe the Namegiver races off the face of the earth. In almost all cases, they attack when they are threatened, hungry, or under the influence of some power. Most of the time, creatures attack characters in the wilds because they instinctively perceive the characters as a threat to themselves or their young, particularly if a group of characters stumbles on one of the creature's lairs or enters the creature's territory. Because creatures that attack when threatened are fighting for their own or their offspring's survival, they rarely break off from battle.

Hungry carnivores hunting for food frequently see wandering characters as just another meal, and will attack if nothing else tasty is around. Unlike creatures battling a threat, creatures attacking from hunger will break away from a losing fight in search of easier prey. Sometimes, though less often, creatures attack when compelled to by some outside influence—anything from an angry beastmaster to a Horror-tainted magician to a Horror itself. Creatures under the influence of other entities are often guard animals or servants of major villains in an adventure such as insane magicians, corrupted Beastmasters, or Horrors.

CREATURE COMBAT

Characters will encounter, and sometimes have to fight, many different creatures throughout the course of their adventures. See the **Combat** chapter of the ***Player's Guide*** for more information on combat.

INITIATIVE

Creatures make Initiative Tests as normal to determine when they act during the combat round. Unless noted in the creature's description, the gamemaster uses the Initiative Step given with the creature's statistics.

NUMBER OF ACTIONS

Some creatures can make more than one Standard Action per round, which can be used as described in **Actions** (***Player's Guide***, p.215). The number of Standard Actions a creature can make each combat round is shown under the "Actions:" notation in the creature's statistics block. However, creatures are limited to moving no further than their Movement Rate during a round in which they take one or more other actions. Creatures may move twice their Movement Rate, but doing so precludes other activities, except for a single Simple Action (***Player's Guide***, p.216).

There are also restrictions to the maximum number of attacks that can be made of a particular type. These limitations are described in **Creature Attacks**, below.

Note that while some creature powers do not use a creature's Standard Action, these powers might require a test for another power to be made. For example, the Bone Shaping power does not require a Standard Action, but a Spellcasting Test. The Spellcasting Test requires a Standard Action, which is why the Bone Shaping power cannot be used when the creature does not have a Standard Action available – because it cannot make a Spellcasting Test. An exception to this rule exists: when a creature has a power that automatically causes an effect – outside of the creature's control – that requires a test, usually a Spellcasting Test, and in such cases the use of Spellcasting does not use a Standard Action.

KARMA USE

In the **Earthdawn** game, only the most powerful creatures possess Karma. Unless a creature's description specifically states otherwise, all creatures with Karma available to them may spend 1 Karma Point on any Action Test they make during the round, including Attack

Tests, Damage Tests, Knockdown Tests, and so on. The Karma Step noted in the creature's statistics block determines the Action Dice rolled with the creature's Action Test. Creatures with Karma can spend only a single point on an Action Test, but they can spend Karma on each Action Test they make during the round. For example, a dragon with two claws and a bite attack can spend a Karma Point on each Attack Test it makes, if it so desires.

Creature Attacks

Creatures will generally attack their prey using the most effective means available to them. As noted earlier (see **Number of Actions**, above), many creatures can attack in more than one way. The statistics block for each creature lists the number of actions a creature can make per round; in many cases, a creature can make more than one type of attack in the same round. For example, a creature with two actions per round may attack twice with its claws, or once with a claw attack and once with a bite attack. If the creature can make more than one type of attack, the Step Number for each type of attack is listed separately. Likewise, separate Damage Steps are provided for each type of attack a creature can make.

The following text describes some of the different forms of attacks that creatures use. Unless noted otherwise, each type of attack uses one of the creature's available actions in a given combat round.

Bite Attacks

Less often employed by creatures than Claw attacks, the **Bite attack** is often used in combination with another type of maneuver, such as Bite and Shake, Bite and Hold, and Grab and Bite. Each of these methods of attack is described below. Regardless of how many attacks they can make, all creatures can only make one Bite attack, including combinations, per round.

Bite and Shake

With the **Bite and Shake** attack, the creature first bites the victim, then vigorously shakes its prey, causing additional damage in subsequent combat rounds. Most of the time, the creature bites its opponent's neck and then shakes it until the neck snaps. A Bite and Shake attack requires the creature to make a successful Attack Test using the Called Shot combat option (***Player's Guide***, p.222). If the test succeeds, the target is considered Grappled (***Player's Guide***, p.230). Each round thereafter, the creature automatically makes a bite Damage Test, reflecting the additional damage caused to its prey from the shaking; it does not need to make another Attack Test. A creature that is shaking its opponent cannot make another Bite attack until the victim is released by the creature or breaks free.

Because the creature shakes its victim so violently, it is easier for him to break free of the creature's grip. When attempting to break free from the Grapple, the victim gains a +2 bonus to his Strength or Unarmed Combat Test. Unfortunately, the act of breaking free requires tearing away from the creature's teeth, which causes further damage to the victim. If the test succeeds, the creature makes a bite Damage Test against the victim as he pulls free. Physical Armor protects against this damage.

Bite and Hold

Similar to the Bite and Shake attack, a creature using a **Bite and Hold** attack bites the victim, usually latching on to a limb, and keeps its iron grip steady, causing additional damage to its prey in subsequent rounds. As with the Bite and Shake attack, a Bite and Hold attack requires the creature to make an Attack Test using the Called Shot combat option. If the test succeeds, the target is considered Grappled, and the creature makes an automatic bite Damage Test each round thereafter until the victim is released or breaks free. The creature uses its Strength Step, rather than its Damage Step, for the Damage Test. A victim attempting to break free does so at the normal Difficulty Number for the Strength or Unarmed Combat Test. As with the Bite and Shake attack, the prey takes damage if it manages to pull free from the creature's jaws. At the gamemaster's discretion, a creature that achieves an Armor-Defeating Hit with its Bite and Hold Attack Test also causes its victim to incur a Harried penalty until freed.

Grab and Bite

Larger non-humanoid creatures can make a **Grab and Bite** attack, using their body size and mass to restrict their victim. A Grab and Bite attack is resolved as described for **Grappling** (***Player's Guide***, p.230), except the creature makes a Strength Test to determine the Difficulty Number for breaking free. Once a creature has successfully grappled its victim, it makes a Bite or one or more Claw attacks against its struggling prey. The victim takes damage only from the Bite or Claw attacks, not from the initial grab attack. The creature cannot make a Bite attack in the round that it makes a successful Grab and Bite attack, but once it has grappled its opponent, it is free to do so each round thereafter. At the gamemaster's discretion, a creature that achieves an Armor-Defeating Hit with its Grab and Bite Attack Test also causes its victim to incur a Harried penalty until freed. Large humanoid creatures, such as gorillas, use the standard rules for Grappling (***Player's Guide***, p.230).

Charging Attacks

Some creatures, especially those with horns or antlers, attack by charging into and trampling or goring their victim. These **Charging attacks** are resolved according to the normal rules for making Charging attacks while mounted (***Player's Guide***, p.233). If a horned or antlered creature makes a Charging attack, it runs at its target and makes an Attack Test, digging its horns deep into the target's flesh. If the test succeeds, the creature makes a Damage Test, which is resolved as normal, and a Strength Test, the result of which is the Knockdown Difficulty of the attack. Regardless of the Damage Test result, the creature's victim makes a Knockdown Test against the Charging attack's Knockdown Difficulty. If the test succeeds, the victim remains standing. If the test fails, the



victim is immediately Knocked Down. If the creature has additional attacks available to it after the Charging attack, it makes these as normal.

Larger creatures, such as thundra beasts or dyres, can trample a target who has been Knocked Down. Unless noted in the creature's description, trampling attacks are resolved in the same manner as the creature's normal attacks.

Claw Attacks

As most creatures possess claws, the **Claw attack** is the form most commonly used. When making a Claw attack, most creatures use one or both of their fore limbs, slashing and raking their prey with their sharp talons or nails. The number of Claw attacks the creature can make prefixes the Damage notation for the attack. For example, a notation showing "2×Claws" indicates the creature may make up to 2 separate Claw attacks. A notation showing just "Claws" means the creature may use both or all of its claws to fight, but they count as a single Claw attack.

Diseases

Creatures sometimes carry diseases that can affect their victims. For example, a character attacked by a rabid dog has a good chance of contracting rabies. Animals such as rats and mice often carry different diseases. Other creatures may be exposed to disease through the twisted machinations of an evil magician. Certain creatures, such as the plague lizard and the harpy, are living disease carriers. Whether or not a creature is carrying a disease, and the nature of the disease in question, is entirely at the whim of the gamemaster. Any disease that he can think up can exist in the world of **Earthdawn**, and therefore poses a potential threat to characters. In game terms, the effects of diseases are resolved using similar game mechanics as for poison (see the **Adventuring** chapter on p.123 for more information).

Magical Attacks

Many creatures possess some kind of magical ability, the effect of which is described in the creature entry. These **Magical attacks** vary from creature to creature, being diverse in nature and effect. Some creatures possess one or more powers, with an associated Step Number used to determine how effective they are. See the descriptions for **Dragon Powers** and **Horror Powers** in the **Dragons** and **Horrors** chapters.

Pack or Swarm Attacks

Though most creatures attack in relatively small groups, some attack in packs of ten or more. A **Pack** or **Swarm attack** can easily overwhelm even the strongest opponent. The standard rules for close combat assume that all attackers are approximately human-sized; because many creatures are much smaller than a human, more than six of them may attack a human-sized opponent at once.

Pack and Swarm attacks are made as normal, except that, depending on the creature's size, more than six of them may attack a single character at the same time (***Player's Guide***, p.229). Creatures the size of an average dog (one to two feet high at the shoulder, and three to four feet in length), can attack two at a time from the same position (***Player's Guide***, p.229). This means that up to twelve dog-sized creatures can attack a single human-sized target. Creatures up to one foot long, such as rats, small snakes, and bats, can attack three at a time from the same position, allowing up to eighteen rat-sized creatures to attack a single human-sized target. Creatures more than four feet long are considered human-sized for purposes of combat, as are windlings (their wings require a reasonable amount of space above their body size).

As well as receiving multiple attacks, a character surrounded by a pack or swarm of creatures is Harried if a sufficient equivalent number of human-sized creatures are involved. Eight dog-sized or twelve rat-sized creatures are equivalent to four human-sized characters, and therefore enough to cause their victim to become Harried. A character attacked by the equivalent of more than four human-sized creatures at a time is not only Harried, he is Overwhelmed (***Player's Guide*** p.227) and incurs an increased penalty to his Defense Ratings and Action Tests. For each additional human-sized equivalent number of creatures in the pack or swarm attacking the victim, he incurs a Harried source.

A character is being attacked by a swarm of twelve rats. Because there are the equivalent of four human-sized opponents, he is Harried, incurring a –2 penalty to his Action Tests, and reducing his Physical and Spell Defense by –2. If the swarm increases in size to eighteen rats, the character incurs two additional Harried sources (eighteen rats are equivalent to six human-sized opponents), further penalizing his Defense Ratings and Action Tests by another –2 each (–1 for each additional Harried source). If the character can kill sufficient rats to drop the swarm size down below twelve vermin, he loses all of these penalties. However, the number of rats continuing to pour out of the nearby sewers looks to prevent that happening anytime soon.

SEVERING LIMBS

Optional Rule: Because of their immense size and strength, some creatures can actually tear or bite off an opponent's limb. Though a rare occurrence, **Severing Limbs** attacks do happen. Severing Limbs attacks can generally only be made by very large creatures, including dragons and some Horrors. Some gamemasters may allow this rule to be used by Namegiver characters, but should do so only if there is a considerable size difference (such as between a troll and a windling, for example). If the gamemaster chooses to allow this devastating type of attack, he should use the following guidelines.

Regardless of the number of attacks a creature may have, it may only make one attempt at a Severing Limbs attack per round. For the creature to be able to tear off an opponent's limb, the creature's Strength Step must be greater than twice that of the victim. The creature makes a Bite or Claw attack using the Called Shot combat option against one of its victim's limbs. If the test succeeds, the creature makes a Damage Test as normal. In addition to the Damage Points inflicted, the creature compares the Damage Test result against the victim's Wound Threshold. On an Excellent result the target's limb is torn or bitten off.

In addition to the immense amount of normal damage done by the attack, the victim will also bleed severely. At the end of each round after the limb is torn off, the victim suffers Step 4 damage from blood loss. No armor protects against this damage. The bleeding continues until the victim dies or somehow staunches the bleeding, by taking a healing potion, or through use of the questor Heal power. Severed limbs can be replaced, but only through use of a spell like Reattach Limb (***Player's Companion***), or by attaching a prosthetic limb, or an implant, like a crystal arm (***Player's Guide***, p. 257).

Poisonous Attacks

Some creatures overcome their prey through their use of a poisonous bite or stinger. When a creature makes a **Poisonous attack**, it may or may not choose to inject poison into the victim. Unless specified in its description, the creature does not need to inflict a Wound on the target for its poison to take effect, just a single Damage Point is sufficient to introduce the venom. To resolve the effects of the creature's poison, use the rules for **Poison,** p.123.

Pouncing Attacks

Many creatures attack their prey by pouncing on it, hoping to daze it long enough for them to kill it. When making a **Pouncing attack**, the creature leaps toward, and then knocks down, its prey. Some creatures can make long jumps of specified distances; if the description for a creature does not specify how long a jump that creature can make, use the following procedure when the creature attempts a Pouncing attack.

The jumping creature makes a Strength Test, the result of which is the distance in feet the creature can leap (note that some creatures possess the Great Leap skill, which they can use to make Pouncing attacks). If a creature attempts to jump over an obstacle (such as a chasm or pit), the creature makes the test against a Difficulty Number equal to the distance it is attempting to jump, in feet. Jumping movement is considered to be a movement action, allowing the creature to attack after it has jumped toward or onto its target.

Once the distance that a creature can jump has been determined, the creature makes an Attack Test as normal for its Pouncing attack. If the test succeeds, the creature makes a Strength Test, the result of which becomes the Knockdown Difficulty of the Pouncing attack. The creature's prey makes a Knockdown Test against the attack's Knockdown Difficulty. If the test succeeds, the victim remains standing. If the test fails, the victim is Knocked Down (***Player's Guide***, p.229).

A Pouncing attack uses one of the creature's actions. Any creature capable of more than one action per round can continue to attack its victim after pouncing on it, regardless of the outcome of the Pouncing attack. At the gamemaster's discretion, a creature that achieves a Pathetic result on its Pouncing Attack Test cannot make any further attacks that round.

Swooping Attacks

A flying creature will often swoop down to attack its target and then fly up and out of harm's way (see the ***Player's Guide***, p.234).

Creatures and Combat Options

When attacking their prey, creatures will often use many of the standard combat options available to characters, as described in the ***Player's Guide*** on p.221. Several options and the creatures most likely to use them are described below. The gamemaster should keep in mind that the use of combat options is intended to simulate a creature's natural instincts rather than indicate conscious decision-making or intelligence on the part of the creature.

Aggressive Attack: Many creatures will use this combat option, especially those who are wounded, dying, or defending their young or territory.

Attacking to Knockdown: This option allows a creature to expose its prey to more effective attacks. Several of the creature attacks described previously, including Pouncing, Charging, and Grab and Bite attacks, include the use of this combat option.

Called Shot: Creatures use this combat option whenever they attempt to attack a specific place on a victim's body, such as limbs, head, or neck.

Defensive Stance: Most creatures use this combat option only if they are badly wounded and attempting to withdraw from battle.

Splitting Movement: Flying creatures commonly use this option when making Swooping attacks (***Player's Guide***, p.234).

Creature Powers

Creatures have a wide range of magical and mundane powers at their command. The following text describes the creature powers available to the creatures in this book. The list is by no means comprehensive, and many creatures have unique ways of using their powers.

Game Terms

The Step Number of a power is usually determined by adding the power's Rank to the Attribute Step listed under the "Step:" notation. If the power requires the creature to make a test, the Step Number is used to determine the Action Dice rolled. For example, a creature with a Willpower Step of 6 and the Bone Shaping power at Rank 3 would have a Bone Shaping Step of 9 (6+3). The Step/Action Dice Table (***Player's Guide*** p.13) shows that Step 9 rolls D8+D6 Action Dice.

Some powers use only a Rank; no Attribute Step is added to the Rank in this case. Many of these powers don't require a test; their effect is determined differently, as detailed in each power's description. For example, a creature's Burning Aura Rank determines the Damage Step used against all targets within 3 yards of the creature.

Most powers use a Standard, Simple, or Free Action, but a few use Sustained Actions or no Actions (work automatically or all the time). Actions for creatures are handled in the same way as for characters, but creatures can have more than one Standard Action (see **Number of Actions**, p. 146).

The type of power (the "Type:" notation) indicates whether it is magical or mundane in nature. Some powers correspond to normal talents or skills (see ***Player's Guide***, p. 57 and p.87). These are noted by a superscripted 'T' (talents as powers) or 'S' (skills as powers) at the end of the power's name.

Some powers also start their descriptions with element types, liek spells do (***Player's Guide*** p. 142).

Acid Spray

Step Number: Rank+DEX
Action: Standard **Type**: Mundane

Water—Acid. Just below the creature's mouth is an organ that can fire a spray of concentrated irritant. This substance is not corrosive, but causes extremely painful rashes and swelling if it hits exposed flesh. The creature makes an Acid Spray Test against the target's Physical Defense. The power's range is the creature's Rank × 6 yards (Rank × 3 hexes). If the test succeeds, the target is hit with acidic spray. Any character hit by the irritant must make a Willpower Test against the Acid Spray Test result. If this test fails, the target falls to the ground, writhing in agony for a number of rounds equal to the Acid Spray Rank. The target may make a Willpower Test against the Acid Spray Test result each round to recover. The acid's potency decreases over time; subtract –1 from the Difficulty Number of the Willpower Test each round after the first.

Blinding Glare

Step Number: Rank+PER
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical

This magical eyelight creates a cone of steady light that extends to a distance listed with the creature's description, widening to a 45-degree arc at the far end (thus creating a cone). The creature's Blinding Glare Test result is compared against the Spell Defense of each target within the cone of effect. If successful, the target is Dazzled (***Player's Guide*** p.226) for a number of rounds equal to the creature's Blinding Glare Rank. The result level determines the

degree of blindness—Partial for an Average result; Full for a Good result; Complete for an Excellent or Extraordinary result.

Blood Veins

Step Number: Rank+STR
Action: Standard **Type**: Mundane

The Blood Veins power allows the creature to push small veins into victims it is touching, drawing away and deriving its sustenance from the victim's blood and fluids. Each minute it is attached to the victim, the creature makes a Blood Veins Test to determine how much damage it inflicts. No armor protects against this damage.

Bone Shaping

Step Number: Rank+WIL
Action: Simple **Type**: Magical

The Bone Shaping power is especially dangerous, as it derives from Horror magic. To use this power, the creature makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If using its bone shaping ability on a Horror-marked target, the creature adds a +2 bonus to its Spellcasting Test, courtesy of its affinity with and its understanding of the intricacies of Horror magic. The power's range is the creature's Rank × 2 yards (Rank × 1 hexes). If the test succeeds, the creature begins reshaping the victim's bones at will. The creature makes a Bone Shaping Test to determine how much damage it inflicts. Mystic Armor protects against this damage. The victim incurs a penalty to his Action Tests equal to the creature's Bone Shaping Rank. The effects can be undone, but only by being subjected to further use of the Bone Shaping power.

Breath Weapon

Step Number: Rank+WIL
Action: Simple
Type: Magical

Element as per creature description, if any. This power allows a creature to breathe a damaging substance at its victims, possibly even a burning one. The exact substance and range is listed with each creature. To attack with its breath weapon, the creature makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the creature makes a Breath Weapon Test to determine how much damage is inflicted. Mystic Armor provides protection against this damage. If the substance is burning or acidic in nature, it continues to bum the character for the next 3 rounds, doing an additional Step 6 damage every round unless the character puts it out by diving into a pool of water, somehow neutralizing it (if it is an acid), or suffocating the flames by other means. For burning substances, the heat from a fire this size is equal to a small campfire (see p.109) and can affect nearby targets, the victim's possessions, and the surrounding area.



Burning Aura

Step: Rank
Action: NA **Type**: Magical

Fire. Some creatures can generate a tremendous amount of heat, appearing as if burning themselves. If the creature passes within 4 yards (2 hexes) of a target, the target automatically suffers damage equal to the creature's Burning Aura Rank. Physical armor protects against this damage. Advanced forms of this power can make non-magical wooden weapons burst into flames at a touch or even melt metal weapons.

Calm Others

Step: Rank+CHA
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical

This power allows creatures to calm targets, removing from them all desire to cause harm. To use this ability, the creature makes a Calm Others Test and compares the result against the Social Defense of every target within range (the exact range of this power is listed with each creature). If the test succeeds, the power dispels any normal or magically induced fear effects the target may be affected by and also physically relaxes him. The target may not initiate any actions that directly or indirectly involve harming anyone. Each round, the target may make a Willpower Test against the creature's Calm Others Test result to shrug off the lethargy.

Camouflage

Step: Rank+WIL
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical; Mundane

Many creatures have the ability to hide in their natural environment, and can use this ability to camouflage themselves or even hide something being sought. The creature makes a Camouflage Test to blend in with its environment, the result of which becomes the Difficulty Number for characters attempting to notice it. Creatures can attack from a camouflaged position. If the intended target fails a Perception Test to spot the creature, the camouflaged creature can make a Surprise attack against the target (see the **Combat** chapter on p.228 of the ***Player's Guide***).

Charge

Step: Rank
Action: Standard
Type: Mundane

The creature is able to make sudden and rapid Charging attacks. The creature must move a distance at least equal to its Movement Rate that round, before attacking an opponent. If the attack is successful, the creature adds its Charge Rank as a bonus to the Damage Test.

Chilling Touch

Step Number: Rank+WIL
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical

Water—Cold. To inflict Chilling Touch, the creature must touch the target and

make a Chilling Touch Test against the target's Spell Defense. Chilling Touch manifests as severe cold, freezing the victim in his tracks. The victim takes 1 point of damage per combat round and can take no action until the Chilling Touch effect is dispelled or the character overcomes the effect by making a Willpower Test against the result of the Chilling Touch Test. No armor protects against this damage.

Control Corpse

Step Number: Rank
Action: NA **Type**: Magical

Creatures using this power can reanimate and use a corpse as a host. This power only works on the bodies of creatures or people dead for two days or less. The host body becomes useless after a number of weeks equal to the creature's Control Corpse Rank; the creature must find a new host after this time. In the case of other creatures, the creature can easily assume the habits common to its host when living. However, if a Namegiver is chosen as a host, the controlling creature must convincingly pass as its host or else avoid society altogether. Not all creatures are good at mimicking Namegiver behavior, which tends to be more complex than the behavior of beasts. Any characters encountering a fellow Namegiver under the control of this power may make a Perception Test against the controlling creature's Social Defense to notice that something is wrong. The success of this Perception Test depends entirely on how well the character knew the host in life. For a casual acquaintance, the character must achieve an Excellent result, while a close friend or family member requires only an Average result.

Crackling Armor

Step Number: Rank+WIL
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical

Air—*Electric.* This power surrounds the creature with bolts of lightning, crackling and popping a mere inch from its skin. Crackling Armor takes one round to activate, and remains active for a number of minutes equal to the creature's Crackling Armor Rank. The creature adds its Cracking Armor Rank as a bonus to its Physical Armor. Any time a character physically strikes the creature, with his hand or foot, a weapon, or some other object, the creature makes a Spellcasting Test against the attacker's Attack Test result. If the test succeeds, lightning arcs from the creature into the attacker. The creature makes a Crackling Armor Test to determine how much damage is inflicted. Non-metal Physical Armor protects against this damage.

Curse

Step Number: Rank+WIL
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical

The creature is able to bestow a curse on a target. The creature must be able to communicate with the target. The creature makes a Curse Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If the test is successful, the target becomes cursed. The gamemaster determines the exact nature and effects of the curse (see **Curses**, p.112).

Disease

Step Number: Rank
Action: NA **Type**: Magical; Mundane

Creatures with this power are infectious and are able to infect a target with a disease. No test is required for a creature to affect a target with the disease—if the victim is physically struck and damaged by tooth, claw or stinger, the disease automatically affects them. After taking damage, the target might become infected by the creature's disease, which is listed with each creature (for more information, see **Disease**, p.126).

Durability

Step Number: Rank
Action: NA **Type**: Magical

The Durability power increases a creature's ability to take damage. Each Rank in the Durability power permanently adds +6 to the creature's Death Rating and +5 to its Unconsciousness Rating. The creature's Death and Unconsciousness Ratings, adjusted for Durability, are shown in parentheses beside the creature's unadjusted ratings.

Engulf

Step Number: Rank+STR
Action: Simple **Type**: Magical

Element—*Air, Earth, Fire, Water, or Wood*. The Engulf power enables a creature to engulf a victim with parts of its body, causing the victim to take damage during each round of exposure. The creature makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the target is completely engulfed by the creature and takes Engulf Test damage each round for a number of rounds equal to the creature's Engulf Rank. Engulfed characters are considered Harried (***Player's Guide*** p.227). After taking damage each round, the engulfed character may make a Strength Test against the creature's Spellcasting Test result. If the test is successful, he manages to break free.

Enhanced Senses

Step Number: Rank
Action: Free **Type**: Magical; Mundane

A creature that has the Enhanced Senses power has an improved sense of hearing, smell, sight, taste, or touch. When the creature makes a Perception Test using the enhanced sense, it adds the Enhanced Senses Rank as a bonus to the Perception Test result. The five enhanced senses that creatures possess include: listen, sight, smell, taste and touch. The specific senses enhanced by this power are shown with the power.

Enraging Scent

Step Number: Rank+WIL
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical

This magical scent enrages all who smell it. To use it, the creature must make a successful Enraging Scent Test against the target character's Spell Defense. If the test is successful, the target becomes infuriated for a number of rounds equal to the creature's Enraging Scent Rank. During this duration an affected target will immediately seek out the closest living creature, friend or foe, and attempt to render it limb from limb. To shrug off the effects of this ability, a target must succeed at a Willpower Test against the creature's Enraging Scent Test result.

Entrancement

Step Number: Rank+CHA
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical

The creature can entrance members of any Namegiver race. To use this ability, the creature makes an Entrancement Test against the target's Social Defense. If the test succeeds, the victim falls under the creature's control, though the creature can only force him to walk in the direction of its choice. An entranced character can break free from the creature's influence by making a successful Willpower Test against the creature's Entrancement Test result. Additionally, the trance automatically breaks if the victim sustains Damage Points equal to this number. Unless the creature has its

victim firmly under its mental control, it will not attempt to confront it physically.

Fire Touch

Step Number: Rank+WIL
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical

Fire. Fire Touch makes the creature's target believe that he is burning. To activate this power, the creature makes a Fire Touch Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the target feels as if he is covered in flame. Each round, the victim takes 1 Damage Point and decreases his Initiative Step by –2. No armor protects against this damage. Once his Initiative Step is reduced to 1, the target can only roll around on the ground trying to put out the fire or run wildly about. To shrug off the effects of this ability, the target must make a successful Willpower Test against the creature's Fire Touch Step. Otherwise, the effects of the power end after a number of rounds equal to the creature's Fire Touch Test result.

Fire Trail

Step Number: Rank+WIL
Action: Free **Type**: Magical

Fire. Flying creatures using this power leave trails of fire that follow them, burning targets in their wake. After a creature using this power attacks, it makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the creature makes a Fire Trail Test in place of a Damage Test. Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

Flashing Glare

Step Number: Rank+WIL
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical

The creature has a shining eyelight, which it can flash on and off, causing uncontrollable seizures in its victims. The creature makes a Flashing Glare Test against the Spell Defense of all targets caught in the glare. If this test succeeds, affected targets become paralyzed for as long as the flashing light remains visible. The sudden seizures can cause the victims to fall to the ground if they fail a Knockdown Test (***Player's Guide***, p.219) against the Flashing Glare Test result.

Freezing Aura

Step Number: Rank
Action: NA **Type**: Magical

Water—Cold. Some creatures can radiate extreme cold. If the creature passes within 4 yards (2 hexes) of a target, the target automatically suffers Damage Points equal to the creature's Freezing Aura Rank. Physical Armor protects against this damage. Advanced forms of this power can make non-magical metal weapons shatter into pieces when struck.

Harden Club

Step Number: Rank
Action: NA **Type**: Magical

Wooden clubs reinforced by this ability are nearly impossible to break. In the hands of an ogre, the club adds the ogre's Harden Club Rank to it's Damage Rank. A wooden club untouched by the creature for more than 24 hours becomes an ordinary hunk of wood, similar to an ordinary club.

Howling Challenge

Step Number: Rank+CHA
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical

The leader of a group of creatures may use its Howling Challenge power on a target within line of sight. The lead creature spends one round howling; in the following round, it makes a Howling Challenge Test against the target's Social Defense. A successful result forces the target into a howling contest with the creature. The victim then makes a Charisma Test against the creature's Howling Challenge Test result. If this test succeeds, the challenge ends and the creature flees in shame, followed next round by its fellow creatures. If the victim's Charisma Test fails, the leader may maintain the Howling Challenge, making another Howling Challenge Test to produce a new Difficulty Number each round for as long as the challenge lasts. The leader can maintain a Howling Challenge as long as it continues to win, and as long as it takes no other action.

Ice Shackles

Step Number: Rank+WIL
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical

Water—Cold. The creature makes an Ice Shackles Test against the Spell Defense of any single target within its line of sight. If the test succeeds, the target is wrapped in bands of magical frost. Ice Shackles melt after a number of rounds equal to the creature's Ice Shackles Rank. To break free of the shackles, the target must succeed at a Strength Test against the creature's Ice Shackles Test result, which shatters the shackles into hundreds of shards. Unless completely destroyed in this way, the shackles automatically repair any cracks or breaks, leaving the character trapped.

Karma

Step Number: Special (see text)
Action: NA **Type**: Magical

Creatures with a Karma Step can spend 1 Karma Point to augment any Action Test they make.

Killing Glare

Step Number: Rank+WIL
Action: Free **Type**: Magical

Creatures with this ability have a killing eyelight that shines in a 45-degree arc directly to the front of the creature. The eyes glow with a fierce white light, which might save a lucky adventurer from destruction if he spots the glow and has the sense to run. The maximum range of the eyelight depends on the ambient light in the area. In direct sunlight, the killing glare becomes so weak that it can only affect opponents standing 2 yards (1 hex) from the creature. In twilight, the glare harms an opponent up to 6 yards (3 hexes) away; in complete darkness, up to 12 yards (6 hexes) away. When the creature's eyelight falls on a target, the creature makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If multiple targets are within the eyelight, compare the result of the Spellcasting Test against each target's Spell Defense separately. If the test succeeds, the creature makes a Killing Glare Test to determine how much damage is inflicted. Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

Lightning

Step Number: Rank+WIL
Action: Simple **Type**: Magical

Air—Electric. Some creatures have the power to strike their target with lightning. To use this lightning-generating ability, the creature makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. The power's range is the creature's Rank × 8 yards (Rank × 4 hexes). If the test succeeds, the creature makes a Lightning Test to determine how much damage is inflicted. Non-metal Physical Armor protects against this damage.

LOCATE TARGET

Step Number: Rank+PER
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical; Mundane

Creatures with the Locate Target power can find their target's position even if they are not able to see them (e.g., on the earth's surface from underground, or in complete darkness). To determine an opponent's location, the creature makes a Locate Target Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the creature is aware of the target's position. The Locate Target range is listed with the creature's description.

MAGIC DRAIN

Step Number: Rank+WIL
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical

To use this power, the creature makes a Magic Drain Test and compares the result against the Spell Defense of every other character or creature within range. If the test succeeds, the creature drains magical energy from each affected victim, the amount depending on the Magic Drain Test result. The creature reduces the Step Number of the victim's entire repertoire of magical abilities (including talents) by –1 Step for each result level achieved. This draining effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to the creature's Magic Drain Rank. The power's range is listed with the creature's description.

PARALYZATION

Step Number: Rank+WIL
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical

Some creatures run or fly around their target when using this ability, cawing and screeching madly, while others fly gracefully overhead and caw at the trespassers, lulling them into a trance with their beauty and grace. The creature makes a Paralyzation Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the target becomes paralyzed for a number of rounds equal to the creature's Paralyzation Rank. The paralysis effect automatically renders a target Knocked Down (***Player's Guide***, p.228).

POISON

Step Number: Rank
Action: NA **Type**: Magical; Mundane

Creatures with this power have poisonous fangs, teeth, claws, or stingers. No test is required for a creature to affect a target with the poison—if the victim is physically struck and takes even a single Damage Point, he is exposed to the poison and suffers the effects. The specific effect of the poison is given in the creature's description (see **Poison**, p.123, for more information).

REGENERATION

Step Number: Rank+TOU
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical

The creature must have a Recovery Test available to use this power. The creature makes a Regeneration Test, reducing its Current Damage by the result. As long as it has Recovery Tests available to it, the creature can use this power each round; it is not subject to the normal rules for resting between Recovery Tests.

SENSE DANGER

Step Number: Rank+PER
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical

The creature makes a Sense Danger Test against the Spell Defense of any target within line of sight. In the case of more than one target, the creature makes a test against the highest Spell Defense among the group. If the test succeeds, the creature knows whether or not the targets intend to attack or otherwise intend it harm.



SENSE MAGIC

Step Number: Rank+PER
Action: Standard
Type: Magical

The creature can use its magic-sensing ability over a range of Sense Magic Rank miles. To detect the use of magic, the creature makes a Sense Magic Test against a Difficulty Number based on the type of magic being used, as shown in the Magic Use Table. If the test succeeds, the creature can track the source of the magic within its range. Because magic use is so pervasive in Barsaive, a creature can detect several different sources of magic use within the range of its power. The strain of sensing multiple uses of magic often confuses and irritates the creature, possibly making it more dangerous.

MAGIC USE TABLE

Magic Type	Difficulty Number
Raw Magic	4
Creature Magic	9
Adept Magic	11
Magical Items	12
Matrix-cast Spells	14

SENSE UNDEAD

Step Number: Rank+PER
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical

The creature makes a Sense Undead Test against the Spell Defense of any target within line of sight. In the case of more than one target, the creature makes a test against the highest Spell Defense among the group. If the test succeeds, the creature knows whether or not the target are undead.

Skills

Step Number: Special (see text)
Action: Special (see text) **Type**: Mundane

Some creatures have powers based on skills (see the ***Player's Guide***, p. 87, for descriptions). Skills as powers are noted by a superscripted 'S' at the end of the power's name.

Sonic Shriek

Step Number: Rank+STR
Action: Standard **Type**: Mundane

This power allows a creature to shatter brittle objects—including crystal armor and weapons, glassware, pottery, and so on. The creature makes a Sonic Shriek Test and compares the result against the Spell Defense (increased by +10) of each item within range. If the test succeeds, the object shatters into hundreds of pieces. Weapons and armor crack horribly or break into fragments; potion bottles crack and spill their contents to the ground. Magical items (including magically-enhanced crystal armor and weapons) are almost immune to the effects of a Sonic Shriek attack; they only shatter on an Extraordinary result. The power's range is listed with the creature's description.

Spellcasting

Step Number: Rank+PER
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical

The Spellcasting power enables creatures to cast spells using raw magic. When casting spells with this power, creatures are vulnerable to the same Warping and Damage effects as Namegiver magicians, but they don't run the same risk of becoming Horror-marked as Horrors are usually less interested in marking creatures than in marking more intelligent life forms. Most creatures do not use spell matrices, but they must weave spell threads where required. Thread Weaving is only required for creatures that need to weave threads (see ***Player's Guide***, p.83). To determine the effect of a spell, use the creature's Willpower Step.

Spells

Step Number: Special (see text)
Action: NA **Type**: Magical

Generally, creatures can cast spells of only one Discipline, though some powerful creatures are able to cast spells of several Disciplines. The spells that the creature can cast are listed with its description.

Sticky Body

Step Number: Rank+WIL
Action: Free **Type**: Magical; Mundane

Water. Creatures with this power excrete a sticky fluid. Whenever the creature comes into contact with another character or item, the creature makes a Sticky Body Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test is successful, the fluid glues the character and the creature together. Creatures using this ability are free to perform other actions while attached to a victim. A character is considered Harried (***Player's Guide*** p.227) as soon as even a single creature sticks to him using this power. Once four creatures stick to a target, it begins to suffocate. The victim takes 1 Damage Point each combat round until fewer than four creatures remain on it. No armor protects against this damage. Characters suffer from being Overwhelmed (***Player's Guide*** p.227) at this stage, further hampering them. As a guideline, up to six creatures can stick to a character of equal size. To break free from the gluey gob, the target must make a successful Strength Test against the result of the creature's Sticky Body Test. The only other way to escape the glue is to wait for the sun to break down the substance, but a creature with this power will rarely allow that to happen. Making physical attacks against a sticky creature is very difficult. At the start of combat, the gamemaster makes a Sticky Body Test to determine the strength of the creature's adhesive layer. Whenever an opponent successfully attacks the creature, his weapon, hand and so on sticks to the creature; the attacker must make a successful Strength Test against the result of the Sticky Body Test to pull the weapon or limb free. If the Strength Test fails, the attacker may make further Strength Tests, but the Difficulty Number for each additional test increases by +1.

Sticky Spit

Step Number: Rank+STR
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical; Mundane

Water. Creatures using this power usually prefer to glue their foes to the ground rather than fight them in close combat. The creature can spit a gob of adhesive at any opponent within the range listed in its description. To spit the gob, the creature makes a Sticky Spit Test against the target's Physical Defense. The power's range is the creature's Rank × 2 yards (1 hexes). If the test succeeds, the target is struck by the mucus. The spit hinders the character's movement; the character is considered Harried (***Player's Guide*** p.227). The spit can be removed with a mild acid, such as vinegar, and a good scrubbing brush. Alternatively, a round spent trying to pull the goo free allows the target to make a Strength Test against the creature's Sticky Spit Test result. If this test succeeds, enough of the goo has been removed to allow freedom of movement again. For this reason, it is common for creature with this power to use it more than once against the same opponent to ensure its prey is well and truly stuck (and to force multiple Strength Tests to break free). The gamemaster may wish to use the Overwhelmed rule (***Player's Guide*** p.227) to account for the effect of multiple Sticky Spit attacks on a target.

Surprise Attack

Step Number: Rank
Action: Free **Type**: Magical; Mundane

The creature is able to strike faster in its initial attack, usually from a hidden position. Add the creature's Surprise Attack Rank to its Initiative Step in the first round of combat. The creature's victim may also suffer a Surprised penalty (***Player's Guide*** p.228).

Talents

Step Number: Special (see text)
Action: Special (see text) **Type**: Magical

Some creatures have powers based on adept talents (see the ***Player's Guide***, p.59, for descriptions). Creatures without Karma must sacrifice one of their available Recovery Tests to use talents that require Karma as a power. Talents as powers are noted by a superscripted 'T' at the end of the power's name.

Tire Others

Step Number: Rank+CHA
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical

Those affected by this power become listless and tired, losing all interest in anything they are doing for a number of minutes equal to the Tire Others Test result. To shrug off the effects of this ability, a target must make a successful Willpower Test against the result of the creature's Tire Others Test.



TRIPLICATE

Step Number: Rank
Action: Standard **Type**: Magical

Creatures using this power can create copies of themselves to engage in combat. Only the original creature, called the core creature, can reproduce. This process takes three combat rounds to perform and causes the core creature 1 Strain. Once the time is over, two duplicates appear. These duplicates remain for a number of hours equal to the core creature's Triplicate Rank before dissolving into a frothy mush. The copies may act individually or together, and even under the influence of magical charms refuse to harm the core creature. A core creature can create a maximum number of duplicates equal to its Triplicate Rank.

VENOM

Step Number: Rank+WIL
Action: Free **Type**: Magical

Creatures using this power can spit venom at targets. The venom is caustic to the touch and creates an irritating burn if it contacts a victim's skin. Whenever a creature makes a venom attack, make a Spellcasting Test for the creature against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, make a Venom Test for the creature to determine the damage the attack causes. Venom has a range, which is listed with each creature.

CREATURE DESCRIPTIONS

Each creature description is presented in up to four sections. First, the opening text includes a physical **description** of each creature, as well as various details about the creature's habitat, eating and mating habits, and natural defenses. Each creature entry lists its relevant **game statistics** (see **Creature Entry Format**, p.145). The **Rules** section includes game rules that correspond to the descriptions of each creature and possible ways to defeat or escape it. This section also includes rules for resolving the use of any unique powers or abilities a creature may possess, including any exceptions to existing rules. For example, a blood raven has the Astral Sight power, which works like the talent of the same name. The Rules section of the creature's description states that the blood raven's Astral Sight is limited to a range of 30 yards (15 hexes), which is an exception to the normal range of the Astral Sight talent.

Lastly, some creatures have an **Adventure Hook** suggesting at least one way gamemasters might use an encounter with the creature as a starting point for an adventure. These adventure hooks are intended to spark ideas for fleshing out a complete adventure and/or integrating the creature into an ongoing **Earthdawn** campaign.

Keep in mind that the suggestions offered in this section are just that: suggestions. The gamemaster should feel free to use the creatures in this book in any way he can imagine.

ALLIGATOR

This aggressive aquatic predator is approximately ten to twelve feet long, and possesses sharp teeth and powerful jaws. It is found in the numerous river and marshland areas of Barsaive, although alligators are most prevalent in the rivers of the Servos Jungle. These cunning reptiles lie submerged in the water with only their eyes and nostrils showing, waiting for prey to come within reach for them to attack. When in the water they are difficult to discern from floating wood or other detritus.

DEX: 5 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 6
PER: 4 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 5 (7; Surprise Attack)
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 8
Damage:
Bite (5): 11
Death: 38
Unconsciousness: 30
Wound Threshold: 10
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 0
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 6/8*

Legend Award: First Circle

* The second value is the creature's swimming Movement Rate

Powers: Surprise Attack (2), Swimming^{S} (2): 8

Loot: Skin worth 5d10 silver pieces.

Rules

Sight-based Perception Tests made to detect a partially submerged alligator require a Good or better result. Even if detected, an alligator's initial attack is extremely sudden—the alligator gains a +2 bonus to its first Initiative Test. The alligator's favored attack strategy is to quickly capture prey using a Bite and Hold attack (p.147) against a (usually) Surprised victim, dragging it underwater to drown.

Aquatic: Alligators can hold their breath for a number of minutes equal to their Toughness Step before drowning.

APE

These large primates are found in the jungle regions of Barsaive, where they live in the treetops. Three different species exist: baboons, gorillas, and orangutans. These animals live in small tribes and are usually peaceful in nature.

DEX: 6 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 6
PER: 4 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 8
Damage:
Bite (5): 12
Death: 36
Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0
Recovery Tests: 3

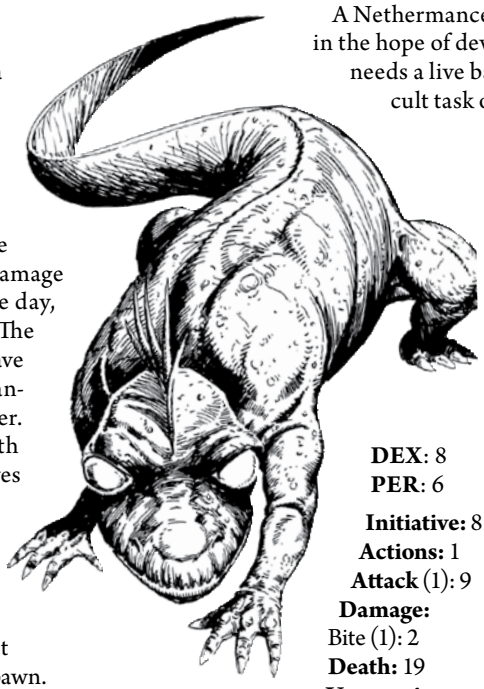
Unconsciousness: 28 **Knockdown:** 8
Wound Threshold: 10 **Movement:** 6/7*

Legend Award: First Circle

* The second value is the creature's climbing Movement Rate

Powers: Climbing S (2): 8, Enhanced Senses [Smell] (2): 6, Great Leap S (2): 8

BASILISK



A basilisk looks like a cross between a garden snake and a four-foot-long lizard. These creatures are usually colored in gray or brown tones, with no distinguishing features save for gray, rooster-like combs atop their heads and beady eyes. The eyes glow with a fierce white light, visible only at night, and which inflicts terrible damage to any living being in its path. During the day, sunlight obscures the basilisk's eyelight. The basilisk hunts by night, crawling out of its cave at twilight. At this time, they are most dangerous, driven to hunt by ravenous hunger. Unlike most creatures, basilisks sleep with their eyes open, lighting up their small caves as if with a hundred candles.

For many centuries, magicians and scholars puzzled over how basilisks reproduce. A creature that kills anything it looks at can hardly be expected to mate in any normal way and would most likely kill any baby basilisks it managed to spawn. The answer to this puzzle is that the basilisk does not mate, but splits. Every so often in a basilisk's life, its tail begins to grow thicker and takes on the appearance of a second head. After several weeks, both heads look exactly the same, and the creature splits in half. The two halves begin to grow new tails, and within days there are two basilisks instead of one.

Some scholars claim the basilisk resembles the cockatrice—others believe basilisks and dragons are related. Legends abound of foolish magicians who tried to harness the basilisk's magic for their own ends, and died from their efforts.

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

Initiative: 6 **Physical Defense:** 7
Actions: 1 **Spell Defense:** 6
Attack (5): 11 **Social Defense:** 5
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 2
Bite (3): 8 **Mystic Armor:** 1
Death: 73 **Recovery Tests:** 2
Unconsciousness: 57 **Knockdown:** NA
Wound Threshold: 8 **Movement:** 6

Legend Award: Fifth Circle (Group)

Powers: Durability (7), Killing Glare (9): 24*, Spellcasting (13): 17

* Includes special bonus for the basilisk's Powerful Glare (see text)

Loot: Two eyes worth 200 silver pieces each (worth Legend Points)

Rules

The basilisk is able to do damage far out of proportion to its size. This creature rarely needs to fight its enemies and so often travels into dangerous places in search of food. If the basilisk runs into anything hostile, it tries to kill its opponent, and it usually succeeds. If it cannot kill its opponent, because the sunlight is strong enough to mask its glare or the opponent is magically protected, for example, the basilisk flees. If cornered, it bites, but this attack is far less dangerous than its gaze.

Powerful Glare: A basilisk's Killing Glare power is far more potent than that of other creatures. To reflect this, the basilisk has a unique +10 bonus when using this power. Like its hapless victims, the basilisk cannot withstand its own sight. If a basilisk's eyelight is reflected back at it, the creature will be affected in the same way as its victims.

Adventure Hook

A Nethermancer wishes to study the basilisk's killing glare in the hope of devising a spell to produce a similar effect. He needs a live basilisk, and hires the characters for the difficult task of capturing one.

BAT

Bats are nocturnal flying mammals. Most are herbivores that eat fruit or insectivores that eat insects, although some feed on the blood of other creatures. These blood-sucking bats are the only ones that attack Namegivers. Bats are blind and "see" by emitting high-frequency sounds, like sonar, that are inaudible to most creatures.

DEX: 8 **STR**: 1 **TOU**: 2
PER: 6 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 8 **Physical Defense:** 12
Actions: 1 **Spell Defense:** 8
Attack (1): 9 **Social Defense:** 3
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 0
Bite (1): 2 **Mystic Armor:** 1
Death: 19 **Recovery Tests:** 1/2 days
Unconsciousness: 10 **Knockdown:** 1
Wound Threshold: 3 **Movement:** 2/8*

Legend Award: First Circle

* The second value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Blood Veins (3): 4, Enhanced Senses [Listen] (2): 8, Locate Target (3): 9, Silent Walk S (1): 9

Rules

A bat's sonar works like a mundane version of the Locate Target power (see p.153). The power's range is 30 yards (15 hexes).

BEAR

Bears are forest- and mountain-dwelling omnivores that are usually not dangerous unless an unwary traveler enters their lair, or threatens their cubs. Bears usually permit travelers to pass through their territory, unless the trespassers pose an obvious threat to the animal's food supply.

DEX: 5 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 6
PER: 3 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 5 **Physical Defense:** 7
Actions: 1 **Spell Defense:** 4
Attack (2): 7 **Social Defense:** 7
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 5
Bite (5): 12 **Mystic Armor:** 0
Death: 38 **Recovery Tests:** 3
Unconsciousness: 30 **Knockdown:** 8
Wound Threshold: 10 **Movement:** 8

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Battle Shout S [Roar] (1): 6, Climbing S (2): 7, Enhanced Senses [Smell] (2): 5, Swimming S (1): 8

BEHEMOTH

Nicknamed "swamp thundras," these giant beasts have attained near-mythical status among Cara Fahd's Cavalrymen. Physically, they resemble thundra beasts with dragon-like necks and tails and shorter horns. The males stand ten feet high at the shoulder, average twenty-five feet in length, and weigh about fifteen tons. They are slow, shy, and secretive, supporting their bulk in the waters of the Locust River mire in southwest Cara Fahd. Though generally docile, they attack by stomping and goring if threatened. The males live to twenty-five years old, the females fifty. They grow throughout their lives, so it is possible to find a female behemoth in excess of sixty feet in length. Males make up roughly four-fifths of the small population. They need vast territories to feed, so a single herd usually consists of a female, three to five males, and no more than three half-grown young.

DEX: 5 **STR**: 16 **TOU**: 17
PER: 4 **WIL**: 10 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 4
Actions: 1
Attack (6): 11
Damage:
Horns (9): 25; Trample (2): 18
Death: 115
Unconsciousness: 102
Wound Threshold: 22
Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 13
Social Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 12
Recovery Tests: 8
Knockdown: 17
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Sixth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Powers: Durability (6), Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 6

Rules

The following rules apply to behemoths.

Hard to Dominate: Behemoths are ornery and resistant to taming, even from Beastmasters. Characters using their talents and abilities to tame or command a behemoth must achieve a result two levels higher than normal to be successful. For example, the Animal Training talent normally requires an Average result to work against a target creature. Against a behemoth, however, Animal Training requires an Excellent result.

Adventure Hook

The powdered horn of the behemoth is an essential ingredient in some unique ork scorcher rituals. The characters are asked to slay a behemoth and bring back the horn. However, the nearest herd is the property of a rival tribe of ork scorchers.

BLOOD BEE

Blood bees resemble two-foot-long wasps with an accordion-like sac flapping from their thoraxes. When attacking, the bee flies backward, strikes its prey with the sticky sac, then flies forward. The forward motion extrudes a hollow spine from within the sac, which punctures the victim's skin and drains his blood. Once filled, the bag becomes heavy enough for the bee to pull free. The laden insect then flies back to its nest to feast on the victim's blood.

DEX: 7 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 5
PER: 5 **WIL**: 4 **CHA** 2

Initiative: 7
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 9
Damage:
Stinger (6): 8 (see text)
Death: 31
Unconsciousness: 22
Wound Threshold: 8
Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 2
Movement: 2/6*

* The second value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Blood Veins (3): 5

Rules

The following special rules apply to blood bees.

Blood Veins: A blood bee uses its Blood Veins power only if it successfully stings its target, requiring an Armor-Defeating Hit on its initial attack. A blood bee's sac can hold nearly half a gallon of blood, so this blood loss can prove fatal to most victims. To remove the bee, the target character must knock it down by inflicting a Wound on it. If the bee fails its Knockdown Test, it is detached from the victim and falls to the ground. Knocking down a bee may look easy, but keep in mind that these creatures *always* attack in swarms.

Vulnerability to Salt: A blood bee's sac is terribly susceptible to salt. If a blood bee touches salt, it takes Step 3 damage. Physical Armor protects against this damage. A character coating himself in salt will enrage the bees, but the buzzing swarms rarely gather the courage to attack him. Usually, a salt-covered character is attacked in only one out of ten encounters.

Adventure Hook

While exploring some ruins, the characters come across an old statue with gemstones in place of eyes. Only one problem—covering the major part of the statue is a huge blood bee nest.

BLOOD MONKEY

Blood monkeys are small simians thickly covered in fur of a deep red color. Their bodies rarely exceed two feet in length, but they have prehensile tails that add another two feet to their overall length. They appear small and harmless, but are actually quite vicious. Sharp claws grow from the ends of their five fingers, and they sport a mouthful of long, needle-sharp teeth.

Blood monkeys are found in most areas of the Blood Wood except the Elven Court and the central regions. The Queen's Blood Warders have taken measures to keep the monkeys away from the Palace and the overwhelming corruption of the Forest's Heart keeps them far away from the center of the Wood. Blood monkeys typically live in groups of up to one hundred animals, but legends tell of attacks by multiple groups numbering in the thousands. Recently, blood monkey pelts have become a sought-after item in some areas of Barsaive, selling for around 100 silver pieces each.



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

Initiative: 8 (11; Surprise Attack)
Actions: 3
Attack (3): 11
Damage:
Bite (5): 10; 2×Claws (3): 8
Death: 42
Unconsciousness: 34
Wound Threshold: 12
Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 3
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 5
Movement: 6/7*

Legend Award: Fifth Circle

* The second value is the creature's climbing Movement Rate

Powers: Climbing S (3): 11, Enhanced Senses [Smell] (2): 7, Great Leap S (3): 11, Surprise Attack (3)

Loot: Pelt worth 100 silver pieces each (worth Legend Points). May find bits of treasure, items, weapons, and armor from the last unfortunate adventurers who passed this way.

Rules

Extremely territorial, blood monkeys will attack everything from individuals to whole trade caravans. Typically, up to five of the strongest males in a blood monkey band will initiate an attack by dropping from the treetops onto their targets, usually by surprise. Blood monkeys can attack up to three times in a combat round, clawing and biting.

Reinforcements: If any blood monkey's initial attack causes damage to a victim, the monkeys give a screech that summons five more blood monkeys. These "reinforcements" arrive within minutes. If the targets defend themselves successfully against the initial attack, and actually manage to counterattack, the blood monkeys will try to escape.

Adventure Hook

Rumors lead the characters to an old shrine, purported to hide the secret location of an old kaer. The shrine, however, has become the favored breeding ground of a local group of blood monkeys, who don't take kindly to having their conjugal relations interrupted by strangers.

Blood Oak Roots

The blood oak is named for the bright red veins that run through its leaves and the deep red hue that its leaves take on for three months of the year. These trees grow to majestic heights throughout the Blood Wood, often exceeding 60 yards. Their crowns grow equally broad, giving each blood oak a wide area around its trunk and roots clear of other large plant life. According to legend, all of the Blood Wood's oaks are descended from the eight trees that form the foundation and towers of Queen Alachia's palace. Blood oaks derive part of their sustenance from the blood of creatures that come to rest beneath their branches. When a creature remains motionless beneath the tree's leaves, hundreds of tiny root-like filaments wriggle up through the ground, attach themselves to the victim and secrete a thin sap that deadens the target creature's nerves.

DEX: 7 **STR**: 13 **TOU**: 12
PER: 5 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1 (see text)
Attack (8): 15
Damage:
Root Whip (3): 16
Death: 150
Unconsciousness: None
Wound Threshold: None
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 10 (7; see text)
Social Defense: 15
Physical Armor: 9
Mystic Armor: 3 (0; see text)
Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: None
Move: 3/6*

* The second value is the creature's burrowing Movement Rate

Legend Award: Eighth Circle (1 root bunch per 2 PC)

Powers: Blood Veins (see text), Durability (15), Engulf (1): 14, Poison [SD 8; Sleep], Spellcasting (8): 13

Equipment, Loot: Items belonging to previous victims may be scattered around the tree's base

Rules

Blood oaks can defend themselves by reaching up from the earth with bunches of roots to grasp creatures and squeeze them to death or draw them down into the earth. Whenever a blood oak is actively threatened or is awakened by a root walker, it uses its roots in this fashion. A blood oak may attack anywhere from one to three characters, depending on the age of the tree. Use the statistics above for each root bunch. When a root bunch successfully attacks a character, it grapples him (***Player's Guide*** p.230) and automatically causes damage each round until the character breaks free or the roots are destroyed. The roots also attempt to Engulf the target. The oaks normally leave dead characters beneath the earth to decompose. Characters may destroy the tree as they would destroy a barrier (see **Barriers and Structures**, p.108).

Blood Veins: Attaching its blood veins takes only a few minutes. Once it is complete, the blood oak begins to suck the target's blood, inflicting 1 Damage Point per minute until the damage reaches the target's Death Rating. No armor protects against this damage. Once the creature is dead, the filaments disengage and retreat beneath the earth. If the target fails to resist the effects of the blood oak's poison, it does not feel the effects of the blood drain and may die unless some one else comes to aid. The filaments are weak; removing them requires no test.

Engulf: *Wood*.

Limited Movement: The Movement Rates listed for the roots indicate how far a root bunch may reach each round. A root bunch moves by pulling more of itself out of the ground to reach farther. This action, however, exposes more of the root to attack. Also, the root may not reach more than 30 yards (15 hexes) from its point of emergence. However, a root bunch may move entirely underground and emerge up to 100 to 250 yards (50 to 125 hexes) from the trunk, depending on the tree's age. A blood oak senses its victims primarily through their contact with the earth, so foes that remain airborne, such as windlings or flying creatures, escape its notice.

Vulnerability to Fire: Blood oaks have a Spell Defense of 10, except against spells that cause fire damage; against fire, the oak's Spell Defense drops to 7 and its Mystic Armor is reduced to 0.

Adventure Hook

The characters make camp in what looks like an easily protected area in the roots of a large tree. Unfortunately for the characters, this tree obscures a blood oak; and its roots are entangled and hidden among those of the other tree.

Blood Raven

Blood ravens can be distinguished from normal ravens by their larger size and reddish legs. Individually, blood ravens pose little threat to Namegivers. However, they most often appear in flocks of dozens of birds. Blood ravens are intelligent, with sharp eyesight and the ability to see astrally as well. For these reasons blood ravens are highly sought after by magicians, and blood elves often take blood ravens as familiars.

DEX: 6 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 3
PER: 7 **WIL**: 5 **CHA** 5

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 9
Damage:
Bite (3): 5
Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0



Death: 23
Unconsciousness: 14
Wound Threshold: 5
Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 2
Movement: 2/8*

Legend Award: First Circle

* The second value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Astral Sight [T] (3): 10, Enhanced Senses [Sight] (2): 9

Rules

Blood ravens usually use the Called Shot combat option (***Player's Guide***, p.223) to attack an opponent's eyes, hoping to blind him. Only helmets or other armor specifically designed to provide eye protection will shield a character against such attacks. A successful attack Completely blinds (***Player's Guide***, p.226) the target for two rounds. If the damage to the target's eyes is sufficient to cause a Wound, the target remains blind until that Wound is healed.

Astral Sight: The blood raven's Astral Sight power is similar to the Astral Sight talent (***Player's Guide***, p.61), but their vision is limited to 30 yards (15 hexes) on the astral plane.

BLOOD WASP

Blood wasps are aggressive insects that attack in swarms to gather the blood they feed on. Only slightly larger than ordinary wasps, they are fiercely territorial and mercilessly attack any creature that comes too close to their nests.

DEX: 8 **STR**: 3 **TOU**: 6
PER: 6 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 8
Actions: 1 (see text)
Attack (3): 11
Damage: (see text)
One Target (10): 13;
Two Targets (7): 10; Three Targets (4): 7
Death: NA (see text)
Unconsciousness: 38
Wound Threshold: NA
Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: NA
Movement: 6*

Legend Award: Third Circle (Group)

* This value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

Rules

The statistics above apply to a swarm of two to three hundred insects: the size of the average blood wasp nest. A swarm this size occupies a sphere-shaped area roughly 10 yards in diameter and will attack up to three creatures within the sphere, though the swarm can only attack each creature once. The statistics above include three different Damage Steps, and the number of targets within the sphere determines which Damage Step is used. Once a swarm has taken damage equal to its Unconsciousness Rating, it disperses. A dispersed swarm takes two weeks to regenerate.

Dousing a character with vinegar or wine drives away any attacking wasps and temporarily prevents further attacks. Pungent salves derived from the sap of certain trees will also ward off blood wasp attacks, but knowledge of these salves is a closely guarded secret in the Blood Wood.

Swarm Form: Attacking a blood wasp swarm with most ordinary weapons (such as a sword or a bow) is virtually useless. All damage inflicted with such weapons is reduced to 1 Damage Point.

Vulnerability to Fire: Attacks made with fire-based weapons or spells gain a +5 bonus to their Damage Test.

BOG GOB

Not native to Barsaive, bog gobs are squat, ugly, wicked creatures with glowing yellow eyes set in mottled-gray heads. Standing four to five feet tall, they weigh a staggering two hundred pounds. The same magic that holds their mud-colored, bipedal bodies together also acts as resilient natural armor. They gather in groups numbering from ten to sixty members. According to legends, these creatures came to Barsaive from faraway swamps in the lands to the north.

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

Initiative: 4
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Half-spear (3): 9
Death: 43
Unconsciousness: 35
Wound Threshold: 12
Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 7
Mystic Armor: 3
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 9
Movement: 4

Legend Award: Second Circle

Powers: Sticky Body (3): 7

Equipment: Half-spear (Damage Step: 3; Cost: 2; STR Min: 7; Weight: 3; Size: 2)

Loot: D10 silver pieces



Rules

Bog gobs often attack simply to injure victims, as well as to kill and loot. These creatures always leave survivors, although the larger the attacking group, the fewer the survivors. The reason for this behavior remains a mystery, though some believe the gobs leave survivors because they enjoy the tales that inevitably spread following these attacks. Beastmasters cannot use their powers to affect bog gobs.

Brain Millipede

Brain millipedes are an aquatic species that cannot live out of the water. Typically, specimens congregate in large masses that vaguely resemble exposed brains. When grouped together in this manner, a brain millipede colony possesses a limited intelligence. According to river tales, brain millipede colonies consume the brains of their victims last and retain the intellects of those victims. However, such tales are probably no more than the musings of garrulous boatmen.

DEX: 4 **STR**: 3 **TOU**: 6
PER: 6 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (1): 5
Damage:
Bite (5): 8
Death: 35
Unconsciousness: 27
Wound Threshold: 9
Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 4
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: None
Movement: 4*

Legend Award: First Circle

* This value is also the creature's swimming Movement Rate

Powers: Mind Crush (5): 13; Spellcasting (1): 7

Equipment, Loot: Occasionally coins and objects from previous victims can be retrieved



Rules

A congregated colony uses a unique power called Mind Crush to attack any target within range until the target leaves the colony's vicinity or is rendered unconscious. If a target loses consciousness, the colony members disperse and reassemble on the victim's body. Then they slowly consume the victim until they have contracted into the same clump they occupied before they dispersed. If the victim regains consciousness, he may remove the millipedes without any further tests. However, the millipede colony will reform itself within 3 rounds and attack the victim again with its spell-like power if the victim remains within range.



Mind Crush: This unique power directly attacks the will of a victim within 48 yards (24 hexes). The brain millipede colony makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the creature makes a Mind Crush Test to determine how much damage is inflicted on the target. Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

Brithan

Dwarf hunters have described the brithan as a cross between a bear and an elemental having a bad day. Luminescent flecks color these animals' eyes, and their large heads sit atop ursine bodies covered with shaggy, deep brown or blue-black fur. Brithans are territorial and will stand on their hind legs and roar a challenge to anything that enters their domain. If a single character answers the challenge, the brithan enters into ritual combat with him, and the two fight until one submits.

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

Initiative: 5
Actions: 1 (see text)
Attack (2): 7 (see text)
Damage:
Bite (7): 13 (see text)
Death: 54
Unconsciousness: 46
Wound Threshold: 14
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 2
Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Second Circle (one character or one group)

Powers: Battle Shout [S] (Roar) (3): 7, Climbing [S] (2): 7, Durability (1), Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 7, Swimming [S] (2): 8

Rules

Brithans submit after taking their first Wound; battering a brithan to unconsciousness is also a victory. A character need not kill the brithan in order to win the combat. Defeating a brithan in ritual combat earns the character a Second Circle Legend Award. A brithan's submission lasts for about 3 days, after which the creature tends to forget who beat him. Any character who submits to a brithan must move himself and his team at least half a mile away from the victorious creature, or the brithan will attack the character in an attempt to kill him.

Frenzy: If more than one character attacks a brithan, the animal fights back savagely, gaining an additional bite attack and a +4 bonus to its Attack and Damage Tests.

Broccha

Broccha live on what are known as *clenkas* or "fool's islands" in Death's Sea. Broccha are reptilian in nature, with a snake-like



head, four stocky legs, and a long tail lined with short spikes. The creature's skin has the odor and texture of the *clenkas* it lies on, a resemblance accentuated by small, bright-red welts, each roughly an inch in diameter, that dot the broccha's skin. These welts show the elemental fire that runs through the broccha's blood. Their coloration allows broccha to lie motionless on the fool's islands and to blend in perfectly with their environment. Intruders never know the creature is there until too late.

Broccha apparently possess an unlimited capacity for their fire-spitting power, though the bright red welts on their skin seem to fade the more they use it. Some tales tell of broccha that have no red welts and never use this form of attack, but we cannot begin to understand the implications of these rumors.

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

Initiative: 6
Actions: 2
Attack (2): 8
Damage: Bite (1): 6; 2×Claws (2): 7; Tail (3): 8
Death: 43
Unconsciousness: 32
Wound Threshold: 8
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Second Circle

Powers: Breath Weapon [Fire] (3): 9, Durability (2), Spellcasting (2): 8

Rules

Though they appear slow and sluggish, brocchas are deadly opponents, made even more so by their fearsome fire-spitting power and their spiked, four-foot-long tails.

Breath Weapon: The broccha's Breath Weapon power enables the creature to spit small, exploding spheres of fire at targets within a range of 40 yards (20 hexes). With a Good result on the Spellcasting Test, the sphere of fire explodes, splashing all characters within 2 yards (1 hex) of the victim with a Spell Defense equal to or less than the Spellcasting Test result.

Tail Weapon: When the tail is used as a third close combat weapon, treat the tail attack like any other attack. Because a broccha can attack anyone within range, it can attack two characters at once.

Tail Frenzy: The tail frenzy is a defensive posture in which the creature whips its tail around in random patterns to keep attacks out of range. The tail frenzy is not an attack, though it causes damage to anyone who gets in the way. The main danger of the tail frenzy is the chance that it will knock a character down. Any successful Attack Test made by the broccha during the tail frenzy means the attacked character must make a special Knockdown (5) Test. If the test succeeds, the character remains standing. On a failure, the character falls—possibly onto molten rock.

CAT

Common, domesticated house cats are found in almost all towns and cities of Barsaive, since they are often kept as pets by Namegivers of all races. Cats are virtually harmless to Namegivers, but they are useful for keeping buildings free of mice and rats.

DEX: 6 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 2
PER: 5 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (1): 7
Damage: Claws (1): 3
Death: 22
Unconsciousness: 13
Wound Threshold: 4
Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 3
Movement: 7

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Climbing ^{S} (1): 7, Enhanced Senses (Listen, Sight) (2): 7, Great Leap ^{S} (1): 7, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk ^{S} (1): 7, Sprint (2)

CAVE TROLL

Cave trolls are descended from tribes of trolls who took to the deep places of the Earth when the Horrors came. Their isolation from the rest of the world led to cultural stagnation, and in some cases, degeneration among these tribes. Elemental magic has raised the strength of these cave trolls beyond that of civilized trolls, however, and in recent years they have emerged from their tunnels to explore the world above. Rude, and often violent, the cave trolls' habit of mixing trade with raiding has made them unwelcome visitors in most of Barsaive.

DEX: 6 **STR**: 13 **TOU**: 8
PER: 4 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 3
Actions: 1
Attack (5): 11
Damage: Cave Axe (7): 20
Death: 73
Wound Threshold: 12
Unconsciousness: 60
Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 7
Mystic Armor: 2
Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 13
Movement: 7

Legend Award: Fifth Circle

Powers: Durability (5), Enhanced Senses [Smell] (2): 6, Heat Sight

Equipment: Cave Axe (Damage 20), Chain Mail (Phys 7; Init 3)

Rules

Cave trolls use large stone weapons called cave axes, little more than crude stone axes bolstered with elemental magic.

Cave Axe: Wielding a cave axe requires a minimum Strength value of 16. Cave axes add +7 to the troll's Strength Step when making Damage Tests. Because demand for these weapons is low, cave axes are usually undervalued at 50 silver pieces each. Cave trolls take offense at anyone other than a fellow cave troll using one of their axes and will react accordingly; worsen the Attitude toward the wielder (and his obvious companions) for Interaction Tests by one level.

CHAKTA BIRD

Chakta birds resemble large ravens with red-tipped wings and gold-flecked feathers. These social animals usually travel in flocks of five birds, and can use their limited telepathy to communicate with intelligent beings within a 12 hex radius. They often approach travelers to share news of the air (or road) ahead, an example of the "civilized" behavior that has prompted some scholars to speculate about their origins. Courteous animals, chakta birds expect courtesy in return. Any rude behavior or omission of simple road courtesies, such as sharing of bread or hunting catch, proper introductions, or offering of places at a fire, enrages chakta birds.

DEX: 8 **STR**: 3 **TOU**: 4
PER: 6 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 8

Initiative: 8
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 12
Damage:
Bite (7): 10
Death: 30
Unconsciousness: 21
Wound Threshold: 7
Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 3
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 3
Movement: 2/8*

Legend Award: Third Circle

* The second value is the creature's flying Movement Rate.

Powers: Enhanced Senses [Sight] (2): 8, Paralyzation (5): 12

Rules

When angered, most chakta birds attack the offending character, and some almost always attack the offender's companions. Chakta birds begin an attack by flying around their targets in a whirling circle, cawing and screeching madly. If the chakta birds manage to paralyze their targets, they swoop in to physically attack. A character can break the paralysis before the duration has expired if he apologizes profusely to the bird (through stiffened, rigid lips), or makes a successful Charisma Test against the bird's Social Defense.

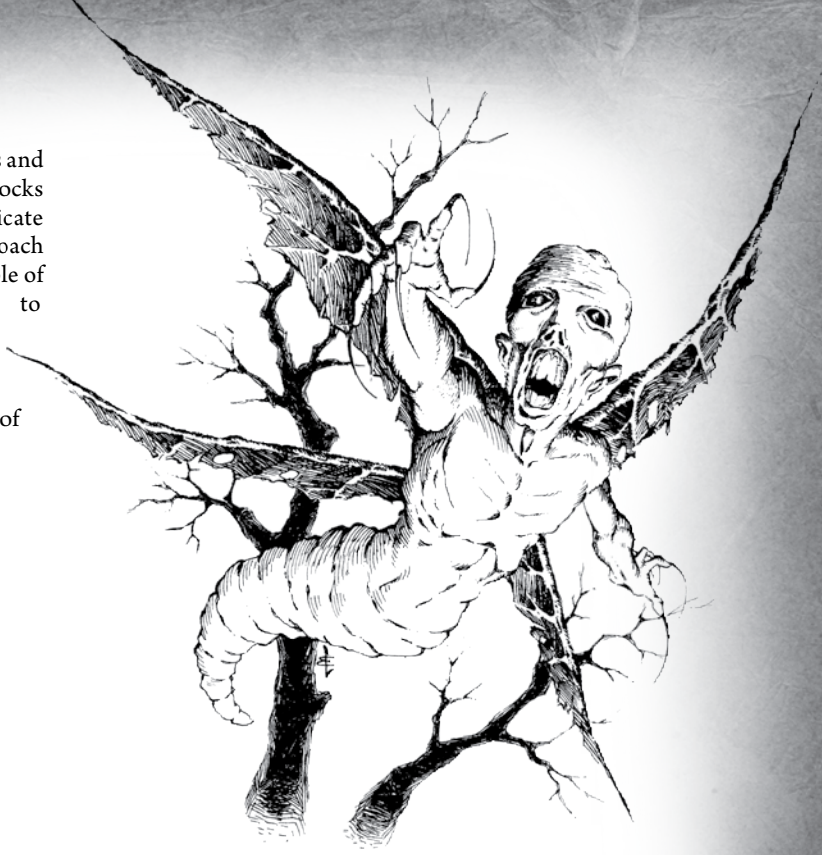
CHANGELING

These Horror-tainted windlings, called changelings by those few who have encountered them and survived, live only in the Scytha Mountains near the eastern edge of the Blood Wood, although there are rumors of at least two other places where they have appeared. Changelings retained the same size as windlings, but with a terribly distorted shape. Their faces are bulbous and hairless, their teeth elongated, and their hands tipped with nails so long and wicked that they look more like claws. Their legs have joined together to become an armored, wormlike tail. Once-healthy flesh is tinted a murky blue, resembling the color of corpses. Only their thin, fragile wings have remained the same.

The Horrors granted the changelings a terrible ability, one that allows them to reshape living bones from a distance of 10 yards (5 hexes). A fragmentary account of these creatures in the Great Library says that the bones also strengthen the kaer walls and serve as a powerful defense against intruders. At a changeling's command, the bones turn into wicked spikes, making it almost impossible to enter without getting cut to ribbons.

DEX: 9 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 5
PER: 8 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 9
Actions: 1
Attack (5): 14
Damage:
Bone Weapon (3): 7 (see text)
Death: 61
Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 1
Recovery Tests: 2



Unconsciousness: 48
Wound Threshold: 8
Knockdown: 4
Movement: 2/8*

Legend Award: Fifth Circle

* The second value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Astral Sight [T] (5):13, Bone Shaping (5): 10, Durability (5), Flight, Spellcasting (5): 13

Equipment: Sculpted Bone Weapon (Damage STR+3)

Loot: A changeling kaer may contain beautiful bone sculptures worth 1,000 silver pieces or more each

Rules

Changelings are completely corrupted. They cannot be redeemed, and have very little in common with their untainted brothers. **Player characters cannot be changelings.** In physical combat, changelings are relatively weak. They usually carry some kind of weapon made of bone that they use if their magical abilities fail them. For specific changelings, use their Strength and the type of weapon they carry to determine how much damage they can do in combat. The changeling's bone-shaping power, however, is its true weapon.

Skull Folding: Against an extremely dangerous opponent, changelings will use their Bone Shaping power to fold the victim's skull backward into the brain. This type of shaping causes an additional +10 Damage Steps per round. If the changelings have time and can accomplish it safely, they will reshape each of a victim's limbs in turn, causing him terrible pain, before killing him.

Adventure Hook

A rich aristocrat with an extensive collection of unusual and beautiful artifacts learns of the changeling kaer's existence. The changelings have lined the inside of their kaer with the bones of living beings, twisted into eerily beautiful shapes—it seems not even the taint of the Horrors could rob them of their artistic gifts. These sculptures are extremely rare (for obvious reasons), and certain collectors pay immense sums for them. The dazzling profit to be made continues to lure the foolhardy, desperate, or simply greedy adventurer to dare the perils of the changeling's kaer, despite the fact that few ever return. The aristocrat hires the characters to get a few bone sculptures for him, promising them wealth beyond their wildest dreams.

Cheetah

The cheetah is a long-legged and swift running cat, with black spots, yellowish-brown fur, and non-retractable claws. These creatures are most likely to be encountered in plains regions near Barsaive's forests.

DEX: 8 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 4
PER: 5 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 9
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 11
Damage:
Bite (5): 10; 2×Claws (3): 8
Death: 30
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness: 21

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 6
Movement: 9

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Climbing [S] (2): 10, Enhanced Senses (Listen, Sight) (2): 7, Great Leap [S] (2): 10, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk [S] (2): 10, Sprint [T] (5)

Rules

Unlike other cats this size, a cheetah's high speed is what makes it a threat. Using their Sprint power, cheetahs can quickly cover any intervening ground and take their prey by surprise—running off with the body before a herd (or group of adventurers) realizes what hit them. The cheetah's speed makes up for its low endurance. Cheetahs will usually flee before they get involved in a fight.

Pounce: The cheetah may move up to twice its Movement Rate and still make an attack in the first round of combat.

Cockatrice

A solitary, silent, and deadly hunter, the cockatrice gathers in packs only during mating season. This large earth-bound bird appears to be half rooster, half lizard, and bears a passing resemblance to the basilisk. Approximately 6 feet in length, the cockatrice is covered with many-hued feathers, except for its bare legs and tail. The feathers are anything but the soft, silky down to which most Namegivers are accustomed; they are rough enough to draw blood from a human's, elf's, or dwarf's fragile skin. The cockatrice prefers wide plains such as those near Parlainth and Iopos, but they have also been spotted in the Badlands near Travar and the Scytha Mountains.



A cockatrice's short, stubby wings are useless for flying, but can help the creatures double or even triple the distance they can jump. Unlike the basilisk, which looks most like a lizard, the cockatrice shows much more of the bird in its appearance. The rooster's comb atop the cockatrice's head leads the gullible to suppose it akin to the basilisk, which it is not. A cockatrice's mouth is a perfect blending of a chicken's beak and a lizard's jaws, and though its legs look like a lizard's, the knee joint bends backward like a bird's. The cockatrice's only reptilian feature is its snake-like tail, which is often half the length of the entire creature.

It hunts by charging its victims and leaping on them, carefully placing its lizard feet to make no sound that might alert its prey. It can leap amazing distances when trying to land on its victim's back, biting and clawing. Tiny hooked barbs grow all over its tail, able to pierce the victim's skin and inject a paralytic poison. When the cockatrice strikes or even lightly brushes a victim with its tail, the tiny hooks dig into the skin and break free from the creature. The paralytic poison will immobilize a victim and leave it entirely at the mercy of the cockatrice. These wickedly sharp hooks grow so fast that if a cockatrice cannot leave them in some hapless foe's hide, it must scrape its tail against a tree or rock every two days or so to remove them and give fresh barbs ample room to emerge.

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

Initiative: 8
Actions: 2
Attack (2): 9
Damage:
Claws (2): 8; Tail (3): 9 (poison)
Death: 52
Unconsciousness: 42
Wound Threshold: 11

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 2
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 6
Movement: 7

Legend Award: Third Circle

Powers: Durability (2), Great Leap [S] (3): 10, Poison [SD 9; Paralysis]

Loot: Feathers worth D6×10 silver pieces, blood worth 5D6×10 silver pieces, and venomous barbs worth 2D6×10 silver pieces (all worth Legend Points)

Rules

Though deadly, cockatrices fight like cowards. They often take on creatures far larger than themselves, but they always attack from behind. If a cockatrice is met head on, it will do everything it can to get behind its victim, trying to leap at its target with outstretched claws, and raking its victim's back with its large claws and barbed tail.

Back Attack: To land on its victim, the cockatrice makes a Great Leap Test against the target's Physical Defense. If this test fails, the cockatrice has missed its target by a few feet to one side or the other. If struck, any target weighing less than 300 pounds must make a successful Knockdown Test against the creature's Great Leap Step to avoid being knocked to the ground.

Barbed Tail: The tail barbs automatically pierce cloth armor or anything lighter, sending paralytic poison into the victim's flesh. If the cockatrice manages to Wound its target, the victim suffers the effects of its poison (see **Poison**, p.123). This paralysis last 10 rounds, long enough for the cockatrice to kill its victim and begin feasting.

Coward: When presented with the opportunity to attack a creature larger than itself from behind, this cowardly creature must make a successful Willpower Test against its own Perception Step to avoid leaping into combat.

Adventure Hook

According to Theran and Barsaivian alchemists, a cockatrice's blood can help to remove a Horror mark. A government official who recently suffered an unfortunate encounter with a

Horror hires the characters to bring him a live cockatrice so that he can use its fresh blood to remove the Horror's taint.

Crakbill

Crakbills are 75-pound, five-foot-tall, carnivorous birds with necks extending to just over half their height. They travel in gaggles of 3 to 18 birds. Using their heavy bills like stone hatchets, the birds crack open the skulls of recent kills or paralyzed prey and feast on the brains of their victims. The bills are less useful against mobile targets than their fearsome appearance suggests. Though crakbills have skulls and body and leg bones, their necks contain no vertebrae. Instead, a crakbill's neck is a thin tube of interwoven muscle. A flexible spiral of magical material that looks like burnished copper connects the skull to the body and reinforces the neck muscles.

DEX: 5 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 5
PER: 2 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 5
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Bite (2): 9
Death: 31
Unconsciousness: 22
Wound Threshold: 8
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 4
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 7

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Breath Weapon [Paralyzing Stream; see text] (3): 10, Spellcasting (4): 6

Loot: Neck cord worth D6×10 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Rules

The crakbill's most potent weapon is its paralyzing breath, which the bird spews in an orange, gaseous stream around a single victim.

Breath Weapon: Their Paralyzing breath can only be used at close combat range, thus crakbills combine the breath weapon attack with a special running attack in which they run full speed past the intended victim and hiss orange vapor at him in passing. A character Wounded by the breath weapon becomes Paralyzed and automatically becomes Knocked Down. To break the paralysis, the character must make a successful Willpower (10) Test. Crakbills continue these running attacks until at least one or two victims succumb to paralysis. This attack is similar to the Splitting Movement combat option (***Player's Guide*** p.226). Once the crakbills have dropped a victim, the birds feed on the paralyzed body.



Creeping Vines

Like many dangerous plants in Barsaive, creeping vines look like ordinary vines. Most of the vines grow within old ruins, most notably the ruins of Parlainth. Though possessed of animal-level intelligence, creeping vines are not smart enough to recognize or react to social interactions.

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

Initiative: 7
Actions: 2
Attack (2): 10
Damage:
Thorn Whip (3): 9
Death: 53
Unconsciousness: None
Wound Threshold: 9
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: NA
Physical Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 4
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: None
Movement: 3

Legend Award: Third Circle

Powers: Durability (3), Silent Walk [S] (2): 10

Rules

Creeping vines possess a malign, animal-level intelligence and will attack any animal or character within the vines' 2-yard (1 hex) reach. Creeping vines make two attacks per combat round, using their sharp leaves and thorns. In some rare cases, creeping vines can move into attack range instead of waiting for a victim to venture close enough. In addition to a standard assault, creeping vines can also grapple (***Player's Guide***, p.230) characters within their reach. Once they attack a target, creeping vines continue to attack until the target moves beyond their attack range, the vines are destroyed, or the target dies. Large and tough, creeping vines have an unusually high Death Rating for a plant.

Mindless: Powers (such as the Mind Wave talent and Mind Fog spell) that affect a victim's mind have no effect on creeping vines.

Crojen

Crojen are deadly predators that hunt in packs of five to ten males and females in the Servos and Liaj jungles. Small black tigers that resemble panther cubs even when fully grown, crojen are roughly two feet long and one foot tall at the shoulder. Their tails add another foot to their body length, though adventurers who have come into contact with them swear that these creatures are larger.

DEX: 12 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 9
PER: 6 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 12
Actions: 2 (see text)
Attack (5): 17 (see text)
Damage:
Bite (5): 15; 2×Claws (2): 12
Death: 80
Unconsciousness: 68 (see text)
Wound Threshold: 14
Physical Defense: 15
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 3
Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 11
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Fifth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Powers: Astral Sight [T] (5): 11, Climbing [S] (5): 17, Durability (5), Enhanced Senses (Listen, Sight) (2): 8, Great Leap [S] (5): 17, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk [S] (5): 17, Sprint (2)

Rules

Crojen patiently hunt their prey for days if necessary, using both normal vision and Astral Sight. This special power makes it hard to elude these creatures except by magic. Crojen have a ferocious bite-and-claw attack, which legend says can rip apart a full-grown troll in just over a minute. No armor can withstand a crojen attack. All of a crojen's attacks require one result level less to inflict Armor-Defeating Hits (usually a Good result).

Feeding Frenzy: A crojen that gets a taste of flesh and blood may go into a feeding frenzy. Each round after it makes a successful attack, the crojen must make a Willpower (7) Test. If the test fails, the crojen slips into a wild feeding frenzy. Crojen normally attack using their claws to rend their victim's flesh. When in a feeding frenzy, however, the crojen also bites its prey, making a third attack at the end of the round, after all other combatants have taken their actions. A character cannot reserve his action in order to move after the crojen's third attack; the crojen's bite is always the last attack during a combat round. Once in a feeding frenzy, a crojen will not break off an attack and cannot be knocked unconscious; the only way to stop one is to kill it. The feeding frenzy will last as long as there is fresh meat nearby. When there is nothing else left to attack or eat, the crojen will leave the area.

DEATH MOTH



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

Initiative: 7
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 9
Damage:
Stinger (1): 4 (poison)
Death: 38
Unconsciousness: 27
Wound Threshold: 6

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0
Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 3
Movement: 8*

Legend Award: Second Circle

* This value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Durability (2), Frighten (4): 8, Poison [SD 8; Amnesia and Paralysis; see text]

Loot: Two wings, highly prized for clothing, worth 200 silver pieces each (worth Legend Points)

This repulsive insect, called the nocturnal headhunter by some scholars, looks deceptively harmless. It greatly resembles a moon moth, growing to a length of two feet or so, with a wingspan of five feet, and even possessing similar coloring. Most death moths are dark blue to dull black, though there are tales of lilac-colored ones in remote parts of Barsaive. Like the moon moth, the death moth has six legs that end in hooked claws and two sets of wings, the first set of which serve as protection for its cobweb-thin flying wings. The moon moth, of course, is a harmless flying nuisance. The death moth can kill. The only visible difference between the death moth and the moon moth is a horrible, leering face peering up from the death moth's underbelly, as if a Horror had tattooed its image on the moth's underside. Close examination reveals that this image is natural coloring—but most people who encounter the things are far too terrified to inspect them. From any distance greater than a few feet away, the death moth looks like the bodiless head of a madman floating through the air—a sight to send even the boldest adventurer into screaming fits.

The death moth bears a long barbed stinger at the end of its belly. The venom inside this stinger is potent enough to paralyze almost any victim. Only those with a tremendously strong constitution can fight the paralysis, and even they usually succumb to the venom's second effect—the poison makes the victim forget the past four hours of his life, including encountering the moth.

The death moth attacks other living things because it must lay its eggs in a living host. The eggs live in the venom and enter the host when he or she or it is stung. The death moth prefers large animals such as cattle or horses, but willingly uses Namegivers. It most often stings its victims in the shoulders and back, laying its eggs in the muscles. Within little more than two weeks, the infesting larvae completely consume their host's internal organs. Once the insects reach a length of six inches, they eat their way out of the host's body in search of a nearby tree or house to climb, in whose branches or eaves they cocoon. Upon leaving the cocoon as adult death moths, they must mate and find a host for their eggs within two weeks, and then they die.

Rules

In direct combat, the death moth is ineffective. Its stinger is its only natural weapon, and the moth always tries to sting its victims in an unarmored spot. However, the moth excels at trapping hosts in which to lay its eggs.

Frighten: To stop potential hosts dead in their tracks with fear, the death moth must show its grim visage. In order to use its Frighten power, the moth flies over a victim. On an Average result, the victim is frightened but able to flee from the moth. On a Good result, the victim is paralyzed by fear for a number of rounds equal to the moth's Frighten Rank. On an Excellent or Extraordinary result, the victim faints in terror.

Laying Eggs: Once the death moth has trapped its victim through fear, it injects paralytic venom into the body that also erases short-term memory. If the poison takes effect (see **Poison**, p.123), the victim is completely paralyzed for the next 15 rounds. During this time, the moth lays its eggs in the victim's flesh. The victim will remember nothing of the past four hours once the paralysis wears off. Within a week to ten days, the larvae of the death moth begin to gnaw on the victim's internal organs, causing intense pain. This dreadful feeding causes Step 8 damage once per day and imposes a –2 penalty on all Action Tests made by the victim. Unless the creatures are destroyed, the afflicted character dies in short order.

Adventure Hook

A traveling companion of the characters goes off on his own into the forest, where a death moth attacks him and implants its eggs

in his back. He returns to his companions less than an hour after he left, shaken and unable to remember the events of the past few hours. The characters investigate their friend's memory loss and stumble over a nest of eight or nine death moths nearby.

Demiwraith

Demiwraiths are an unusual type of animated dead. Not true undead, such as ghouls or ghosts, these hateful spirits possessed victims during the long years of the Scourge and eventually merged with the host body. Some of these spirits could not separate themselves from their hosts when the hosts died, and became demiwraiths. Demiwraiths animate the dead flesh that imprisons them, and revel in destroying the living. A black, foggy astral substance often shrouds a demiwraith's body, giving these beings an appearance similar to that of a true wraith.

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

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 9
Damage:
Claws (3): 9
Death: 50
Unconsciousness: None
Wound Threshold: 10
Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 9 (14; see text)
Social Defense: 13
Physical Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 4 (9; see text)
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 6
Movement: 6

Legend Award: Second Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Powers: Chilling Touch (4): 12, Durability (2)

Loot: D4 small gems, each worth D12×10 silver pieces, or a total of 5D6×10 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Rules

Because a demiwraith is not truly undead, increase its Spell Defense and Mystic Armor by +5 against spells or powers specifically designed to target undead beings.

Dog

Like cats, dogs are found in almost all populated areas of Barsaive, since they are often kept as pets by Namegivers of all races. Dogs can be trained for all kind of things, but are mostly used as guardians.

Guard Dog

Guard dogs are trained to guard a house or an area. They bark at anyone who enters their territory and will attack if the intruder persists.

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

Initiative: 4
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 6
Damage:
Bite (5): 10
Death: 26
Unconsciousness: 17
Wound Threshold: 6
Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 6
Movement: 7

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Battle Shout (Bark) [S] (2): 6, Enhanced Senses (Listen, Sight, Smell) (3): 8

Hunting Dog

Dogs trained for hunting are used to hunt and track down other animals and creatures. They usually try to help their masters in the hunt, but can bring down the prey if ordered to do so.

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

Initiative: 5
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Bite (5): 10
Death: 26
Rating: 17
Wound Threshold: 6
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 6
Movement: 7

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 7, Great Leap [S] (2): 7, Hunting [S] (2): 7, Tracking [S] (2): 7

War Dog

These dogs are a rare breed, as they need careful training. Bred for aggression, these animals are trained for war and attack to kill on command.

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

Initiative: 5
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 8
Damage:
Bite (5): 11
Death: 30
Unconsciousness: 21
Wound Threshold: 7
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 7

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 6, Great Leap [S] (2): 7

Dyre

The dyre eats grasses, travels in herds, and appears to pose little danger to adventurers. Ork Cavalrymen prize the dyre as a mount because of its huge size, quick brain, and irritable temper. Most ork cavalries have at least one or two in their ranks, if not several. Anyone foolish enough to think the dyre a placid, docile creature because it is a mere herd-beast should think twice before hunting one. The slightest annoyance triggers a killing frenzy in these huge animals, another trait that their ork riders value. An ork enjoys nothing more than guiding this great mount into battle and riding its ferocious wave of destruction, spearing enemies on all sides with his long lance.

Standing only a little taller than twelve feet at the shoulder; the dyre is covered in long, matted brown fur. Its back rises sharply in the middle as if humped, and it resembles a cross between a bear and bull. Like a bear, the dyre has squat, stubby legs and a short tail. Its head looks like a bull's, only wider, with sharply curving horns. The beast has hardly any neck at all, holding its head so low to the ground that only its back-hump shows over the top of the high plains grass. A dyre looks ferocious, but it eats no meat—only grasses such as abound on the plains near Parlainth and the ancient ork kingdom of Cara Fahd. Dyres will eat other plants when they can get them, and consider fruits and vegetables rare delicacies. Indeed, they will often eat themselves ill given a chance. To keep them healthy, their ork riders often muzzle them when not on the battlefield.

A herd of wild dyres numbers about forty animals—mostly females, half-grown males, and young. Every herd has only one adult male, who has the sole privilege of mating with the females. Once a young dyre reaches maturity, the herd leader challenges him and usually forces him out. After a few years on his own, the hardened young male often returns to the pack to challenge the

leader—those not strengthened by their solitary ordeal die. Most returning males are more than a match for the leader, and so often win the fight to become the new herd leader. Mating season comes only once every two years, and so very few herd leaders mate more than once or twice with the females before being deposed.

When approached by a predator, the dyres gather into a huge circle with the young at the center. The females stand on the outside of the circle to hold off attackers. Most predators lack the prodigious strength necessary to take down a healthy adult, and won't risk getting crushed by the dyres' hooves or speared with their wicked horns for the slight chance of bringing down a young animal.

DEX: 6 **STR**: 14 **TOU**: 14
PER: 5 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 5
Actions: 1
Attack (5): 11
Damage:
Charge (5): 19
Horn Sweep (1): 15 (see text); Trample (2): 16
Death: 70
Unconsciousness: 63
Wound Threshold: 20
Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 2
Recovery Tests: 7
Knockdown: 15
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Fifth Circle

Powers: Charge (4), Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 7

Rules

In close combat, the dyre attempts to gore its opponent with its huge horns. When battling an opponent human-sized or smaller, the dyre will often sweep its horns toward him or her, using the Attacking to Knockdown combat option (***Player's Guide*** p.222). If successful, this sweep will then throw its enemy anywhere from 3 to 6 yards into the air (use the **Falling Damage** rules, p.109, to determine how much damage the victim takes from plummeting to the ground). Once its victim has landed, the dyre tries to trample him to death. In each round that the victim is on the ground near the dyre, the beast must make a successful Attack Test to strike the victim with its hooves. Dyres can be trained using the Animal Training talent or skill.

Adventure Hook

The characters briefly join an ork scorcher band, during which time they learn ancient scorcher ways of sharpening weapons, riding mounts, fighting honorably, and breaking in dyre calves. In a trial by fire, the scorcher leader orders the characters to find a dyre herd and retrieve a few young beasts for training.

EAGLE

Eagles are large birds of prey, characterized by a powerful, hooked bill, broad wings; and strong, soaring flight. Eagles can be found almost everywhere in Barsaive, hunting for food in the air and on the ground.

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

Initiative: 5
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 8
Damage:
Bite (4): 9
Death: 30
Unconsciousness: 21
Wound Threshold: 7
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5
Movement: 2/9*

Legend Award: First Circle

* The second value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Sight) (5): 11



EARTH Q'WRIL

This furred creature looks part mole and part serpent, with a bird-like beak. About as long as a human's forearm, the earth q'wril looks harmless. Most of these beasts pose no threat to anything save a few plants. The q'wril feeds on roots, berries, and fruit, though some few have developed a taste for meat. These latter are quite rare, and few adventurers will likely encounter them. The earth q'wril can move through the earth as easily as a fish through water. The beast uses its diamond-hard, pyramid-shaped beak to break through all but stone and the hardest clay. The beak also dribbles a thin fluid, which acts as a lubricant and has a magical property that somehow thins the soil, allowing the beast to pass through it as if the earth had no more substance than water. Most q'wril travel just a few feet below the earth's surface, though they can move as far below ground as they desire.

The q'wril's senses are abnormally sharp. Scholars, as usual, squabble endlessly over the reason; some believe that the beast's furry coat is sensitive enough to detect objects on the ground above it, while others insist that the creature has some other unknown sense that makes it aware of its surroundings. Still others claim the q'wril's beak has some mystical property apart from the magic liquid it secretes, basing this staggeringly far-fetched assumption on the rapid clicking of the beak below the soil that is occasionally heard. The q'wril's extraordinary senses, combined with its prowess at hurling itself out of the earth with great force, enables this subterranean beast to find the fruit on which it lives. The q'wril can burst from the ground and seize objects many feet above it, bounding into the boughs of an oak to graze on its leaves or plucking a tasty apple from an exposed branch. It can even spear other small animals, leaping into them like a tiny furred javelin. The surface disturbance caused by the q'wril's subterranean movement ceases just before it leaps because the animal is sinking deeper into the soil to get a longer run at the surface.

The q'wril likes the company of its fellows, often moving in groups of twenty or more. A pod of q'wril cresting above the fields or weaving around the trunks of trees below a forest floor is one of Barsaive's most fascinating sights, though most of Barsaive's farmers would not agree. The creature's taste for roots makes the q'wril the farmer's enemy; a large pod can devastate a field in a scant few days. In areas plagued by q'wril, the working folk build stone corrals around their fields and bury stone slabs in the soil to keep the creatures from burrowing in and then erect palisades upon the stone foundations to stop the beast from leaping over the top. Many farms in these areas resemble intricate mazes or daunting fortifications, all to stop the depredations of a creature smaller than a dog.

Villages plagued by the q'wril rarely seek out and exterminate the animals, having learned from bitter experience that they will only lose many Namegiver lives in the process. The creatures attack in pods, bursting suddenly through the earth at blinding speed and using their deadly beaks to stab their attackers through even the heaviest armor. Elves prize these beaks as arrowheads, and some windlings use them as spear tips when they can get them.

DEX: 5 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 2
PER: 2 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 5
Actions: 1
Attack (1): 6
Damage:
Bite (2): 4 (see text)

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 3
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death: 19
Unconsciousness: 10
Wound Threshold: 3

Recovery Tests: 1/2 days
Knockdown: 3
Movement: 7/3*

Legend Award: First Circle

* The second value is the creature's burrowing Movement Rate

Powers: Locate Target (4): 6

Loot: Triangular beak worth 25 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Rules

The tiny earth q'wril is a small threat by itself, but potentially deadly in numbers. This creature always travels in groups of at least twenty and an entire pod of q'wril can dispatch an unwary victim quickly and easily. A q'wril's sharp bite causes little damage, but its bill is enormously strong. The q'wril requires one result level less to achieve an Armor-Defeating Hit on its victim (usually a Good result) with its beak.

Locate Target: The earth q'wril's Locate Target power allows them to sense targets on the earth's surface from underground. The power's range is 8 yards (4 hexes).

Adventure Hook

A river near a village where the characters are staying floods the feeding grounds of the local q'wril population, forcing them to plunder the farmers' fields to survive. The farmers turn to the characters to help them exterminate the unwanted pests, not knowing how deadly an opponent these small creatures can be.

EDDYPAD

Eddypads resemble large lily pads. Ranging in size from 3 to 60 feet across, eddypads float just below the surface of the river, or any of its numerous tributaries or adjacent pools. Even the slightest change in current may cause an eddypad to close like a flower around a passing creature. Within minutes, the eddypad constricts and forms a skin-tight cocoon around its prey.

Although the inner surface of an eddypad is delicate, the outer layer is a tough, fibrous membrane through which victims must cut to escape. Swimmers are the most common victims of eddypads, but even small boats can fall victim to larger pads.

DEX: 8 **STR**: 8 **TOU**: 8
PER: 3 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 9
Actions: 1
Attack (4): 12
Damage: Engulf (see text)

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: None
Physical Armor: 10 (13)
Mystic Armor: 2

Death: 55
Unconsciousness: None
Wound Threshold: 12 (15)

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 8
Movement: NA

Legend Award: Third Circle

Powers: Durability (2), Engulf (2): 10, Spellcasting (4): 7

Rules

In the statistics above, the Physical Armor Rating in parentheses represents the outer layer of the eddypad. An engulfed character may free himself—or another character may free him—by inflicting a Wound on the eddypad with an attack. However, any external attack that inflicts an Armor-Defeating Hit on the eddypad also damages anyone trapped inside (the character's own armor protects him as normal, however).

ELEPHANT

These large, long-nosed herbivorous mammals are often trained to serve as war mounts in the provinces of Creana, Indrisa, and Thera. Elephants are often used as beasts of burden for transporting goods as well. In Barsaive, elephants are typically found in the plains and forested regions.

DEX: 4 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 9
PER: 4 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 3
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 7
Damage:
Charge (8): 20
Trample (2): 14; Tusks (4): 16

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

Death: 50
Unconsciousness: 43
Wound Threshold: 14

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 13
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Third Circle

Powers: Charge (4), Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 6

Rules

If provoked, elephants tend to gore their unfortunate victims with their tusks before using their hooves to trample them down.

ESPAGRA

Flying predators colored a brilliant shade of blue, espagra resemble small dragons except for their iguana-like heads. An espagra's wingspan often reaches twelve feet. Though quick and agile flyers, espagra do not strike opponents while in flight, preferring to swoop down upon an enemy, knock him down, and continue the struggle on the ground. Some espagra scales exude elemental air magic. These scales add luster and brilliance to the other scales, making the creature shimmer in a way that other espagra—and many races—find appealing. Master clothiers can tailor garments using espagra scales (***Player's Guide***, p.254); such clothes look richer than other fine garments, even those decorated with precious jewels.

DEX: 9 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 8
PER: 6 **WIL**: 10 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 10
Actions: 3
Attack (3): 12
Damage:
2×Claws (3): 9; Tail (3): 9

Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 6

Death: 62
Unconsciousness: 51
Wound Threshold: 13

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 9*

Legend Award: Third Circle (1 per 2 PC)

* This value is also the creature's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Durability (3)

Loot: Scales worth D20×10 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)



Rules

An agile beast, the espagra can strike at three different targets simultaneously without penalty, one with each attack, as long as the targets stand within 1 hex of each other.

Swooping Attack: An espagra's swooping attack gains a +7 bonus to the Damage Test if the creature hits the target character, but a swooping espagra sacrifices its remaining two attacks that round. An espagra may make a swooping attack after it has used its full Flying Movement Rate of 9, and may follow up with three non-Swooping attacks starting in the following round.

ETHANDRILLE

The ethandrille represents a tragedy like that of the changeling. Once, the ethandrille was a creature with a place in the life of the Universe, a proud beast that roamed the wilds of the Wyrm Wood. Those ethandrilles preyed on the smaller animals of the forests and even occasionally took on larger prey, such as full-grown elk. But then the accursed blood elves used their terrible magic to transform the ethandrille into a fearsome abomination as bad as they. The blood elves not only corrupted themselves with their powerful and dangerous magic during the Scourge—they also corrupted all the innocent living things around them, living things that had no choice in the matter.

Before the blood elves' magic corrupted them, ethandrilles were a kind of wolf only a little larger than big dogs. The wretched creatures now known as ethandrilles still look somewhat the same as their forerunners once did; covered in brown and gray fur to better conceal themselves in the forests. Thorns pierce the thin skin around the ethandrilles' mouths and stretched their fur in a horrible manner where their pelts were too thick for the thorns to penetrate. The poor beasts look tortured, as indeed they are. Like the blood elves, ethandrilles are in constant agony from the thorns and are immune to the pain-causing powers of the Horrors. The thorn magic also made the ethandrilles larger and fiercer, and enhanced their already keen tracking abilities. In addition, the magic gave them the ability to discharge a mighty bolt of lightning at an opponent before actually engaging in combat.

The blood elves have domesticated the once-proud ethandrille, using the beasts as draft animals, pets, and more. The elves use ethandrilles to ferry supplies and food from tree to tree, stand guard throughout the forest, and drive intruders back across the wood's borders.

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

Initiative: 10
Actions: 2
Attack (3): 11
Damage:
Bite (5): 12

Death: 52
Unconsciousness: 41
Wound Threshold: 9

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 4

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 8
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Third Circle

Powers: Battle Shout [S] (Howl) (3): 7, Durability (3), Great Leap [S] (3): 11, Lightning (1): 9, Locate Target (2): 7, Maneuver [S] (3): 11, Spellcasting (4): 9, Sprint (2), Tracking [S] (3): 8

Rules

An ethandrille can locate any intruders within their territory within a matter of minutes, using their Locate Target power. The Locate Target power's range is 20 yards (10 hexes). One of the reasons these magical wolves hunt in packs is to ensure that at least one of them can successfully track any invader. Before ethandrilles attack physically, they usually attempt to strike their target with their Lightning power.

Adventure Hook

A rich patron hires the characters to capture a few ethandrilles from the Blood Wood, a task much easier said than done. From the moment the characters arrive in the Blood Wood, the ethandrilles follow them. Within a day or two, the elves of the Blood Wood discover the characters and demand that they leave the forest. If the characters refuse, the ethandrilles drive them out; the characters will need all their skill to get out of Blood Wood alive.

FALCON

Falcons are small birds of prey, characterized by long, pointed, and powerful wings, and capable of swift flight. Falcons can be found almost everywhere in Barsaive, hunting for prey. These birds are typically trained for hunting.

DEX: 8 **STR**: 3 **TOU**: 4
PER: 7 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 8
Actions: 2
Attack (3): 11
Damage:
Beak (5): 8; 2×Claws (3): 6
Death: 40
Unconsciousness: 29
Wound Threshold: 7

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6
Movement: 2/9*

Legend Award: Third Circle

* The second value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Durability (2), (1), Enhanced Senses [Sight] (2): 9, Hunting [S] (3): 9, Tracking [S] (3): 10

Rules

Swooping Attack: A falcon's swooping attack gains a +4 bonus to the Damage Test if the falcon hits the target character, but a swooping falcon sacrifices its other attack that round. A falcon may make a swooping attack after it has used its full Movement Rate of 9, and may make two non-swooping attacks in the following round.

FIREBIRD

The firebird is a truly beautiful and fascinating creature; roaming the air above the molten lava of the Death's Sea, it is one of the many living creatures that inhabit that supposedly barren

wasteland. The firebird is closely related to the fire eagle, with a wingspan of about 10 feet, but its feathers change color depending on its surroundings. Like most creatures of the Death's Sea, the firebird can tolerate the intense heat of the lava and the sun overhead without burning; however, the firebird does not care much for such temperatures. When it glides over the lava in search of food, it changes its feathers to a burnished silver to reflect the heat of the updrafts back down into the sea. Other color changes help it hide from predators; the firebird can change color to match the reddish lava flows or the brown of a hardened-lava island, depending on its needs.

Mating firebirds are among Barsaive's most amazing sights. The male hunts down a large creature as a gift for the female, and then the female and the male feast on the carcass. After mating, the female lays several eggs, often more than twenty, each the size of a human's fist. Life is harsh in the Death's Sea; almost all of the eggs and hatchlings are eaten by other predators within a year, and so only a large clutch of eggs will produce enough offspring to ensure that a few will live to adulthood. The firebird's existence is further threatened by certain magicians who will pay handsome sums for firebird eggs, feathers, and hatchlings so as to extract elemental fire from them.

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

Initiative: 8 **Physical Defense:** 10
Actions: 2 **Spell Defense:** 6
Attack (3): 11 **Social Defense:** 7
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 2
Bite (2): 6; 2×Claws (1): 5 **Mystic Armor:** 2
Death: 50 **Recovery Tests:** 2
Unconsciousness: 39 **Knockdown:** 4
Wound Threshold: 8 **Movement:** 2/10*

Legend Award: Third Circle (1 per 2 PC)

* The second value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Burning Aura (6), Color Change (see text), Durability (3), Enhanced Senses [Sight] (2): 6

Loot: Feathers worth D6×10 silver pieces, eggs worth 3D6×10 silver pieces, and hatchlings worth 300 silver pieces each (all worth Legend Points)

Rules

When the firebird fights, it uses its unique Color Change power to change to a dull black and flies in a long, low circle over the boiling lava in order to build up tremendous heat in its body. It then flies close to its foe, upon which its Burning Aura can inflict great damage without even a touch. The firebird finds its smoldering-hot body temperature painful, but endurable; its enemy, however, usually cannot withstand the heat. Clothing, sails, even some kinds of armor, regularly burst into flame when a firebird passes close by. As for weapons with which one might strike a firebird, a wooden club or staff becomes an instant torch and a sword or other metal weapon becomes soft and malleable after a blow or two. Wooden airships are especially vulnerable to a firebird's attacks unless specially treated to resist flames.

The firebird also uses its weight as a devastating offensive weapon. It often streaks toward its foe at blinding speed and strikes him. The luckiest victim of such a collision suffers truly dreadful burns; the impact knocks the less fortunate off their ship or island and into the lethal lava below.

Color Change: To change color, the firebird must make a successful Spellcasting (6) Test. When it changes to silver, potential observers gain a +3 bonus to all Perception Tests to spot the creature. When it attempts to camouflage itself, potential observers suffer a –3 penalty to all such Perception Tests.

Immunity to Fire: Because the firebird can withstand such high temperatures, it suffers no damage from mundane fire attacks, and only a quarter of normal damage from magical and elemental fire attacks. Though the firebird can resist the intense heat of the Death's Sea, it can burn. If it falls into the lava, it will die immediately.

Adventure Hook

While working on an airship mining elemental fire, the characters are sent down to a temporary island in the Death's Sea. As they walk across the island, they discover a nest of fresh firebird eggs. The parent birds are out hunting, providing the characters with the perfect opportunity to scoop up the eggs in order to sell them when they reach civilization. After the parents return to find the nest empty, however, they will search far and wide for the criminals who stole their children.

Fire Eagle

Fire eagles are predatory birds that nest atop the bizarre rock formations that form along the shores of Death's Sea. Their 12 foot wingspan makes these birds resemble large eagles with continually flaming feathers, the flames fuelled by the elemental fire in their blood. The razor-sharp claws of fire eagles are a shiny black and usually more than four inches long. These birds are fiercely territorial; only one person has ever claimed to have tamed one, and that was the great Beastmaster Nil Tasio of the Dragon Mountains.

Fire eagle feathers do not remain on fire if taken from their bodies; the fire is a side-effect of the elemental fire that courses through their blood. The feathers possess certain other qualities that alchemists, Elementalists, and sages find valuable, however, and can be sold for considerable profit. Fire eagle eggs throb with elemental fire. They are extremely rare and extremely valuable, mostly because many magic items based on elemental fire contain pieces of fire eagle egg.

DEX: 11 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 4
PER: 5 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 11 **Physical Defense:** 14
Actions: 2 **Spell Defense:** 8
Attack (4): 15 **Social Defense:** 8
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 0



Beak (3): 8; 2×Claws (2): 7
Death: 60
Unconsciousness: 46
Wound Threshold: 7
Mystic Armor: 2
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5
Movement: 2/10*

Legend Award: Fourth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

* The second value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Burning Aura (8), Durability (5), Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 7, Fire Trail (3): 8, Spellcasting (4): 9

Loot: Eggs and feathers containing True fire worth 100 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Rules

Fire eagles make Swooping attacks, but do not incur any penalties for Splitting Movement (***Player's Guide***, p.226). They attack primarily with their claws, often using their deadly Fire Trail power as a follow-up. If encountered on the ground, a fire eagle will attack with its beak and claws.

FIRESCALE

These huge, four-legged animals resemble thundra beasts and are large enough for trolls to use as mounts. These beasts are known to live only in the Scol Mountains of Barsaive. Firescales stand more than eight feet tall at the shoulder, are twelve to fifteen feet long, and weigh well over 1,000 pounds. Their rock-like, deep-red hides resemble dragon scales.

Trolls of the Firescale moot use these creatures as mounts. They consider the beasts sacred; to slay one for its blood or horns is unthinkable, and they viciously attack any who dare attempt to do so. Only if a firescale dies in battle do the Firescale trolls consider using it for such purposes.

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

Initiative: 9
Actions: 2
Attack (5): 13
Damage:
Charge (8): 20;
Horns (4): 16; Trample (2): 14
Death: 70
Unconsciousness: 62
Wound Threshold: 19
Physical Defense: 9
Social Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 8
Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 13
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Fifth Circle

Powers: Breath Weapon [Fire; 3/day] (5): 13, Charge (4), Climbing^{S} (5): 13, Durability (1), Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 7, Spellcasting (7): 12

Loot: Blood worth 50 silver pieces per gallon, and horns worth 2D6×10 silver pieces (all worth Legend Points)

Rules

Like thundra beasts, firescales have a large horn in the center of their foreheads, as well as one on either side of their skulls, all of which they use to gore their victims. Firescales also often trample their victims, crushing unlucky targets under their huge hooves.

Firescales can attack twice per round, using two gore attacks, two trample attacks or one of each. A firescale's Breath Weapon allows them to breathe gouts of flame at their victims as they charge by.

True Fire: Because these creatures are magical, their horns and blood are valuable to magicians and alchemists. Distilling the blood of a firescale (which requires a complex alchemical ritual) allows a magician to harvest kernels of True fire from it. Each gallon of distilled firescale blood yields one kernel of True fire. Firescale horns are used to create many different potions and also to craft magical weapons.



GATE HOUND

The gate hound is an aberration not of Nature, but of certain Namegivers' meddling with Nature. In the last few years before the Scourge, many magicians searched frantically for ways to protect the Namegiver races from the Horrors. The sensible ones built the kaers and citadels. A few mages attempted to lower the magic levels around their city of Chasteyn so that the Horrors would never arrive there. However, this was a monumental task—halting the natural cycle of magic is far beyond the ability of any magician in Barsaive, or anywhere else in the world. To achieve their goal, the magicians chose to create a creature that could drain magic. Their experiment failed to produce the desired result; instead, it produced the gate hound, a creature of limited ability to drain magic and an enormous appetite for warm flesh.

The gate hound resembles a giant dog or wolf, often standing 6 feet tall at the shoulder. Stocky and thick-muscled, they are covered in dull red fur that seems to soak up the light. Their eyes glow with a fierce white light, not unlike a basilisk's. They have huge jaws crammed full of sharp teeth, and hunt in packs large enough to bring down almost any living creature—eight to ten hounds at least, sometimes more.

Gate hounds can drain magic, though nowhere near as well as their creators hoped. They store magical energy drained from another creature in an organ just below their thick, ugly necks. The drain is short-lived, however, wearing off within a few seconds.

More than a few magicians—perhaps the latter-day descendants of the fools who created these beasts—have attempted to harness the power of the gate hounds. Thus far, all have failed. One rumor tells of a magician who tried to use a hound's magic-draining organ to lower the level of magic around his house. He failed and drained his own magical ability; worse yet, he made the effect permanent.

DEX: 7 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 7
PER: 4 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 7
Physical Defense: 9
Actions: 1
Spell Defense: 10
Attack (2): 9
Social Defense: 7
Damage:
Bite (5): 15; Claws (2): 12
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 6
Death: 48
Recovery Tests: 3
Unconsciousness: 40
Knockdown: 11
Wound Threshold: 12
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Second Circle

Powers: Durability (1), Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 6, Great Leap [S] (2): 9, Magic Drain (2): 8, Tracking [S] (2): 6

Loot: Magic-draining organ worth 500 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Rules

In combat, gate hounds can bite or rake an opponent with their powerful claws. Their favorite tactic is to clamp their jaws down on an opponent and shake the hapless victim back and forth in an effort to break his neck using a Bite and Shake attack (p.147).

The hound can use its Magic Drain power only against other creatures; it cannot drain areas. Trying to tame or otherwise use a gate hound is impossible. The power's range is 4 yards (2 hexes).

Attracted to Magic: Like Horrors, gate hounds are drawn to magic-rich places. The two species often meet and attack each other savagely. Some secret animosity seems to exist between them; even intelligent Horrors renowned for savoring their foes' slow death over many years do not retreat from battle with gate hounds until either they or the gate hounds die.

Adventure Hook

A pack of gate hounds begins to stalk a character (or a friend of the characters) who, unknown to his companions, has a Horror mark. Rather than attack their victim, however, the hounds simply follow and watch him. The characters investigate the hounds' presence and discover the Horror mark just as the Horror itself turns up to check on its new slave. The unfortunate character with the Horror mark, as well as his companions, is immediately caught in the middle of a titanic battle between the Horror and the slavering gate hounds.

Genhis

The adult genhis is a placid, faintly foolish-looking grass eater that resembles a large cow. It travels in herds, though only in small ones. This gentle, slow-thinking creature long ago destroyed every village and town in the ancient troll Kingdom of Ustrect. Most scholars blame the razing of Ustrect on Horrors, partly to convince themselves that such destruction cannot happen again because most of the Horrors are gone.

Most people know of the adult genhis and in some areas of Barsaive even use them as meat animals. The prudent among genhis herders rid themselves of their herds every 10 years, if not more often, for it is almost impossible to tell which of the cow-like adults is a pregnant female. The young take a decade or so to grow large and strong enough to survive outside the womb, and it's when they emerge from that womb that the trouble begins. Moments after being born, young genhis begin to raze everything in their path in a frenzied search for food.

A pregnant genhis carries within her womb a large, tough, sack-shaped membrane in which the unborn infants grow. Without the membrane to restrain them, the horrible little beasts would swiftly eat their way out of their mother's body. Before giving birth, the mother genhis looks for the perfect spot in which to bring her young into the world. She greatly prefers forests and farms, which have plenty and varied food for her ravenous babies—trees, birds, deer, cattle, horses, crops, people, everything. Having chosen the birthing place, the mother genhis expels the sack from her womb and runs for her life. Within a scant few minutes of landing on the ground, the baby genhis chew their way through the sack and swiftly begin eating everything within reach.

Young genhis look nothing like their parents. Instead, they resemble a cross between a bird and a lizard, with a toothy mouth almost half the length of the entire creature. Their powerful jaws enable them to chew through anything—metal, wood, stone, and flesh. Fortunately for Barsaive, the horrid little pests frequently feast on each other soon after birth, and many a genhis brood destroys itself before doing much damage to anything else. Those that avoid becoming prey for their brood-mates can destroy countless acres of land, as well as all inhabitants, within a few hours, though they eventually spread out to destroy more isolated pockets of land. Why they don't eat each other in the womb is unknown, but it is surmised that magic plays some part in protecting them. As the genhis grow larger, they become less and less ravenous, after about five years turning into placid plant eaters. Unfortunately, most of the genhis that survive are female, and most of the females become pregnant soon after maturing.

The following game statistics represent both an adult and the dangerous baby genhis.

Adult Genhis

DEX: 5 **STR**: 9 **TOU**: 9
PER: 3 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 5
Actions: 1
Attack (1): 6
Damage:
Bite (1): 10

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1

Death: 65
Unconsciousness: 55
Wound Threshold: 13
Legend Award: Second Circle

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 10
Movement: 8

Powers: Durability (3)

Loot: Birth sac worth 100 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Baby Genhis

DEX: 9 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 3
PER: 3 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 9
Actions: 2
Attack (2): 11

Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 5

Damage:
Bite (4): 8

Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2

Death: 24
Unconsciousness: 15
Wound Threshold: 5
Legend Award: Third Circle

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 5
Movement: 8

Rules

An adult genhis is virtually harmless and fairly stupid, though it can be trained as a draft animal if the owner feels inclined to keep a nasty accident waiting to happen in his or her barn.

Baby genhis are incredibly dangerous in numbers, somewhat less so by themselves. A single brood of genhis can contain as many as 200 babies. The longer one waits before entering an area where a pregnant genhis has given birth, the greater the chance that the baby genhis will disperse. The circle of destruction wrought by these deadly pests expands rapidly, and they will often spend five days or more rampaging through a given area in search of food. Fortunately, the young genhis have no qualms about consuming each other. Within a brood's first few days of life, two hundred baby genhis may diminish to fifty to sixty animals, who will eventually cover so much area that they no longer pose much of a hazard.

Adventure Hook

A Nethermancer hires the characters to bring him a genhis' birth sac on which to try a few gruesome experiments. Of course, the magician neglects to mention what is inside the birth sac, leaving the unsuspecting characters in for a painful and dangerous surprise.

GHOUL LIZARD

The nocturnal ghoul lizard gets its name from its taste for carrion and its unusual appearance—the pale, green-white scales and raised bony ridges around the lizard's eyes and along the top of its snout resemble the upper half of a human skull. Ghoul lizards can grow up to nine feet long, including their long tails. More of the bony spikes are located in three rows down a lizard's back. These spines remain folded flat until the animal is threatened or readies itself to attack. Though primarily a carrion eater, the ghoul lizard has been known to attack weakened live prey. Though the lizard's claws and teeth are ineffective for this task, its tail is covered with short, bony poisoned spikes that can easily pierce even hard armor, like chain mail.

DEX: 5 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 6
PER: 4 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 5
Actions: 1
Attack (4): 9
Damage:
Tail (4): 10

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 0

Death: 38
Unconsciousness: 30
Wound Threshold: 10
Legend Award: Second Circle

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 8

Powers: Climbing [S] (2): 7, Poison [SD 8; Damage 8]

Rules

If a ghoul lizard Wounds its target, its victim must resist the effects of its poison, which causes damage as noted above (see **Poison**, p.123).

Spikes: Any character who fails an attack against a ghoul lizard must make a Dexterity (7) Test. If this test is failed, the would-be attacker is stuck by one of the lizard's spikes and may suffer the effects of the poison. If the Dexterity Test yields a Pathetic result, the would-be attacker automatically takes Step 3 damage. No armor protects against this damage.



GIANT CARNIVOROUS SQUIRREL

Giant carnivorous squirrels have appeared in the Blood Wood since the Scourge. Their true origin remains unknown, though some scholars from outside the Blood Wood believe that these squirrels are the results of early experiments by the blood warders. These massive rodents, nearly five times the size of ordinary squirrels, frequent the treetops, attacking any living creature they meet to sate their voracious appetites. Far more dangerous than their smaller, mundane cousins, giant carnivorous squirrels nonetheless possess many of their same instincts, including the urge to store food for later consumption. This instinct, coupled with the squirrel's carnivorous diet, produces overpowering odors of rot and decay in areas inhabited by the creatures.

DEX: 6 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 4
PER: 5 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1 (see text)
Attack (3): 9 (see text)
Damage:
Bite (4): 8 (disease; see text)

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

Death: 48
Unconsciousness: 36
Wound Threshold: 7
Legend Award: Third Circle

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5
Movement: 7*

* This value is also the creature's climbing Movement Rate

Powers: Climbing [S] (3): 9, Disease [SD 7; Debilitation], Durability (3), Great Leap [S] (3): 9,

Rules

These squirrels attack in groups of five animals, leaping upon their prey from the trees and biting with their sharp front teeth. Because they live amid the rotting carcasses of their prey, giant carnivorous squirrels often carry diseases. Consequently, any victim who suffers a Wound from a squirrel attack may contract a severely debilitating disease as well (see below). Giant carnivorous squirrels will attack and consume each other whenever other prey is unavailable, a habit that (thankfully) helps keep the carnivorous squirrel population relatively low.

Disease: Most diseases carried by these creatures have an onset time of 1–3 hours. At the end of this time, the victim must make a Toughness (7) Test. If this test fails, reduce the character's Toughness value by –1 and adjust his Toughness Step and characteristics as appropriate. Every day, the character must make another Toughness (7) Test. Each failed test further reduces the character's Toughness value by –1, along with all related characteristics. If a character's Toughness value drops to 0, he dies. A successful Toughness Test at any time prior to death allows the character to throw off the effects of the disease, and he subsequently regains lost Toughness points at the rate of +1 point per day. Throughout the course of the disease and recovery, the character suffers a penalty to all Action Tests equal to the difference between the victim's current and normal Toughness Steps.

Frenzy: If a squirrel's attack Wounds its target, the taste of blood drives the squirrel into a frenzy. Frenzied squirrels double the number of attacks they make each round and gain a +2 bonus to their Attack and Damage Tests.

GIANT SPIDER

The giant spiders of the Servos Jungle are approximately six to seven feet in length, similar in size and appearance to jehuthras—arachnid Horror constructs, p. 277—and are often mistaken for them. Horror powers or no, giant spiders are still very dangerous creatures.

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

Initiative: 5
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Bite (3): 8 (poison)

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

Death: 39
Unconsciousness: 31
Wound Threshold: 11

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 8
Movement: 8*

Legend Award: Second Circle

* This value is also the creature's climbing Movement Rate

Powers: Climbing S (2): 7, Enhanced Senses (Touch) (2): 6, Poison [SD 7; Paralysis; Damage 9], Spellcasting (5): 10, Venom (4): 9

Rules

If a target falls unconscious by the spider's venomous spit, the spider encases the victim in a thick cocoon and feeds on the victim at its leisure. A cocooned victim who awakens may free himself without making any tests. Occasionally, packs of five or more giant spiders spin large communal webs to ensnare prey.

Venom: The giant spider can spit venom up to 8 yards (4 hexes away).

Web Trap: To detect a giant spider's web, which is strong enough to entangle even Namegiver-sized victims, characters must make a successful Perception (9) Test. Whenever a character stumbles into a giant spider web, the gamemaster determines the web's Strength value by making a Step 8 Strength Test. To free himself from the web, the character must make a successful Strength Test against the web's Strength value. Giant spider webs are often large enough to ensnare up to three human-sized targets.



GIANT TRAPDOOR SPIDER

The giant trapdoor spider has adopted a unique tactic to catch its prey. Rather than spinning a web, the giant trapdoor spider finds an empty animal burrow and lines the interior with webs. It then crafts a cover of sticks, leaves, and rocks, using its webbing as glue to hold it all together. The spider places the cover over the burrow's entrance and hides beneath it, ready to spring out and attack any victim that falls into its trap. Giant trapdoor spiders are most commonly found in the southern portion of the Blood Wood, though they also live in the western region.

DEX: 6 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 6
PER: 5 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 6 (12; Surprise Attack)
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 8
Damage:
Bite (3): 9

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

Death: 36
Unconsciousness: 28
Wound Threshold: 10

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 9
Movement: 8*

Legend Award: First Circle

* This value is also the creature's climbing Movement Rate

Powers: Climbing S (2): 8, Poison [SD 9; Paralysis], Surprise Attack (6)

Equipment, Loot: Lair may contain items and small valuables from previous victims

Rules

When a victim falls into the burrow (see below), the spider makes two attacks. First, it grapples the victim. If the spider successfully grapples its target, it will attempt to trap the victim in the webs that line the burrow. For its second attack, the spider attempts to bite the victim and inject him with a paralyzing poison (see **Poison**, p.123).

Cocoon: If the poison takes effect, the victim is paralyzed for a number of minutes equal to the result of the Effect Test, and the spider spins a cocoon around the victim. Once the paralytic venom has worn off, a cocooned character may free himself by making a successful Strength (8) Test. However, the victim must still deal with the spider to escape from the burrow.

Burrow: Characters passing near a spider's lair may notice it by making a successful Perception (10) Test. (Characters with the Wilderness Survival skill or the Creature Lore knowledge skill can make a Skill Test in place of the Perception Test.) If the test fails, the character does not notice the trapdoor and may fall into the burrow unless he makes a successful Initiative (9) Test.



GLOBBEROG

The globberog is a most curious and repulsive creature that protects its own fragile body with the flesh and bones of other living things. This disgusting lump of quivering meat exudes and can also spit a sticky ooze with which it glues to itself the bodies of those unfortunate enough to fall afoul of it. From these bodies it creates a shell, which over the years can grow amazingly thick and strong, depending on how many creatures or Namegivers the globberog catches.

Any unlucky victim trapped by this spittle remains paralyzed by it unless it breaks down, which begins to occur (if at all) only after more than five hours' exposure to sunlight. In most cases, of course, the victim does not have this slim chance of escape. If the globberog gets close enough to trap a person or creature by brushing its sticky slime against him, the victim instantly becomes the newest piece in the globberog's revolting shell. If the thing must spit at its victim to ensnare him, it rarely allows five hours to pass before slithering up to the poor wretch and fusing him to itself. The globberog's sticky spittle is magical in nature, much like the spit of the bog gob. Victims struggling to set themselves free only worsen matters, the more they struggle, the faster they spread the sickening stuff all over themselves.

Because the globberog builds its shell from whatever creatures or Namegivers it encounters, each shell is uniquely disgusting. More than a few people have been driven mad with grief and revulsion at the sight of friends and loved ones stuck to a globberog's back, staring vacantly at them from under a glaze of slime. One legend tells of a globberog that entered a kaer and killed all the inhabitants. The poor people and all of the kaer's treasure were stuck to its outsides, making the thing look like a huge, slithering treasure chest. Though globberogs have no use for the treasures and coins they often pick up, they fiercely resist any attempt to remove these bits and pieces.

The creature under the shell is a soft, hairless lump about the size of a cow, covered in a disgusting ooze. It has four tiny nearsighted eyes that fortunately give it poor aim when spitting. When the beast begins to build its shell, it sends small veins into the bodies on its back, through which it draws sustenance from its victims. The creatures can only feed in this revolting way, as they have no mouths or stomachs. The veins also carry the globberog's spittle and keep it flowing across the creature's entire shell. Because it is constantly exuding a fresh layer of slime, the globberog rarely suffers any ill effects from prolonged sunlight.

When a globberog's shell finally gets so huge that the creature can no longer move, the globberog detaches itself from the shell and (coincidentally) gives birth to several new globberogs. The newborn globberogs, each the size of a large cat, cling to the inside of the discarded shell, which protects them from most natural predators hungry enough to actually want to eat one of them. The adult globberog stays near its young and will quickly add to its new shell any predator foolish enough to attack its offspring.

As a globberog's spittle makes an almost unbreakable glue, the glands that produce it can fetch high prices in many cities. Killing a globberog to get these glands requires caution, of course. Many a greedy and feckless adventurer has paid for a lack of planning with his life.

DEX: 5	**STR**: 14	**TOU**: 10
PER: 4	**WIL**: 8	**CHA**: 6

Initiative: 4
Actions: 1
Attack: NA
Damage: NA

Physical Defense: 4
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 10–20+
Mystic Armor: 10

Death: 76
Unconsciousness: 65
Wound Threshold: 15

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 18
Movement: 4

Legend Award: 10-18 Physical Armor—Fifth Circle (group)
19-20+ Physical Armor—Seventh Circle (group)

Powers: Blood Veins (1): 15, Durability (4), Sticky Body (4): 12, Sticky Spit (4): 18

Loot: Glue glands worth 250 silver pieces (worth Legend Points). Treasure, coins, and other valuables (determined by the gamemaster) stuck to the creature's back, worth at least 1,000 silver pieces.

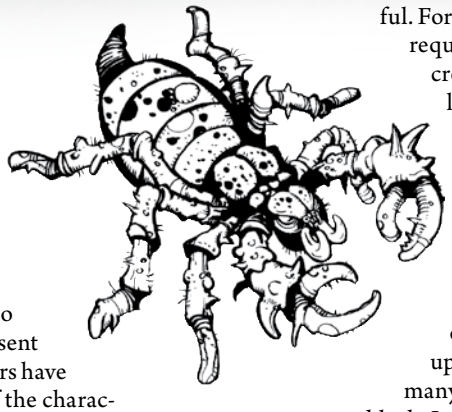
Rules

Globberogs move slowly but silently and often sneak up on opponents to spit at them from behind. A globberog prefers to glue its foes to the ground rather than fight in close combat. If it feels threatened, a globberog will attempt to use its Sticky Spit power at any opponent up to 8 yards (4 hexes) away. If the victim fails to break free, the globberog attaches him to its back within minutes of a successful attack. The globberog then begins to attach its Blood Veins to the victim.

Hard Shell: Because a globberog's shell provides excellent protection, the globberog can spend a great deal of time lining up the perfect shot before its opponents can possibly reach the vulnerable creature within (unless they're very lucky). Depending on its age, a globberog's shell may have a Physical Armor Rating of 20 or more, though younger creatures may have ratings as low as 10. All globberog shells are immune to Armor-Defeating Hits.

Adventure Hook

A globberog that long ago entered a kaer and killed all its inhabitants is now wandering the countryside in search of more victims. The people of a town that lies on the path of the creature's wanderings hire the characters to track it down and kill it; as an added inducement, the locals agree that the characters can keep any valuables they find stuck to the globberog in addition to their fee. Unknown to the characters, they are not the first party sent to kill the creature; several other adventurers have already tried and failed, including some of the characters' friends. The globberog has fused the remains of those friends into its shell, right where the characters can see them.



GOAT

Goats are bearded, horned herbivores that are often domesticated. Shepherding herdsmen raise them on Barsaive's mountains and hills for milk and meat. Goats are sometimes used by windlings as cheap riding mounts. These statistics can also be used for other horned or antlered herbivores, such as deer and moose.

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

Initiative: 4
Actions: 1
Attack (1): 5
Damage:
Gore (2): 8

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 0

Death: 35
Unconsciousness: 27
Wound Threshold: 9

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 8

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Enhanced Senses [Listen, Sight, Smell] (3): 7, Sprint (2)

GRANLAIN

Granlain are unusually large, strong horses that often serve as draft animals. They stand seven feet tall at the shoulder and commonly reach ten feet in length. Granlain are stubborn animals, and trolls are often the only Namegivers strong enough to deal with these massive, willful beasts. Granlain are not common. Wild granlain live only in the plains and foothills near mountainous regions.

DEX: 5 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 8
PER: 4 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 5
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Trample (2): 12

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 1

Death: 46
Unconsciousness: 39
Wound Threshold: 13

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 11
Movement: 8

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 6, Great Leap [S] (2): 7, Sprint (2)

Rules

To reflect this creature's innate resistance to training, any characters using their talents and abilities to tame or command a granlain must achieve a result one level higher than normal to be successful. For example, the Animal Training talent normally requires an Average result to work against a target creature. Using Animal Training against a granlain, however, requires a Good result.

GREATER TERMITE

These enormous insects often reach a size and length that Barsaive's largest rats might envy. Like their tinier brethren, colonies of greater termites create giant towers of mashed tree pulp; however, the greater termites' towers often rise more than ten yards into the sky and up to five yards wide. Greater termites come in many colors, from pasty white to bright red to shiny black. In many cases, each colony of termites seems to have its own distinct coloring. A thick carapace protects them against most predators.

Three kinds of greater termites exist: workers, soldiers, and queens. The workers build the colony's towers, hunt for food, and care for the young. The soldiers protect the colony from predators. These termites have powerful pincers, vicious temperaments, and a natural poison that unfortunately does not kill, but makes its victim writhe on the ground in agony if so much as a drop of the secretion touches his skin. The queen, the mother of the colony, is a bloated version of her smaller kindred.

Greater termites eat both meat and plants and have developed powerful jaws with which to chew an amazing variety of foodstuffs. They also use these fearsome mandibles to bore through any substance in search of food and to make the pulp from which they build their towers.

One mystery about these insects is their ability to communicate silently with each other across great distances. Scholars believe them to be under the mental control of the queen. Only an intense mental bond can explain how the soldier fighting some foe outside the colony knows immediately that its queen is under attack. Those foolish enough to attack a termite queen will soon face every soldier in the colony that returns to it from any distance to defend her. This kind of mental bond also explains the behavior of worker termites. When one of these finds food, it begins to stuff its jaws, and without stirring a step away from its feast somehow manages to call its fellow workers to join it. Within minutes, hundreds of other worker termites arrive to help collect the same food supply.

DEX: 6 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 5
PER: 2 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 6
Actions: 2
Attack (2): 8
Damage:
Bite (1): 7; Claws (4): 10

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 1

Death: 31
Unconsciousness: 22
Wound Threshold: 8

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 8
Movement: 8

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Acid Spray (1): 7, Climbing [S] (2): 8, Empathic Sense [T] (5): 8

Loot: Pincers worth D6×5 silver pieces each (worth Legend Points)

Rules

Because only soldier termites fight, the statistics above apply only to them. Soldier termites have huge pincers and can also rake opponents with a vicious set of barbed front legs.

Adventure Hook

A colony of greater termites infests the wall of a fortress, whose owner hires the characters to remove the pests before they do too much damage. Of course, exterminating a nest of rat-sized insects

with mandibles that can slice through armor, flesh, and bone is easier said than done.

Griffin

These strange, four-legged creatures combine a lion's body with the head, legs, and wings of a large eagle. Like an eagle, a griffin's front legs are covered in feathers and end in sharp talons; its hind legs resemble those of a lion, covered in soft fur and ending in paws. Typically, griffins stand four feet tall at the shoulder, and are five to six feet long with an average wingspan of seven to nine feet. The head of a griffin resembles that of an eagle, with large, keen eyes and a sharp beak. Its wings are covered with bright feathers, usually yellow and white, but sometimes red and orange. Griffins gather in nests of up to ten individuals, but more commonly live in flocks of four to five. They nest in mountainous regions, and rarely venture into the jungles or forests of Barsaive.

Humanoids of average human size and smaller, except for windlings, can use griffins as aerial mounts. Before a griffin can be used in this way, however, it must undergo extensive training, which keeps the cost of these animals high. Though difficult to train, once broken in, tame griffins make excellent and loyal steeds.

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

Initiative: 7
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 8
Damage:
Claws (5): 12
Death: 50
Unconsciousness: 43
Wound Threshold: 14
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 1
Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 8
Movement: 10*

Legend Award: Second Circle

* This value is also the creature's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Enhanced Senses [Sight] (2): 8

Loot: Beak and feathers worth 3D6×10 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Rules

Griffins seldom attack travelers on foot, unless their territory is threatened. Their strong taste for horse meat occasionally leads them to attack travelers on horseback, in order to feed on the horse. Trained griffins lack the swooping attack capability of their wild counterparts.

To reflect this creature's innate resistance to training, any characters using their talents and abilities to tame or command a griffin must achieve a result one level higher than normal to be successful. For example, the Animal Training talent normally requires an Average result to work against a target creature. Using Animal Training against a griffin, however, requires a Good result.

Swooping Attack: An attacking griffin swoops down on an opponent and strikes out with its talons. Such a Swooping attack adds a +3 bonus to the griffin's Damage Test. After swooping down, the griffin remains on the ground where it can attack its prey with its talons and hind claws.

Harpy

Harpies are a repulsive cross between bird and human, displaying the worst qualities of both. They have the faces and bodies of hags, covered with grimy matted feathers. Their bird-like feet and short stubby wings are dirt encrusted, their faces are dotted with suppurating boils, and their feathers crawl with parasites. Their harsh, shrill voices irritate the ear like the scrape of a sword blade on rocks.

A single harpy poses no danger to anyone. However, harpies almost always travel in packs. Groups of the foul things pose a serious threat. A hunting pack of harpies usually lands in the trees near their chosen victims, at whom they hurl every slur and foul word they know (they know more curses than most people will hear in a lifetime). By this torrent of abuse they hope to anger their opponents so as to make them careless in combat. The insults also help the harpies determine the strength of their foe. An enemy who remains calm is most likely an experienced adventurer too strong for the harpies' taste, whereas one who becomes furious likely has little discipline and so will be easily defeated. Harpies are cowards by nature and prefer to attack as few opponents as possible, and weak ones, at that.



The greatest danger harpies pose, assuming their victims survive an attack, is the threat of disease. These dreadful monsters wallow constantly in their own filth and carry several terrible afflictions to which they are immune but most other living things are not. Often, victims who survive an initial harpy attack succumb to some bizarre and debilitating disease within a few hours. If the illness doesn't kill them, the harpies will fall upon their weakened prey and slay him.

Harpy young are born into a world of filth and forced to fend for themselves almost immediately—a harpy feels no familial ties and has no compunction about kicking its offspring away from food violently enough to snap a chick's dirty neck. The last to feed on kills, young harpies eat a steady diet of rotting meat (when they eat anything at all). Prone to starvation and not yet immune to the diseases rampant in the filth amid which they live, young harpies die at a tremendous rate—though not fast enough to eliminate the species entirely. Harpies appear to have a limited form of intelligence almost as keen as a Namegiver's, but they care nothing for the pursuit of knowledge, the study of magic or the arts, or any other thing except their foul kind's survival.

DEX: 5 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 5
PER: 5 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Claws (2): 6
Death: 40
Unconsciousness: 31
Wound Threshold: 9
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 0
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 4
Movement: 6/8*

Legend Award: Second Circle

* The second value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Curse (4): 8, Disease [SD 7; Debilitation], Durability (1), Enhanced Senses [Sight] (2): 7, Taunt S (6): 8

Equipment: Primitive weapons

Rules

Harpies almost always precede physical attacks by insulting their victims in an attempt to enrage them by using a specialized form of the Taunt talent. Once they succeed in angering their enemies, the harpies attack. Because they have had time to gauge their opponents' strength, they almost always attack the strongest fighter or the group's leader first, swooping down upon him before wheeling off to attack others. Harpies slash at their victims' faces with their sharp-taloned feet and batter them with makeshift weapons, such as clubs and large rocks. If the battle seems to turn against them, the harpies fly back to the treetops and hurl more foul words. In close physical combat, the harpies use their claws to inflict damage. If their attacks successfully inflict any damage, their victims are exposed to the effects of the creatures' diseases.

Disease: Most diseases carried by these creatures have an onset time of one to three hours. At the end of this time, the victim must make a Toughness (7) Test. If this test fails, reduce the character's Toughness value by –1 and adjust his characteristics and Toughness Step accordingly. Every day, the character must make another Toughness (7) Test. Each failed test further reduces the character's Toughness value by –1 point and also reduces all related characteristics. If the character's Toughness value drops to 0, he dies. However, a successful Toughness Test at any time prior to death allows the character to throw off the effects of the disease, and subsequently he begins to regain lost Toughness points at the rate of +1 point per day. Throughout the course of the disease and recovery, the character suffers a penalty to all Action Tests equal to the difference between the victim's current and normal Toughness Steps.

Taunt: If the Taunt Test is successful the target feels compelled to go all out to destroy the harpy, even if doing so will leave him vulnerable to assault.

Adventure Hook

A questor of Lochost, determined to civilize the harpies, hires the characters to protect him from the monsters' constant assaults and to carry supplies deep into the wilds of Barsaive, where colonies of harpies are rumored to exist.

Hell Hound

Hell hounds are large dogs, standing more than four feet high at the shoulder. Their stocky, muscular bodies are covered with short dark-brown fur that seems to absorb the light; indeed, they bear a passing resemblance to gate hounds. Teeth as sharp as talons fill their jaws; a hell hound can easily tear an arm or a leg off a human or an elf with a single bite. The presence of a fire flickering within in its mouth, however, clearly shows the hell hound for what it is. A hell hound's eyes also seem to burn; deep within the sockets are twin balls of flame. In complete darkness, the eyes of a hell hound glow like candle flames.



Hell hounds have an impressive magical power, one they share with dragons: at the height of their power, they can breathe great gouts of flame. Unlike normal fire, this magical flame can briefly burn almost anything, including armor, weapons, rocks, clothing, wood, and flesh. The hell hound's magic flames are not precisely fire as most Namegivers understand it. The flame mixes in the hound's throat with a volatile ooze that sticks to the hound's target and burns continuously. One can only put out this burning ooze by completely suffocating it.

Hell hounds travel and hunt in packs so that they can surround their prey from all sides. Once the pack has encircled its victim, the pack leader sets the poor wretch afire. If the victim tries to bolt in any direction, the hound nearest him or her coughs up its own stream of fire at the sufferer, forcing the victim to stagger back into the tightening circle of hell hounds. Most victims begin to succumb to the pain and shock of burning flesh within minutes. The smaller the prey, of course, the faster it burns. Hell hounds hunt in this way to ensure that only a few pack members use up their fire-breathing power at any given time and to cook their food so as to reduce their chances of eating diseased meat.

More than a few rumors make the rounds regarding hell hounds and dragons, which supposedly created these creatures as pets. However, the fact that they breathe fire is no more than a coincidence of Nature. A hell hound can be kept as a pet if raised from a pup, and will show amazing loyalty to its master as long as it is not hungry. Those who wish to tame a hell hound would be well advised to feed it often.

DEX: 8 **STR**: 8 **TOU**: 6
PER: 3 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 8
Actions: 2
Attack (3): 11
Damage:
Bite (5): 13; 2×Claws (2): 10
Death: 59
Unconsciousness: 47
Wound Threshold: 9
Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 3
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 9
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Third Circle

Powers: Astral Sight T (5): 8, Breath Weapon [Fire; three times/day] (6): 10, Durability (4), Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 5, Great Leap S (2): 10, Spellcasting (7): 10, Tracking S (3): 6

Rules

Hell hounds can see into the astral plane, but they cannot affect creatures there. If forced to a close-quarters fight when its fire has run out, a hell hound attacks with claws and teeth.

Breath Weapon: The hell hounds' ability to breathe fire makes them extremely dangerous. They can use this power three times per day, but it diminishes in strength with each use. Once a hell hound has used its power, 24 hours must pass before the fire-breathing ability returns to full strength. The second time a hell hound

uses its fiery breath, reduce its Spellcasting Step by –1 Step; the third time reduce it by –2 Steps. These reductions also apply to the damage caused by the fire. The power's range is 12 yards (6 hexes) for the first use, 10 yards (5 hexes) for the second use, and 8 yards (4 hexes) for the third and final use.

Adventure Hook

Through his efficient spy network, King Neden of Throal learns that the Therans are attempting to create devastating siege weapons whose fiery blasts can bum through almost anything. If they succeed, no fortress in Barsaive will provide protection. Neden hires the characters to find out how the weapon builders intend to produce the powerful fire. The characters learn that the Therans are slaying hell hounds to obtain a supply of the unique magical substance the animals use to spit their dangerous flames.

Henghyoke Otter

The Henghyoke otter is a species of river otter bred by the t'skrang of House Henghyoke. Specimens can grow up to six feet long and two feet tall at the shoulder. The creatures are amazingly dexterous and have been trained to fight under the direction of their masters. In fact, some boatmen claim that Henghyoke otters are more fearsome than their t'skrang masters.

DEX: 9 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 6
PER: 9 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 8

Initiative: 12
Actions: 2
Attack (3): 12
Damage:
Claws (3): 9

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 11
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 2

Death: 36
Unconsciousness: 28
Wound Threshold: 10

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 8*

Legend Award: Third Circle

* This value is also the creature's swimming Movement Rate

Powers: Silent Walk[S] (4): 13, Swimming[S] (3): 9, Tracking[S] (3): 12

Rules

Aquatic: Otters can hold their breath for a number of minutes equal to their Toughness Step before drowning.

Horse

Horses have recently regained importance in Barsaive. Most of the horses in the region descend from those brought in by the first ork nomad tribes to re-enter Barsaive after the Scourge.

Ork tribes remain Barsaive's premier source of horses, and ork Cavalrymen take justifiable pride in their tribes' abilities to breed strong, hearty animals.

Draft Horse

A draft horse is used to transport goods across great distances. These animals are often found pulling the carts and wagons of the caravans found on the trade routes of Barsaive.

DEX: 5 **STR**: 8 **TOU**: 8
PER: 3 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 4
Actions: 1
Attack (1): 6
Damage:
Trample (2): 10

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1

Death: 43
Unconsciousness: 35
Wound Threshold: 12

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 9
Movement: 8

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 5

Pony

A smaller breed of horse used mainly by dwarfs for transportation and war. Many ork, elf, and human children train their horse riding skills on ponies as they grow up. Ponies cannot wear barding or armor. A pony can carry a rider and up to 125 pounds of equipment without suffering encumbrance penalties.

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

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (1): 6
Damage:
Trample (2): 8

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1

Death: 40
Unconsciousness: 32
Wound Threshold: 11

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 8

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 7, Great Leap[S] (2): 7, Sprint (3)

Riding Horse

The most common horses used, riding horses make strong mounts, but cannot wear barding or armor. A riding horse can carry a rider and up to 250 pounds of equipment without suffering encumbrance penalties.

DEX: 6 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 8
PER: 4 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 7
Actions: 1
Attack (1): 7
Damage:
Trample (2): 9

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

Death: 44
Unconsciousness: 36
Wound Threshold: 13

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 8
Movement: 10

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 6, Great Leap[S] (2): 8, Sprint (3)

War Horse

Larger and stronger than riding horses, war horses are bred to carry heavy loads while remaining able to canter and gallop. War horses can wear barding, and can carry their rider and up to 350 pounds of equipment without suffering encumbrance penalties. War horses are often used by armies and cavalry units, particularly ork scorcher tribes.

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

Initiative: 7
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 9
Damage:
Trample (4): 13

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2

Death: 48
Unconsciousness: 41
Wound Threshold: 14

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 10
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Second Circle

Powers: Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 7, Great Leap[S] (2): 9, Sprint (4)

HUTTAWA

The huttawa's body resembles that of a lion or tiger, but it has an eagle-like head with a large beak and bird-like eyes. Four feet at the shoulder and six feet long, huttawa are a favored mount for dwarf Cavalrymen, and often help pull caravan wagons belonging to dwarf trading companies.

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

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 8
Damage:
Beak (4): 12

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

Death: 43
Unconsciousness: 35
Wound Threshold: 12

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 9
Movement: 8

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Climbing [S] (1): 6, Enhanced Senses [Sight] (2): 7, Great Leap [S] (1): 6, Sprint (3)

Rules

Though not overly bright, huttawa are easy to train. To account for this, any characters using their talents and abilities to tame or command a huttawa must achieve a result one level lower than normal to be successful. For example, the Animal Training talent normally requires an Average result to work against a target creature. Using Animal Training against a huttawa, however, only requires a Poor result.

ICE FLYER

Ice flyers resemble white, winged baboons, standing roughly six feet tall and weighing up to seven hundred pounds. They often gather in flocks of four to twenty-four individuals, one of which leads the flock. Some, though not all, of their feathers gleam as if made of crystal. These are enchanted feathers that stay cold even in tropical heat, allowing the creatures to live in tropical or arid environments. These ice feathers worth Legend Points.

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

Initiative: 10
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 9
Damage:
Bite (9): 14

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

Death: 52
Unconsciousness: 41
Wound Threshold: 9

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5
Movement: 8 *

Legend Award: Third Circle

* This value is also the creature's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Durability (3), Enhanced Senses [Smell] (2): 7, Ice Shackles (3): 10, Howling Challenge (4): 9 [Leader only]

Loot: Ice feathers worth D6×10 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Rules

Ice flyers may strike targets from the air, swooping in to attack in a flurry of shrieking and clawing, and then flapping upward out of the melee. The leader usually stays out of direct combat, using its powers to attack rather than physically entering the fray.

JUB JUB

Jub jubs are "giant frogs with fangs," as many riverboat captains describe them. The jub jub's name comes from its shockingly loud, rumbling call, which will jolt a Namegiver's bones. A large jub jub can swallow a windling in one gulp. Jub jubs hunt along the banks of the river and prefer to prey on lone individuals.

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

Initiative: 11
Actions: 1
Attack (1): 8
Damage:
Tusks (6): 14
Knockdown: 9

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

Death: 51
Unconsciousness: 41
Wound Threshold: 11

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 9
Movement: 4/7 *

Legend Award: Second Circle

* The second value is the creature's swimming Movement Rate

Powers: Battle Shout [S] (2): 8, Durability (2), Great Leap [S] (4): 11, Poison [SD 6; Paralysis 10], Swimming [S] (2): 10

Rules

Jub jubs attack by leaping from long distances and attempting to sink their fangs, which can grow up to a foot long, into their targets' torsos. To sink its fangs into its victim, a jub jub must inflict enough damage on its target to create a Wound. If successful, the jub jub then hangs on and waits until its poison paralyses its victim. After paralyzing a victim, the jub jub attempts to swallow its prey whole.

Poison: Jub jub poison takes effect three rounds after the initial attack.

Aquatic: Jub jubs can hold their breath for a number of minutes equal to their Toughness Step before drowning.

JUNGLE GRIFFIN

The jungle griffin is one of Jaspree's most beautiful and dangerous children. Brother to the common griffin, the jungle griffin is a creature of even greater grace and beauty. Far larger than common griffins, jungle griffins stand six to seven feet tall at the shoulder, are eight to nine feet long, and have a wingspan of almost fifteen feet. The portion of the creature that resembles an eagle carries much brighter-colored feathers than do common griffins—red, yellow, and even green are quite usual among jungle griffins. Large horns extend from either side of the jungle griffin's head.



As their name implies, jungle griffins live in or near jungles. The Servos Jungle harbors a few, but most of

Barsaive's jungle griffins are found in the Liaj Jungle. Fifteen or twenty jungle griffins at a time build their nests near clearings in the dense growth, often not far from wide rivers or waterfalls. They appear to love both water and sunlight. The differences between griffins and jungle griffins go deeper than size or coloring. Of particular interest to Namegivers who have ridden common griffins is this fact: no jungle griffin will ever permit a Namegiver to sit on its back. More than one Cavalryman or Beastmaster has been killed and eaten after trying to ride a jungle griffin.

Jungle griffins also possess magical abilities that common griffins do not. These territorial creatures use their magical abilities to deal with trespassers. Jungle griffins stake out territory surrounding their nests to a distance that a Namegiver might walk in an hour, and they can magically sense any Namegivers who enter this region. Two or three griffins seek out the trespassers and frighten them off, if possible. If not, the jungle griffins use a second magical trick. The griffins can send intruders into a trance, during which they lead the trespassers beyond the borders of their territory. The trance lasts for several minutes after the subjects have departed from the griffins' land; upon awakening, trespassers have only the vaguest memory of where they were and what happened to them. Most jungle griffins prefer to deal with trespassing Namegivers in this way; they dislike fighting because it endangers their young and taints the air with the smell of blood. However, they will brutally attack any Namegivers who insist upon re-entering their territory too many times.

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

Initiative: 9
Actions: 2
Attack (5): 12
Damage:
Bite (7): 15; 2×Claws (5): 13
Death: 76
Unconsciousness: 64
Wound Threshold: 13

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 11
Social Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 3
Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 9
Movement: 10*

Legend Award: Fifth Circle

* This value is also the creature's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Durability (5), Enhanced Senses [Sight] (2): 10, Frighten (5): 13, Paralyzation (5): 13, Sense Danger (5): 13

Loot: Beak and feathers worth 5D6×10 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Rules

When forced to engage in physical combat, jungle griffins attack with their claws and occasionally their beaks. Jungle griffins usually rake the target with both forepaws and only use beaks if necessary. Though the beak is a nastier weapon, it is more difficult to use, and so a jungle griffin may make only one attack per round when using its beak instead of the usual two attacks.

Jungle griffins use their magical abilities to avoid unnecessary contact with Namegivers whenever possible. When a Namegiver enters the territory of a pride of jungle griffins, the creatures sense it and send one or two members of the pride to seek out the trespasser. The griffins announce their presence to the intruding Namegivers, most often by simply squawking and flying overhead, while using their Sense Danger power.

Frighten: If the trespassers intend to hunt, attack, or harass the griffins, the griffins attempt to scare the Namegivers away by squawking and screeching loudly, using their Frighten power. If the Frighten Test is successful in this case, the target becomes so frightened that he or she feels compelled to leave the area as soon as possible. This fear lasts until the target has left the griffins' territory. Targets affected by this fear can overcome it by making a successful Willpower Test against the Frighten Test result.

Paralyzation: If the trespassers have no negative intentions toward the griffins, the griffins fly gracefully overhead and caw at the trespassers, using their Paralyzation power. If the Paralyzation Test is successful, the target is lulled into a light trance by the beauty and grace of these creatures. The griffins then lead the awestruck trespasser out of their territory. The trespasser remains entranced for 10 minutes after he has left the griffins' territory and regains normal consciousness with only a vague recollection of what just happened.

Adventure Hook

While walking through the Servos Jungle in search of a kaer supposedly located near a waterfall along the Serpent River, the characters discover that the lands around the waterfall contain a den of jungle griffins. To reach the kaer, the characters must find a way to pass through the griffins' territory without falling victim to the creatures' magical abilities or causing them to attack.

KRILWORM

Krilworms are nocturnal flyers, traveling in swarms ranging from eight to eighty members, and feeding on large insects and small mammals. Their needle-like teeth drip a foul-smelling substance that many believe to be toxic. They have segmented bodies about eighteen inches long, with bat-like wings sprouting near the front. Eyeless, they "see" through divination magic organs that look like six open, running sores. Krilworms have a strange affinity for Nethermancers.

DEX: 5 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 5
PER: 6 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (1): 6
Damage:
Bite (1): 6
Death: 31
Unconsciousness: 22
Wound Threshold: 8

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5
Movement: 7*

Legend Award: First Circle

* This value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Locate Target (2): 8



Rules

On occasion, swarms of krilworms attack large animals and humanoids, but a determined character can easily drive off these swarms. For each krilworm killed fighting a larger opponent, the swarm makes a Willpower (4) Test. If the test is successful, the swarm continues its attack on the target, otherwise the swarm leaves to find easier pickings.

Affinity for Nethermancers: Krilworms have a peculiar affinity for Nethermancers, and Nethermancers in turn often harbor a soft spot for these loathsome creatures. This unusual affinity allows Nethermancers to add a +2 bonus to any Interaction Tests they make against a krilworm's Social Defense.

Locate Target: This ability replaces a krilworm's normal sight, but also works on invisible or hidden targets. The powerful divination organs can (so far) only be used by krilworms, and are worthless on the open market. The power's range is 24 yards (12 hexes).

K'sathra

Small carnivorous fish, a school of k'sathra can strip a full-sized herd animal down to the bone in a matter of minutes. K'sathra are one of the worst menaces in the Mist Swamps, and their numbers have exploded during the past twenty years.

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

Initiative: 10
Actions: 1 (see text)
Attack (3): 13
Damage: (see text)
One Target (10): 14; Two Targets (7): 11; Three Targets (4): 8
Death: NA
Unconsciousness: 47
Wound Threshold: NA
Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: NA
Movement: 6 *

Legend Award: Third Circle (group)

* This value is also the creature's swimming Movement Rate

Powers: Swimming [S] (3): 7

Rules

The game statistics above represent a school of thirty or so k'sathra, which would occupy an area of roughly 8 cubic yards in the water. A single school makes one to three attacks per round, depending on the number of victims within its range; each victim within range receives the same number of attacks.

If a character attacks a k'sathra school, do not resolve damage against each fish. Instead, a k'sathra school automatically disperses when it takes damage equal to its Unconsciousness Rating.

Kue

The kue resembles a cross between a lizard and a cat, with a reptilian body and feline mannerisms and facial features. Like cats, kue possess excellent night vision, and sometimes serve windling communities as watch animals. A kue has long, slender legs rather than the short squat legs typical of most lizards. They are about two feet tall at the shoulder, three to four feet long, and have horns on their heads and tails.

Kues are native to jungles and forests, and make ideal mounts for the windling Cavalrymen and Warriors who protect windling communities and villages. Kues are generally sold only in larger cities and those towns located near jungles.

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

Initiative: 7
Actions: 2
Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 7



Attack (2): 8
Damage:
Claws (3): 7; Tail (3): 7
Death: 36
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness: 28
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 1
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 5
Movement: 8

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Climbing [S] (2): 8, Great Leap [S] (2): 8, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk [S] (2): 8, Sprint (2)

Leech Rat

The leech rat looks like an ordinary rat, except that it moves on six legs and balances with a short tail. Most have brown fur, but black and white ones are known to exist. The leech rat has wickedly long claws for its size, perfect for climbing, and a somewhat larger mouth than one might expect of a rodent. At the base of its tail lie two scent glands, which it uses to control larger animals so that they may kill its meat for the rat.

The first gland produces a soothing scent that pacifies the creature chosen by the leech rat as its mount; often, the mount enters a sleep like state under this odor's influence. The leech rat then climbs on the somnolent creature's back, sits on its shoulder, and grips firmly with its claws. Small glands just above each of the claws produce a mild painkiller so that the host creature does not feel its rider and attempt to throw off the rat. The second scent gland sends the leech rat's mount into a frenzy, during which it tries to kill anything in its path (and usually succeeds). When a creature is under the influence of this scent, killing it is often the only way to stop it. Once the berserk mount has slain every potential predator in sight (or they have all sensibly fled), the leech rat once more exudes the soothing scent to calm the mount. Then it carefully climbs down and feasts on the carcasses of the slain.

To ensure an ample food supply—and also to protect themselves from predators with a taste for rats—the leech rat chooses its mount for strength and ferocity. If a mounted leech rat encounters a creature stronger than the one it is riding, it sprays its soothing scent in the air in hopes of ensnaring the other creature and changing mounts. It does not confine itself to dumb beasts, either; there are many tales of powerful Warriors acquiring a leech rat before battling some fierce creature.

Many magicians and alchemists who have recently rediscovered old magical texts and learned the value of the leech rat's glands will pay a high price for those sacs of scent, as will the few healers who know of the creature's existence. Getting the glands, of course, is a risky proposition. The leech rat may be riding anything from a lion to a brithan to a chimera, and so the bold (or greedy) adventurer in search of one must defend against all the powers of the leech rat's host creature. When removing the glands from a dead rat, a character must handle them with

great care, otherwise the glands will burst and spray their contents all over the place, paralyzing those nearby or driving them into a killing madness.

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

Initiative: 5
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 8
Damage:
Bite (2): 5; Claws (1): 4
Death: 23
Unconsciousness: 14
Wound Threshold: 5
Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 4
Movement: 7

Legend Award: Third Circle (1 leech rat + 1 mount of Third Circle or lower.) If mount is of Fourth or higher Circle, use the mount's Legend Award instead.

Powers: Climbing [S] (3): 8, Enhanced Senses [Smell] (2): 7, Enraging Scent (8): 12, Paralyzation (8): 12

Loot: Scent glands worth 200 silver pieces each (worth Legend Points)

Rules

By itself, a leech rat is almost no threat in combat. Its tiny bite and claws only do little damage. A leech rat on a mount, however, is a different story. The leech rat hides on its mount's upper neck and is extremely difficult to see and to hit. To successfully hit a mounted leech rat requires a Called Shot (***Player's Guide***, p.222).

In most cases, it is easier to deal with the mount first and the leech rat later. The leech rat's Enraging Scent and Paralyzation powers are much more formidable than its weak physical defenses, and the leech rat uses them to great effect.

Adventure Hook

For the past few weeks, a wyvern has rampaged through the area where the characters are staying. Hired to track and kill the wyvern, the characters discover that the beast is being driven mad by the leech rat perched on its back. They must not only kill the enraged wyvern, but avoid becoming the leech rat's next chosen mounts.

Leopard

Leopards have yellowish-brown fur, covered with black spots and striations. They are most likely to be encountered in the plains near Barsaive's forests, although the snow leopard having white fur with black spots and striations can be encountered in the mountains.

DEX: 6 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 4
PER: 3 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 9
Damage:
Claws (3): 8
Death: 30
Unconsciousness: 21
Wound Threshold: 7
Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 1
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6
Movement: 8

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Climbing [S] (3): 9, Enhanced Senses (Listen, Sight) (2): 5, Great Leap [S] (2): 8, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk [S] (2): 8, Sprint (2)

Lightning Lizard

Traveling in prides of three to thirteen individuals, lightning lizards are four foot long with three-foot-long tails and weigh roughly two hundred pounds. When dry, their yellow-and-green skin glistens as though oiled. Lizards bloated from feeding in the past 48



hours (during which time they eat over one-third of their body weight), are usually docile unless provoked. Hungry lizards, by contrast, show remarkable aggression.

DEX: 6 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 5
PER: 9 **WIL**: 12 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 7
Actions: 2
Attack (4): 10
Damage:
Claws (3): 8
Death: 58
Unconsciousness: 46
Wound Threshold: 9
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 11
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 3 (6; see text)
Mystic Armor: 8
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Fourth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Powers: Climbing [S] (4): 10, Crackling Armor (3): 15, Durability (4), Lightning (2): 14 (see text), Spellcasting (4): 13

Loot: Two eyes worth 75 silver pieces each (worth Legend Points)

Rules

Utilizing electricity for defense, lightning lizards also pack a powerful electrical attack.

Twinbolts: Lightning lizards can conduct lightning through their eyes as two bolts, directed against a single target within 48 yards (24 hexes). If the lizard's Spellcasting Test succeeds, it makes two separate Lightning Tests to determine how much damage is inflicted on the target. Non-metal Physical Armor protects against this damage. This power can be used only once each round.

Lion

The lion is a ferocious carnivore, with a yellow-brown coat, a loud roar, and a devastating bite. The males have a long, thick mane, whereas females do not. These animals live in the plains of Barsaive, but the same statistics can be used for mountain lions, which live in mountains and foothills.

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

Initiative: 4
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 7
Damage:
Bite (5): 12
Death: 34
Unconsciousness: 26
Wound Threshold: 9
Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 0
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 8
Movement: 8

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Battle Shout [S] [Roar] (3): 6, Climbing [S] (1): 5, Enhanced Senses (Listen, Sight) (2): 5, Great Leap [S] (2): 6, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk [S] (2): 6, Sprint (2)

Lizard

Lizards of different colors and sizes are often kept as pets by Namegivers. These creatures are found in almost every corner of Barsaive.

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

Initiative: 4
Actions: 1
Attack (1): 5
Damage:
Claws (1): 6

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

Death: 31
Unconsciousness: 22
Wound Threshold: 8

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6
Movement: 7

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Climbing [S] (2): 6

Mangrove Eels

So-called mangrove eels are actually the roots of certain mangrove trees that grow in the Servos Jungle. These highly evolved roots possess heat-sensing organs that enable them to sense creatures (or Namegivers) passing nearby. The t'skrang tribes of the Servos Jungle believe that mangrove eels are guardian spirits of elemental wood and regularly make offerings of fruit and fish to the roots to share in the spirits' protection.

DEX: 8 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 8
PER: 4 **WIL**: 2 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 8
Actions: 2
Attack (2): 10
Damage:
Tentacle (4): 10

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 0

Death: 43
Unconsciousness: NA
Wound Threshold: 12

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: NA
Movement: 3

Legend Award: Second Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Equipment, Loot: Occasionally items and valuables from previous victims can be retrieved

Rules

The movement of a group of mangrove eels is limited to a 12-yard (6 hex) radius surrounding the group's parent tree. Once a group of roots senses prey, the roots use their powerful pinion jaws and saw-blade teeth to pull their victim under the surface of the water and into the center of the tree's underwater root system. There, the victim's decaying body provides nutrients to the growing tree.

Mastrylith

A mastrylith is a huge war elephant weighing about fifteen tons. Native to the province of Indrisa, they can be found throughout the Theran Empire, including Barsaive province.

DEX: 5 **STR**: 13 **TOU**: 13
PER: 5 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 4
Actions: 1
Attack (5): 10
Damage: Charge (8): 21; Tusks (4): 17; Trample (2): 15

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 2

Death: 100
Unconsciousness: 87
Wound Threshold: 19

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 14
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Fifth Circle

Powers: Charge (4), Durability (6), Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 7

Messenger Bat

Messenger bats are slightly larger than windlings, with monkey-like faces and long fingers at the ends of their wings. They are usually brown, gray, or black and are found primarily in Cara Fahd's jungles, where native orks have tamed and trained them for years. The bats eat insects, small mice and lizards, and do not attack Namegiver-sized creatures. When attacked, they invariably fly away unless cornered, in which case they flap their wings in the attacker's face to distract him, and bite only until there is room to flee.

DEX: 8 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 6
PER: 8 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 9
Actions: 1
Attack (1): 9
Damage:
Bite (1): 6

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0

Death: 35
Unconsciousness: 27
Wound Threshold: 9

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5
Movement: 2/8*

Legend Award: First Circle

* The second value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 10, Locate Target (15): 23, Silent Walk [S] (1): 9

Loot: Direction-sensing organs worth 200 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Rules

The bats can navigate locations perfectly, using magical direction-sensing organs in their heads, memory of the sun and scent cues in order to fly to any given location. If a messenger bat is ordered to fly to any place that it has previously been, even as an infant, the bat will be able to get there. For this reason, the orks of Cara Fahd use messenger bats to deliver message stones and papers between towns. Getting them to understand an order, however, requires a Beastmaster. Critical information is not usually sent via messenger bat: they are slow-witted, easily distracted and can be intercepted by anyone who feeds the bat.

Locate Target: The power's range is 150 yards (75 hexes).

Molgrim

Most folk who have seen the molgrim and lived to speak of it assume it is not a natural beast, but yet another magically created abomination. They cannot imagine that the Universe actually gave birth to something so hideous—and the molgrim is certainly hideous, combining bits and pieces of many different creatures into a truly sickening whole. Moderately sized, the thing is about as tall as a large bear, but much broader, with a deep and powerful chest. Its back slopes like a toad's, and it has frog-like hind legs with which it can make prodigious leaps. Its forelegs, though smaller, are as strong as a human's arms, and the three fingers on its broad hands are tipped with claws as long and broad as a human's forefinger.

Even though it looks like a large and ugly frog, the molgrim is not an amphibian. Its hide is not moist like a frog's, but dry and tough like imperfectly cured leather. Short, thick, oily fur grows from its mottled skin, light-colored on the back and darker on the belly. Most molgrims are gray or light tan around the spine, dark brown or black

underneath. A molgrim's head is too large for its body, and the shape of its skull is unusual. Most of the head looks bear-like, but the molgrim has a large beak in place of a snout. Wickedly hooked and sharp as a dragon's claws, this beak is perfect for tearing flesh.

The molgrim is a carnivore, most often found in the foothills of the rugged mountain ranges ringing the region Named the Wastes (though any stretch of rough, broken ground will do). It eats bears and mountain sheep most often, as well as anything else that wanders into the gaze of its small, red-rimmed eyes. Lacking the patience and intelligence to ambush its food, the molgrim prefers to chase down its prey. The creature can leap up to twelve yards forward, and almost half that distance upward, and can run faster than a galloping horse for minutes at a time. Molgrims often capture their prey with one terrifying leap, landing on a victim's back and brutally snapping the spine in half. If a molgrim must give chase to capture its meal, it invariably captures it. Once the creature has the scent of its prey and sets off in pursuit with an ugly, barking cry, only death will end the hunt.

Molgrims are constantly hungry, and during the day they are always either feeding or seeking food. More territorial than griffins or even wyverns, molgrims hunt alone; one of the few things that can distract a molgrim from the chase is the arrival of another molgrim in its hunting grounds. Unless the interloper is a female seeking a mate (or a male intruding on a female's hunting grounds), the two molgrims will fight to the death. Many such challenges kill both combatants; one gets torn to shreds, and the other dies soon afterward from its wounds. The defending male first attempts to charge the challenging male and drive the challenger from his territory. Should this counterchallenge fail, the defending male rears up on its hind legs, utters its horrible cry, then leaps at the challenger in an attempt to grapple the intruder and slashes at it with his beak and claws. The challenger often leaps at the same moment, and the two monstrous figures clash in midair, falling to the ground already tearing and clawing at each other. If one manages to break free, they repeat this behavior until one loses enough blood to fall unconscious and die at the beak of the other.

The female molgrim always seeks her mate rather than waiting for a male to seek her out, testing each male she encounters by entering his territory and challenging him. Only if the male survives this vicious challenge does the mating proceed. Because the male is smaller and weaker than the female, only the strongest males battle their would-be mate to a draw and earn the right to pass on their fitness to survive to a new generation. After mating, the male departs, never to return to that female except by chance. Within six months, the female gives birth to two or three cubs and protects them until they are weaned, a year later. After that, the young molgrims must fend for themselves.

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

Initiative: 9 **Physical Defense:** 12
Actions: 2 **Spell Defense:** 9
Attack (3): 12 **Social Defense:** 10
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 8
Bite (4): 14; 2×Claws (2): 12 **Mystic Armor:** 4
Death: 66 **Recovery Tests:** 4
Unconsciousness: 56 **Knockdown:** 10
Wound Threshold: 14 **Movement:** 6

Legend Award: Third Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Powers: Climbing [S] (3): 12, Durability (3), Great Leap [S] (3): 12

Equipment, Loot: Occasional items or valuables dropped by its prey, at the gamemaster's discretion

Rules

A molgrim's preferred method of attack is to leap onto its prey, biting with its beak while tearing its victim's flesh with its forelimbs. If the creature cannot use its favorite attack, it will rear up on its hind legs to bring its forelimbs and beak into play. The creature can also deliver a punishing kick to a target behind it, but this uses all of the molgrim's attacks that round.

Adventure Hook

While in the city of Jerris, the characters hear of a nearby town under attack by molgrims. Upon arriving in the town as its protectors, they learn that the local folk recently expanded their farmlands into a hunting ground contested by two huge molgrims, which killed several of the farmers. Not long after the characters arrive, a female molgrim seeking a mate enters the same territory and proceeds to challenge the males. All three molgrims are shoring up their strength by snacking on the local farmers, and may add the characters to the menu as well unless the characters can defeat them.

MONKEY

Monkeys are small arboreal primates who live in the forests and jungles of Barsaive. Many different species exist: lemurs, tarsiers, and marmosets. These animals live in small tribes and are usually peaceful in nature.

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

Initiative: 7 **Physical Defense:** 11
Actions: 1 **Spell Defense:** 7
Attack (1): 8 **Social Defense:** 4
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 0
Bite (5): 10 **Mystic Armor:** 0
Death: 30 **Recovery Tests:** 2
Unconsciousness: 21 **Knockdown:** 5
Wound Threshold: 7 **Movement:** 6/7*

Legend Award: First Circle

* The second value is the creature's climbing Movement Rate

Powers: Climbing [S] (2): 9, Enhanced Senses [Smell] (2): 7, Great Leap [S] (2): 9



NAGA

A naga has the body of a snake and the head of a human. The body is roughly the size of a rock python or a sea snake. Coin-sized scales cover it, their color changing to suit the place where the naga lies. As nagas live everywhere, from mountain peaks to misty swamps, differences in color can be huge. Most nagas, however, prefer bare earth and so are dusty brown in color.

A naga's head is always that of a woman in the prime of her life, beautiful in face but as bald as a dragon's egg. Her eyes are silver-colored, and fine scales cover her skin. Many males of the Namegiver races find nagas' faces irresistible. Even their two-inch canine teeth, which most males would surely find distasteful, don't seem to detract from the nagas' beauty.

Nagas possess an innate magical ability to enthrall any male with a single glance, save for those possessing the strongest will. The victim of this power forgets that the object of his obsession is a bizarre blend of human and snake. Used in combination with the naga's second power, which allows it to change the color of its scales to blend with its surroundings, the naga's magic makes it a formidable foe.

A camouflaged naga stealthily approaches its prospective victim, then reveals itself and entrances him in order to lead him to a secluded spot. Once it gets its victim alone, it compels him to lie down so that it can feed on his lifeblood. However (and very luckily for the victim), the naga has intelligence enough to have developed a conscience. Many nagas no longer kill other intelligent beings, preferring to kill and eat tree monkeys. Therefore, most of them now use their entrancing power simply to lead men away from their homes.

It is likely that Therans in the pay of Overgovernor Pavelis created the naga. Shortly after the end of the Scourge, when the Therans began to think of returning to Barsaive, they realized that they might face resistance to their rule. Just in case anyone in Barsaive had managed to raise an army to oppose Thera, Pavelis ordered certain mages to create the naga as a secret tool of assassination. When released into Barsaive, the nagas were to entrance and devour all the able males in the province's fighting force, making any ensuing battle an easy victory for the Therans.

Unluckily for Pavelis, the nagas questioned the morality of such an action. When released into Barsaive, they refused to do what the Therans wanted. Instead, the nagas claimed part of Barsaive as their own and quieted their innate craving for Namegiver flesh by eating a certain kind of tree monkey that seemed to satisfy them. For the past sixty or so years, the nagas have lived more or less peacefully, breeding and raising young (how is unknown, as they all appear to be of one sex) and creating homes that might almost be called naga settlements. In general, the best way to avoid being slain by a naga is simply to leave it alone—or to be sharp-eyed and female.

DEX: 6 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 6
PER: 6 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 10

Initiative: 8
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 8
Damage:
Bite (1): 6
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 3
Death: 35
Unconsciousness: 27
Wound Threshold: 9
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 5

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 13

Legend Award: Second Circle

Powers: Camouflage (3): 9, Climbing [S] (2): 8, Entrancement (2): 12, Silent Walk [S] (2): 8

Rules

Nagas rarely attack victims. One of the naga's most effective magical powers enables it to blend perfectly with its surroundings. The naga can also entrance males of any Namegiver race, using its Entrancement power.

Adventure Hook

While traveling with a caravan, the characters enter a region of Barsaive that the nagas have claimed for their own. Mistakenly believing that the caravaneers plan to attack them, the nagas are killing them one by one, using their entrancement powers to draw off stragglers and dispatch them in private with a bite to the neck. When the characters notice that members of the caravan are starting to disappear, they investigate the situation and must then deal with the nagas.

NAUTILID

Like its kin the squid, the nautilid has ten tentacles, bulbous eyes, and a hard beak nestled in the midst of its limbs. Two of its tentacles are much longer than the others and tipped with broad, sensitive pads. When alive, the creature's flesh seems to shimmer and can change color rapidly. Unlike the squid, the nautilid shows only its tentacle-covered head. The rest of its soft body lies inside a spiral shell, much like a snail's. Though this pearl-pink shell appears thin and delicate, almost translucent under certain circumstances, it is hard and resilient. The bigger the nautilid, the older and thicker the shell.

Newly hatched nautilids are shell-less, resembling tiny squids no larger than the smallest joint of a human's little finger. They quickly secrete the substance with which they form their first shell, a spiral little larger than themselves. As they grow, they add new chambers to the shell, into which their bodies expand. An average adult nautilid's shell measures perhaps two feet across the spiral, and its longest tentacles trail almost three feet beyond the shell. Of course, some full-grown nautilids are smaller and a few rare ones are much larger.

Like squid, nautilids move by spraying powerful jets of water through a muscular organ called the "siphon." They usually move shell-first, tentacles trailing, but can pivot the siphon to move tentacles-first if necessary. Nautilids have little endurance, but in short sprints of 30 yards or so they are among the swiftest creatures in the ocean. Carnivorous by nature, nautilids hunt fish of all kinds, hanging motionless beneath rocky overhangs until their prey comes close and then bursting forth in a blindingly fast sprint. Once a nautilid

wraps its sucker-lined tentacles around its meal, only the strongest fish can break its grip before the creature's beak tears it to shreds.

Nautilids seem to be social beasts and often hunt together in groups of up to a dozen. Though they hunt together, they do not cooperate terribly well. By day, nautilids prefer to hunt at depths of ten yards or more (unless prey on the surface particularly attracts them, of course). After sundown, however, they come within one or two yards of the surface—not to hunt, but apparently simply to gather. These gatherings are the most fascinating aspect of nautilid behavior.

The part of the nautilid protected by its shell contains some kind of light-producing organ or substance, with which the nautilids glow when the sea grows dark. Up to a hundred of them gather together, swimming slowly in ever-changing geometrical patterns. From above, these patterns seem complex and incredibly precise. They also change color, beginning with a blue-green light and shifting to various hues in ways that almost suggest purposeful communication.

DEX: 6 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 10
PER: 4 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 8
Damage:
Beak (2): 14; Tentacles (1): 13
Shell: 10; Tentacles: 2
Mystic Armor: 3

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor:

Death: 51
Unconsciousness: 44
Wound Threshold: 15

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: NA
Movement: 7*

Legend Award: Second Circle

* This value is also the creature's swimming Movement Rate

Powers: Swimming S (2): 14

Loot: Shell worth 3,000 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Rules

A nautilid's sucker-equipped tentacles grip tightly, making it difficult for prey to escape the Grappling attack (***Player's Guide***, p.230) To attack a nautilid's tentacles requires a successful Called Shot. Once a nautilid has a grip on its victim, it can strike with its beak each round, automatically inflicting damage without making an Attack Test.

Water Jet: If a fight begins to go against a nautilid, it releases any victims it holds and uses its jet propulsion to escape. This allows the nautilid a Movement Rate of 14, for up to 12 rounds. The nautilid's jet can be employed only once per hour, however. If escape is impossible, the nautilid's head changes color, adopting a complex rippling pattern of reds and purples. This display calls all other nautilids within sight to its aid. Nautilids sometimes spray jets of water at crewmen on the decks of ships, but only the largest nautilids can knock them into the sea this way. At worst, these attacks usually just dampen or distract the target.

Adventure Hook

A certain dwarf scholar believes that the geometrical patterns created by nautilids have some deep meaning, and decides to study them as close to firsthand as he or she can get. However, the patterns can only be viewed from the air—and this particular scholar is scared to death of setting foot in an airship or going out over the vast sea far from the sight of land. The scholar hires the characters to fly over the sea in his or her stead and record as many nautilid patterns as possible. Of course, flying out over the sea at night is generally not a particularly safe thing to do…



Ogre

Orks claim that ogres look like overgrown dwarfs; dwarfs think ogres look like overlarge orks. Everyone agrees that ogres are big and ugly. They stand 7 feet 6 inches tall, weigh 400 pounds, and can use elemental magic to detect certain metals and wield powerful weapons.

DEX: 6 **STR**: 11 **TOU**: 9
PER: 4 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 3
Actions: 1
Attack (6): 12
Damage:
Club (5) *: 16

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 7
Mystic Armor: 2

* Includes the ogre's Harden Club Rank

Death: 53
Unconsciousness: 45
Wound Threshold: 13

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 11
Movement: 6

Legend Award: Third Circle

Powers: Detect True Element [Earth] (1): 5, Durability (1), Enhanced Senses [Smell] (2): 6, Harden Club (2)

Equipment: Ogre Club (**Damage:** STR+3), Chain Mail (Phys 7; Myst 0; Init 3)

Loot: D6×10 silver pieces

Rules

Ogres believe the crude lengths of wood they wield are magical weapons, unaware that the magic that reinforces their clubs lies in themselves, not their weapons.

Detect True Element [**Earth**]: Ogres can smell True earth, silver and other precious metals, and often dig makeshift mines to locate the ore. Once dug up, they trade the ore to greedy dwarfs in exchange for chain mail, plate armor, and (occasionally) weapons.

Ogre Twins

Ogre twins are two identical ogres, only one of whom can inhabit the material plane at a time. Ogre twins are indistinguishable from their single counterparts, unless a character can sense connections between a twin and the astral plane.

DEX: 7 **STR**: 11 **TOU**: 9
PER: 7 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 4
Actions: 1
Attack (6): 13
Damage:
Club (5) *: 16

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 11
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 7
Mystic Armor: 4

* Includes the ogre's Harden Club Rank

Death: 62
Unconsciousness: 53
Wound Threshold: 14

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 11
Movement: 6

Legend Award: Fourth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Powers: Detect True Element [Earth] (2): 9, Displace, Durability (2), Enhanced Senses [Smell] (2): 9, Harden Club (2), Regeneration (2): 11

Equipment: Ogre Club (**Damage:** STR+3), Chain Mail (Phys 7; Myst 0; Init 3)

Loot: Each twin has D6×10 silver pieces and D4 small gems worth 50 silver pieces each (gems worth Legend Points)

Rules

If a character makes a successful Astral Sight (or Sense) Test against the ogre twin's Spell Defense, he can see a pair of faint, white lines trailing from the ogre twin's head and disappearing into astral space. Either twin can use his Regeneration power to heal himself. Ogre twins usually heal in the dimensional pocket, switching places when the other twin needs healing.

Like conventional ogres, ogre twins can sense precious metals and magically harden their clubs.

Detect True Element [Earth]: Ogres can smell True earth, silver and other precious metals, and often dig makeshift mines to locate the ore. Once dug up, they trade the ore to greedy dwarfs in exchange for chain mail, plate armor, and (occasionally) weapons.

Displace: Ogre twins can switch places with a thought; they don't have to spend an action for it. Each twin's physical possessions remain on the material plane; the second twin's body appears in the same spot occupied by the first twin, in the same position, even in mid-action if the twins so desire. The displaced twin inhabits a small, dimensional pocket between the astral and material planes. The white lines magically connect the displaced twin with the thoughts of the material twin, and also provide the displaced twin with air. If one of the ogres is killed, the other immediately appears on the physical plane to avenge its twin's death.

Pack Mule

Mules are the sterile crossbreeds of donkeys and horses. Pack mules are used to transport goods all across Barsaive. Though not as strong as draft horses, they are more sure-footed and travel better on uneven ground. These animals are often found pulling the carts and wagons of caravans traveling through rough terrain.

DEX: 4 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 7
PER: 3 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 4
Actions: 1
Attack (1): 5
Damage:
Trample (2): 9

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

Death: 42
Unconsciousness: 34
Wound Threshold: 12

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 8
Movement: 8

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 5

Pangolus



Some notable sages claim that the pangolus is the ancestor of all the Namegiver races. Others, equally notable, insist that the pangolus is actually a degenerate form of Namegiver. The pangolus is the height of a dwarf, but has the slender body and limbs of a human or an elf. Its arms are longer and its legs shorter in comparison to its height than is true of elves or most humans, and it has a useless stump of a tail. Its thin muscles are disproportionately strong, and an average pangolus weighs no more than eighty pounds. The creature's small head has a sharply sloping forehead, leaving relatively little space for a brain. A pangolus has no more intelligence than a hunting dog by comparison.

Pangoli spend much of their time in the branches of large trees, climbing them by means of long hooked claws on their hands and feet. In addition to climbing, they use their claws to tear open rotting trunks in search of their favorite food—grubs and other insects. Pangoli are swift and dexterous, almost graceful, in the treetops—they have no fear of falling and easily leap great distances from one tree to another. Few predators can match a pangolus for climbing speed. On the ground, however, they are slow and clumsy. Their short legs and long arms slow them down to a waddling walk. Only by crouching can they move with any kind of stealth. In addition to grubs, leaves, and fruit, pangoli also eat tree rats and other small living creatures. They stalk and frequently catch nesting birds, including such dangerous predators as cloud owls. On the ground, they dig up small burrowing creatures with their claws—they seem to like star moles and rock squirrels more than anything else. Sometimes they even feed on carrion.

Among their own kind, male pangoli are almost as territorial as jungle griffins. Females are always welcome, but the arrival of another male in a pangolus' territory prompts a threatening display. The pangolus whose territory is invaded hangs from a large branch and gives a strange, piercing, hooting cry. If the rival does not give ground, the defending pangolus starts to charge. If the intruder refuses to flee, the charging pangolus pulls up and hoots again. If the rival runs from the charge, however, the defending pangolus pursues it and attacks, often killing the unfortunate beast. The only way for the intruder to safely back down from a challenge is to voice its own battle cry and then slowly and deliberately depart. Most challenges end this way, though a few lead to dreadful clawing duels that end when one pangolus gives up or dies. The beasts cannot distinguish between Namegivers and their fellow pangoli, or between a male and a female Namegiver. Adventurers passing near pangolus territory had best be cautious.

Young pangoli can fend for themselves almost from birth, quite unlike the younglings of Namegiver races. The mother pangolus

protects and helps feed her young for almost a year, but the father has nothing to do with mother or offspring after mating.

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

Initiative: 9
Actions: 2
Attack (2): 10
Damage:
Claws (2): 7

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 1

Death: 48
Unconsciousness: 36
Wound Threshold: 7

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5
Movement: 5/7*

Legend Award: Third Circle (1 per 2 PC)

* The second value is the creature's climbing Movement Rate

Powers: Battle Shout [S] (Howl) (3): 8, Climbing [S] (3): 11, Durability (3), Great Leap [S] (3): 11

Equipment, Loot: A collection of various shiny objects, worth about 10–15 silver pieces

Rules

A pangolus attacks with its claws, raking its foe. When battling a creature larger than itself, it may grasp the opponent with its forepaws in a Grappling attack (***Player's Guide,*** p.230). This attack inflicts normal damage while the pangolus secures its grip. The creature can then tear at its opponent with its rear claws in the following round. The creature's rear claws inflict the same damage as its foreclaws, but using them adds a +3 bonus to the pangolus' Attack Test.

Adventure Hook

Reacting to rumors that somewhere on the fringes of the Wastes exists a colony of pangoli that uses a primitive language, a sage hires the characters to investigate. They find the colony, only to discover that a village in the region is fighting the pangoli because the villagers want to hunt on the land. In defense of their territory, the pangoli have recently raided the village and harmed a few inhabitants. The villagers responded by hiring a band of hunters to eliminate the creatures.

PLAGUE LIZARD

A plague lizard looks like the twisted offspring of a reptile and a rodent, if one can imagine a lizard-rat that measures more than 10 feet from snout to tail. Its entire body is covered with boils and welts, each of which carries a different disease. The lizard actually likes contagion, and often seeks out contaminated places where it can browse among filthy sicknesses as a gourmet Namegiver might browse at a banquet. Of course, the unfortunate tendency of most Namegivers to build and live in cities has given the plague lizard any number of such banquets to choose from. Nowhere in the world can a plague lizard find such a delicious variety of diseases as in a city's garbage heaps and overcrowded streets.

Once a plague lizard makes its nest in a garbage heap, Namegivers living nearby start sickening and dying in great numbers. The hallmark of lizard-borne illness is the variety of plagues that afflict the luckless population at once, as well as their virulence. Unless the afflicted have powerful magical and mundane defenses against the lizard's diseases—all of them—death is inevitable. The only way to stop the spread of contagion is to root the lizard out of its nest and kill it, then burn the stinking corpse in a red-hot kiln to destroy all trace of its plagues.

DEX: 5 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 8
PER: 4 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Bite (4): 10; Claws (1): 7
Death: 43
Unconsciousness: 35
Wound Threshold: 12

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 2
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Second Circle

Powers: Climbing [S] (2): 7, Disease (SD 10; Damage 10; see text), Disease Immunity

Equipment, Loot: None (unless someone comes up with some perverted use for the creature's disease)

Rules

Plague lizards attack opponents using their claws and teeth. A plague lizard's bite usually transmits the lizard's most virulent disease, which it stores in small glands at the base of its teeth. Unless he has a strong constitution, the victim can die within a minute. The lizard can also make two claw attacks each round, each of which may also transmit a disease.

Disease: Most of the diseases carried by the plague lizard cause Step 10 damage to the victim each round until he dies. The victim may make a Toughness Test each round to resist the disease, but the Difficulty Number increases by +2 each time. The plague lizard is, of course, immune to all diseases. Many of the diseases a plague lizard carries are magical and can be dispelled by means of a successful Dispel Magic spell Effect Test against a Difficulty Number of 10 (increased by +2 in each subsequent round). As the lizard collects diseases, the gamemaster can substitute a new disease for each one used. The specific diseases a given plague lizard may be carrying are up to the gamemaster—any plague he can think up can exist in the world of **Earthdawn**. Be creative, be cruel—but be careful!

Adventure Hook

The Throal government learns of a small village whose inhabitants have died of a variety of diseases almost overnight and hires the characters to protect a group of magical healers sent to relieve the suffering. One of the healers has seen a similar outbreak before and tells the characters that they must hunt down the plague lizard responsible and kill it.



POISON VINES

Poison vines look very much like the ordinary, harmless vines that grow over many ruined buildings. Few visible marks distinguish poison vines from their harmless counterparts.

DEX: 4 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 2
PER: NA **WIL**: NA **CHA**: NA

Initiative: NA
Actions: 1 (see text)
Attack (3): 7
Damage:
Leaves (3): 5

Physical Defense: 2
Spell Defense: 2
Social Defense: None
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death: 19
Unconsciousness: None
Wound Threshold: 3
Legend Award: First Circle

Recovery Tests: 0
Knockdown: None
Movement: NA

Powers: Poison [SD 12; see text]

Loot: Poison sap worth D10×4 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Rules

If characters attempt to hack down a poison vine, use the statistics listed above for the vine. The "Standard Actions" reflects exposure to the vines; the vines don't attack. Because poison vines cannot fight back, they are generally easy to kill, as long as the characters are careful to wear protective clothing or take steps to avoid being poisoned. Poison vines contain a toxic sap; the oil that coats the vines' razor-sharp leaves contains the same toxin.

Poison: A character who brushes past the vine's leaves may suffer cuts without realizing it, allowing the poison to affect him. The poison causes an extremely irritating rash that reduces all of the target's Step Numbers by –1. This effect lasts until the character applies a poultice or poison antidote, or for seven days (whichever comes first). The healing powers of a questor of Garlen can also neutralize the poison.

PORCUPINE SNAKE

These gigantic snakes can grow up to sixty feet long and more than a foot in diameter. They are thick-bodied, weighing several hundred pounds. They feed primarily on fish, turtles, beavers and other snakes, but gladly eat pigs, chickens, and anything up to human size. They are a muddy brown-green with intricate black swirled markings on their backs and yellowish stomachs. Normally, porcupine snakes are lazy and good-natured (for snakes), allowing curious onlookers within ten feet before they strike a defensive and threatening posture of puffing up their bodies and hissing. They feed at relatively long intervals and are only dangerous when actively threatened or very hungry.

DEX: 7 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 10
PER: 3 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 8
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 9
Damage:
Constrict: 10 (see text)

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

Death: 60
Unconsciousness: 52
Wound Threshold: 15
Legend Award: Second Circle

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: NA
Movement: 5/6*

* The second value is the creature's swimming Movement Rate

Powers: Climbing S (2): 9, Durability (1), Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 5, Heat Sight, Swimming S (2): 12

Loot: Quills worth 100 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Rules

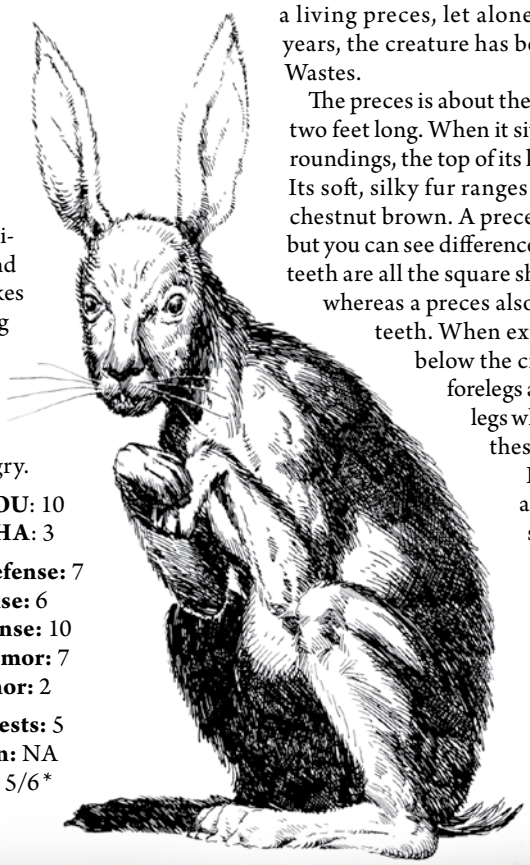
When a porcupine snake attacks, it tries to constrict its prey in its coils, suffocating them before consuming them.

Constrict: Both snake and victim make Strength Tests, with the higher result being successful. If the victim's result is higher, he is able to prevent the snake from constricting him; if the snake's result is higher, it coils around the prey in the same round as the initial attack, but does no extra damage. Each round thereafter, both opponents repeat the Strength Test. If the character remains ensnared, he takes damage, increasing by +1 Damage Step each round, to a maximum of Step 20. The snake does not stop constricting until a full five minutes have elapsed. When hurt or surprised, the porcupine snake inflates to nearly twice its diameter, popping three-inch quills as hard as ivory out from underneath its scales. To anything already constricted, this defensive measure inflicts an additional Step 15 damage every round. A thrashing, irritated porcupine snake with quills out may strike a character with its tail or body, inflicting Step 13 damage, but subtract –4 from its Attack Step to reflect that it is merely thrashing about, not actively attacking a specific target.

Aquatic: Porcupine snakes can hold their breath for a number of minutes equal to their Toughness Step before drowning.

PRECES

The preces has many different Names. The Name "preces" was bestowed on this creature by the Therans centuries before the Scourge, and the folk of Barsaive's southern regions still call it that. Further north, local people call it "supplicant," to the west, it is Named "prayer rabbit," and the few folk along the borders of the Wastes call it "grassfang." To most people outside the Wastes, the preces is a legendary beast; few Barsaivians have ever seen a living preces, let alone studied it. Until the past several years, the creature has been rarely encountered outside the Wastes.



The preces is about the size and shape of a large hare, some two feet long. When it sits on its haunches to observe its surroundings, the top of its head reaches as high as a troll's knee. Its soft, silky fur ranges in color from pale yellow to a rich chestnut brown. A preces looks and acts much like a rabbit, but you can see differences if you take a closer look. A rabbit's teeth are all the square shape needed to crop and chew grass, whereas a preces also has a set of sharp incisors and eyeteeth. When extended, these fangs show their tips below the creature's soft, furry lips. The preces' forelegs are also unusual, longer than its hind legs when fully extended. Usually, however, these legs are bent double.

Imagine a Namegiver holding his arms bent at the elbow, palms together so that his fingers are in front of his face as if in prayer. The preces holds its forelimbs in just such a pose, its "elbows" bent so that its "forearms" and "upper arms" are close together. When the creature moves—either in a slow, rocking walk or a high-speed dash—its elbows, not its front paws, touch the ground. Some folk in the Wastes hunt preces for food and for their soft pelts, but the swift-moving creatures have

an uncanny ability to sense approaching danger. Often, they dash to the safety of their burrows before their would-be hunters even see them.

Most of the year, the preces is as placid and calm as the rabbit it resembles. It lives peacefully in groups of up to twenty, grazing on succulent wildflowers and fleeing from the smallest threat. For a single month, however, as the days shorten and the harvest approaches, the preces enters its mating season and becomes a crazed carnivore. Males and females both refuse grass and flowers in favor of warm bleeding flesh, and the males battle each other ferociously as the females look on. They tear each other to shreds, continuing to fight long after any other creature would have collapsed from shock, pain, and blood loss.

Any preces in the grip of mating frenzy will attack anything it sees regardless of size. A preces attacks with blinding swiftness, flinging itself at its target and extending its forelimbs to catch its prey in a deadly grip. The beast is far stronger than a creature its size has any right to be, and its small furry feet are tipped with needle-sharp, hooked claws. On the insides of its forearms, usually hidden by its soft pelt, are half a dozen barbs, all tipped with a terrible poison. A single preces in heat can badly maul or kill an unwary Namegiver, except possibly a troll or obsidiman. Though male preces in a frenzy hunt alone, females often hunt in groups of six or more.

DEX: 8 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 4
PER: 5 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 9
Actions: 2
Attack (3): 11
Damage:
Bite (2): 7; 2×Claws (1): 6

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 1

Death: 45
Unconsciousness: 33
Wound Threshold: 6

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 6
Movement: 6

Legend Award: Third Circle

Powers: Durability (3), Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 7, Poison (SD 8; Damage 8; see text), Great Leap^{S} (3): 11

Rules

An attacking preces charges so fast that those who don't recognize the animal will be surprised. It usually attacks with its claw-tipped forearms. A mating preces is fearless and will fight any opponent to the death.

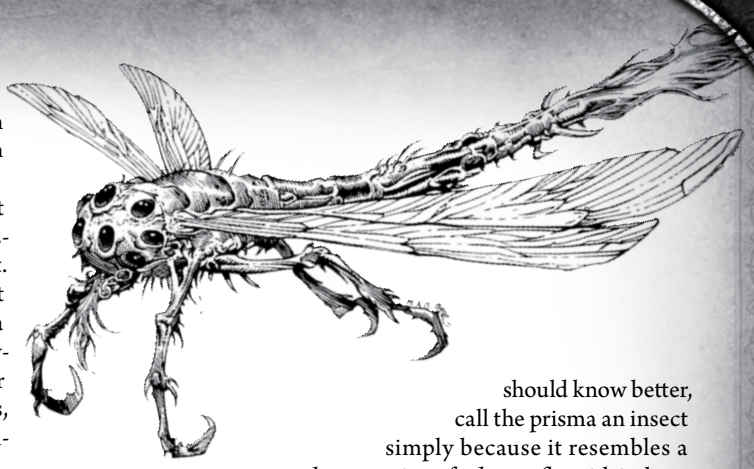
Poison: The venomous barbs on the insides of the preces' forearms inflict Step 8 poison damage each round for five rounds. The victim also suffers a –1 penalty to Action Tests during this time.

Adventure Hook

In a certain region near the Wastes, where a few buried kaers have high levels of residual magic, bands of adventurers attempting to enter the newly discovered kaers have succumbed to vicious attacks by local colonies of preces, despite the fact that the beasts' mating season is months past. The characters hear travelers' tales of these misfortunes, and within days are hired by a friend to help him investigate possible connections between the magic of the kaers and the preces' abnormal behavior.

PRISMA

Of all the flying creatures native to Barsaive, the prisma is perhaps the most beautiful. As it flies high over the land, its four colorful wings reflect and refract the sunlight, breaking it into ever-shifting rainbows and spears of multicolored light. Certain artists and artisans pay handsomely for prisma wings. Most terrestrial creatures, even scholars who



should know better, call the prisma an insect simply because it resembles a huge version of a dragonfly, with its long, tapering body and double wings. However, the prisma is not an insect, but a warm-blooded creature. It has four legs, rather than an insect's customary six, and an internal skeleton rather than a carapace. In addition, its eight eyes are not the compound eyes of a true dragonfly. They do, however, give it a field of vision as wide as many insects' because they are spaced evenly around its spherical head. Unlike every other warm-blooded creature, the prisma has no blind spot.

The prisma's body is forty feet long and its wingspan spreads almost fifty feet. Each of its muscular legs ends in a single curved claw the length of a human's forearm. A fast and maneuverable flyer, the prisma loves the thin, cold air hundreds or even thousands of feet above ice-capped mountains. An adult prisma rarely descends nearer to the ground than four or five thousand feet, finding the thicker and moister air at lower levels distasteful. Indeed, a prisma lands only a handful of times in its entire adult life, always on the highest and most isolated peaks. Few people, therefore, have ever seen an adult prisma up close.

Adult prisma have beaks set in the undersides of their bodies, with which they catch and devour small flying creatures on those rare occasions when they feel hunger (small, to a prisma, being anything the size of a large eagle or less). They enjoy hunting and will not pass by easy prey, but they do not kill for enjoyment or in anger. They can survive if necessary on a single eagle a week, drawing strength from the rich fat they store in their long narrow bodies. They build up this fat reserve by voracious feeding in their infant stage. On occasion, prisma dive down on high-flying airships and snatch crewmen from the decks. Trolls and obsidimen are too large for their tastes, but other Namegivers are at grave risk when the prisma indulges in one of these hunting raids.

Prisma live pitifully short adult lives, four or five years at best. Usually solitary, prisma seem to sense when one of their number is dying and gather around it in its last days. When the creature dies in its last flight, its fellows fall upon it and tear it to shreds before it can strike the ground. Soon after maturing, adult prisma mate and the female gives birth to a clutch of five or six live offspring, which it deposits in the rugged, broken ground of high mountain passes. These so-called larval prisma are about the size of a large cat and strikingly ugly. Slimy black skin covers their broad, flat bodies, four single-clawed legs, and small heads. Like the adult prisma, the young ones have eight eyes, as well as a pair of tusks that somewhat resemble an insect's mandibles.

The young prisma is an aggressive hunter, easily capable of slaughtering a full-grown mountain sheep (or unlucky mountaineer). It will attack and eat anything that comes near it, including its siblings. To help ensure her young's survival, the mother puts each larva in her clutch down several miles away from its fellows. The creatures feed voraciously and triple in size within a month. Within a year, they reach their full length of fifteen feet, remaining able to move with incredible speed despite weighing a ton or more. The young continue to eat for two or three more years, though they no longer grow any larger. At the end of this time, they search for a large cave in which to hibernate for another six months. They prefer caves

already occupied by bears or other such creatures, because they enjoy a last snack before settling down to sleep. As it hibernates, the young prisma undergoes a profound change. When the prisma awakes, it possesses its adult form and immediately takes to the air.

The following game statistics are for an adult and a larval prisma.

Adult Prisma

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

Initiative: 7
Actions: 1
Attack (1): 8
Damage:
Bite (7): 14
Claws (1): 8

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 4

Death: 40
Unconsciousness: 32
Wound Threshold: 11

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 8 *

Legend Award: Second Circle

* This value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Enhanced Senses [Sight] (2): 6

Loot: Wings worth 2,000 silver pieces, or 5,000 silver pieces if retrieved immediately after death (worth Legend Points)

Larval Prisma

DEX: 6 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 6
PER: 3 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (1): 7
Damage:
Bite (2): 8

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 4

Death: 35
Unconsciousness: 27
Wound Threshold: 9

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 8

Legend Award: First Circle

Rules

An adult prisma attacks by Grappling its prey (***Player's Guide***, p.230) with its clawed limbs and dragging the unfortunate target to its beak, then biting it in the next round. When hunting a flying creature, the prisma first tries to cripple its target or tear off the victim's wings. Prisma larvae can inflict a damaging bite with their mandible-like tusks. They do not use the claws on their legs to attack. During their metamorphosis from larvae to adult, prisma are defenseless.

Adventure Hook

A certain artist or mage has developed a theory that a dying prisma secretes a substance that makes its wings a particularly valuable prize. This person, determined to get his hands on such a pair of wings, hires the characters for the almost-impossible task of harvesting wings from a dying prisma.

Quadrilobe

The quadrilobe is a truly ancient creature, one that has existed almost unchanged for countless millennia. Quadrilobes are small even by dwarf standards. The largest one known measures a mere four feet long, but the more common specimens are only half that size. Broad and flat in shape, the quadrilobe's width averages about two-thirds its length, and its height represents a mere eighth of its length.

Viewed from above, the creature's head looks semicircular, dotted with two tiny eyes and two nostrils set in the top. Its mouth is hidden below the head, and behind the head extends a central "spine" of overlapping plates and a set of flattened ribs that curve slightly backward. For each of the twenty-four plates in its spine, an adult quadrilobe has two ribs on both sides and one pair of legs attached to its underside. Three overlapping fins make up its tail in a manner similar to a lobster or crayfish. The quadrilobe grows additional plates as it reaches maturity; young quadrilobes have fewer spinal plates than an adult creature, and a newly hatched quadrilobe, about the size of a human child's hand, has no more than six.

Despite its relatively small size, the quadrilobe is an inordinately heavy beast. An adult of average size can weigh as much as three hundred pounds. The soft, vulnerable parts of its body nestle safely inside a carapace of rock-hard chitin, a shell that is usually more than half an inch thick. Even the heaviest quadrilobe can move remarkably quickly, however, almost as fast as a running human or elf. It usually scuttles forward, but can easily change direction and move just as quickly to either side or to the rear.

Most quadrilobes live on the rocky shores and in the shallows of the Aras Sea. They do not swim, but scurry and scuttle underwater in exactly the same manner as they do on land. They breathe both air and water equally efficiently, but must immerse themselves in water at intervals of roughly one or two hours and so rarely stray more than a spear-cast from the ocean. Quadrilobes have never been seen living in fresh water. Quadrilobes are scavengers, sometimes searching for food alone but often scuttling across the rocks and sand in groups as large as a dozen. They feed by tearing the flesh of dead animals from the bones using their wickedly sharp and highly specialized teeth, and a group of quadrilobes can strip the body of a cow to the bone in minutes. Quadrilobes lack somewhat for intelligence and do not always distinguish between the dead and the merely motionless. A downed Namegiver too badly wounded to drag himself away from the shoreline may suffer a nasty demise.

Quadrilobes mate up to three times a year in the coastal shallows, males and females joining multiple times with different partners. After being impregnated, the female remains underwater until ready to lay her egg pouch. This rubbery, resilient sack is coated with a sticky substance that dries into a stone-hard bond within an hour or so. This "glue" enables the female quadrilobe to attach her pouch to a rock just above the low-water line, thus exposing



the pouch to air for only a few minutes at every ebb tide. Once the female has laid her eggs, she often leaves the area entirely.

The pouch has a distinctive odor—reminiscent of both tannin and honey—that repels fish that might otherwise eat the eggs. The smell seems to attract certain airborne predators, but they find it difficult to break open the hardened sack. The eggs hatch after six to seven weeks, releasing an average clutch of four to nine immature quadrilobes. As a tribute to the creatures' instinct for survival, the young grow rapidly, reaching a length of about two feet within the first year. At this point, their growth slows dramatically, though they continue to grow in tiny increments all their lives.

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

Initiative: 5
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 6
Damage:
Bite (3): 7

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 1

Death: 34
Unconsciousness: 26
Wound Threshold: 9

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: NA
Movement: 8

Legend Award: First Circle

Rules

Note that these creatures will not bite anything moving faster than might be accounted for by water currents, even in self-defense. If threatened, they flee.

Hardened Armor: Armor-Defeating Hits require one result level higher than normal (usually an Extraordinary result) against a quadrilobe's chitinous exoskeleton.

Adventure Hook

According to certain legends, the quadrilobes of Barsaive disappeared almost entirely from their accustomed shores throughout the decade or so before the Horrors arrived. Some people argue that the primitive creatures sensed the approaching Scourge and hid from the destruction. Shortly after learning of this legend, the characters hear that the quadrilobes have vanished from a particular area of the Aras Sea coast … and no one can explain why.

RAT

These are rats—each animal up to twelve inches long, hungry, vicious, diseased, black- or brown-furred, with sharp yellow teeth. Rats appear in groups of ten to twenty animals. At the gamemaster's discretion, they may or may not attack, depending on how hungry or vicious they are.

DEX: 4 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 3
PER: 4 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 5
Actions: 1
Attack (1): 5
Damage:
Bite (1): 3

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

Death: NA
Unconsciousness: 23
Wound Threshold: None

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: None
Movement: 6

Legend Award: First Circle*

* Increase award, depending on Disease virulence

Powers: Disease [SD 5–8; Blood Poisoning]

Rules

Rats use the rules for Pack or Swarm Attacks (p.147). The statistics above are for a pack of twenty rats. When the pack's Unconsciousness Rating is exceeded, the surviving rats scamper away.



Disease: A character bitten by a rat might suffer the effects of the blood-poisoning disease the rat is carrying. The disease's Spell Defense varies from rat to rat, ranging from 5 to 8, and the onset time ranges from 12 to 24 hours. For 36 hours before the poisoning actually sets in, the infected character becomes feverish—during this period he is considered Harried (***Player's Guide***, p.227). In addition, the infected character must make a Toughness Test every 24 hours; the character reduces his Toughness value by –1 for every test he fails. Once the disease sets in, the character's body becomes a disgusting mass of boils, sores, and pustulant buboes. A healer can cure these effects for a fee of 25 silver pieces per day of treatment. A character undergoing treatment regains lost points of Toughness at the rate of +1 for every 48 hours of bed rest or week of normal activity. If the character's Toughness value is reduced below 1 point, he dies.

RELAN

The loathsome little parasite called the relan is incredibly dangerous, simply because it often hides inside a familiar and harmless being. The relan cannot eat on its own, but must use the digestive tract of a larger, more complex creature to turn food into strength. It accomplishes this feat by burrowing into a deceased creature and reanimating it. Therefore, any creature—or Namegiver, for that matter—may be controlled by a relan (especially if the possibility exists that the person or creature in question may have died recently). As long as the relan is concerned only with making its host eat, there is little danger to fear from it, but if confronted, the host may become a powerful threat. Relans can send a powerful venom through the host body that in time causes irreparable damage, but until then gives the host immense strength and endurance. The relan then uses its host to fight its opponent or else makes the body flee to wherever the dreadful little beast can find a new host.

In appearance, the relan is a squat worm, rarely growing longer than twelve inches. Six small black eyes, as well as other sense organs dot its tiny head. Each of its six legs ends in small, sharp claws which the repulsive little pest uses to burrow into its host. On its underside is a small, thin tube that it extends into its host's intestines. The relan nestles at the base of the corpse's spine, from which it can control all parts of the body. Using its ample supply

of magic, it can reanimate the corpse sufficiently to get it moving again, at which point it sends the dead thing in search of food. As the animated corpse eats, the relan siphons off what it wishes through its feeding tube. In choosing its host, the relan prefers as recent a death as possible and an intact body, so that the reanimated host will be in fine working order. A powerful physique is an advantage, so that the worm will not be forced to change hosts too often. If a relan must change hosts, it can survive on its own internal stores of food for a week. After that, the little worm begins to starve. Before the Scourge, relans mostly used to haunt battlefields, where an endless supply of food lay on the ground for their taking. Now, one may find these disgusting worms everywhere.

Over time, the relan as a species has gained greater and greater skill at controlling their hosts. Long ago, they could use their hosts only for the rudimentary task of eating anything in sight. As time went on, however, the relan learned to force its host body to walk, run, and perform complicated physical acts. It even learned to slow down—perhaps even to halt—the decomposition of dead flesh. With these abilities, relans that took over Namegiver corpses could almost blend in with society. However, dead Namegivers animated in this way are slow to speak and cannot act in a normal manner.

There are legends of a realm in which the inhabitants see relans as the Passions in physical form. They actually leave their dead where relans can easily find them, and sometimes they even breed the little creatures. They believe that if they can't bring their loved ones back from the grave, the walking corpse is an acceptable substitute.

DEX: 6 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 3
PER: 8 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 5
Actions: As host
Attack: As host
Damage: As host

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 1

Death: 23
Unconsciousness: 14
Wound Threshold: 5

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 3 or as host
Movement: 3 or as host

Legend Award: Second Circle (1 relan + 1 host of Second Circle or lower.) If host is of Third or higher Circle, use the host's Legend Award instead.

Powers: Control Corpse (4), Corpse Venom, Enhanced Senses [Sight] (2): 10

Equipment, Loot: Host's possessions, if any

Rules

A relan can only attack through its host's body, and so the gamemaster must create statistics for the host if necessary. The statistics given apply to the relan itself.

Corpse Venom: The relan's powerful venom increases the host's Strength and Toughness Steps by +8 each and adds +20 to the host's Death Rating. The venom takes a heavy toll on the host body, however, causing it to decompose within two hours, so the relan will only inject its host if it has no choice. A host affected by relan venom cannot be revived.

Adventure Hook

During a savage battle against a foe of the gamemaster's choice, a gamemaster-character friend of the characters goes down under a mass of the enemy. Understandably, the characters assume their comrade is dead. Two days later, however, the fallen comrade returns, wounded but apparently alive. Gradually, the characters notice small but strange changes in their companion, and decide to find out what really happened after they saw him or her cut down. Unknown to the characters, their companion is in fact dead, and has been reanimated by a relan.

RHINOCEROS

A rhinoceros is a large, thick-skinned mammal bearing up to two horns on its snout. As herbivorous herd animals, they live on the plains of Barsaive. Rhinos are known for their bad tempers and will typically charge intruders if they get too close, attempting to gore their foes on their horns. Typically, a rhinoceros directs its first Charge attack at the nearest character or animal that poses a threat.

DEX: 5 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 10
PER: 3 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 5
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 8
Damage:
Charge (8): 18; Gore (4): 14
Death: 52
Unconsciousness: 45
Wound Threshold: 15

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 2
Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 11
Movement: 8 **Legend Award:** Third Circle

Powers: Charge (4), Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 5

RIVER STEED

The river steed is an unusual creature that resembles a large sea snake with fins. The t'skrang of House Ishkarat are said to breed the creatures and train them to swim along the water's surface and respond to a bridle and bit. Allegedly, the Ishkaratans race these river steeds for sport and use them as mounts for messengers. Some tales claim that a member of the Denairastas clan of Iopos has formed an entire regiment of "river cavalry" composed of riders on river steeds. Wild river steeds typically shy away from swimmers and riverboats and pose little danger to travelers.

DEX: 7 **STR**: 9 **TOU**: 8
PER: 6 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 7
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 9
Damage:
Bite (3): 12

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

Death: 46
Unconsciousness: 39
Wound Threshold: 13

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 9
Movement: 8*

Legend Award: First Circle

* This value is the creature's swimming Movement Rate

Powers: Swimming^{S} (2): 11

Equipment: Saddle, bit, and bridle (if trained)

ROCKWORM

These elemental creatures resemble giant worms ten to fifteen feet long, covered with a rocky hide of overlapping plates. They burrow through the hardest rock and stone like dirt, consuming elemental earth and other minerals to sustain themselves. Though mindless, they are fiercely territorial and will attack any other creature that intrudes on their territory; miners and prospectors are among their most numerous victims.

Though prospecting around rockworm territory is often dangerous, it can be profitable as well, as the worms tend to lair in areas with high concentrations of elemental earth. Such concentrations usually indicate nearby veins of living crystal or orichalcum, which can net a lucky prospector even more money. Some prospectors and miners follow the signs of rockworm tunnels to find these rich deposits, keeping close watch for an attack by the worms.

DEX: 7 **STR**: 11 **TOU**: 10
PER: 2 **WIL**: 2 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 7 (10; Surprise Attack) **Physical Defense:** 8
Actions: 1 **Spell Defense:** 6
Attack (3): 10 **Social Defense:** 13
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 13
Bite (5): 16 **Mystic Armor:** 3

Death: 51 **Recovery Tests:** 4
Unconsciousness: 44 **Knockdown:** 13
Wound Threshold: 18 **Movement:** 5/4*

Legend Award: Third Circle

* The second value is the creature's burrowing Movement Rate

Powers: Surprise Attack (3)

Loot: Gems and crystals worth 5D6×10 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Rules

A rockworm typically bursts out of the ground without warning and attacks with a powerful bite; its stony jaws, lined with jagged pieces of crystal, can inflict considerable damage. Its tough hide makes the worm difficult to hurt. If seriously wounded, a rockworm usually retreats back beneath the earth.

ROLLING MOSS

Rolling moss, deep green in color with dark roots, grows in subterranean areas as well as outdoors. Its ability to grow swiftly over anything in its path gave rolling moss its name (though even rolling moss cannot grow on a rolling stone). Rolling moss can, however, grow fast enough to cover an animal or character within two hours. Because it possesses only rudimentary intelligence, rolling moss attacks solely for food, and will attempt to cover conscious as well as unconscious victims. Any character remaining motionless for one to two hours will be covered in rolling moss.

DEX: 4 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 2
PER: NA **WIL**: NA **CHA**: NA

Initiative: 1 **Physical Defense:** 2
Actions: 1 **Spell Defense:** 2
Attack (5): 9 **Social Defense:** NA
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 0
Roots (2): 4 **Mystic Armor:** 0

Death: 19 **Recovery Tests:** 0
Unconsciousness: NA **Knockdown:** NA
Wound Threshold: NA **Movement:** NA (see text)

Legend Award: Second Circle

Powers: Poison [SD 9; Paralysis]

Rules

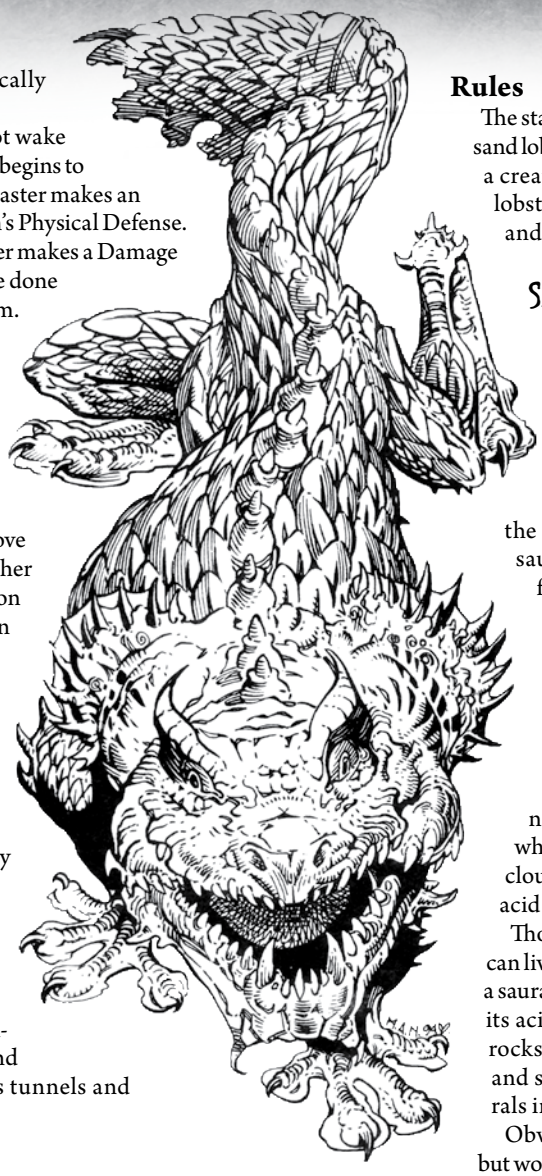
Though swift when compared to the growth rate of normal plants, rolling moss moves slowly enough that a character or creature may notice it creeping over his body, even in his sleep. To become aware of the moss, a sleeping target must make a successful Perception Test against a Difficulty Number of 21. When the moss begins to creep toward the target, but does not yet cover any portion of the character, the Difficulty Number for the Perception Test is 11. Once the moss begins its attack by growing over a hand or foot, the Difficulty Number drops to 5.

Poison: Rolling moss produces an aromatic pollen that acts like a paralytic poison, putting the target character or animal to sleep. Once the moss has covered 75 percent of its target, the pollen induces a sleep-like, paralytic state. To awaken from this effect, the affected character must make a Toughness Test against a Difficulty Number of 9 plus the number of minutes since the pollen took effect. For characters attempting to wake up without aid, the gamemaster should allow the character to make a Toughness (14) Test after 5 minutes. Any aid a character receives in waking lowers the Difficulty Number for the Toughness Test to 5. Using any radical method to wake a character, such as splashing water in his



face, attacking him, and so on, automatically wakes the victim.

Roots: If a character or animal does not wake from the paralysis within 4 hours, the moss begins to take root in the victim's body. The gamemaster makes an Attack Test for the moss against the victim's Physical Defense. If the Attack Test succeeds, the gamemaster makes a Damage Test for the moss to determine the damage done by the moss' roots digging into the victim. Armor offers no protection against rolling moss, because it creeps along the body beneath a character's armor. The moss can only attack its victim once per day; this limit allows characters a chance to wake up and stop further attacks. If a victim wakes up after the moss makes a successful first attack, the victim must remove the roots that have burrowed into his or her body. The difficulty of this task depends on how much damage the character has taken from the moss. If the total damage is less than the victim's Wound Threshold, the victim may simply pull the moss out, taking Step 2 damage in the process. No armor protects against this damage. If the total damage done to the character exceeds his Wound Threshold, the moss has dug so deeply into his body that only magic, like the Sterilize Object spell, can remove it. Note that an awakened victim takes no additional damage from the moss, no matter how long it takes him or her to get rid of it. Unless the victim can free himself from the moss, it will eventually kill him. Many of the explorers and animals whose corpses litter Parlainth's tunnels and streets met their deaths this way.



SAND LOBSTER

Sand lobsters like to bury themselves in the sandy banks of the lower Coil River and wait for approaching prey. Most varieties of sand lobster are small, and their claws inflict no more than painful pinches.

The meat of these smaller specimens is a prized delicacy in Urupa and increasingly elsewhere along the river. However, those seeking to cash in on this growing food craze should keep in mind that some sand lobster varieties grow to the size of a horse and possess enough strength to crush a troll.

DEX: 8 **STR**: 11 **TOU**: 11
PER: 6 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 9 (14; Surprise Attack) **Physical Defense:** 10
Actions: 2 **Spell Defense:** 7
Attack (5): 13 **Social Defense:** 6
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 8
Pincers (4): 15 **Mystic Armor:** 2

Death: 85 **Recovery Tests:** 5
Unconsciousness: 73 **Knockdown:** 15
Wound Threshold: 16 **Movement:** 8/4*

Legend Award: Fifth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

* The second value is the creature's burrowing Movement Rate

Powers: Durability (5), Surprise Attack (5)

Rules

The statistics above represent a moderate-sized sand lobster, roughly four to five feet long. When a creature or Namegiver walks above a sand lobster, the lobster springs out of the ground and grabs its victim with its claws.

SAURAL

A strange creature indeed is the saural, a creature halfway between frog and lizard that can burn with the slightest touch. Anyone who has ever encountered long, winding paths seemingly burned into the ground or the heat-blackened rocks that dot the shores of the Serpent River, has seen the trail of the saural. The grayish-green saural is about four feet long and can breathe on land and in the water through the gills at the base of its thick neck. Thick, armor-like scales protect it against most natural predators. Its most powerful protection, however, is the burning acid that covers its entire body. From a distance, the acid looks like sticky slime, but it is nothing so harmless as that. No matter what surface the saural sits on, a constant cloud of steam rises around it as its natural acid eats through whatever it touches.

Though a cold-blooded creature, the saural can live in extremely high temperatures. Often, a saural will spend so much time on a rock that its acid eats all the way through. The melted rocks look as if they were as soft as river clay and some huge artist's hand pushed the saurals into the rock to form the impressions.

Obviously, touching a saural is a foolish act, but would-be heroes can also come into contact with the acid through no fault of their own. The creature can also spit acid for a distance of more than thirty feet. By instinct, it aims for the eyes whenever it can. The lucky victim of such an attack is merely blinded for life, and strong healing magic can restore the mess that was once his eyes to a semblance of physical wholeness. If the victim is unlucky, the acid will eat through his eyes and the front of his skull, dissolving his brain within minutes. Only by immediately bathing his or her eyes in a running stream can the victim wash the acid away. Luckily for those who encounter a saural, the beast can be fooled by a simple trick. Draw a pair of eyes larger and more menacing than your own on some other surface or object, and the saural will instinctively aim its caustic spit at those eyes instead of yours.

As to the question of why saurals don't melt themselves into piles of slime, the beast appears to have a protective layer of liquid underneath the acid that seems to neutralize the burning effect. This second liquid also allows saurals to mate; both males and females seem able to exude this protective substance outside the acid layer so that they do not harm each other. An infant saural exudes no acid at all, lest it burn itself out of its eggshell prematurely; only upon reaching a large enough size to fend for themselves do they develop the necessary organs in the skin to produce the substance. The organs that produce the acid and its antidote are in high demand from alchemists and adventurers, respectively—alchemists find the acid extremely useful in their experiments, and adventurers use the antidote to protect themselves against all manner of irritants.

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

Initiative: 5
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Bite (1): 5
Death: 37
Unconsciousness: 27
Wound Threshold: 8
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 2
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 7

Legend Award: Second Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Powers: Breath Weapon [Acid] (12): 15, Climbing^{S} (2): 7, Durability (1), Spellcasting (6): 9

Loot: Acid-creating and acid-neutralizing organs worth 200 silver pieces each (worth Legend Points)

Rules

An adult saural constantly drips acid. Anyone foolish enough to touch the creature immediately takes Step 12 damage from acid burns. The acid similarly damages inanimate objects; carrying the stuff around in a magically treated glass vial is ideal for melting away locks and other hindrances. Acid-spitting saurals always attempt to hit their target's eyes, requiring a Called Shot to succeed. If a saural hits a target's eyes, the target is blinded by the acid (***Player's Guide***, p.226). If the damage to the target's eyes is high enough to cause a Wound, the target remains blind until that Wound is healed. At the gamemaster's discretion, this blindness may be permanent or may only remain until the victim can be healed by powerful magic, such as that of a questor of Garlen.

Breath Weapon: To spit its acid at a victim, the saural uses its Breath Weapon power. After a target has been hit successfully, the acid continues to burn for four rounds, each round inflicting –1 less Step of damage. Armor protects against this damage, but at the price of permanent injury or destruction. For example, if plate armor (Phys 9) is hit by a gob of acid that does 8 Damage Points, the armor permanently loses 8 points of protection—its new Physical Armor Rating is now 1. Certain types of armor that are immune to saural acid include living crystal armor, blood pebble armor, and all forms of crystal armor and shields. The power's range is 12 yards (6 hexes).

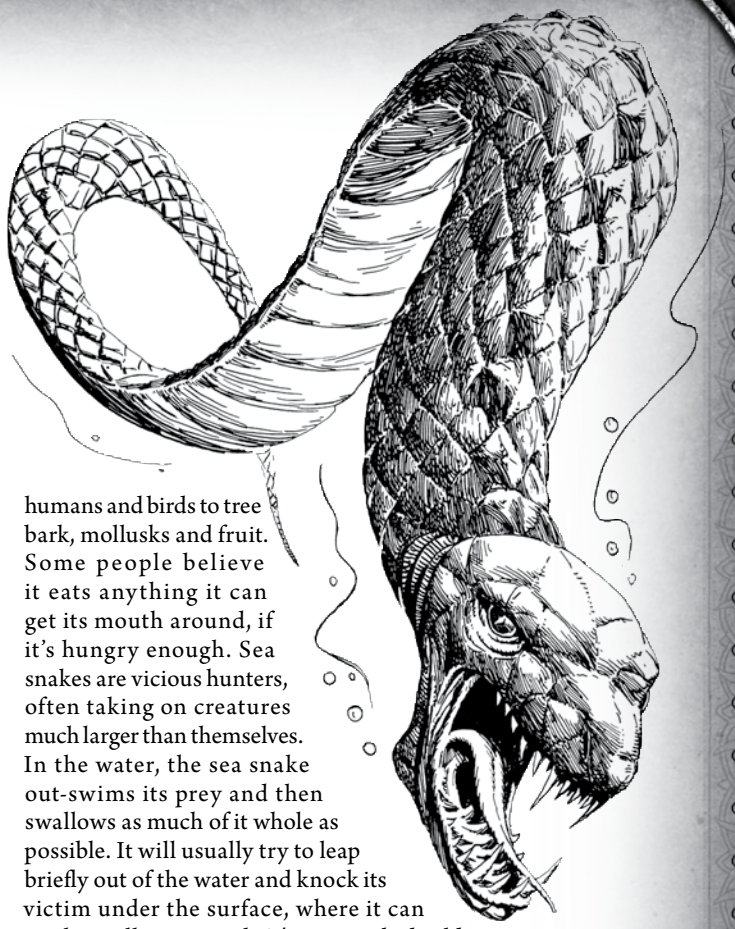
Adventure Hook

T'skrang merchants near a busy port on the Serpent River discover a colony of saurals near their docks and hire the characters to exterminate the beasts before they manage to burn the docks away. The t'skrang are willing to pay a handsome fee and allow the characters to keep the valuable skin organs from any saural they kill. Killing a saural, however, is much easier said than done.

Sea Snake

A large serpent, the slender sea snake is often as long as 10 feet, covered in luminescent blue-green scales that glimmer like jewels in the sun. Its large jaws can unhinge to swallow prey much larger than the width of its head. Just behind its jaws lie the sea snake's gills, with which it breathes water as easily as air. Anyone who has ever fought a sea snake (assuming he lived) knows that the beast is made almost entirely of muscle. The sea snake can flatten its muscular body to an incredible thinness and race through water at prodigious speeds. When the creature wishes to leave the water, it resumes a rounder shape and slithers up onto the land. Unlike other serpents, the sea snake is warm-blooded. No scholar has been able to explain this oddity; it seems to be another of the Universe's mysteries.

As well as living anywhere, the sea snake can eat anything. Though it seems to prefer red meat, this beast eats anything from rodents, humans and birds to tree bark, mollusks and fruit. Some people believe it eats anything it can get its mouth around, if it's hungry enough. Sea snakes are vicious hunters, often taking on creatures much larger than themselves. In the water, the sea snake out-swims its prey and then swallows as much of it whole as possible. It will usually try to leap briefly out of the water and knock its victim under the surface, where it can easily swallow its catch. The sea snake builds up tremendous speed under the water, before launching itself upward—it is able to knock a sailor overboard this way.



DEX: 8 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 5
PER: 5 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 8
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 11
Damage:
Bite (3): 10
Death: 49
Unconsciousness: 37
Wound Threshold: 8
Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 2
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: None
Movement: 5/7*

Legend Award: Third Circle

* The second value is the creature's swimming Movement Rate

Powers: Climbing^{S} (3): 11, Durability (3), Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 7, Heat Sight, Swimming^{S} (3): 10

Rules

The sea snake bites its victims with its jaws either hinged or unhinged. When hinged, the jaws apply considerable force, causing the damage listed for its bite. With the jaws unhinged, the sea snake's bite is feebler, but it can swallow a sufficiently small prey in one gulp. To knock prey into the water, a sea snake must make a successful Attack Test using the Attacking to Knockdown combat option (***Player's Guide***, p.222). The sea snake then clamps its mouth around the victim's leg, arm, clothes, or any other convenient handle and drags him down to drown. For each round the victim struggles with the snake, he is dragged another 10 yards beneath the water's surface; a character who manages to break the snake's hold faces a long swim back to air.

Adventure Hook

A scholar who wishes to discover whether all sea snakes are actually the same species hires the characters to bring back live

specimens from all across Barsaive. The gamemaster can send the characters anywhere in Barsaive he wishes to capture the huge snakes, exposing them to all kinds of danger and giving them a chance to explore the entire province.

Selachi

These shark-like creatures measure at least twenty-five feet from nose to tail. Unlike a common shark, the selachi has a squarish nose covered with layer upon layer of iron-hard bone. Below this bone-ram is the creature's huge mouth, big enough to swallow a large human whole. Row upon row of dagger-length teeth line the monster's jaws, and the selachi continually grows new ones as the old teeth break off in the bodies of their prey. Interestingly, selachi are also notorious for attempting to bite and chew objects that they cannot eat—ship hulls, sunken treasures, and such.

Some folk call the selachi the sea wolf because it hunts in packs of five to ten. The creatures find their prey by means of amazingly acute senses. Their keen hearing can as easily lead them to an animal splashing in the water as it can to the rhythmic churning of a t'skrang fire engine. They can smell even the faintest trace of blood in the water. Unlike other sea creatures, they can also see well both in water and out of it. Indeed, a selachi will often swim toward the surface at a great speed and launch itself several feet into the air, so that it may see any nearby ships, leviathans, or pods of whales before it plunges back beneath the waves.

Once a selachi has found its prey, the entire pack swims toward the luckless meal as fast as possible and rams it with their armored noses. The vicious carnivores will strike whales or leviathans again and again, hoping to daze the creatures enough to tear them apart with their terrible jaws. Selachi packs also hunt wooden ships, leaping out of the water and slamming headfirst into a boat's side until it crumbles into timbers. Once the ship is destroyed, the selachi can devour its soft, chewy crew and passengers at leisure.

The most successful method of keeping selachi away from a ship requires attracting them first. As mad as that no doubt sounds: it works. Whenever a selachi is spotted in the distance, sailors kill one of the cattle on board and pour some of its blood over the side. The pack of selachi will swim toward the blood and drift aimlessly around in it in search of the animal from which it came until the blood disperses. All this time, of course, the ship is sailing swiftly away. After enough time has passed for the blood to have vanished, more blood is poured into the water to distract the creatures again. By this means, sailors make sure to stay one step ahead of the selachi throughout the voyage. However, waiting until a selachi is seen in the distance is more dangerous than simply spilling blood at regular intervals. Selachi can swim so fast that there might not be enough time to slaughter a cow or pig before the ravenous pack has reached the ship.

However, playing "follow the leader" with these vicious beasts in the manner may have terrible consequences if they follow the ship into port. There, they will wreak havoc not only on the ship but on every ship in the harbor.

DEX: 8 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 9
PER: 3 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 9
Actions: 1
Attack (5): 13
Damage:
Bite (6): 16 (see text);
Ram (4): 14 (see text)

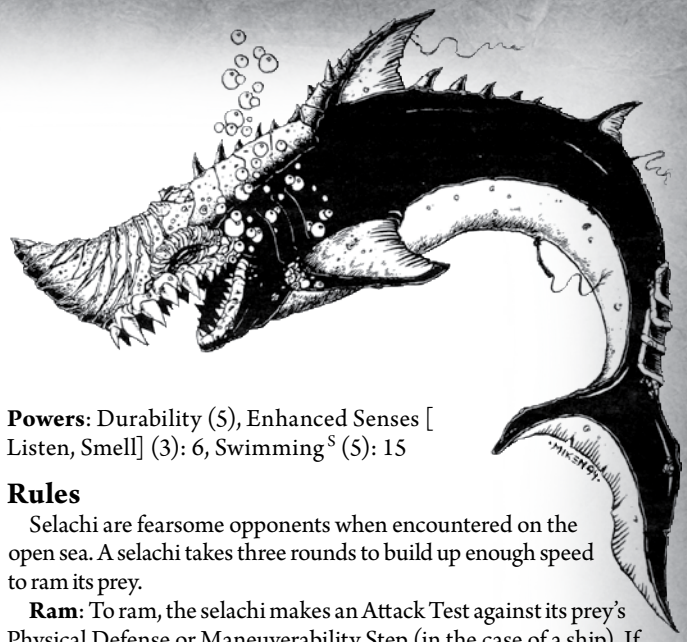
Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 0

Death: 80
Unconsciousness: 68
Wound Threshold: 14

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: None
Movement: 8*

Legend Award: Fifth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

* This value is also the creature's swimming Movement Rate



Powers: Durability (5), Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (3): 6, Swimming^{S} (5): 15

Rules

Selachi are fearsome opponents when encountered on the open sea. A selachi takes three rounds to build up enough speed to ram its prey.

Ram: To ram, the selachi makes an Attack Test against its prey's Physical Defense or Maneuverability Step (in the case of a ship). If successful, the target takes damage. After a few rounds of this kind of onslaught, even the sturdiest ships are likely to be destroyed (see the ***Gamemaster's Companion*** for typical ship statistics).

Bite and Swallow: Once the selachi's prey is rendered unconscious, the beast attempts to bite and swallow it. Human-sized or smaller creatures are swallowed whole. No armor protects against this damage.

Adventure Hook

A ship docks in a busy harbor, and the ship's hands are beginning their work just as the characters board the vessel. Minutes later, the dockmaster shouts a dire warning: a school of selachi has entered the bay. As the creatures start smashing into boats and sending them to the bottom, the terrified ship owner begs the characters to drive them off or kill them.

Shadowmant

Eight feet wide with a five-foot-long tail, shadowmants resemble large, flying stingrays. A shadowmant's outer side is black, its underside dark gray, and its tail ends in a crystalline stinger. A shadowmant has two eyes and a small mouth lined with rows of tiny, needle-sharp teeth. Nocturnal creatures, shadowmants roam at night, spending daylight hours underground. Alchemists prize shadowmant stingers, using them to brew magical potions.

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

Initiative: 7
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Stinger (2): 7 (poison)

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

Death: 35
Unconsciousness: 27
Wound Threshold: 9

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5
Movement: 8*

Legend Award: Second Circle

* This value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Low-Light Vision, Poison [SD 8; Damage Step 9]

Loot: Stinger worth D10×10 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Rules

A shadowmant uses its tail to sting its victims. The stinger contains a poison powerful enough to kill a troll within 10 rounds. Once the poison has killed its prey, the shadowmant eats its victim.

Poison: The shadowmant's virulent poison resists the healing effects of talents or healing aids with a Spell Defense of 8.

SHILAGRUE

Shilagrue is the t'skrang word for "wandering shawl," which aptly describes these strange creatures. flat and thin as a piece of cloth, shilagrue vary in size from four to twenty square feet. Shilagrue possess no means of locomotion. Instead, they billow and float underwater, drifting along with the current. A shilagrue's shape and translucent coloring make it difficult to see, and swimmers often fail to spot it until it is almost upon them.

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

Initiative: 8
Actions: 1
Attack: NA
Damage: NA

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1

Death: 35
Unconsciousness: 27
Wound Threshold: 9

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6
Movement: Varies

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Engulf (2): 8, Spellcasting (3): 8

Rules

Once any part of a shilagrue touches a victim, the creature reflexively attempts to envelop him. If possible, the shilagrue seals its edges, sinks to the bottom of the river and suffocates its victim (even creatures and characters that can breathe underwater may be killed in this manner). A character enveloped by a shilagrue immediately begins to take damage from drowning each round he remains trapped in the creature. A shilagrue that has killed prey remains on the river bottom as it digests its meal, then ejects any skeletal remains and begins to drift once more with the current. The shilagrue's swimming Movement Rate is determined by the speed of the river.

SHRIEKER BAT

The shrieker bat looks almost exactly like its smaller cousins, except for its greater size. At full extension, its leathery wings span 4 feet, it also has larger eyes and smaller ears. Unlike other bats, the shrieker bat does not navigate by sound but by sight—therefore, it does not need the large mouse-like ears common to its tiny kindred. Instead, it can produce a cry every bit as piercing; a painfully irritating, sound, worse than sharp talons on metal. The shrieker bat uses its cry to paralyze its prey, most often birds and rodents (though any source of meat, including Namegivers, is quite welcome to its palate). The shriek affects any animal within hearing range, though the paralysis effect grows weaker the bigger the victim. The shriek also affects inanimate objects. Weapons, glassware, pottery, and other objects made of similar materials may well shatter into slivers when the shrieker bat flies near.

This creature is quite dangerous when hunting; its dull black fur makes it almost impossible to see in the dark, and its high-pitched cry is beyond the ability of the Namegiver races to hear—only the rush of its wings gives its presence away. Unlike other bats, the shrieker bat also flies in daylight, most often to protect its nest from harm, but a ravenous bat will also hunt in sunlight if it must.

Once the bat paralyzes its prey, it lands on its victim and begins to tear out great chunks of flesh with its sharp claws and teeth. The effects of its cry last for at least a couple of minutes, to prevent a bat's victims from running before the bat starts to eat. Any traveler unlucky enough to fall victim to a shrieker bat had best hope his companions have intact weapons left with which to battle it until he can move again. However, these bats usually travel in packs of ten, twenty, or sometimes more—defeating them should prove a challenge for even the most experienced heroes.

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

Initiative: 8
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 10
Damage:
Bite (2): 7

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 2

Death: 52
Unconsciousness: 41
Wound Threshold: 9

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5
Movement: 2/8 *

Legend Award: Third Circle (1 per 2 PC)

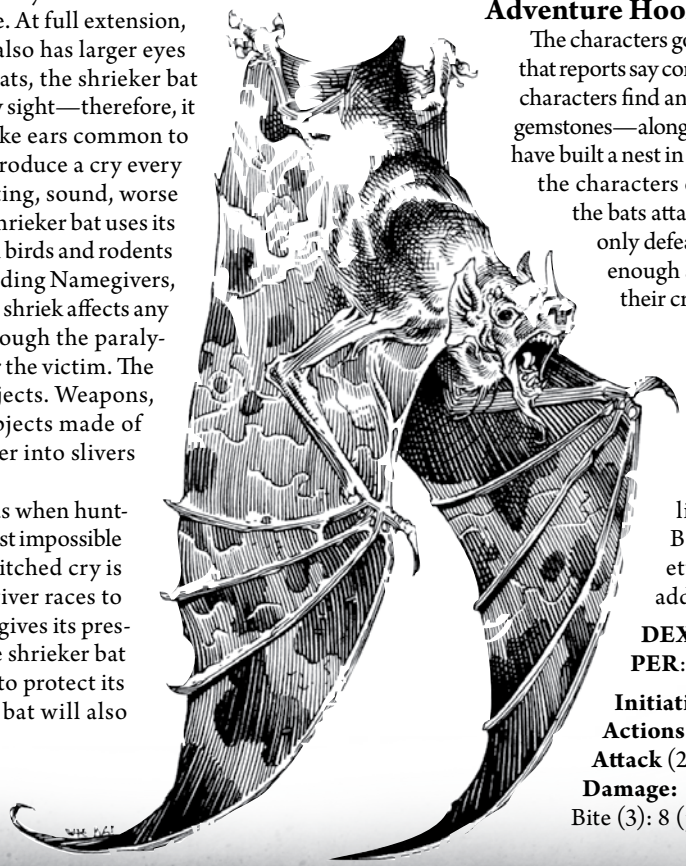
* The second value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Durability (3), Enhanced Senses [Listen, Sight] (2): 5, Low-Light Vision, Paralyzation (8): 12, Silent Walk S (2): 9, Sonic Shriek (7): 12

Rules

The shrieker bat's sonic attack covers a large part of the audio range, allowing it to paralyze victims and shatter objects. When the bat attempts to paralyze living creatures, use the creature's Paralyzation power. The shrieker bat uses its Sonic Shriek power to shatter brittle objects.

Once it paralyzes a target, the shrieker bat lands on its prey and begins to eat. The bat attacks the victim in each round that he remains paralyzed. The bat eats until it is sated or until someone knocks it off its victim. In general, a bat feeds for five to ten rounds, and so a pack of shrieker bats may find a single victim to be an insufficient food source.



Adventure Hook

The characters go in search of a long-forgotten kaer that reports say contains a valuable store of gems. The characters find and enter the kaer and even find the gemstones—along with a colony of shrieker bats, who have built a nest in the walls of the gem room. Before the characters can retrieve the precious stones, the bats attack them. The characters must not only defeat the bats, but also draw them far enough away from the gemstones so that their cries do not shatter the gems.

SNAKE

The snake is a small, scaly, legless, venomous reptile. These creatures are found all over Barsaive, but most of them live in the forests and jungles of Barsaive. There are a wide variety of species, such as asps, black adders, cobras, and the like.

DEX: 6 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 4
PER: 3 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 8
Damage:
Bite (3): 8 (poison)

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death: 28
Unconsciousness: 19
Wound Threshold: 7
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: None
Movement: 5

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Climbing [S] (2): 8, Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 5, Heat Sight, Poison (SD 5; Damage 5), Silent Walk [S] (2): 8

Snow Badger

Only in Barsaive's tallest mountains, where snow falls deep and lingers throughout the year, can the snow badger still be found. Thousands of years ago, when large portions of Barsaive lay under a white blanket for months at a time, snow badgers were numerous and fat. Now, the land is temperate and growing ever warmer, and many believe that within a few hundred years the snow badger will disappear altogether.

The snow badger strongly resembles its mundane brethren, though it is somewhat larger. Its pelt is almost entirely white, crossed with a few darker stripes. The badger's coloring allows it to blend perfectly with the shadows on the snowy landscape; often, the only clue to a snow badger's presence is its squeal of alarm. Its short muzzle hides small sharp teeth, though its bite does painful damage. A snow badger also has short, but sharp claws on its back feet and long, curving front claws that can burrow into the earth as easily as they dig into an unlucky predator's flesh.

The snow badger's real weapon is not teeth or claws, but its magical ability to give off waves of biting cold. The badger somehow sucks up the cold from the surrounding snow and concentrates it around itself. The creature can lower the temperature so far that the thin skin of most Namegivers will freeze, and fingers and toes grow brittle with frostbite and fall off. Most adventurers don't prepare for such extreme concentrated cold and will quickly succumb to it unless they kill the creature or flee. When the beast begins to draw in the cold, blue-white lines form in the snow in a wheel-spoke pattern around the creature, extending in all directions for several hundred feet. It looks as if the badger is drawing in lightning from the snowdrifts—the lines seem to crackle and snap with power.

In many troll communities of Barsaive's mountain ranges, the pelts of snow badgers are highly prized. As one can imagine, obtaining such a pelt requires great stealth and cunning and has become even more difficult as the population of snow badgers has dwindled. As a result, they confer great status on their wearers—mostly powerful chieftains and Warriors who wear them as ceremonial dress. Troll legends also claim that a snow badger pelt confers the creature's unique power on its wearer, but it seems improbable that the dried pelt of a living creature would retain any of the creature's magical powers. One can find merchants selling snow badger pelts in most of the marketplaces of Barsaive. But almost all of these are simply the pelts of mundane badgers, dyed to resemble the coats of snow badgers.



Snow badgers mate for life. Therefore, if you see one snow badger, you will likely soon meet another one. They couple during the spring and usually produce six to eight dark-gray or black cubs. For the first half year of their lives, young snow badgers do not leave the hidden burrow dug by their parents—their dark coloring, though useless in the snow, perfectly hides them from snooping predators in the darkness of their holes. Many of these burrows are large enough to admit a human and extend downward for several feet, though they are only about three feet across. Of course, the parents are never far off—any predator that tries to crawl inside the burrow will face a couple of angry adult badgers within seconds.

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

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 9
Damage:
Bite (3): 8; Claws (1): 6
Death: 56
Unconsciousness: 45
Wound Threshold: 10
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 1
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 8
Movement: 7/3 *

Legend Award: Third Circle (1 per 2 PC)

* The second value is the creature's burrowing Movement Rate

Powers: Climbing [S] (3): 9, Durability (3), (2), Enhanced Senses [Smell] (2): 6, Freezing Aura (3), Temperature [T] (7): 11

Loot: Pelt worth 100 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Rules

The badger prefers to defend itself from its protected burrow, only coming out of the entrance far enough to bite and slash at its opponent.

Temperature: *Water—Cold*. The magical ability of the snow badger works like the Temperature talent (***Player's Guide***, p.83), except it can affect open areas to a 20-yard (10 hex) radius around the badger. For every ten degrees of cold, those unprepared to face it take Step 3 damage per round. No armor protects against this damage, but the gamemaster may reduce it by an amount he feels appropriate for targets wearing some kind of warm winter clothing. For example, if a snow badger lowers the temperature by thirty degrees, every person and creature in the affected area (except the badger) takes Step 9 damage from the cold every round.

Adventure Hook

The characters are traveling in the mountains when they come across a large snow badger burrow, which they mistake for the entrance to a nearby kaer. The characters climb down into the burrow just as the adult badgers are returning. Once they realize their mistake, the characters must fight their way past the angry and frightened mother and father of the helpless badger cubs.

Song Sprite

These small, delicate, beautiful creatures flit around on sparkling wings seemingly spun of gossamer threads. Though they resemble windlings, song sprites rarely exceed six inches in height. They are actually a variety of will o' the wisp that produce sound rather than light. By modulating the sound they produce, these creatures can create harmonious, ethereal melodies as they fly through the Blood Wood. Many song sprites are harmless, and visitors may see a few flitting around Queen Alachia's palace. Like the will o' the wisps,

however, some song sprites were driven mad by the Scourge and have since used their songs to sow death and corruption.

DEX: 5 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 2
PER: 5 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 8

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack: NA
Damage: NA

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 13
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 5

Death: 22
Unconsciousness: 13
Wound Threshold: 4

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 2
Movement: 8*

Legend Award: Second Circle

* This value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Entrancement (4): 9

Loot: Lair may contain 50–100 silver pieces worth of jewelry per sprite, taken from victims

Rules

Song sprites are commonly attracted to small, shiny objects such as gems and jewelry. Their small size prohibits them from carrying off much, but they will often take any small items that their victims were carrying (up to half a pound in weight). Sprites usually live in small groves, and each sprite adorns its nest with items it has collected.

Entrancement: A sprite's song can be heard up to 40 yards (20 hexes) away from the sprite, entrancing Namegivers and drawing them toward the music. The sprites use their melodies to draw victims into deadly situations—into quicksand, towards groups of hunting wood lions, and so on. A single sprite's song is not terribly dangerous. However, song sprites often travel in groups, which enables them to weave more complex and powerful melodies. In a group, each sprite beyond the first adds +1 to the song's Entrancement Step. If the Entrancement Test succeeds, the target becomes entranced and immediately begins to move toward the sprites, heedless of any danger nearby. Sprites may attempt to enchant only one target per round.

STAJIAN

Stajian are large, bison-like animals often used as mounts by ork cavalry. They are 6 feet high at the shoulder—less massive than a thundra beast, but faster, and far stronger, than a horse. Their broad hooves allow them to traverse mountains and swamps with equal ease. Stajian live wild on the plains of Barsaive. They eat anything from grass to tree limbs and usually congregate in herds of five to ten females and young, and one to six males. They are rare to encounter in most other places.

DEX: 7 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 10
PER: 5 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 7
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 10
Damage:
Charge (8): 18; Gore (4): 14

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 1

Death: 60
Unconsciousness: 52
Wound Threshold: 15

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 11
Movement: 11

Legend Award: Third Circle

Powers: Charge (4), Durability (1), Enhanced Senses [Listen, Sight] (2): 7, Sprint (2)

Rules

Ornery in the extreme, wild stajian frequently fight for dominance of their herd, and such behavior continues with domesticated animals, meaning stabled stajian must be watched carefully. This tendency can be trained to be directed at enemy mounts, and a ridden stajian will gleefully gore, bite and kick opposing animals or Namegivers without direction from its rider. No troops that use stajian consider the beasts to be trained for war since their use of such tactics are unreliable to control.

STINGER

Small and rodent-like, the stinger stands a mere four feet tall, with much of its body drooping over its short hind legs. Its upper half tapers into a narrow head, flanked on either side by vicious barbs. The beast has two even-shorter front legs, which it uses to dig tunnels, climb walls (though rarely), and attack prey. These limbs end in long, sharp claws that can swiftly make a bloody mess of most Namegivers. The creature's lower half tapers into a sturdy tail, also tipped with a sharp barb. Its back legs, slightly longer than the front, give it an amazingly fast running speed.

Stingers tend to gather in swarms of fifteen to twenty, preferring underground spots such as natural caves and abandoned kaers. Unlike many creatures, these beasts do not shy away from Horror-taint; more than a few swarms of them roam the Badlands in search of food. Stingers uses their front claws to dig long, intricate tunnels through the soil that makes up their homes. They are also appallingly swift—faster than almost any other land-bound creature in Barsaive, and a group of Namegivers can succumb to a swarm of these beasts as easily as any other animal on which the stingers prey.

Stingers will eat any type of living animal, from small rats and mice to thundra beasts and even elephants. The small stinger can bring down such a variety of beasts larger than itself because it always hunts in swarms and because its poison is unbelievably potent. Stingers attack in groups of five or more from all directions at once, dashing by their prey and raking it with their curved front claws. As the creature passes by, it also strikes with its tail stinger, injecting the victim with venom that eats away at the prey's flesh. This poison can burn through flesh and bone as easily as fire burns human hair.

Alchemists and magicians greatly prize stinger venom. Many an adventurer has met his death attempting to harvest it from a stinger swarm.

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

Initiative: 10
Actions: 3
Attack (5): 14
Damage:
2×Claws (1): 8;
Tail Stinger (3): 10 (poison; see text);
Head Stinger (2): 9 (poison see text)

Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 2

Death: 69
Unconsciousness: 53
Wound Threshold: 6

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 8
Movement: 8/4*

Legend Award: Fifth Circle

* The second value is the creature's burrowing Movement Rate

Powers: Climbing^{S} (5): 14, Durability (7), Enhanced Senses [Smell] (2): 6, Poison [Head] (SD 10; Damage 10), Poison [Tail] (SD 12; Damage 12), Spellcasting (8): 12

Loot: Stingers and poison sacs worth 2D10×10 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Rules

Stingers usually attack with their claws, raking an opponent with both forepaws, but when fighting creatures their own size may grapple their victims (***Player's Guide***, p.230). and use their head stingers. When attacking Namegivers, stingers rely on their claws and tail stingers.

Poison: Any time a victim attacked by a stinger's tail suffers a Wound, the stinger has injected the victim with its poison. The acidic tail venom does Step 12 damage for three rounds before it wears off. In addition to this damage, the venom also burns away the victim's flesh (and possibly bones). If this burning damage causes a Wound, treat it as described for the optional **Damage to a Limb** rule in the ***Player's Guide***, p 223. The poison in the head stingers is slightly less potent than the poison in the tail, and causes only Step 10 damage.

Swift Attacks: Stingers are extremely swift. They may use the Splitting Movement combat option (***Player's Guide***, p.226), leaping forward from behind rocks or from crevices to slash at or sting their opponents, then ducking back into cover.

Adventure Hook

When the characters venture into a forgotten kaer, they notice a number of holes about three to four feet high in the walls of many of the kaer's passageways. As they move deeper within the kaer, the characters stumble on a large swarm of stingers that has lived there since the last years of the Scourge. To get out alive, the characters must defeat the stingers.

Stone Lion

Like the brithan, stone lions are part savage mountain creature and part angry earth elemental. These small, gray mountain lions have fur as hard as rock, along with razor-sharp, crystal-edged claws and teeth that can tear armor as easily as flesh. Stealthy and patient hunters, they stalk mountain goats and other creatures, and are territorial enough to attack a full-grown troll who intrudes on their hunting grounds. Most stone lions are solitary, but hunters and travelers have occasionally reported seeing a mated pair. Crystal raiders sometimes hunt stone lions for their pelts, which can be made into strong and flexible hide armor. Stone lion flesh is tough and unpleasant to eat. Hunting a stone lion is often considered a Rite of Passage for a young crystal raider before he undergoes his Rite of Naming.

DEX: 10 **STR**: 9 **TOU**: 12
PER: 6 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 9
Actions: 2
Attack (5): 15
Damage:
Bite (7): 16

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 15
Mystic Armor: 5

Death: 90
Unconsciousness: 78
Wound Threshold: 20

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 10
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Fifth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Powers: Battle Shout[S] [Roar] (5): 10, Climbing[S] (4): 14, Durability (5), Enhanced Senses (Listen, Sight) (2): 8, Great Leap[S] (5): 15, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk[S] (5): 15

Loot: Elemental earth worth 3D6×20 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Storm Crow

Storm crows are often mistaken for the larger and more aggressive blood ravens, though the two birds are natural enemies. Storm crows will go out of their way to attack blood ravens, protecting the other animals of Blood Wood in the process. Storm crows are commonly found in the same areas as blood ravens, including the northern and southern stretches of the forest. Storm crows can often be seen cavorting in the rain and wind when storms pass over the Blood Wood, a time when other birds seek shelter. This kinship with the elemental power of storms gives these birds a dramatic magical power that they employ in combat.

DEX: 7 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 2
PER: 6 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 7
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 9
Damage:
Claws (2): 4

Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1

Death: 20
Unconsciousness: 11
Wound Threshold: 4

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 2
Movement: 2/8*

Legend Award: First Circle

* The second value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Enhanced Senses [Sight] (2): 8, Lightning (3): 8, Spellcasting (3): 9

Loot: Silver talons worth 20–25 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Rules

The following rules apply to storm crows.

Lightning: When diving toward a target, a storm crow's outstretched silver talons briefly glow blue and then discharge a small bolt of lightning. Normally, a storm crow may create only one bolt of lightning each day. When fighting during a storm, storm crows can cast a bolt of lightning every alternate combat round for the storm's duration.

Hard to Dominate: Capturing and training a storm crow is extraordinarily difficult. They are naturally resistant to magical abilities and spells that control or dominate animals, such as Dominate Beast and Animal Bond. Use of any animal-based talents or spells requires one result level higher than normal against storm crows.

Storm Wolf

An excellent hunter, the handsome storm wolf stands taller and is a little stronger than a normal wolf. Storm wolves travel in packs of eight to two dozen animals, and hunt travelers only if desperately hungry or if they sense evil emanating from the traveling party.

A storm wolf's pure, elemental spirit can detect impurities commonly found in undead spirits, and the wolves go out of their way to destroy such impurities. Legends say storm wolves have hunted undead creatures across hundreds of leagues. In the past, storm wolves have led travelers to sites of the undead they wish to see destroyed, creating a storm to let a party approach safely.

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

Initiative: 9
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 10
Damage:
Bite (6): 12

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 3

Death: 50
Unconsciousness: 39
Wound Threshold: 8

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Third Circle

Powers: Battle Shout[S] [Howl] (3): 8, Durability (3), Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 7, Great Leap[S] (3): 10, Maneuver[S] (3): 10, Sense Undead (3): 8, Sprint (2), Storm Call (4): 9

Loot: Pelt worth 75 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Rules

Elementalists are forbidden by their Discipline to take storm wolf pelts. Any character who has skinned a storm wolf for its pelt

can never receive aid from another storm wolf; every wolf's spirit can sense the character's desecration of its fellow.

Storm Call: Storm wolves use their Storm Call ability—an eerie, whistling howl, to summon a storm. The pack leader takes 2 Strain and makes a Storm Call (20) Test—each additional wolf in the pack adds a +1 bonus to the leader's Storm Call Test. If successful, the storm arrives in 1D6 rounds. It disperses after one hour, unless the leader's command dispels it earlier. Should the pack leader die, another wolf takes his place and automatically inherits control of the storm. During the round after the pack leader calls the storm, the storm wolves leap into action. When the storm arrives, the fury of the elements causes the wolves' opponents to suffer a –3 penalty to their Action Tests. The storm energizes the wolves, however, who gain a +3 bonus to their Attack and Damage Tests.

Injured wolves may use a Recovery Test with a +3 bonus as their Standard Action that round. The normal waiting period between Recovery Tests does not apply to storm wolves while the storm is in effect—if they wish, they can use one of their available Recovery Tests every round. The leader of the storm wolf pack can also heal an injured character by placing his muzzle in the character's lap, transferring the healing power of the storm to the character, who receives the benefit of the wolf's Recovery Test. Though it can heal injuries, the rain does not revive dead wolves.

THUNDRA BEAST

This large, four-legged animal looks like a cross between a rhinoceros and a dinosaur, with a tough, rock-like skin covering its entire body. Thundra beasts stand seven feet tall at the shoulder, are ten to twelve feet long, and weigh about five thousand pounds. Each thundra beast has a large horn in the center of its forehead, which it uses to attack opponents.

Ork scorcher groups frequently ride thundra beasts; adventurers will rarely encounter a thundra beast in the wild. Thundra beasts usually attack by charging their target and goring with their horns or trampling with their hooves.

DEX: 6 **STR**: 11 **TOU**: 12
PER: 5 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 7
Actions: 1
Attack (4): 10
Damage:
Charge (8): 19; Horn (4): 15; Trample (2): 13

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 2

Death: 66
Unconsciousness: 58
Wound Threshold: 17

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 12
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Fourth Circle

Powers: Charge (4), Durability (1), Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 7

TIGER

Tigers are large carnivorous cats found in Barsaive's jungles and plains. Their fur is usually white, yellow, or gold in color, with black stripes.

DEX: 6 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 6
PER: 3 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 9
Damage:
Bite (5): 12

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 0

Death: 36
Unconsciousness: 28
Wound Threshold: 10

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 8
Movement: 8

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Battle Shout [S] [Roar] (3): 7, Climbing [S] (2): 8, Enhanced Senses (Listen, Sight) (2): 5, Great Leap [S] (2): 8, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk [S] (2): 8, Sprint (2)

TROAJIN

Troajin are tiger-like animals native to jungle and mountain country. The average troajin stands approximately four feet at the shoulder and is eight feet long, a combination of a five-foot-long body and a three-foot tail. Wild troajin are fiercely territorial and defend themselves with sharp claws and teeth. Troajin often become animal companions for Beastmasters.

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

Initiative: 7
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 9
Damage:
Claws (4): 10

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

Death: 38
Unconsciousness: 30
Wound Threshold: 10

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 8

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Battle Shout [S] [Roar] (3): 7, Climbing [S] (3): 9, Enhanced Senses (Listen, Sight) (2): 6, Great Leap [S] (3): 9, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk [S] (2): 8, Sprint (3)

UNICORN

The Scourge wiped out many of Barsaive's wondrous beasts and transformed others nearly beyond recognition. The latter fate befell the unicorn, though it was greatly improved rather than corrupted. Before the Scourge, the unicorn was one of Barsaive's most feared



predators. Even the mere sight of the foul beasts, with their matted fur and blood-encrusted horns, struck fear in the hearts of most Namegivers. Unlike most predators, the unicorns did not hunt merely to feed themselves; they seemed to enjoy killing for its own sake. These unicorns hunted in packs and showed an uncanny intelligence that allowed them to take on much larger and more powerful creatures. They often hunted thundra beasts, manticores, and even an occasional dragon, surrounding their prey and wearing it down with sheer numbers. Some of these vicious, malignant beasts learned to lie in wait along footpaths and trade roads, where they would ambush small bands of adventurers or lone travelers, then feast on their flesh. For Namegivers, these unicorns became a special danger, for once they tasted the tender flesh of humans and the like, they often forsook other prey. Many of these same herds even took to raiding Namegiver villages, attacking under the cover of darkness and using their terrible horns and sharp hooves to devastate all in their paths. Soon, the hamlets of the countryside learned to fear the sound of hoof-beats in the night.

Inexplicably, the Scourge changed the unicorn from vicious creatures with a taste for Namegiver flesh to gentle beasts of great beauty. Now, unicorns have become solitary animals that feed on the plants of the forest, rather than its inhabitants. Though unicorns look like large horses with horns on their heads, these noble creatures are nowhere near as docile as the farm beasts. They are gentler than they were, but not if someone is trying to capture them. A unicorn still loves its freedom as much as ever. Most unicorns are pure white, though there are spotted and even black ones. The unicorn's horn is a terrifying weapon, two to three feet long and supposedly capable of killing a Horror with one blow. The popular belief in the horn's power may well be just a myth, however. Certainly the horn can cause a vicious stab wound—it can even plunge through bone if the beast is galloping fast enough when it strikes.

Whether or not it can kill Horrors, a fresh unicorn horn possesses a remarkable sensitivity to poisons. When touched to any substance even the least bit venomous—or at least poisonous enough to harm the unicorn—the horn changes color. The darker it turns, the more dangerous the poison. Also, a tiny sprinkling of powdered unicorn horn can neutralize any poison, no matter how potent.

Post-Scourge Unicorn

DEX: 7 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 9
PER: 7 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 10

Initiative: 8
Actions: 1
Attack (5): 12
Damage:
Horn (10): 20; Trample (6): 16
Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 13
Social Defense: 13
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 7

Death: 80
Unconsciousness: 65
Wound Threshold: 14
Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 11
Movement: 10

Legend Award: Fifth Circle

Powers: Calm Others (1): 11, Detect Poison, Durability (5), Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 9, Sprint (2)

Loot: Horn worth at least 2,000 silver pieces (worth Legend Points). Possession of a unicorn horn is a criminal offense in most areas of Barsaive.

Rules

The changes wrought by the Scourge created several different variations of unicorns, each with its own distinct powers. The description and statistics above apply to the most common type. (Incidentally, a unicorn's horn cannot kill a Horror with one touch.) Though they prefer to avoid combat, unicorns make terrifying opponents when cornered or their young are threatened. A unicorn typically attacks by goring its opponent with its horn. The beast can also kick with its hind legs.

Calm Others: The power's range is 10 yards (5 hexes).

Detect Poison: A unicorn's horn can detect poisons if a large part of the horn is immersed in the substance in question. The horn darkens to indicate that a substance is poisonous; the darker the color, the deadlier the poison. Depending on the type of poison, its potency, and the concentration, the horn can take anywhere from one to ten minutes to change color. Powdered unicorn horn neutralizes all types of poisons.

Pre-Scourge Unicorn

DEX: 7 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 9
PER: 7 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 10

Initiative: 8
Actions: 1 (2; see text)
Attack (6): 13
Damage:
Bite (8): 18; Horn (10): 20; Trample (6): 16
Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 13
Social Defense: 13
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 7

Death: 86
Unconsciousness: 70
Wound Threshold: 14
Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 11
Movement: 10

Legend Award: Sixth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Powers: Detect Poison, Durability (6), Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 9, Sprint (2)

Loot: Horn worth at least 2,000 silver pieces (worth Legend Points). Possession of a unicorn horn is a criminal offense in most areas of Barsaive.

Rules

Few in number, pre-Scourge unicorns still exist. These unicorns thirst for blood and killing. They do not have the ability to Calm Others as post-Scourge unicorns do, but have their own power instead.

Blood Rage: A pre-Scourge unicorn that Wounds an opponent with a bite attack becomes infused with blood lust. It gains +1 attack per round and a +4 bonus to Attack and Damage Tests until killed or driven off.

Adventure Hook

A band of Theran slavers has taken to killing unicorns wherever they find them, and certain people in southern Barsaive are fearful that a herd of unicorns near their village may fall victim to the marauding Therans. They hire the characters to herd the unicorns far away from the Therans' usual hunting grounds in hope of saving the gentle beasts.

Unfortunately, the well-intentioned locals don't know that their unicorn herd is made up of throwbacks to the pre-Scourge beast—these "gentle" animals are actually vicious killers with sharp teeth and nasty tempers. The characters are in for a very rude awakening.

Velos

The velos inhabit the darkest interior of the Servos Jungle. Long considered mythical, the velos have only recently been rediscovered by agents of House K'tenshin. At first sight, a velos' reptilian features and long tail can easily lead observers to mistake the creature for a tall t'skrang. In truth, velos are taller than the average obsidiman and possess long, sharp teeth and razor-like claws on their feet. First reports made the velos out as savage beasts, because they hunted down and ate many of the early K'tenshin explorers. However, more recent evidence indicates that the velos may be Namegivers closely related to the primitive t'skrang of the Servos Jungle. According to all accounts, the velos live in four or five isolated villages located deep in the Mist Swamps.



DEX: 9 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 12
PER: 7 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 8
Actions: 2
Attack (5): 14
Damage:
Weapon (see text)
Death: 92
Unconsciousness: 80
Wound Threshold: 18
Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 2
Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 12
Movement: 6

Legend Award: Fifth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Powers: Climbing [S] (5): 14, Durability (5), Enhanced Senses [Sight] (2): 9, Silent Walk [S] (5): 14, Swimming [S] (5):17

Armor: Footman's Shield (Phys 3; Init 1)

Weapons: Spear (Damage (4): 16),
Bone Tail Knife (Damage (1): 15)

Loot: Villages contain feathers, furs, and handicrafts worth 200–300 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

VETTA

Like the unicorn, the vetta owes its modern-day appearance and behavior to the Scourge. The vetta, however, suffered terribly from the Horrors' influence, becoming an ugly changeling version of its former self. The ancient vettas were a perfect source of food for many denizens of Barsaive, being slow and stupid and meaty enough to feed several people. The modern-day vetta is still slow and stupid, but it possesses a powerful magical enchantment that keeps it safe from harm. It seems to have gained this ability as it lost every natural defense it once had, which suggests that even Horror-tainted creatures must bow to the essential harmony of the Universe. Vettas resemble large gazelles, standing five to six feet tall at the shoulder. The beast prefers mountains to plains and grasslands, and its legs end in hooves. The beast's long, curved horns have grown too tangled to be used in its defense, made so by the corruption of the Horrors. Its once-graceful, long legs have grown so short that the animal can no longer run fast except in brief spurts. Its eyes have grown small, almost beady. Its ears are perhaps half the size of a deer's, and it reacts sluggishly to loud noises or nearby predators.

The modern-day vetta's powerful magical defense causes creatures around it to grow unnaturally listless and tired. A predator within range of this power forgets what it was hunting for and usually decides to take a long nap in the hot sun. The vettas amble away from the drowsy predator, which after a time slowly comes to its senses. Because vettas are herd creatures, their power depends on how many of them are using it. A predator stalking a single vetta won't have much trouble catching it, but trying to hunt one from a whole herd is a fruitless exercise.

The vetta's power waxes and wanes depending on the time of day. During the early morning, when predators are most active, this power is strong enough to affect any creature that approaches within 20 yards (10 hexes) of a vetta herd. At midday, when the temperature is high and most predators usually find a shady spot to sleep, the power wanes to almost nothing at 2 yards (1 hex). The power increases again at twilight, then drops to almost nothing overnight while the vettas sleep. Nocturnal hunters can almost always make a meal of a vetta.

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

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 7
Damage:
Horns (2): 7
Death: 42
Unconsciousness: 30
Wound Threshold: 5
Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 2
Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 6
Movement: 5

Legend Award: Third Circle

Powers: Durability (3), Enhanced Senses [Smell] (2): 5, Tire Others (1): 5

Loot: Horns worth 3D6×10 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Rules

If the vetta's would-be attacker shakes off or never succumbs to the creature's magical ability, he or she can easily dispatch the vetta. In close combat, vettas can gash an opponent with their horns, but most often they run from predators.

Tire Others: Because the vettas' Tire Others power depends on their numbers, the Step Number for this ability rises according to the number of animals in a given vetta herd. The base Step Number increases by +1 for every creature in the herd above the first. For example, a herd of sixteen vettas makes a Spellcasting Test using Step 20/2D12+D10 (base Step 5+15=20). The larger the herd, the more difficult this ability becomes to defend against. To reflect the fact that the vettas' power waxes and wanes throughout the day, halve the Tire Others Step at midday and reduce it by three-quarters during the night. During morning and twilight hours, the vettas' power is at full strength. Once the gamemaster has determined the proper Step Number, he makes a single Tire Others Test for the entire herd.

Adventure Hook

While the characters are traveling through mountains, they run into a herd of vettas. They suddenly become extremely tired and decide to have a quick little nap. Unfortunately for them, a pride of stone lions also fell into the vettas' trap. When the sun climbs higher and the vettas' power wanes, the characters and the lions begin to awaken—very, very close to each other.

VIRAAS

Viraas are lizards that live on the massed clenkas in Death's Sea known as fool's islands, usually hiding in relatively cool pockets beneath the surface of the island. Viraas measure five feet long, and stand three feet high at the shoulder. Their thick skin is most often a dark beige or tan color, and is covered with what appear to be warts. These are actually scars from touching the hottest molten stone of Death's Sea. Viraas are very rare. Legends state that Death kept them as pets and that they await his return. Death supposedly loved these creatures so well because they can kill a person with a single bite.

DEX: 8 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 10
PER: 5 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 7

Initiative: 8
Actions: 2
Attack (5): 13
Damage:
Bite (5): 15; 2×Claws (2): 12
Death: 84
Unconsciousness: 72
Wound Threshold: 15
Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 1
Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 11
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Fifth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Powers: Climbing ^{S} (5): 13, Durability (5)

Rules

Viraas attack with their claws and by biting. Their unusual habitat made them immune to fire, but vulnerable to water.

Immunity to Fire: Viraas are immune to the effects of all fire-based attacks, both magic and mundane. Because all recorded encounters with viraas have taken place near areas rich in elemental fire, we assume they protect it instinctively.

Powerful Bite: Viraas have incredibly powerful jaws and sharp teeth, capable of penetrating nearly all forms of armor. All successful bite attacks are armor defeating.

Vulnerability to Water: Viraas armor has no effect against water-based attacks. Attacks made with elemental water can actually daze them into lethargy. An elemental water attack that succeeds with a Good or better result causes the viraas to lose –1 Step to its Dexterity and all related abilities for the duration of that encounter.

VOLUS

The volus' entire fifteen-foot-long body is covered with tough, chitinous plates of varied hues and sizes. The huge claws tipping its front feet are far larger than its rear claws, and its head resembles the bowl of a thick shovel. It uses its strangely shaped head and large front claws to dig vast tunnels beneath the earth in search of food.

The way the volus finds food is truly amazing. The beast can smell magic as a dog follows a scent. Once the volus catches a whiff of its prey, it digs through the earth until it is directly beneath its intended lunch. Then the volus collapses the earth beneath its victim, entrapping and suffocating the victim underground. The volus rarely fails to catch a meal this way; six feet of earth above the victim's head will kill it as surely as claws and teeth. Not many Namegivers can dig half as well as the volus, so travelers beware this beast. One safeguard against it is to stand on solid rock; the volus cannot dig through stone. One



indication of a volus' hunting ground is the presence of several sinkholes in a given area.

The volus' ability to sense magic is highly refined—even the most alert Horror might find it difficult to match this creature's prowess. The volus can sense any use of magic, no matter how small (though it can sense larger uses of magic over longer distances, of course). Even the feeble magical aura given off by enchanted items acts as a beacon for the volus. If a great deal of magic is being used, several voluses might converge on the user from a wide range. A Wizard once botched a powerful magical experiment and blew the top of his house off; half a day later, thirty voluses arrived and proceeded to drag the house under the ground. It is believed that the volus developed its unique ability over time as the rise of the world's magical energy created many creatures with innate magical powers. All of these the volus can sense, stalk, and eat.

The volus is a territorial beast, preferring to mark out its own hunting grounds. These hunting grounds may be any region where a good deal of magic is used—towns and villages with too many adepts often fall prey to volus infestations. They also hunt on the high roads of Barsaive, especially in recent years, as more and more of the magically adept travel on those roads in search of adventure. A party of adepts is an invitation to dine to any number of voluses, depending on how many of the creatures' hunting grounds they pass on their journey.

Not surprisingly, a volus' magic-sensing organ is prized by magicians and alchemists. The little gland forms a small hard lump at the base of the neck, and can be removed with a sharp knife. It is, however, extremely delicate—one touch of the blade on the gland itself will ruin it. To prevent decay, it has to be placed in a magical container or preserved with a spell. Carefully preserved, the organ will retain its magic-sensing abilities indefinitely. The volus can also be trained to act as a sort of hunting dog for magical threats (including Horrors), convenient for helping travelers avoid such perils. To train a volus, of course, first requires catching one—and once it is trained, its master should keep it well fed.

DEX: 7 **STR**: 9 **TOU**: 10
PER: 4 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (5): 12
Damage:
Bite (1): 10; Claws (6): 15
Death: 84
Unconsciousness: 72
Wound Threshold: 15
Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 5
Recovery Tests: 10
Knockdown: 11
Movement: 6/3*

* The second value is the creature's burrowing Movement Rate

Legend Award: Fifth Circle

Powers: Climbing [S] (5): 12, Durability (5), Sense Magic (10): 14

Loot: Magic-sensing organ worth 300 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Rules

In close combat, a volus attacks with its huge digging claws and its shovel-shaped mouth.

Sense Magic: The volus can use its magic-sensing ability over a range of ten miles.

Adventure Hook

In an attempt to find a legendary kaer buried by an earthquake or a landslide, the characters take the advice of a sage who suggests that the magic-sensing abilities of the volus might help. The intact kaer is almost certainly full of magical treasures, and a volus will be drawn to it like a bloodhound after a scent. To find the kaer and get their hands on its wealth, the characters must seek out a volus and somehow use it to lead them to their goal without getting killed and eaten in the attempt.

WATER STRIDER

Water striders are one of the many varieties of giant insects that live on the upper reaches of the Serpent River, near Iopos. These large spiders have bodies about the size of a human's head and legs that extend three to five feet in every direction. The creatures' long legs enable them to actually walk on the surface of the water. Water striders avoid all contact with swimmers and other aquatic life forms whenever possible.

While not dangerous, water striders present a considerable nuisance to riverboat crews because they often climb the sides of riverboats and raid the ship's stores for food. The ravenous creatures can consume a month's worth of provisions in just a few short hours, leaving the crew to go hungry. Boatmen consider it bad luck for a water strider to cross the path of their vessels.

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

Initiative: 7
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 8
Damage:
Bite (2): 8
Death: 34
Unconsciousness: 26
Wound Threshold: 9
Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 2
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 9
Movement: 8

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Climbing [S] (2): 8, Swimming [S] (2): 8

WHIRLCLAW

The whirlclaw is a small, exceptionally quick, and nimble biped that lives in shallow burrows along the forest's edge and other thinly wooded parts of the Blood Wood. The shaggy creatures rarely exceed two feet in height, but they possess long, spindly arms that end in sharp, wickedly curved claws. The whirlclaw relies on speed and multiple claw attacks to overcome its prey, often leaping from target to target to cause chaos and confusion.

DEX: 10 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 5
PER: 5 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 12
Actions: 2
Attack (3): 13
Damage:
Claw (3): 7
Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1
Death: 50
Unconsciousness: 39
Wound Threshold: 8
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 4
Movement: 7/4*

Legend Award: Third Circle

* The second value is the creature's burrowing Movement Rate

Powers: Climbing [S] (3): 13, Durability (3), Enhanced Senses [Smell] (2): 7, Great Leap [S] (3): 13

Loot: Two claws worth 3D6 silver pieces each (worth Legend Points)

Rules

Whirlclaws prey on small mammals and birds, though they sometimes travel in groups of four to six, which will attack larger prey, including Namegivers. After downing its prey, a whirlclaw usually gorges itself, then returns to its burrow and sleeps for up to a week. The whirlclaw fears fire and usually flees when confronted with open flames.

WILD BOAR

Wild boars are hunted throughout Barsaive and their meat is a staple in many woodland settlements. A single male leads and protects each boar pack, attacking all threats to the pack with a pair of wicked tusks that can cause ragged and bleeding wounds. Typically, a boar directs its first attack charge at the nearest character or animal that poses a threat.

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

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (3): 8
Damage:
Charge (11): 17; Tusks (5): 11
Death: 40
Recovery Tests: 3
Unconsciousness: 32
Wound Threshold: 11
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 0
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Second Circle

Powers: Charge (6), Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 6, Sprint (2)

Loot: Tusks worth 3D6 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

WILL O' THE WISP

The will o' the wisp began as a magical construct, but the Scourge turned something harmless into something dreadful … or at least unpleasant. The first will o' the wisps served as portable lights. With one of these little creatures floating beside him, a magician never needed to carry a candle or torch and had his hands free to open doors, cast spells, and so on. To keep itself alive, the little creature drew magic from its surroundings, which it changed into sustenance. This conversion threw off the light the magician needed. Never able to stop once they had created a good thing, many magicians began to experiment with the wisps and created new varieties. One could remember simple instructions and guide people from one place to another. Others gave off sound or heat instead of light. Soon, too many varieties of wisps existed for any one person to remember.

During the Scourge, most of the wisps were left outside the kaers, where the Horrors slew and ate them. Some of the wisps, however, hid from the Horrors, and thus survived and bred. After five centuries of existence as wild creatures, the wisps have become just that. Most are utterly feral, and many were twisted by the

Horrors as well. These latter specimens often dimly remember their ancient duties and perform them to the best of their insane abilities. A few—a very few—are sane and still remember their original purpose. Some of these, created as guides, can still lead people to their master's home (or the remnants of it) and the treasures, if any, that lie within.

The most dangerous wisps are those meant to paralyze, harm, or even kill those who entered their master's home without permission. The Horrors kept these wisps alive whenever they found them but drove them insane. These wisps now believe that their master's home is all of Barsaive and attack as an intruder any Namegiver they come across. Almost as dangerous are the ones called magic twisters; these wisps can drastically change the effects of any spells cast within the area of their light. Sometimes they reduce the effects to almost nothing, other times they boost a spell's power so that it flies out of the caster's control.

What makes the wisp particularly hazardous to the traveler or adventurer is the similarity of their looks and the vast difference in what they can do. All wisps emit an unearthly green light, but here any resemblance between them ends. One can't tell by looking which wisp is a still-sane guide, which a harmless light-giver, and which an insane defender of Barsaive. And because will o' the wisps have bred and multiplied on their own for five centuries, many kinds may exist that their creators never envisioned. In short, any wisp may be able to do just about anything you can imagine—and perhaps a few things no one deemed possible.

DEX: 6 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 3
PER: 4 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack: NA
Damage: NA

Death: 23
Unconsciousness: 14
Wound Threshold: 5

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 12
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 7
Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 2
Movement: 8 *

* This value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

Legend Award: Equals the highest Circle spell the Will O' the Wisp possesses.

Powers: Spellcasting (6): 10, Thread Weaving *[T] (6): 10

* All of the magician Disciplines are covered by the same Step Number

Spells: Choose one or more spells (see text). Spells commonly used include: Repel Animal, Alarm, Circle of Well-Being, Metal Scream, Mind Dagger, Spirit Grip

Rules

Will o' the wisps offer the gamemaster the perfect tool to completely confuse players. The characters should never run into two wisps with the same powers. Feel free to create havoc by giving your wisps weird abilities. Note, however, that other than their spells, wisps make no attacks.

Eerie Light: The one feature all wisps have in common is their unearthly green glow, though some can turn this light on and off.

Spells: The gamemaster determines exactly what spells a given wisp possesses; common spells include those listed above. Wisps might have one or more spells from multiple magician Disciplines. Will o' the wisps do not use spell matrices—their spells are considered to be innate powers—therefore wisps cast their spells without the need to attune matrices, although they still weave spell threads. If it is necessary to tweak the rules so that they make more sense for a given wisp, go right ahead. The gamemaster has free rein to add to the characters' paranoia.

Adventure Hook

The characters learn that a will o' the wisp is haunting a nearby region and decide to find out whether it can lead them to anything valuable. They discover that the wisp is one of the fortunate few that survived the Scourge and stayed sane; furthermore, it will lead them to the ruined home of its Wizard master, where the characters expect to find at least a few valuable magical items. Unknown to them, however, the wisp was actually created by another Wizard to sneak into his rival's home, kill anything living there, and generally cause massive destruction. When the characters follow the wisp home, it follows its centuries-old orders, turning berserk and trying to kill them with its powerful spells.

WITHERFANG

Although found elsewhere in Barsaive, witherfangs are native to the Blood Wood and can be identified by their thick bodies and flared, cobra-like hoods. These snakes are named for the powerful poison transmitted through the stinger at the ends of their tails—a poison that can wither a victim's limb until it is virtually useless. The witherfang's other unique characteristic is its large number of teeth, which it uses to hold victims immobile while it administers its poisonous sting. Witherfangs usually match the colors of their surroundings, possessing a form of natural camouflage. Most are a dull gray-green, though the coloring of individual snakes may vary depending on their habitats.

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

Initiative: 4
Actions: 2
Attack: (5): 12
Damage: Bite (2): 7;
Tail (3): 8 (poison; see text)
Death: 66
Unconsciousness: 53
Wound Threshold: 10

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 7
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: NA
Movement: 5

Legend Award: Fifth Circle

Powers: Camouflage (5): 9, Climbing [S] (5): 12, Durability (5), Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 6, Heat Sight, Poison [SD 12; see text], Silent Walk [S] (5): 12

Rules

A witherfang attacks by biting its victim, then coiling its body around the prey and striking with its tail stinger. The bite attack inflicts damage each round until the witherfang's grip is broken.

Strong Grapple: To break a witherfang's grip, the target must achieve an Armor-Defeating Hit against the snake. However, an Armor-Defeating Hit does not stop a tail stinger attack.

Poison: Witherfang poison has an effect similar to the Wither Limb spell (***Player's Guide***, p.209). If a successful tail attack Wounds the target, the target may suffer the effects of the poison (p.123). If the Poison Resistance Test fails, the target's bitten limb withers. Only powerful healing magic such as the Reverse Withering spell (***Player's Guide***, p.193) can restore the limb to usefulness. No known antidote to this poison exists. In fact, many Nethermancers and Wizards use witherfang venom to create paralytic poisons, as well as a poison that mimics the effects of the witherfang's sting.

WOOD LION

The wood lion is equally at home in the branches of trees or on the ground. Its fur is dappled like that of a newborn deer. A full-grown adult is approximately five feet long and weighs about four hundred pounds.



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

Initiative: 8
Actions: 3 (5, see text)
Attack: (5): 11
Damage: Bite (3): 8 (see text); Claws (3): 8 (see text)
Death: 66
Unconsciousness: 51
Wound Threshold: 7
Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Fifth Circle

Powers: Battle Shout [S] [Roar] (5): 9, Climbing [S] (5): 11, Durability (6), Great Leap [S] (5): 11, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk [S] (5): 11, Sprint (2)

Rules

The wood lion usually attacks from a concealed position in the undergrowth or from the lower branches of a large tree. Its first attack is always an attempt to knock down its prey. From the trees, it leaps on the target's back. When making its first attack from the ground, the wood lion can rush a distance up to 2 × its Movement Rate and still make an attack.

Leap Attack: The momentum of rushing or leaping at an opponent grants a +5 Damage Test bonus to the lion's first attack and is treated as an Attack to Knockdown (***Player's Guide***, p.222).

Number of Attacks: If the lion manages to knock its victim to the ground, it can attack up to 5 times per round—using all four claws and a bite—while the victim remains prone. Once the target gets up, the lion may only attack 3 times per round.

WOLF

Related to domestic dogs, wolves are wild, fierce carnivores that attack as a pack and maneuver to outflank and harass their intended prey before attacking in force. Wolves can be encountered anywhere in Barsaive, but have a preference for mountainous terrain.

These statistics represent regular wolf pack members, those who loyally follow their leader.

DEX: 6 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 4
PER: 5 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 7
Actions: 1
Attack: (2): 8
Damage: Bite (5): 10
Death: 39
Unconsciousness: 28
Wound Threshold: 6
Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0
Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 6
Movement: 8

Legend Award: Second Circle

Powers: Battle Shout [S] [Howl] (3): 6, Durability (2), Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 7, Great Leap [S] (2): 8, Maneuver [S] (2): 8, Sprint (2), Tracking [S] (2): 7

ZOAK

The zoak looks like a cross between a large bird and a bat, with feathers on its body and head and a leathery neck, wings, and tail. The creature's feathered legs each end in four eagle-like talons. Zoaks measure roughly four feet from beak to tail-tip. Their necks are long and flexible, similar in appearance to the crakbill's, but with vertebrae instead of muscle.

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

Initiative: 7
Actions: 1
Attack: (3): 9
Damage: Bite (3): 8
Death: 38
Unconsciousness: 30
Wound Threshold: 10
Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 2
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 5
Movement: 2/9*

* The second value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

Legend Award: First Circle

Powers: Enhanced Senses [Sight] (2): 8

Rules

These jungle and forest animals are favored by windling Cavalrymen and often serve as companions for Beastmasters. Because they are difficult to train, zoaks are rarely offered for sale, although some Throalic merchants are known to buy and sell them.

Hard to Train: Characters using talents or abilities to tame or command a zoak require a result one level higher than normal to be successful. For example, the Animal Training talent requires an Average result to train most creatures. Against a zoak, however, Animal Training requires a Good result.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SPIRITS

What do you think prevents us from talking to them once they're dead?

• Belgaras, Troll Nethermancer •

Spirits are entities that exist solely in the various realms of astral space. Scholars and magicians agree that these varied and unique entities inhabit the netherworlds, elemental planes and other various astral regions. Beyond that, little is known about the true nature of spirits, though years of study have yielded some useful information on these beings.

Spirits rarely have a desire to come to this world without a reason all on their own. But since spirits have proven to be useful and wise, these entities are often called upon and asked for their services.

The art of attracting spirits to perform some sort of service is called **summoning**, as detailed in the ***Player's Guide***.

USING SPIRITS IN ADVENTURES AND CAMPAIGNS

Most spirits prefer to remain in astral space and only manifest in the physical world when forced to do so by their summoner. Once a spirit has manifested physically, it can affect physical objects and characters in the same way as any other physical being.

More often than not, spirits have thoughts, feelings, likes, dislikes, and memories like Namegivers. Adepts should regard all spirits with caution and respect—spirits usually find a way to punish those who treat them with insufficient respect. But perhaps more importantly, spirits exhibit an impressive capacity to learn. As a result, some of them possess great wisdom, while others have become quite cunning and treacherous. Still others have learned to cast spells, and some carry the knowledge of all those who have summoned them, making them a valuable asset to any magician.

Magicians recognize five major categories of spirits: tasked spirits, elemental spirits, ally spirits, Named spirits, and invae spirits. Full descriptions of the different spirit types appear later in this chapter.

MOTIVATIONS, ATTITUDES AND PERSONALITY

Like Namegivers, spirits have unique motivations and attitudes. Like the motivations and attitudes of Horrors, however, those of spirits seem bizarre and alien to Namegivers. The very nature of spirits precludes Namegivers from truly understanding the workings of the spirit mind.

Despite their mysterious behavior, spirits do seem to possess personalities as distinct as any Namegiver. Each individual spirit is a unique creature with a unique outlook. A rare few spirits enjoy being summoned and put to use, while the great majority strongly resent being disturbed by Namegivers too ineffectual to solve their own problems. Many spirits consider themselves so superior to Namegivers that they feel insulted when a Namegiver summons them; a few others relish the idea of exploring a bit of the physical world every now and again. Any spirit may be summoned—even those with the most abrasive personalities—but adepts usually choose to summon spirits with reasonable personalities. Of course, until an adept has summoned one such spirit, he must take what he gets.

SPIRIT STRENGTH RATINGS

Not all spirits are equally powerful. A spirit's **Strength Rating** is an approximate measure of its power level in relation to other spirits. The higher a spirit's Strength Rating, the more powerful the spirit, both in its base statistics and in the powers at its disposal. Note that a spirit's Strength Rating is different from its Strength Attribute.

Each increase in a spirit's Strength Rating enhances the spirit's characteristics and grants it additional powers and abilities. Refer to the **Spirit Descriptions**, p.216, for details. Because a spirit's Strength Rating directly affects its Spell Defense, summoning spirits with a significant Strength Rating can be extremely difficult.

INCREASING SPIRIT STRENGTH RATINGS

A spirit's Strength Rating can increase in two ways. First, the rating grows as the spirit ages. Second, repeated summonings can increase the rating. Increases due to age accumulate slowly and account for very little growth in a spirit's Strength Rating. Generally, a spirit's Strength Rating is related to its age—the older the spirit, the higher its Strength Rating. However, the two factors are not always so directly proportional. For example, a 100-year-old spirit might have a Strength Rating of only 4 or 5, while a 500-year-old spirit could have a Strength Rating of 10 or more.

The primary way a spirit's Strength Rating increases is through repeated summonings. Whenever a spirit is summoned, the summoner uses magical energy to reach out to the spirit's pattern and draw it toward the summoner. As is the case with most magic use, under ordinary circumstances the magical energy dissipates once the spirit has been summoned. When a specific spirit is summoned repeatedly, however, the spirit learns to recognize that it is being summoned and to absorb a little of the magical energy used in the summoning before the energy dissipates. The vast majority do this to increase their Strength Rating in an attempt to eventually become too powerful to be summoned.

Summoners recognize that this phenomenon increases a spirit's strength and have found a way to avoid it, because a spirit becomes harder to control as its Strength Rating increases. The section on **Repeated Summonings** (p.212 of the ***Player's Guide***) details a special procedure summoners may use to repeatedly summon a spirit without adding to its Strength Rating.

Great Form Spirits

Spirits with Strength Ratings of 15 and higher are considered **great form spirits**, and are usually Named. The difficulties of summoning and controlling such powerful spirits prevent most adepts from ever attempting the feat. When magicians do try to summon such spirits, they usually use ritual magic, because few adepts possess enough power to summon a great form spirit by themselves. Typically, summoners employ the Summoning Circle talent when calling up great form spirits.

Any great form spirit that breaks free from its summoner by winning a Contest of Wills is likely to wreak havoc in order to express its displeasure at being summoned before returning to its native astral habitat.

On Ally Spirits

Nethermancers summon **ally spirits** when they need an astral ally or servant. In this respect, ally spirits resemble tasked spirits (see below), but allies are much more powerful and versatile because their existence is not tied to the completion of a specific task. Ally spirits may assume astral or physical forms, but generally prefer to remain in their astral incarnations. When they do physically manifest, ally spirits appear as ghosts or apparitions. They never take on truly solid physical forms, but they can attack and be attacked by physical beings.

Individual ally spirits may vary widely. Some are astral denizens of the netherworlds, while others are the spirits of deceased Namegivers. A Nethermancer never knows which type of ally spirit will arrive when he summons one, and most ally spirits prefer to reveal as little about themselves as possible.

The gamemaster determines the exact powers and abilities of a summoned ally spirit, though Nethermancers may specify services they want an ally to perform. In these cases, the spirit's powers and abilities generally reflect the type of service. For example, a spirit that is summoned to meld with a Namegiver will have the Possession power. An ally spirit summoned to aid a Nethermancer in combat will have relatively high physical statistics, or perhaps specific combat-related abilities. A spirit summoned to aid a Nethermancer in ritual magic or spellcasting will likely have relatively high Perception and Willpower Steps.

Alternatively, Nethermancers may summon ally spirits with specific powers and abilities, as noted in the **Summoning** rules (p.211 of the ***Player's Guide***).

Ally Spirits and Names

Most ally spirits have Names, but they cannot be forced to reveal them. Summoning an ally spirit as a Named spirit provides the summoner with greater control and power over the spirit. See **Summoning** (p.211 of the ***Player's Guide***) for more information.

On Elemental Spirits and Elementals

Elemental spirits are the astral form of spirits from the elemental planes in astral space. Five types of elemental spirits exist, one for each True element: air, earth, fire, water and wood. Elemental spirits may switch between their astral and physical forms at will, though these spirits are very reluctant to assume physical form and usually must be coerced to do so. Physically manifested elemental spirits are called **elementals**. For example, an elemental air spirit in astral form would be called an air spirit; in its physical form, the same spirit would be called an air elemental. Elementals appear in a multitude of guises, based on the elements they embody. For example, a water elemental may appear as a soft mist, a whirlwind of water, or a quiet pool. A wood elemental may take the shape of any plant.



Most Elementalists summon elemental spirits to make use of these spirits' powers. Summoned elementals, however, also serve well as champions for magicians who prefer not to fight an opponent themselves. Most Elementalists summon these spirits with extreme care and the utmost respect, because these magicians believe the elemental spirits have lived in the elemental planes since before Namegivers walked on the earth. In the view of an Elementalist, summoning an elemental spirit is like summoning the sacred elemental planes themselves. Only Elementalists may summon elemental spirits.

Elemental Spirits and Names

Most elemental spirits have Names. Elemental spirits need not be summoned as Named spirits, however, and cannot be forced to reveal their Names. Summoning an elemental spirit as a Named spirit provides the summoner with greater control and power over the spirit, a benefit most Elementalists feel is worth the extra difficulties the method presents.

On the Invae

Not much is known about the **invae**, apart from the fact that they are spirits inhabiting the netherworlds—and frequently try to enter our world. Many regard them as another form of Horror, and rumors frequently tell of invae appearing in areas where a summoning went horribly wrong. However, the most common legend told is the one about the Invae Burnings—which (as it turned out) was only one of the invae's many endeavors.

The Invae Burnings

Chorrolis, the Passion of wealth and trade, was much venerated along the great trading routes and wealthy cities of the ancient kingdoms of Landis and Cara Fahd. Long ago, when the Scourge was but a dark rumor, one cult of his followers worshipped Chorrolis with greater fervor than any other in those lands. As they grew in number, their rivals in trade began to disappear. The dead bodies of some were found, others never appeared again. When the leaders of Landis and Cara Fahd at last began searching for the killers, they discovered the cult of Chorrolis had come under the sway of an evil, loathsome insect race called the invae.

The invae knew no mercy toward the people of Barsaive; they took captives and used them in bizarre, arcane rituals that transformed their captives into insects or summoned more of their cursed race from the black depths of astral space. No one knew how long the invae had worked their evil will in Barsaive, nor how far their presence had spread.

Panic swept through Landis at the news of the invae and soon spilled over to other kingdoms. Soldiers and terrified citizens swept through the temples of Chorrolis, slaying all within and burning the buildings. Unable to tell friend from foe in their frenzy, the people also razed temples of Astendar and Floranuus and killed many of their innocent worshippers.

These first attacks—known as the Invae Burnings—killed hundreds of invae. The rest fought fiercely to protect their brood, and the streets ran red with blood. The terrible battles of sword and magic destroyed the once-proud city of Emmerlich and left the very earth on which it stood lifeless.

The burning of the invae continued across Barsaive long after the creatures had died or gone into hiding, and thousands of innocents lost their lives. In memory of their dead, followers of Chorrolis hold a bitter feast once a year. Even today, the followers of Chorrolis still carry a light stigma of being corrupt—some people believe the loathsome creatures survived the burnings and the Scourge and even now work their evil among the races of Barsaive through corrupted followers of Chorrolis. And who can tell if someone is corrupted or not?

On Named Spirits

Often the target of nethermantic summoning, **Named spirits** can be important sources of knowledge of past myths, tales and legends. Summoning a Named spirit requires the summoner to make use of the Law of Contagion—one of the laws governing the use of the magic flowing through the fabric of the universe. The Law of Contagion states that once a connection has been forged between two things, they remain connected forever. A dragon's scale is always part of that dragon, even if he sheds it. The place of his birth is a part of a Namegiver's legend until the end of his days, even if he journeys far away from it. As a result, the summoner is required to either know the spirit's True Name or have one of the spirit's pattern items at his disposal. Learning a spirit's True Name or obtaining a Named spirit's pattern item is a difficult and involved process that may require journeys into astral space and the netherworlds. Because of these potential difficulties, adepts usually only summon a Named spirit when no other spirit will fit their needs. Adepts may also summon Named spirits in order to use the spirit's powers or abilities. For example, a powerful Named spell might require the presence of a specific Named spirit. A Nethermancer studying an ancient ork weapon may summon the spirit of the legendary ork Weaponsmith Rugaah Gloh to aid his research.

Types of Named Spirits

Both ally and elemental spirits may be Named, though tasked spirits are almost never Named. Named ally spirits are almost always the spirits of deceased Namegiver adepts, sometimes referred to as **Namegiver spirits**. On very rare occasions, a Nethermancer may learn the Name of and/or obtain a pattern item belonging to a spirit native to the netherworlds.

Nethermancers most often summon Namegiver spirits. Usually, these spirits are adepts with knowledge and experience that can greatly help their summoners.

Summoning Named elemental spirits remains an extremely difficult proposition for most Elementalists, chiefly because obtaining a pattern item of such a spirit is nearly impossible. According to legends, Barsaivians frequently encountered Named elementals before the Scourge, and some tales even speak of small cities summoning such elemental spirits to help build their kaers and citadels. If such tales are true, recovering pattern items of these elemental spirits and then summoning them seems possible.

Named Spirit Powers and Strength Ratings

The powers of specific Named spirits are determined by the spirit's type (ally or elemental) and Strength Rating. Most Named spirits have several of the powers available to spirits of their type and possess Strength Ratings of 8 or higher. The Strength Rating of a Namegiver spirit always equals or exceeds the Circle of the Namegiver from whom the spirit descends.

Controlling Named Spirits

Though difficult to summon, Named spirits are sometimes easier to control than other powerful spirits if the summoner possesses at least one of the spirit's pattern items and has woven a thread to the item. Add the rank of this thread as a bonus to the summoner's Willpower Tests for any Contest of Wills he makes against the spirit (see **Summoning**, p.211 of the ***Player's Guide***). Apply the same bonus to the summoner's Charisma Tests, Bargain With Summoned Creature Tests, or any other talent he uses when bargaining with the spirit.

For example, a Nethermancer has obtained a pattern item for a Strength 8 Named ally spirit and has woven a Rank 4 thread to it. The Nethermancer summons the spirit and orders it to open a portal into astral space. The spirit, a native to astral space and the netherworlds, refuses to comply with its summoner's orders. The Nethermancer decides to challenge the spirit to a Contest of Wills to force it to do as he wishes. The Rank 4 thread he has woven to the spirit's pattern item gives the Nethermancer a +4 bonus to his Willpower Tests when making the test for the contest.

Namegivers as Named Spirits

When Namegivers enter astral space, they become subject to the same laws as other residents of astral space. This means that a Namegiver traveling in astral space may be summoned. To do so, an adept must use the Summon talent to summon the Namegiver's spirit as though it were a Named spirit. A summoned Namegiver appears in astral space near the summoner and is bound to serve the summoner as any other summoned spirit.

For more information about Namegivers in astral space, see the **Astral Space** chapter in the **Gamemaster's Companion**.

On Tasked Spirits

Tasked spirits are the most common and least dangerous type of spirit encountered in Earthdawn. These spirits exist solely to provide specific services for their summoners. They may perform any number of duties, such as dusting, guarding a valuable item, scouting for danger or annoying a specified target. Unlike other types of spirits, tasked spirits commonly manifest in physical form. Most of the time, a tasked spirit's physical appearance is related to the task it performs. For example, tasked spirits may manifest as brooms, mice, shadows or any other form that suits the gamemaster's imagination.

These spirits are summoned by different spells and/or talents for specific tasks. Examples of tasked spirits include the spirits summoned by the Pocket Guardian spell, the Orbiting Spy talent, and the Spirit Dodge talent. Any adept with the appropriate spell or talent may summon a tasked spirit. The spirit's game statistics are always listed with the talent or spell in question.

All tasked spirits' Strength Ratings increase only under very unusual occasions. Tasked spirits cannot refuse to obey a summoner and may only provide the services described by the spell or talent used to summon them. Tasked spirits can be banished like any other spirit. However, anyone other than a tasked spirit's summoner must achieve a Good or better result to banish the tasked spirit.



Spirit Powers

Ally, elemental and Named spirits may possess a number of special powers, much like the powers of creatures, dragons and Horrors. The spirit type descriptions list some of the spirit powers common to these different spirits. As they increase in Strength, spirits may gain new powers as well, as noted in **Spirit Strength Ratings**, p.210. Unless a power's description states otherwise, any type of spirit may possess that power.

The following list of spirit powers is not intended to be comprehensive. Gamemasters should feel free to create additional powers for their games.

Game Terms

As with other abilities, spirits must use a Step Number to make tests with their powers. Most of these Step Numbers are based on one of the spirit's Attributes, usually Willpower, and the spirit's Strength Rating. Any increase in a spirit's Strength Rating also increases the Step Number it uses to make tests. If a power's description does not provide a Step Number formula, the power has a specific effect that does not require a test.

Some powers require the spirit to take a Standard Action to use them. These are noted by the word "Standard" in the "Action:" notation. Powers which do not require an action are noted by the word "Simple" or "Free" in the "Action:" notation. These powers usually require a Spellcasting Test that meets the "Action: Standard" requirement.

Aid Summoner

Step: Strength Rating **Action:** Standard

The Aid Summoner power allows a spirit to enhance its summoner's magical abilities. To activate this power, the spirit's summoner takes Strain equal to the spirit's Strength Rating. For the duration of the power, the summoner may add a bonus equal to the spirit's Strength Rating to any of his magical ability steps when making tests. This includes talents such as Spellcasting, Thread Weaving and Willforce. This bonus may be applied to different abilities, as chosen by the summoner, but only one ability each round. For example, during one round the summoner may boost his Spellcasting talent, while in the next round he may boost his Willforce talent. Each time the summoner uses the bonus on an Action Test he takes 2 Strain. Each use of the Aid Summoner power lasts for a number of minutes equal to the spirit's Strength Rating.

Astral Portal

Step: Strength Rating **Action:** Standard

Ally spirits only. This power enables a spirit to create a portal through which Namegivers can enter astral space. The portal remains open for a number of minutes equal to the spirit's Strength Rating×10. Note that the portal is two-way, allowing entry into and exit from astral space.

Confusion

Step: WIL+Strength Rating **Action:** Standard

Ally spirits only. This power enables a spirit to temporarily confuse a target character by passing some of its own energy through him. The spirit makes a Confusion Test against the target's Spell Defense. The range of this power is line of sight. If the test succeeds, the target suffers a –1 penalty to his Perception and Willpower Steps for each result level achieved. This penalty affects all abilities based on the reduced Attributes. The effect lasts for a number of minutes equal to the spirit's Strength Rating.

Detect Trap

Step: PER+Strength Rating **Action:** Standard

Ally spirits only. The Detect Trap power works in the same manner as the talent of the same name.

Detect True Element

Step: Strength Rating **Action:** Standard

Elemental spirits only. This power enables an elemental spirit to detect the presence of its own True element. For example, an air spirit could detect only True air by using this power. Because elemental spirits represent a manifestation of the elemen-

tal planes, and because Elementalists generally use this power to locate True elements for their own use, these spirits do not like to use the Detect True Element power for their summoners. Coercing an elemental spirit to do so requires a Contest of Wills. If the summoner wins the contest, the spirit leads the summoner to any source of its True element within a number of miles equal to the spirit's Strength Rating—a spirit cannot detect the presence of its True element beyond this range. Elemental spirits will never aid a summoner in making a Gathering Test (see **Enchanting** in the ***Player's Companion***). Even losing a Contest of Wills cannot coerce a spirit to violate this principle.

Detect Weapon

Step: PER+Strength Rating **Action:** Standard

Ally and elemental earth spirits only. The Detect Weapon power works in the same manner as the talent of the same name. This power also enables a spirit to describe the general size, shape and location of the weapon.

Disguise Self

Step: CHA+Strength Rating **Action:** Standard

Ally spirits only. The Disguise Self power works in the same manner as the talent of the same name and allows the spirit to physically manifest in the form of any Namegiver the spirit has seen.

Durability

Step: Rank **Action:** NA

The Durability power increases a spirit's ability to take damage. Each rank in the Durability power permanently adds +7 to the spirit's Death Rating and +6 to its Unconsciousness Rating.

Empathic Sense

Step: PER+Strength Rating **Action:** Standard

Ally spirits only. The Empathic Sense power enables a spirit to retain an empathic connection with its summoner, in much the same manner as the talent of the same name.

Engulf

Step: WIL+Strength Rating **Action:** Simple

Elemental spirits only. This power enables an elemental spirit to engulf a victim in its element, causing the victim to take damage during each round of exposure. The elemental must be physically manifested to use this power. The elemental must successfully grapple (***Player's Guide***, p.230) the target in order to use this power. Once the victim is grappled, it is completely engulfed by a harmful version of the appropriate element (see below) and takes damage each round equal to the result of the Engulf Test. Each round, after taking damage, the engulfed character may make a Strength Test against the elemental's Attack Test result. If the test succeeds, he breaks free of the element.

Air: The spirit is able to make the air around a victim unbreatheable. The victim can hold his breath and begins to take damage when he falls unconscious. Mystic Armor protects against this damage. Victims might suffocate if engulfed for too long.

Earth: The target receives damage from the crushing weight of the spirit. Physical Armor protects against this damage.

Fire: The target is covered in fire and starts to burn. Physical Armor protects against this damage.

Water: The spirit is capable of exerting great pressure on engulfed victims. Physical Armor protects against this damage and victims might drown if engulfed for too long.

Wood: The target is covered in thorny vines that pierce his skin. Physical Armor protects against this damage.

Enrage Element

Step: WIL+Strength Rating **Action:** Standard

Elemental spirits only. This power enables an elemental to create a tumultuous whirlwind of its element. Earth elementals may create small storms of flying rocks; air elementals may create whirling winds; wood elementals, storms of spinning twigs; fire elementals, showering sparks; and water elementals, hurricane-like waves. The power affects all targets within a radius equal to the spirit's Strength Rating in yards × 2 (hexes × 1). The power's effects last for a number of rounds equal to the spirit's Strength Rating. Each round, the spirit makes an Enrage Element Test in place of a Damage Test to determine how much damage each target takes. Physical Armor protects against this damage. In addition, any targets within the area of effect are considered Harried (***Player's Guide***, p.227).

Evil Eye

Step: WIL+Strength Rating **Action:** Standard

Ally spirits only. To use this curse-like power, a spirit makes an Evil Eye Test against the target's Spell Defense. The range of this power is line of sight. If the test succeeds, one of the target's Attribute Steps suffers a –2 penalty for a number of hours equal to the spirit's Strength Rating, affecting all abilities based on that Attribute. The spirit or its summoner chooses the affected Attribute. A single target can be subjected to only one use of this power at a time.

Find

Step: PER+Strength Rating **Action:** Standard

The Find power enables a spirit to trace an item to its origin, as long as it is within a range no greater than the spirit's Strength Rating × 1,000 miles. For example, if a spirit has a lock of hair, it can locate the hair's owner. If it has a piece of a wall, it can locate the building from which the piece came. To use this power, the spirit makes a Find Test against the subject's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the spirit has located the subject and reports back to the summoner. Tracing an item can take a long time. As a rule of thumb, the spirits needs one hour per 1,000 miles of distance. A spirit usually cancels his search if the summoning duration ends – often without reporting back.

Haggle

Step: CHA+Strength Rating **Action:** Standard

The Haggle power works in the same manner as the talent of the same name, except spirits may use the power only when bargaining with a summoner.

Karma

Step: Special (see text) **Action:** NA

Like dragons and Horrors, spirits can spend a Karma Point on any test. Most spirits have a relatively low Karma Step, but this increases as the spirit's Strength Rating increases.

Manifest

Step: Strength Rating **Action:** Standard

The Manifest power enables a spirit to manifest in the physical plane. The duration of the manifestation is limited to a number of hours equal to the spirit's Strength Rating. Physically manifested elemental spirits are called elementals. Physically manifested ally spirits appear as ghosts or apparitions and remain insubstantial enough to pass through solid objects, including walls, doors and rock. If the object is thicker than 1 yard, however, the spirit becomes lost inside it and requires an extra round per yard of depth to find its way back out.



MANIPULATE ELEMENT

Step: WIL+Strength Rating **Action:** Standard

Elemental spirits only. This power enables a spirit to change the basic structure of any object composed of the spirit's native element. The diameter of the area of effect cannot exceed the spirit's Strength Rating in yards. For example, an earth elemental can use the Manipulate Element power to turn an area of solid earth into mud or quicksand. An air elemental could make the air in a certain area toxic. A water elemental could turn a pool into solid ice, and a wood elemental could twist a tree into a cage. A fire elemental could make a dying ember burn white-hot or even explode. The gamemaster determines the specific effects of each use of the Manipulate Element power. The effects of this power last for a number of minutes equal to the spirit's Manipulate Element Test result.

POSSESSION

Step: WIL+Strength Rating **Action:** Standard

Ally spirits only. This power allows a spirit to temporarily possess and take control of a target's physical body. To use the power, a spirit makes a Possession Test against the victim's Spell Defense. The range of this power is touch. If the test succeeds, the victim is possessed by the spirit for a number of minutes equal to the spirit's Strength Rating. During this time, the target is aware of his body's actions but cannot control them. Possessed targets may force the spirit out by making a successful Willpower Test against the spirit's Spell Defense.

REMOVE ELEMENT

Step: WIL+Strength Rating **Action:** Standard

Elemental spirits only. This power enables a spirit to remove any trace of its native element from an area. The diameter of the area of effect cannot exceed the spirit's Strength Rating in yards × 2 (or Strength Rating in hexes). For example, an earth spirit could use the power to damage a building by removing the dirt around one or more of the building's supporting walls, or a water spirit could remove all the water from a character's body. The spirit makes a Remove Element Test against the target's Spell Defense. When using the power against a Namegiver, a spirit must achieve an Excellent or better result. Any time a spirit successfully uses this power to remove the water or air from a Namegiver's body, the character takes damage equal to the Remove Element Test result. Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

SHARE KNOWLEDGE

Step: Strength Rating **Action:** Standard

Elemental spirits only. This power allows a spirit to learn general information about any recent activity in, on, or near its native element. For example, an earth spirit may learn that two horses recently passed along a dirt road, a breeze may carry snippets of conversation to an air spirit, or a water spirit may learn that a boat recently passed along a river. The power enables spirits to learn only of events that occurred within a number of hours equal to the spirit's Strength Rating. The gamemaster determines exactly how much information the elemental learns.

SOOTHE

Step: CHA+Strength Rating **Action:** Standard

Elemental spirits only. This power enables a spirit to produce soothing sounds or smells that cause its target to relax. Sounds and smells might include a cool breeze, the sound of a softly gurgling brook, the smell of fresh dirt, the sound of leaves rustling in the wind, or the sound of a crackling fire. To use this power, a spirit makes a Soothe Test against the target's Social Defense. If the test succeeds, the character rests more comfortably and gains a +1 bonus to his next Recovery Test.

SPEAR

Step: STR+Strength Rating **Action:** Free

Elemental spirits only. This power allows a physically manifested spirit to form a spear from its elemental essence and throw it at a target. In the case of a water elemental, the spear might take the form of an icicle. For a fire elemental, it might be a flame bolt. An air elemental's spear might appear as a barely visible shimmering that cuts through the air on its way to the target. The spirit makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. The range of this power is 24 yards (12 hexes). If the test succeeds, the spirit makes a Spear Test in place of a Damage Test to determine how much damage the target takes. Physical Armor protects against this damage.

SPELLCASTING

Step: PER+Strength Rating **Action:** Standard

The Spellcasting power enables spirits to cast spells using raw magic. When casting spells in this manner, spirits are vulnerable to the same Warping and Damage effects as Namegiver magicians, and they run the same risk of becoming Horror-marked. For these reasons, spirits rarely use this power unless a summoner forces to them do so. Some (but not all) spirits employ the Thread Weaving and Spell Matrix powers when casting spells (see Talents, below).

SPELLS

Step: Special (see text) **Action:** NA

Elemental spirits may only cast spells that deal with their native elements. Generally, ally spirits can cast spells of only one Discipline, though some powerful ally spirits can cast spells of several Disciplines. The spirit's Strength Rating determines the maximum spell Circle it may cast. Thus, a Strength 6 ally spirit could cast any spell up to Sixth Circle for any type of magic it knows.

TALENTS

Step: Special (see text) **Action:** Special (see text)

Some spirits have powers based on adept talents, denoted by a superscripted 'T' at the end of the power's name. Refer to the Talents chapter of the ***Player's Guide*** for a description of the talent in question. Spirits ignore any Karma requirements listed with a talent.

TEMPERATURE

Step: WIL+Strength Rating **Action:** Standard

Ally and elemental fire spirits only. This power enables spirits to alter the temperature of an area up to its Strength Rating in yards × 2 (or Strength Rating in hexes) in diameter. The spirit raises or lowers the temperature enough to disconcert or discomfit characters within the area of effect, but not enough to endanger the characters. Characters or creatures within the area of effect experience difficulty concentrating and suffer a –1 penalty to their Perception and Willpower Tests. The effect of the Temperature power lasts for a number of minutes equal to the spirit's Strength Rating.

The following descriptions are organized by spirit type. Most of the examples below include simple formulas to calculate a spirit's basic game statistics. The spirit's Strength Rating appears abbreviated as 'SR'. For example, air spirits with a Strength Rating of 5–8 are listed with a Social Defense of 8+SR. A Strength Rating 5 air spirit would have a Social Defense of 13 (5+ 8). Please keep in mind that these formulas are only guidelines and serve to form the basic game statistics for most spirits. As shown in the examples, these can always be modified to serve a special purpose.

Great Form Spirits

Spirits with Strength Ratings of 15 or higher are very difficult to summon and control, and are usually summoned with ritual magic—few adepts possess enough power to summon these spirits all by themselves. The templates below only list spirits up to a Strength Rating of 15. To create statistics for spirits with even higher Strength Ratings, use the **Customizing Creatures** rules from the **Gamemaster's Companion** and add +1 per point of Strength Rating above 15 to their Attribute Steps.

AIR SPIRITS

Air spirits embody the nature of air. Air spirits tend to be extremely perceptive and possess better social skills than any other type of elemental spirit. Most are good-natured as well, but can quickly turn from happy-go-lucky breezes to killer tornadoes when displeased. Most air spirits accept being summoned without complaint or struggle, and a few occasionally bargain with the summoner to stay longer or to be summoned again. Air spirits prefer to be near the flow of air at all times and become uncomfortable in enclosed spaces.

Manifested air spirits may take many physical forms. Air elementals have been known to manifest as whirlwinds, soft breezes, or the sound of breathing. Air elementals often assume humanoid faces that appear as wispy, changing visages floating in the midst of their bodies.

Strength Rating 1–4

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

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack: 6+SR
Damage: See Powers

Physical Defense: 6+SR
Spell Defense: 6+SR
Social Defense: 3+SR
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: SR

Death: 28
Unconsciousness: 19
Wound Threshold: 7

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: NA
Movement: 6/7*

* The second value is the spirit's flying Movement Rate when physically manifested

Legend Award: SR Circle

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight T (PER+SR), Detect True Element (PER+SR), Engulf (STR+SR), Manifest (SR), Manipulate Element (WIL+SR), Share Knowledge (SR), Spear (STR+SR), Spellcasting T (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 5–8

DEX: 10 **STR:** 9 **TOU:** 8
PER: 10 **WIL:** 9 **CHA:** 8

Initiative: 10
Actions: 2
Attack: 10+SR
Damage: See Powers

Physical Defense: 11+SR
Spell Defense: 11+SR
Social Defense: 8+SR
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: SR

Death: 44
Unconsciousness: 36
Wound Threshold: 13

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: NA
Movement: 6/7*

* The second value is the spirit's flying Movement Rate when physically manifested

Legend Award: SR Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Detect True Element (PER+SR), Engulf (STR+SR), Manifest (SR), Manipulate Element (WIL+SR), Share Knowledge (SR), Spear (STR+SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 9–12

DEX: 14 **STR:** 13 **TOU:** 12
PER: 14 **WIL:** 13 **CHA:** 12

Initiative: 14
Actions: 3
Attack: 14+SR
Damage: See Powers

Physical Defense: 16+SR
Spell Defense: 16+SR
Social Defense: 14+SR
Physical Armor: 12
Mystic Armor: SR

Death: 60
Unconsciousness: 53
Wound Threshold: 17

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: NA
Movement: 6/7*

* The second value is the spirit's flying Movement Rate when physically manifested

Legend Award: SR Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Detect True Element (PER+SR), Engulf (STR+SR), Manifest (SR), Manipulate Element (WIL+SR), Share Knowledge (SR), Spear (STR+SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 13–15

DEX: 18 **STR:** 17 **TOU:** 16
PER: 18 **WIL:** 17 **CHA:** 16

Initiative: 18
Actions: 4
Attack: 18+SR
Damage: See Powers

Physical Defense: 21+SR
Spell Defense: 21+SR
Social Defense: 19+SR
Physical Armor: 16
Mystic Armor: SR

Death: 84
Unconsciousness: 77
Wound Threshold: 23

Recovery Tests: 9
Knockdown: NA
Movement: 6/7*

* The second value is the spirit's flying Movement Rate when physically manifested

Legend Award: SR 13: Fourteenth Circle (group); SR 14: Fifteenth Circle (group); SR 15 Fifteenth Circle × 2 (group)

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Detect True Element (PER+SR), Engulf (STR+SR), Manifest (SR), Manipulate Element (WIL+SR), Share Knowledge (SR), Spear (STR+SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Rules

Due to its gaseous form, an air spirit only attacks using its Engulf or Spear powers. Choose a number of additional powers up to the air spirit's Strength Rating.

Gaseous Form: Attacking a manifested air spirit with most non-magical, ordinary weapons (such as a sword or a bow) is virtually useless. All damage inflicted with such a weapon is ignored.

Invisibility: Because air can rarely be seen, air elementals may become invisible at will. The air spirit makes a Spellcasting Test, the result of which is the Detection Difficulty for any attempts to detect the elemental.

Vulnerability to Earth: Lower the result level required to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on an air spirit or elemental by one level (from Excellent to Good, for example) if the attack was made with an earth-based weapon or spell.

ALLY SPIRITS

Ally spirits are summoned by Nethermancers to provide a variety of services. The spirit possesses powers common to all ally spirits. Note that this is only one possible configuration of an ally spirit. The gamemaster determines the exact powers and spells of ally spirits to suit his games and campaign.

Strength Rating 1–4

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

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack: 5+SR
Damage:
Unarmed: 5

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 5+SR
Social Defense: 5+SR
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: SR

Death: 32
Unconsciousness: 24
Wound Threshold: 8

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5
Movement: 6

Legend Award: SR Circle

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Empathic Sense (PER+SR), Lifesight (PER+SR), Manifest (SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 5–8

DEX: 9 **STR:** 9 **TOU:** 9
PER: 9 **WIL:** 9 **CHA:** 9

Initiative: 10
Actions: 2
Attack: 9+SR
Damage:
Unarmed: 9

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 11+SR
Social Defense: 11+SR
Physical Armor: 9
Mystic Armor: SR

Death: 48
Unconsciousness: 41
Wound Threshold: 14

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 9
Movement: 6

Legend Award: SR Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Empathic Sense (PER+SR), Lifesight (PER+SR), Manifest (SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 9–12

DEX: 13 **STR:** 13 **TOU:** 13
PER: 13 **WIL:** 13 **CHA:** 13

Initiative: 14
Actions: 3
Attack: 13+SR
Damage:
Unarmed: 13

Physical Defense: 17
Spell Defense: 16+SR
Social Defense: 16+SR
Physical Armor: 13
Mystic Armor: SR

Death: 64
Unconsciousness: 57
Wound Threshold: 19

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 13
Movement: 6

Legend Award: SR Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Empathic Sense (PER+SR), Lifesight (PER+SR), Manifest (SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 13–15

DEX: 17 **STR:** 17 **TOU:** 17
PER: 17 **WIL:** 17 **CHA:** 17

Initiative: 18
Actions: 4
Attack: 17+SR
Damage:
Unarmed: 17

Physical Defense: 22
Spell Defense: 21+SR
Social Defense: 21+SR
Physical Armor: 17
Mystic Armor: SR



ALLY SPIRIT POWERS TABLE

Spirit Power	Minimum Strength Rating
Confusion, Detect Trap, Detect Weapons, Talents	1
Astral Portal, Find, Possession, Temperature	5
Evil Eye	9

Death: 80
Unconsciousness: 73
Wound Threshold: 23

Recovery Tests: 8
Knockdown: 17
Movement: 6

Legend Award: Fourteenth Circle (group); SR 14: Fifteenth Circle (group); SR 15 Fifteenth Circle × 2 (group)

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Empathic Sense (PER+SR), Lifesight (PER+SR), Manifest (SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Rules

Add +5 to the Physical Defense of an ally spirit when physically manifested. Choose a number of additional powers equal to the ally spirit's Strength Rating.

Powers: Ally spirits do not gain powers in any specific order or priority. Gamemasters should, however, use the guidelines in the Ally Spirit Powers Table when assigning powers to ally spirits as their Strength Ratings increase. Note that these suggestions apply to *Ally spirits only.*

Shadow (Sample Ally Spirit)

When a Horror kills a victim's body, it can create a shadow by capturing the slain Namegiver's spirit (see **Create Shadow**, p.271). Driven mad by the sundering of spirit and body, magically enslaved by the Horror, the shadow becomes a fearsome tool for its master's dread designs.

A shadow doesn't have the kind of physical being it once had as a Namegiver; it has no depth, no thickness, none of the bulk of living flesh. It appears to have no more substance than the harmless shadow of any object or person; only the closest gaze at an ordinary patch of shade can reveal the slightly darker shape of the Horror's shadow-servant. A shadow can assume whatever shape its master pleases, matching the exact outlines of a common shadow cast by any object. It can also dim its glowing red eyes, becoming almost invisible within normal shade. The only thing that gives it away is this: the affected object or person seems to cast a slightly darker shadow than the other objects in the room.

Thus, shadows have not enough substance to affect the physical world directly, but can easily act as spies for their dreadful masters. Able to blend in perfectly with almost any surroundings, shadows enable Horrors to keep watch over whomever they choose. If necessary, these terrible beings can even skitter from shadow to shadow to avoid detection.

Rules

A shadow is a corrupted ally spirit. The Strength Rating is determined by the rank of the Horror's Create Shadow power, and usually equals the highest Circle a victim has achieved as an adept.

Manifestation Restriction: Shadows can only manifest within the shade cast by an object or person; they cannot do so in total darkness or in direct light.

Possession: Shadows with the Possession power can aid the Horrors in taking control of victims. If a shadow-servant shapes itself

to match a real person's shadow, the shadow-servant can attempt to possess that person. If it succeeds in its foul purpose, the shadow controls the victim's body, though it cannot possess the victim's mind. A shadow often stalks its intended victim for some time, carefully learning exactly how he behaves before taking possession, lest the victim manage to use its mind against the shadow in some subtle way.

Because shadows are no longer Namegivers, characters under their control often act strangely. They may exhibit subtle differences in speech patterns or mannerisms, or do something blatantly out of character like attacking a loved one. Depending on the oddness of the behavior, other characters may notice something wrong with a shadow's victim by making a Perception Test against the result of the Possession Test used by the shadow to take control. If the victim's odd behavior is subtle, the Perception Test receives no modifiers. However, if the shadow's victim lashes out at friends and companions, characters may add a +3 or +4 bonus to this Perception Test, at the gamemaster's discretion.

Of course, controlling a body while leaving the mind free offers the Horrors a chance to cause pain and suffering in ways they find especially delicious. The victim is compelled by the shadow to do dreadful things, and all his will to rebel cannot prevent him from committing whatever atrocity the controlling Horror desires. By playing one person against another and making diabolical use of its shadow-controlled puppets, a Horror can often tear an entire town or village apart from within and feed on the anguish of all the inhabitants.

Vulnerability to Light: Other than a spell designed to strike directly at the shadow, there is only one way to kill it. Light shed on the shadow's hiding place before it can leap to a new pool of darkness or return to astral space, will destroy it.

Adventure Hook

In a city of the gamemaster's choice, a politician who is also a close friend of the characters has begun to act extremely unlike himself. He makes confusing and often contradictory decisions, as if in the grip of some internal struggle. The characters decide to find out why, and if possible to help their friend through his or her trouble. Unfortunately, their friend has fallen victim to a shadow.

To save their friend, the characters must confront and destroy the shadow and the Horror who created it. As they search for answers and try to take action, the Horror is consolidating its control over others in local government and forcing them to commit horrible acts—the characters must stop the Horror before it destroys the entire city.

Earth Spirits

Earth spirits embody the nature of True earth, the element from which all physical objects arise and to which they return. An earth spirit's nature makes it more attuned to the physical world than any other type of elemental spirit. Earth spirits tend to be patient and calm. They speak slowly, take their time when thinking through an idea or making a decision, and they perform tasks with diligence and patience. An earth elemental can be unpredictable when angered, but even when in the grip of rage the spirit remains outwardly unemotional, a characteristic that often frustrates a summoner attempting to gauge a spirit's emotional state.

While the living manifestation of their element fascinates earth elementals, most of these spirits prefer to remain in the Plane of Earth, surrounded by their True earth. They especially dislike being summoned in water or in the air. They will first attempt to manifest in an outcropping of rock or in dirt, or in a clay pot if no other earthen material is available.

Strength Rating 1–4

DEX: 3 **STR:** 6 **TOU:** 7
PER: 4 **WIL:** 6 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 2
Actions: 1
Attack: 3+SR
Damage:
Unarmed (5): 11
Death: 40
Unconsciousness: 32
Wound Threshold: 11
Physical Defense: 4
Spell Defense: 7+SR
Social Defense: 4+SR
Physical Armor: 6+SR
Mystic Armor: 2+SR
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 6+SR
Movement: 6/5*

* The second value is the spirit's Movement Rate when physically manifested

Legend Award: SR Circle

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Detect True Element (SR), Engulf (WIL+SR), Manifest (SR), Manipulate Element (WIL+SR), Share Knowledge (SR), Spear (STR+SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 5–8

DEX: 7 **STR:** 10 **TOU:** 11
PER: 8 **WIL:** 10 **CHA:** 8

Initiative: 6
Actions: 2
Attack: 7+SR
Damage:
Unarmed (5): 15
Death: 56
Unconsciousness: 49
Wound Threshold: 16
Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 13+SR
Social Defense: 10+SR
Physical Armor: 10+SR
Mystic Armor: 1+SR
Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 10+SR
Movement: 6/5*

* The second value is the spirit's Movement Rate when physically manifested

Legend Award: SR Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Detect True Element (SR), Engulf (WIL+SR), Manifest (SR), Manipulate Element (WIL+SR), Share Knowledge (SR), Spear (STR+SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 9–12

DEX: 11 **STR:** 14 **TOU:** 15
PER: 12 **WIL:** 14 **CHA:** 12

Initiative: 10
Actions: 2
Attack: 11+SR
Damage:
Unarmed (5): 19
Death: 72
Unconsciousness: 65
Wound Threshold: 21
Physical Defense: 14
Spell Defense: 18+SR
Social Defense: 15+SR
Physical Armor: 15+SR
Mystic Armor: 1+SR
Recovery Tests: 7
Knockdown: 14+SR
Movement: 6/5*

* The second value is the spirit's Movement Rate when physically manifested

Legend Award: SR Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Detect True Element (SR), Engulf (WIL+SR), Manifest (SR), Manipulate Element (WIL+SR), Share Knowledge (SR), Spear (STR+SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 13–15

DEX: 15 **STR:** 18 **TOU:** 19
PER: 16 **WIL:** 18 **CHA:** 16

Initiative: 14
Actions: 3
Attack: 15+SR
Damage:
Unarmed (5): 23

Physical Defense: 19
Spell Defense: 23+SR
Social Defense: 20+SR
Physical Armor: 19+SR
Mystic Armor: 1+SR

Death: 88
Unconsciousness: 82
Wound Threshold: 24

Recovery Tests: 9
Knockdown: 18+SR
Movement: 6/5*

* The second value is the spirit's Movement Rate when physically manifested

Legend Award: SR Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 2×SR

Karma Step: 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight T (PER+SR), Detect True Element (SR), Engulf (WIL+SR), Manifest (SR), Manipulate Element (WIL+SR), Share Knowledge (SR), Spear (STR+SR), Spellcasting T (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Rules

Choose a number of additional powers equal to the earth spirit's Strength Rating.

Manifestation Restriction: Earth elementals require the presence of earth to manifest. This requirement only presents a problem when the elemental attempts to manifest aboard an airship, on the upper floor of a wooden building, or under other special circumstances. Earth elementals may manifest as pools of mud, large rocks, clods of dirt, or in many other forms. Often, these elementals shape themselves into humanoid forms.

Vulnerability to Wood: Lower the result level required to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on an earth spirit or elemental by one level (from Excellent to Good, for example) if the attack was made with a wooden weapon or wood-based spell.

Shard (Sample Earth Spirit)

Shards are Strength Rating 5 earth spirits that manifest in living crystal. They appear as tall, spidery humanoid figures with long limbs, their bodies formed from multifaceted crystal with many sharp edges, like a roughly hewn statue. Shards use their crystalline limbs and sharp cutting edges to attack. Most shards are not terribly intelligent. They often guard deposits of living crystal or act as thralls of a more powerful earth spirit. Shards have been encountered in some of the deep crystal caves in the Twilight Peaks and elsewhere, concealed among the crystals there and virtually invisible until they attack.

DEX: 7
PER: 6

STR: 10
WIL: 8

TOU: 12
CHA: 6

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (5): 12
Damage:
Unarmed (5): 15
Death: 60
Unconsciousness: 53
Wound Threshold: 17

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 11
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 15
Mystic Armor: 5
Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 15
Movement: 5

Legend Award: Fifth Circle
Karma Points: 10

Karma Step: 8

Powers: Aid Summoner (5), Astral Sight T (5): 11, Detect True Element (5), Engulf (5): 13, Enrage Element (5): 13, Manifest (5), Manipulate Element (5): 13, Share Knowledge (5), Spear (5): 15

Equipment: None

Loot: Embedded crystals and gems worth D6×20 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points)

Rules

Due to their crystalline bodies, shards are not vulnerable to wood. Instead, their bodies shatter easily.

Fragile Body: Because their bodies are crystalline, shards can be shattered by a sufficiently powerful blow. Lower the result level required to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on a shard by one level (from Excellent to Good, for example) if the attack was made with a blunt weapon, such as a mace or a hammer. Other weapons inflict Armor-Defeating Hits normally.

Fire Spirits

Fire is the great destroyer, an element that clears away the old to make room for new growth. While fire is a vital part of the world's natural order, it remains hazardous, unpredictable and often uncontrollable. All of these traits characterize fire spirits and elementals. Fire spirits have vivid imaginations and are quick to anger. They experience extreme, rapidly changing emotions. Whether a fire spirit is expressing anger, fear, love, hate, disgust, or friendship it does so loudly and forcefully.

When they manifest, fire elementals arise from a fire source and assume a roughly humanoid form. A fire elemental's appearance changes to match its current emotions. Cozy, crackling flames may form the body of a calm elemental, while an angry elemental may become a blazing inferno. Unlike other elementals, fire elementals do not generally care where they manifest, as long as a source of fire is present.

Strength Rating 1–4

DEX: 6
PER: 4

STR: 5
WIL: 6

TOU: 5
CHA: 4

Initiative: 7
Actions: 1
Attack: 5+SR
Damage:
Unarmed (5): 10

Physical Defense: 7+SR
Spell Defense: 7+SR
Social Defense: 4+SR
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: SR

Death: 32
Unconsciousness: 24
Wound Threshold: 8

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: NA
Movement: 6

Legend Award: SR Circle



Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Burning Aura (SR), Detect True Element (SR), Engulf (WIL+SR), Manifest (SR), Manipulate Element (WIL+SR), Share Knowledge (SR), Spear (STR+SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 5–8

DEX: 10 **STR:** 9 **TOU:** 9
PER: 8 **WIL:** 10 **CHA:** 8

Initiative: 11
Actions: 2
Attack: 9+SR
Damage:
Unarmed (5): 14

Physical Defense: 12+SR
Spell Defense: 12+SR
Social Defense: 9+SR
Physical Armor: 9
Mystic Armor: SR

Death: 48
Unconsciousness: 41
Wound Threshold: 14

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: NA
Movement: 6

Legend Award: SR Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Burning Aura (SR), Detect True Element (SR), Engulf (WIL+SR), Manifest (SR), Manipulate Element (WIL+SR), Share Knowledge (SR), Spear (STR+SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 9–12

DEX: 14 **STR:** 13 **TOU:** 13
PER: 12 **WIL:** 14 **CHA:** 12

Initiative: 15
Actions: 3
Attack: 13+SR
Damage:
Unarmed (5): 18

Physical Defense: 17+SR
Spell Defense: 18+SR
Social Defense: 15+SR
Physical Armor: 13
Mystic Armor: SR

Death: 64
Unconsciousness: 57
Wound Threshold: 19

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: NA
Movement: 6

Legend Award: SR Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Burning Aura (SR), Detect True Element (SR), Engulf (WIL+SR), Manifest (SR), Manipulate Element (WIL+SR), Share Knowledge (SR), Spear (STR+SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 13–15

DEX: 18 **STR:** 17 **TOU:** 17
PER: 16 **WIL:** 18 **CHA:** 16

Initiative: 19
Actions: 4
Attack: 17+SR
Damage:
Unarmed (5): 22

Physical Defense: 22+SR
Spell Defense: 23+SR
Social Defense: 20+SR
Physical Armor: 17
Mystic Armor: SR

Death: 80
Unconsciousness: 73
Wound Threshold: 23

Recovery Tests: 8
Knockdown: NA
Movement: 6

Legend Award: SR 13: Fourteenth Circle (group); SR 14: Fifteenth Circle (group); SR 15 Fifteenth Circle × 2 (group)

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Burning Aura (SR), Detect True Element (SR), Engulf (WIL+SR), Manifest (SR), Manipulate Element (WIL+SR), Share Knowledge (SR), Spear (STR+SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Rules

Add +5 to the Physical Defense of a fire spirit when it is physically manifested. Choose a number of additional powers equal to the fire spirit's Strength Rating.

Burning Aura: Fire. Manifested fire spirits generate a tremendous amount of heat. If the spirit passes within 4 yards (2 hexes) of a target, the target automatically suffers damage equal to the spirit's Strength Rating. Physical Armor protects against this damage. Unless somehow fireproofed, non-magical metal and wooden weapons are useless against a manifested fire spirit of Strength Rating 9 or higher. Any blow a character lands against the spirit automatically destroys the weapon—metal swords and daggers melt, wooden shafts burst into flame.

Manifestation Restriction: Fire elementals can only manifest from a source of fire. The size of the source determines the Strength Rating of the elemental that manifests. Torches and other small flames may only spawn fire elementals of Strength Ratings 1 to 3. Only campfires and larger sources can produce a fire elemental of Strength Rating 4 or higher.

Vulnerability to Water: Lower the result level required to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on a fire spirit or elemental by one level (from Excellent to Good, for example) if the attack was made with a water-based weapon or spell.

Invae Spirits

The insectoid spirits known as invae are neither ally nor elemental spirits, and thus cannot be directly summoned by Nethermancers or Elementalists. Invae do not come from the planes familiar to most magicians. Little is known of these netherworlds, save that the invae have referred to them as "crowded."

The invae are usually human-sized spirits that most often resemble wasps or ants, though they have been known to appear in termite or even mantis forms. Hybrid forms combining these insect features and characteristics of the Namegiver races are also fairly common. Most people believe that other forms of invae exist, as yet unseen in Barsaive.

Though few in number, most invae live in hive-like societies located near large population centers. Though many regard them as another form of Horror, the invae act quite differently. Rather than feeding off the pain of their victims, the invae subject their victims to loathsome rituals that induce metamorphosis, transforming the victim into a Namegiver/invae hybrid. These creatures, in turn, breed new invae to increase the size and power of the hive. Once the hive reaches a certain size, it will attempt to summon an invae queen from astral space.

Strength Rating 1–4

DEX: 3 **STR:** 5 **TOU:** 10
PER: 3 **WIL:** 4 **CHA:** 5

Initiative: 4
Actions: 1
Attack: 3+SR
Damage:
Claws (3): 8

Physical Defense: 4
Spell Defense: 3+SR
Social Defense: 6+SR
Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: SR

Death: 52 **Recovery Tests:** 5
Unconsciousness: 45 **Knockdown:** 4+SR
Wound Threshold: 15 **Movement:** 6/8*

* The second value is the spirit's climbing and ground Movement Rate when physically manifested

Legend Award: SR Circle

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers:
Climbing T (DEX+SR), Manifest (SR), Poison [SD 5+SR; Paralysis], Silent Walk T (DEX+SR), Summon T (PER+SR), Transform (WIL+SR; see text)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 5–8

DEX: 7 **STR:** 9 **TOU:** 14
PER: 6 **WIL:** 8 **CHA:** 9

Initiative: 8 **Physical Defense:** 9
Actions: 2 **Spell Defense:** 7+SR
Attack: 7+SR **Social Defense:** 11+SR
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 14
Claws (3): 12 **Mystic Armor:** SR

Death: 68 **Recovery Tests:** 7
Unconsciousness: 61 **Knockdown:** 8+SR
Wound Threshold: 20 **Movement:** 6/8*

* The second value is the spirit's climbing and ground Movement Rate when physically manifested

Legend Award: SR Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Climbing T (DEX+SR), Manifest (SR), Poison [SD 5+SR; Paralysis], Silent Walk T (DEX+SR), Summon T (PER+SR), Transform (WIL+SR; see text)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 9–12

DEX: 11 **STR:** 13 **TOU:** 18
PER: 10 **WIL:** 12 **CHA:** 13

Initiative: 15 **Physical Defense:** 14
Actions: 3 **Spell Defense:** 12+SR
Attack: 15+SR **Social Defense:** 16+SR
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 18
Claws (3): 16 **Mystic Armor:** SR

Death: 84 **Recovery Tests:** 9
Unconsciousness: 77 **Knockdown:** 12+SR
Wound Threshold: 23 **Movement:** 6/8*

* The second value is the spirit's climbing and ground Movement Rate when physically manifested

Legend Award: SR Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Climbing T (DEX+SR), Manifest (SR), Poison [SD 5+SR; Paralysis], Silent Walk T (DEX+SR), Summon T (PER+SR), Transform (WIL+SR; see text)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 13–15

DEX: 15 **STR:** 17 **TOU:** 22
PER: 14 **WIL:** 16 **CHA:** 17

Initiative: 16 **Physical Defense:** 19
Actions: 4 **Spell Defense:** 17+SR
Attack: 15+SR **Social Defense:** 21+SR
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 22
Claws (3): 20 **Mystic Armor:** SR



Death: 100 **Recovery Tests:** 11
Unconsciousness: 94 **Knockdown:** 16+SR
Wound Threshold: 27 **Movement:** 6/8*

* The second value is the spirit's climbing and ground Movement Rate when physically manifested

Legend Award: SR 13: Fourteenth Circle (group); SR 14: Fifteenth Circle (group); SR 15 Fifteenth Circle × 2 (group)

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Climbing T (DEX+SR), Manifest (SR), Poison [SD 5+SR; Paralysis], Silent Walk T (DEX+SR), Summon T (PER+SR), Transform (WIL+SR; see text)

Equipment, Loot: None

Rules

Though a myriad of invae varieties exist, the statistics above generally apply to all types. Choose a number of additional powers equal to the invae spirit's Strength Rating.

All invae attack by striking their victims with chitinous claws, then rending the victim's flesh with both claws and mandibles. In addition to normal damage, a bite attack exposes the victim to a paralyzing venom. Invae usually try to render their victims unconscious, in order to take them prisoner and eventually turn them into one of their own.

Transform: Invae spirits use this power to permanently manifest in living hosts. These hosts must be specially prepared (usually in a cocoon) and spend some time in a coma while the invae spirit enacts physical changes on the host from astral space. The host body slowly changes form over time, turning it into a hybrid in a matter of days. During the process, the host gains a bizarre mix of insectoid features in addition to his own, often creating gross parodies and abominations.

In game terms, the invae spirit is allowed to make a Transform roll once per day. If the result is higher than the host's Spell Defense, one of the host's Attributes is replaced with one of the invae's. The transformation is complete once all of the host's Attributes have

been replaced. Once started, no part of this transformation process can be reverted, except perhaps with powerful healing magic.

Poison: Unlike many paralytic poisons, invae venom reduces the victim's Dexterity until he cannot move any longer, making him an easy target. Subtract –1 from the victim's Dexterity Stepeach round until it reaches zero, at which point the victim is completely paralyzed.

Summon: Invae use this power to summon more of their kind, and to summon their queen once their hive size allows for a summoning ritual. An invae queen has a minimum Strength Rating of 13.

WATER SPIRITS

Water is ever-changing, fluid, perpetually moving. Water spirits exhibit these characteristics as well, quickly moving from experience to experience with a curiosity and excitement shown by no other type of elemental spirit. Many magicians attribute this curiosity to the broad range of incarnations experienced by water spirits, from the slow, waiting time of ice to the fast-flowing movement of water to the floating airiness of mist.

Often, water elementals change their appearance several times while physically manifested. An elemental may first appear as a large bubble of water floating in midair, then disperse into a fog and finally coalesce into a block of ice. Generally, water elementals do not mind being summoned to the physical plane; they are generally curious beings, as their shifting nature implies.

Strength Rating 1–4

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

Initiative: 8
Actions: 2
Attack: 6+SR
Damage:
Unarmed: 4

Physical Defense: 8+SR
Spell Defense: 9+SR
Social Defense: 6+SR
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: SR

Death: 28
Unconsciousness: 19
Wound Threshold: 7

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: NA
Movement: 6/7*

* The second value is the spirit's Swimming Movement Rate when physically manifested

Legend Award: SR Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Detect True Element (SR), Engulf (WIL+SR), Manifest (SR), Manipulate Element (WIL+SR), Share Knowledge (SR), Spear (STR+SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 5–8

DEX: 11 **STR:** 8 **TOU:** 8
PER: 9 **WIL:** 9 **CHA:** 9

Initiative: 12
Actions: 2
Attack: 10+SR
Damage:
Unarmed: 8

Physical Defense: 13+SR
Spell Defense: 14+SR
Social Defense: 11+SR
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: SR

Death: 44
Unconsciousness: 36
Wound Threshold: 13

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: NA
Movement: 6/7*

* The second value is the spirit's Swimming Movement Rate when physically manifested

Legend Award: SR Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Detect True Element (SR), Engulf (WIL+SR), Manifest (SR), Manipulate Element (WIL+SR), Share Knowledge (SR), Spear (STR+SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 9–12

DEX: 15 **STR:** 12 **TOU:** 12
PER: 13 **WIL:** 13 **CHA:** 13

Initiative: 16
Actions: 3
Attack: 14+SR
Damage:
Unarmed: 12

Physical Defense: 18+SR
Spell Defense: 19+SR
Social Defense: 16+SR
Physical Armor: 12
Mystic Armor: SR

Death: 60
Unconsciousness: 53
Wound Threshold: 17

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: NA
Movement: 6/7*

* The second value is the spirit's Swimming Movement Rate when physically manifested

Legend Award: SR Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Detect True Element (SR), Engulf (WIL+SR), Manifest (SR), Manipulate Element (WIL+SR), Share Knowledge (SR), Spear (STR+SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 13–15

DEX: 19 **STR:** 16 **TOU:** 16
PER: 17 **WIL:** 17 **CHA:** 17

Initiative: 20
Actions: 4
Attack: 18+SR
Damage:
Unarmed: 16

Physical Defense: 23+SR
Spell Defense: 24+SR
Social Defense: 21+SR
Physical Armor: 16
Mystic Armor: SR

Death: 76
Unconsciousness: 69
Wound Threshold: 22

Recovery Tests: 8
Knockdown: NA
Movement: 6/7*

* The second value is the spirit's Swimming Movement Rate when physically manifested

Legend Award: SR 13: Fourteenth Circle (group); SR 14: Fifteenth Circle (group); SR 15 Fifteenth Circle × 2 (group)

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Detect True Element (SR), Engulf (WIL+SR), Manifest (SR), Manipulate Element (WIL+SR), Share Knowledge (SR), Spear (STR+SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Rules

The spirit's Physical Defense is used in astral space as well as when physically manifested. Choose a number of additional powers equal to the water spirit's Strength Rating.

Manifestation Restriction: Water elementals can only manifest from a source of water. The size of the water source has no bearing on the Strength Rating of the water elemental that may manifest from it. Even a drop of water is sufficient to spawn the mightiest of water spirits.

Vulnerability to Air: Lower the result level required to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on a water spirit or elemental by one level (from Excellent to Good, for example) if the attack was made with an air-based weapon or spell.

WOOD SPIRITS

Wood spirits serve a special purpose in the grand scheme of things, because the element of wood holds all the other elements together. Wood sends its roots deep into earth. It draws water through itself. It pulls in air through its pores. It provides fuel for fire, which clears the way for new wood to grow and continue the cycle. Without wood, the harmonious balance of the elements could not exist. Many magicians find wood spirits show a high level of self-confidence and wisdom. They attribute these characteristics to wood's ability to store knowledge. They point out that trees collect information through their roots and pores, channel it through their veins and store it in their rings. The wise sayings of wood spirits, though often vague, verge on prophecy.

Wood spirits do not appreciate being forced to manifest. The weakest of the elemental spirits, they prefer to stay in their elemental plane among their own kind, sorting and considering the information they receive from the outside world. They object to being summoned underwater or in any other environment where another element shuts them off from the flow of information, and so wood spirits must be coerced to appear by the summoner making a successful Contest of Wills (***Player's Guide***, p.212).

Strength Rating 1–4

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

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack: 7+SR
Damage:
Unarmed (3): 7

Physical Defense: 4
Spell Defense: 9+SR
Social Defense: 6+SR
Physical Armor: 7
Mystic Armor: SR

Death: 28
Unconsciousness: 19
Wound Threshold: 7

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 6+SR
Movement: 6/5*

* The second value is the spirit's Movement Rate when physically manifested

Legend Award: SR Circle

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Detect True Element (SR), Engulf (WIL+SR), Manifest (SR), Manipulate Element (WIL+SR), Share Knowledge (SR), Spear (STR+SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 5–8

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

Initiative: 10
Actions: 2
Attack: 11+SR
Damage:
Unarmed (3): 11

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 14+SR
Social Defense: 11+SR
Physical Armor: 11
Mystic Armor: SR

Death: 44
Unconsciousness: 36
Wound Threshold: 13

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 8+SR
Movement: 6/5*

* The second value is the spirit's Movement Rate when physically manifested

Legend Award: SR Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Detect True Element (SR), Engulf (WIL+SR), Manifest (SR), Manipulate Element (WIL+SR), Share Knowledge (SR), Spear (STR+SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 9–12

DEX: 11 **STR:** 12 **TOU:** 12
PER: 13 **WIL:** 13 **CHA:** 13

Initiative: 15
Actions: 3
Attack: 15+SR
Damage:
Unarmed (3): 15

Physical Defense: 14
Spell Defense: 19+SR
Social Defense: 16+SR
Physical Armor: 15
Mystic Armor: SR

Death: 60
Unconsciousness: 53
Wound Threshold: 17

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 12+SR
Movement: 6/5*

* The second value is the spirit's Movement Rate when physically manifested

Legend Award: SR Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Detect True Element (SR), Engulf (WIL+SR), Manifest (SR), Manipulate Element (WIL+SR), Share Knowledge (SR), Spear (STR+SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Strength Rating 13–15

DEX: 15 **STR:** 16 **TOU:** 16
PER: 17 **WIL:** 17 **CHA:** 17

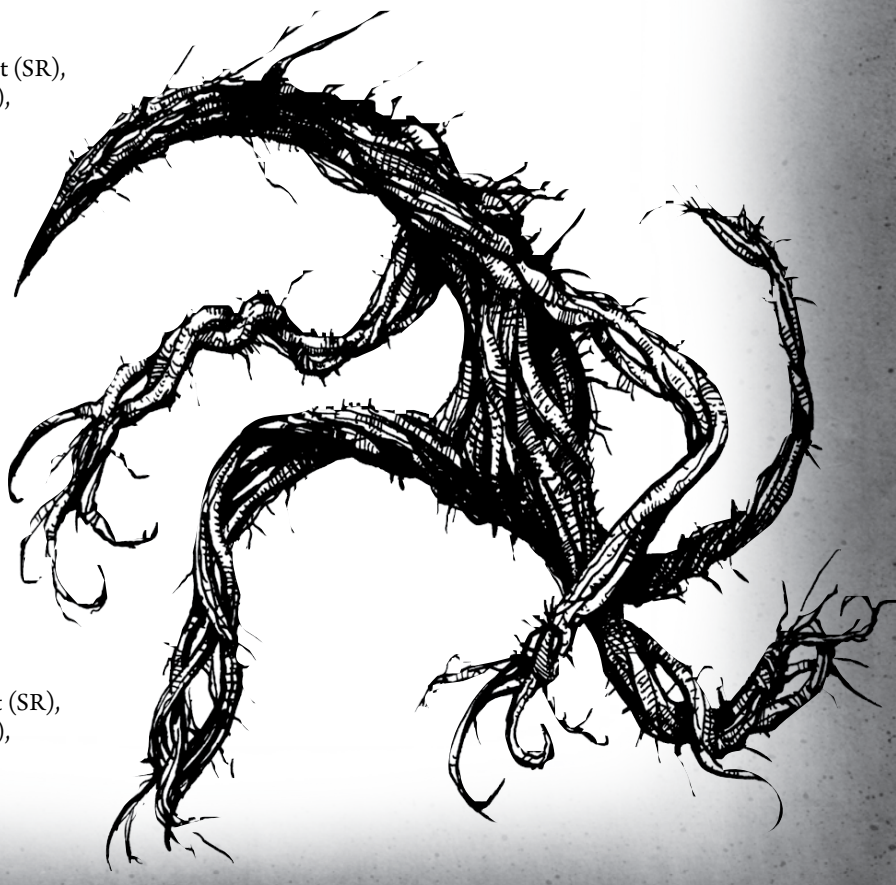
Initiative: 18
Actions: 4
Attack: 19+SR
Damage:
Unarmed (3): 19

Physical Defense: 19
Spell Defense: 24+SR
Social Defense: 21+SR
Physical Armor: 19
Mystic Armor: SR

Death: 76
Unconsciousness: 69
Wound Threshold: 22

Recovery Tests: 8
Knockdown: 16+SR
Movement: 6/5*

* The second value is the spirit's Movement Rate when physically manifested



Legend Award: SR 13: Fourteenth Circle (group); SR 14: Fifteenth Circle (group); SR 15 Fifteenth Circle × 2 (group)
Karma Points: 2×SR **Karma Step:** 3+SR

Powers: Aid Summoner (SR), Astral Sight [T] (PER+SR), Detect True Element (SR), Engulf (WIL+SR), Manifest (SR), Manipulate Element (WIL+SR), Share Knowledge (SR), Spear (STR+SR), Spellcasting [T] (PER+SR)

Equipment, Loot: None

Rules

Subtract –3 from the Physical Defense of a wood spirit when it is physically manifested. Choose a number of additional powers equal to the wood spirit's Strength Rating.

Manifestation Restriction: Wood elementals manifest within trees and plants, usually altering the shape of the tree or plant into a humanoid form with bark skin and leafy appendages. The approximate size of a plant determines the maximum Strength Rating of the wood elemental. Strength Rating 1–4 elementals can manifest in smaller plants and bushes, or small trees. Strength Rating 5–8 elementals take the shape of large bushes or medium-sized trees. Strength Rating 9–12 elementals only manifest in large, old trees. Elementals of Strength Rating 13 or more need a giant and possibly ancient plant to manifest in.

Vulnerability to Fire: Lower the result level required to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on a wood spirit or elemental by one level (from Excellent to Good, for example) if the attack was made with a fire-based weapon or spell.

Adventure Hook

Legends say that in protecting themselves from the Horrors, the elves of Blood Wood twisted the wood elementals in their forest to make them manifest spontaneously. A local noble hires the characters to bring him such a wood elemental for his private garden. Unfortunately for the characters, only the elves of Blood Wood know how and when their wood elementals manifest, and they rarely reveal their secrets to outsiders. To collect their fee from the noble, the characters must first convince the elves to point them toward a wood elemental; once they have found one, they must hold onto it and bring it to their employer.

Thorn Man (Sample Wood Spirit)

Blood Warders summon the wood spirits known as thorn men to help protect the Blood Wood's borders. Thorn men also guard many settlements and sites within the Blood Wood, including Queen Alachia's palace. Thorn men are animated bundles of thorns with rudimentary intelligence. Vaguely human-like in appearance, they stand roughly six feet tall and weigh sixty pounds.

Though some thorn men remain active at all times, most are awakened when the approach of intruders activates the wards around the edges of the Blood Wood. The thorn men emerge from the trees and other plants when the wards are triggered and immediately seek out the intruders, attempting to eject them from the forest or prevent them from entering until blood elf reinforcements arrive.



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

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (1): 6
Damage:
Spear (7): 13
Unarmed (3): 9

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 13
Physical Armor: 7
Mystic Armor: 1

Death: 36
Unconsciousness: 28
Wound Threshold: 10

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 5

Legend Award: First Circle

Karma Points: 2 **Karma Step:** 4

Powers: Aid Summoner (1), Astral Sight [T] (1): 6, Detect True Element (1), Engulf (1): 6, Manifest (1), Manipulate Element (1): 6, Tiger Spring [T] (1)

Equipment: Thorn Man Spear; see text

Loot: None

Rules

Thorn men are Strength Rating 1 wood spirits summoned by thorn men wards. These wards line the perimeter of the Blood Wood to keep intruders out (see **Traps**, p.110, for more information on thorn man wards).

Thorn Man Spear: Many thorn men carry wooden spears with polished stone tips. These spears are magical weapons, given to them by their summoners. When wielded by anyone but a thorn man, the spear acts as an ordinary spear unless a thread is attached to it (for more information on these weapons, see Thorn Man Spear, p.142). When wielded by a thorn man, they gain the benefits of Thread Rank One of the Thorn Man Spear automatically.

Vulnerability to Fire: Lower the result level required to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on a thorn man by one level (from Excellent to Good, for example) for fire-based attacks.

CHAPTER TWELVE

DRAGONS

You have impressed me … as a snack.

• Icewing •

For as long as any race can remember, dragons have existed. Every culture in Barsaive has stories about dragons, many of them millennia old. Some scholars of the ancient races teach that dragons were the first of the world's living creatures, though little support exists for this theory. The dragons, who know the truth, generally decline to answer questions about their past. Dragons are solitary creatures, living alone by choice. Despite unsubstantiated rumors of dragon moots or councils, cooperation among dragons remains the stuff of legends.

All dragons are dangerous. Few tolerate other races meddling in their affairs, unless the dragon initiates the contact. Though some, such as the great dragon Vasdenjas, have established a protocol by which the races of Barsaive may talk to them, most dragons prefer to be left alone.

Using Dragons in Adventures and Campaigns

A close look at the statistics and abilities of the dragons in this chapter should reveal an obvious fact: these things are dangerous! Even the slightest of dragons is more powerful than most groups of adepts, and great dragons dwarf the power of adepts of nearly any Circle. Fortunately, it is (or at least should be) fairly rare that a group of characters will find themselves the enemy of one or more of the dragons of Barsaive, and the power these creatures wield is one that few characters will ever face directly. Nonetheless, using dragons in adventures in any way is a delicate business.

It requires careful consideration as to which dragon to use, as well as the role the dragon should play in the adventure or campaign. Before we address these issues, however, we should ask one question. Should dragons be that powerful? Yes. Absolutely. The dragons need to be as powerful as they are for the simple fact that they are the oldest and most powerful creatures in the world. Their abilities with magic are unrivaled. Even the most powerful and skilled magicians of the Theran Empire pale in comparison to the magical skills of dragons. Even the most mighty of adepts should feel apprehension at the thought of confronting a dragon under any circumstances. Because dragons are such powerful and important beings, gamemasters need to exercise great care when using them in adventures and campaigns, to prevent dragons from becoming just another monster. Dragons are intelligent Namegivers with their own desires and goals.

There are two basic approaches to using dragons in **Earthdawn** adventures and campaigns: as allies, or as enemies. In either role dragons function best behind the scenes, where they can spin their plots and pull the strings of nations and great powers. A great dragon has the power to lay waste to an entire kingdom if it wishes, but dragons tend to restrain their power, preferring to act indirectly. This—along with the difficulties dragons have with group cooperation—explains why the dragons don't simply descend en masse against the Therans, the Denairastas or anyone else who offends them. They prefer the slow and cautious method. After all, what is a century or more to beings who measure their lives in millennia?

Dragons as Allies

As noted above, dragons are intelligent Namegivers with their own desires and goals. Sometimes these goals coincide with those of other Namegivers, as in the case of Barsaive's struggle against the Theran Empire. These situations allow gamemasters to introduce dragons as allies or even patrons of the player characters.

A dragon, especially a great dragon, is a powerful ally. Dragons have considerable knowledge and magical power, as well as great wealth. A dragon ally can provide adepts with important information, Key Knowledges of magical items, spells and material resources (including silver!). How much the dragon is willing to give depends on how much it thinks the player characters can advance the dragon's own cause.

Dragons are not known for their generosity, and they give away nothing unless it benefits them in some way. A dragon who lavishes gifts on the player characters expects undying loyalty and service in return. Any alliance with a dragon is likely to be a temporary thing, as that is how most dragons prefer to deal with Namegivers. A typical arrangement might be as follows: the dragon asks the player characters to perform a specific task, perhaps in exchange for some service or resource the dragon has to offer. As an example, adepts might seek out a great dragon such as Icewing in hopes of learning a Key Knowledge or some particularly obscure piece of arcane lore. In return, the dragon asks the adepts to spy on a Theran operation near Lake Ban and report back to him, then he will give them the information they seek.

Gamemasters can also establish more lasting relations between dragons and adepts. A dragon can serve as a patron and mentor for the adepts, who perform tasks and serve as the dragon's eyes and hands in Namegiver society. Dragons run a whole network of spies and agents which provides an ideal means for gamemasters to use dragons as patrons.

While dragons usually treat their servants well, they are not bound by the culture and beliefs of other Namegivers. Dragons are arrogant and treat other Namegivers much like children or pets. It is not uncommon for a dragon to sacrifice agents like pawns in a greater game. Adepts who are chosen for sacrifice may not take the same dispassionate view of the situation as their dragon master. If they survive, they may choose to seek revenge on their former patron.

One interesting way a dragon can become a patron of a group of characters is if all of the characters are dragonkin related to

the particular dragon, such as being members of the Denairastas Clan. In this case, the dragon has reasons of its own for defying the traditions of its kind and wishes to aid and support its progeny. Characters in such a campaign will tend to have many other dragon enemies, since most dragon view dragonkin as abominations.

Dragons as Enemies

A dragon (especially a great dragon) makes an epic foe for an **Earthdawn** campaign. Dragons are very powerful creatures, perhaps the most powerful beings in the world, with the possible exceptions of mighty astral entities such as the Passions and perhaps the most powerful Horrors, such as Verjigorm, the Great Hunter.

Dragons have great physical ability and magical power, and the intelligence to use both well. A fight against any dragon should never be easy; such a battle should be the climax of a long campaign, rather than a simple clash.

Fortunately, dragons rarely operate in the open where would-be dragon-slayers can come and find them. Most dragons are plotters and schemers, operating through a complex network of servants and informants to carry out their intricate plans. The nature of dragon culture and custom makes dragons aloof and separate from the day-to-day affairs of other Namegivers.

A dragon villain works best as a puppetmaster, operating behind the scenes at first. While the player characters are low-Circle adepts, the dragon's presence is virtually unknown; they interact only with its servants and agents. As time goes on and the characters gain Legend Points and advance in Circle, they interact with more and more of the dragon's powerful servants and uncover more of its schemes, becoming a thorn in its side. Eventually, after a long campaign, the adepts may gain enough power to confront the dragon directly and slay it in an epic battle that shakes the earth and is retold in song and story for generations to come. The defeat of a dragon is no small thing; it is the stuff legends are made of.

The very nature of the dragons creates an interesting dilemma for gamemasters. Using any of the Named dragons in this book can easily result in the death of one or more of the player characters. When dealing with entities as powerful as the dragons, character death should not be unexpected. But while character death is undesirable, it is an important element of **Earthdawn** and one the gamemaster should not try to avoid. If every time the characters encounter a dragon they escape unscathed (or at least not dead!), the significance and power of dragons in the world of **Earthdawn** becomes diluted. The threat and danger they present to the world becomes less sincere.

So the question becomes: how can a gamemaster use the dragons as enemies and maintain the dragons' true nature, but not kill the characters in each adventure? Below are some suggestions for how to resolve this dilemma, without diluting the essence of the **Earthdawn** universe.

The first thing to keep in mind is that most dragons should be long-term opponents. Some of the dragonlike creatures such as drakes are suitable for single adventures, but most should be used over a series of adventures, in which the characters discover the dragon's plans, encounter the dragon's victims, or witness its powers in use. This serves two purposes.

First, it allows the players to encounter the dragon indirectly, as they learn more and more about its influence and machinations. Second, over a series of adventures, the characters will grow in power and experience, and be more ready to deal with the dragon (or at least with its servants and minions).

Another way to look at this is to consider dragons as campaign level opponents. These are not things you battle once and slay. All dragons are very powerful, and only an experienced group of characters has a chance at defeating any of them. The Named dragons in this book represent opportunities for several different types of campaigns, based on the specific attitudes and goals of the individual dragons. Each of these dragons offers different types of adventures and stories. Also, many of these dragons prefer to use their powers over a long-term period. For instance, you should never plan for the characters to learn about, confront, and battle Vestrivan in the course of a single adventure. This would be a waste of a good dragon.

Another idea to keep in mind is that the characters need not confront the dragon itself right from the start. Many of the dragons work through agents, either willing or not. Willing agents include Namegiver servants, drakes or other dragons. Unwilling agents might be Namegivers who aren't even aware that they serve the dragon's goals.

Adventures featuring the Named dragons from this book also need not conclude with the characters actually confronting the dragon itself. In some cases, characters should consider themselves fortunate to survive any type of encounter with a dragon, direct or not! A series of small, minor victories that disrupts the dragon's plans is a good way in which these powerful creatures can be used without risking the lives of the characters too much. Of course, if a dragon's plans were to be disrupted too often, it might just consider a direct assault on the party responsible.

On a slightly less upbeat topic, remember that adventures in which characters are killed are an excellent reminder for the players (and gamemaster) that the world of **Earthdawn** is a dangerous one.

Adventure after adventure in which the characters succeed against any opponent they face only diminishes the feeling that Barsaive is a very dangerous place, one that is still far from safe. An occasional adventure in which the characters suffer losses of some sort, be it serious injury or death, helps to maintain the proper atmosphere of Barsaive as potentially lethal.

As it is inevitable that one or more characters will suffer some misfortune, try to work it into the story, and have it be a significant event. When this occurs, try to let it mean something more than that one of the players needs to make a new character. Don't let the death (or other type of loss) of a character happen for no good reason. The characters in **Earthdawn** are heroes. If they are going to go down, let them go down heroically!



The following work is transcribed from the words of Vasdenjas, the Master of Secrets, a most noble and intelligent great dragon with whom it has been my privilege to work as a scribe and scholar for these past seven years. It contains the dragon's thoughts and reflections on the nature, culture and history of his race, the dragons. I have endeavored to leave the great dragon's words untouched, merely organizing his thoughts and dissertations in a logical order for ease of use and reference. Otherwise, I have included all of the information as he relayed it to me.

—By the Hand of Tiabdjin the Knower, scribe of the Great Library of Throal and First Scholar of the khavro'am

The Master of Secrets Speaks

To the Young Races of Barsaive, Vasdenjas the Master of Secrets extends his most cordial greetings. I have long enjoyed the works of the scholars of the Great Library of Throal, and wish to repay the amusement I have gained from reading your various works by contributing some of my own vast knowledge to your collection. After a brief bout of ire (and I apologize once again for the singeing of your beard, noble scribe) I realized that no scholar from the Young Races could possibly have written with authority anything of substance with regard to my kind, and the scholars of the Great Library wisely declined even to try, knowing they could not possibly do us justice.

Therefore, I have decided to take it upon myself to once again impart my wisdom to the Young Races, this time concerning my own kind, the dragons of Barsaive. I hope this document will help to clear up many misconceptions and rumors about our noble and ancient race. As a sign of our goodwill towards the Young Races, I have asked for this volume, upon completion, to be placed in the Great Library of Throal so that all of the citizens of Throal can be enlightened about the true nature of dragons. I am sure the scholars of the Great Library will treat it with the reverence and serious attention it deserves.

Of Form Most Noble

The dragon is the most noble and perfect creature to grace the world since the very beginning of time. We possess many abilities which make us the strongest, wisest and most graceful beings in existence; one of which is the form and function of our bodies. (Yes, Tiabdjin, if you are patient, I will get to all of the questions I see written on your face.)

Dragons are found in different forms and types throughout the world (I will speak more of this later) but we share many traits that define us as dragons.

The first is the strength and power of our physical form. Adult dragons grow larger than most airships, far larger than any of the little folk of the Young Races. A great dragon such as myself dwarfs even the greatest airship of the Throalic fleet (if you will excuse the pun, my dwarf friend).

You small folk are born into the world naked, soft and helpless. Even the scales of a t'skrang are too soft to turn aside the claws of a wild cat. The obsidimen do have some natural armor of course, but their elemental nature is quite a different matter. Coming as they do from a single Liferock they … ah, but I digress.

At birth, we dragons possess sharp teeth and talons, with hides able to turn aside the little injuries that threaten such as you. Why, I've seen newborn hatchlings kill and devour several bears with no more difficulty than a dwarf dispatching a few rabbits. We also recover quickly from any injury we do sustain, using the power of our magic to knit damaged flesh and bone anew. These natural defenses are sorely needed because, as you will see, the life of a dragon can be a harsh one compared to those of the Young Races. We are challenged by Nature in many ways—ensuring that only the strongest and most able of us survive.

The other distinguishing trait of dragonkind is our keen intellect and magical nature. You Young Races call yourselves Namegivers, and rightly so, as you share with us the unique ability to give Names to what you see. We dragons are Name-makers, because we are the only race to choose our own Names, rather than having them bestowed upon us by others.

But what of trolls, Master? They choose their Names upon reaching adulthood.

Eh? Oh, that. You speak of re-Naming, my dear Tiabdjin, something any Namegiver can accomplish, given sufficient knowledge. Even then, the re-Naming that occurs among trolls is not true re-Naming. Nonetheless, I am speaking of knowing your own Name before it is spoken by any other. Did you know your Name before you parents told you what it was? Does a newborn troll know the nature of his Name? I would say not.

Now then, our magical nature is born into us as surely as our knowledge of Naming. Dragons are in touch with the primal forces of what you call astral space, the wellspring of all magic in this world. We can see the astral patterns of things around us, the astral imprints of living beings, and the ebb and flow of astral energies around us.

Magic is to us like air is to you: it is our natural environment, our very essence. While your people have learned to understand and control a tiny amount of magic, they have only brushed the surface of an ocean deeper and more mysterious than the Selestrean Sea itself. Like our own Names, we know the depths of these mysteries; know the powers of magic, from the very time we are born. Astral space is the pool from which we draw our magic and our very life.

Our knowledge of the currents of astral energies allows us to affect the outcome of events, to tip the balance of Fate towards a desired end. For most dragons, this ability is an expression of will and magical power, affecting only our own actions. For the more advanced and capable (such as myself) we can work our wills to change the fates of other creatures as well as ourselves.

On the Life Cycle of Dragons

The life of a dragon is not unlike that of one of your people, Tiabdjin, or of any of the Young Races. We are born, we grow, we mate, and produce young. These are things all living creatures understand. What you must know is the unique way we dragons follow the path of life and how long our road is compared to your own.

On the Rite of Mating

Like most living creatures, a new dragon begins with a mating. Unlike most other creatures, a female dragon controls when she is ready to reproduce. Female dragons choose the times to mate during the adult stage of their lives, and most females mate more than once, perhaps every hundred years or so. The process of mating and laying eggs is quite draining, and most females prefer not to leave themselves in a weakened condition very often.

When she decides the time has come to mate, the female seeks out a suitable male. Usually she chooses a potential mate on the basis of traits she wishes to pass on to her offspring. Females only rarely mate with the same male twice, preferring to seek out a different mate each time. In this way, we add diversity and strength to our offspring, mixing the most desirable traits from many dragons.

Once a female has found a desirable mate, she approaches him and performs the First Rite of Mating. In this Rite, the female informs the male that she has chosen him and asks the male to prove his worthiness to father her young. If the male does not desire the mating, he may perform the Rite of Refusal with no

shame to either party, and the two dragons simply part. There are some stories of spurned female dragons becoming vengeful, but these stories have grown in the telling, I can assure you. Unlike the Young Races, our mating practices do not consume all of our thoughts and feelings.

If the chosen male desires the mating as well, he must respond with the Second Rite of Mating, in which he describes the valuable traits he has to offer the female and pass on to her offspring. This Rite is accompanied by the Dance of Courting, where the candidate male demonstrates his worthiness through grace of movement as well as words. Many young males perform foolish and extravagant stunts during the Dance to show off to the female. Age and experience soon show them that females are more impressed by signs of wisdom, strength and maturity than youthful foolhardiness. I, for example, mated many females in my younger days who were taken with my clear wit and great intelligence, rather than how many clever aerial tricks I could perform. Now I see just as many young males performing for a female's attention like giant, silly birds as ever before. It is sad, the state of youth today, Tiabdjin.

Again, during the Second Rite, if the female decides she does not want the male as a mate, she may refuse him without recrimination. Many females are quite choosy, and prefer to perform the Second Rite with many males before deciding which one will be her mate. Males have been known to compete with each other for the attention of an especially desirable female, hoping to humiliate their rivals by defeating them in battle. Our legends tell of the great battles that were fought long ago for the affections of the mighty All-Wings, she who was the pinnacle of female dragonhood. Males killed each other in duels to prove their worthiness as mates.

Yes, the competition between males for the attention of a female sometimes invokes the rarely used Ritual of Battle. The male candidates fight to determine who is the most worthy of the female. Such a struggle is not only a test of physical prowess, but of cunning, intelligence and magical might, all traits a female might consider desirable. The winner of the Ritual is considered the most worthy, although the female may still choose to reject him. The Ritual is not always to the death, but it often results in such. The ire of a dragon is a mighty thing, my friend. Once roused, it is difficult to end a battle without the death of one side.

Once the first two Rites of Mating are performed, and the female and male are both satisfied with their choice, the two retire to a secluded location to perform the Dance of New Life. It is a ritual lasting for many days in which the two dragons prepare for the moment of mating, and the female begins her cycle that will culminate in readiness to conceive. I have heard tales of other Namegivers witnessing the Dance, without knowing what it was they were seeing.

Some believed the two dragons were locked in combat, and some parts of the Dance would seem that way to outsiders.

Others believed they found two dragons in love, although I would never ascribe such an emotion to mating rites.

Oh no, we do not mate for life, as many of the Young Races do. Mating is, for us, a practical thing, the creation of new life, not a permanent bond. As I said, a female will mate with many different males during her life, and a male will likewise perform the Dance with many different females, if he is worthy. Once the mating is done, the two dragons perform the Rite of Separation and take their leave of each other, the male always leaving the place of mating first and returning to his home. The female will lay her eggs in time, usually three or four at once, and then pass them on to be tended for and raised by the proper guardian of such new life.

On the Care of Eggs

Dragon eggs are cared for by great dragons. We are the elders of our race, and so the most fit to protect and educate the young. A female dragon with newly-laid eggs will come to a great dragon and perform the Petition of Caregiving, humbly asking the dragon to become the guardian of her eggs. The female describes her offspring in the most flattering and complimentary way, telling how they will bring pride and happiness into the great dragon's life. She speaks of the sterling qualities that make this great dragon her choice. If her petition is accepted, the female places her eggs in the great dragon's care and departs, most likely never to see them again. The parents have no further role in the lives of the young from that moment on. Indeed, most dragons never even know who their parents are. They know only the care of the great dragon sire who raised them.



After hearing the female's Petition, a great dragon may refuse to care for the eggs. No reason need be given for such a refusal, and the female has no recourse but to seek out another great dragon to care for her eggs. There are many reasons one of us might refuse to become guardian for an egg clutch, such as having too many young to care for already, receiving many different Petitions at once, and other matters which demand our attention and prevent us from giving the eggs the care they require.

The Hatching

It was at this point that I asked Master Vasdenjas if he himself had eggs he was caring for. The Master of Secrets said yes, he did, and I was given the singular honor of being perhaps the first Namegiver to see the Egg Chamber of a great dragon. I was bodily carried, blindfolded, into the depths of Vasdenjas' lair, to a small cavern barely large enough to accommodate the great dragon's bulk. The cave was warm and dry, the floor covered with hot sand. Half-buried in a shallow pit in the center was a collection of great speckled eggs large enough that a dwarf could have stood up inside one quite comfortably. I counted a dozen such eggs, many of them in slightly different shades and patterns.

Having heard tales of adepts finding dragon eggs—specifically, a number of eggs under the care of Icewing—I asked about the size of the eggs before me, as they were considerably larger than those that were described to me. Vasdenjas replied that, unlike the eggs of most other creatures, dragon eggs actually grow during their incubation, starting as small as one foot in diameter, and growing as large as the eggs I saw here. He also reminded me not to place too much credence on the stories of adepts, as they are prone to exaggeration.

Vasdenjas showed me how he used his fiery breath to heat the stones and sand of the cave to keep the eggs warm. Indeed, it was quite hot in the cave, and I was sweating profusely, while the dry air seemed to draw the moisture away from my body like a sponge. I watched as the great dragon examined the eggs with the greatest of care, gently turning them in the sand with his talons and narrowing his eyes to examine each shell with his sharp senses, watching for something that was likely far beyond my limited perception. It was then that the most amazing thing happened.

Vasdenjas withdrew from the eggs, but made no motion for us to leave. After waiting for long minutes in silence, I began to ask the great dragon what we were waiting for, but the Master of Secrets silenced me with

a look that sent a chill through me, even in that sweltering heat. I was certain if I spoke again it would be the last thing I ever said. So I waited with the dragon in silence, making myself as comfortable as I could.

I cannot say how much time passed, hours perhaps. I may have fainted from the heat for a short time, it is difficult to say. I recall my attention being captured by a noise and a sight I shall never forget for as long as I live. One of the eggs in the sandpit began to tremble and shiver. Then a flickering light lit the egg from within, visible through the thick shell. It did so again twice more before there was a loud snapping sound, and a crack appeared in the top of the shell. A set of powerful claws emerged from the crack and slowly began to widen it, enough to allow a thin trickle of smoke to leak out. Then, with a mighty heave, the shell split and a long, serpentine head emerged with a mewling cry. The shell split cleanly in half, revealing a dragon hatchling.

The newborn hatchling was an amazing creature. It was a full twelve feet in length, much like a serpent, with a pair of leathery wings folded tightly to its body and a stubby pair of legs below. I saw no sign of forelimbs, and the head was considerably blunter than a dragon's snout. I did, however, take note of the barbed tail that lashed about, tipped with some kind of stinger as sharp as a dagger. I have no doubt that, were Vasdenjas not present with me, the hatchling would have killed and devoured me only moments out of its shell.

As it was, the Master of Secrets approached the newborn and fixed his gaze upon it. I cannot say for sure what passed between them, but I felt an overpowering sense that an exchange of some kind took place. Almost immediately, the hatchling curled up in the warm sand with a contented growling sound and Vasdenjas guided me out of the Egg Chamber before excusing himself to get the hatching something to eat. He explained that a newborn is usually exhausted by breaking out of its tough shell and needs rest, food and warmth above all else. It was some time before he returned, but I hardly noticed, so engrossed was I in writing down these very words before the incredible experience of seeing a dragon born could be forgotten.

On the Stages of Draconic Life

Much like other Namegivers, Tiabdjin, we dragons pass through stages of our lives, from birth through adulthood, to great age and wisdom. You have already seen how a dragon is born. Now allow me to explain to you the other stages of our lives.

Hatchling

A newborn dragon is called a hatchling. It generally takes about a hundred years or so for a hatchling to be ready to emerge from its shell. Dragon eggs have very strong shells, not like the delicate eggs of birds or even t'skrang.

The tough outer shell can resist even blows from a sword, much like a dragon's armored hide. Indeed, both shell and scale are formed of the same material. The production of the tough eggshells is what most depletes the female during her egg-laying time. When the hatchling is ready, it uses its dragon breath (a natural ability possessed even in the shell) to weaken the shell from within. This quickly heats the inside of the shell to great temperatures, so once it has begun to try to break out of the shell, the hatchling must be successful or else it will die, cooked alive within its shell. Such unfortunates—along with eggs that are not successfully fertilized—are eaten by the guardian dragon in the Ritual of the Quintessential Feast, taking into ourselves the substance of life unfulfilled and gaining, perhaps, some small part of the uniqueness that has been lost.

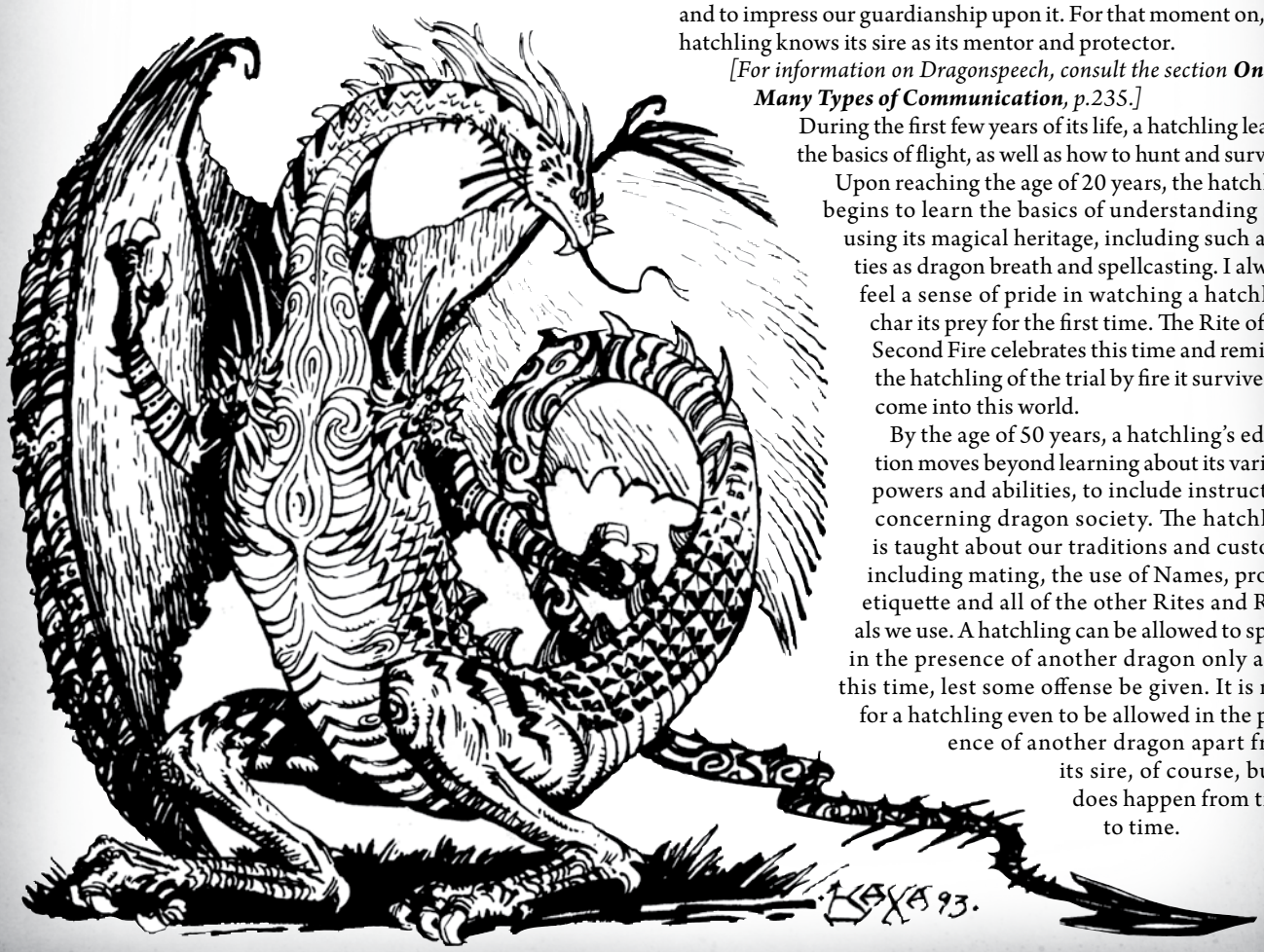
You're looking a touch pale, Tiabdjin. Do you require anything? Something to eat perhaps? No? Very well, then.

Once the hatchling has broken out of the shell, its guardian greets it. We use Dragonspeech to welcome the new life into the world and to impress our guardianship upon it. For that moment on, the hatchling knows its sire as its mentor and protector.

*[For information on Dragonspeech, consult the section **On the Many Types of Communication**, p.235.]*

During the first few years of its life, a hatchling learns the basics of flight, as well as how to hunt and survive. Upon reaching the age of 20 years, the hatchling begins to learn the basics of understanding and using its magical heritage, including such abilities as dragon breath and spellcasting. I always feel a sense of pride in watching a hatchling char its prey for the first time. The Rite of the Second Fire celebrates this time and reminds the hatchling of the trial by fire it survived to come into this world.

By the age of 50 years, a hatchling's education moves beyond learning about its various powers and abilities, to include instruction concerning dragon society. The hatchling is taught about our traditions and customs including mating, the use of Names, proper etiquette and all of the other Rites and Rituals we use. A hatchling can be allowed to speak in the presence of another dragon only after this time, lest some offense be given. It is rare for a hatchling even to be allowed in the presence of another dragon apart from its sire, of course, but it does happen from time to time.



During the first 100 or so years of their lives, a hatchling lives near its caregiver's lair, and the range of its activities tends to be limited to within roughly 4 days walking (as measured by you small Namegivers) of the lair. The hatchling is allowed short flights to hunt and explore, but is carefully watched and spends much of its time being instructed and taught by its guardian. It is extremely rare for outsiders to encounter a hatchling during this time. We great dragons take care to prevent other Namegivers, and even other dragons, from encountering our hatchlings at such a young age.

When the hatchling engages in activities outside the lair, its guardian is always close by. You may wish to ask your readers to keep this in mind, Tiabdjin, if the idea of attacking a hatchling should ever come into their minds.

By the age of 100 years, the hatchling becomes much more self-reliant, able to strike out on its own for brief excursions. For the next 100 years, the hatchling is encouraged to learn on its own, but still within the confines of its guardian's territory. It is during this time that most young dragons begin to really develop their powers. Sometimes youthful experimentation can get out of control, like the time when a hatchling under my care set a large area of the forest aflame. The other Namegivers in the area blamed me for the fire when they saw me flying overhead after retrieving the youngster and sending her back to my lair. As if I would set fire to an area of virgin forest for no reason! I tell you, this is how one gets an undeserved reputation.

When the hatchling reaches the age of 200 years, it comes time for it to leave the care of its guardian and strike out on its own for a time. We perform the Rite of Separation at that time, and the hatchling is left on its own to begin the next, brutal, and thankfully brief, stage of its life.

Adolescence

In reading works from the Great Library of Throal and speaking with many Namegivers, I have noticed something else dragons have in common with the Young Races. There comes a time in the life of every young Namegiver, somewhere between childhood and adulthood, when the forces of natural growth become even more rapid and seem to overwhelm the Namegiver's reason, turning the child into an irrational, irritable and most unreasonable creature, neither child nor adult. You call them adolescents, which is the Name I shall use here.

A dragon adolescent is as far beyond an adolescent of your kind as a dragon adult is beyond an adult of the Young Races—which is to say, a great deal. While you might find your adolescents irrational and emotional, they are nothing compared to a young dragon on the verge of adulthood. It is a period of madness, when primal urges and drives take hold and send the youngling into a state where it is little more than a beast.

When a young dragon reaches this stage, it secludes itself in the wilderness, sometimes close to the lair of its guardian but often quite far away. There it lives, occasionally gathering with other adolescent dragons, for as long as a hundred years, hunting and sleeping, its thoughts (if such they can be called) consumed with nothing more than the need to survive. Adolescent dragons are just as territorial as adults, perhaps even more so. They also lack the reason and etiquette necessary to settle their disputes properly, so they often find themselves locked in struggles to the death with other young dragons, even their own egg-mates. As many as two-thirds of them will die in these struggles. Few survive to pass on to the next stage.

In fact, it is not unknown for young dragons to attack even an adult dragon who threatens their territory. While a single youngling is no match for the might of an adult, a flock of them can bring one down, which is reason enough for us to give our adolescents a wide berth. None of us has any wish to kill our own young unless we are forced to.

Fortunately for other Namegivers, an adolescent dragon has not yet come into its full powers or mature state.

These creatures lose the use all of the magic they learned as hatchlings, blotted out by their savage drives, and have only an animal cunning to aid them. They still have their strong scales, sharp teeth and powerful talons, capable of rending any Namegiver to bits. It is also at this time that the young dragon's venom begins to flow. The sting of its tail can bring a painful death and young dragons learn to use their venom against prey at this time.

Your pardon, master, but I noticed that the hatchling had only a pair of wings and hind limbs, but no forelimbs as adult dragons do. How does a creature like a hatchling become so different as an adult?

Patience, Tiabdjin, patience. I am coming to that stage, which comes immediately following adolescence.

Then an adolescent dragon appears much like a hatchling, only larger, with a poisonous tail barb?

Yes …

Then they appear much like wyverns, do they not?

I did not say so! Why, I never said anything of the sort!

But Master Vasdenjas…

Silence! Wyverns are not dragons! They never have been, and they never shall be. You will not speak of this again! How dare you! Get out, get out of my sight!

It was at this point that I withdrew, quite fearful for my life. Never before had I seen Vasdenjas so angry. I retreated outside the dragon's lair and it was some time before the Master of Secrets calmed down and invited me back into his presence. He apologized for his outburst and asked that the whole matter be forgotten. I never did get an answer to my question, however, and I have thought better of raising it again.

Metamorphosis

The time of adolescence is fortunately the shortest in a dragon's life, lasting only 50 to 100 years or so. When it is done, the madness that gripped the young dragon begins to lift from its mind and it is generally drawn back to the place of its birth and raising, there to begin the great Rite of Change that will begin its journey to its adult form and status.

The young dragon enters the realm of astral space like a bird returning to the forest where it was born. There it uses magic to weave a cocoon of astral threads around itself where it will sleep and undergo the transformation. These cocoons exist only in astral space, and cannot be seen or detected from the physical world. It is during this time that the dragon's True Pattern changes and its body changes as well, taking on the adult form that is familiar to the Young Races of Barsaive.

The Horrors' corruption of astral space during the Scourge poses a serious threat to young dragons undergoing The Rite of Change. For this reason, the astral cocoons are nearly always located in astral space high above the ground, usually near the lair of the young dragons' guardian so they can be watched and protected from any harm. Astral regions polluted by the Horrors are no more suitable for the Rite of Change than waters fouled by pollution are suited to the birthing of fish.

Master?

Yes, Tiabdjin?

Please forgive this humble inquiry, but the cocoons you describe sound similar to legends of Verjigorm, the Great Hunter, trapping dragons within astral cocoons. (Note: I am sure I flinched a bit, waiting for a rebuke, or worse, a blow for my question. I thank Mynbruje that neither came, only a deep sigh from the Master of Secrets.)

The cocoons of the Great Hunter are in no way related to those of the Rite of Change. Rumors and legends linking the two are nothing but fabrication and unwarranted assumption by less learned minds. The Rite is entirely natural and normal for my kind, while the … other practice is a foul and unnatural abomination. Now, let us continue.

Once a young dragon is safely ensconced in its cocoon, it remains in astral space for some five to ten years while the transformation takes place. The youngling's Pattern slowly changes, causing changes in the physical body as well.

When the time is right, the new adult dragon emerges into the world to take its Name.

Adulthood

The Rite of Emergence is one of the most important in a dragon's life. It is when a young dragon, after centuries of learning, preparation and survival, takes on a Name and becomes an adult. You see, until a dragon reaches the time of Emergence, it has no Name. Hatchlings and adolescents are Nameless; we do not Name our young as other Namegivers do, imposing a Name on a child without its knowledge or consent. We Name ourselves upon becoming adults. Your people are Namegivers, but mine are Name-takers and Name-makers as well.

Excuse me Master, but if young dragons have no Name, how are you able to communicate with them or identify one young dragon from a group?

Why do you insist that something have a Name in order for it to be identified? Are Names truly necessary for communication? To answer your question, it is through Dragonspeech, we are able to communicate with our young, in ways far more efficient and effective than mere speech. Tiabdjin, though you are indeed a most learned scholar, there are time when you think entirely too much like a dwarf. May I continue? Thank you.

When the new dragon emerges from the cocoon, it has the form known to the Young Races. Nearly all Namegiver descriptions of the various types of dragons I have heard and read are based on the adult form, and only a very few members of the Young Races besides yourself have ever seen a dragon hatchling.

The Emergence of a new dragon is a time of great pride for the dragon's former guardian. Like seeing the hatchling emerge from the egg, we watch the adult come from its astral cocoon. There, the new dragon declares its Name for the first time, announcing itself to the world with a mighty roar. From that time on, the dragon is a member of our society and no longer a ward of its guardian great dragon.

The new adult will first seek a domain to claim as its own, and set up a lair. Each of us requires a large area in which to hunt, and we are territorial by nature, defending our domains fiercely. Many dragons find unclaimed areas and make them their own, while others will seek out another dragon and conduct a Ritual of Challenge to take its lair. Many young dragons die in this way, fighting for control of territory.

Once comfortable in a lair, dragons settle into a life of contemplation and development. During adulthood we refine our mastery of the magical arts and our own natural abilities, advance our knowledge of the world and begin to gather and collect mementos and keepsakes to remind us of our past in the years to come. Adulthood is also the time when we mate to produce young, beginning the Dance of New Life again to continue our kind.

An adult dragon may continue in this way for thousands of years, longer than the entire history of your Kingdom, Tiabdjin. We live a very long time indeed, compared to the brief lives of you small folk. Even elves rarely live longer than it takes for one of us to grow from hatching to adulthood.

Also, unlike the Young Races, dragons never stop growing. A new adult dragon is fairly small by our standards, perhaps half my own size. As the centuries pass, we continue to grow larger, stronger and more powerful where other Namegivers quickly reach their peak and start to become smaller and feebler with each passing day. Not so for dragons. We grow in body, mind and spirit with the passage of the years; gaining in power, knowledge and, hopefully, wisdom.

Eventually, if the dragon lives long enough, it grows sufficiently to reach the last stage of life, becoming a great dragon.

Great Dragon

We great dragons are the elders of our kind. It takes a long time for an adult dragon to become great, some 2,000 years. Most dragons never accumulate enough power and wisdom to survive long enough to become great dragons.

Perhaps one in every four makes it this far. The others are slain by Horrors, dragon-hunters or even other dragons, or else fall victim to their own poor judgment and die in accidents or similar misfortunes. It is for these reasons that we great dragons are so rare. Indeed, in all of Barsaive there have never been more than a dozen great dragons at any one time, and I dare say there never will be.

Your Great Library has numerous tales and legends of the Rites we must undergo to become great dragons. I have read them all with considerable amusement and shared them with many of my fellow great dragons. They found the accounts as insightful as I did, although not all found them as humorous.

Great dragons are above the concerns of our younger relations. It is our duty and privilege to guide our race. We are the guardians of the past and the future. We are keepers of lore, history, tradition and custom from throughout our ancient past. We are also the caretakers of the eggs and the hatchlings that ensure the future of our kind. We understand the flow of time and the eternal march of history better than any other creature because we have seen it all pass before us.

It falls on us to use our wisdom and experience to guide our race through the dangerous waters of time. We always strive to learn from the mistakes of the past, so we will not be doomed to repeat them in the future.

On the Rites of Death

All things die in their time. Even among dragons Death is not a stranger. Most of the eggs you saw in my Egg Chamber will not survive. Of the hatchlings that will come forth, many will die. Many more will be lost as adolescents and only a tiny fraction will speak their Names and become adults. Perhaps there is even a single future great dragon or two among those lives in my care, one to take its place among the eldest of our kind. Who can say?

We dragons know death well. We are hunters and predators at heart. No amount of lore or learning can change that. We hunt and kill to survive, and I know of no dragon, no matter how old, whose heart does not quicken at the thrill of pursuing prey.

The death of a great dragon is a sad event for us all. There are very few of us, and the loss of any dragon diminishes us all. We perform the Rites of Death for all great dragons, and for notable adults who have fallen. It is one of the few occasions when we put aside our territorial nature and gather together in a single place.

The Rites of Death are many, including the Dance for the Fallen and the Rite of Succession. The Dance is performed in the air above the fallen dragon's lair or place of death. It honors the life of the fallen as each dragon expresses their thoughts, feelings and memories through the movements of the Dance. It is a time to put aside all differences in the face of Death.

The Rite of Succession is an altogether different matter. Dragon custom dictates that the strongest and most worthy should inherit the possessions and domain of the fallen. Often, it is clear who the successor should be. The Rite determines matters in cases where it is not clear. It is a ritual combat to decide who among the gathered dragons has the greatest right to Succeed the fallen and claim what was once theirs. The Rite is rarely to the death, but again, we are competitive creatures, and willing to struggle until the very end.

After the successor has been chosen, he conducts the Ritual of the Cleansing Fire. The remains of the fallen are burned in dragon breath until only ashes remain, to be taken by the winds and the Earth, returning the fallen to the elements from which we spring.

It is unfit to leave the body of any dragon to simply rot and be torn apart by scavengers.

The Cleansing Fire sends the light and smoke to tell all Namegivers that a great event has taken place; that a great dragon has died.

Of Culture Most Polite and Complex

We dragons are creatures of passion, capable of extreme temper and savagery. Our traditions, rituals and customs are like a complex web of incredibly fine spider silk that holds those primal urges in check. They are the means by which we survive and keep conflict among ourselves to a minimum. They serve as a reminder of who and what we are in this world.

There was a time when this was not so. In the beginning, when the world was young and dragons first flew in the skies, when the Young Races had not even laid the first stone of their first nation, we were without the culture we have today. Dragons were little more than savages, more like mindless adolescents than civilized adults. Our hearts ruled our minds, and our great intellects were focused on our rivalries and warfare. We fought amongst ourselves and with any other creature that challenged us. In those battles many dragons died, and the Earth shook from the fury of our conflict.

Then came the great dragon Logolas, the Lawgiver. He was one of the first great dragons, a wily and intelligent creature who survived using his superior wit rather than his brute strength. Logolas had a vision in which dragons turned their fierce cunning towards constructive, rather than destructive, ends, and he worked to spread that vision to other dragons. He was able to convince two of his fellow great dragons to meet with him, setting certain rules for the meeting and binding them with a powerful Oath—the very first Rite of Greeting among dragons.

The results of the meeting spread like dragon fire. Logolas and his allies began to create new Rites and Rituals to overcome our natural aggressive and territorial tendencies. These allowed them to work together to achieve common goals, and to resolve disputes without the death of one of the parties involved. In time, other dragons began to realize the benefits and to see the wisdom in the Rites and Rituals Logolas and the others created. If the dragons were able to adapt to this new culture of cooperation, they gained numerous allies, a form of relationship without precedent among our kind. If they continued on their own, they risked the wrath of more than one enemy. To attack one member of the new society was considered a crime—another new concept—something the society as a whole could act to punish.

From those early beginnings the greatness of dragon culture flowered. Reason came to rule emotion, and we found our powers virtually limitless when focused and no longer distracted by war. Our newfound cooperation allowed us to work together to achieve a great pinnacle of civilization as yet unrivaled throughout history. Our society also instilled a great pride in all dragons across the world, a loftiness which ultimately proved disastrous. But like so many other races, we've come to learn from our mistakes.

Vasdenjas refused to elaborate on the above statement, saying only "it is best to let some things be the mysteries that they are." Much of what he related here and elsewhere in this volume supports legends of an Age of Dragons long ago, when dragon civilization was at its peak and dominated the world. What became of this great civilization we can only guess.

On Proper Etiquette

Among dragons, proper behavior is most important. Without the support of our customs and codes of conduct, our society, like any other,



would crumble into chaos and never-ending conflict. It is the rituals we observe that allow us to live in relative peace and harmony.

Dragons are creatures of ritual. We have rituals for everything: meeting, parting, cooperation, disagreement, mating, birth, death, transformation and communication. Every aspect of life where we interact with another of our kind is governed by some kind of ritual, telling us how we should behave and telling others what they can expect of us. To not follow proper etiquette is a serious offense among my kind, and often leads to conflict and struggles to the death when our predator nature comes to the fore.

For example, if you wished to visit a friend in one of the inner cities of Throal, you would go to your friend's home and knock on their door. They would answer and invite you in, perhaps offer you some refreshment, and you would talk of things of importance to you. You would not enter someone else's home uninvited, or abuse their hospitality, without risk of offending them.

If I wished to visit one of my fellow dragons, I would travel to their lair and perform a Rite of Honored Greeting (of which there are several). The specific Rite of Honored Greeting I would perform would depend on the status of the host, of course. To do otherwise would be considered a challenge to that dragon's domain, a challenge he would be required to answer, or else appear weak. A Rite of Challenge is a serious affair, since it may result in the death of one of the challengers.

If the other dragon did not wish the confrontation, and I can hardly think of any dragon who would wish to Challenge me, he could choose to perform the Ritual of Humble Veneration, assuming the Second Posture of Formal Regard and thereby acknowledging my superior strength, avoiding the need for a challenge.

Once mutual goodwill is established, it is considered proper to conduct affairs promptly. We do not concern ourselves with the chatter you small folk seem to love so dearly. No words are wasted on unnecessary conversation between dragons. Our rituals ensure precision in both speech and action. They provide a dependable medium for the exchange of ideas, resources and news among dragons while keeping our conflicts controlled.

(While Vasdenjas speaks of promptness and brevity here, I also learned that some dragon rituals take many hours or even days to perform. Readers should keep in mind that the meaning of "prompt" is different for creatures who measure their lives in many centuries.)

Master Vasdenjas, before you go on, I have a question.

Of course you do Tiabdjin, it seems to be your way concerning this work.

I understand that the Rites and Rituals that you use are passed from a great dragon sire to the young, but do you have among your kind a dragon who maintains the dragons' traditions, etiquette and protocol? For that matter, do you have archivists of any sort, to record and maintain the history of your kind?

Actually, yes we have those among us who are responsible for both these duties. For though young dragons are taught both the history and the Rites and Rituals of dragon-kind, events in our past have shown us the wisdom of maintaining and recording both the customs of our kind, and what you might refer to as a written history of our kind. Among the dragons of a given region there is chosen one who is known as the Loremaster. This is the dragon who ensures that proper Ritual and tradition is adhered to at dragon gatherings, and is also the dragon responsible for recording the history of the dragons of his region, and for ensuring that our history is maintained even after his death.

Gatherings? Under what conditions or circumstance do dragons gather?

Suffice to say that on occasion there are times, only a scant few in this most recent age of magic I might add, when events require the gathering of great dragons, in order that a course of action or actions be discussed and agreed upon. We refer to these gatherings as Councils, and they are a most serious matter among dragons. Councils are not convened casually, nor are the issues discussed at Council to be dismissed. To ignore or disobey the edicts of a great dragon Council is among the most serious of crimes among my kind.

What would be the penalty for disobeying the edicts of a great dragon Council? Has there ever been a case of a dragon who did so?

I expected you would ask this. The penalty is harsh indeed, though I will spare you the specifics. There are some secrets which should remain so. As to your second question, only once has a great dragon defied its fellows, and that dragon has paid a terrible price indeed.

Has paid? But … ?

No more questions my friend. I've said more than I should already. Let us move on before you ask the many questions I know you have in your mind, as I cannot answer them.

On the Importance of Names

Anyone in Barsaive knows that Names are important. The ability to Name and use Names is what makes us Namegivers, after all. For dragons, Names are particularly important. Since we Name ourselves, rather than being Named by our parents or guardians, we understand the power and value Names have. To know something's Name is power, to Name something is an even greater power.

Dragons have many Names. For example, I am Vasdenjas. I am also the Master of Secrets, the Terrible, the Eater of Cities, the Master of Mount Wyrmspire, and many other things. Those Names all describe me and who I am. Some are more accurate than others, perhaps, but all of them are mine. As a dragon goes through life, he accumulates Names. The more Names a dragon has, the older and more powerful he tends to be.

Because we have and use so many Names, we dragons also have rules and rituals about which Names we use in which situations. For example, another dragon—hatchling, adolescent, adult or even great—does not address a great dragon by his chosen Name. Such is considered a grave insult. Dragons address great dragons by other Names to show their respect. We great dragons even use these other Names when speaking of a great dragon to other Namegivers. To do otherwise is considered the same thing as addressing a great dragon by his chosen Name. Conversely, other Namegivers must address us by our chosen Name or a proper title, since to use the same Name that other dragons do in addressing us would be to suggest equality with other dragons, a breech of etiquette that could get someone eaten.

The improper use of titles can be trouble for even a Namegiver. I know of one rather foolish diplomat from Travar who met with Firedancer, an adult dragon dwelling in the Dragon Mountains, regarding the passage of airships over his domain. In an effort to be polite, the diplomat began "We ask you, O Great Dragon." Firedancer was quite offended that the diplomat should address him by a title he had not earned (being a relatively young adult). He perceived it as a mocking insult, suggesting he was inferior, so he ate the diplomat in a fit of pique (younglings can often be quite emotional). It was some time before Travar chose to send another envoy, and Firedancer found himself fending off dragon-slayers and champions from Travar for several years.

As a general rule, if you are uncertain how to address a dragon (either because you do not know its Name or are confused, as small folk often are) it is always proper to use "noble dragon." I do not recommend addressing a dragon by Name unless it gives you leave to do so. Improper familiarity may insult dragons more sensitive to matters of protocol.

Master, I have a question about this subject.

Yes, what is it Tiabdjin?

Why do some dragon Names, such as Mountainshadow or Icewing, seem to be taken from Throalic, while others, such as your own Name, are far more exotic and unusual?

An excellent question, but alas, one that is not so easily answered. As I've told you, dragons Name themselves upon reaching adult-

hood. However, there are no rules or standards by which dragons choose their Names. All I can tell you is that dragons who choose what you refer to as more exotic names, such as myself, most often take Names from the dragon language (yes we have one, though we don't find much use for it save for the most formal of occasions), while the "Throalic" Names, as you call them, are likely chosen to inspire the very images that the Names you mentioned instill when you hear them.

On the Many Types of Communication

You have asked many questions about our language, Tiabdjin, and I would like to answer them, but first you must understand that dragons use means of communicating other than simple speech and written words. Our "language," if such it may be called, is far more complex and subtle than any Namegiver tongue.

Speech

Dragons can speak, of course, or else I would not be talking to you now. We learned to master the many languages and dialects spoken by the Young Races long ago, including Throalic, Sperethiel, trollish, or'zet, and even the t'skrang's tongue. I myself speak more than fifty Namegiver languages, including some belonging to civilizations that were dust before Death's Sea was fire. With our keen minds and magical power, learning and speaking a new language is a simple matter.

In fact, I know some dragons who collect languages as often as they do new items for their hoards.

We consider it polite to speak to other Namegivers in their own tongue, and so we learn your languages, even though they are not our natural method of communicating. Our natural magic allows us to speak aloud, but the dragon mouth, tongue and throat were not designed for the use of your words. For us, the mouth is better used as a place to put food or produce fire. We have natural vocalizations of our own, but they are usually limited to hunting, battle and mating. Primal sounds to convey primal emotions. Not proper things used to convey thoughts or ideas.

Dance and Gesture

The most basic component of our own language is the subtle communication of movement. You small folk have some crude similarity in using gestures when you speak. You nod your heads to indicate agreement, or lift your shoulders and furrow your brows to show confusion. Many Namegivers gesture vaguely with their hands while they speak, a muddled and distracting habit, I must say.

Movement is very important in communication among dragons. How we stand, the position of the head, the motion of talons, wings and tail, all of these things speak volumes about our mood, our intent and our thoughts. Dragons are taught proper posture and movement from the time they are hatchlings. There are hundreds of different Poses and Postures used to communicate different attitudes. The Postures of Formal Regard demonstrate respect, for example. The Pose of Aggression, with wings spread wide and head held high, shows anger and forcefulness. It is quite similar to the Pose of Command, except the wings are held closer in the latter. Nearly every movement we make has meaning to us.

Even more complex than our many gestures are our Dances. A Dance makes use of the basic Poses and Postures, combining them in a flowing display, much as you combine spoken words to make phrases, sentences and whole stories.

A Dance tells a story, with traditional forms used for different purposes. The Dance of New Life honors the act of mating and tells of the power of passion and creation. The Dance for the Fallen speaks of the life of a dragon who has died and honors their spirit. Most of our dances are best performed in the air, allowing for the greatest freedom of movement. If you are ever fortunate enough to see a dragon's dance, Tiabdjin, I advise you to take the opportunity. There are fewer things in this world more beautiful or graceful.

Dragonspeech

Even with its significance and importance, movement is only the first part of our true language. The other is the power of Dragonspeech. Our minds are in touch with the forces of astral space and with the ebb and flow of all living things. This allows us to send out our thoughts with our minds like you send out words with your lips and tongue.

Like this.

It was only then that I realized the Master of Secrets had fallen silent while speaking to me. I heard his voice, not with my ears, but with my mind. It is almost impossible to describe, like an illusion or phantom of a voice speaking from within you. It is a most disturbing sensation at first, which is why dragons tend not to use Dragonspeech with other Namegivers, so as not to unsettle them.

Dragonspeech allows us to communicate with each other with more than simple words. We can also speak in thoughts, images and ideas. Spoken language is crude and imprecise by comparison. You can place multiple meanings in words, and your poets and artists amuse themselves with double entendres and word games, but we can describe multiple layers of thought and meaning in an instant through our own form of communication. Combining movement and Dragonspeech allows us to describe an entire experience or concept quickly, clearly and easily.

The power of Dragonspeech is used from a very young age to begin educating our hatchlings, and is another important role of the guardian. Great dragons are the experienced elders of dragon-kind. Using Dragonspeech, it is possible for us to pass on our wisdom and knowledge directly without needing to try to express the customs and traditions of millennia in words. It would take more volumes than your entire Great Library to hold such knowledge. I often think this vastness of our own language is the reason why dragons are so adept with Names. We see the deeper meaning of a Name all at once, understanding, experiencing the whole of it rather than breaking it into word, sound and meaning.

In general we prefer to use Dragonspeech among ourselves because it is less cumbersome than spoken language.

So many of the concepts of our language cannot be conveyed by the spoken word, so it is nearly impossible to learn to "speak dragon", as so many scholars have attempted. Parts of our language can be written down or translated into spoken words, but many concepts can be expressed only through thought and movement.

Dragonspeech also has the advantage of being silent, allowing us to communicate with each other without fear of being overheard. If you see two dragons engaged in a whirling aerial dance, they may be carrying on an entire conversation using their thoughts and their motions without anyone the wiser.

Normally, Dragonspeech is only the projection of thought; one mind sending its ideas into another. However, many of us learn to listen as well as speak with our minds. Yes, this allows us to see into the minds of others, Tiabdjin, and know their thoughts and memories. What? No, I didn't do it just then. For the most part, you Young Races are open books to anyone with an observant eye. It didn't take the power of Dragonspeech to know what your next question was going to be. Our knowledge of movement and gesture alone is generally enough to read the intent of any creature clearly.

Still, there are dragons skilled enough in the use of Dragonspeech to pluck thoughts from your mind as easily as you might pluck a single flower from a hillside. We have learned a great deal about other Namegivers in this way; seeing the world as they do, knowing what they know. This experience has inspired many ideas and experiments among my kind, some more successful than others.

Writing

Like speech, we have learned and mastered the many systems of writing used by the Young Races. I can read any of the books in your Great Library, and I have enjoyed many of the obscure volumes you have collected over the years. I find books a fascinating idea. They are so small and fragile, but they contain a certain artistry I find compelling.

Other Namegivers have spoken of the pleasure of holding and reading a fine book, and I confess a certain understanding of the sensation.

We ourselves do not create books; they are generally too small, and our talons can make neither paper nor ink.

On rare occasions we write on parchment, but usually with the help of a scribe (such as yourself Tiabdjin). Additionally, we do sometimes scribe symbols and runes derived from our movements and dances onto surfaces like stone or metal to serve as messages to others, but such things are rare. As with Dragonspeech, our natural form for storing information goes far beyond simple writing.

Memory Crystals

To record important knowledge, we dragons use magically prepared pieces of living crystal we call memory crystals. The crystalline structure of living crystal serves to capture and hold the thoughts, memories, images and ideas projected into it, freezing them like an insect caught in a piece of amber, maintained as they are, unchanging with the passage of time. Once such information has been placed within a memory crystal, Dragonspeech can be used to retrieve the wisdom placed within the crystal. In this way we preserve important knowledge so it is not lost.

Small memory crystals, no larger than the tip of one of my talons, perhaps large enough to fit in the hand of a dwarf such as yourself, can hold only a single message or piece of complex information; we would use them to send messages and correspondence to others. Larger crystals contain correspondingly greater amounts of information. Some memory crystals are as large as you, my dwarf friend, or even larger.

Memory crystals can take many forms. Some are rough-faceted and unworked, while others are shaped by skill and magic into works of arts. Many of the jewels you see in my own hoard are more than pretty baubles, they are memory crystals containing dragon lore older than your nation, or any nation of this Age. To those of you foolish enough to consider looting a dragon's lair, beware, the beautiful gemstones you set your greedy gaze upon may contain treasures beyond your feeble imagination, and may carry with them the retribution of all of my kind.

I inquired about the similarity between memory crystals and the message stones we use to carry messages. Vasdenjas gave a rumbling chuckle and told me that memory crystals were far different from simple message stones. The stones use elemental air to trap sounds, like the sound of a voice, and simply repeat the sounds at a later time. Memory crystals trap thought and memory itself. The knowledge in a crystal is only accessible through the power of Dragonspeech, although the Master of Secrets did concede that other magic might theoretically be able to retrieve information from a memory crystal.

On Dragon History and Beliefs

As you have already seen, our lives are long and we have much time to contemplate the mysteries of life. This has led dragonkind to develop an awareness of the nature of the Universe and our role in it unrivaled by the Young Races. The full body of dragon understanding and knowledge is vast, enough to fill many large memory crystals. Since I know the impatient nature of you Young Races, Tiabdjin, I shall keep my comments on the fascinating and complex tapestry of our beliefs simple and brief.

The Origin of the World

This tale is similar to the origin of dragonkind told by Icewing in the Horrors collection. I note that the Master of Secrets spoke the Name of the Great Hunter with considerable trepidation and did not wish to elaborate further.

Dragons were the first Namegivers, indeed the first creatures to understand the power of Names. When we appeared, long, long ago, we gave Names to ourselves, separating us from the Nameless and formless mass of the world.

It was a very different world then, a world of darkness, pain and suffering. Black clouds blotted out the sky and the land was covered in foul mists, the waters dark and bubbling. It was into this world that the First Named came.

It was the Age of the Dark One, the sole creature that lived in the world. Then it had no Name as we know it. It simply was, a creature of unimaginable foulness and corruption. The Dark One created spawn, called horoi, in its image, creatures of darkness and endless hunger that fought battles on the land, in the sea and in the sky above the world for their master's amusement. The Dark One reveled in the slaughter and the rivers were filled with the toxic ichor of the slain horoi.

In time, the Dark One gave rise to a horoi that was not like all others. It possessed a spark, a vital essence no other creature had. Instead of joining in endless battle, the horoi fled to a distant part of the world the Dark One and its minions had not touched. There it Named itself and became Nightslayer, the First Named.

Nightslayer stood on a rocky pinnacle overlooking a great ocean and was overcome with joy at the beauty of the world. Nine tears fell from its eye and became creatures where they splashed upon the Earth. The first of those creatures was the First Dragon, Dayheart, who proudly proclaimed her Name. The others did not have Names of their own, so Nightslayer gave them Names. They became the progenitors of the Young Races, who even now lack the ability to Name themselves and must be given Names by others.

When the Dark One discovered what Nightslayer had done, it grew furious. It raged and brought forth armies of horoi to kill Nightslayer and its new creations. But the First Named stood strong against the onslaught. With the power of Naming, it forced the horoi and the Dark One to flee from the world into the depths of the netherworlds. The Dark One swore that day, "I will hunt your children for the rest of time. I will slay every last one of them, and my minions will feed on their pain and terror. But I will not give the mercy of death to your favorite—the Dragon, the one you created in your image. As you betrayed me, the children of the Dragon's line will betray you. I will corrupt them, twist their souls and make them my own. Then I will return and reign over all the world."

The Dark One fled, hurling a ball of fire at Nightslayer as it departed. The First Named gathered its children under the protection of its mighty wings. There was a sound like a thousand roars. The earth and sky trembled and a great cloud filled the sky. When the rumbling stopped, Nightslayer's children lived, but the First Named was no more.

They gathered by its great head and mourned its passing, honoring the sacrifice of Nightslayer so that its children might live. Since that earliest time, all dragons are consumed by fire in death, echoing the sacrifice of the First Named for us.

In time, the children of Dayheart, the First Dragon, grew many and strong. They learned the secrets of threads and patterns and gained wisdom in the ways of the world far beyond that of the short-lived Young Races. They laid the foundations for our civilization that continues to this very day, and we wait for the return of the Dark One, the Great Hunter, Named Verjigorm.

The Role of Dragons

If you were to ask one of your kind what reason dragons have to exist, they would likely answer that we exist to terrorize you little folk and to provide heroes with enemies to hunt and slay so they may have songs written of their glorious deeds. Despite the millennia we have existed alongside the Young Races, most of you still do not understand the importance of dragons in the scheme of things. I hope this document can correct those misconceptions.

As the oldest of all Namegivers, we are living history, a link to the past. We understand the complex nature of astral space and the warp and weft of the tapestry of fate. It is our burden to understand all of these things and more. To understand, to watch, to learn and to gather experience as we gather treasures and trinkets. Yes, it is a heavy burden.

Much as a parent watches over a growing child, so do we watch the progress of the Young Races, as you stumble through your first steps toward civilization, towards an understanding of the world and its mysteries. And like that experienced parent, we can guide, we can test and we can strengthen you through our wisdom, but we cannot walk the path with you. A child must be allowed to fall many times before it learns to walk, or to fly. So do your people fall into war, upheaval, and folly. The orks say "tell me and I hear a tale, show me and I see a vision, fight me and I have an experience." Such is the way with all Young Races. We can tell you what we have learned, but you must experience things for yourselves before you truly understand.

The Young Races have left the carefree time of childhood for the turbulent time of adolescence. Like all adolescents, you are belligerent, stubborn and willful. You do not heed the wisdom of your elders and you rebel against all that seems strange or confining to you. You make your own rules, you seek your own path. Sometimes you strike out against us. It is strange that the people of Throal consider themselves so superior for their abolishment of slavery, for their affirmation of the rights of all Namegivers, but no court in Throal would consider the murder of one of my kind a crime.

Instead, it is a legend to be celebrated in song and story. Consider that when you next hear tales of a brave band of dragon-slayers.

The Passions

Oh, we dragons are not without passion, but not the Passions as you know them. We do not worship the things as the Young Races do. Namegivers call upon Thystonius for strength in physical endeavors, on Astendar for help in matters of love and even on Mynbruje to aid intellect and insight. We rely on no one but ourselves. It is understandable that the Young Races might wish to believe in something greater than they, powers they can entrust to aid and guide them. We have no such need. We acknowledge the power of the Passions, but we have seen Passions change many times over the years. If you could live to be as old as I, Tiabdjin—or any other dragon—then you would have a very different view of the Passions, I assure you.

Strange, is it not, that Namegivers of the Young Races revere the power of the Passions, look to them for strength, guidance and wisdom, but at the same time turn away in fear from the same qualities in dragons? Only an enlightened few (like your good self) seek us out with their questions rather than crowding the temples and praying in solitude. Perhaps because the Passions wear more comfortable masks. It is easier for Namegivers to seek what they need from beings cast in their own image than from creatures so different from them. No matter that I have looked upon the true faces of the Passions and can tell you with certainty that they are no more like you than I am, less so in fact. Perhaps because dragons do not seek your worship, our knowledge is considered less pure than the insights offered by unbound Passion. Who can truly say why you small folk do anything?

If dragons can be said to worship anything, then we worship the Universe itself. We honor the beauty and majesty of all creation in our thoughts and our dances. We revere the primal mystery that gave life to all things, allowing us to live and experience. Some of my kind have said that the Universe is the only thing grand enough to awe even a dragon.

On Relations With Other Namegivers

As you have seen, the relationship between dragonkind and the Young Races is not unlike that of a distant parent and wayward child. For the most part, we choose to remain uninvolved in the activities of the Young Races. We stay close to our own concerns and leave your affairs to you, and only when other Namegivers impinge upon our lives do we take action. That has been the way of things for longer than your nation has existed, and will continue for some time to come, unless something happens which requires our attention.

In general, we dragons have few relations with the Young Races. Most of you small folk are too fragile, too short-lived and too impatient to appreciate the nuances of dragon culture, and far too many of you consider dragons nothing more than creatures to be slain or bowed to in abject fear. It is difficult to have a conversation with a Namegiver who is either cowering in terror or trying to hack you to pieces.

On rare occasions we do find Namegivers (such as yourself) who are willing to converse with us, or to petition for aid or advice. I know many of my kind who have no interest in speaking with other Namegivers whatsoever. They live in isolation from the Young Races and consider them no more than an occasional light snack when there are no cattle or other food available. In their



view, the Young Races are a waste of our time (although why they worry about the loss of a few days out of a life span such as ours is beyond me).

There are some among us, such as Doll-Maker (known to you as Icewing) and myself, who view themselves as representatives of our kind to yours. We go out of our way to make our lairs accessible to those of you in need of our wisdom and insight. Be forewarned, however, our attention rarely comes without a price.

So, conversations such as this one are exceedingly rare, as you might imagine. Only true seekers of knowledge and intelligent discourse seek us out and capture our attention as you have done, Tiabdjin. For that reason, we tend to deal more often with the Young Races given to scholarship and contemplation, such as you dwarfs or the obsidimen. The cultures of orks and trolls tend to be too violent and too wrapped up in their endless raiding and wars to consider us anything more than another enemy to fight. Windlings are often too flighty, and I sometimes wonder if humans will ever realize they are not the sole center of all creation. The t'skrang have had their dealing with my kind, and they understand some of what it is to be hatched. The elves I will speak of shortly.

The Kingdom of Throal

The Kingdom of Throal is the only great power of Barsaive to have significant dealings with dragon-kind. In addition to myself and the great works I have bequeathed to the Library of Throal, the dwarf kingdom has had relations with my fellow great dragon Doll-Maker in the past, as well as crossed paths with Root Protector (known to you as Earthroot), the dragon-king of the Pale Ones, who lives in the subterranean depths of the Throal Mountains. And then, of course, there is young King Neden's encounter with Far Scholar (known to you as Mountainshadow) in his childhood. Indeed, Throal seems to have attracted a great deal of attention from us in comparison to the other kingdoms of Barsaive.

Before you or anyone else interprets this as some kind of special favor towards the dwarf kingdom, let me say that our dealings with Throal are not favoritism, nor biased in any way. For the most part, they simply stem from the fact that Throal is a great power in Barsaive, and one willing to entertain the notion of civilized dealings with my kind. The other nations and city-states of this land consider dragons a threat, but I believe Throal is beginning to recognize and understand our true nature. We are no threat to that which does not threaten us.

The Blood Wood

The elves of Blood Wood take every opportunity to slander dragons and express their distrust of us. They claim one of my kind, the great dragon Elfbane (known to you as Alamaise), was responsible for the death of their Queen Dallia. I will not dignify their tales and rumors with a response, except to say this: if the elves outside of the Elven Court could understand a tenth of what really happened to their Queen, and why, they would not be so quick to condemn us.

The Blood Elves, especially, are hardly fit to pass judgment on any other Namegiver, given what they have done to themselves and their once-beautiful home. I prefer to have no dealing with them whatsoever. Swallowing one up is a painful proposition, at least without first roasting them so that their thorns turn to char. Even then, they are so riddled with corruption that they leave a foul aftertaste long after you swallow them, like a bitter root.

The Theran Empire

The dealings of dragonkind with the Theran Empire are well known. In the years before the Scourge, when the Therans spread the word of the coming Horrors, some dragons sought to offer our knowledge to aid the Young Races.

The techniques we use for creating our lairs are not unlike those of the kaers offered by the Therans, although vastly superior. When we generously offered our help to the Young Races, how was it received? The Theran Empire began a program of persecution and execution against any dragon who tried to undermine their monopoly on protection against the Horrors. We were given no choice but to defend ourselves.

After the first few Therans died, the Empire wisely chose to leave us alone. We, in turn, withdrew our offer of aid to the Young Races and allowed the Therans to go about their business. In the end, the separation and servitude the Empire forced on provinces such as Barsaive backfired. During the Scourge, Throal realized the folly of the Theran way and chose its own path, as have other places once loyal to the Empire. Now Thera tries to reunite their scattered Empire through the power of spell and sword. They have clearly learned nothing since their dealings with us long ago.

Of the Theran Empire's current game of brinkmanship in Barsaive, I shall say only this: the Empire discovered once what happens to those who challenge us. Let us hope they have learned their lesson.

On Worship and Service

There are those among the Young Races who recognize the ancient power and wisdom we possess. Some of these Namegivers choose to devote themselves to our service, helping to improve relations between us and the Young Races through their work. I have known many over the years, and they are devoted folk, although sometimes a bit too devoted.

It is quite understandable, you see, that some Namegivers consider us objects of worship and veneration just as others consider us objects of fear. Reverence and dread are closely related, Tiabdjin. To please us, these Namegivers offer us devotion and service. We, in turn, can offer them our knowledge, our protection and a sense of purpose in life. Not all dragons choose to accept the sup-



plication of others. Most of us prefer lives of solitude and to choose or make our own servants as needed.

Others of my kind, however, thrive on the attention and love of the Young Races. Far Scholar, for example, came to the aid of many Namegivers before the Scourge, offering them shelter in his vast lair in the Dragon Mountains. The descendants of those people consider the great dragon their savior and treat him like one of the Passions; offering him homage and continued loyalty. Root Protector, a fellow great dragon, is the king of the Pale Ones, an extended tribe of t'skrang living in deep caves and underground rivers beneath the Throal Mountains. The presence of his small nation of pale t'skrang allows Root Protector to carry out his activities through many servants, and to have eyes and ears throughout his underground domain. For their part, the Pale Ones treat Root Protector as both king and patron Passion of their people.

I have heard of other dragons permitting Namegivers to serve them. It is an ancient tradition, after all.

Nevertheless, most dragons prefer solitude over the recreation of past glories.

A Dragon's Life

So, you ask, what is it that dragons do? I have told you of the grand scheme, of the cycle of life from birth onward, but what of the daily business of dragon-kind? What things make up the routine of a dragon? Worthy questions, deserving of answers. Attend and you shall learn how we spend our time.

Lairs

The most important place to a dragon is her lair, much as the home of a Namegiver is central to his life. We spend much of our time in our lairs, and we try to make them as comfortable and pleasant as possible. The similarity with the homes of other Namegivers ends there. A dragon lair is as different from a simple dwarf stone house as is a t'skrang tower deep beneath the waters of the Serpent River, or the Palace of the Elf Queen, growing from the very trees of the Blood Wood.

The most common type of lair used by dragons is a cave located high in the mountains. We dragons are creatures of flight, soaring high above the Earth, and we prefer our homes to be in suitably aerial environs. Some dragons prefer more earthly homes, like the depths of a dark forest or swamp, or even a subterranean den, but most of my kind live close to the sky.

Mountain caves are well-suited to our needs for a number of reasons beyond this, however. They are dry and comfortably temperate, remaining cool in the heat of day and warm in the chill of night. The stone in many caves is worn smooth, making it pleasant to lie upon (although some rough spots are wonderful for scratching one's scales against when they become dry and itchy).

We do not require furnishings like you small folk—what chair could hold a dragon, after all? For us, the flat surfaces of our lair are enough to lie upon, and many dragons gather their belongings close for their repose, curling around a cool pile of metal and crystal.

Likewise, we do not need most of the tools the Young Races surround themselves with. We eat our food raw, or sometimes prepare it first with dragon breath. The refuse is cast outside the lair, and serves as a warning to other predators (and Namegivers) not to approach too close without invitation. We get water from underground springs, mountain lakes and the power of our own magic as needed. We have no use for the other trinkets Namegivers fawn over except as suits our hoard, a topic I will explain shortly.

Our inherent understanding and sensing of the astral world and its effects upon the material world allow us to choose our lairs with great care, ensuring a place safe from the taint of the Horrors, where we can work our magic freely. I am sad to say that such places have become increasingly rare since the Scourge. Only the dragon lairs which remained sealed throughout the Scourge have avoided any touch of corruption. New lairs are becoming harder to find, and young dragons have been known to fight for control of a prime lair, or even to settle for lairing in more questionable territory, restraining much of their magic to avoid the notice of the Horrors.

A dragon's lair is more than just a home, however. It is a place that, over time, becomes a part of us, like an extension of ourselves. We can sense the presence of unwanted visitors in our lairs just as you might feel a bug crawling across your skin. We also use magic to create various wards and traps to protect our lairs, just as many Namegiver magicians protected their kaers and shelters from the Horrors during the Scourge. But whereas most traps Namegivers make are intended primarily to prevent entrance or to injure their victim, our traps also alert us to the presence of trespassers in our lairs. Any Namegiver who thinks to surprise a dragon in her lair is in for a rude awakening.

Shal-mora

We spend most, in fact nearly all, of our time in our lairs in a state we call *shal-mora*. It has no translation in any other Namegiver language, but it has some similarities (albeit vague) to the state the obsidimen call "the Dreaming" among their own kind. It is a trance-state somewhere between sleep and deep thought, nearly indistinguishable from sleep to non-dragons. A dragon in *shal-mora* is at rest, usually curled up on the floor of its lair, and to most onlookers appears to be slumbering. In truth, dragons do not sleep or dream nearly often as the Young Races do, perhaps only once a month or so. The rest of the time, our minds are active in *shal-mora*.

While in *shal-mora* we think and contemplate things—many, many things. Our long lives give us more memories than I suspect could even fit into the minds of the Young Races, so we always have something to think about or consider. The *shal-mora* shuts out minor distractions and worldly concerns, allowing us to focus inward and make the most use of our considerable mental faculties. It is not a complete ignorance of the outside world, however—quite the opposite. *Shal-mora* has the effect of opening up our consciousness and putting our minds in a state of hyper-awareness, so that thoughts and sensory input flow with increased speed. A dragon in *shal-mora* can rouse instantly at the first sign of trouble or an intruder in its lair. Many would-be dragon-slayers have taken the *shal-mora* to mean that dragons sleep constantly, and can therefore be taken unawares. They have learned their mistake when their prey surprised them with sudden wakefulness.

Hunting and Eating

Outside of our lairs, we dragons spend a good deal of our time hunting. As you might imagine, we require a great deal of food to sustain us, being so much larger than other Namegivers. Although we can create food magically when needed, most dragons prefer our food as fresh as possible. Several sheep or cattle can make a decent meal for a dragon, as can any number of succulent creatures like cave crabs or dyres, or even some horsemeat or mountain goat when the mood strikes.

At this moment, the Master of Secrets realized he was quite hungry and excused himself for a time to go hunting. He returned an hour or so later with a slightly charred ox clutched in his fore claws, which he dropped on the floor of his lair and proceeded to tear into as he continued his narrative. Although he offered me a share of the meat, I politely refused; partially cooked beef has never been a favorite of mine.

Now, as I was saying, dragons are primarily meat-eaters. We eat greenery occasionally, to supplement our diet and aid in proper digestion, but our diet properly consists of prey. The type of animals eaten depends on the individual dragon's taste, much as certain dwarfs may like mutton while others prefer chicken or turkey. I

have known other dragons to eat the most disgusting or unpleasant things, such as saurals or sea snakes.

Contrary to tales I have heard, dragons rarely eat members of the Young Races. It does happen from time to time, of course, but I know few if any dragons who regularly hunt other Namegivers for food. After all, it is far easier to hunt prey that doesn't carry a grudge as you small folk do. A dragon who too often indulges in a meal of Namegivers quickly finds itself the target of endless would-be dragon-slayers, and can even bring the wrath of an entire nation down on its head. It's altogether easier to stick to simple beasts and eat only those Namegivers foolish enough to violate one's lair uninvited. This maintains good relations, and helps you small folk by weeding out the most stupid of your kind, hopefully before they've had an opportunity to breed. Personally, I find most other Namegivers only vaguely satisfying; t'skrang are too tough and salty, and eating orks tends to upset my stomach. Trolls are entirely too crunchy for my taste, and dwarfs … Tiabdjin, you are looking quite pale, are you well? Oh, I see, perhaps we should turn back to hunting, yes?

The hunting territory of a dragon is considered part of the dragon's domain. As you might imagine, we require a very large area in which to hunt. An individual dragon may claim an area of about a day's flight from its lair (somewhere in the area of 4 to 6 days walking for most Namegivers by my calculations). Any intrusion into the territory of another dragon is considered a serious offense unless the visitor performs the proper Rites, such as the Rite of Visitation, and has business with the master of the domain.

We hunt for a portion of each day. Usually we find a decent meal early or late in the day, and spend much of the remainder of the day resting in *shal-mora* while the food settles. During times when we are more active, such as while you and I have been working on this document, we eat smaller meals more frequently. This helps maintain a feeling of lightness and wakefulness.

Correspondence

We dragons are not as social as the Young Races; we do not build cities or habitations to live together. Once a young dragon leaves the care of its sire, it finds a lair of its own and has little direct contact with other dragons outside of mating. We value our solitude and prefer to keep conflicts between us to a minimum.

Still, there are many reasons for a dragon to keep in touch with others. We have siblings, egg-mates and even friends among our own kind. Does that surprise you? Additionally, we exchange ideas, thoughts and news of importance to our fellow dragons.

Most of this correspondence is not conducted in person. As I said, eye-to-eye meetings among my kind are rare, since they tend to cause struggles for dominance and provoke our predatory nature. Instead, we conduct our business through messengers, usually servants such as drakes or summoned spirits able to quickly carry messages across the great distance between our lairs. From time to time we entrust messages to other Namegivers, servants or hirelings, much like you might employ a courier to deliver something to a distant city.

Short messages can be entrusted to the memory of a servant to deliver (drakes have excellent memories by design). Longer correspondence and important ideas are placed in memory crystals to be delivered to the other dragon or dragons. Only rarely do we make use of written documents as the Young Races do; such pages tend to be too cumbersome and fragile for our use. I remember—yes, yes, little one, I see you. What may I answer for you now?

Drakes, Master?

All good things in time, Tiabdjin. I'll explain drakes later; suffice it to say for now that they are servants of dragons created in our own image.

Hoarding

In addition to hunting, and conducting business with our fellow dragons, another activity that takes up much of our time is hoarding. I use the term because it is common among your own scholars and legends, a more appropriate word for it might be "gathering" or "collecting."

You see, dragons are creatures with very long memories. Our lives may last longer than the history of one of your nations, and we have many experiences and times to remember. We hoard things of value to help remind us of the different stories and tales that make up our long lives. For example, the jeweled hilt you see sticking up over there is the Sword of Hallad the Bold, an ork warrior who lived in Cara Fahd long before the Scourge. He tried to slay me over some piddling quarrel involving some cattle and a nobleman's daughter. I keep the sword as a reminder of our battle. He fought quite well, but underestimated me in the end, which is invariably fatal. Each of the other items here has a similar story.

We also retain items such as memory crystals containing useful or valuable knowledge. I have even known some dragons to find and keep books and scrolls written by other Namegivers. Some make a habit of hoarding the bones of worthy enemies and prey, while others I know keep collections of certain kinds of metals, jewels, armor and other such things.

If my hoard seems large to you, just think of the vast number of things you small folk accumulate over your short lives and compare it to the store of a dragon such as I. When you think about it, you'll see we dragons are actually quite frugal. If I had kept every bauble and coin that fell into my talons since I Named myself, I would need a lair many times the size of this one, just to keep it all in! Time forces us to choose to keep only the things which have the greatest meaning and use, the rest is used to pursue various interests, given away or used as the owner sees fit.



Personal Interests

The remainder of time not spent hunting, hoarding, communicating with our fellow dragons or resting and contemplating in *shal-mora* is spent as we please. Dragons indulge in a variety of activities to pass the time and expand their personal knowledge and experience.

Often times a particular activity will seize a dragon's heart and the dragon will follow it with great devotion for a few years, perhaps even as long as a century, before losing interest and moving on to something else.

I, for example, was fascinated with the Andevin School of Music in the ancient Kingdom of Landis before the Scourge, and I spent many years secretly patronizing the musicians of that school before the fall of the kingdom. One of the greatest tragedies of the Scourge was the loss of such fine and wonderful music.

Dragons have personal interests as broad, if not more so, than any race. Dragons can become interested in nearly anything, and our long lives give us the opportunity to experience many different things. The various arts most commonly capture our interest, ranging from philosophy to poetry to sculpture and music. Some of us have even been known to become secret patrons of Namegiver artists who catch our attention, as I did with the Andevin School.

Of course, the greatest art among us is magic. We often spend a great deal of time contemplating the twist and turns of the astral fabric, learning new techniques and methods of magic. Magical experimentation can be a tricky business, even for us, so it is undertaken with great care. Accidents do happen, but such things are never allowed to get out of control.

Master, I am curious; how do dragons experience many of these things you speak of? You say you patronized the Andevin School in secret, but I would think the presence of a great dragon at a performance of a group of troubadours would draw no small amount of attention.

Quite so, Tiabdjin, which brings me to an important and little-known facet of our nature.

So saying, the Master of Secrets lifted up his long neck, his eyes flashing with magical power, and vanished.

Walking on Two Legs

In Vasdenjas' place stood a dwarf of most noble stature and bearing. He was quite tall for a dwarf, towering easily a full head taller than me. His hair and beard were a sandy color, with golden highlights gleaming in the light of the cavern, and his eyes were the most unusual shade of amber. I could not say for sure how old he appeared; somewhere in the vague age between maturity and old age. He wore the fine clothes and cloak of a dwarf gentleman, right down to a high polish on his black leather boots and a pair of fine calfskin gloves tucked into his belt. Gold gleamed on his fingers and one of his ears, and mischief twinkled in his eyes as he regarded me, sitting quite in a state of shock. I opened my mouth to speak, but no sound came forth, the strange dwarf threw back his head and gave a laugh that echoed in the suddenly large and empty cave.

You should see the look on your face, Tiabdjin! Ah, I have not had such amusement in some time. Why so shocked, my dwarf friend? I have told you that we are creatures of magic, with powers equal to those of any magician. With spellcasters able to take the forms of birds and bats and illusory beasts, I would think a dragon able to take the shape of your people would not be so surprising. The magic used for both are not so different from one another.

I suppose not, Master. It's just the idea that a great dragon would wish to take dwarf form never really occurred to me.

And why should it? Why, you might ask, would a being as great and powerful as I wish to take on the shape and bearing of so small a creature as a dwarf?

Listen carefully and I shall explain. Since the very beginning, we have studied the nature of the Young Races to better understand you. At first it was to care for you and help guide you as an elder race should, and later, to understand and observe as you made your own way. We learned much through the power of Dragonspeech, reading memories and experiences directly from the minds of certain Namegivers, and this inspired in some of us a desire to understand the nature of your kind first hand. These dragons developed the skills necessary to alter our natural form into one resembling yours. Over time, we learned to use magic to assume the form of any of the Young Races, and some dragons became quite adept at the art of form-changing. It allowed us to move among the Young Races unnoticed, to experience life as you small folk do, and to see things without the response offered to a mighty dragon.

There is a legend among your people of how King Varulus the First would disguise himself as a commoner using illusion magic and walk out among his people. He desired to hear their opinions and concerns, and to debate important issues with them without the separation of king and commoner. I can tell you he got that idea from us (from Doll-Maker, to be specific). We already knew the value of seeing the world through another set of eyes. Our knowledge of form-changing also allowed us to give our drake servants the inborn ability to assume Namegiver form, blending the most useful aspects of the Young Races with draconic resilience and strength.

It is quite an experience to see the world through other eyes. Your forms take some getting used to, as they are quite soft and small and fragile. You lack talons and fangs to fight with, and have no armor except what you make for yourselves. Your vision is dim and blurred compared to ours. Even the Heat Sight that dwarfs possess lacks clarity to my eyes. Your hearing is likewise muffled and your senses of smell and taste nearly nonexistent by dragon standards. I was pleasantly surprised by the sensitivity of touch possessed by many of the Young Races; soft and supple skin has its advantages, I suppose.

However, your skin must be covered and protected against the heat, the cold, the sun, wind and rain. The sensation of wearing clothing is a very strange one. Never would a dragon have thought of wrapping itself up in fabric.

Yet it is not unlike the comfort of being back in the astral cocoon again. Before I experienced clothing, I had no idea of the feeling of different textures of fabric sliding over skin (and of course, the sensation of having skin rather than scales was still new to me as well). Clothing also comes in such a bewildering variety of styles, shapes and colors. It allows you to change your plumage to suit the occasion, a most interesting idea. I have experimented a bit with different styles of Namegiver clothing, and have found that the clothes one wears can radically alter how others interact with you. Most curious.

I also quite like your hands.

Here Vasdenjas, still in dwarf form, held out one hand and flexed it, turning it over and looking at it like something he'd never seen before.

Namegiver hands are remarkable things. We dragons have a fair amount of dexterity ourselves, but nothing quite like the small, clever hands of the Young Races, so well suited for making and using the tools you love so much. So very sensitive, able to tell many things by touch alone. I have quite enjoyed using hands to wield both pen and sword, using tools as you might use them. That is the whole reason for the experience.

Assuming the form of one of the Young Races allows us to understand you more fully. We can know what it is to eat, sleep, speak and move as one of you in a way that even Dragonspeech cannot fully convey. I know that many of my kind consider other Namegiver forms weak and unpleasant, and I confess that I would not wish to spend the whole of my existence trapped in a form such as this, but there is so much to experience from other perspectives it is quite compelling. Eating and drinking as an ork, running and hunting as a human, swimming as a t'skrang, mating rituals …

Excuse me, Master, did you say mating?

What? Oh, yes. Yes, I did.

Then you have … ?

Coupled with other Namegivers? Yes, on occasion. Your customs are so different from ours, the experiences proved most interesting.

I see. Could anything ever come of such a coupling of a dragon and another Namegiver?

The words had barely left my lips when Vasdenjas' brows crouched low over his dark eyes and his dwarf form begin to stretch and flow like water, growing larger and reassuming his true form, towering above me mere seconds later.

Certainly not! It would be quite impossible. Coupling with other Namegivers is something we once did out of curiosity, a passing fancy, but it is no longer permitted. No dragon among us bothers with it any more, I'm sure. In fact, we rarely assume Namegiver form these days. It was something of an experiment once, but we prefer to keep to ourselves now, so most dragons do not invest the time or effort in learning the necessary magic any longer.

After this point, any further attempt at discussing the matter with the Master of Secrets was met with tangents and stories of other things, so this work cannot further illuminate the experience of dragons taking Namegiver form, other than to say it is clearly possible. We can only speculate on the possibilities.

Vasdenjas' words reminded me of the t'skrang legend of the founding of the line of House Syrtis. The Syrtis claim their ancient ancestress mated in secret with the Dragon of the Moon to produce their line. Many scholars have taken this tale as apocryphal or symbolic in some way, but perhaps there are Namegivers, such as the Syrtis, who are literally descended from the union of a dragon in Namegiver form and another Namegiver. Certainly, the Shivalahala Syrtis is one of the greatest magicians and seers in all of Barsaive. Do her unique talents (and perhaps, even her well-known eccentricities) stem from this unusual heritage? I cannot say with any certainty, and the Master of Secrets remains silent, almost suspiciously so, on this matter.

Dragon Magic

Dragons have practiced magic since long before the Young Races understood the power of Names and patterns at all. Magic is woven into our very beings, as natural to us as breathing or flying. Over the millennia, we have gained a great deal of knowledge and wisdom in the Art. More than any other Namegivers, we are masters of the magic that flows through the Age of Legend™. We are in tune with the energies of astral space and able to instinctively perceive and understand the warp and weft of the fabric of astral space. This gift gives us dragons great magical knowledge and ability to call upon in addition to our formidable powers.

Adult dragons have magical skills rivaling some of the greatest magicians among the Young Races, including even the famed Heavenherds of Thera, while we great dragons have magic unrivaled by any other creature.

Innate Magic

Dragons are born with certain insights and abilities of magic that take Namegiver magicians years to learn. We are natural spellcasters and possess Dragonsight, allowing us to clearly perceive the weave of astral space in a way almost incomprehensible to others. I will try to make clear the natural advantages we possess.

First and foremost, dragons have a natural astral sight ability not unlike that possessed by windlings, though far superior. We can see the astral images and patterns of everything around us through an act of will. Other Namegivers learn to perceive astral space so they can learn to use magic, but dragons are born with the ability to do so. Right now, Tiabdjin, I can see your astral image as clearly as your physical body. I can see the complex threading of your Pattern and the many subtle shadings of your thoughts, feelings and history woven into it. Given time, I could study your Pattern to learn more about it. Our ability to do so is the basis of our magic.

However, since the Scourge, Dragonsight has become something of a mixed blessing. While it allows us to see the areas of astral space warped and corrupted by the presence of the Horrors, and thereby avoid those places, it also causes us to see the damage done by the Scourge to astral space, damage that has not healed like many physical scars the world bears from the passage of the Horrors. Few Namegivers remember the sublime beauty of astral space in the time before the coming of the Scourge. To view it as it is now is a great tragedy.

You will recall my saying how Dragonspeech allows us to express thoughts and ideas in a way other languages do not allow. The power of Dragonspeech also allows us to speak to the Universe in words it understands. Our true language is the language of ideas, concepts and patterns. Using the power of Dragonspeech, it is possible to express any pattern we desire and manifest that pattern in astral space. Magicians of the Young Races call this process "spellcasting" the creation of a pattern which expresses a particular effect, charged with astral energies to bring the effect into the physical world.

Once, this ability allowed us to cast spells in a way no other Namegiver could emulate, then or now. We merely focused our desire on the patterns of astral space and, through the power of our will, brought that desire into being. We used no grimoires, no codified spells. They were not needed.

Master, I am no magician, but the process you describe sounds much like what we call "raw magic," something Namegiver magicians have known of for centuries.

Tiabdjin, I thought you were paying more attention. Our natural magic is indeed much like what you Young Races call raw magic, with one important difference. A magician may cast any spell he knows using raw magic, but he must first learn the spell's pattern and know how to call up that pattern in his mind's eye to cast it, even with raw magic.

We do not need to learn patterns, we create raw spell patterns at will. Using natural magic, a dragon can cast any spell that exists, or create a new one on the spot. Anything we could imagine, we could do with sufficient effort and strength of will.

Spell Magic

As it has done to so much of our world, the Scourge and the tainting of astral space changed our use of magic.

There had always been those among us who studied the ways of the magician, creating more complex and codified forms of spell magic. But the coming of the Horrors made the use of our natural spellcasting abilities dangerous even for creatures as powerful as we. The damage we caused ourselves by use of raw magic was previously so minor it was hardly noticed, not the risk weaker Namegivers take when they allow the energies of astral space to surge through their frail forms. Still, the warping damage one suffered in places where the Horrors passed was great enough to make even a dragon wary. Even so, that was not the greatest concern.

The most serious threat is the danger of being marked by a Horror. Yes, even dragons fear the danger a Horror Mark poses. Given our innate skill and understanding of magic, no dragon dares risk becoming a victim of the Horrors' ability to corrupt from within. To allow such power to fall into the hands of the Horrors might well cost the world much more than we lost during the Scourge, and so most of us abandoned use of our innate spellcasting except when we were assured of safety, such as in our own lairs. In its place many of my kind took up the study of spell magic as other Namegivers performed it, using spell matrices to protect them from the pollution of astral space and the notice of the Horrors.

These techniques allow us to use spell magic safely, even though they require more time and learning than the abilities that come to us naturally. Because of the limitations of Namegiver spell magic, not all dragons bothered to learn these techniques. Many of them suffered for their lack of foresight, I can tell you.

We study the spells of the various disciplines much as you Young Races do, although we have no need for grimoires to record spell formulas and patterns. Such formulas and patterns are quite simple to memorize or impress in a memory crystal to pass on to others.

We also invent our own spells quite often. I have heard many legends of Namegivers stealing a dragon's grimoire, and I can tell you there is no truth to any of them. Even if a band of adventurers were to find a memory crystal used by a dragon to store spell patterns and lore, and remove it from the dragon's lair, there is no way known for any other Namegiver to make use of the information without the benefit of Dragonspeech.

There is some truth to tales of dragons teaching spells to Namegiver magicians. A spell pattern is a spell pattern, after all, and some rare magicians are clever enough to learn some useful spells from a dragon with the patience to teach. Magical lore is not given away cheaply, however, and it is frowned upon for a dragon to teach any magician secrets that might later come back to threaten us.

Most adult dragons choose to learn the spells of a particular discipline, such as elementalism or wizardry. As they grow older, most branch out into other disciplines. Great dragons generally know spells from several different disciplines, although some can be single-minded enough to focus solely on a single discipline for centuries. These dragons often develop considerable finesse in their use of spells, using more complex techniques to make their spells harder to dispel, or to create spell-traps for their lairs.

The process of using spells is the same for us as it is for any other Namegiver. We do have certain advantages over the Young Races, of course, such as our natural talent for using spells, our faster thought processes and a knack for understanding and recalling spell patterns. These allow dragons to cast complex spells far more quickly than any other Namegiver magician.

Game Information

As mentioned in the descriptions of the Spellcasting and Spells powers, many dragons make use of the spellcasting methods and techniques of Namegiver magicians. A dragon with the Spells power has learned to use the spells of one or more magician Disciplines. However, because of dragons' considerable skill with magic, the rules for their casting of spells in this manner are slightly different. The following rules also apply to any dragonlike creatures with the Spells power.

Spell Matrices

Dragons use spell matrices like other Namegivers. However, the spell matrices are a natural defense mechanism and thus, a dragon has no need to learn these like other Namegivers do. All of the normal spell matrix rules apply to dragons, including the need to reattune their matrices. See the Spellcasting power for more details.

Thread Weaving

Dragons weave threads to their spells like other spell-casters, using the Thread Weaving power. A dragon with multiple Standard Actions can use them to weave more than one thread at a time. For example, a dragon with "**Actions:** 4" could weave three threads for a spell and cast the spell in the same combat round.

Spell Effects

To determine the effect of a dragon's spell, use the dragon's Willpower Step. Dragons do not have the Willforce talent, nor do they ever learn it. This limitation represents the one true restriction dragons face when using the "primitive" spellcasting techniques of Namegivers.

Learning Spells

Dragons learn new spells using their Spellcasting power instead of the Read and Write Magic talent against the Learning Difficulty of the spell they wish to learn. A dragon generally knows all of the spells for the Circles it has in a Discipline.

Spellcasting Talent Knacks

Dragons may learn any of the Spellcasting or Thread Weaving talent knacks in the ***Player's Companion*** as a knack for their Spells power.

Dragons do not need the Spell Design talent knacks to design spells; their natural sense for magic allows them to do so. Dragons use their Spellcasting Step for all tests associated with designing new spells.

Thread Magic

Dragonsight gives all dragons the ability to see the patterns of things. From the very earliest times, we understood the importance of Names and patterns and learned how to use them to our advantage. Weaving connections to the True patterns of other things and beings is an ancient art among my kind.

We use thread magic in some of the same ways as other Namegivers: weaving threads from our True patterns to the patterns of other creatures and places via pattern items, in order to enhance our abilities in dealing with them. It is a common practice, for example, for a dragon to weave a thread to its lair. The thread's magic can be used to enhance one of the dragon's abilities within the lair or—more commonly—to enhance one of the lair's own properties; making its defenses stronger or its traps and wards more difficult to detect, for example.

Dragons also weave threads to other beings, but only rarely. We do not usually concern ourselves with the pattern items of other Namegivers, although some dragons have many pattern items in their hoards. We guard the nature and location of our own pattern items very carefully indeed. I know one dragon who nearly allowed one of his pattern items to fall into the hands of other Namegivers, a mistake which might have spelled his downfall if it had not been recovered. pattern items have great power, even over us.

There was once a practice of weaving threads to the True pattern of a trusted and valued Namegiver servant or champion. A dragon would show favor to the Namegiver by weaving threads to his pattern, providing magic to increase the champion's abilities. This practice has nearly died out in this age, as few Namegivers are willing to entrust a dragon with one of their pattern items, and our other servants are best left as we have made them. Still, a dragon with possession of a Namegiver's pattern item is in as much of a position to help them as to hurt them. Unlike you small folk, we do not weave threads to things very often. We do not use the magi-



cal devices and equipment that form the basis for so many tales and legends among your kind, so we have no need to weave such threads. Occasionally a dragon possesses a Named item of sufficient magic and power to weave a thread to power it, but most dragons I know do not bother with such things.

Our Dragonsight and intimate knowledge of patterns does allow us a certain insight into magical items few magicians or other Namegivers can match. Adepts have been known to bring items to a dragon to ask for aid in deciphering the object's pattern so they can use it. Doll-Maker often entertains such audiences in exchange for a suitable gift, but I prefer to keep such unwanted visitors away from my lair. Such Namegivers are better off to learn some true scholarship, in my view, rather than to look for quick answers from their betters.

Game Information

Dragons use thread magic like other Namegivers, using the Spellcasting and Thread Weaving powers. A dragon can have a maximum number of threads equal to its Thread Weaving Step, and each has a maximum thread Rank of 15. A dragon's hoard may contain many pattern items collected by the dragon over the years, and dragons very carefully guard their own pattern items. These rules for dragon thread magic apply to drakes as well.

Spirit Magic

As a general rule dragons do not traffic with spirits as often as the magicians and adepts of the Young Races do. Perhaps it is some inherent need on the part of you small creatures to command other beings to do your bidding, I cannot say. We dragons have servants enough without the need to surround ourselves with a flock of stubborn and strong-willed spirits, who are often more trouble then they are worth.

Not that spirits don't make useful servants. I frequently employ tasked spirits to carry out minor errands such as delivering messages to my noble associates elsewhere in Barsaive, tidying up my lair and keeping watch over the goings-on in my domain. These are tasks suited to a spirit. So is more specialized work, like calling on an earth spirit to dig a new tunnel into the mountain, or a water spirit to provide a new spring for drinking. For any of these things, I can call forth a spirit, set it to work and dismiss it when the task is done. For longer, more precise tasks requiring a level of intelligence, drakes are far more useful and agreeable. Spirits tend to become rebellious and quarrelsome over time.

Despite my words above, however, there are great dragons who make frequent and effective use of spirit servants, most often elemental spirits. Most often great dragons will use spirits native to the terrain of their lair as guards and servants. I leave it to your delightfully curious mind to ponder which great dragons use which types of spirits, as there are some secrets which need remain secret.

The one area of spirit magic we know best is tied to life magic, which I will explain in a moment.

We also have our dealings from time to time with spirits that are not our servants. Most of them steer well clear of us, as even powerful Named spirits know not to offend a dragon. We can see spirits where they are normally invisible to other Namegivers, and our powers are sufficient to deal with any upstart spirit that gets out of control. The mere sound of a dragon's roar is enough to send lesser spirits scattering like dead leaves before a gale wind.

Blood Magic

Dragons do not practice blood magic as other Namegivers do. Indeed, for the most part we do not practice blood magic at all, since it is a practice that is both dangerous and unnecessary for beings at our level of magical power and sophistication. Unfortunately, you Young Races have not yet learned the wisdom to handle blood magic properly, and your ignorance of its power and danger has done nothing to curb your usage of it. I sometimes think the Scourge taught you nothing.

The use of blood magic to empower spells and items (such as charms) is unknown among dragons. We have no need for the tiny power offered by blood charms, which some among the Young Races use to imitate dragons, giving themselves claws, armored skin and astral sight. I recall the first time I saw a Namegiver laden with these charms, which turned his whole body into a crude imitation of our most noble form. I was nearly paralyzed with mirth at the sight, although my good humor was cut short by his attempt to stab me with a spear. I demonstrated most eloquently the superiority of our natural abilities over his magical add-ons. In fact, I think I still have his stone-covered hide here somewhere. Perhaps I can show it to you later.

Likewise, the use of blood drawn from other creatures for magic is forbidden among dragons. It is a corrupt practice that cannot be tolerated among any Namegivers. That the Therans continue to use the sacrifice of slaves by the thousands to prop up their tottering Empire is another example of their corruption and ultimate road to doom. How little some learn from the mistakes of the past. Such a short-term gain in power is not worth its cost a short way down the path.

Two forms of blood magic are known and used among my kind. The first is what you Young Races call "life magic," a far more apt Name in my opinion. Life magic is a personal sacrifice of some kind to support an act of magic. It is used to create and seal oaths and to work powerful magic, and can also be used by us in the creation of new life. Dragons can and do use life magic for the creation of blood oaths among us, although such an oath is always a very serious matter. A blood oath may bind one of us for centuries, even millennia, so a dragon makes no promise lightly, especially one sealed in blood.

A kind of life magic is also used in the creation of our drake servants. Life must always come from life in some way, so the creator of a drake must make a sacrifice to spark the new creation's life force. The process is long and laborious, similar to spells and rituals employed by some nethermancers, but far more sophisticated.

Game Information

Although they are able to use blood magic like other Namegivers, dragons generally disdain it in favor of their other magical powers and abilities. Certain feathered dragons are the only dragons to regularly use blood magic. Dragons do not use blood charms or similar items, nor do they generally make use of death magic. They can and do use blood magic to seal oaths, and blood magic is also used in the Dance of Blue Spirits, the process by which great dragons create drakes. Dragons swear few if any blood oaths in their long lives. A pledge made by a dragon is a serious thing, since it may last for thousands of years.

Ritual Magic

Most of the magic I have spoken of until now is used by the Young Races in one form or another. We dragons may have more skill and experience, but the most capable of your magicians can duplicate many of the same feats of magic I have described. However, there is magic known only to dragons, magic beyond anything any other Namegiver race has ever accomplished.

I have told you of our Rites and Rituals, how they serve to maintain good relations between dragons. What you do not yet know are the rituals of great magical power, rites that allow us to cooperate not only socially but magically as well. Namegiver magicians have means by which lesser talents support greater ones; apprentices lending power to their teachers, servants to their masters. The rituals we work allow us to cooperate as peers, equal powers combining to perform magic far greater than any individual dragon could accomplish alone. In fact such magic is so powerful that I question whether any one individual or group should ever wield such power at all.

With the power of our magical rituals, we can change the face of the world: level mountains, flood plains, dry oceans and sink islands. We can change the course of the heavens, shake the foundations of the earth and even alter the very course of history forever. It is

the power to reweave the most primal patterns of existence into new forms, to speak to the Universe and be obeyed.

As you might well imagine, it is not a power to be used lightly. We once used our great power without the wisdom or foresight needed to wield it properly, and terrible mistakes were made. We have since learned restraint and the need to judge our every action in light of what might be the consequences. In the whole history of your kingdom, no ritual like I describe has been performed. It is difficult at best to gather enough dragons together in one place, to gain the cooperation needed to perform such a ritual is rare in the extreme. Since all of those who take part must agree fully that the ritual is necessary, it is an often debated and rarely settled issue. If we are fortunate and Fate is kind, this Age may never see the full power of dragon magic. However, it is my experience that Fate is rarely kind.

Like so many topics he discussed in the course of dictating this essay to me, Vasdenjas refused to elaborate on his cryptic comments concerning ritual magic. I thought to try to learn more by asking questions related to ritual magic, hoping to gradually shift the conversation to my true goal. I should have known better. Vasdenjas anticipated my every question, and every attempt to learn more was met with a quick and subtle rebuke. He finally convinced me to cease my efforts when, after assuming dwarf form once again, he looked directly into my eyes and said to me

"Tiabdjin, you might believe that I and my kind fear nothing, and that there is nothing we would not dare attempt. In truth, there are things that even great dragons dare not meddle with. Ritual magic is one of them."

I needed to hear nothing further.

Game Information

No rules are given for dragon ritual magic. Suffice to say that such massively powerful magical rituals are capable of causing vast changes in the forces of nature, the structure of astral space and even in the very fabric of reality itself. A dragon ritual could certainly destroy a city or an entire nation. They are greater in power than Thirteenth Circle or higher spells, like Call Forth the Maelstrom, Call Forth the Army of Decay, or City in a Bottle.

Dragon rituals take time, effort and the presence of several dragons working in concert. They are magic on a truly epic scope. As such, they are better treated as major events in the history of a campaign rather than simple spells. Keep in mind that ritual magic has not been performed by any of the dragons of Barsaive since long before the Scourge and perhaps even longer before that. These massively powerful rituals are not something that dragons invoke lightly. As Vasdenjas points out in his treatise, the dragons of Barsaive have learned from their past mistakes.

DRAGON POWERS

Dragons have a wide range of magical powers at their command. All dragons have at least some of the powers listed here, and great dragons often have all of these powers (and more) to call upon. Adult dragons always have the Disrupt Fate, Dragon Breath, and Fear powers, as well as their other innate abilities including Armored Scales, Astral Sight, Karma, and Regeneration (see below). As a dragon ages, it is able to improve its existing powers and to develop and learn more powers, not unlike the modification of an adept's True pattern over time as the adept improves and learns more talents.

Dragon Power Knacks

In addition to their various powers, many dragons also develop dragon power knacks. These are similar to an adept's talent knacks, and allow dragons to use their powers in new and different ways. Some dragons know many power knacks while others know very few.

Most adult dragons choose to specialize in learning knacks for a few powers. Great dragons often know many, many knacks for their various powers, learned over their extremely long lives. The gamemaster can decide if a dragon knows any of the power knacks described here and should also feel free to create new power knacks to ensure that dragons and their powers are always an unknown quantity. Example knacks are listed for a number of the dragon powers described below.

ARMORED SCALES

Step: Rank+TOU (see text) **Action:** NA

A dragon's armored hide provides great physical and magical protection against attack. Use the Armored Scales Step Number as the dragon's Physical Armor Rating. Add the dragon's Armored Scales Rank to its Mystic Armor Rating. Only attacks that score an Extraordinary result against the dragon's Physical Defense achieve an Armor-Defeating Hit. Mystic Armor protects against magical attacks in the same way; any attacks made against the dragon's Spell Defense must achieve an Extraordinary result to bypass the dragon's Mystic Armor.

DISPEL MAGIC

Step: Rank+WIL **Action:** Simple

With their power over the forces of magic, many dragons can dispel many types of magic at will. A dragon using this power makes a Spellcasting Test against the Spell Defense of the magician who cast the target spell, or of the creature or character that created the magical effect the dragons wishes to dispel. The range of this power is 30 yards (15 hexes). If the test succeeds, the dragon makes a Dispel Magic Test against the spell's Dispel Difficulty (see **Dispelling Magic** in the **Spell Magic** chapter on p.138 of the ***Player's Guide***). If this test is successful, the spell is broken and immediately ends.

This power can also be used to dispel other magical effects and abilities, such as talents and creature abilities (including Horror and dragon powers) that have a sustained duration. The Dispel Difficulty for creature powers is based on the Step Number of the power or ability. The Dispel Difficulty for talents is based on the talent's Rank. Find the Step Number (or Rank, in the case of talents) on the Circle column of the Dispel Difficulty Table. The corresponding Dispel Difficulty is used for the talent or power to be dispelled. If a creature power or ability Step Number is higher than 15, add +1 to the Dispel Difficulty for each Step above 15. For example, the Horror power Corrupt Reality at Step 17 would have a Dispel Difficulty of 28 (26+2).

DISRUPT FATE

Step: Rank+WIL **Action:** Free

Dragons with this power can alter the fate of other creatures. To use this ability the dragon spends a Karma Point, which entitles it to make an immediate Disrupt Fate Test against the Spell Defense of a target character or creature. The range of this power is line of sight. If the test succeeds, the target must immediately repeat the most recent test he made. The new test result stands, and cannot be disrupted a second time. Disrupt Fate counts as a Simple Action. As long as the dragon has Karma Points, it may make as many Disrupt Fate Tests as there are targets. Note that the Karma Point expenditure entitles the dragon to use its Disrupt Fate ability; the dragon does not roll any Karma dice when making a Disrupt Fate Test.

Dominate Beast

Step: Rank+WIL **Action:** Standard

This power allows a dragon to control beasts, similar to the Beastmaster talent of the same name. To use this power, the dragon makes a Dominate Beast Test against the Spell Defense of the beast(s) the dragon wishes to control. If successful, the dragon controls the target creature(s) for a number of minutes equal to its Dominate Beast Step. An animal under the effect of this power will not take any hostile action against the dragon, and will perform one simple task for the dragon that does not exceed the duration of the power.

The great dragons Aban and Usun both possess this power, using it to control the various creatures living in their respective homes in the Mist Swamps and the Liaj Jungle.

Dominate Beast Knacks

Some knacks based on the Dominate Beast power include:

Beast's Eyes

This knack allows the dragon to perceive through the senses of any beast it dominates. To use this knack the dragon makes a Dominate Beast Test against the Spell Defense of the dominated beast. If the test succeeds, the dragon can perceives everything the beast perceives. Dragons with this knack, including Aban and Usun, use dominated beasts in their domain as scouts and spies.

Stampede

A dragon with this knack can cause a group of animals to stampede in a specific direction like the Incite Stampede talent. Using this knack requires only a single action. The dragon makes a Dominate Beast Test in place of the Incite Stampede Test.

Dragon Breath

Step: Rank+WIL **Action:** Simple

The most famed and feared power of dragons is their fiery breath. Every culture has horrific legends of the destruction of villages, towns, and cities by furious dragons. Dragon Breath targets everything within a 90-degree arc, using the dragon's mouth as the arc's center. The distance the arc extends is based on how much Strain the dragon is willing to take, as shown on the Dragon Breath Table.

Dragon Breath engulfs every target within the arc. Each arc of Dragon Breath requires one of the dragon's actions. If it has enough actions available, a dragon may lay down more than one fiery arc per round. To determine which targets within the area of effect are damaged by Dragon Breath, the dragon makes a Spellcasting Test and compares the result against the Spell Defense of each target within the arc. If the test succeeds, the target catches fire, taking damage as a result. As long as the dragon stays within 1,000 yards of the flames, they cannot be extinguished by normal means. Only a successful Willpower or Dispel Magic Test against the dragon's Spell Defense can put out the Dragon Breath fire. The affected character makes the appropriate test; if the test is successful, the flames stop burning.

A burning target takes damage during each combat round that the fire burns. The dragon makes a Dragon Breath Test each round as a Damage Test. If the Dragon Breath attack inflicted an Armor Defeating Hit, even normally non-combustible objects burn. Dragon fire can burn anything, including weapons, boulders, bricks, and metal or crystal armor. Burning armor degrades at a rate of 2 Armor Points per combat round. Weapons degrade at the rate of 2 Damage Steps per combat round. These losses are spread evenly among whatever Damage Steps or Armor Ratings the object has. For example, a ferndask shield would lose 1 point from each of Physical and Mystic Armor each round when burning, rather than losing 2 points from either the shield's Physical or Mystic Armor. Once the object's Damage Step or Physical Armor Rating reaches 0, the object is reduced to slag.

DRAGON BREATH TABLE

Strain Cost	Range
1 Strain Point	10 yards (5 hexes)
5 Strain Points	20 yards (10 hexes)
15 Strain Points	40 yards (20 hexes)
30 Strain Points	60 yards (30 hexes)

Dragon Breath Knacks

Dragons have developed various power knacks to control and refine the power of Dragon Breath, such as the following:

Flame Spout

With this knack, the dragon breathes a line or bolt of flame at a single target, rather than an arc. The Strain cost of a Flame Spout is half the normal cost (round up) and it causes normal Dragon Breath damage to its target. A dragon can use this knack to strike at multiple targets in one attack with individual bolts of flame, as long as all the intended targets are spread out no further than 50 yards. The dragon uses the knack as described, but takes an extra 3 Strain for each additional target above the first.

Flame Ball

Using Flame Ball, a dragon can spit a bolt of flame that explodes into a sphere of fire on impact with its target, creating an effect similar to the elementalist spell Fireball. The sphere has a radius equal to half the range of the bolt, based on the Strain taken by the dragon. For example, a Flame Ball with a range of 100 yards has a 50 yard radius.

The dragon makes a normal Spellcasting Test and compares the result against the Spell Defense of all the targets within the radius of the fireball to determine who takes damage. Damage from a flame ball attack continues to damage the targets each round as normal for Dragon Breath.

Friendly Fire

Dragons with this power knack have the amazing ability to choose which targets are affected by their Dragon Breath and which are not. Targets in the affected arc whom the dragon chooses not to affect are completely unharmed by the dragon fire. Their clothing and equipment aren't even singed. Other targets take damage normally.

This knack is so selective that a dragon can use it to burn a Namegiver to ash while leaving his clothing and equipment untouched (or vice-versa, leaving a helpless and likely very embarrassed Namegiver).

Smoke Cloud

The dragon using this knack breathes not fire, but a thick cloud of choking black smoke. The smoke covers an arc similar to the Dragon Breath. The dragon makes a Spellcasting Test and compares the result against the Spell Defense of each target within the intended area effect. If successful, the dragon makes a Dragon Breath Test to determine how much damage the targets take from the heat and choking vapors.

Targets do not burn, but temporary blindness will cause them to suffer a –3 penalty to all Action Tests for the next 5 rounds. A character can make a Willpower or Dispel Magic Test against the dragon's Spell Defense to overcome this penalty; a successful test result allows the character to see and removes the penalty from that character.

Dragonsight

Step: Rank+PER
Action: Standard

Dragons are naturally attuned to astral space, allowing them to see astral forms at will. To use this power, the dragon makes a Dragonsight Test. If the result of the test exceeds the Spell Defense

of any subject within the dragon's line of sight, the dragon can see the astral image of the subject. The Dragonsight power is a heightened version of the Astral Sight talent. Unlike most Namegivers, dragons do not have to spend Strain to use it. For more information about the use of Astral Sight and other astral sensing abilities, see the **Workings of Magic** chapter in the ***Player's Guide***, p.104.

Dragonsight Knacks

Many dragons develop power knacks using their Dragonsight. Any of the Astral Sight talent knacks from the Talent Knacks chapter of the ***Player's Companion***, may be learned by dragons as Dragonsight power knacks. Dragons also have some unique Dragonsight knacks of their own:

Item History

This knack functions exactly like the Item History talent except the dragon uses its Dragonsight Step in place of the Talent Step, and the dragon needs to study the item for only a day, not a full week. Use the results of the dragon's Item History Test normally for determining an item's Key Knowledges. Some dragons (including Icewing) have been known to perform Item History on powerful magical items with high Spell Defenses), in exchange for future favors from adventurers.

Matrix Strike

With the Matrix Strike knack, a dragon can attack a magician's spell matrices in astral space, just like the Matrix Strike talent. To use this power, the dragon must have first detected the astral image of the target with a Dragonsight Test. The dragon then makes a Spellcasting Test against the target magician's Spell Defense. A successful test damages one of the target's spell matrices. Dragons can attack matrices only with their claws when using this power. The target's Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

Spirit Strike

This knack allows the dragon to strike at opponents from astral space, just like the Spirit Strike talent. To use this power, the dragon must have first detected the astral image of the target with a Dragonsight Test. The dragon then makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If successful, the dragon causes normal attack damage. Mystic Armor protects against this damage, but defensive talents such as Avoid Blow cannot be used to avoid a Spirit Strike.

True Sight

Dragons are difficult to fool, and dragons with this knack are even more so. True Sight allows a dragon to see through illusions, like the talent of the same name. To use this knack the dragon makes a Dragonsight Test against the Disbelief Difficulty of each illusion to overcome it.

See **Illusions** on p.139 of the ***Player's Guide*** for more information.

DRAGONSPEECH

Step: Rank+PER **Action:** Standard

All adult dragons have the Dragonspeech power. It allows the dragon to transmit its thoughts as speech to any being within the dragon's line of sight, by making a successful Dragonspeech Test against the being's Spell Defense. The dragon can also send simple images as well as speech through its mental link. A target that wishes to hear the dragon's mental speech can voluntarily lower its Spell Defense, of course, although considering the further probing Dragonspeech can be used for, it is not always wise to trust a dragon. Under normal circumstances, the gamemaster can assume a dragon's use of Dragonspeech is successful, unless the subject has a Spell Defense higher than the dragon's Spellcasting Step.

Dragonspeech is the natural method of communication for dragons, and they use it most often among themselves. It is also useful because it transcends language, allowing a dragon to speak to another being whether or not it understands the subject's language.

Dragonspeech Knacks

Most dragons hardly bother with Dragonspeech except among their own kind, but some have developed a number of power knacks using Dragonspeech, including the following:

Animal Talk

This knack allows the dragon to communicate with animals using Dragonspeech. This knack is commonly used by Leviathans to communicate with other underwater creatures and summon them to protect their underwater domain and lairs.

Read Thoughts

This knack allows the dragon to not only project its own thoughts, but to read the surface thoughts of any being it can see, with a successful Dragonspeech Test against the subject's Spell Defense. This permits two-way mental communication between the dragon and the subject, transcending language barriers. It also allows the dragon to know what the subject is thinking. A successful Willpower or Willforce Test against the result of the dragon's Dragonspeech Test is required to successfully hide a thought from the dragon, or to tell a lie. Dragons with this knack tend to have great insight into other Namegivers.

Learn Language

By touching the mind of a subject using Dragonspeech, the dragon can learn any language the subject knows. The dragon makes a Dragonspeech Test against the subject's Spell Defense. On an Excellent result, the dragon learns one language the subject knows, speaking and reading it as fluently as the subject can.

Thought Probe

Thought Probe is one step more advanced than Read Thoughts. It allows the dragon to sift through the thoughts and memories of a subject like hunting through a pile of coin and gems. With a successful Dragonspeech Test, the dragon can probe the subject's mind for a particular memory or piece of information. The result level of the Test determines what information the dragon can dig up. An Average result allows the dragon to locate any memory up to a day old; a Good result up to a week old; an Excellent result up to a year old; an Extraordinary result can locate any memory, even information the subject is not consciously aware of. In addition to gaining useful information from unwilling subjects, dragons can use this knack to read the memories of willing subjects (such as drake and Namegiver servants). This allows a dragon to directly experience what its servant experienced.

Second Sight

Using the Second Sight knack, a dragon can use Dragonspeech to perceive through the senses of another being, with or without that being's consent. The dragon must first establish a connection to the subject via thread magic to use this knack. Once this is accomplished the dragon may, at any time, make a Dragonspeech Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the dragon gains access to one of the subject's senses for each result level achieved. An Extraordinary result allows the dragon to perceive with all of the subject's senses. The dragon does not have any direct power over the subject using this knack; in fact, the subject is not even aware the dragon is eavesdropping, unless the dragon achieves a Poor result on its Dragonspeech Test, in which case the subject feels a brief sensation of being watched.

Suggestion

The Suggestion knack allows a dragon to mentally plant a suggestion in the target's mind, similar to a powerful post-hypnotic suggestion. The dragon makes a Dragonspeech Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the dragon may implant a single suggestion. This can be something immediate or it can be triggered by later circumstances. To overcome the suggestion, the victim must make a Willpower Test against the dragon's Dragonspeech Step. Otherwise, the victim follows the suggestion as if it were his own idea.

Reweave Mind

This is the most powerful and sophisticated knack of Dragonspeech—the ability to tear the fabric of a living mind and reweave it to the dragon's will. The great dragon Mountainshadow is known to have reached this level of ability, but few other dragons can hope to do so. With Reweave Mind, a dragon can mentally reshape the fabric of the subject's mind, altering, removing or restoring memories, changing personality and so forth. The process is not fast, even for the powerful mind of a dragon. Any attempt at Reweave Mind takes at least one hour, longer if the changes are more complex. The dragon makes a Dragonspeech Test against the subject's Spell Defense. On an Excellent result, this power allows the dragon to alter the subject's memories and such at will. An Extraordinary result is required to make fundamental changes in personality or vital memories. Any other result has no effect on the subject. This power can also literally rebuild a mind shattered by illness or madness.

DURABILITY

Step: Rank **Action:** NA

The Durability power increases a dragon's ability to take damage. Each Durability Rank permanently increases a dragon's Death and Unconsciousness Ratings. The amount of this increase is determined by the type of dragon. The Dragon Durability Increase Table shows the appropriate increase per Durability Rank listed as two numbers separated by a slash. The number to the left of the slash represents the increase to the dragon's Death Rating. The number to the right represents the increase to the dragon's Unconsciousness Rating. If a dragon has learned a Discipline which employs higher Durability ratings, these values are replaced by those of the Discipline.

DRAGON DURABILITY INCREASE TABLE

Age	Increase
Dragon-kin	6 / 5
Dragonlike creatures	7 / 6
Dragons	8 / 7
Great Dragons	9 / 8

FEAR

Step: Rank+Charisma **Action:** Standard

Dragons radiate a fearsome aura. Many heroes who try to confront a dragon flee in terror upon seeing the beast. To use its Fear power, a dragon makes a Fear Test and compares the result against the Spell Defense of all characters and creatures within 40 yards (20 hexes). Within this distance, the dragon's bellow rattles the ground, enough to make the most dauntless character nervous. A successful test result means the dragon's Fear power affects the characters; its victims tremble, sweat, stammer and exhibit other hallmarks of extreme fright. The result of the Fear Test becomes the Difficulty Number for any attempts to resist the dragon's Fear power. Before an affected character can take any action that requires a test, he must resist the effect of the Fear power by making a successful Willpower Test against that Difficulty Number. While under the influence of Fear, however, he can move, talk, or perform other actions that do not require tests.

Fear Knacks

Some of the more common Fear knacks include:

Awe

A dragon using this power knack does not inspire just fear but more of a powerful sense of awe and respect mixed with a touch of fear. The effects are the same as described for Fear, except victims are less frightened, and more impressed.

Paralyzing Gaze

This knack allows a dragon to focus the power of its Fear on a single individual, rendering that character incapable of any action. The dragon makes its Fear Test normally. If it is successful, the victim is paralyzed, unable to do anything except stare in fear at the dragon for as long as the dragon's gaze is upon him. In order to take any action at all, the victim must make a successful Willpower Test against the result of the dragon's Fear Test.

Terror

The Terror knack allows a dragon to instill blind panic in its victims. It costs the dragon 5 Strain. On a successful Fear Test, the victim flees from the dragon as quickly as possible. To take any action other than fleeing madly, the victim must make a Willpower Test against the result of the dragon's Fear Test.

KARMA CANCEL

Step: Rank+WIL **Action:** Simple

Karma Cancel allows a dragon to override another character's use of Karma. The dragon makes a Karma Cancel Test against the target character's Spell Defense. The range of this power is line of sight. If successful, the dragon may spend a Karma Point to cancel the target's use of Karma. If a target spends multiple Karma Points (such as for the use of the True Shot talent), the dragon must spend the same number of points to cancel them. Karma Cancel does not require an action; a dragon may attempt to cancel an opponent's use of Karma at any time so long as it still has Karma Points to spend.

Karma Cancel Knacks

Some knacks based on the Karma Cancel power include:

Lend Karma

The Lend Karma knack allows a dragon to give Karma Points or lend its Karma Step to any other being it can see or that the dragon has woven a thread to. The dragon makes a Karma Cancel Test against the target's Spell Defense (a willing target may lower his Spell Defense; see the **Spell Magic** chapter on p.133 of the ***Player's Guide*** for rules on how to do this). If the test succeeds, the dragon can transfer 1 Karma Point from its own Karma pool to the target for each result level achieved. The target may spend the Karma Points he receives from this knack as normal. For example, a dragon who achieves a Good result on a Karma Cancel Test may give the target up to 2 Karma Points.

Alternatively, the dragon may "lend" the target its own Karma Step for a number of rounds equal to the result level achieved. An Average result equals 1 round; a Good result, 2 rounds; an Excellent result, 3 rounds; an Extraordinary result equals 4 rounds. The target spends his own Karma Points as normal, but rolls Karma dice based on the dragon's Karma Step instead of his own.

KARMA POINTS

Step: Special (see text) **Action:** NA

All dragons have Karma Points they may use to augment any of their Action Tests. A dragon may spend only 1 Karma Point per test.

LAIR SENSE

Step: Rank+PER **Action:** Free

A dragon makes its lair an extension of itself, and can use Lair Sense to notice intruders anywhere within its lair. Whenever a character makes a test within the confines of the dragon's lair, he triggers the dragon's Lair Sense. Simple movement and quiet conversation tend not to activate this power, thought they can on occasion. To use this ability, the dragon makes a Lair Sense Test against the Spell Defense of the character whose action activated the power. If the test succeeds, the dragon detects the character and his location within the lair. Dragons often booby-trap their lairs to take advantage of this power, forcing characters to beat the traps by performing an action that reveals their presence.

Lair Sense Knacks

Many dragons develop Lair Sense knacks, like the following:

Absent Lair Sense

Lair Sense normally works only when the dragon is in its lair, protecting the dragon from being surprised while in *shal-mora* or otherwise distracted. A dragon with this knack may use Lair Sense to detect intruders even while away from its lair. The Lair Sense works normally otherwise. Characters who wait for a dragon to depart before raiding its lair may still be in for a surprise if they trigger the dragon's Lair Sense.

Identify Intruder

A dragon with this knack not only senses the presence of an intruder, but also gains some information about him. The dragon gets a visual image of the intruder in his mind and knows his Name. The dragon may recognize characters with sufficient Legendary Status and will certainly recognize anyone it has encountered before.

Lair Mark

This knack allows a dragon to place an invisible astral "mark" on a character detected by its Lair Sense. The dragon makes a Lair Sense Test against the target character's Spell Defense. If successful, the dragon is able to know the exact location of the marked character for a year and a day, up to 5,000 miles away from the dragon. The mark does not allow the dragon to affect the character in any way, just to know his location. Many Namegivers who thought that they had successfully robbed a dragon's lair have been hunted down using this knack.

Lair Vision

With this knack, a dragon whose Lair Sense detects an intruder can see and hear everything happening at the intruder's location in the lair as if the dragon were physically present. This allows the dragon to see any companions the intruder might have, and to listen in on their plans. Many would-be dragon hunters have been surprised to find their prey waiting as if the dragon was expecting them.

REGENERATION

Step: Rank+TOU **Action:** Simple

Dragons can regenerate any damage done to them by opponents. To activate this power, the dragon must sacrifice a Recovery Test and spend 1 Karma Point. The dragon then makes a Regeneration Test, and reduces its Current Damage by the total.

Regeneration Knacks

Great dragons developed a powerful knack for the Regeneration power:

Regrowth

Similar to the regenerative capacity of some reptiles, dragons with the Regrowth knack can actually regenerate lost body parts, so long as the dragon's brain and spine are intact. The lost part regrows once the dragon's Current Damage and Wounds are fully healed, at a cost of one Recovery Test for a small body part like a talon, and up to five Recovery Tests for a limb. Regrowth takes a number of days equal to the number of Recovery Tests required.

SKILLS

Step: Special (see text) **Action:** Special (see text)

Some Dragons have powers based on skills. Refer to the **Skills** chapter on p.87 of the ***Player's Guide*** for a description of each skill and how it works.

SPELLCASTING

Step: Rank+PER **Action:** Standard

All adult dragons know how to use spell magic. The ability to manipulate the energies of astral space is inherent. Dragons can use their Spellcasting power to cast any spell as Raw Magic. The dragon doesn't need to know the spell, it simply shapes the astral energy to its will and the spell happens. This is a natural ability for dragons. For a long time, dragons performed all of their magic in this way, grabbing magical energy and shaping it to their wills.

Dragons use the Thread Weaving power when casting spells in this manner (***Player's Guide***, p.83). Hatchlings using this ability must weave all the threads necessary for the spell they wish to cast. Adult dragons need weave only one-half (rounded down) the required threads for any spells they cast in this manner, while great dragons need not weave any threads for spells they cast using this ability.

Dragons automatically receive a number of spell matrices equal to their Spellcasting Step divided by 4 (rounded up). One out of every three of a dragon's matrices are Enhanced Matrices and one out of every six are Armored Matrices. For example, a dragon with a Spellcasting Step of 23 would have 23/4=5.75, rounded up to 6 spell matrices. Three of these would be standard spell matrices, two would be Enhanced Matrices and one would be an Armored Matrix. All of a dragon's matrices have a Rank equal to that of the maximum Circle spell the dragon can cast.

Despite the versatility and power of this ability, not all dragons exploit the full potential of their spellcasting abilities. With the tainting of astral space by the Horrors, the use of Raw Magic is dangerous, even to creatures as powerful as dragons. For this reason, many dragons have adopted the more complex forms of spell magic practiced by other Namegivers.

SPELLS

Step: Special (see text) **Action:** NA

Dragons are natural born spellcasters, with an inherent knowledge of the workings of magic. They use spell magic regularly. This power refers to the dragon's use of spell magic as practiced by magician adepts (spell matrices, threads, etc.), but dragons also have their own unique form of spell magic.

SUMMONING

Step: Rank+WIL **Action:** Standard

Dragons may summon any kind of spirit by making a Summoning Test against the spirit's Spell Defense. For each result level achieved on the test, the spirit will perform one service for the dragon summoner. After summoning a spirit, the dragon makes a Willpower Test, the result of which determines the number of days the spirit remains in service. For complete information on summoning spirits, see the ***Player's Guide*** on p.211.

SUPPRESS MAGIC

Step: Rank+WIL **Action:** Standard

With their natural knack for manipulating astral space, most dragons can suppress magic used by other creatures. To use the Suppress Magic ability, the dragon makes a Suppress Magic Test against the target's Spell Defense. The range of this power is 30 yards (15 hexes). If the test succeeds, the dragon reduces the target's use of magic by a number of Steps equal to its Suppress Magic Rank. In addition to reducing spells, Suppress Magic reduces the Step Numbers of all talents, the damage from magical weapons, and any other magic use. Suppress Magic lasts for a number of rounds equal to the Suppress Magic Test result. If it prefers, a dragon can use this ability to suppress one specific type of magic, such as talents, magic items or spells, instead of suppressing all types.

TALENTS

Step: Special (see text) **Action:** Special (see text)

Many dragons have powers based on adept talents. Refer to the **Talents** chapter on p.57 of the ***Player's Guide*** for a description of the talent in question. Dragons ignore any Karma requirements listed with a talent. Dragons cannot learn the Willforce talent.

VENOM

Step: Rank+WIL **Action:** NA

Dragons with this power have venomous teeth and claws, and any tooth or claw attack that causes damage to a character also poisons him. No test is required for a dragon to affect a character with poison—if the character is physically struck and damaged by tooth or claw, he is automatically affected by it. After taking damage from a dragon's teeth or claws, a character must make a successful Toughness Test against the dragon's Spell Defense each round for 10 consecutive rounds to resist the effects of the venom. If the character fails a Poison Resistance Test, the dragon makes a Venom Test to determine how much damage the character takes from the Venom. (For more information on poisons and how they work, see the **Adventuring** chapter, p.108.) Each use of the Venom power lasts for 10 rounds, after which time the poison ceases to damage the character. A single target can only suffer damage from one use of the Venom power at a time.

Venom Knacks

Typical knacks based on the Venom power include:

Pain Venom

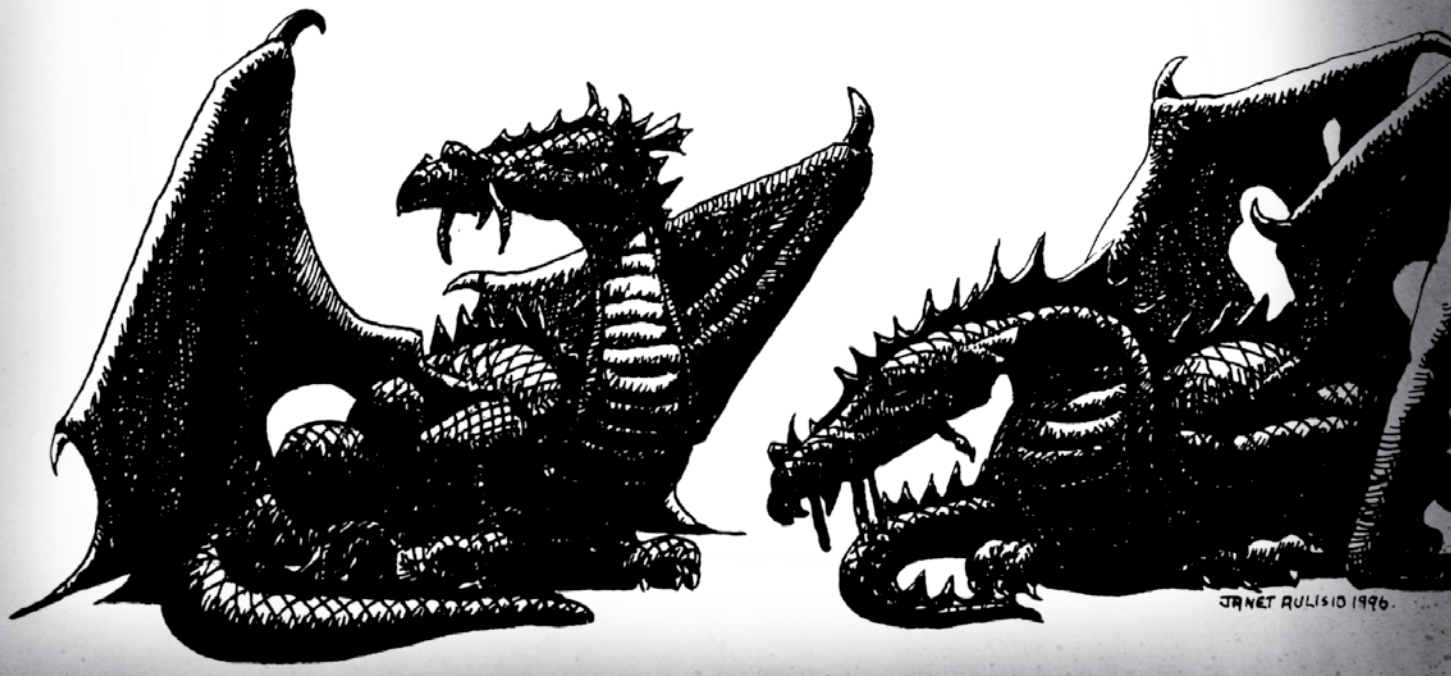
Instead of causing damage, the Venom of a dragon with this knack causes excruciating pain, rendering most victims unable to do anything except writhe on the ground in agony. The dragon makes the Venom Test as usual, except the result becomes the Difficulty Number for the victim to take any action. Each round, the poisoned character must make a Willpower Test against this Difficulty Number in order to take any action. The Venom lasts for 10 rounds as normal.

Sleep Venom

A dragon with this knack can use its Venom power to render victims unconscious, rather than killing them. Damage from the venom ceases to affect the victim once his Current Damage reaches his Unconsciousness Rating. Venom damage done when using this knack does not kill the victim.

Spit Venom

Some dragons have the ability to spit or spray venom from their mouths. A dragon with this knack makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the dragon makes a Venom Test to determine how much damage is inflicted on the victim from the corrosive venom. Physical Armor protects against this damage. On an Extraordinary result, the dragon's venom hits the target's eyes, causing full Blindness for 10 rounds (see the **Combat** chapter on p.214 of the ***Player's Guide***), in addition to the damage caused by the venom.



Wingbeat

Step: Rank+DEX **Action:** Standard

Winged dragons can use their wings to knock over opponents. The dragon makes a Wingbeat Test, the result of which is compared against the Physical Defense of each character up to 8 yards (4 hexes) away, in a 90 degree arc from the front of the dragon. If the test succeeds, the dragon's wing hits the character.

The test result also becomes the Difficulty Number for the Knockdown Test that any character struck by the wings must perform. Any character who fails the Knockdown Test is knocked down and moved backward a number of yards equal to the difference between the Difficulty Number and the result of the Knockdown Test. For example, a character whose Knockdown Test result is 11 points less than the Difficulty Number would be knocked backwards 11 yards. This can be especially hazardous for characters fighting a dragon somewhere high up, like the deck of an airship or a mountain top.

Wingbeat Knacks

The following knack is available to dragons with the Wingbeat power:

Dust Cloud

A dragon using this knack can stir up a cloud of dust, dirt, sand, ash or similar material using the winds generated by beating its wings. The dragon makes a Wingbeat Test and the result becomes the range in yards that the cloud extends in all directions from the dragon. Any characters in the dust cloud suffer a –3 penalty to their Action Tests from the flying, stinging dust. The cloud lasts for 5 rounds, after which it settles harmlessly to the ground.

Dragonkin

Dragonkin are Namegivers born of or descended from the mating of a Namegiver and a dragon in Namegiver form. They have certain unique abilities as a result of their heritage. Without careful breeding and a regular infusion of dragon blood, most families of dragonkin become ordinary Namegivers after many generations as the dragon blood is slowly diluted. Dragon tradition now forbids dragons mating with any of the Young Races to produce dragon-kin, and the practice has been banned since the dawn of the Age of Legend™. Violating this tradition is one of the few actions that is likely to result in a dragon being banished from dragon society. As a result, the number of these Namegivers in Barsaive is extremely small and is constantly decreasing.

Any Namegiver race can produce dragon-kin, with the exception of the obsidimen, who do not reproduce as other Namegivers do. Because of this, dragonkin are less of a "race" and more of a "subspecies" of their Namegiver parent race, but also sharing certain characteristics with the dragon side of their mixed heritage. Dragonkin are capable of breeding with other members of their Namegiver parent's race, and their children are generally dragonkin as well, with the trait appearing for generations.

It is a closely guarded secret that the Denairastas Clan of Iopos is the only extended family of dragonkin currently in existence, though the great dragons of Barsaive may know of or suspect others. The Denairastas are the children of the great dragon Denairastas who chose to violate dragon tradition by mating with a human female sometime before the Scourge. This dragon, now banished from dragon society, lairs in the Scol Mountains and is one of the most powerful allies of the Denairastas clan.

Aside from the great dragons' original servants, the Denairastas Clan are the only known living dragonkin in Barsaive, perhaps in the entire world. Members of the Denairastas Clan cover their various dragon traits using clothing, makeup and illusionism magic. Those children with deformities too severe to be concealed are generally killed, although there are rumors that Uhl Denairastas keeps some of them alive to perform experiments requiring dragonkin subjects.

Legends among the t'skrang insist that members of House Syrtis are descended from a dragon, but the truth of these tales is not known.

Other families and lineages of dragonkin may exist in Barsaive, keeping their heritage secret out of fear of persecution from both the dragons and other Namegivers. The gamemaster can introduce such isolated dragonkin into the campaign as desired. Violating this tradition is one of the most serious transgressions a dragon can commit, and none of Barsaive's great dragons would ever consider doing so.

Creating Dragonkin Characters

Dragonkin have the normal racial abilities and modifiers of their Namegiver parent, with an additional +1 to their Perception and Willpower values. All dragonkin also have the Racial Abilities of Astral Sight and Low-Light Vision. Their abilities make dragonkin natural-born spellcasters, and many of them follow one or more of the magician Disciplines.

Dragonkin all have at least one physical deformity or trait tied to their dragon blood, sometimes more than one. Common traits include scaly patches of skin, pointed ears, oddly colored eyes, eyes that feature slitted pupils, or eyes that lack pupils altogether. Other traits include webbed fingers and/or toes, a vestigial tail or wings, small horns, pronounced canine teeth, a complete lack of body hair, or bony deposits on the skin similar to heavy scales. These traits make the character recognizable to anyone familiar with dragonkin (particularly any dragon). Most dragons strongly dislike dragon-kin. Drakes particularly detest dragon-kin, perhaps because they are jealous of their close kinship with their dragon masters. Namegivers unaware of the dragon-kin's heritage will often think him cursed or Horror-touched.

Dragonlike Creatures

In addition to the information he provided on the different types of dragons, I prevailed upon Master Vasdenjas to provide more information on some of the various dragonlike creatures living in Barsaive. These include drakes (shape-shifting servants of the dragons), hydras and (at my insistence) wyverns. Some of the information below is most intriguing. See my commentary, as follows.

—By the Hand of Tiabdjin the Knower, scribe of the Great Library of Throal and First Scholar of the khavro'am

There are some creatures in Barsaive that resemble dragon-kind, but they are not dragons, nor should they be considered as such, any more than you would consider a pangolus or a blood monkey related to your good self, Tiabdjin.

Still, these beings, specifically drakes and hydras, share some of our nature and abilities, through design in both cases, the first brilliant and the second tragic. This does make them worthy subjects for this tome.

Drakes

As I have said, some dragons are served by members of the Young Races. Most great dragons such as myself, however, prefer to avoid becoming entangled with the culture of other Namegivers. Given

this, there remained the matter of who would serve us in the society of the Namegivers. To solve the problem, we created the drakes to be our eyes, ears and hands in the world, so we would not need to trouble ourselves with minor details and trifling tasks. Drakes have been the finest servants we could ask for, far better than those of the past, in my opinion.

Servants of the past, Master?

Don't change the subject, Tiabdjin.

Drakes are not Namegivers. They are not born from others of their kind, but made using powerful magic. The enchantments used in creating a single drake are complex, lengthy and involved, far beyond the understanding of any of your people. These enchantments are so complex that they are beyond the skills of even most adult dragons, never mind magicians of the Young Races. The enchantments are also quite exhausting, for the spark of life to create the drake must come from its maker. Drakes are our magical children, in a manner of speaking, rather than children born of mating. Once the drake is formed, it is given a Name of its own.

Since the process of making a drake is so involved, we create fairly few of them, just enough to see to our needs. Only the most powerful dragons create drakes as servants, and our traditions define a limit on the number of drake servants a dragon may create as a matter of rank and status among us. Great dragons are generally the only dragons with the power and prestige sufficient to have more than a single drake. Adult dragons have but one, if any, and most make do without drakes at all, having Namegiver servants or no servants whatsoever.

Apart from their unique origin, drakes are much like Namegivers in all other respects. They eat, sleep and require air just like you do (although drakes do not require as much sleep as the Young Races; part of their dragon heritage). In their natural form, drakes look like miniature dragons, perhaps seven to eight feet in length. They resemble the type of dragon who created them, so my own drakes appear as western, Barsaivian dragons, with a coloration similar to my own. A knowledgeable dragon can tell a drake's creator and master at a glance, without ever having seen the drake before.

Feathered dragons tend to create drakes far less frequently than western dragons, the former preferring Namegiver servants. Leviathans only very rarely create drakes, so nearly all drakes resemble so-called "common" dragons. (By Nightslayer's Maw, Tiabdjin, you small folk practically have me using that ridiculous Name!)

The most useful quality of drakes is their ability to assume Namegiver form. A drake can assume the form of any of the Young Races, except for windlings (too small to imitate) and obsidimen (a mix of flesh and elemental earth). Not only does this ability give drakes an understanding of your different races, it allows them to interact with Namegivers and move through Namegiver society without provoking the sort of fear and distrust you generally reserve for my kind (as well as others different from yourselves). This makes drakes useful agents in the world outside our lairs.

In Namegiver form, a drake is identical in appearance to a normal Namegiver, but loses its dragonlike physical abilities. It retains its magical powers, however, which can prove quite a surprise for those unaware of the drake's true nature.

Magical beings to their very heart, many drakes follow adept disciplines, and use those abilities when in their Namegiver form. Like their creators, drakes have a gift for magic, so many of them follow the magician disciplines, while the rest tend to follow fighting disciplines like the way of the Warrior or Swordmaster, or stealthy paths like the Thief or Scout. They learn quickly, and many advance quite far in their chosen discipline, some even taking on Namegiver students (with their master's permission, of course).

Drakes live far longer than the Young Races, another gift of their dragon heritage. Barring accident or death in battle, a drake can live for centuries. Their lives are finite, however. Upon death, drakes return to the base matter from which they sprang, decaying far more swiftly than other creatures until they are little more than pools of dissolved flesh and bone.



Typical Drake

Drakes are magical constructs created by dragons, primarily great dragons, as their servants. Although there are both male and female drakes, they are not capable of reproduction on their own. Each drake represents the investment of considerable time, effort and magical power, so dragons do not use them casually.

Drakes have two forms. Their "natural" form is that of a miniature dragon about five to seven feet long from head to tail. They can also assume the forms of the different Namegiver races. Drakes cannot assume windling or obsidiman forms because duplicating the special magical natures of those Namegivers would be too difficult.

DEX: 12 **STR:** 15 **TOU:** 12
PER: 14 **WIL:** 16 **CHA:** 13

Initiative: 15 **Physical Defense:** 16
Actions: 3 (1) **Spell Defense:** 18
Attack (4): 16 **Social Defense:** 17
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 15 (armor)
Bite (3): 18; 2×Claws (4): 19; (weapon) **Mystic Armor:** 15
Death: 62 **Recovery Tests:** 6
Unconsciousness: 55 **Knockdown:** 16 (15)
Wound Threshold: 18 **Movement:** 7/10*

Legend Award: Sixth Circle or Highest Discipline Circle if higher (Group)

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step:** 8

* The second value is the drake's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Armored Scales (3), Dispel Magic (1): 17, Disrupt Fate (1): 17, Dragon Breath (1): 17, Dragonsight (1): 15, Dragonspeech (1): 15, Enhanced Matrix [T] (6), Fear (1): 14, Regeneration (1): 13, Spellcasting (2): 16, Spell Matrix [T] (6), Spell Matrix [T] (6), Spell Matrix [T] (6), Suppress Magic (1): 17, Thread Weaving [Discipline] [T] (2): 16

Spells: By Discipline (up to Sixth Circle)

Equipment: Varies by Namegiver form

Loot: Scales and blood worth D6×50 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points)

Notes: Statistics in parentheses ( ) apply when in Namegiver form

Rules

While working as envoys and agents of their dragon masters, drakes prefer to remain in Namegiver form so as not to give away their true nature. They assume drake form only when circumstances require it.

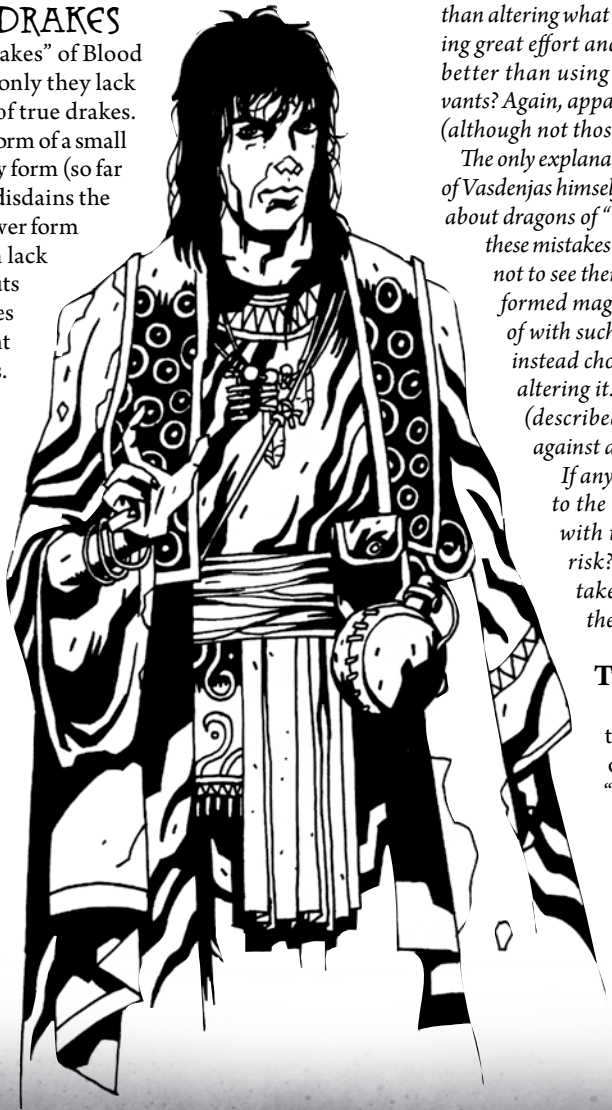
Shapeshifting: This ability requires one of the drake's actions to switch between forms. A drake in Namegiver form can be detected by someone who examines the drake's pattern in astral space. Detecting a drake's true nature requires an Excellent result on an Astral Sight Test against the drake's Spell Defense. A failure on this test results in the viewer seeing an astral form of the drake's Namegiver form.

In Namegiver form, drakes can follow Disciplines and learn talents and skills just like other Namegivers. Most drakes are adepts, and most of them follow one or more of the magician Disciplines. Some drakes follow the Disciplines of Beastmaster, Scout, Swordmaster, Thief or Warrior. A typical drake will be at least Sixth Circle in its chosen Discipline. The drake's talents and Discipline abilities function only while it is in Namegiver form, although magician drakes can still cast spells in dragon form.

In addition to their Discipline abilities, drakes share many of the powers of their dragon masters, some of which can be used in either form. In Namegiver form drakes can use only Dispel Magic, Dragonsight, Dragon Durability, Regeneration and Suppress Magic. In addition, while in Namegiver form they have the abilities listed in parentheses above. When a drake switches form, all of the clothing and equipment from their Namegiver form vanishes into an Astral Pocket, similar to the talent of the same name (see the ***Player's Companion***). The equipment returns when the drake returns to Namegiver form.

False (Lesser) Drakes

The so-called "false drakes" of Blood Wood are in fact drakes, only they lack the shapeshifting ability of true drakes. The false drakes have the form of a small dragon, which is their only form (so far as I know). Their creator disdains the usefulness of the Namegiver form and prefers drakes which lack that "weakness" (as he puts it). It is clear that false drakes are not nearly as intelligent or capable as true drakes. Since they lack insight into the nature of the Young Races, false drakes tend to be rather flighty and even playful, more like dragon hatchlings than full-grown adult Namegivers. Still, they are more than capable of rending an opponent with their teeth and claws and no doubt make useful, if limited, servants.



Vasdenjas refused to say who the creator of the false drakes is, other than indicating it is a male dragon, most likely a great dragon. The Master of Secrets also had very little to say regarding the culture or traditions of drakes (if indeed they have any). Likewise, I could not pry from him any information about how drakes are created apart from what is given previously. The great dragon claims such magic is beyond our comprehension, and perhaps so, but it is also possible it is simply considered too valuable or too dangerous (or both) to fall into the hands of "the Young Races."

I find it curious that even a great dragon like Vasdenjas can speak so easily about magically creating life from nothing, a feat only the most powerful magicians can accomplish. When we first talked years ago, while compiling the Creatures of Barsaive collection, Vasdenjas spoke often of the "tampering" Namegiver magicians performed on the natural development of certain creatures, experiments which led to the creation of things like the naga and the hydra.

"We dragons did not create hell hounds," *Vasdenjas said,* "nor do we keep them as pets—certainly we have never indulged in any kind of dubious magical experimentation to produce these creatures; as far as I know, only your races subject other living beings to such butchery."

"The naga is one of far too many creatures that seem to owe their existence to barbaric magical experiments with innocent living things," *he began on another occasion.*

And on yet another occasion, he stated "The will o' the wisp began as a magical construct—why you smaller races insist on bothering with unnecessary tinkering, I do not understand. We dragons do not use our magical abilities so frivolously."

Clearly, Vasdenjas looks upon the magical alteration of living creatures as wrong, yet he and other dragons use their magic to create drakes—which are clearly intelligent, thinking creatures who are used as little more than slaves. I find it difficult to reconcile these apparently contradictory attitudes. Is creating and enslaving an entire race better than altering what already exists? Apparently so for dragons. Is expending great effort and magical power on the creation of a single servant better than using the same energy to recruit many Namegiver servants? Again, apparently so by the standards of the dragons of Barsaive (although not those of other, distant lands, like Cathay).

The only explanation I can offer for this behavior comes from the words of Vasdenjas himself. The Master of Secrets spoke many times in our talks about dragons of "the mistakes of the past." He never made clear what these mistakes were, only that he and other dragons were determined not to see them repeated in the present. Perhaps dragons once performed magical experiments of the kind Vasdenjas now speaks of with such disdain. They realized the error of their ways and instead chose to create life, tailored to their design, rather than altering it. It is also quite possible that the creation of hydras (described in the following section) embittered all dragons against any tampering with existing life.

If any of the above is true, I can only offer this speculation to the magicians engaged in similar work. Is tampering with the fundamental Patterns of Life truly worth the risk? Do we want to be the ones to repeat the very mistakes the dragons seek to avoid? And if we do, how will the great dragons respond?

Typical False (Lesser) Drake

These creatures are most commonly found in the Blood Wood, but are occasionally found in other areas of northern Barsaive as well. Lesser or "false" drakes strongly resemble true drakes, but they are not intelligent and are somewhat weaker physically. They also do not share a true drake's ability to assume Namegiver form. Though lesser drakes cannot speak, they emit fierce cries of pleasure as they hunt or swoop through the Blood Wood, weaving intricate patterns as they fly around the trunks and branches of the Blood Wood's largest trees.

DEX: 12 **STR:** 12 **TOU:** 10
PER: 11 **WIL:** 11 **CHA:** 12

Initiative: 12
Actions: 2
Attack (3): 15
Damage:
Bite (2): 14; 2×Claws (3): 15
Death: 65
Unconsciousness: 56
Wound Threshold: 15

Physical Defense: 15
Spell Defense: 14
Social Defense: 15
Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 6
Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 13
Movement: 7/10*

Legend Award: Fourth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

* The second value is the drake's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Dispel Magic (2): 13, Dragon Breath (2): 13, Durability (2), Dragonsight (2): 13, Spellcasting (2): 13, Suppress Magic (2): 13, Venom (2): 13

Equipment, Loot: None

Rules

Lesser drakes use their dragon powers in much the same way as dragons and true drakes.

Dragon Breath: A lesser drake's Dragon Breath power produces a thin stream of fiery breath that can strike only one target at a time, similar to the Flame Spout power knack.

HYDRAS

Knowledge is a most powerful kind of spirit, Tiabdjin. Once it is free from confinement, it can never be imprisoned again. Years ago, I told you the origin of the hydra so you could record it in your tome on the fauna of Barsaive. It was a secret my fellow dragons did not want revealed, and many were not pleased with me for telling it. Now that the secret is out, even they cannot confine it again. No further harm (and perhaps a great deal of good) can be done by spreading the knowledge.

Not long ago (about 600 years), there lived in Barsaive a great dragon Named Thermail. She was fairly young for a great dragon, having only recently achieved great status. Thermail mated for the last time not long before becoming a great dragon. When the time came to lay her eggs, Thermail was already a great dragon and she chose to do what no other dragon had done since the time of All-Wings herself: care for her own eggs. It is a decision that always seems to come to tragedy.

Thermail was a great friend to the Young Races at that time; she encouraged visitors to come to her lair and talk with her of art, history, philosophy, music, magic and a great many other things. Her wisdom and advice were legendary, and many Namegivers sought her out. Thermail received them all with graciousness and great trust—a trust that was betrayed only once, but most grievously.

When it came time for Thermail's eggs to hatch, she withdrew from the world into her lair and accepted no visitors for many years. Not even she would allow other Namegivers to see her hatchlings. Thermail's clutch was an exceptionally large one, and she chose to remain isolated to devote her time to the hatchlings until they were ready to leave the lair. However, her protective measures were not enough. A magician of Thermail's acquaintance, a human who had spent much time with the dragon, snuck into her lair and lured away seven of her ten hatchlings.

No one knows the magician's Name (may his spirit writhe in agony for all time), or the reasoning for what he did with the stolen hatchlings. Using powerful magic, the thief merged the seven hatchlings into a single monstrous creature with the heads of seven dragons, the first hydra. Worse still, he magically caused another hydra to be produced from the first, and mated them so now the foul creatures can be found all over Barsaive and in many other lands.

When she discovered what had happened to her children, Thermail went mad from grief. She flew over the lands of Barsaive, burning villages and razing cities, killing any Namegivers who stood in her way. Still, no matter how many she killed, she could not find the thief who caused the awful metamorphosis, nor could she bring back her lost children. Finally, to end her pain, she impaled herself on the pinnacle of a high mountain, which other Namegivers called Mount Wyrmspire—the same peak under which we sit, Tiabdjin. Thermail was one of the finest of our kind and I honor her memory here in my lair, Named for her, not me.

Despite our efforts to wipe them out, hydras still exist. They are hideous creatures, perhaps half the size of an adult dragon, roughly forty feet in length, with seven dragonlike heads springing from a central body. They are wingless, and nearly mindless as well. The melding of different dragons used to create the first hydra gives the creatures sporadic dragonlike abilities. No two hydra necessarily have the same powers. Some breathe flames; others are lethally venomous or capable of freezing their prey in place with terror. There is no way of telling what powers a hydra might have, so it is always best to assume the worst. No hydra has the intelligence to use spells (thankfully), nor can they speak in any way, including Dragonspeech. They are mindless beasts, not Namegivers.

Hydras are not dragons, though they were made from dragons. They are hideous abominations of life that never should have been. Should any Namegiver with sufficient strength encounter a hydra, I recommend you kill it immediately and spare it the pain of such a tortured existence. All dragons kill hydras on sight as quickly and cleanly as possible. They are abominations, but they did not ask to be created, nor did they choose their terrible existence.

Typical Hydra

Hydras are up to forty feet long from head to tail. Hydras are magical abominations originally created from the merging of seven western dragon hatchlings. The magician who created the first hydra is one of the ancestors of the Denairastas Clan of Iopos. Only recently was the truth of the hydra's creator revealed, to both Uhl Denairastas and (inadvertently) the great dragons of Barsaive. What, if any, form of retaliation the great dragons plan is not known at this time.

DEX: 9 **STR:** 22 **TOU:** 22
PER: 8 **WIL:** 10 **CHA:** 8

Initiative: 8
Actions: 5
Attack (10): 19
Damage:
3 ×Bite (5): 27; 2×Claws (3): 25
Death: 162
Unconsciousness: 147
Wound Threshold: 27

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 25
Mystic Armor: 5
Recovery Tests: 10
Knockdown: 23
Movement: 5

Legend Award: Twelfth Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 10 **Karma Step:** 6

Powers: Durability (9), Spellcasting (7): 15

And one or more of the following Powers: Dispel Magic (5): 15, Dragon Breath (5): 15, Dragonsight (5): 13, Fear (5): 13, Regeneration (5): 27, Suppress Magic (5): 15, Venom (5): 15

Equipment: None

Loot: Up to 10,000 silver pieces worth of treasure hidden in its lair (counts as treasure worth Legend Points)



Rules

A hydra usually attacks by biting its opponent with its many heads. Each combat round, a hydra can attack with up to five of its heads, as well as with its front claws.

Hydra Armor: Hydra armor, like dragon hide, is extremely tough, requiring an Extraordinary result on an Attack Test to achieve an Armor-Defeating Hit against the hydra. However, unlike the Armored Scales ability, hydra armor does not offer increased Mystic Armor protection.

Powers Restriction: A hydra may have any of the dragon powers listed above, but each individual hydra possesses only one of them. If the player characters are more than a match for a normal hydra, the gamemaster may add additional dragon powers to create a very powerful and dangerous hydra sufficient to withstand the player characters.

WYVERNS

It was only with great reluctance that Vasdenjas agreed to speak any further on wyverns. I carefully avoided my earlier blunder in comparing wyverns to adolescent dragons, but I remain most curious about the similarity between the two.

I can hardly imagine why you persist with such an interest in wyverns, Tiabdjin. They are savage, bestial things that hardly bear discussing. Not nearly as interesting as, say, magma beasts, or even prisma … oh, very well, if we must.

I have said it before, and I will say it again. Wyverns are not dragons. They are not even Namegivers. They are nothing more than mindless beasts, driven entirely by instinct and a savage nature. Any resemblance between wyverns and dragons is pure chance—or perhaps a mocking joke on the part of the Universe—nothing more.

That said, wyverns do somewhat resemble small dragons, growing as large as thirty feet from head to tail. Unlike dragons, they have only two powerful hind legs in addition to their wings, and no forelimbs of any kind. The tops of their wings are tipped with claws that allow them to climb trees and cliff-faces, and to rend their prey limb from limb. The legs are also tipped with sharp, tearing talons. Their bodies are quite slim, covered in overlapping scales. Their heads are rather small (they don't accommodate much in the way of intelligence), but their jaws are quite large, capable of swallowing a dwarf in a single bite. Their long, muscular tail ends in a wickedly sharp, barbed stinger, which contains their greatest weapon—a deadly venom. Wyverns sting their prey and allow the venom to do its work while they continue their attack. They often sting multiple times, and I have seen wyverns sting prey even after it is dead.

Just because they are stupid beasts, wyverns should not be underestimated. They have considerable cunning, and use it in hunting prey and staying alive. Sometimes a group of wyverns will cooperate to bring down larger prey, and others have been known to take advantage of the natural features of the terrain, especially long drops into mountain canyons and valleys, to overcome flightless prey.

Wyverns tend to live in isolated areas, usually heavily forested or mountainous regions, and they defend their territory fiercely against all other predators. If you stumble into a wyvern's hunting grounds, likely it will find you before you find it. Wyverns fly rather quickly and can move through difficult terrain with surprising speed and agility. Their snakelike bodies can coil around high trees or on top of rocky ledges and the like, to offer some camouflage while they hunt. They favor surprise attacks. Wyverns are built to be hunters, and they are well-equipped to overcome and kill their prey. They hunt nearly any-thing, although they usually restrict themselves to prey the same size or smaller than themselves. Still, a wyvern or a small group of them have been known to attack larger prey, yes, even dragons.

If wyverns can bring down a creature as powerful as one of my kind, you can imagine what they can do to creatures as small and frail as the Young Races. To all those would-be wyvern hunters, I say it is suicide. Wyverns are death-machines better left alone.

This was all I could learn. Vasdenjas said nothing about wyvern mating rituals, how they are born, how long they live or anything else about their life cycle. Having done some research, I can say that no Namegiver has reported seeing wyvern young or eggs (if indeed they lay eggs) and, while dead wyverns have been found, they always die by violence, no old wyverns are ever seen. As far as anyone can tell, wyverns spring from nowhere fully grown, then die in battle or vanish, never to be seen again. Although the Master of Secrets describes wyverns as stupid and savage beasts, he speaks quite highly of their combat abilities. If I did not known better, I would almost think he was exaggerating the threat posed by a wyvern to make them seem more fearsome. They are deadly creatures, to be sure, but wyvern hunters manage to kill them fairly often. One would think the great dragon wished to give other Namegivers a reason not to hunt wyverns. Unfortunately, I have no facts to offer, only the speculations and musings of a humble scholar.

Typical Wyvern

Wyverns average thirty feet in length. They bear a strong resemblance to adolescent western dragons (and are somewhat larger than western hatchlings). Not only do they share the physical characteristics of western dragons, but they also have the fierce, aggressive nature of adolescents. No information is known about the breeding or mating habits of wyverns, how they raise their young, or how old they live, giving some scholars (Tiabdjin the Knower among them) cause to consider the possibility that wyverns are in truth directly related to western dragons.

DEX: 11	**STR:** 12	**TOU:** 10
PER: 6	**WIL:** 7	**CHA:** 5

Initiative: 12
Actions: 3
Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 8

Attack (3): 14
Damage:
Bite (2): 14; 2×Claws (1): 13; Tail (3): 15
Death: 79
Unconsciousness: 68
Wound Threshold: 15
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 2
Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 12
Movement: 5/10*

Legend Award: Fourth Circle (Group)

* The second value is the wyvern's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Durability (4), Venom (6): 13

Equipment, Loot: None

Rules

Wyverns prefer to attack non-flying targets with sweeping flybys, tearing the victim apart with a few slashes of their claws. If a wyvern can't cause enough damage quickly, it will land on the ground near its opponent and rear up to its full height. This stance allows the creature to bring its venomous tail into play.

DRAGONS

The following material contains Master Vasdenjas' musings on the differences among various types of dragons, including types of dragons that are not at all well-known within the boundaries of Barsaive. These dragons hail from distant lands, such as Cathay and Indrisa, and Araucania, far across the Selestrean Sea. Though these dragons are only rarely (if ever) seen in Barsaive, based on Vasdenjas' stories and lectures on these other types of dragons, I believe Vasdenjas (and, perhaps, the other great dragons of Barsaive) had or have regular contact with others of their kind in remote places.

—By the Hand of Tiabdjin the Knower, Scribe of the Great Library of Throal and First Scholar of the khavro'am

Dragons come in as much variety—if not more—than the Young Races. We have unique colors, shapes and features all our own, as distinctive as your own colors and textures of hair and skin, your facial and body shapes and other things Namegivers use to distinguish themselves from each other. No two dragons are exactly the same, any more than two other Namegivers are exactly the same. (And before you ask, Tiabdjin, twins are exceedingly rare among my kind, since we are not born as you are, but hatched. I can recall but one instance of identical dragon twins in my entire life—not egg twins—but that is a tale for another time.)

Although there are many individual variations among my kind, dragons can be broadly divided into four main types. In some cases the type is related to the areas where they usually dwell, in other cases, the type is identified by other factors. You small folk have your own Names for these types of dragons already, and so I will use them, despite the fact that they are often erroneous and even rather clumsy. Such is to be expected of your language, I suppose. Among ourselves, the four types of dragons are thought of in relation to four of the elements. Beyond these four types are the great dragons, who remain distinct and separate from our younger brethren.

The four types of dragons are separate races in much the way that elves are not the same as humans, who are not the same as t'skrang, yet they are all Namegivers. In the same way, although the different types of dragons often appear quite different from each other, even in having different limbs and bodies, we are all dragons, all part of the same line that began with Nightslayer and Dayheart so long ago. All dragons share a tie of blood and history that cannot be denied.

Customizing Dragons

The sample statistics in this chapter provide only rough guidelines regarding the powers and abilities of the different types of dragons and of dragonlike creatures. These are intended as a starting point from which the gamemaster can customize the abilities of a specific dragon. Dragons are unique creatures, as individual as any other Namegivers. They are not simple "monsters," but gamemaster characters, with their own personalities and motivations. Two dragons will have as much in common as any two other Namegivers.

Gamemasters should reflect the individuality of dragons by adjusting the various abilities, attributes and Step Numbers given in the sample statistics, based on the specific characteristics of the dragon in question. (Refer to **Customizing Creatures** in the ***Gamemaster's Companion*** for rules and guidelines.)

The entries on the Named great dragons of Barsaive include specific details about the abilities of the dragon described. For instance, both Aban and Usun are described as being larger and stronger than most dragons. This is reflected by slightly higher physical Attribute Steps, Attack and Damage Steps, and by higher Death and Unconsciousness Ratings. Likewise, Mountainshadow is said to be the most skilled at magic, which is supported by his slightly higher Spellcasting Step.

Beyond their attributes and characteristics, individual dragons may also have different ratings in various dragon powers, or even powers entirely different from those listed in the sample statistics. Beyond giving a specific dragon different powers or adjusting the Step Numbers of their powers, dragons can also know a number of different dragon power knacks (see **Dragon Powers**, p.245) which offer another means of customizing an individual dragon's abilities.

In addition to their game statistics, each dragon has a unique appearance, personality and goals. The gamemaster should take time to consider these unique aspects of the dragon's nature. What sets it apart? How does it act? What does the dragon want? These things help to make a dragon less of a faceless monster and more of an individual. The material in the section **The Master of Secrets Speaks**, starting on p.228, can provide additional ideas on personalizing dragons of the gamemaster's creation, while the individual dragon entries can provide additional ideas on personalizing the statistics of the dragons described in this chapter.



COMMON DRAGONS

I will begin, of course, with the dragons best known to the people of Barsaive. Since the type which I and the other great dragons—with the exception of Root Protector—sprang from is the most common in this land, you have given us the Name "common" dragons. Depending on which dragon you ask, this is a matter of either great humor or great displeasure among my kind. As if any dragon, even the smallest hatchling, could be considered "common!" I was quite shocked to discover the word used in some of the scholarly texts in your own Library.

Though I understand the resistance to change among Namegivers (including dragons), I strongly advise both your fellow scholars and the people of Barsaive to seriously consider using a different word for the dragons you see most often. At the very least, do not call any dragon "common" to her face if you wish to avoid becoming her next meal. Although I would tend not to devour a Namegiver merely for the mistake of ill-informed scholars and poor language, most of my kind are not nearly so merciful or understanding of your ways.

To the people and dragons of Cathay, we are known as "western dragons," a name I find considerably more polite than "common dragons." But then, the people of Cathay have always shown more of the proper respect for my kind than any of the other Young Races in this world, as I shall explain in due time. Among ourselves, the so-called "common dragons" are known as Dragons of the Earth, because we are closest to the nature of the elemental of Earth and stone: solid, strong, sharp, filled with inner fire and deep wisdom. Thus our great resonance with places of earth and stone like mountains and caves. For our purposes here I shall avoid giving credence to the mistakes of the past, so I shall use the Cathay term "western dragon" to refer to what you might call "common." Perhaps the idea will catch on and we can put this "common" nonsense to rest once and for all!

Western dragons are, in fact, the most common of all dragons in Barsaive. We are what Namegivers in these regions think of when they hear the word "dragon": creatures having long, powerful bodies with fore and hind limbs, a pair of wings, long neck and tail. Our heads are topped with horns and possessed of sharp teeth, and we have a most attractive ruff about the head, leading into a stretch of spines down the back.

Other than those traits, western dragons differ greatly in appearance. Our dragon scales come in all the colors of the Earth itself: from nearly black to deep green, brown, golden, silvery or deep blue. Most are a single color, and are usually darker towards the back and paler towards the belly, underside and wings. A rare few dragons are multiple colors, or decorated with patterns of stripes or even spots.

On some occasions, I have known young dragons to decorate themselves in this way intentionally, though for the most part, dragons keep their natural coloration as a matter of pride, since it demonstrates lineage and character. Eggshells are usually similar in color to the hatchling that will emerge. A great dragon with much experience in caring for eggs, such as myself, can often tell at a glance the parentage of a particular egg.

Horns are a very common trait among Dragons of the Earth, although some western dragons have quite small horns—little more than nubs—and others sport very large, curling horns like those of a ram. It is quite rare for a western dragon to be born without horns at all. Females often consider a male's horns a very attractive characteristic, perhaps one of the reasons horns are so common.

Face and form come in many varieties, as with other Namegivers. Some dragons are large, others small. Some are thin and others fat, although few dragons reach the extremes known to the Young Races. A western dragon who allowed himself to become skeletal-thin or too obese to easily move would not survive for very long.



Like other Namegivers, individual dragons very often have their own unique features. I was shocked to discover other Namegivers, even some respected scholars, consider color the primary means to tell us apart. You might as well say you can tell an obsidiman from a troll only by the color of their skins!

Most of what I have already told you about dragons as a whole—customs, traditions and physiology—applies to western dragons, since that is my own experience. We are the solid bedrock of dragon-kind—strong, vital and dependable.

Typical Common Dragon

Common, or western dragons as Vasdenjas refers to them, average sixty-five feet in length. Their tail adds another fifty-five feet to their overall length, and their wingspan is one hundred feet in width. Though they are the most common type of dragons in Barsaive, one of the quickest ways to die in Barsaive is to call a common dragon "common" to its face. Indeed, the name is a misnomer. Though the people of Barsaive use it because nearly all the dragons they know of are of similar size, shape, and general appearance, they are by no means common. In fact, few people in Barsaive have ever seen a dragon of any kind.

Common dragons much prefer the Cathayan term "western dragons" when referring to dragons of their type. Common dragons vary greatly in individual appearance, goals, mannerisms, and abilities. Gamemasters may consult the information in the other sections of this chapter for ideas on the nature and variety of common dragons, particularly the description of the Named common dragons, below.

DEX: 19 **STR:** 25 **TOU:** 27
PER: 17 **WIL:** 18 **CHA:** 15

Initiative: 22
Actions: 4
Attack (4): 23
Damage:
Bite (7): 32; 4×Claws (5): 30
Death: 240
Unconsciousness: 219
Wound Threshold: 30

Physical Defense: 23
Spell Defense: 22
Social Defense: 20
Physical Armor: 31
Mystic Armor: 18
Recovery Tests: 13
Knockdown: 26
Movement: 7/12*

Legend Award: Fourteenth Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step:** 10

* The second value is the dragon's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Armored Matrix [T] (9), Armored Scales (4), Disrupt Fate (7): 25, Dragon Breath (7): 25, Dragonsight (4): 21, Dragonspeech (5): 22, Durability (15), Enhanced Matrix [T] (9), Enhanced Matrix [T] (9), Fear (10): 25, Lair Sense (4): 21, Regeneration (4): 31, Spellcasting (6): 23, Spell Matrix [T] (9), Spell Matrix [T] (9), Spell Matrix [T] (9), Summoning (5): 23, Suppress Magic (5): 23, Thread Weaving [Discipline; see text] (6): 23, Venom (7): 25, Wingbeat (11): 30

Spells: By Discipline (up to Ninth Circle; see text)

Equipment: None

Loot: Magical items and a hoard of coins and gems worth about 300,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points)

Rules

Most common dragons know spells of at least one magician Discipline, and many know spells from more than one. Dragons who know spells of only one Discipline know spells up to and including Ninth Circle. Those who follow more than one Discipline know spells up to and including Seventh Circle.

Typical Common Dragon Hatchling

Hatchlings start life at about twelve feet long, and have only one set of limbs and a pair of wings. Hatchlings have slim bodies and size, and their strength and power are nowhere near that of a full grown dragon. Hatchlings of other types of dragons share physical characteristics with their parent dragons.

DEX: 10 **STR:** 12 **TOU:** 10
PER: 10 **WIL:** 10 **CHA:** 9

Initiative: 11
Actions: 2
Attack (3): 13
Damage:
Bite (3): 15; 2×Claws (1): 13
Death: 91
Unconsciousness: 79
Wound Threshold: 15
Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 13
Social Defense: 11
Physical Armor: 11
Mystic Armor: 6
Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 13
Movement: 7/10*

Legend Award: Sixth Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 10 **Karma Step:** 10

* The second value is the dragon's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Armored Scales (1), Dragon Breath (5): 15, Dragonsight (2): 12, Dragonspeech (2): 12, Durability (5), Regeneration (1): 11, Spellcasting (3): 13, Suppress Magic (2): 12, Venom (2): 12

Equipment, Loot: None

Rules

These statistics represent a hatchling no more than a few decades old (barely a toddler in dragon terms). Still, a dragon hatchling can be a dangerous opponent for a group of low-Circle adepts, particularly when the effects of its magical powers are taken into account. Add to this the fact that hatchlings are usually found in small groups, and that their guardian great dragon is never far away, and it becomes clear that attacking a dragon hatchling is asking for trouble.

While most hatchlings have not yet learned formal spells, those that have can cast them using raw magic, like any dragon. The lairs where hatchlings are raised are considered Safe regions for the purpose of casting raw magic.

Asante

While substantially older than her mate Nightsky (see p.260), Asante's age of 800 years is still very young by dragon standards. In contrast to Nightsky, Asante's coloration is an unusual creamy white, with a much darker tint on her horns and claws. Among dragons she is considered exceptionally beautiful.

Asante's main flaw is that her youth leaves her naïve and unwilling to recognize the power that dragon blood gives her over weaker races. Indeed, her fondness for the Young Races became a weakness that was exploited by cunning Namegivers in her youth, and which later forced her into dissension with her elders. Over the years, she has become more self-righteous in her attitudes, and thus still vulnerable to manipulation.

In addition to her naiveté, Asante does not have the vast resources possessed by many other dragons, even those of her age. Much of her wealth has gone to aiding and supporting Namegivers in need—mostly victims of Horrors—and she rarely sees a return on her investments. Her preoccupation with Namegiver affairs has replaced drives common in other dragons, specifically the hoarding of wealth and accumulation of influence and power. Her attention is devoted to more ephemeral things, and she is thus unlikely to be suspicious of well-laid plans.

DEX: 19 **STR:** 25 **TOU:** 27
PER: 17 **WIL:** 17 **CHA:** 20

Initiative: 22
Actions: 4
Attack (4): 23
Damage:
Bite (7): 32; 4×Claws (5): 30
Death: 240
Unconsciousness: 219
Wound Threshold: 30
Physical Defense: 23
Spell Defense: 22
Social Defense: 25
Physical Armor: 31
Mystic Armor: 17
Recovery Tests: 13
Knockdown: 26
Movement: 7/12*

Legend Award: Fifteenth Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step:** 10

* The second value is the dragon's flying Movement Rate

Powers (Knacks): Armored Matrix [T] (7), Armored Scales (4), Disrupt Fate (7): 24, Dragon Breath (8): 25 (Friendly Fire), Dragonsight (4): 21, Dragonspeech (6): 23 (Suggestion), Durability (15), Enhanced Matrix [T] (7), Enhanced Matrix [T] (7), Fear (10): 30, Haggle [T] (4): 24, Lair Sense (5): 22 (Absent Lair Sense, Identify Intruder), Regeneration (4): 31, Spellcasting (6): 23, Spell Matrix [T] (7), Spell Matrix [T] (7), Spell Matrix [T] (7), Summoning (5): 23, Suppress Magic (5): 23, Thread Weaving [Elementalism, Wizardry] (6): 23, Venom (7): 25 (Sleep Venom), Wingbeat (11): 30

Spells: Elementalism, Wizardry (both at Seventh Circle)

Equipment: None

Loot: Magical items and a hoard of coins and gems worth about 150,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points)

Charcoalgrin

The dragon Charcoalgrin is known to anyone who has traveled to Parlainth and Haven in search of adventure and fortune. She is the most powerful creature living in the ruins, except perhaps for Horrors that have not yet been discovered in the catacombs' depths.

Charcoalgrin's story begins before the Scourge, when she was but barely an adult, and when the glorious city of Parlainth had been completed and its wizards and scholars were looking for ways to defend it from the Horrors. Like Mountainshadow, Charcoalgrin was intrigued by the Young Races, and studied the residents of Parlainth at a distance from her lair in the nearby Caucavic Mountains. But where Mountainshadow is wise and maintains discretion in his studies, Charcoalgrin fell victim to the innocence of her youth, and grew fascinated by the Namegivers who created the city.

In defiance of dragon traditions concerning contact with the Theran Empire—in particular, magicians of the Theran Empire—Charcoalgrin sought out contact with the magicians of Parlainth and willingly taught them mysteries as yet undiscovered by their superiors in Thera.

One Theran Wizard in particular fascinated the dragon. This human Wizard, Named Eyripemes, was among the magicians leading the city's efforts to protect itself from the coming Scourge. Over time, Charcoalgrin took a liking to this human and revealed to him the secret to hiding Parlainth from the Horrors, a spell taught to her by her sire, one that had not been cast since the previous age of magic. She shared with Eyripemes not only this ancient spell, but also the location of a pocket of astral space, a separate reality

of sorts where Parlainth could escape to during the Scourge, sealing itself off from the coming Horrors.

Charcoalgrin also instructed the city's magicians and builders in the creation of vessels that would allow them to move about in this astral pocket if needed. These vessels would allow the Theran magicians of Parlainth to explore regions of astral space unknown to any Namegivers save the dragons. The vessels resembled small stone airships, much smaller than vedettes, capable of carrying only a handful of passengers. Parlainth's magicians were able to build only a small number of these, less than two dozen, before they were forced to enact the spell that would send Parlainth from this world to the next.

Eyripemes was delighted, not only because he now had a way to protect his beloved city, but because he now had access to magic more ancient than anyone had ever imagined. The human devoted his life to Charcoalgrin, and would do anything she said in return for another nugget of wisdom. As a gift for Eyripemes' devotion, Charcoalgrin transformed the wizard, giving him the shapeshifting ability of drakes, allowing him to take dragon form, and thus greatly extending his life. The relationship between the two strengthened, as often happens between teacher and student, and Charcoalgrin grew quite fond of Eyripemes, right up until Parlainth's disappearance. The day Parlainth vanished was indeed one of the saddest of Charcoalgrin's life.

Not even Charcoalgrin was immune to the spell the Therans used to cover their tracks into astral space. She, like all other Namegivers, forgot about the city the moment it vanished. The years of the Scourge went by and finally the Long Night had ended. The Namegivers emerged from their kaers, and the dragons once again flew in the skies. Charcoalgrin was among them, but was never as animated or clever as she had been before. Parlainth returned, and with it returned Charcoalgrin's memories of Parlainth and Eyripemes, and much of her former enthusiasm and energy. She immediately flew to the city, only to discover it in ruins, a shattered version of its former self. Rather than going back to her lair in the Caucavic Mountains, Charcoalgrin remained in the ruins, sequestering herself in what remained of the Imperial Palace, claiming the entire northern quarter of the city as her own.

Along with the return of her memories of Parlainth and Eyripemes came memories of the magical astral vessels she had told the magicians to build. She sought out these vessels in the city, hoping they might hold the secret of Parlainth's fall. She was able to find only a handful among the ruins, while a few others remained hidden deep in the undercity, crushed under the weight of tons of stone and rubble. After an exhaustive search, she returned to her lair in the Vaults of Parlainth, convinced that a number of vessels had in fact been jettisoned from Parlainth into astral space. The notion that some of Parlainth's Namegivers, perhaps Eyripemes, had escaped the Horror-ravaged city in one of these vessels plagued Charcoalgrin's mind. As stragglers and criminals came to Parlainth, she exerted her particularly powerful personality and created from them a devoted army that now exists only to find clues of these missing vessels. Even more interesting is the evidence that Charcoalgrin is in fact searching for clues on how to return the city of Parlainth to its other reality, so she can continue her search for Eyripemes.

DEX: 19 **STR:** 25 **TOU:** 27
PER: 19 **WIL:** 22 **CHA:** 14

Initiative: 22
Actions: 4
Attack (4): 23
Damage:
Bite (7): 32; 4×Claws (5): 30
Death: 240
Unconsciousness: 219
Wound Threshold: 30

Physical Defense: 23
Spell Defense: 24
Social Defense: 19
Physical Armor: 31
Mystic Armor: 22
Recovery Tests: 13
Knockdown: 26
Movement: 7/12*

Legend Award: Fifteenth Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step:** 10

* The second value is the dragon's flying Movement Rate

Powers (Knacks): Armored Matrix [T] (7), Armored Scales (4), Disrupt Fate (7): 29, Dominate Beast (4): 26, Dragon Breath (7): 29, Dragonsight (5): 24 (Item History), Dragonspeech (7): 26 (Read Thoughts, Thought Probe), Durability (15), Enhanced Matrix [T] (7), Enhanced Matrix [T] (7), Fear (11): 25 (Awe), Lair Sense (4): 23, Regeneration (4): 31, Spellcasting (6): 25, Spell Matrix [T] (7), Spell Matrix [T] (7), Spell Matrix [T] (7), Spell Matrix [T] (7), Summoning (5): 27, Suppress Magic (5): 27, Thread Weaving [Nethermancy, Wizardry) (6): 25, Venom (7): 29, Wingbeat (11): 30

Spells: Nethermancy, Wizardry (both at Seventh Circle)



Equipment: None

Loot: Magical items and a hoard of coins and gems worth about 450,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points)

Rules

Like most of her kind, Charcoalgrin is arrogant to a fault. By sequestering herself in the moldering ruins of Parlainth, the dragon has assured that she will forever be the biggest fish in a very small pond. Other dragons view her as little more than an eccentric, content to play with the Young Races and creatures who gather beneath her tattered wings. Her servants are suspicious and thorough, and go to great lengths to ensure that there is no way to gather information about her from sources other than herself. Charcoalgrin is always prepared to speak at great length on any topic one could name. Her favorite topic, naturally, is herself. Those who have gone to Charcoalgrin in search of information usually get it, but at the cost of their lives when they show the faintest hint of boredom at her pedantic delivery.

Nightsky

Nightsky is the youngest adult dragon in Barsaive today, having emerged from his astral cocoon just two years before Throal sealed itself from the world. Nightsky was the last of Usun's hatchlings to emerge before the Scourge. His few brothers and sisters who remained in their cocoons after that year were destroyed by astral Horrors.

Physically, Nightsky is very large for a dragon of his young age, nearly seventy-five feet long. He is jet black in color with flecks of silver on the tips of his scales and horns. This coloration gives the effect of stars on a moonless night, a key factor in his choosing his Name. His natural coloration also led Nightsky to favor nocturnal hunting, and on clear starlit nights, he moves all but undetected through the region of the Caucavic Mountains that he and Asante (p.258) claim as their lair.

Nightsky awoke from his cocoon impatient and eager to take on the world, as young whelps usually are. He entered adulthood just as the Scourge began in earnest, and did not have time to construct a proper dragon lair, so he was forced to seek shelter with another dragon. Having arrived too late to remain with his sire Usun, he was fortunate enough to find shelter under the Throal Mountains, where Earthroot took him in. His impatience made the time of hiding particularly long and torturous, preventing him from entering the *shal-mora* as most dragons did during the Long Night. Eventually he could wait no more and left his shelter soon after the Scourge had ended, being one of the first Namegivers to look upon the Scourge-ravaged landscape of Barsaive. Even for a dragon this act was a foolish risk, as many powerful Horrors still roamed the world. Though Nightsky would surely deny it, it was fortune rather than physical prowess that kept him alive.

DEX: 20 **STR:** 26 **TOU:** 27
PER: 17 **WIL:** 17 **CHA:** 15

Initiative: 23
Actions: 4
Attack (4): 24
Damage:
Bite (7): 33; 4×Claws (5): 31
Death: 120 (240)
Unconsciousness: 114 (219)
Wound Threshold: 30
Physical Defense: 24
Spell Defense: 22
Social Defense: 20
Physical Armor: 32
Mystic Armor: 17
Recovery Tests: 13
Knockdown: 27
Movement: 7/12*

Legend Award: Fifteenth Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step:** 10

* The second value is the dragon's flying Movement Rate

Powers (Knacks): Armored Matrix [T] (9), Armored Scales (5), Chameleon [T] (4): 24, Disrupt Fate (7): 24, Dragon Breath (8): 25 (Flame Spout), Dragonsight (4): 21, Dragonspeech (5): 22, Durability (15), Enhanced Matrix [T] (9), Enhanced Matrix [T] (9), Fear (11): 26 (Terror), Lair Sense (4): 21, Regeneration (4): 31, Spellcasting (6): 23, Spell Matrix [T] (9), Spell Matrix [T] (9), Spell Matrix [T] (9), Summoning (5): 22, Suppress Magic (5): 22, Thread Weaving [Elementalism] (6): 23, Venom (8): 25 (Pain Venom), Wingbeat (11): 31

Spells: Elementalism (Ninth Circle)

Loot: Magical items and a hoard of coins and gems worth about 150,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points)

Leviathans

As western dragons are Dragons of the Earth, the next most "common" of the dragons in Barsaive, though still only rarely encountered, are leviathans, the Dragons of the Water. I spoke a small bit on leviathans for your Creatures of Barsaive collection and, upon reflection, I realize I did not entirely do them justice. (Of course, had all of my comments been included, rather than being edited for length by those without one-hundredth of my experience and insight … but, no matter.) Long, long ago, Dayheart, the First Dragon, gave birth to eight eggs, which in turn hatched into eight hatchlings, four male and four female. In time, the four pairs of hatchlings grew to claim their right of rulership over the world from which Nightslayer banished the Dark One and his spawn. Following their Naming, Dayheart gave the young dragons dominion over four of the elements. To my ancestors went the earth, and to the leviathans, the sea. In the sea, there are few creatures able to fight a leviathan and win, and the sea dragons hunt the greatest krakens and whales as their prey. They are as much kings of the sea now as then.

On the Form of Leviathans

Untold years of life in the depths of the sea has changed the leviathans. They are smaller than western dragons, perhaps half the size on average. Their bodies are sleek and more slender, not unlike the bodies of feathered dragons (of which I shall speak shortly). Their scales tend to be smaller and more tightly overlapping, giving leviathans a wet, iridescent appearance, even out of the water. They tend towards oceanic colors of blue-green, with some paler and darker colors known. I have seen at least one leviathan with black scales and another white as pearl.

Having largely abandoned both the sky and the land, leviathans have no wings and only small, stubby limbs that are little more than vestigial. Yes, I do recall your insightful comments, Tiabdjin, about how a leviathan can tear apart a ship with their "vestigial" limbs. Indeed they are still useful for such crude tasks, but otherwise possess virtually no dexterity. I suspect, as time passes, with less and less use, these limbs will begin to disappear entirely. Despite their lack of wings, however, leviathans can fly, albeit for only short distances at a time, perhaps as far as a dwarf might walk in a few days. Leviathans fly with a motion like swimming through the air. They are only rarely seen flying, as it is very tiring, and the air is not their natural element. Nonetheless, their ability to fly allow leviathans to move about Barsaive, most often from body of water to body of water, without resorting to travel on land, something they are quite adverse to. A leviathan forced onto land is severely limited in its mobility, and can move only a fraction as fast as it can in water. This is not to say that leviathans cannot survive on land; they can breathe air just as easily as they do water. They simply prefer to remain in their natural environment whenever possible. The ability to survive on land is one of the lesser-known facts about our water-born brothers, and something that many so-called "leviathan hunters" learn too late.

A leviathan's jaws are generally larger than those of a land dragon, with long, sharp teeth. They are capable of swallowing entire schools of fish, or fishing boats, for that matter. A leviathan's bite is its strongest attack, for they lack powerful talons and wings such as my kind have. Some also strike with their whip-like tail, a blow

powerful enough to smash a small boat. I have encountered some leviathans with venom nearly as strong as that of a land-dragon, including ones who retain a powerful stinger in their tails, not too dissimilar to that found on wyverns.

Leviathans are born of eggs like all other dragons, raised and cared for by great dragons (great leviathans, I should say). I know of only a handful of great leviathans living in the depths of the Aras Sea, partly due to that sea's limited space, a factor that also restricts the mating and breeding practices of the leviathans who make their homes there. They are allowed to mate and breed only when the great leviathans grant them permission. This prevents overpopulation and unneeded conflicts between them. Most Barsaivians think of leviathans as found only in the Aras Sea, but there are legends of leviathans in the Serpent River lakes (though I highly doubt this). Leviathans are far more plentiful in the Selestrean Sea and the Sea of Storms that borders the province of Indrisa. In these and other larger bodies of water, leviathans mate and breed as they will, like most other dragons.

When leviathans reach adolescence, they leave the care of their great leviathan sire and swim out on their own. It is at this stage that most leviathans are encountered by Namegivers, particularly sailors and the so-called 'leviathan-hunters.' The younglings are bestial and entirely without reason, often attacking boats and Namegivers without any knowledge or awareness of what they are doing. Namegivers often hunt and slay the young leviathans without any awareness that they are hunting a Namegiving creature, although I doubt that would sway most of the heartless mercenaries who make their living selling leviathan corpses.

Those few who survive the harsh years of madness at sea weave cocoons for themselves at the very bottom of the ocean where they undergo their development into adulthood. Leviathan adults are nearly identical in appearance to hatchlings, save for size, and their transformation does not take very long. I have heard it is in the area of ten to twenty years or so, after which, upon Emergence, the leviathan finds its Name and takes its place as an adult of its kind. In some rare instances, adult leviathans have relocated to other bodies of water to find their lairs.



On Leviathan Culture

Compared to western dragons, leviathans lack a sophisticated understanding of the surface-world and of other Namegivers. Most leviathans in my experience tend to be quite parochial. They have no interest in the customs, traditions or history of the Young Races. They strictly maintain the traditions and ways of dragon-kind. For example, few leviathans deign to speak aloud to other Namegivers, leading you to consider them mindless beasts. They usually use only Dragonspeech among themselves, and rarely bother to speak to other dragons. This is not a lack of ability—I know leviathans who can speak many different languages—it is more a lack of desire or interest.

As they do not concern themselves with spoken language, leviathans have even less use for writing. Paper and similar materials are useless in the watery depths, and even more durable materials can be worn away by time and tide. What lore leviathans do keep over the years is stored in memory crystals kept in undersea caves and grottos known only to them. I have heard interesting tales and legends of sea dragons cultivating beautiful forms of living crystal and unique coral for their memory crystals, but have never been privileged enough to see one.

Beyond these differences, leviathans are not too unlike their earth-bound brothers. They make lairs, gather mementos (mostly from the ships they encounter at sea), study magic, hunt for food, and spend a great deal of their time in the *shal-mora*, perhaps even more than most western dragons. The reasons for this are unclear to me, but I suspect their underwater habitats result in very little contact with the outside world, thus freeing them from the tiresome interruptions that many dragons must endure.

The underwater dances of the leviathans are as beautiful in their own way as the aerial dances of my kind. Leviathan mating rites are especially involved, and woe betide any other Namegivers who come upon a mating pair of leviathans near the surface of the sea. If the intruders are fortunate, they will manage to leave without attracting notice. Otherwise, they are certain to become part of the Rite of Feasting, along with the other local sea-life.

On Leviathans and Namegivers

As you might suspect, leviathans tend towards solitude even more than most dragons. This is true even with regard to their fellow dragons. Leviathan society is almost completely separate from the rest of dragon-kind. They contact us only when circumstances demand it, an event that has occurred only once in my memory, long before the Scourge.

Leviathans rarely welcome any Namegivers into their watery realm. Even other dragons are treated with grudging respect, and a leviathan is quite likely to invoke a Rite of Challenge on any dragon so foolish as to disturb its domain unbidden. Fortunately, they have no concern about the skies over the sea, and other dragons can soar high over the waters without offering insult to the kings of the sea, provided they do not hunt or seek to collect goods the leviathans consider

their own. In general, adult leviathans do not attack ships on the surface without provocation—usually only when their domain is threatened. The same is not true however of adolescent leviathans, who are quite likely to assault any ship or creature that gets too close.

Despite their usual preference for isolation and general dislike of most Namegivers, there are leviathans who have shown interest in surface-dwellers. One great leviathan in particular, whom I know as Wavedancer, lairs near the city of Urupa on the Aras Sea, and has been known to welcome visitors from Barsaive. Twice since the Scourge this dragon has invited a number of visitors to her lair (likely only one of several lairs) to a small festival of sorts. (Leviathan's lairs are often air-filled grottos, Tiabdjin.) These gatherings last several days (I've heard anywhere from two to seven days) during which the dragon invites Troubadours to perform for her and her other guests, and where contests of skill and strength are held between the visitors and Wavedancer's servants. I have been unable to discern the reasons for these festivals, though some stories I've heard suggest that Wavedancer uses them to find suitable adepts to serve as her agents in Barsaive, acting as her eyes and ears on land. If these stories are true, then perhaps this points to the end of the centuries-long isolation of the leviathans of the Aras Sea.

On the Magic of Leviathans

Yes, the sea dragons use magic. Though I would say leviathans are the least magically skilled of all dragons, their command of the element of water is unrivaled. Nearly all sea-dragons use their magical gifts to study the discipline of the Elementalist, and only a rare few show interest in any other sort of magic (Wavedancer being the one exception known to me, she having also studied the Illusionist discipline). Still, a sea-dragon sorcerer can call up water spirits, stir the seas into a raging froth and command storms into being to serve their needs. Their undersea lairs may contain great magical lore in elementalism, but I would urge caution on any Namegiver foolish enough to seek out a leviathan's lair.

In addition to their spellcasting, many leviathans have developed their Dragonspeech to allow them to communicate with the creatures of the deep. They rarely use this power to aid in hunting, but can raise a virtual army of angry sea-life against surface-dwellers who intrude on their domains. Many leviathan-hunters have faced sharks, sea snakes, selachi and worse under the control of a leviathan.

The magic powers of great leviathans far surpass those of adult leviathans, just as the magic of great dragons surpasses that of adult dragons. Great leviathans share many of the abilities of other great dragons, including the ability to assume Namegiver form and to create drake servants.

Having some experience with leviathan-hunters, I can say these creatures are sought mainly for an organ in their body which gathers True water from the seas the leviathan swims in. This organ is worth thousands of silver pieces on the open market. Vasdenjas did not mention this organ, so I can only speculate as to its purpose. Perhaps the elemental water provides some form of nourishment or protection for the leviathan. It may also be vital to the sea dragon's magic in some unknown way.

Typical Leviathan

Leviathans average sixty feet in length overall, and have four short, stubby legs, each about six feet long. In Barsaive, leviathans are found primarily in the Aras Sea, but also live in the Selestrean Sea to the west and the Sea of Storms near the Theran province of Indrisa.

These aquatic dragons are the most reclusive of all dragons, only rarely interacting with other dragons or Namegivers, except when their domain is threatened.

DEX: 19 **STR:** 25 **TOU:** 25
PER: 15 **WIL:** 15 **CHA:** 12

Initiative: 20 **Physical Defense:** 23
Actions: 4 **Spell Defense:** 20
Attack (4): 23 **Social Defense:** 15
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 29
Bite (5): 30; 2×Claws (1): 26; Tail (3): 28 **Mystic Armor:** 14
Death: 218 **Recovery Tests:** 12
Unconsciousness: 196 **Knockdown:** NA
Wound Threshold: 29 **Movement:** 5/10/12*

Legend Award: Thirteenth Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step:** 10

* The second value is the dragon's flying Movement Rate, the third value is the dragon's swimming Movement Rate

Powers (Knacks): Armored Scales (4), Disrupt Fate (10): 25, Dominate Beast (4): 19, Durability (13) (8/7), Dragon Breath (10): 25, Dragonsight (4): 19, Dragonspeech (5): 20 (Animal Talk), Enhanced Matrix [T] (6), Fear (13): 25, Regeneration (4): 29, Spellcasting (4): 19, Spell Matrix [T] (6), Spell Matrix [T] (6), Spell Matrix [T] (6), Spell Matrix [T] (6), Summoning (4): 19, Thread Weaving [Elementalism] (4): 19

Spells: Elementalism (Sixth Circle)

Equipment: None

Loot: Elemental water collecting organ worth 10,000 silver pieces. Treasure hoard worth up to 100,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points)

Rules

When dealing with smaller ships, swimmers, and various other floating enemies, leviathans prefer to swallow them whole. Leviathans can swallow anything that measures up to a tenth of their entire length. Against larger creatures and boats, the leviathan often coils around the victim and then tears at it with its powerful claws.

Coil Attack: To coil around a creature, the leviathan must achieve a Good result on its Attack Test against the target's Physical Defense; when attacking ships, the vessel's Maneuverability Rating serves as its Physical Defense (see the **Airships and Riverboats** chapter in the ***Gamemaster's Companion***). Once coiled tightly, the leviathan causes damage with its claws each round until it is killed or driven off. The leviathan can even use its twisted tail as a weapon, inflicting Step 28 damage to the target.

Spells: Roughly one-third of all leviathans can cast spells, and nearly all those cast spells of the Elementalist Discipline. Those leviathans who do cast spells have generally mastered the spells of their Discipline up to Sixth Circle. Leviathans, like all dragons, can use their natural spellcasting ability to cast spells using raw magic.

Feathered Dragons

The remaining children of Dayheart chose to dwell in the hot, sunlit lands of the south. They are the brightly colored Dragons of Fire, known as feathered dragons by your scholars and those of the Theran Empire. They are the rarest of dragons in this part of the world, more rare even than the legendary Cathayan dragons. Feathered dragons are most often found quite far from Barsaive, in the warm, tropical lands across the great ocean, near Araucania, where they are called Quetzal by the native Namegivers. Feathered dragons are also known to live in the warm regions closer to this land, such as Indrisa, and in the central and southern regions of Fekara near the ancient Nuboz Empire.

No feathered serpents make their home in Barsaive, and only on the rarest of instances have they visited this land. Barsaivians are unlikely to encounter a feathered serpent without traveling very, very far. I myself have only met two feathered serpents, and then only because they were invited to join us at a great dragon council in the time before the Scourge.

On the Form of Feathered Dragons

Feathered dragons are quite unlike any other dragons in form and appearance. They are thin and sinuous, and look serpent-like. They have a powerful pair of wings and a single pair of small limbs they use to walk rather clumsily on the ground. In fact, feathered dragons are quite similar to dragon hatchlings in shape, having smaller limbs and a slightly thinner body.

The greatest difference between feathered dragons and others is also the source of their name—they are covered in brightly colored feathers along their entire body, including a ruff of feathers around the head and a tuft at the tip of the tail. The wing feathers are the largest and brightest, while the body feathers tend to be small and similar to brightly colored scales. The feathers are predominantly green and blue, but vivid wing and head feathers may be crimson, yellow, white or purple.

Feathered dragons have sharp, venomous fangs and a dagger-like tail spine which is likewise venomous. They often coil around prey to stab with their tails and bite, or they simply crush the life out of their prey with their powerful bodies. Their compact shape makes feathered dragons well-suited for life in the brightly colored jungles of the south, where they wind their way through the tree-tops. A feathered dragon at rest in the upper limbs of a strong tree can be difficult to spot in the jungle foliage. They enjoy the warmth of the sun and love to lay draped across a strong tree or an outcropping of rock to soak up the heat.

On the Life and Culture of Feathered Dragons

Feathered dragons are not born feathered. Their hatchlings look much like those of other dragons, covered in fine scales, with membranous wings and smaller hind limbs. They are raised and cared for by the great feathered dragons, taught life in the harsh jungle and shown how to hunt and fend for themselves. Eventually, they live for a time on their own in the jungle, where they struggle to survive against countless other predators there, including their fellow dragons. Life in some of the southern jungles can be truly harsh, not unlike the jungles of Barsaive. Only a few young feathered dragons survive adolescence.

It is during the metamorphosis from adolescent to adult that feathered dragons take on their true nature. They weave fantastically colored cocoons in the depths of astral space, where they undergo the change into their adult state. When they emerge from astral space, they shine with their new brilliance. Each new adult then takes its Name and its place among the other adult feathered dragons.

Like us, feathered dragons tend to be solitary beings. They establish their own domains in their jungle homes and defend them against intruders. Unlike other dragons, feathered dragons tend to be shy and prefer to conceal themselves from strangers. They will often watch intruders entering their domains carefully for a time before taking any action, using Illusionism magic to allow them to get quite close without anyone the wiser.

Feathered dragons are quite skilled in the use of illusions, and they have a mischievous sense of humor as well. Namegivers who dwell near feathered dragons sometimes become the subject of elaborate pranks or deceptions. Some among my kind consider this to be little more than our feathered brothers playing with what they consider their toys, but I believe the feathered dragons have other, more honorable motives. Feathered dragons have been known to aid members of the Young Races who become lost in the jungle, subtly guiding them to safety while protecting them from jungle hazards. Only when the visitors are outside the jungle confines do they look back to see a brightly-feathered form vanish back into the foliage.

Beyond this, feathered dragons have little to do with other Namegivers who live nearby. In fact, most Namegivers in lands that are home to feathered dragons consider them little more than large, dangerous creatures, and do not afford them the same respect



and awe dragons are shown elsewhere in the world. These members of the Young Races do not realize that the feathered ones are vast fonts of knowledge and wisdom, and avoid them. I believe it is this misunderstanding that drives feathered dragons to treat other Namegivers in the manner described above. Those Namegivers should see that surely any beings who enjoy playing pranks and aiding lost travelers are more than mere beasts.

For all of their humor and quiet nature, feathered dragons are fierce enemies of anything that threatens their home. I have heard tales of a feathered dragon who became locked in aerial combat with a Horror twice its size. They fought for hours, each struggling to overcome the other. During that time the dragon never faltered. Even though the Horror dealt it grievous wounds, the feathered dragon fought savagely, with all of the fierce strength of the Dragons of Fire, and overcame the Horror in the end. Such is the fate of all enemies that violate the homeland of a feathered dragon.

Beyond the differences in physical appearance, and the different relations between feathered dragons and Namegivers, they share many similarities with other dragons. They have lairs, usually hidden deep within the jungles, or near waterfalls alongside rivers. They hoard treasure and mementos as other dragons do, and hunt and study just as we do. Given their natural habitat, feathered dragons spend considerable time studying nature and the abundant flora and fauna. They are masters of animal and plant magic, and have developed abilities that allow them to experience the world through nature's eyes, seeing, hearing and sensing life through the plants and animals of the jungle. It is this ability that makes approaching a feathered dragon's lair so difficult, even for the most subtle. I believe it is also because of this ability that feathered dragons allow trespassers to get so close to their lairs before confronting them, as they are able to closely observe and study the trespassers before chasing them off.

On the Magic of Feathered Dragons

Feathered dragons are the only dragons to make any significant use of blood magic, specifically the more powerful and dangerous forms of blood magic that you know as death magic. They understand the fire that flows in the veins of dragonkind and, to a lesser degree, within all creatures. In their own lands, feathered dragons have used blood magic to heal the damage done to the land by the Scourge, repairing scars and making the jungles fertile once again. The elves of the Blood Wood could take some lessons from the feathered dragons in using blood magic to enhance growth without twisting the land and its creatures beyond recognition.

There is a definite split among the feathered dragons concerning the different uses of blood magic. Some feathered dragons are strongly opposed to death magic—that is, blood magic used solely for power. These dragons consider death magic inherently wrong, and suggest that it partakes of the power of the Horrors, and can only prolong the presence of those Horrors remaining since the Scourge. While they understand and appreciate the value of life magic, used to aid and restore life, these dragons see the two forms of blood magic as inextricably linked, and fear that use of one type leads to use of the other. The second group of feathered dragons

believes all forms of blood magic, whether life magic or death magic, are, like all magic, merely power—a tool beyond good and evil, to be used for whatever ends they see fit.

They argue that if any beings are powerful enough and wise enough to use blood magic safely, it is the dragons. It saddens me that there are some among my kind who have failed to learn the lessons of the past. Perhaps most frightening about the feathered dragons' use of blood magic is their propagation of its use to other Namegivers. There are some feathered dragons who teach and encourage the use of blood magic, specifically death magic, among the Young Races that live near them. I do not understand the purpose of this practice, and I fear its ultimate consequences. Fortunately, this practice is not widespread, and most feathered dragons oppose passing such potentially dangerous knowledge on to others.

What began as a philosophical argument has grown over the years to become a serious rift among feathered dragons (good enough reason to leave blood magic alone, in my view). I have heard tales from the hot lands of the south of feathered dragons fighting and even killing each other over the matter of blood magic. Some suggest there may be a Horror at work, corrupting some feathered dragons through the use of death magic. I cannot say, but I hope that reason prevails and the feathered dragons are able to settle their differences according to our tradition rather than repeating the mistakes of the past.

Along with their knowledge of blood magic, feathered dragons make considerable use of other magic, as I have mentioned. Many are spellcasters of considerable skill, particularly with illusion magic. Others practice elementalism and study the forces abroad in their jungle homes, in particular the different types of elemental spirits and animals. Some few feathered dragons also study nethermancy, particularly those with a strong interest in blood magic as well. These dragons have a great understanding of the netherworlds and astral space, perhaps too great an understanding for the comfort of others, as there are many things in the netherworlds that are best left alone.

Like the great dragons of Barsaive and Cathay, great feathered dragons are masters of magic far beyond that practiced by adult feathered ones. Great feathered dragons create drake servants just as we do, though not as often. Drakes are used by feathered dragons primarily as their eyes and ears in the cities and lands of other Namegivers, and are less often used to pursue a particular agenda. As you might expect, these drakes resemble small feathered dragons, as our drakes resemble us. As with other drakes, they can assume Namegiver form if necessary.

Typical Feathered Dragon

Feathered dragons average about forty feet in length, with a forty-foot-long tail, and a wingspan of sixty feet. They originate from a land far from Barsaive, near Araucania, but are also found in the jungles of lands such as Indrisa. Feathered dragons tend to avoid contact with Namegivers except in their distant homelands.

DEX: 18 **STR:** 23 **TOU:** 23
PER: 21 **WIL:** 20 **CHA:** 19

Initiative: 23
Actions: 4
Attack (5): 23
Damage:
Bite (7): 30; 4×Claws (5): 28
Death: 200
Unconsciousness: 182
Wound Threshold: 27

Physical Defense: 21
Spell Defense: 27
Social Defense: 24
Physical Armor: 27
Mystic Armor: 19
Recovery Tests: 11
Knockdown: 24
Movement: 7/12 *

Legend Award: Thirteenth Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 30 **Karma Step:** 12

* The second value is the dragon's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Armored Matrix [T] (10), Armored Scales (4), Disrupt Fate (5): 25, Dragon Breath (5): 25, Dragonsight (4): 25, Dragonspeech (4): 25, Durability (12), Enhanced Matrix [T] (10), Enhanced Matrix [T] (10), Fear (4): 23, Lair Sense (4): 25, Regeneration (4): 27, Spellcasting (7): 28, Spell Matrix [T] (10), Spell Matrix [T] (10), Spell Matrix [T] (10), Spell Matrix [T] (10), Summoning (4): 24, Suppress Magic (4): 24, Thread Weaving [Discipline; see text] (7): 28, Venom (5): 25, Wingbeat (5): 23

Spells: By Discipline (up to Tenth Circle; see text)

Equipment: None

Loot: Magical items and a hoard of precious metals and gems worth around 300,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points)

Rules

All feathered dragons can cast spells of one or more of the magician Disciplines. Most cast spells of the Illusionist or Elementalist Disciplines, or (more rarely) both, though some also follow the Wizard and Nethermancer Disciplines—the latter being common among those feathered serpents who pursue blood magic.

Feathered dragons usually know spells of only one Discipline up to the Tenth Circle. Those rare feathered dragons who do follow more than one Discipline know spells up to the Eighth Circle.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

HORRORS

Foolish Namegivers! Knowledge is a powerful tool in this age of magic. Knowledge of the Horrors, however, invites their touch upon your mind and heart. The wise Namegiver will remember this and be wary.

• Vasdenjas, Master of Secrets •

What the Horrors are, where they come from, and their reasons for doing what they do are not easily answered questions. Though theories abound, debated endlessly by scholars, sages, and Nethermancers, the people of Barsaive know precious little of the Horrors' true nature. Few of the existing theories answer all the questions posed about the Horrors; though this chapter describes many traits common to the known Horrors in Barsaive, vast areas of information remain frustratingly vague.

USING HORRORS IN ADVENTURES AND CAMPAIGNS

A close look at the statistics and powers of the Horrors in this chapter should make clear just how dangerous these beings are. The Horrors possess incredible powers and abilities that they use to do vile, horrible, and evil things. They manipulate whole populations into killing themselves and each other. They feed off the fear and anguish wrought by the devastation of the Scourge. They torture people and creatures for nourishment, in the form of flesh or emotion. This lethal combination of great power with the worst types of actions makes using Horrors in adventures a delicate business. Carefully consider what type of Horrors to use as well as how to use them.

Should the Horrors be that powerful? Yes, absolutely. The Horrors need to be as tough as they are because they are the cause of the Scourge. The Horrors forced the world's population to live in shelters for four hundred years and left the land decimated. They destroyed forests, corrupted jungles and laid waste vast stretches of terrain. With rare exceptions, no one save those who accepted Theran aid survived the Horrors' onslaught.

The evil and powerful nature of the Horrors creates an interesting dilemma for gamemasters. Using any of the Named Horrors in this book will likely result in the death or permanent corruption of one or more of the player characters. When dealing with entities this powerful, those kinds of things are likely to happen. Though the death or corruption of a player character may be undesirable, both are important elements of **Earthdawn**, and the gamemaster should not try to avoid them. If the characters escape unscathed every time they encounter a Horror, the impact of the Horrors on the game universe is diluted because the threat they present to the world becomes less real.

The following guidelines suggest ways to present the true power of Horrors without killing large numbers of player characters in each adventure.

First of all, most Horrors (especially Named Horrors) should be long-term opponents. Certain minor Horrors and Horror constructs may work well in single adventures, but most Horrors should be used over a series of adventures in which the characters encounter the Horror's victims or witness the effects of its powers. Using a Horror in this way allows the players to encounter the Horror indirectly and gradually learn more about its influence and machinations. This knowledge, as well as the power and experience the players will gain during the course of several adventures, will leave them more ready to deal with the Horror by the time they meet it face-to-face.

Consider the Horrors campaign-level opponents. These are not the kinds of beings that characters fight once and slay. Most of the Horrors in this book are so powerful that only an experienced group of characters has any chance of defeating them. The Named Horrors in this chapter represent opportunities for over fifteen different types of campaigns, using different kinds of adventures and stories. Also, many of these Horrors prefer to use their powers over a long period of time. For example, planning for the characters to learn about, confront, and battle Ysrthgrathe in the course of a single adventure is a waste of a good Horror.

Keep in mind that the characters need not confront the Horror right from the start. Many Horrors work through agents, willing or otherwise. Willing agents might include cultists devoted to a particular Horror or constructs under the Horror's control. Unwilling agents might include Namegiver pawns of Ristul or the tormented victims of Chantrel's Horror.

Adventures featuring the Named Horrors need not conclude with the characters actually confronting the Horror head-on. In most cases, characters should consider themselves fortunate to survive any encounter with a Horror, direct or not! A series of minor victories for the characters that disrupt a Horror's activities is a good way to use these powerful Horrors in adventures without risking the lives of the characters too seriously. Of course, if a Horror's plans are disrupted too often, that Horror might consider a direct assault on the party responsible.

Remember also that adventures in which characters die or become Horror constructs or servitors act as an excellent reminder that the world of **Earthdawn** is a dangerous one. Adventure after adventure in which the characters succeed against any opponent they face only serves to diminish the sense of danger that Barsaive should hold. An occasional adventure in which the characters suffer losses, either through injury or death, helps maintain a challenging atmosphere in your **Earthdawn** adventures and campaigns.

It is inevitable that one or more characters will suffer some misfortune at a Horror's hands, so try to work such misfortunes into the story. Make them significant events. Make them mean something beyond the fact that one of the players needs to create a new character. Don't let the death or corruption of a character happen for no good reason. The characters in **Earthdawn** are heroes; if they are going to die, let them die well!

Finally, consider the importance of the Horrors to the world of **Earthdawn**. One of the major themes in **Earthdawn** is battling the Horrors and attempting to drive them from the world.

Therefore, the Horrors should be interesting opponents rather than simply invincible ones. Always give your player characters some way to defeat a Horror. Not just any group of characters should be able to defeat any Horror, of course. But the gamemaster must strike a balance between allowing some possibility of success for the characters and maintaining a threat level consistent with the terrible nature of the Horrors.

On the Origins of the Horrors

As the First Book of Harrow foretold, the Horrors entered Barsaive hundreds of years ago at the beginning of the terrible time called the Scourge. According to the famed dwarf scholar Jaron, the Horrors' native lands lie somewhere in the deepest (or perhaps furthest) reaches of the astral plane. These dark netherworlds are surely places of fluid, ever-changing evil, and it is doubtful that any Namegiver could reach the Horrors' homeland without losing body, mind, and soul.

Explicating his theories, Jaron states that, *"the darkling spirits may only exist in a world that supplies them sufficient magical energies. Without sufficient energies, the Horrors suffocate, just as the Namegivers suffocate without sufficient air to breathe."* [First Book of Harrow, 1, III] Jaron goes on to state that the level of magical energies in this world fluctuates as do the tides. It may be that at low tide, no magic exists—certainly the Horrors cannot exist in such an environment. However, when the tide rises to a critical point, the Horrors can enter and exist in this world. If the tidal analogy is correct, it appears that Namegivers are magically "amphibious," able to exist with or without such energies as amphibious creatures can exist immersed in and outside water. Certain scholars, mostly human, assert that only humans and perhaps dwarfs can exist as Namegiver races without a certain amount of magical energy. This human-centered theory, of course, is a source of great contention in many academic circles.

If Jaron's hypothesis is accepted as being accurate, the conclusion would be that the Horrors come from a magic-rich netherworld whose landscape remains unimaginable and inaccessible to Namegivers. The question then immediately arises: why do the Horrors leave their home plane to wreak havoc in this world? If the Horrors have all the magical energies and anything else they can possibly want in their netherworld, then this question can't be answered. However, all too many Horrors appear eager to bridge the gap between the astral and physical realms to feast upon the land. Any Barsaivian who glances out his window at the still-scarred landscape, or listens to family stories about his forebears' time in the kaers, knows the truth of this. Therefore, the only conclusion is that the Horrors want or need something this world has to offer.



Regarding the Nature of the Horrors

Though it is extremely difficult to make any statement that is true of all Horrors, every one of these monstrosities shares the need to feed. This need for sustenance is one that all living creatures possess, and the Horrors are most certainly living creatures. However, Horrors do not all feed on flesh or plant life or other such physical substances as most creatures. In fact, most Horrors seem to feed on intangible emotions and the very energy of life. The life force of all living beings appears to draw the Horrors to our world, and the more complex and varied the life force, the richer a source of food the Horror finds it. For this reason the Horrors are particularly drawn to Namegivers, who have the most rich and complex emotions and life energies of all Barsaive's creatures.

Even those Horrors that feed on physical flesh seem to share the need to cause emotional upheaval in their victims. It is interesting to note that, although the type of emotional disturbance each Horror seems to most enjoy varies, all Horrors cause some sort of emotional or psychic distress in their victims. The conclusion seems inescapable that the Horrors either need or strongly desire these powerful emotional energies.

However, this theory alone does not adequately explain why no Horrors appear to feed on such intense but pleasant emotions as love or joy. Instead, Horrors prefer to cause madness, pain, terror, despair, jealousy, and the like. Some scholars suggest that this preference means pleasurable emotions might hold the key to driving the Horrors away forever, but such a conclusion is highly theoretical at best. However, it's not good advice to use a smile instead of a spell or a sword when faced with a Horror!

Although it is known that Horrors must feed upon powerful, negative emotional energies, scholars can only make few additional general statements about these terrible entities. No two types of Horrors appear to be the same, nor can we assume they possess the same strengths and weaknesses. Several magical abilities that known Horrors possess have been described, as well as those that seem more or less common than others. The truth is that the only characteristic that unifies these monstrosities is their amazing diversity!

Not all Horrors are unique creatures—for example, there exist such general types of Horrors as bloatforms, dopplers, kreescra, and so on—but the vast majority are singular beings. As with all unique creatures, most Horrors have Names. Most of them have different ways of behaving, differing abilities, forms, modes of hunting, and desires. Such an incredible range presents terrible problems for those brave souls who attempt to rid our lands of these monsters. There is no certainty save uncertainty when facing a Horror.

Each and every sane Namegiver in Barsaive believes with every fiber of his being that the Horrors are evil, perhaps even evil incarnate. Most people wake sweating, with their hearts in their throats, at the merest thought of a Horror in their dreams. Such a reaction is natural, given the devastation the Horrors have inflicted (and still inflict) on this world. However, the Namegivers still comprehend almost nothing about them. No sages or scholars specialize in studying the desires or motives of Horrors. No peacemakers exist to help Horrors and Namegivers understand each other the way some have done between the different Namegiver races. Certainly,

no scholar or adept—not even Nethermancers, for all their often sinister reputation—questions that Horrors perpetrate tremendous evil. However, anyone who faces or studies these creatures is urged to keep an open mind regarding their motives and true goals. When dealing with Horrors, blind fear, hatred and ignorance can all too easily prove fatal.

On a Singular Truth About the Forms of All Horrors

The Horrors are amazingly varied in nature. In a particularly unusual variation, not all Horrors exist on the same plane. Some Horrors possess only astral bodies and cannot exist in the physical world. Other Horrors possess only physical forms during their sojourns in Barsaive. Still others seem to have both astral and physical bodies. This last variation is particularly intriguing, as all other creatures known to us have only one mode of existence. Either all individual creatures of a given type exist astrally, or they all exist physically, or they all exist in both planes—there is no variation between individual members of a given species. Of all the creatures that are known to exist, only the Horrors depart from this pattern.

This has led some scholars to the intriguing hypothesis that those beings called Horrors are actually individual members of countless separate species. This hypothesis, however, does not adequately explain why only one, unique example of most Horrors is encountered in Barsaive. It may simply be that the vagaries of magic and existence in astral space produce countless permutations of the same basic stock.

Many Nethermancers agree that variations in physical and astral manifestation might provide a primitive means of classifying Horrors as astral in nature, physical in nature, and dual in nature. This simple classification may at first appear to have little or no practical application. However, anyone who ever attempts to destroy a Horror would be well advised to keep these categories in mind, as they offer one of the few clues known concerning how to kill or banish Horrors.

Specific rituals of banishment, physical attacks, astral quests, and more may be necessary to destroy or repel a Horror. If the Horror only exists on the physical plane, then one may safely assume that destroying its body destroys the Horror. However, an astral Horror can only be destroyed through spells, astral combat, and other means that attack the creature's intangible essence. And Horrors that reside in both the physical and astral worlds must be destroyed on both these planes; destroying one form or the other will not suffice to kill the Horror. Almost all of the Horrors are able to recreate either one of their bodies as long as one remains intact. Any number of brave Namegivers have no doubt prematurely celebrated a Horror's destruction, only to find themselves dying a horrible death inflicted by the supposedly deceased creature. It is important never to assume to know a Horror's true nature or how to destroy it.



On the Dangers of Studying the Horrors

Some people say that the Horrors are too terrible, too destructive for mortal minds and hearts to bear. Certainly the number of people driven insane by the slightest contact with a Horror should be caution enough for anyone. It is always dangerous to dwell overlong on thoughts of the Horrors, for they appear able to sense attention directed at them. It is also highly inadvisable to speak a Horror's Name aloud, as the chance of attracting the creature's attention grows much greater with every utterance. Unfortunately, such concerns often play no part for the more heroic-minded among Barsaive's people detesting the very thought of a dread secret remaining unknown, particularly if the revelation of it may save lives one day. Such heroic souls and seekers are the most vulnerable to the Horrors. Their noblest qualities are the very things that may draw the Horrors to them.

Regarding Horror-Cursed Items and Places

Just as the Horrors can mark individuals with their fearsome powers, so too can they mark places and objects. These so-called Horror-cursed locations and items provide channels that Horrors can use to influence the physical world. Almost all Horrors can channel their Horror Mark power through such things, and many Horrors, such as Artificer and Aazhvat Many-Eyes, can use all manner of dreadful powers through cursed items and places.

Horror-cursed items come in as many shapes and sizes as do Namegivers, from seemingly mundane items to strange objects created from a Horror's body or forged by a Horror or one of its servitors. Some Horror-cursed items grant the user certain of the Horror's powers; in many gruesome cases, they also transform the user into a Horror construct. The danger of a Horror curse should never be underestimated, for entire towns have fallen under a Horror's influence because some careless merchant sold a Horror-cursed item to an inhabitant.

A Horror-cursed place or item functions in the same way as a Horror Mark (p.273). Through the curse, a Horror establishes a link to the item or place and can use its powers against any characters who pass through that place or come into contact with that item. Because the Horror must work indirectly through the cursed item or place, however, its powers become less effective. Resolve the use of the Horror's powers as described in the **Horror Powers** section, p.270, but weaken them by a number of Steps to reflect this. Feel free to adjust the power's effect higher or lower than the suggested level, as best suits your game. Generally, Horrors channel their powers carefully through cursed items or places,

using only those powers that will not alarm the living sufficiently to make them abandon the place or object.

In some instances, Horrors may also Horror mark any character who comes into contact with cursed items or places. To do this, the gamemaster makes a Curse Test against the character's Spell Defense. The curse's Step number is equal to the Spellcasting Step of the Horror that laid the curse. If the test succeeds, the character is Horror-marked. This method of Horror-marking is an exception to the normal line-of-sight restriction on the **Horror Mark** power, p.273).

Other Horror-cursed items or places may contain specific curses that affect characters. Use the Curse Test described in the preceding paragraph to determine if characters are affected by these curses. To break a Horror curse, the characters must usually kill the Horror that marked the item or place. Doing so breaks the curse on the place or item and on any characters under its effects. Descriptions of a few Horror-cursed items, are as follows.

Tainted Orichalcum

Namegivers throughout Barsaive use orichalcum in a variety of enchantments, ranging from the forging of magical weapons and armor to blood-magic rituals. Because of the widespread use of this magical metal, Horror-tainted orichalcum remains a grave and never-ending threat to all Namegivers. A Horror may use the Horror Mark (p.273) or Horror Thread (p.274) power to taint a supply of orichalcum. Treat all items made of tainted orichalcum as Horror-cursed items.

The Flydrop Coat

According to legend the so-called Flydrop Coat, Raknidor, was created by magicians enslaved by the infamous Horror known as Hate. Few records exist of this garment, which reputedly transforms its wearers into monstrous, spider-like Horror constructs called jehuthras (p.280).

The Flydrop Coat requires no threads or Key Knowledges to activate its power. Anyone who puts on the coat for the first time must make a Willpower (10) Test. If the test succeeds, the coat's effect on the wearer is suppressed for 24 hours. If the character is still wearing the coat the next day, he must make a Willpower (11) Test. Add +1 to the Difficulty Number for each day the character wears the coat, until the character's Willpower Test fails or he removes the coat. A failed test arouses in the wearer an inexplicable desire to wear the coat every day.

The coat changes fashion and color up to once a day as the wearer desires. However, the design always includes gray fur (actually spider hair) and conceals the body from shoulder to knee. Whenever the wearer wills it, the coat kills all flies within Willpower Step yards of the wearer. After a week of wearing the coat, the wearer learns he may excrete a lump of organic material that attracts flies within a radius in miles equal to his Willpower Step. The lump's magic lasts for 1 week, after which time the wearer can produce another lump.

About the same time, the thought enters the wearer's mind that the flies killed by the coat probably taste good. A second full week of wearing the coat brings on a compulsion to spit saliva, which dries instantly into tough threads, and to weave the threads into cat's cradles or webs. A month after his failed Willpower Test, the wearer's behavior drives away even casual visitors. At this point, the coat attaches thick adhesive tendrils to the wearer's body, preventing him from removing it. Over the next month the wearer, who now feeds solely on flies, grows lazy and withdraws into some shadowy, unfrequented niche such as a cave or a cellar.

The coat now begins to transform the hapless character. The wearer's limbs atrophy and most of his body withdraws into his abdomen, which swells five-fold. His skin grows milky, tough, and inflexible, eventually becoming a cocoon. As the cocoon grows, the coat peels away under its own power and reforms intact nearby. After three days of slow growth into a papery, foul-smelling sphere, the cocoon tears open and a mature jehuthra crawls out. The newhatched jehuthra carries the coat to a public place where someone will find it and goes off to spread panic and terror as Hate desires.

The wearer can remove the coat without trouble during the first week in which he wears it. After that, another character must persuade, trick, or force the wearer to remove the coat. If this happens, the wearer makes a Willpower (17) Test. If this test succeeds, the wearer recovers his senses and recognizes the coat as the vile item it is. At the gamemaster's discretion, the wearer may make a similar Willpower Test to remove the coat after some shock, such as eating his first fly or facing a jehuthra in combat and uncomfortably recognizing his own kinship with his opponent. Once the transformation begins, however, removing the coat inflicts damage at a Step number equal to the number of weeks the wearer has worn the coat. No armor protects against this damage.

A questor's healing magic can reverse the transformation at any time before the cocoon stage and enable the wearer to remove the coat without damage. Destroying the coat requires powerful magic. That act also releases the coat's energies, which attracts Hate's attention. Treat attempts to destroy the Flydrop Coat as a use of raw magic to determine whether Hate Horror-marks the coat's destroyer.

The Skull of Maarberg

Maximum Threads: 1 **Spell Defense:** 21
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

The legendary Skull of Maarberg is a fearsome-looking helmet formed from the skull of a large reptilian Horror killed in the early years of the Scourge. Traditionally, the skull is described as having seven eye-sockets and several large spiked horns, which give its wearer a menacing appearance. Reputedly, anyone who wears the Skull gains the powers of the Horror to which it once belonged—and risks possession by the Horror as well. The ancient Skull of Maarberg has turned a dull brownish color with age and patches of light green discoloration mar its surface. The Skull is much stronger than it looks, however, and the legends are true—any wearer who weaves threads to the skull receives the ability to wield several Horror powers. Currently, the skull belongs to Moltaa, an obsidiman Nethermancer who leads a small unit of the Grim Legion in the hinterlands of Barsaive just north of the Tylon Mountains.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The skull belongs to a Horror slain by a great hero during the earliest days of the Scourge. It was recovered many years after the Invae Burnings in a buried city its discoverers christened Maarberg. The user must discover the Name given to the city by its long- dead inhabitants (the gamemaster supplies the Name).

Effect: The wearer gains the Swat ability. The Step number for this ability is equal to the wearer's Strength Step+the helmet's thread rank. Using the ability is a Simple Action. When struck, the wearer makes a Swat Test against his opponent's Attack Test result. If the test succeeds, the wearer deflects the force of the blow with a backhanded swipe of his arm. The force of the blow rebounds into the attacker, sending him flying backward a number of yards equal to the difference between the two test results (at least 1 yard). To avoid taking 1 point of Stun damage for each yard he is thrown, the attacker must make a successful Avoid Blow Test against the Swat Test result. If the wearer's Swat Test fails, his opponent's blow does standard damage, and the wearer is immediately Knocked Down.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The wearer gains the Horror power Animate Dead (p.270). The Step number for this power is equal to the wearer's Willpower Step+the helmet's thread rank.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wearer must discover the Name of the hero who slew the Horror in the final defense of his city.

Deed: When the wearer attaches this thread to the Skull, the lingering, malign presence of the dead Horror psychically assaults him. To resist, the wearer makes a Willpower Test against the Horror's Spell Defense. If the test fails, the spirit of the Horror possesses the wearer for three days, during which time it attempts to force the wearer to cause as much pain and suffering as possible. If the wearer resists the Horror, he gains 1,300 Legend Points for the Deed. If not, he gains no Legend Points, but the Deed is still successful.

Effect: The wearer gains the Horror power Cursed Luck (p.271). The Step number for this power is equal to the wearer's Willpower Step+the helmet's thread rank.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The wearer gains the Horror power Damage Shift (p.271). The Step number for this power is equal to the wearer's Willpower Step+the helmet's thread rank.

Thread Rank Five

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

Deed: When the wearer attaches this thread, the Horror's spirit psychically assaults him. To resist, the wearer must make a Willpower Test against the Horror's Spell Defense. If the test fails, the Horror possesses the wearer for a year and a day. If the wearer resists the Horror, he gains 3,400 Legend Points for the Deed. If not, he gains no Legend Points, but the Deed is still successful.

Effect: The wearer gains the Horror power Skin Shift (p.276). The Step number for this power is equal to the wearer's Willpower Step+the helmet's thread rank.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The wearer gains the Horror power Corrupt Karma (p.271). The Step number for this power is equal to the wearer's Willpower Step+the helmet's thread rank.

Thread Rank Seven

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the curse that escaped the lips of the Horror at the moment of its death: "Through a Namegiver's greed for power, I shall live again to laugh at your crumbling bones!"

Deed: The spirit of the Horror makes a final attempt to possess the wearer, who must make a Willpower Test against the Horror's Spell Defense. If the test fails, the Horror destroys the wearer's identity and takes over his body until he dies of natural causes. If the test succeeds, the Horror possesses the wearer for three days. Regardless of success, the wearer gets no Legend Points for this Deed.

Effect: The wearer gains the Horror power Karma Tap (p.276). The Step number for this power is equal to the wearer's Perception Step+the helmet's thread rank.



The Pipes of Wrongness

The Pipes of Wrongness are a set of pan-pipes beautifully wrought of pewter. Crafted by an unknown, long-dead craftsman, the rune-covered pipes carry an unusual and powerful curse from the Horror Fla Tra Lys, the Eater of Music, p.286.

Anyone who picks up the pipes immediately experiences an irresistible urge to blow them and hear their melody. Unfortunately, the only music they produce is a high, unpleasant, piercing whistle. Within days after a character blows the pipes, an undead servant of the Horror called Fla Tra Lys appears. This servant is an unimaginably haggard, haunted looking individual with thin white hair, sunken cheeks, and a skeletal body. His clothes are filthy, as though he has been recently dug from the earth. The servant possesses the same game statistics as a cadaver man (p.278).

The servant says, *"I am a gift from Fla Tra Lys, the Eater of Music. I will serve as your slave for a year and a day. You may beat me or starve me, but I will continue to serve you. You may drive me away, but I will return to serve you. If you slay me, I will rise from the dead and serve you even as my body rots."*

The undead servant remains with the character for a full year and a day. During that time, the servant rises from any injury or death to continue its service. Once that time has elapsed, the Horror appears to claim the servant and slay the character it has been serving. Then the Horror uses the Unnatural Life power to transform the character into a new undead servant, who serves the next character who blows the pipes.

If a character who blew the pipes dies before Fla Tra Lys claims him, the undead servant remains with the character's surviving fellow adventurers. However, the Horror soon shows up to devour the servant. Blowing on the pipes again before the servant's time is up has no effect. Characters may compel or bargain with Fla Tra Lys to take back the pipes and remove the item's curse from a player character. However, they must first summon the Horror by some means (if it is not already present), such as the Horror Call spell (see ***Player's Guide*** p.176).

The pipes can be destroyed by tossing them into the Death's Sea, but the Horror will try to prevent this. Dragon flame also destroys the pipes, but persuading a dragon to use its breath in this manner may prove difficult. A generous gamemaster may decide that the act of destroying the pipes also weakens Fla Tra Lys, so that characters may more easily destroy the Horror. A powerful questor of Garlen, Lochost, or Mynbruje can remove the enslaving curse from a victim but cannot destroy the pipes.

HORROR POWERS

All Horrors demonstrate powerful magical abilities. They may use the magical energies of the world to wield these powers, as Namegivers use spells or talents, or these powers may exist because the Horrors are actual manifestations of astral energy. No one knows for certain.

Keep in mind that not every Horror possesses every power, nor are Horror powers limited to the list below. The powers described in this section are those most extensively documented. As far as anyone knows, the Horrors may have any number of additional, fearsome abilities.

The following text describes known Horror powers and demonstrates different ways to use some of them, plus it offers guidelines for altering Horror powers to suit your needs, and describes other abilities unique to Horrors.

Customizing Horror Powers

The descriptions of Horror powers represent the most commonly encountered manifestation of those Horror powers. However, not all Horror powers function identically for all Horrors. Many Horrors use slight variations of them, which add an element of the unknown to the game. Alterations to Horror powers may make them more powerful, but can also make them less so. Some Horror powers are extremely deadly — adding limitations to such powers makes the Horror a bit easier for characters to deal with. Below are guidelines for altering certain Horror powers during play:

The most common method of altering a Horror power from the norm changes the parameters of a power's effect, such as its range or duration. For example, many standard Horror powers can only be used on victims that the Horror can see. One variation might allow the Horror to use any or all of its powers on any victim it has Horror-marked, operating on the theory that the Horror mark allows it to "see" the character in question. Similarly, the standard Damage Shift power transfers current Damage only—a more powerful variation might allow the Horror to transfer Wounds as well.

The other method of alteration involves changing the power's actual effect. Such variations are common among the Named Horrors presented later in this chapter. Each of these Horrors is unique and so manifests its powers in a unique way. For example, the Horror Mark power used by the entity known as Taint provides a good example of an altered effect. Instead of marking victims as most other Horrors do, Taint must mark the victim a little bit at a time until the Horror has tainted the victim's pattern sufficiently to create the Horror mark. Once a victim has been marked, Taint can use its Corrupt Magic power on that character. The alterations to Taint's Horror Mark power limit the power in one way, but also allow the Horror to use other abilities against the victim.

The rules for Horror powers are meant as guidelines, and the gamemaster may bend, twist, or even break them in whatever way best suits his adventures. Similarly, the descriptions of Horror powers in this book are simply mechanics for resolving the actions most commonly associated with the Horrors, and the gamemaster should feel free to modify the way these powers work as he sees fit. For example, if the gamemaster wishes to create a Horror whose Horror mark allows it to take control of its victims for brief periods of time, he should do so. Just because the existing description of the Horror Mark power does not cite this type of effect does not mean that a given Horror cannot use it that way.

However, keep in mind that the dreadful powers of many Horrors can result in the death of many characters if used without caution. Horror powers are dangerous enough as written, and any enhancements of them might easily make the Horrors unbeatable. If the characters have little or no chance of ever defeating a Horror, the adventure in which they face the Horror will soon cease to be fun. Therefore, resist the temptation to beef up Horror powers too much. In fact, altering a Horror's powers to reduce their effectiveness may add to the fun of the game by forcing the Horror to use more subtle approaches to ensure its success.

Some Horror powers are so effective as written that they can prevent the characters from taking any action against the Horror. For example, the Terror power can completely incapacitate an entire group of adepts, while the Damage Shift power can transfer all of the damage the characters inflicted on the Horror to another victim. High Step numbers for either of these powers can result in a dead-end scenario for the characters, and so the gamemaster may wish to substitute lower Step numbers for these powers. For example, if a Horror's Damage Shift Step number is only +1 or +2 Steps higher than the average Spell Defense of a group of characters, the Horror will likely suffer at least some of the damage the characters inflict on it.

ANIMATE DEAD

Step: Rank+WIL **Action:** Standard

The Animate Dead power allows a Horror to place an undead spirit into a corpse or cadaver, resulting in the creation of a cadaver man (p.278). The Horror touches a portion of the deceased body and makes an Animate Dead Test against the deceased target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the dead man is raised to unlife for a number of days equal to the Horror's Animate Dead Step, turning him into a cadaver man under the Horror's control. The Horror can directly control the cadaver man at a distance equal to its Animate Dead Step×20 yards (10 hexes). Though the Horror must concentrate to control the dead, it need not make any tests to give the cadaver man orders. Because cadaver men created with this power are telepathically linked to the Horror, its commands to them do not depend on speech or line of sight. The Horror may use blood magic to extend the power's duration. For 1 Blood Magic Damage, the Horror can keep the cadaver man animated for a year and a day. At the end of this time, the cadaver man collapses into dust unless the Horror continues to extend the blood magic. This damage can be healed once the cadaver man is destroyed or the power ends, whichever occurs first.

ASTRAL CAMOUFLAGE

Step: Rank+WIL **Action:** Standard

Some Horrors have the ability to hide their presence in astral space, and can use this power to camouflage their astral imprint. The Horror makes an Astral Camouflage Test, the result of which becomes the Detection Difficulty for Perception and any Astral Sensing Tests. If the Horror engages in combat or moves faster than half its normal Movement Rate, the camouflage is disrupted. Though its features appear blurry and indistinct, it can be seen normally, and will remain visible until the end of the round in which it slows down. Each use of the Astral Camouflage power lasts for a number of hours equal to the Horror's rank in Astral Camouflage.

ASTRAL SIGHT

Step: Rank+PER **Action:** Standard

Like dragons, almost all Horrors possess astral sight. To use this ability, the Horror makes an Astral Sight Test. The gamemaster then compares the result against the Spell Defense of each object or being within Astral Sight Rank×10 yards (5 hexes) of the Horror and in its line of sight. If the test succeeds, the Horror can see the target's astral image.

AURA OF AWE

Step: Rank+CHA **Action:** Standard

The Aura of Awe power allows a Horror to alter the attitudes of other characters toward it. To use this power, the Horror makes an Aura of Awe Test against the target's Social Defense. The range of this power is the Horror's line of sight. The result level achieved determines the Attitude of the target. On a Poor result, the target adopts a Neutral attitude toward the Horror. On an Average result, the target adopts a Friendly attitude. On a Good result, the target becomes Loyal. An Excellent or better result means the target is Awestruck. The effect lasts until the target has been out of the Horror's presence for a year and a day, or until the Horror directly or otherwise obviously injures the target. When a player character is affected by the Aura of Awe, the gamemaster may secretly instruct the player to run the character appropriately or may temporarily take over decisions for the player until the power ends or is dispelled.

CORRUPT KARMA

Step: Rank+WIL **Action:** Standard

The Corrupt Karma power allows the Horror to alter another being's use of Karma. The Horror makes a Corrupt Karma Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the Horror overrides the character's use of Karma, preventing him from spending Karma on any actions taken against the Horror. If the Horror achieves an Excellent result on the Corrupt Karma Test, it can prevent the character from using Karma at all. Though this power normally works only through line of sight, it can also work against a Horror-marked character several hundred miles away from the Horror in question.

CORRUPT REALITY

Step: Rank **Action:** Standard

The Corrupt Reality power enables a Horror to distort the fabric of reality within sensing distance of a victim it has previously Horror-marked. By distorting reality in this manner, the Horror can alarm and torment the victim and anyone else in the victim's vicinity. This serves to isolate the victim from others, who will typically avoid the presence of anyone who is a locus for such occurrences. Typical effects of Corrupt Reality include the ever-present eye images associated with Aazhvat Many-Eyes, as well as the fouling of food and drink, the creation of eerie sounds or changes in temperature, the transformation of mundane objects into slime-covered monstrosities, and the induced rapid decay of inanimate objects. The effects of Corrupt Reality appear for a number of rounds equal to the Horror's Corrupt Reality rank. These manifestations are not illusions, and it therefore does no good attempting to disbelieve them. However, the effects of Corrupt Reality are not permanent. Any transformed object returns to normal at the end of the duration, and Corrupt Reality cannot directly cause damage to living organisms. Of course, the fear and dismay the effect induces may cause those beholding it to act in a manner resulting in harm to themselves or others.

CREATE SHADOW

Step: Rank **Action:** Standard

Using this power, a Horror can create a shadow by killing a victim's body and capturing the slain Namegiver's spirit. With a terrible wrenching sound, the Horror sucks the soul from the dead or dying body and corrupts it. A terrible blackness slowly passes over the poor victim's astral self, until the only bit of the wretch still visible is the dull glow of his eyes. Nothing remains of the victim, not the smallest shred of his soul—the victim has died, completely and irrevocably. The shadow has a maximum Strength Rating equal to the Horror's rank in the Create Shadow power. For more information on shadows, refer to the **Spirits** chapter on p.218.

CURSED LUCK

Step: Rank+WIL **Action:** Standard

Many Horrors can bring bad luck to their opponents using this power. To use Cursed Luck, the Horror makes a Cursed Luck Test against the target's Spell Defense. The range of this power is the Horror's line of sight. If the test succeeds, the power reduces the result of at least one die rolled by the target for any action to 1. The result level achieved determines how many of the target's dice have their results reduced. An Average result reduces one die; a Good result reduces two dice; an Excellent result three; an Extraordinary result reduces four dice. Cursed Luck automatically reduces the highest numbers rolled by the target character. For example, if a character rolls a 2 and a 6, the Cursed Luck power reduces the 6 to a 1.

If the result level achieved by the Horror allows it to reduce more dice than the target character has rolled, the power affects all the target's dice and gives the character an automatic result of 1, meaning that his action fails, probably with a Pathetic result (see the **Rule of One** in the **Game Concepts** chapter on p.15 of the ***Player's Guide***). A character may not use cursed dice as Bonus dice, because the curse has already reduced any result from such dice to 1 before the character can gain any benefit. Cursed Luck only affects the results of one test and can only be used if the Horror has a higher Initiative than his target.

DAMAGE SHIFT

Step: Rank+WIL **Action:** Simple

The Damage Shift power allows a Horror to shift damage it has taken onto a target character. The Horror may use Damage Shift by making a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, a number of Damage Points equal to the Horror's Damage Shift Test result, up to a maximum equal to the Horror's Current Damage total, are shifted to the target character. Damage Shift works by line of sight, meaning that the Horror must be able to see its chosen target.

DISEASE

Step: Rank **Action:** NA

Horrors with this power are infectious and are able to infect a target with a disease. No test is required for a Horror to infect a target with the disease—if the victim is physically struck and damaged by the Horror, it is automatically exposed to the disease. The effects of the Horror's disease are listed with the description for the Horror (for more information about diseases, see the **Adventuring** chapter, p.126).

DISPLACE

Step: Rank+PER **Action:** Standard

Horrors can exist in the physical world, astral space, or both. All Horrors capable of existing in both astral space and the physical world have the ability to enter and leave astral space at will. When a single-natured Horror uses this power to enter astral space, its body disappears from the world. If the Horror is attacked and killed while in this state in astral space, it is utterly destroyed. To use this power, the Horror makes a Displace Test against its own unlowered Spell Defense. The type of region the Horror is in when it attempts to enter or leave astral space can aid or hinder the Horror. Horrors receive a bonus to the Displace Test when moving



into or out of astral space in Tainted or Corrupt regions. Tainted regions add a +2 bonus to the Horror's Displace Test, while Corrupt regions add a +4 bonus. Open regions add no bonus; Safe regions cause a –2 penalty to the Horror's Displace Test. If the test succeeds, the Horror shifts into or out of astral space, depending on where it is when it uses this power.

Disrupt Magic

Step: Rank+WIL **Action:** Standard

The Disrupt Magic power allows a Horror to disrupt any form of magical force or pattern, from a sustained spell to the talents of a Namegiver. To use this power, the Horror makes a Disrupt Magic Test. If the target of the power is a spell, the Disrupt Magic Test result must equal or exceed the Dispel Difficulty of the spell. If it does, the spell is dispelled. If the Disrupt Magic Test result equals or exceeds the Step number of the ability or talent being targeted, the ability/talent is damaged and cannot be used until the target character (or creature) makes a Recovery Test to restore the ability/talent. The range of this power is 24 yards (12 hexes).

Dream Shape

Step: Rank+WIL **Action:** Standard

The Dream Shape power enables a Horror to enter the dreams of a sleeping Namegiver by making a successful Dream Shape Test against the subject's Spell Defense. The Horror can only use this power against Namegivers it has previously marked. The Horror can make only one attempt per night to enter a specific Namegiver's dreams. A successful test allows the Horror to manipulate the victim's dreams in any way the Horror desires. For example, a Horror might continuously plant a specific dream instructing the character to go to an undiscovered kaer and perform certain actions that will free the Horror's physical form. Some Horrors use this power to cause particular emotions in their target. Others enjoy driving their victims mad through the sadistically twisted imagery they place in the Namegivers' minds. For example, Druistadt often causes its victims to dream of themselves dying, impaled on the burning bill of a ferocious bird with glowing red eyes.

Durability

Step: Rank **Action:** NA

The Durability power increases a Horror's ability to take damage. Each Durability rank permanently increases a Horror's Death and Unconsciousness Ratings. The amount of increase is determined by the Horror's type. The Horror Durability Increase Table shows the appropriate increase per Durability rank listed as two numbers separated by a slash. The number to the left of the slash represents the increase to the Horror's Death Rating. The number to the right represents the increase to the Horror's Unconsciousness Rating.

HORROR DURABILITY INCREASE TABLE

Type	Increase
Horror construct	6/5
Minor Horror	7/6
Named Horror	9/8

Energy Drain

Step: Rank+PER **Action:** Simple

This power allows Horrors to sustain themselves by feeding on the emotions and life energies of their victims. This nourishment is represented by a Horror's Karma Points, which in turn represent the Horror's raw magical energy. All Horrors automatically regain a number of Karma Points per day. The Energy Drain power allows Horrors to gain additional Karma Points beyond the base rate. This power is related to the Karma Drain power, but can only be used once per day.

Horrors can gain Karma by feeding on the negative emotions of Namegivers or by drawing on the victim's life energy. In the first case, fear, anger, hatred, and jealousy are all examples of the types of emotions that Horrors find pleasurable. Most often, the Horror feeding on these emotions has caused those emotions to boil up in its victims in the first place. The Horror essentially manipulates its victims into creating food for it. The second method allows Horrors to feed on the magical or life energy of Namegivers. As magic and life are so closely intertwined in **Earthdawn**, these two types of energy are essentially the same. When feeding on life energy, the Horror is usually careful not to completely drain its victims, so that it can maintain its own food supply.

Feeding off emotion requires the Horror to make an Energy Drain Test against the victim's Social Defense; draining life energy requires an Energy Drain Test against the victim's Spell Defense. When draining energy from multiple victims, the Horror makes

the appropriate test against the highest Defense Rating among all the victims, adding +1 to the Difficulty Number for each victim beyond the first. In either case, a successful test means the Horror gains a number of additional Karma Points equal to his rank in Energy Drain. These Karma Points are in addition to those the Horror regains under normal conditions.

Some powerful Horrors can also increase their Karma Step using this power. Each time a Horror achieves an Extraordinary result using its Energy Drain power, it may increase its Karma Step by 1 instead of gaining Karma Points. This increase is not permanent, however. The Horror's Karma Step will revert to normal on the day after the Horror has increased it in this way.

Forge Horror Construct

Step: Rank+PER **Action:** Sustained

With this power, Horrors can create Horror constructs from other life forms such as mundane animals, magical creatures, and even Namegivers. Horrors can forge constructs from dead or living bodies, although they prefer living creatures. When using Namegivers, the vilest Horrors usually leave a bit of the victim's mind intact, so that he will live out his entire existence dimly aware that he is a Horror construct. To use this power against living targets, the Horror must have previously Horror-marked them. The body used must be of sufficient size and weight to form the body of the construct desired. For example, a Horror would need a body at least the size of troll or obsidiman to create a construct as large as a jehuthra. However, as Horror constructs can be of virtually any size and shape, most Horrors can make do with whatever victims happen to be handy.

To forge a construct costs the Horror 5 points of Karma. These initial Karma Points infuse the target body with the Horror's magical energy, initiating the body's transformation. After the Horror has initiated the change, it makes a series of five Forge Horror Construct Tests against the target body's Spell Defense. If the target body is dead, use the Spell Defense the target had when it was alive. Each successful Forge Horror Construct Test allows the Horror to alter one of the target body's Attributes to that of the type of construct being forged or to grant the construct a power or special ability. Each result level above Average on any Forge Horror Construct Test allows the Horror to alter one additional Attribute or add one additional power. Note that the Horror cannot add his Karma dice to the roll for any of these tests; the Karma is used simply to fuel the power.

The Horror can also alter the target's other characteristics by 1 point for every additional point of Karma spent. When spending Karma to change a certain Characteristic, the Horror makes an additional Forge Horror Construct Test. There is no limit to the number of additional Karma Points a Horror can spend on forging a construct. For example, if a Horror spends 2 Karma Points to grow natural armor on his victim, he needs to succeed at a Forge Horror Construct Test against the victim's Spell Defense. As a result, the victim's skin hardens permanently, providing 2 points of natural Armor.

When used against living targets, each successful Forge Horror Construct Test causes damage to the victim equal to the result of the test. This damage often kills the target, but many Horrors make a point of leaving the target an alive and unwilling pawn in their control. To alter the Attributes of living targets, the Horror must achieve a Good result on its Forge Horror Construct Tests. When a Horror uses this power against Namegivers, the victim may make a Willpower Test to attempt to resist the effects of the Horror's magic. The result of the Willpower Test can substitute for the victim's Spell Defense when he resists in this way. Then the victim makes a Willpower Test for each of the Horror's Forge Horror Construct Tests. If the result of the victim's Willpower Test is lower than his Spell Defense, he defends using his normal Spell Defense.

When all the construct's Attributes and abilities have been altered as the Horror wishes, the Horror makes a Horror Mark Test to form a link between itself and the construct. If this test succeeds, the construct is complete. Once formed, Horror constructs remain under the control of the Horror that forged them. Many Horrors forge constructs and let them roam Barsaive, inflicting pain and suffering on all the Namegivers they encounter.

Almost all magically active Horrors possess the ability to forge constructs. The Horror powers Animate Dead and Karma Tap are specialized forms of this power, each with special restrictions. Dual-natured Horrors can also use this power to forge new bodies for themselves, and some Horrors build this power into Horror-cursed items. When activated, such items begin to transform a victim into a construct as described above.

This ability is extremely powerful, and gamemasters should use it sparingly against player characters.

Forge Trap

Step: Rank+PER **Action:** Standard

The Forge Trap power enables a Horror to transform an earth, stone, or metal passageway so that it becomes a trap or contains one. The nature of the Horror determines the precise type of trap. The Difficulty Number for the Forge Trap Test necessary to use this power is based on the predominant material of the passageway. For a passage of raw earth, the Difficulty Number is 6; for raw stone, 10; for worked stone, 15; and for metal, 20. If the Forge Trap Test succeeds, distribute the result between the trap's Detection Difficulty, Disarm Difficulty, Trap Initiative, and Trap Effect/Damage Step. See **Traps** in the **Adventuring** chapter on p.110 for more information on traps and how they work.

The Horror may spend a Karma Point to create a link between itself and its traps, which enables it to use the Energy Drain power to feed on the suffering of any living being taking damage from the traps. Traps may do indirect damage—for example, by preventing characters from escaping a small room—and may require nonstandard methods to neutralize. For example, characters might need to solve a riddle or puzzle to deactivate the trap.

Horror Mark

Step: Rank+PER **Action:** Standard

This terrible ability allows Horrors to mark victims and items, thereby linking the Horror and the target. When cast on a target, a Horror mark becomes embedded into the target's True Pattern, making it difficult even for other Horrors to detect. To use this power, the Horror must be able to see the target. The Horror makes a Horror Mark Test against the target's Spell Defense. (If the target character has used raw magic, use the method described under **Casting Raw Magic** in the **Spell Magic** chapter on p.136 of the ***Player's Guide*** instead of this Test.) If the test succeeds, the target becomes Horror-marked.

The Horror mark links the Horror to the target over vast distances and allows the Horror to use any of its abilities against or through the target when it is within 10 miles of the Horror. For a range up to 100 miles, the Horror mark allows the Horror to take actions against a target character that do not directly cause damage, and communication between the Horror and the target extends for 5,000 miles. Horror marks last a year and a day, and the Horror may renew the Horror mark whenever it is within 100 miles of the target.

Unique Horror Marks

The standard description of the Horror Mark power outlines the power's basic effects and the most common method in which Horrors use it. However, many major Horrors have their own versions of this power that exemplify each Horror's strengths, weaknesses,

and favorite tactics. The Game Information sections for many of the Named Horrors in this book offer expanded game mechanics for how the Horror's unique variant of the Horror Mark power functions in the game.

When creating new Horrors or using the Horrors in published **Earthdawn** material, feel free to alter the specific effects of the Horror Mark power to best suit the Horror using it and satisfy the needs of the story (see **Customizing Horror Powers**, p.270).

Effects of Horror Marks

A Horror mark has an impact on the marked character and the overall adventure/campaign. The gamemaster immediately has a new story to tell in which the Horror uses the advantages of its mark, either directly or subtly. Exactly how and when the Horror shows itself is up to the gamemaster and depends on the specifics of his or her campaign—the Horror mark affects the victim as much or as little as the gamemaster decides.

Most people in Barsaive know that a Horror mark is a bad thing. If it becomes common knowledge that a character has been marked, he will face challenges in dealing with fellow Namegivers. Ever fearful of the Horrors, the common folk would rather leave a Horror-marked victim to die of wounds or exposure rather than aid such a person and risk facing a Horror. Like much about the Horrors, Horror marks are a source of considerable superstition. Countless tales exist about the ways in which Horrors can work through their marked victims, many of which are true. For every true tale, however, there are perhaps two or three false ones told.

Detecting Horror Marks

A Horror-marked victim does not necessarily know that he or she has been marked—a Horror mark leaves no physical trace on the victim unless the Horror's specific use of this power causes one. Instead, a Horror mark taints a victim's True Pattern, and so detecting one requires some type of astral sensing ability such as the Astral Sight talent or the Astral Sense spell.

When perceived astrally, a Horror mark appears as a small stain on the victim's pattern. The texture and design of this stain are unique to the Horror whose mark it is. For example, the Horror mark of Aazhvat Many-Eyes might appear as an unblinking eye, while the Horror mark of Taint would resemble a spot of corrupted energy. Describing the appearance of a Horror mark in a way that reflects the Horror who marked the victim allows the gamemaster to drop hints about the Horror's nature to the characters and players (assuming that the character is unaware of the Horror mark in the first place).

To detect a Horror mark, the sensing character must make an astral sensing test based on the appropriate ability against the Spell Defense of the Horror that marked the victim. This astral sensing test can also allow characters to detect Horror curses on items and places, any attempt to do so requires the character to achieve a Good result.

Determining if a character is under the influence of a Horror by having him perform an Artisan skill is unlikely to result in real proof—this widespread tradition is the result of centuries of legend and superstition. However, that does not necessarily mean that this method never works—some Horrors do pervert the Artisan skills of their victims, such as the Horror known as Fla Tra Lys (see **Minor Horrors**, p.286).

Horror Marks and Raw Magic

A magician who casts raw magic may find himself Horror-marked. The use of raw magic acts like an astral flare, drawing the attention of nearby Horrors and allowing them to easily locate the magician in astral space. Once a Horror finds the magician, it can easily use its Horror Mark power on the unfortunate victim. The Horror (or type of Horror) that marks a character in this situation depends on the preparations and personal preferences of the gamemaster.

PLANNED HORROR MARKS

Optional Rule: If the gamemaster plans to put a Horror mark on one of the player characters, the player himself can bring the Horror into the campaign in the most convenient manner. In this case, the gamemaster has chosen a Horror and is simply waiting for the right opportunity to use its powers against the characters. A magician using raw magic provides just such an opportunity.

For situations in which the gamemaster has a Horror standing ready to mark any adepts daring enough to use raw magic, the following optional method may be used to resolve the Horror Mark Test required by the casting of raw magic (see the **Spell Magic** chapter of the ***Player's Guide***). This option greatly increases the likelihood of the magician in question receiving a Horror mark. This option also assumes that a Horror is lurking nearby in astral space, has already targeted the magician and is simply waiting for the best opportunity to mark him.

The Step Number for the standard Horror Mark Test when casting raw magic is based on the Circle of the spell cast and the type of region in which the magician cast the spell (see the **Spell Magic** chapter of the ***Player's Guide***). When using this optional rule, the Circle of the spell and the type of astral region act as a bonus to the Step Number of the Horror Mark power. For the appropriate bonus, consult the Raw Magic Horror Mark Table.

RAW MAGIC HORROR MARK TABLE

Region Type	Horror Mark Step Bonus
Safe	None
Open	Circle
Tainted	Circle + 3
Corrupt	Circle + 5

If the Horror mark was not pre-planned (as is most likely), the creation of a Horror mark through the use of raw magic allows the gamemaster to design a Horror that can later be introduced into the campaign to torment the unfortunate magician. The gamemaster can also link the marking to an upcoming adventure that features a Horror.

This situation can also fit into an adventure or campaign in which a Horror is already involved. This Horror might well be the one that marks the magician. If the adventure ends with the death of the Horror, the victim avoids its dreadful intentions. If not, he will face no end of challenges in subsequent adventures.

Horror Marks and Items

An item, such as a grimoire (see **Casting From a Grimoire** in the **Spell Magic** chapter on p.136 of the ***Player's Guide***), may end up carrying a Horror mark as well. A Horror-marked item can be used to influence Namegivers carrying or using it, allowing the Horror to use the item as a medium for using its powers. To reflect that the Horror's influence isn't applied directly, the gamemaster should incur a –3 penalty to any tests the Horror makes when using its powers through a marked item.

HORROR THREAD

Step: Rank+PER **Action:** Standard

The Horror Thread power enables Horrors to connect to the patterns of magical items and Namegivers. The connection formed by use of this power is similar to that created by a Horror mark but is far stronger. A Horror thread allows a Horror to even-



tually tap into and use the victim's natural abilities. Horrors can only use the Horror Thread power on victims they have previously Horror-marked. To use this power, the Horror spends an initial 5 Karma Points and makes a Horror Thread Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the Horror has woven a thread connecting its True Pattern to that of the victim. Once this thread is established, the Horror can attempt to obtain Pattern Knowledge about the victim, just as if the Horror had acquired one of the victim's Pattern Items.

Obtaining this Pattern Knowledge allows the Horror to make up to five Horror Thread Tests against the victim's Spell Defense. Each of these tests requires the Horror to spend a Karma Point. Note that the Horror cannot add his Karma dice to the roll for these tests. On a successful test, the Horror learns a portion of the victim's Pattern Knowledge, which enables the Horror to weave an additional thread to the victim. Each additional thread woven to a victim requires the Horror to spend another 5 Karma Points. The Horror must study the victim for at least a month before it can attempt to learn any of the victim's Pattern Knowledge and must attach a new thread to the victim each time it learns before it can attempt to gain additional Pattern Knowledge.

The effects of the threads connecting the Horror to its victim grow with the number of threads woven. Each thread grants the Horror a +1 bonus to any test made by the Horror against the victim. The first thread woven also grants the Horror access to the victim's thoughts and memories, allowing the Horror to taunt and torment the victim more effectively.

When the Horror's thread number equals the victim's Willpower Step number, the Horror can actually tap into the victim's powers and use them as its own. The victim becomes merely a channel between the Horror and the physical world. This allows the Horror to use the victim's talents, skills, spells, and the like as it desires. When using these abilities, the Horror makes tests using the victim's appropriate Step Numbers. The Horror can spend Karma Points on any action taken by a victim via use of this power. The Horror can also use any of its own abilities through the victim.

The Horror Thread power also allows the Horror to take physical control of its victim. For example, a Horror might force a Beastmaster to use his Claw Shape and Claw Frenzy talents against an unsuspecting target. In this case, the Horror would physically dominate the Beastmaster as the Horror slashes the victim's claws into its target. In the case of some talents, particularly Spellcasting and Thread Weaving, no physical clues reveal that a Horror is controlling the victim's actions. In all cases, however, the victim himself senses that some alien entity is using his abilities.

RELATIONSHIP TABLE

Target Character	Result Needed
Related by blood	Poor
Related by marriage	Average
A business associate	Extraordinary
A recent friend	Excellent
A friend for a year and a day, or longer	Good
A lover	Average
Connected through a pattern item	Poor

KARMA BOOST

Step: Rank+PER **Action:** Standard

The Karma Boost power enables a Horror to offer aid to a victim and eventually transform the individual into a Horror construct. To use the power, the Horror offers to boost the Karma of a previously marked character. If the character accepts the offer, the Horror must spend a Karma Point. The victim may then add a number of Karma Points equal to the Horror's rank in Karma Boost to his own. Note that the victim must willingly accept the Horror's aid for Karma Boost to be used. The Horror must spend a Karma Point each time the victim accepts its aid.

Make a secret Karma Boost Test for the Horror against the character's Spell Defense each time the character accepts the Karma Boost. If the test succeeds, reduce the initial number of Karma Points the Horror has to spend to transform the character into a Horror construct (see **Forge Horror Construct**, p.273). Horrors with Karma Boost may not build on Karma Boosts previously accepted by another Horror. Once a Horror uses Karma Boost on a victim, any previous acceptances of aid from other Horrors are neutralized.

KARMA DRAIN

Step: Rank+WIL **Action:** Standard

This power allows a Horror to transfer Karma Points to itself from any of its Horror-marked victims. To use Karma Drain, the Horror makes a Karma Drain Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the Horror can drain a number of Karma Points equal to its rank in Karma Drain from the victim. The Horror cannot drain more Karma Points than the victim's Current Karma Points total, however.

KARMA POINTS

Step: Special (see text) **Action:** NA

Nearly all Horrors and many Horror constructs have Karma Points that they may use on any test, though they may spend only 1 Karma Point per test.

KARMA TAP

Step: Rank+PER **Action:** Standard

This ability allows a Horror to suggest actions to characters. The Horror makes a Karma Tap Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the Horror forms a telepathic link with the character. If a character is Horror-marked by the Horror suggesting the action, the Horror adds a +3 bonus to its Karma Tap Test. If the test succeeds, the link lasts for a number of days equal to the Horror's rank in Karma Tap. If the character accepts the suggestion, the Horror substitutes its Karma Step for the character's when the character embarks on the suggested course of action. Though the influenced character must still spend his or her own Karma Point, he may spend it on any action, and uses the Horror's Karma Step rather than his own to carry it out. The telepathic link extends for 1,000 miles.

POISON

Step: Rank **Action:** NA

Horrors with this power have poisonous teeth, claws or stingers that are able to poison a target. No test is required for a Horror to affect a target with poison—if the victim is physically struck and damaged by the Horror, it is automatically affected by the Poison. After taking damage, the target suffers the effects of the Horror's poison, which is listed with the Horror's description (for more information about **Poison**, see p.123).

SKILLS

Step: Special (see text) **Action:** Special (see text)

Some Horrors have powers based on skills. Refer to the Skills chapter of the ***Player's Guide*** p.87 for descriptions.

SKIN SHIFT

Step: Rank+WIL **Action:** Simple

This gruesome ability allows the Horror to mutilate a target's body. The Horror touches the target and makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the Horror rolls the Skin Shift dice to determine damage. The target takes Damage Points equal to the result of the Skin Shift dice roll; his skin tears loose from muscles and ligaments, twisting and rotating about his body. Skin Shift inflicts a number of Wounds equal to the Horror's rank in Skin Shift on the target in addition to the damage of the Skin Shift dice roll result.

SPELLCASTING

Step: Rank+PER **Action:** Standard

Almost all Horrors know how to use spell magic. The ability to manipulate the energies of astral space is inherent. Though Horrors cast all spells as raw magic (***Player's Guide***, p.136), they take no damage and generally ignore raw magic spells cast by other Horrors. Also, Horrors do not use spell matrices, though they must weave spell threads where required. Horrors use the Thread Weaving power when casting spells in this manner (see ***Player's Guide***, p.83).

SPELLS

Step: Special (see text) **Action:** NA

Horrors often learn spells from sentient captives who follow a particular magician Discipline. Horrors can learn every spell from their captives' listed Disciplines and Circles, though they rarely learn those spells that affect the undead and spirits. Though Horrors may learn the spells from a Discipline, they acquire none of that Discipline's other talents.

SUPPRESS HORROR MARK

Step: Rank+PER **Action:** Standard

The Suppress Horror Mark power allows a Horror to bury a Horror mark deep within the pattern of a marked character. The Horror can only affect one of its own Horror marks with this power. As long as the power is in use, the Horror mark has no effect on the character. To use this power, the Horror makes a Suppress Horror Mark Test. The result is the Difficulty Number for detecting the suppressed mark and also the Difficulty Number the Horror must exceed to remove the effects of this power. The relationship between the marked character and the detecting character determines the result level needed to detect a suppressed Horror mark. When attempting to detect a suppressed mark, consult the Relationship Table to determine the result level.

See the **Horror Mark** power, p.273, for more information about detecting Horror marks.

TALENTS

Step: Special (see text) **Action:** Special (see text)

Many Horrors have powers based on adept talents. Refer to the Talents chapter of the ***Player's Guide*** p.57 for descriptions. Horrors ignore the Karma requirements for talents. Also, note that Horrors cannot learn the Willforce talent.

TERROR

Step: Rank+CHA **Action:** Standard

Terror allows Horrors to instill intense fear into their targets. Each use of Terror causes the Horror 5 Strain. To use this power, the Horror makes a Terror Test and compares the result against the Spell Defense of all characters within 20 yards (10 hexes) of the Horror. If the test succeeds against any character, the affected character must make a successful Willpower Test against the Horror's Terror Step before he can perform any action against the Horror. Until the character makes a successful Willpower Test, he can take no other actions. His speech becomes a piteous wail, and any movements become random twitches.

THOUGHT WORM

Step: Rank+PER **Action:** Standard

The Thought Worm power allows a Horror to create a telepathic link between itself and a character. The target must be within the Horror's line of sight for the Horror to place a Thought

Worm in the character's mind. The Horror makes a Thought Worm Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If the target has been previously Horror-marked by the Horror creating the worm, the Horror gains a +3 bonus to its Thought Worm Test. If the test succeeds, a Thought Worm is placed within the mind of the victim. The worm lasts for a year and a day, and the Horror may renew it for 1 Permanent damage per additional year and a day. If the target character dies, the Horror may heal this damage.

A Thought Worm allows the Horror to make telepathic suggestions to the target when he is within 1,000 miles of the Horror. If the target resists the suggestion, the Horror makes a Thought Worm Test, and the character takes a number of Damage Points equal to the result. Mystic Armor protects against this damage. When a character resists, the gamemaster also records a number of Legend Points for the Thought Worm equal to the Horror's rank in Thought Worm×100. For example, when a character resists a Horror that has the Thought Worm power at Rank 5, the gamemaster records 500 Legend Points. Because Horrors enjoy rewarding their faithful servants, each resistance adds to the total Legend Points; if the character subsequently acts upon a suggestion from the Thought Worm, he gains all of the Legend Points previously accumulated through his resistance. Unfortunately, in addition to the Legend Points, the Horror gains another opportunity to use its Horror Mark power on the character.

Unnatural Life

Step: Rank+WIL **Action:** Standard

This ability allows a Horror to give a corpse the "gift" of unnatural life. This ability only works on corpses dead for less than a year and a day. To use this power, the Horror touches the dead body and makes an Unnatural Life Test against its Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, Unnatural Life revives the corpse. Though not as dreadful to behold as a zombie or a ghoul, the corpse remains visibly decayed and retains the distinctive odor of rotting flesh. Aside from a horrific appearance and smell, the animated character can function as he did in life; Unnatural Life revives him with all of his Attributes and talents intact.

Characters animated by Unnatural Life are hard to destroy. They may make a Recovery Test during any Combat Round, which counts as their action for that round. Additionally, the unnaturally living may make unlimited Recovery Tests in the course of a day.

The Horror loses 1 Damage Point when it uses this power and regains it when the Unnatural Life ends. The Horror may stop the effects of Unnatural Life any time the unnaturally alive character is within 100 yards of the Horror.

Horror Constructs

Horror constructs are the living tools of the Horrors, created from the flesh of the Horrors' dead and living victims. These abominations vary in form as widely as do the Horrors themselves. Among the most commonly reported Horror constructs are cadaver men, shadows, jehuthras, and the dreaded plagues.

The following passages represent a mere handful of the Horror constructs that likely infest Barsaive.

Black Mantis

The black mantis is a huge 9-foot-tall insect with a thick, black carapace that acts as natural armor and eight arms, each ending in a barbed spike. The mantis uses these spikes to spear its prey, then carries the prey to its mandibles and devours it. Six legs support the mantis's 18-inch thorax, helping it climb most rough surfaces with ease.

The Horror Tyrannisis forged the black mantises from inshalata (see the ***Gamemaster's Companion***) and used them as soldiers when it attacked Talon Kaer. The horrible creatures climbed the kaer's walls using tangled fronds of glow-moss and other natural handholds, and ravaged the kaer more swiftly than even Rasper-Nor had thought possible. After destroying Talon Kaer, the black mantises spread across much of Barsaive.

DEX: 10 **STR:** 13 **TOU:** 10
PER: 9 **WIL:** 5 **CHA:** 5

Initiative: 10 (14)
Actions: 4
Attack (3): 13
Damage:
Claws (2): 15

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 12
Social Defense: 15
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 2

Death: 99
Unconsciousness: 84
Wound Threshold: 15

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 16
Movement: 9*

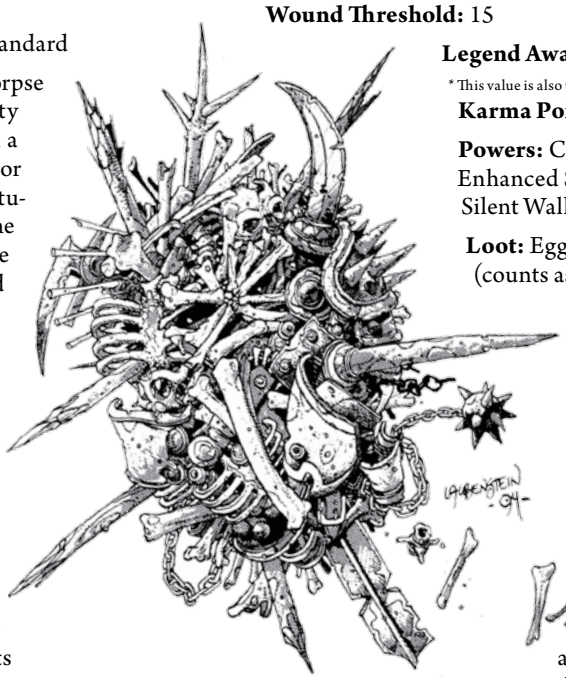
Legend Award: Sixth Circle (Group)

* This value is also the Horror construct's climbing Movement Rate

Karma Points: 5 **Karma Step:** 8

Powers: Climbing S (3): 13, Durability (8), Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 11, Silent Walk S (3): 13, Surprise **Attack** (4)

Loot: Eggs worth 150 silver pieces each (counts as treasure worth Legend Points)



Bone-Shambler

Bone-shamblers are a horrible form of undead Horror construct built from the thousands of bones that litter the ruins of Horror-penetrated kaers. Many, though not all, bone-shamblers have gold and silver pieces incorporated into their bodies. Bone-shamblers move by rolling, the bones and their former owners' armor and weapons rattling around with a sound guaranteed to set teeth on edge.

DEX: 8 **STR:** 15 **TOU:** 15
PER: 4 **WIL:** 7 **CHA:** 2

Initiative: 7
Actions: 2
Attack (7): 15
Damage:
Spikes (2): 17

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 15
Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 5

Death: 86
Unconsciousness: NA
Wound Threshold: 21

Recovery Tests: 7
Knockdown: 13
Movement: 5

Legend Award: Seventh Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Karma Points: 5 **Karma Step:** 8

Powers: Durability (2)

Equipment: Broken weapons and armor of incorporated victims.

Loot: 3D10 silver pieces and 2D8 gold pieces attached to body (counts as treasure worth Legend Points)

Rules

When a bone-shambler attacks, jagged bones and broken weapons protrude from its "arms" like giant spikes. A bone-shambler sees through "eyes" made of smaller bones, and can ambush a target from behind. If it takes damage equal to its Death Rating, a bone-shambler shatters into hundreds of bone fragments. Unless these fragments are scattered or destroyed, a bone-shambler can re-form itself in 1 to 4 hours.

Cadaver Men

During the Scourge, some residents of citadels infested by Horrors chose death rather than face such evil beings. From these suicide victims, some of the more intelligent Horrors created the animated corpses known as "cadaver men," undead beings capable of feeling only pain. Although most cadaver men retain their human intelligence, their miserable existences have filled them with hatred of the living and driven most insane. As a result, social contact with cadaver men, though possible, is unsettling for living beings. Cadaver men are also cannibals, but contrary to popular myth do not require sentient flesh for survival.

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

Initiative: 4
Actions: 1 (4; see text)
Attack (3): 7
Damage:
Claws (3): 9

Death: 51
Unconsciousness: NA
Wound Threshold: 11

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 11
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 6
Movement: 5

Legend Award: Third Circle

Powers: Durability (2)

Rules

Cadaver men become easily enraged, flying into a manic fury if they experience any significant pain, such as being subjected to a Pain spell or receiving a Wound.

Rage: An enraged cadaver man makes 4 attacks per round until it has killed the source of the pain or 10 rounds have passed, whichever comes first. If a cadaver man cannot determine who caused it pain, it attacks and kills the nearest living creature. When enraged, a cadaver man will often use the Aggressive Attack combat option (***Player's Guide***, p.222). The effect of the rage overcomes any penalties they may suffer from the pain itself; this means the cadaver man ignores Wound penalties or any Harried or Knocked Down penalties the pain would normally cause.

Falsemen

Falsemen are servitors animated from various inanimate substances by the powerful Theran magicians of Parlainth. Initially constructed to carry out tasks deemed too sensitive for slaves, falsemen eventually became a status symbol in Parlainth. Several magicians founded wealthy merchant houses using profits from the manufacture of falsemen. The faddish demand for falsemen explains the wide variety of materials, some of dubious practicality, from which they were fashioned.

The Forge Falsemen ritual spell (see the ***Player's Companion***) describes the method used to create falsemen. The following information should be used by the gamemaster to supplement that given in the spell description. In general, falsemen lack an independent consciousness, instead responding unthinkingly to those magically attuned to it. A character who wishes to give a falseman orders must first weave a thread to it using the falseman's Spell Defense as the Difficulty Number. Because falsemen possess a limited capacity to understand instructions, the character who successfully weaves such a thread must make a Charisma Test to issue an order to a falseman against a Difficulty Number based on the complexity of the order. The simpler the order, the lower the Difficulty Number.



The sample orders below indicate the levels of difficulty common to various kinds of orders (the Difficulty Number is shown in parentheses).

- **Easy (5):** "Prevent anyone from entering this room."
- **Average (9):** "Prevent anyone but me from entering this room."
- **Hard (15):** "Prevent anyone from entering this room unless they wear a brooch identical to the one I hold before me."
- **Very Hard (21):** "Prevent anyone from entering this room unless they wear a brooch identical to the one I hold before me, except for orks. Orks may not pass even if they have a brooch."
- **Heroic (25):** "Prevent anyone from entering this room who seems untrustworthy or of hostile intent."

Note that orders requiring falsemen to exercise judgment are the most difficult for them to follow. Also, successfully issuing an order does not mean that the falseman will carry it out as the character wishes. In the case of the last example, the falseman may understand the order, but may decide who seems hostile in an arbitrary way.

Corrupted Falsemen

Most falsemen encountered in ruins such as Parlainth cannot be controlled by player characters. Endowed by the Horrors with rudimentary consciousness and exposed to those powerful beings' evil for centuries, these falsemen grew beyond blank-minded constructs. They have minds of their own of a sort, and pose a serious threat to hapless explorers.

After destroying the population of Parlainth, the Horrors trapped in the city nearly went mad from boredom until some of them thought to stage war games against each other using falsemen as pieces. The Horrors gave the falsemen minimal awareness and aggressive instincts in order to add spice to the games, which the falsemen still play. Some attack anything that moves; others have spent centuries honing a blind instinct for torture and cruelty. A

select few may have evolved to a level of self-awareness greater than the Horrors ever intended, but these rare individuals seem viciously insane by civilized standards.

A character weaving a thread to a Horror-corrupted falseman faces unimaginable danger. If the Horror who corrupted the falseman maintains an active link to the construct, the Horror may attempt to Horror-mark the adventurer attempting to weave such a thread, whether or not that character is in the Horror's line of sight. Also, the character must use the Horror's Spell Defense as the Difficulty Number for his Thread Weaving attempt, not the falseman's. Some Horrors set traps for unwary adventurers by corrupting falsemen and ordering them to act untouched, hoping that some foolish adventurer will try his luck at controlling the falseman.

A few corrupted falsemen may also have Karma Points, granted to them by their controlling Horror. Such a falseman usually has the same Karma Step as the Horror, but sometimes has a smaller number of Karma Points.

The game statistics for untouched falsemen can be found in the **New Spells** chapter of the ***Player's Companion***. The values shown below describe typical examples of corrupted falsemen. Regard the statistics for corrupted falsemen as a guideline rather than an absolute; not all corrupted falsemen have exactly the same statistics. Special rules for corrupted falsemen, such as no Armor-Defeating Hits and vulnerabilities also apply to untouched falsemen.

Strawman

Strawmen, animated wicker mannequins, are quite common in the ruins of Parlainth. The Horrors constructed strawmen in great quantities and a few of the originals, simple servitors created by the magicians of Parlainth to perform non-strenuous physical tasks or serve as conversation pieces at parties, survived to the present.

Adventurers should assume that any strawmen they meet are hostile. Fortunately, the flimsiness of their component material makes them more of a nuisance than a threat. Since Parlainth's return to Barsaive, the word "strawman" has slipped into the Throalic language to mean a weakling or an easily defeated opponent. When debaters use arguments they know are without merit in order to draw out their rivals, they are often said to be "building a strawman."

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

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Unarmed (1): 6
Knife (2): 7
Death: 31
Unconsciousness: NA
Wound Threshold: 8
Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5
Movement: 5

Legend Award: First Circle

Equipment: Some strawmen carry knives, openly or concealed (+1 Damage Step to unarmed damage)

Loot: None

Rules

Because they lack vital areas, Armor-Defeating Hits are not possible against strawmen.

Vulnerability to Fire: Strawmen are especially vulnerable to fire. Once set alight, they take progressively doubled damage from fire each combat round until completely consumed.

Karma: A Strawman with Karma Points from a Horror is a worth a Second Circle Legend Award.

Waxman

Like strawmen, waxmen performed menial labor in areas vulnerable to sabotage, spying, or betrayal. These crude, humanoid wax shapes are much rarer than other falsemen because the Horrors did not make any during their imprisonment in Parlainth during the Scourge, and because most of the originals were not durable enough to survive. Most remaining waxmen can be found in areas untouched both by Horrors and explorers.

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

Initiative: 6
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 8
Damage:
Unarmed (1): 7; Sword (4): 10
Death: 35
Unconsciousness: NA
Wound Threshold: 9
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 3
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6
Movement: 5

Legend Award: First Circle

Equipment: Some waxmen wield dwarf swords (+3 Damage Steps to unarmed damage)

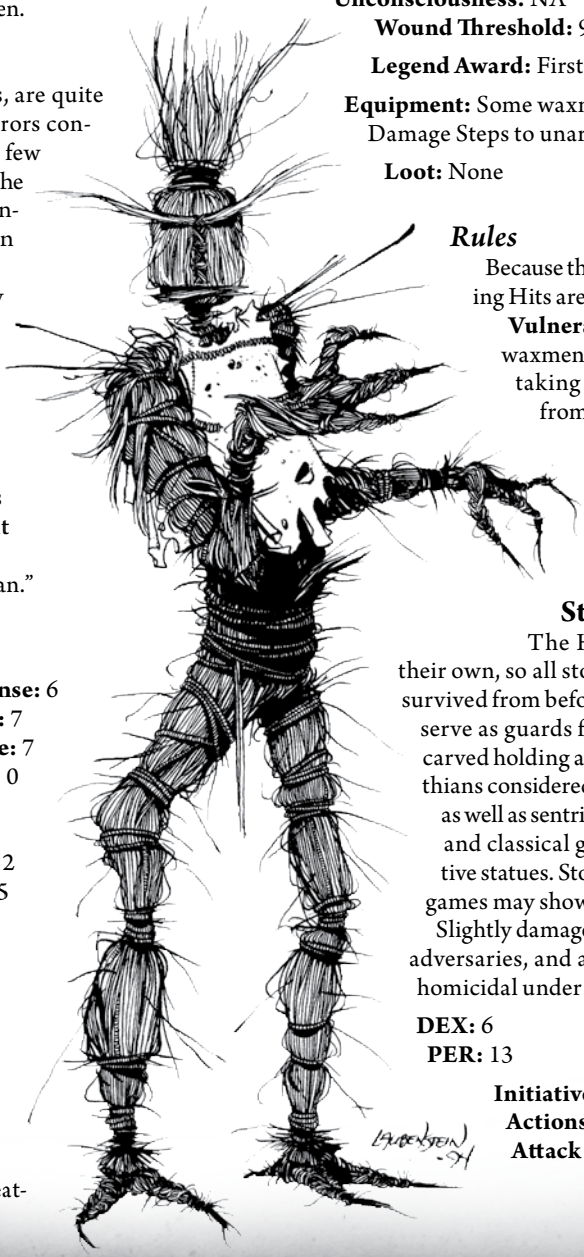
Loot: None

Rules

Because they lack vital areas, Armor-Defeating Hits are not possible against waxmen.

Vulnerability to Fire: Like strawmen, waxmen are especially vulnerable to fire, taking progressively doubled damage from exposure to heat each combat round until completely melted.

Karma: A Waxman with Karma Points from a Horror is a worth a Second Circle Legend Award.



Stoneman

The Horrors made no stonemen of their own, so all stonemen remaining in Parlainth survived from before the Scourge. Constructed to serve as guards for sensitive sites, each one was carved holding a stone weapon. Because Parlainthians considered stonemen to be status symbols as well as sentries, their intricate ornamentation and classical grace of form make them attractive statues. Stonemen used in the Horrors' war games may show chips in their ornamentation.

Slightly damaged stonemen remain formidable adversaries, and are more likely to have become homicidal under the Horrors' influence.

DEX: 6 **STR:** 12 **TOU:** 12
PER: 13 **WIL:** 10 **CHA:** 10

Initiative: 6 **Physical Defense:** 8
Actions: 2 **Spell Defense:** 16
Attack (6): 11 **Social Defense:** 13

Damage:
Unarmed (5): 17

Physical Armor: 15
Mystic Armor: 5

Death: 89
Unconsciousness: NA
Wound Threshold: 20

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 12
Movement: 5

Legend Award: Fifth Circle (1 per 2 PC)
Powers: Durability (5)

Loot: Any reasonably intact pieces of a shattered stoneman can be sold as sculpture and count as treasure worth Legend Points. Depending on the quality of the workmanship, an intact head is worth D6×1000 silver pieces; an intact head and torso might be double that value. Intact pieces of those rare stonemen sculpted from semi-precious stone such as jade or turquoise may bring quintuple that value.

Rules

Because they lack vital areas, Armor-Defeating Hits are not possible against stonemen.

Karma: A Stoneman with Karma Points from a Horror is a worth a Sixth Circle Legend Award.

Steelman

Rarer and more durable than stonemen, steelmen once fulfilled the same purpose as their stone counterparts. Like the stonemen, many of them make dazzling art objects as well as potentially deadly foes. Steelmen reacted well to the rudimentary consciousness that the Horrors gave to some falsemen, and therefore tend to be somewhat more intelligent than other falsemen so endowed.

Steelmen untouched by Horrors usually continue to perform their original duties, guarding a place or item of value to the long-dead Theran rulers of Parlainth.

DEX: 8 **STR:** 20 **TOU:** 18
PER: 16 **WIL:** 14 **CHA:** 14

Initiative: 8
Actions: 2
Attack (10): 18
Damage:
Unarmed (8): 28

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 20
Social Defense: 19
Physical Armor: 18
Mystic Armor: 9

Death: 143
Unconsciousness: NA
Wound Threshold: 23

Recovery Tests: 8
Knockdown: 20
Movement: 5

Legend Award: Tenth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Powers: Durability (10)

Loot: Player characters may sell reasonably intact pieces of a broken steelman as sculpture. Such pieces also count as treasure worth Legend Points. Depending on the quality of the workmanship, an intact head is worth D6×1000 silver pieces; an intact torso might be worth double that value. The few steelmen sculpted from precious metals are worth even more: any part of a copper steelman is worth five times the same part of a standard one, silver steelmen are worth ten times copper, and gold are worth ten times silver.

Rules

Because they lack vital areas, Armor-Defeating Hits are not possible against steelmen.

Karma: A Stoneman with Karma Points from a Horror is a worth an Eleventh Circle Legend Award.

Ghoul

Ghouls are undead creatures created by the Horrors' arcane magics. To sustain themselves, ghouls must eat the vital organs of the living or recently dead. They live along trade routes where they ambush passing travelers, in cemeteries where they feed on the newly dead, or in city sewers, crawling out at night to hunt their victims.

Ghouls generally travel in groups of six to twenty-five individuals. Though some travelers have reported seeing ghoul hordes comprised of as many as one hundred members, such huge bands have become rare since the departure of the Horrors.

DEX: 5 **STR:** 4 **TOU:** 6
PER: 4 **WIL:** 3 **CHA:** 5

Initiative: 5
Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Claws (4): 8 (poison)

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 0

Death: 42
Unconsciousness: NA
Wound Threshold: 10

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 4
Movement: 5

Legend Award: Second Circle

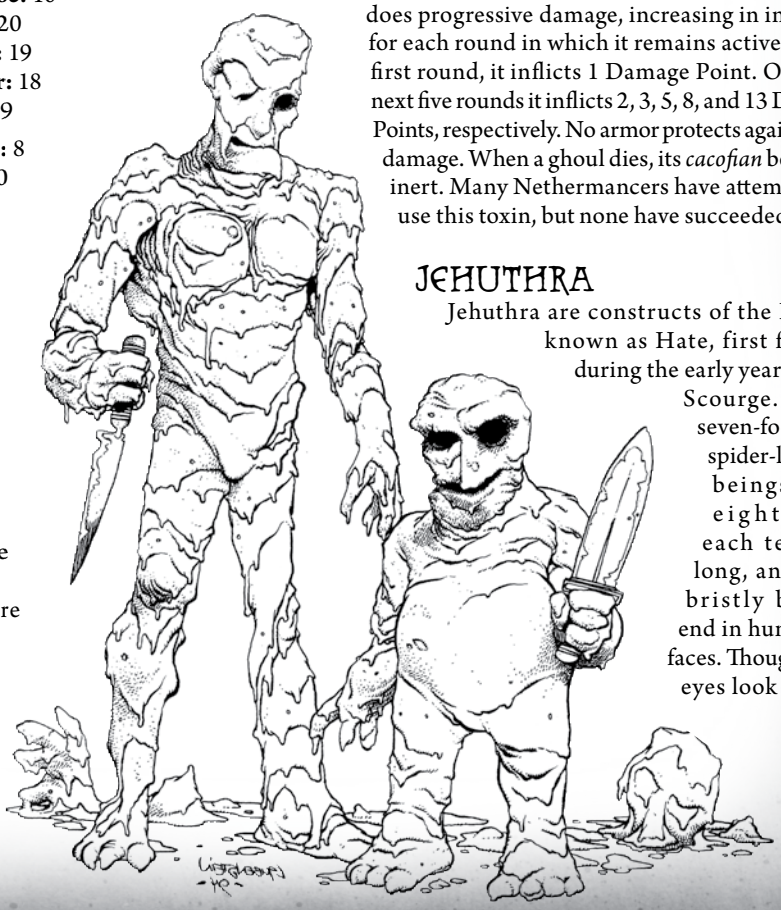
Powers: Durability (1), Poison (SD 10; see text)

Loot: 3D6 silver pieces, taken from both tombs and victims. Many ghoul leaders carry jewelry worth D8×25 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Rules

Ghouls react badly to sunlight, incurring a –2 penalty to their Attack and Damage Tests if forced to fight in full sunlight or its equivalent.

Poison: Ghouls produce a magical toxin called *cacofian* that remains inert until the ghoul strikes the target with a successful Attack Test to release the toxin. The poison takes effect for six rounds, or until dispelled or resisted. The poison does progressive damage, increasing in intensity for each round in which it remains active. In the first round, it inflicts 1 Damage Point. Over the next five rounds it inflicts 2, 3, 5, 8, and 13 Damage Points, respectively. No armor protects against this damage. When a ghoul dies, its *cacofian* becomes inert. Many Nethermancers have attempted to use this toxin, but none have succeeded.



Jehuthra

Jehuthra are constructs of the Horror known as Hate, first formed during the early years of the Scourge. These seven-foot-long spider-like beings have eight legs, each ten feet long, and their bristly bodies end in humanoid faces. Though their eyes look vacant,

jehuthras possess considerable cunning and intelligence. They prefer traps and ambushes to a straight confrontation, and an overmatched jehuthra will flee rather than fight. Only if flight looks difficult or impossible does a jehuthra defend itself with its magical powers.

DEX: 7 **STR:** 5 **TOU:** 7
PER: 10 **WIL:** 9 **CHA:** 5

Initiative: 7
Actions: 2
Attack (6): 13
Damage:
Claws (6): 11

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 13
Social Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 4

Death: 66
Unconsciousness: 54
Wound Threshold: 12

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 8
Movement: 8*

Legend Award: Fourth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

* This value is also the Horror construct's climbing Movement Rate

Powers: Climbing S (4): 11, Durability (4), Frost Web (4): 13, Iron Web (4): 13, Lacerators, Spellcasting (4): 14

Loot: Thorax web worth D12×10 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points)

Rules

The metallic deposits on a jehuthra's chest form a thorax web, which the creatures use to create three different magical effects: Frost Web, Iron Web and Lacerators. Unless noted otherwise, all of these effects have a Dispel Difficulty of 12.

Frost Web: *Water—Cold.* Frost web takes one round to cast against a single character, who must be within 40 yards (20 hexes) of the jehuthra. The jehuthra rubs its thorax web and points at the target, then makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the victim is entangled in an icy, barbed web, which is extremely cold. The jehuthra makes a Frost Web Test for damage each round. Physical Armor protects against this damage, but metal armor offers no more than 3 points of protection. The web holds the victim fast for three rounds, unless he shatters it by making a successful Strength (12) Test.

Iron Web: *Earth—Metal.* Iron Web is a defensive effect that allows a jehuthra to form a metal maze around its prey. The jehuthra traces a pattern upon its thorax web, then makes an Iron Web Test against the highest Spell Defense among all the target characters within a 10 yards (5 hexes) radius. If the test succeeds, a 6 yard-high maze (3 hexes-high maze) is created, consisting of eight independent paths that lead to the maze's center. The web maze extends for 10 yards (5 hexes) around the jehuthra, closing over the top of the maze walls. The Iron Web isolates each character, placing him on a separate path from his fellow travelers. If a group has more than eight characters, the Iron Web distributes them as evenly as possible. The paths lead only to the center of the maze, and do not intersect. Characters moving faster than a slow walk (4 yards (2 hexes) per round) must make a successful Dexterity (6) Test in order to safely move through the maze. A Poor result inflicts Step 7 damage on the character as the web's magical barbs tear at him. Physical Armor protects against this damage. A Pathetic result means the character also trips and is Knocked Down unless he makes a successful Knockdown (7) Test. The web lasts for Step 9 rounds, or until dispelled. Dispelling a single path has a Dispel Difficulty of 12; the entire web has a Dispel Difficulty of 21.

Rather than wait in the center, the jehuthra usually scurries down a path either to escape or to attack a character. If it wishes, the jehuthra can make a Spellcasting Test to dispel its own Iron Web—either a single path or the entire web.

Lacerators: Lacerators are cold, icy spikes that form on two of the jehuthra's legs, granting a +4 bonus to the construct's Damage Tests. They take one round to form and last for Step 9 rounds (the construct's Willpower Step).

NIGHTWIST

Nightwists are the most commonly encountered manifestations of the Named Horror called Ristul. These Horror constructs appear as twisted strands of darkness, bending and distorting the night air as they pass through it. They may be as small as a windling or as large as a thundra beast, and they may assume any shape imagined in nightmare. Nightwists appear only in corrupted areas, around astral breaches, or in the proximity of Horror-marked characters.

DEX: 13 **STR:** 5 **TOU:** 9
PER: 15 **WIL:** 6 **CHA:** 7

Initiative: 15
Actions: 3
Attack (9): 22
Damage:
Unarmed: (9): 14

Physical Defense: 16
Spell Defense: 22
Social Defense: 19
Physical Armor: 9
Mystic Armor: 5

Death: 124
Unconsciousness: 103
Wound Threshold: 14

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 5
Movement: 8*

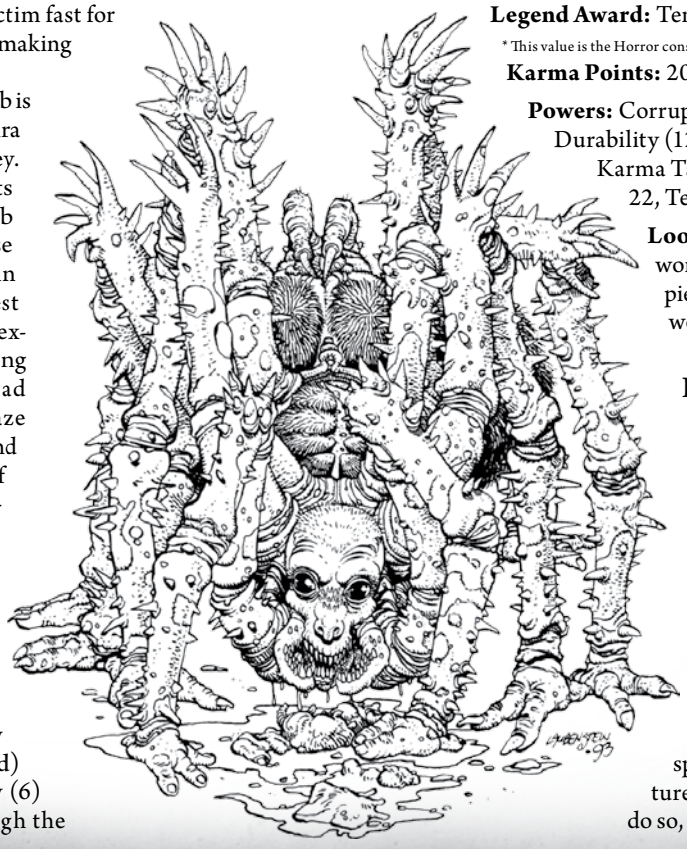
Legend Award: Tenth Circle (Group)

* This value is the Horror construct's flying Movement Rate

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step:** 8

Powers: Corrupt Karma (10): 16, Durability (12), Horror Mark (7): 22, Karma Tap (7): 22, Spellcasting (7): 22, Terror (5): 12

Loot: A captured nightwist is worth (D8+10)×100 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points)



Rules

Because nightwists are made from the corrupt essence of dreams, they may serve as components for blood charms that corrupt karma, creating an effect similar to the Corrupt Karma power. Only containers that can hold astral or magical material, such as orichalcum jars, can hold nightwists. In a pinch, a spell matrix can be used to capture and contain a nightwist. To do so, the magician makes a Thread

Weaving Test against the nightwist's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the nightwist is placed in the spell matrix. To release the nightwist, the magician must make another successful Thread Weaving Test against the nightwist's Spell Defense. Using a spell matrix in this manner corrupts it beyond repair. Attempts to cast a spell using the corrupted spell matrix result in the same effect as a spell cast with raw magic.

PLAGUE

Though the heroes of the Scourge documented many Horrors and Horror constructs, few seem as fearsome or as insidious as the Horror constructs known as plagues. These vile things first appeared in southwest Barsaive just prior to the Scourge. According to legend, plagues spread through the vicinity of the ancient Kingdom of Landis, and only severe quarantine measures prevented them from spreading illness and death throughout the province of Barsaive. However, various accounts describe plagues in regions as far from Landis as the city of Parlainth.

Plagues most often appear as tall, gaunt humans with thin, splotchy hair and discolored blisters covering their skin. They often wear filthy rags and reek of decay and mould. Surprisingly limber, plagues can move very quickly when necessary.

DEX: 13 **STR:** 8 **TOU:** 15
PER: 13 **WIL:** 15 **CHA:** 3

Initiative: 14
Actions: 2
Attack (4): 17
Damage:
Unarmed (3): 11

Physical Defense: 17
Spell Defense: 17
Social Defense: 15
Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 10

Death: 131
Unconsciousness: 114
Wound Threshold: 21

Recovery Tests: 7
Knockdown: 5
Movement: 7

Legend Award: Eighth Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step:** 10

Powers: Cause Plague [Disease SD 17; see text], Durability (10), Spellcasting (4): 17, Thread Weaving [Illusionism] (4): 17

Spells: Illusionism [Fourth Circle]

Rules

Despite their grotesque appearance, plagues shy away from physical combat and use illusion spells to escape any potential fights. However, all plagues possess the Cause Plague power.

Cause Plague: The Cause Plague power enables the construct to infect Namegivers with a plague-like disease. The disease can infect any Namegiver who approaches within 20 yards (10 hexes) of it by making a successful Cause Plague Test against the target's Spell Defense. Within the first few days of infection, victims experience red speckles or rashes on their throats and chests. A few days later the victim suffers dizziness, nausea, body aches, and a relentless dry cough. Within two weeks, fever leaves the victim bedridden and death becomes inevitable. The game effects of this disease are similar to those of a Debilitating poison (see **Poison**, p.123). The disease also creates a bond between the plague and its victim, similar to the bond created by a Horror Mark. This bond enables the plague to monitor the victim's location, as well as his physical and emotional states.

A Namegiver infected with the disease may infect others through skin-to-skin contact, and the highly contagious disease remains alive in a victim's corpse long after the victim has died. This latter characteristic led to the spread of plague throughout Barsaive and the decimation of entire kaers and towns in past times. This characteristic also led to the practice of burning corpses, a common precaution still employed by Namegivers throughout Barsaive to prevent the creation of disease-carrying cadaver men. Few proven



cures for this disease exist. An Excellent result on a Dispel Magic Test against the Cause Plague Test result can cure a victim. Additionally, victims recover from the disease if the plague that caused the disease dies. No other known cures exist, however.

Adventure Hook

Plagues can be introduced into adventures by simply having the players stumble across an outbreak of a plague-caused epidemic, or the players might be persuaded to help save a town surrounded by plague-ridden hot spots. Keep in mind that contracting the disease practically guarantees death, so make sure the players know enough about the disease to protect themselves. Plagues can also be used to inject urgency into a game. If a player becomes infected and no magical healing services are available, the players will have to slay the plague that caused the disease within mere weeks in order to save their comrade. In another possible adventure, villagers may hire the players to hunt down and kill a plague. Though the Horror construct may not seem like a formidable opponent at first, keep in mind that as a general rule, players cannot retreat from combat with one and escape with their lives.

QURAL'LOTECTICA

The terrible creature known as the qural'lotectica is one of the most feared Horror constructs known to Namegivers. The qural'lotectica, or "qural," consists of a small, bulbous body from which numerous tentacles emerge. These creatures hide themselves in trees along forest pathways or along alleyways in cities and towns. They drape their thin tentacles across the passage. As a victim walks by, the qural's tendrils pierce the individual's skin. Then the entity swiftly draws the blood from its victim, its transparent tendrils and body taking on a deep crimson color. The qural consumes only the

blood of its victims, leaving drained, emaciated corpses as a sign of its presence.

According to the stories of Cathan elders, qurals infested the Servos Jungles during the Scourge, preying on the beasts of the jungle as well as the Cathan and other tribes. Apparently, qurals would lie in wait in the subterranean tunnels where the jungle people took refuge during that dark time, feeding in the dark and narrow passageways. Though most of these Horror constructs live in Barsaive's jungles and forests, they may inhabit cities and towns as well.

DEX: 10 **STR:** 9 **TOU:** 12
PER: 12 **WIL:** 9 **CHA:** 3

Initiative: 12
Actions: 4
Attack (6): 16
Damage:
Tentacles (8): 17

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 16
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 4

Death: 120 (see text)
Unconsciousness: 103
Wound Threshold: 17

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 10
Movement: 3*

Legend Award: Eighth Circle (Group)

* This value is also the Horror construct's climbing Movement Rate

Karma Points: 5 **Karma Step:** 4

Powers: Climbing S (6): 16, Durability (10), Poison [SD 20; Paralysis]

Rules

The qural's tentacles are each tipped with a sharp hollow claw. The base of each claw contains a gland that secretes a paralytic toxin, which the qural injects into the victim. The poison swiftly immobilizes the victim so that the Horror construct will not be damaged by the struggles of its meal while it attaches more of its bloodsucking tentacles. The qural's tentacles are also hollow and carry blood from the thing's luckless prey to its stomach (which comprises most of its bulbous body).

Vulnerability to Fire: The qural is vulnerable to fire, and its tentacles can be broken or severed by a strong hand or a sharp blade-if the adventurer who runs across one is lucky enough to see it before it sinks its tentacles into him. To reflect the creature's vulnerability to flames, grant a +5 bonus to the attacker's Damage Test for any fire-based attacks used against a qural.

Tentacles: Attacking one of the creature's tentacles requires a successful use of the Called Shot combat option. Each of the qural's tentacles has a Death Rating of 17. If a single tentacle suffers damage equal to its Death Rating, the tentacle is destroyed.

Shilagrue Horror

The shilagrue Horror is a rare type of construct that closely resembles the common shilagrue (p.199).

DEX: 9 **STR:** 13 **TOU:** 13
PER: 8 **WIL:** 10 **CHA:** 8

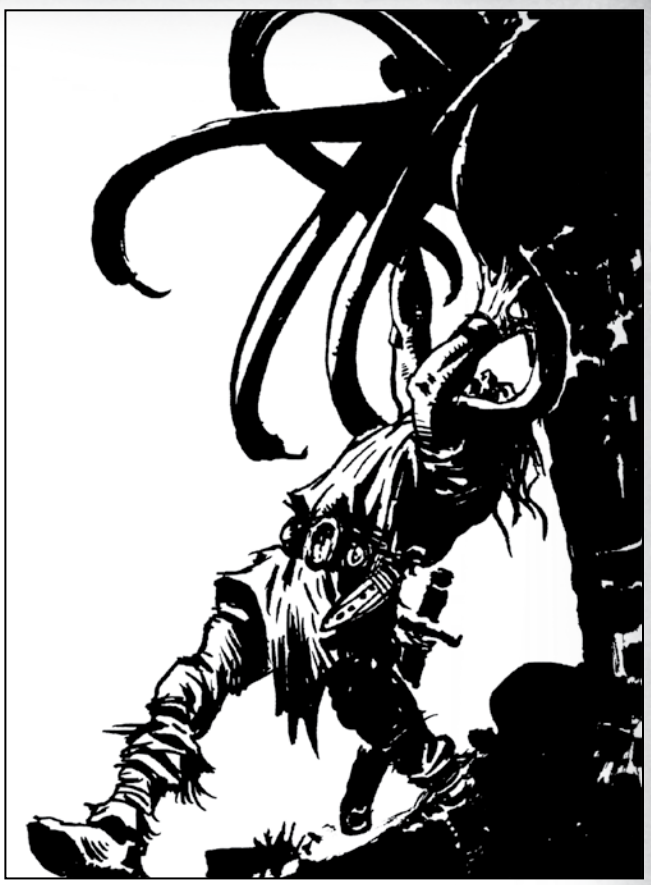
Initiative: 10
Actions: 2
Attack (2): 11
Damage:
Constrict: (1): 14

Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 6

Death: 69
Unconsciousness: 61
Wound Threshold: 18

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 13
Movement: 3*

* This value is the Horror construct's swimming Movement Rate



Legend Award: Fifth Circle (1 shilagrue Horror + possessed target of Fifth Circle or lower.) If possessed target is of Sixth or higher Circle, use the possessed target's Circle Award

Karma Points: 15 **Karma Step:** 5

Powers: Animate Dead (4): 14, Durability (1), Engulf (2): 12, Possession (see text), Spellcasting (2): 10, Swimming S (1): 14, Terror (2): 10

Rules

The statistics above represent an unattached shilagrue Horror. Once a shilagrue Horror possesses a victim, it uses the victim's statistics while retaining its own Karma and Horror powers. After possessing a victim, a shilagrue Horror often preys on the victim's closest companions.

Possession: When a shilagrue Horror envelops a victim, it forms itself around its prey like a second skin and takes control of the victim's thoughts and actions. Then the shilagrue Horror opens small vents in its body to provide air to its victim to keep the prey alive. The skin of characters possessed by shilagrue Horrors exhibits a wet pallor and unnatural smoothness, and the victim's eyes are covered with a milky glaze. This power otherwise works like the **Engulf** spirit power, p.214.

Spectral Dancer

Undead creations of the Horrors, spectral dancers are individuals who possessed considerable charisma and social skill in life. They appear as phantoms of the bodies they once inhabited. To make a spectral dancer, the Horror severs the dancer's spirit from his body in a grisly ritual, so that the dancer loses almost all ability to communicate with other sentient beings. He can occasionally see, hear, smell, and taste the world of the living, but cannot make contact with his fellows. The spectral dancer can only speak in garbled howls, and loses all ability to write, draw, or communicate in any

way. The desire to communicate and the need for companionship remain, heightened by the ritual to the point of torment.

DEX: 12 **STR:** 7 **TOU:** 14
PER: 12 **WIL:** 13 **CHA:** 9

Initiative: 13
Actions: 1
Attack: NA (see text)
Damage: NA (see text)

Physical Defense: 20
Spell Defense: 15
Social Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 8

Death: 97
Unconsciousness: NA
Wound Threshold: 19

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 6*

Legend Award: Seventh Circle

* This value is the Horror construct's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Durability (5), Spellcasting (8): 20

Spells: Spirit Dart 15, Spirit Grip 19

Rules

Their utter isolation drives spectral dancers insane. The spirits flit in and out of humanity, moving in a chaotic, frenzied dance. Desperate to communicate, a spectral dancer approaches a character and dances for one to three rounds, waiting for the character to join it. If the character turns down the "invitation," the spectral dancer attacks with desperate fury, using its Spellcasting Step. The creature makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the spectral dancer makes a Spirit Dart Test to determine how much damage is inflicted on the target. Mystic Armor protects against this damage. It continues to attack until the character dies or the dancer is destroyed. Keep in mind that these devastating magical attacks can kill even a stout troll within a few rounds. The spectral dancer's almost incorporeal form gives it a high Physical Defense, reflecting the difficulty of finding a solid spot to hit amid the swirling, pulsing light and fog. Though not an easy task, a determined (and lucky) character can find and attack such a spot.

A character may also attempt to defend himself by joining the spectral dancer in the dance, but this carries its own danger. The character and the dancer remain locked in the dance until the character either dies or manages to assuage the dancer's terrible loneliness for a brief moment. Once joined, the character must see the dance through to its conclusion. During each round that the dance continues, the dancer's movements cause a number of Steps of damage to the character equal to the number of rounds the dance has lasted. For example, on round five of the dance, the dancer inflicts Step 5 damage, Step 6 damage on round six, and so on. No armor protects against this damage.

During any round of the dance, the character can try to make contact with the dancer in order to ease its loneliness. To do this, the character makes a Charisma Test against the spectral dancer's Social Defense; at the gamemaster's discretion the character may use another Charisma-based talent for the test. To ease the spirit's loneliness and escape its clutches, the character must achieve an Extraordinary result against the dancer's Social Defense. Each result level achieved adds a +1 bonus to the character's Charisma Test for the duration of the dance, as his empathy with and understanding of the spectral dancer improves. As the dance nears its end, the character often sees or relives the dancer's memories. Once the character achieves an Extraordinary result, the spectral dancer's motions slow, then stop. The dancer thanks the character for giving it brief companionship, then fades away.



STORMWRAITH

Stormwraiths are creatures of dark mist, created by Horrors from elemental air and corrupt magic. They dwell in storms and near high mountain peaks where the elemental air needed to sustain them is found. They appear as dark blobs of mist with a vaguely humanoid shape in which faint, bluish lightning crackles. Two burning pits of electric blue that seem to radiate hatred serve as a stormwraith's eyes. Stormwraiths can speak and understand Namegiver languages, and are intelligent enough to plan and work together. They hate all living creatures and attack them at every opportunity, especially airships mining True air from the clouds and high peaks where stormwraiths abound.

DEX: 8 **STR:** 4 **TOU:** 8
PER: 7 **WIL:** 8 **CHA:** 6

Initiative: 9
Actions: 2
Attack (2): 10
Damage:
Unarmed (5): 9 (Shock; see text)

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 4

Death: 74
Unconsciousness: 61
Wound Threshold: 13

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 4
Movement: 7*

Legend Award: Fourth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

* This value is the Horror construct's flying Movement Rate

Karma Points: 15 **Karma Step:** 4

Powers: Durability (5), Spellcasting (5): 12, Thread Weaving T [Elementalism] (5): 12

Spells: Lightning Bolt 13, Winds of Deflection 14

Loot: Kernels of elemental air worth 2D6×20 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points)

Rules

The following rules apply to stormwraiths.

Shock: *Air—Electric.* Stormwraiths attacks carry a powerful electrical shock. A stormwraith that makes a successful unarmed attack, makes a Spellcasting Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If successful, the stormwraith inflicts Step 12 electrical damage. Physical Armor protects against this damage.

Invulnerable to Electricity: Stormwraiths are immune to electrical- and air-based attacks made against them.

MINOR HORRORS

The term "minor Horrors" is somewhat misleading. The danger these entities pose is minor only when compared to the threat of the so-called major, or greater Horrors. Indeed, many so-called minor Horrors possess Names and True patterns, and most of these entities are more than a match for even the most skilled hero—a fact that any would-be Horror hunter overlooks at his own peril. And because these Horrors are much more common than their more well-known brethren, they may actually present greater danger to Namegivers.

The minor Horrors may be classified into several general types, such as bloatforms, wormskulls, plagues, gnashers, and so on. This tome endeavors to describe but a few of these types. Adventurers would do well to assume that many other unclassified, minor Horrors still roam the lands of Barsaive and always be wary.

BAGGI

Baggis are arboreal Horrors, most often sighted in the outer fringes of the Blood Wood. These Horrors resemble obese apes, somewhat like hairless black orangutans with long arms, flabby bodies, bullet-



shaped heads and terrible claws. Their large eyes are a sickly pale pink, and their skins have an unpleasant oily texture and rank smell. Baggis slack toothless mouths are permanently twisted into vicious idiot grins. Unlike true apes, baggis seem to have no skeletons whatsoever. They can stiffen parts of their bodies to move or attack, but essentially they are quasi-humanoid bags of skin filled with some unknown substance. (No records exist of a baggi corpse being dissected.)

Baggi are superior climbers and swingers and generally travel in small packs of three to eight individuals. They lurk in the high branches of trees, then swoop down on any unsuspecting prey that passes beneath them. Usually, baggi tear their victims apart with their claws, but these Horrors can also widen their mouths enough to swallow a human-sized victim whole.

One legend tells of a party of hunters from Blood Wood who were attacked by a pair of baggi in the early days of the Scourge. One young elf had fallen behind the group, and a baggi seized and devoured him. The other baggi attacked the rest of the hunters, who managed to slay it. The hunters then chased the surviving baggi to a clearing, where the Horror climbed a tree. After expending all their arrows, they tried to climb the tree after the monster but were repeatedly thrown back down.

Afterwards the hunters stated they could clearly see their devoured companion struggling inside the baggi's body for hours trying to push his way out. In the end the hunters set fire to the tree to put their friend out of his misery. Rather than attempt to flee, the baggi sat on a high branch as the flames enveloped the tree, making a sound something like a horrible barking laugh.

DEX: 15 **STR:** 22 **TOU:** 21
PER: 12 **WIL:** 24 **CHA:** 13

Initiative: 11
Actions: 2
Attack (7): 22
Damage:
Claws (3): 25

Physical Defense: 19
Spell Defense: 15
Social Defense: 17
Physical Armor: 30
Mystic Armor: 20

Death: 187
Unconsciousness: 167
Wound Threshold: 26

Recovery Tests: 10
Knockdown: 18
Movement: 5/6*

Legend Award: Thirteenth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

* The second value is the Horror's climbing Movement Rate

Karma Points: 15 **Karma Step:** 4

Powers: Climbing S (7): 22, Durability (13), Enhanced Senses [Smell] (2): 14, Great Leap S (7): 22

Rules

The malleable physique of baggi enables them to squeeze through any hole or crack through which a grown man can insert his fist. Obviously, this does not apply if the baggi is currently digesting a large victim.

Devouring: Baggi must achieve an Excellent result on their Attack Test to devour a victim. Baggi are intelligent enough not to try to swallow an obviously armed victim, and victims who are swallowed generally are too constrained by the creature's body to effectively attack with bare hands. However, if a devoured adventurer is carrying a small, concealed blade or similar weapon, he can attack the baggi from the inside. The baggi's interior has no Physical Armor.

A devoured character is prone to drowning (see p.109 for drowning rules) and takes Step 3 damage every minute from the baggi's digestive processes while he remains within the Horror. No armor protects against this damage.

BLOATFORM

A catch-all name for a diverse class of Horrors, bloatforms often look like floating slugs or jellyfish. Other bloatforms appear as impossibly bloated, bubbling corpses. For an example of a Named bloatform, see Fla Tra Lys, below.

DEX: 13 **STR:** 12 **TOU:** 18
PER: 15 **WIL:** 20 **CHA:** 14

Initiative: 11
Actions: 3
Attack (7): 20
Damage:
Tentacles (3): 15

Physical Defense: 16
Spell Defense: 19
Social Defense: 18
Physical Armor: 25
Mystic Armor: 23

Death: 163
Unconsciousness: NA
Wound Threshold: 24

Recovery Tests: 9
Knockdown: 13
Movement: 4

Legend Award: Eleventh Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 30 **Karma Step:** 10

Powers: Corrupt Karma (3): 23, Create Shadow (7), Durability (11), Horror Mark (7): 22, Spellcasting (7): 22, Terror (3): 17, Thread Weaving T [Wizardry] (7): 22, Thought Worm (3): 17

Spells: Wizardry (Seventh Circle)

Rules

Bloatforms rarely kill their victims directly, preferring to encourage suicide or murder. They especially enjoy insinuating themselves into small settlements and manipulating a community into self-destruction. Bloatforms enjoy chatting with victims they have marked. They cajole, threaten, taunt, and negotiate with the victim, all with the aim of getting the victim to destroy himself.

Some bloatforms have other talents from a variety of Disciplines as well as the average bloatform's powers and spells. Often, they lie dormant until a delicious whiff of pain crosses their path and rouses them. Horribly patient, bloatforms can wait years for the destruction of a particularly succulent victim.

Fla Tra Lys (Sample Bloatform)

This slow, globular-shaped Horror has six short, thick tentacles. When it moves, bulky masses shift and rotate beneath its scabby hide. A shimmering haze rises from it, and it emits a cool, sterile smell like rubbing alcohol. Unlike other bloatforms, Fla Tra Lys cannot float.

Survivors of Fla Tra Lys's attacks named the Horror "the Eater of Music" for its horrible effect on music. The Horror uses a unique magical effect to turn music played in its vicinity into wretched, grating noises. Apparently the Horror delights in the disquiet this causes and often manifests where music is being played.

DEX: 13 **STR:** 12 **TOU:** 18
PER: 15 **WIL:** 20 **CHA:** 14

Initiative: 11
Actions: 3
Attack (7): 20
Damage:
Tentacles (3): 15

Physical Defense: 16
Spell Defense: 19
Social Defense: 18
Physical Armor: 27
Mystic Armor: 25

Death: 170
Unconsciousness: NA
Wound Threshold: 24

Recovery Tests: 9
Knockdown: 13
Movement: 3

Legend Award: Twelfth Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 30 **Karma Step:** 11

Powers: Corrupt Karma (3): 23, Create Shadow (7), Durability (12), Horror Mark (7): 22, Spellcasting (7): 22, Terror (7): 21, Thread Weaving T [Nethermancy] (7): 22, Thought Worm (3): 17, Unnatural Life (3): 23

Spells: Nethermancy (Seventh Circle)

Rules

Fla Tra Lys has ambitions beyond a steady supply of human pain. Less bluntly manipulative than some other Horrors, Fla Tra Lys seeks to corrupt Namegivers' artistic impulses. It offers easy wealth to talented creators, especially musicians, if they accept its suggestions when creating their works. If an artist gives a performance or fashions a work that embodies the Horror's advice—an unsettling experience for any audience, in as much as the Horror has no sense of beauty—then Fla Tra Lys tells the corrupted creator how to reach some long-hidden treasure. This usually involves hardships far beyond the treasure's intrinsic worth. Inevitably the artist's resulting wealth and guilty conscience bring corruption of a different kind, and Fla Tra Lys feeds well on that, too. For more information on how Fla Tra Lys lures his victims, see **The Pipes of Wrongness**, p.269.

Horror Mark: A victim marked by Fla Tra Lys cannot perform music. Any attempt to do so results in the same wretched, grating noises that appear when the Horror is present.

CRYSTAL ENTITY

Crystal entities drop into the world from the astral plane. They must inhabit an object or structure at least the size of a coffin, and commonly infest huts, garden sheds, or similar small structures. The infested structure looks built of glass, quartz, or ice. When an entity is wounded, its rock-hard skin ruptures and oozes an oily liquid. When killed, its skin shatters and its blood coagulates into elemental earth coins. For an example of a Named crystal entity, see Ago'astia, below.

DEX: 7 **STR:** 6 **TOU:** 7
PER: 8 **WIL:** 6 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 5
Actions: 2
Attack: NA
Damage: NA

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 13
Mystic Armor: 5

Death: 98
Unconsciousness: 79
Wound Threshold: 15

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: NA
Movement: NA

Legend Award: Sixth Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step:** 7



Powers: Death Spikes (10): 16, Durability (8), Horror Mark (8): 16, Karma Tap (8): 16, Spellcasting (8): 16, Thread Weaving[T] [Wizardry] (8): 16

Spells: Astral Sense 12, Counterspell 11, Dispel Magic 6, Mind Dagger 8

Loot: Blood creates D6 elemental earth coins worth 100 silver pieces each (counts as treasure worth Legend Points)

Rules

Crystal entities attack opponents and defend themselves by using spells. Though a crystal entity can make no direct physical attacks, it can cast spells. When casting spells at a target, a crystal entity makes the Spellcasting Test required by the spell's description. If the test succeeds, the crystal entity then makes the applicable Effect Test or rolls the Effect dice to determine damage.

Death Spikes: To use the Death Spikes power, the entity makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the spell alters the joints and bones of a victim within the spell's 1,000 yard range, forming crystalline spikes that pierce the skin from the inside out. To determine damage, the entity rolls its Death Spike dice. No armor protects against this damage. In addition to other damage inflicted, Death Spikes cause a minimum of 1 Wound. The spikes remain in effect for a day, or until dispelled. For dispel purposes, treat Death Spikes as a Fifth Circle spell.

Ago'astia (Sample Crystal Entity)

Ago'astia is a crystal entity of unusual intelligence, cunning, and power. During the Scourge, Ago'astia entered the physical world and breached the citadel of Arrakal, killing all of the kaer's inhabitants and destroying what was left of the nation of Ustrect. Since then Ago'astia has grown to encompass a large part of the ruined city; its power growing as it covers more and more of the ruins. Eventually the Horror may encompass the entire city.

It has created numerous Horror constructs similar to jehuthras (see p.280) to serve it, made entirely from crystal and capable of casting the Earth Darts spell in addition to other powers.

DEX: 14 **STR:** 12 **TOU:** 14
PER: 16 **WIL:** 12 **CHA:** 8

Initiative: 12
Actions: 3
Attack: NA
Damage: NA

Physical Defense: 14
Spell Defense: 20
Social Defense: 22
Physical Armor: 20
Mystic Armor: 10

Death: 151
Unconsciousness: 132
Wound Threshold: 22

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: NA
Movement: NA

Legend Award: Tenth Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step:** 8

Powers: Death Spikes (10): 22, Durability (12), Forge Horror Construct (5): 21, Horror Mark (8): 24, Karma Tap (8): 24, Spellcasting (8): 24, Thread Weaving[T] [Elementalism, Wizardry] (8): 24, Thought Worm (3): 15

Spells: Astral Sense 18, Counterspell 17, Dispel Magic 12, Mind Dagger 14, and Elementalism (Eighth Circle)

Loot: Blood creates 2D6 elemental earth coins worth 100 silver pieces each (count as treasure worth Legend Points)

Adventure Hook

More recently, Ago'astia has begun an insidious plan. It has Horror-marked a group of living legend cult members of an organization called the Raisers of Ustrect, whose goal is to restore Ustrect in the same way Cara Fahd has begun anew. Most of the Raisers of Ustrect are from the Ironmongers trollmoot. Ago'astia plans to use the Raisers of Ustrect to take control of the Ironmongers moot and call for a mass emigration to Ustrect, and then seize and corrupt the trolls for its own purposes.

Deceiver

Few people know what deceivers really look like, for they almost always appear cloaked in illusion. Even in death they assume a false form. According to a few reports from powerful Illusionists who

have beheld deceivers with true sight, they appear humanoid in shape, no more than 4 feet tall, and covered from head to toe in gray, lumpy skin that resembles writhing brain matter. These Illusionists saw no sensory organs or other visible features.

DEX: 8 **STR:** 6 **TOU:** 8
PER: 14 **WIL:** 11 **CHA:** 15

Initiative: 7
Actions: 3
Attack (3): 11
Damage:
Unarmed (6): 12

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 18
Social Defense: 19
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 7

Death: 106
Unconsciousness: NA
Wound Threshold: 12

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 6
Movement: 6

Legend Award: Ninth Circle

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step:** 6

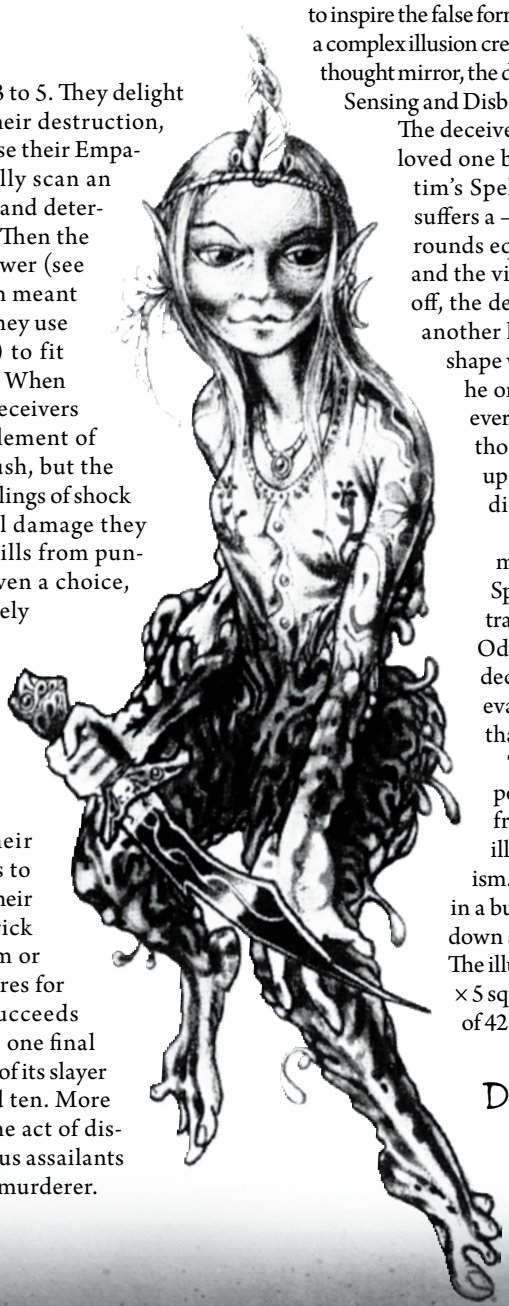
Powers: Animate Dead (1): 12, Corrupt Karma (1): 12, Cursed Luck (1): 12, Damage Shift (1): 12, Durability (9), Empathy Net (8): 22, False Form (9): 20, Spellcasting (1): 15, Thread Weaving [T] [Illusionism] (1): 15, Thought Mirror (8)

Spells: Illusionism (First Circle)

Rules

Deceivers usually roam in packs of 3 to 5. They delight in using trickery to lure victims to their destruction, either physical or mental. Deceivers use their Empathy Net power (see below) to mentally scan an unsuspecting victim from a distance and determine his or her most noble instincts. Then the deceivers use the Thought Mirror power (see below) to create a large-scale illusion meant to appeal to those instincts. Finally, they use their False Form power (see below) to fit themselves seamlessly into the illusion. When the victim comes to investigate, the deceivers reveal themselves and attack. This element of surprise makes for an effective ambush, but the deceivers seem to enjoy the victim's feelings of shock and betrayal as much as any physical damage they might inflict. Deceivers get their thrills from punishing those who act unselfishly. Given a choice, they prefer to leave their victims barely alive rather than killing them, most likely in hopes that the victim will refuse the next opportunity to act heroically once he or she recovers. Deceivers revel in the knowledge of having stained a shining soul with fear and self-doubt.

In combat, deceivers combine their Empathy Net and False Form powers to identify and mimic the appearance of their opponent's loved ones. This nasty trick unsettles the opponent by forcing him or her to hack away at those he or she cares for most in the world. If its opponent succeeds in killing a deceiver, the Horror plays one final trick: it shapeshifts into a precise copy of its slayer as a child between the ages of six and ten. More than one hero has been attacked in the act of disposing of a deceiver corpse by righteous assailants who believe they have caught a child-murderer.



Of all the Horrors, deceivers are among the easiest to kill despite the ferocity with which they defend themselves. They rarely flee from fights, and many scholars believe that they care more about inflicting mental trauma on others than their own survival. To a deceiver, death at the hands of a Namegiver simply affords the Horror another opportunity to cause its killer harm.

Empathy Net: Once a deceiver selects a spot it believes will attract the right kind of victim, it expends a Karma Point and performs a brief ritual during which it dashes out the brain of a living creature against a rock. After this gruesome rite, the deceiver waits until a Namegiver approaches to within 500 yards of it, at which point the power of the ritual mentally alerts the deceiver to its victim's presence. The deceiver then makes an Empathy Net Test against the highest Spell Defense of any Namegivers within the 500-yard range. If the test succeeds, the Empathy Net power fills the deceiver's mind with images from the Namegivers' minds. From this telepathic flow, the deceiver can determine what situations would most likely trigger a self-sacrificing response from the targets, what their past and present loved ones look like, and what they looked like as young children.

False Form: The False Form power allows the deceiver to mimic anything it sees in an Empathy Net scan. This power works in three ways, depending on which of the victim's thoughts the deceiver is using to inspire the false form. The deceiver can, for example, become part of a complex illusion created by its Thought Mirror power. As part of the thought mirror, the deceiver's false form shares the Thought Mirror's Sensing and Disbelief Difficulty Numbers (see below).

The deceiver can also assume the form of an opponent's loved one by making a False Form Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the victim suffers a –2 penalty to all Action Tests for a number of rounds equal to the difference between the test result and the victim's Spell Defense. When the effect wears off, the deceiver can attempt to adopt the form of yet another loved one. Because the deceiver changes its shape while its opponent watches, the victim knows he or she is fighting an illusion. In this case, however, disbelief does not negate the –2 penalty. Even though a victim knows he is not really chopping up his mother, he still finds the act emotionally difficult to perform.

If mortally wounded in combat, the deceiver makes a final False Form Test against its killer's Spell Defense. On a successful result, the deceiver transforms into a replica of its opponent as a child. Oddly enough, this change is not an illusion. The deceiver actually becomes a dead child of the relevant Namegiver race, matching its opponent at that age down to the last freckle.

Thought Mirror: *Illusion.* The Thought Mirror power allows the deceiver to use images gleaned from an Empathy Net scan to create a complex illusion that appeals to the victim's sense of heroism. Examples include a mother and baby trapped in a burning building, a drowning child being swept down a river, or a kitten being stalked by a rabid dog. The illusion covers an area up to Thought Mirror rank × 5 square yards. The illusion has a Sensing Difficulty of 42 and a Disbelief Difficulty of 26.

DESPAIRTHOUGHT

The despairthought resembles a giant, white larva, ranging from the size of a sheep to the size of several horses. It has white, sightless eyes and a huge maw tipped with large

fangs. Along its body are child-sized arms, on which it scrambles around. Although a formidable foe in physical combat, the Horror prefers psychic attack. The despairthought usually hides in a cavern or within ruins, far from civilization, and travels through the astral plane seeking victims. It can roam a limitless range in astral space, keeping its attention on both the physical and astral planes simultaneously.

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

Initiative: 8
Actions: 2
Attack (6): 12
Damage:
Bite (2): 15

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 7

Death: 83
Unconsciousness: 73
Wound Threshold: 18

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 14
Movement: 7

Legend Award: Fifth Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step:** 8

Powers: Corrupt Karma (1): 13, Displace (1): 9, Durability (3)

Rules

The Horror must have aid from one of its victim's loved ones to use its powers, and for this reason it often attacks children. It frequently seeks out cruel, selfish, or especially fearful parents who might sacrifice their own children to save themselves. Taking the form of a white shadow that drifts in and out of amorphous shapes, the creature tells the victim's loved one that it will kill him unless he helps the creature take the victim. It promises not to kill the victim, but swears to kill the loved one unless he assists the Horror. In reality, the despairthought can do no harm without the help of the loved one, but few people realize that the death threat is pure bluff. If the loved one cooperates, the creature describes a pattern to its newfound accomplice. The loved one must trace this pattern—a special Horror mark—upon the flesh of the victim. Though invisible, the mark lets the despairthought follow the victim until he dies or the Horror is killed. The Horror cannot leave its chosen victim; both remain trapped with one another until one of them dies. Once the Horror's accomplice has made the mark, the creature enters the victim's thoughts, allowing it to use the following **Powers:**

Commit Suicide: The despairthought can render its victim suicidal. Once a year, the Horror can attempt to force the victim to commit suicide. In this case, the Horror and the victim each make three sets of Willpower Tests against each other's Willpower Step, and compare the results of the tests. If the Horror's results exceed the victim's for each of the three tests, the victim commits suicide within 24 hours. The Horror usually does not invoke this power for at least a full year after invading the victim, preferring to wallow in the pain it can cause the victim during that time.

Thoughts of Despair: Inside the victim's mind, the Horror constantly feeds him bleak ideas, cynical notions, and hopeless views of the world. To reflect this process, once a day the creature can make a Willpower Test against the victim's Willpower Step. The Horror can make this roll at any time, and usually does so when the victim is in danger. If the test succeeds, the victim can take no action of any kind. He cannot fall to the floor, take shelter, or do anything potentially useful. Most despairthoughts affect their victims this way to get the victim killed, though some despairthoughts simply enjoy causing the victim inconvenience, embarrassment, or trouble. The creature's influence lasts a number of rounds equal to the Willpower Test result.

Tormenting Voice: When the victim tries to speak, the creature takes control of the victim's voice, making horrible sounds and grunts issue forth instead of words. The victim often spasms and loses control of his body, and his noises torment those who hear them. Anyone within hearing range of the victim's voice must make a Willpower Test against the despairthought's Willpower Step. If the test is unsuccessful, the listener automatically suffers a knockdown. He clutches at his head as his consciousness drowns in agony for all the painful actions, large or small, that he has ever committed against anyone. The horrible sounds amplify these memories to such a degree that the listener is rendered incapable of taking any action. Some listeners cry, howl, or roll back and forth on the floor in agonizing pain. The effects of the Horror's terrible voice last until the listener makes a successful Willpower Test, or until the victim makes a successful Willpower Test against the despairthought's Willpower Step.

DOPPLER

These bizarre Horrors consist of one or more humanoid bodies, normal save for the flexible, two foot stinger that grows from their upper arms or hips. Dopplers grow in strength by using their stinger to increase their numbers, as it allows them to replicate their victims. The only other clue to a doppler's true nature is the slightly disconnected aura that surrounds the entity's body when viewed in astral space. On careful observation, a doppler's body appears to have shrunk away from its aura. No theorist can satisfactorily explain why doppler bodies emit this oversized aura.

Mystery shrouds the origin of dopplers. Legends describe the original doppler as a large, blighted tree or other plant, and the various dopplers now in Barsaive as its astral "seeds." Other legends insist that present-day dopplers originate from more than one parent. The parent doppler, or dopplers, are said to know everything ever known by every doppler victim. Various tales place the original doppler tree in the Liaj Jungle or Blood Wood. Those who claim the doppler tree is located in Blood Wood also murmur that Queen Alachia knows of it and may even have made a pact with the Horror. If this is true, even destroying all the known dopplers in Barsaive will not end their existence; only the destruction of the doppler tree would stop their insidious propagation.

DEX: 11 **STR:** 10 **TOU:** 12
PER: 11 **WIL:** 12 **CHA:** 10

Initiative: 12
Actions: 2
Attack (2): 13
Damage:
Unarmed (1): 11

Physical Defense: 14
Spell Defense: 15
Social Defense: 13
Physical Armor: Varies
Mystic Armor: 9

Death: 73
Unconsciousness: 64
Wound Threshold: 17

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 10
Movement: 6

Legend Award: Fourth Circle (Group. If spells or talents are from a higher Circle, use that Circle instead.)

Karma Points: 15 **Karma Step:** 4

Powers: Corrupt Karma (2): 14, Doppler Sting (6): 16, Durability (2), Spellcasting (2): 13, Thread Weaving[T] [Discipline] (2): 13, Talents (see text)

Spells: By Discipline (see text)

Equipment, Loot: Varies by victim

Rules

Dopplers seek to expand their power by creating more dopplers. Related dopplers can serve as cannon fodder, or they can infiltrate an existing community and corrupt it, particularly if the victim was someone of sufficient power to influence other Namegivers. Dop-

plers are particularly interested in manipulating events on a large scale by taking the place of key persons and so provide an excellent way to introduce conspiracies and intrigue into **Earthdawn** campaigns.

Each doppler possesses the same attributes and statistics. However, each doppler is unique in that it possesses the abilities of the Namegiver it was created from. Additionally, each doppler possesses all the knowledge and skills of any other dopplers created by the same "parent" doppler. Note that these related dopplers do not possess each other's talents.

Most of the time, dopplers attack with the talents and skills of their Namegiver form. In addition, dopplers that have been unmasked use their stingers to slash at opponents. When a doppler attacks with its stinger, it uses its normal Attack Step for the Attack Test, and its Doppler Sting Step for the Damage Test.

Doppler Sting: Whenever a doppler kills a Namegiver, it uses its stinger to draw blood from the corpse, then detaches the blood-filled stinger and plants it in some hidden spot. Over the course of the following month, the planted stinger grows into a new doppler that is an exact replica of the slain Namegiver. The original "parent" doppler grows a new stinger within a few days after planting the old stinger.

Dread Iota

The smallest type of Horror known, a single dread iota is invisible to the naked eye and may be found in water, as well as in many plants and animals. Dread iotas are fully intelligent Horrors that exercise a cruel influence over any creature unfortunate enough to ingest them, including Namegivers. When these parasites group together, they resemble an intelligent, directed disease. Masses of dread iotas infest streams, ponds, springs, lakes, and even rain clouds in parts of Barsaive that still bear the worst scars of the Scourge. Dread iotas can enter a Namegiver's body if the Namegiver drinks water or eats a plant or animal infected by iotas. Questors have been able to cast iotas out of victims in some cases, but in general, infected Namegivers slowly waste away and die.

One scholar, the late Yamonis IV of Throal, created a device that combined a number of magnifying lenses. Using this device, Yamonis successfully observed dread iotas. His sketches depict them as humanoid in structure, with scaly hides and grinning, malevolent faces.

DEX: NA **STR:** NA **TOU:** NA
PER: 8 **WIL:** 8 **CHA:** 3

Initiative: NA
Actions: 2
Attack: NA
Damage: NA

Physical Defense: NA
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: NA
Mystic Armor: 4

Death: NA
Unconsciousness: NA
Wound Threshold: NA

Recovery Tests: NA
Knockdown: NA
Movement: NA

Legend Award: Fifth Circle

Karma Points: 10 **Karma Step:** 6

Powers: Animate Dead (3): 11, Create Shadow (3), Horror Mark (3): 11, Karma Tap (3): 11,, Spellcasting (3): 11, Thread Weaving[T] [Nethermancy] (3): 11

Spells: Nethermancy (Third Circle)

Rules

Once a dread iota has entered a Namegiver, it can use its Horror Mark power on that Namegiver. The dread iota's primary goal is to reproduce and infect other intelligent victims. One way it may accomplish this goal is to reveal itself to the victim and use its Karma Tap ability to reward hosts who help it infect others (Namegivers may become infected by the exchange of bodily fluids with an infected victim). Dread iotas are also fond of using the Bone Dance spell to temporarily control the movements of their hosts. If a host dies, the dread iotas often animate the corpse and seek out a new host before the old one rots away.

Dread iotas are difficult to kill. The Elementalist spell Purify Water will kill dread iotas in water samples, but once a victim has been infected, only the questor of Garlen Heal power is known to be effective against the parasites. Avoiding infection in the first place remains the best way to deal with dread iotas. Fortunately, anyone who successfully uses any sort of astral sensing can spot the distinct astral signature of dread iotas by making an appropriate test against the dread iota's Spell Defense. Any material, animal, or Namegiver infected with dread iotas glows faintly under such observation.

Degeneration: The presence of this parasitic Horror causes tissue degeneration and eventual death. Infected victims must make a Toughness Test each week against a Difficulty Number equal to the number of weeks they have been infected. Each time the test fails, the victim loses –1 point from each Attribute value. The victim dies when any Attribute value, other than Charisma, reaches zero. The Attribute value loss is permanent, barring the direct intercession of one of the Passions or perhaps the use of legendary healing magic.

Adventure Hook

Sometimes entire villages become infected by dread iotas. The victims act much like foul folk, though the infection will leave many of them weakened. In one possible adventure, the neighbors of an infected settlement may hire the players to accompany questors of Garlen into the hamlet to heal as many as can be saved, and slay the rest.

Gharmhek

These loathsome Horrors feed on Namegiver feelings of distaste and revulsion. Less robust than many of their kind, they skulk in safe burrows waiting for dead Namegivers to be brought near them. They prefer to live near graveyards, catacombs, field hospitals, and other such places where the dead abound. The gharmhek use their Animate Dead power to make cadaver men of the corpses, then wait for Namegivers to approach and react with disgust to the sight of the walking dead. Living Namegivers react especially strongly to the unlife of those walking dead they knew personally; the specific negative emotions of these Namegivers is a rare delicacy to the gharmhek, who quiver with pleasure when they detect it. A brief shot of such personal revulsion can sustain them for months. When forced to do without it entirely, the gharmhek hibernate, surviving in sleep for centuries.

The gharmhek resemble bizarre reptiles, with frills of heavy bone behind their armored heads and sharp fearsome-looking beaks for mouths. Their tiny, dark eyes burn with cruel intelligence. Their flabby snakelike bodies extend roughly three feet behind their heads and are encrusted with scabs and sores that often leak a milky, greenish fluid.



Characters can converse with gharmhek if they wish, though these Horrors display an unpleasant preoccupation with decomposition and other biological processes usually avoided in polite society. Gharmhek occasionally make deals with Namegivers or other hostile creatures in order to ensure their own survival, but honor such agreements only as long as it benefits them.

DEX: 4 **STR:** 4 **TOU:** 11
PER: 8 **WIL:** 13 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 4
Actions: 1
Attack (5): 9
Damage:
Bite (6): 10

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 10 (head); 0 (body)
Mystic Armor: 9

Death: 58
Unconsciousness: 51
Wound Threshold: 17

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: NA
Movement: 4/2*

Legend Award: Fourth Circle (Group)

* The second value is the Horror's burrowing Movement Rate

Karma Points: 15 **Karma Step:** 4

Powers: Animate Dead (1): 14, Damage Shift (1): 14, Horror Mark (2): 10, Spellcasting (2): 10, Terror (6): 10

Rules

The following rules apply to gharmeks.

Animate Dead: Unlike most other Horrors, the gharmhek can use their Animate Dead power within 30 yards (15 hexes) of the victim and need not touch the victim.

Burrow: The gharmhek protect their weak bodies by burrowing into the ground of earthen walls, exposing only their armored heads. As long as a gharmhek remains in its burrow, it uses its head's Physical Armor Rating of 10. A gharmhek is at a great disadvantage outside its burrow. Those experienced in fighting the gharmhek usually try to pry them loose in order to expose their pulpy posteriors. To force a gharmhek out of its burrow requires a pole or similar implement with which to pry out the Horror, and a successful Strength Test against the gharmhek's Toughness Step. Several characters can combine their Strength Steps for this test.

Although gharmhek are immune to normal Knockdown, those pried from their burrows can only physically strike at floor-level targets (such as an opponent's feet). A gharmhek outside its burrow uses its body's Physical Armor Rating of 0.

GNASHER

Gnashers are the simplest of the Horrors. During the Scourge, legions of these mindless entities swarmed across the face of the world, devouring everything in sight and leaving poisoned wastelands in their wake. Though gnashers prefer sentient victims, these Horrors will eat any living thing and even inanimate matter if no other food is available. The only thing they do not attempt to eat is each other. Unlike most other Horrors, gnashers show no signs of higher intelligence and are indifferent to the pain and suffering they cause. They possess none of the dread powers associated with most Horrors. Gnashers are simply killing machines driven by a blind, insatiable impulse to devour.

Gnashers typically travel in swarms of several dozen. They eat constantly, and their gobbling and snarfing sounds are usually audible from a considerable distance. Gnashers try to eat anything they can sense, and their acute sense of smell enables them to detect prey within a quarter of a mile. These Horrors have no sense of self-preservation and continue to attack no matter how effectively their prey fights back. They never flee, even when large numbers of them are slain.

Gnashers vary widely in appearance. Some are reptilian, others toad-like or mammalian. Some possess features of several different



animals, and still others are utterly alien or formless in structure. Most are the size of a large dog. The one feature all gnashers possess is a massive set of jaws, lined with dozens of razor-sharp teeth. The jaws of most gnashers represent more than fifty percent of the monster's body mass. These terrible jaws enable gnashers to devour the equivalent of their own weight many times over in mere minutes. Examination of slain gnashers has revealed that they possess no standard means of excreting waste matter from their bodies. This has led scholars to speculate that gnashers transform the matter they consume into mystical energy, which they expel into astral space. Several popular theories attempt to explain what happens to this energy when it reaches astral space. The most popular theory contends that the excrement merely floats about, obscuring much of the astral plane.

DEX: 5 **STR:** 8 **TOU:** 4
PER: 2 **WIL:** 8 **CHA:** 3

Initiative: 5
Actions: 1
Attack (5): 10
Damage:
Bite (8): 16

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 15
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 6

Death: 58
Unconsciousness: 45
Wound Threshold: 7

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 8
Movement: 6

Legend Award: Fourth Circle

Karma Points: 15 (see text) **Karma Step:** 4

Powers: Durability (4), Enhanced Senses [Smell] (2): 14 *, Great Leap ^{S} (4): 9

* Adjusted for Heightened Senses bonus (see text)

Rules

These Horrors make an excellent combat challenge for intermediate or experienced adventurers. They possess too little personality to serve as the linchpin of an entire plotline, but may be useful for wearing down a party or emphasizing the inherent danger of a Horror-infested area. Because gnashers are virtually mindless, the action-lovers in the gaming group can enjoy a guilt-free, good time bashing away at them.

Gnashers travel by leaping, and can jump up to their Combat Move in height to get at higher targets. Some gnashers have powerful back legs that they clearly use for locomotion. Others, however, have no apparent means of physically making these incredible leaps.

Though less robust than some Horrors, gnashers pay no heed to damage inflicted on them and continue to attack until they lapse into unconsciousness or die. Up to eight gnashers may engage a

human-, t'skrang- or ork-sized target at one time. Up to twelve may engage a troll- or obsidiman-sized target. Generally, no more than five will attack a dwarf. Windlings need only worry about one or two gnashers attacking.

Heightened Senses: Gnashers gain a +10 bonus to their Enhanced Senses [Smell] Tests.

Karma Cap: Gnashers may only spend Karma on Attack and Damage Tests.

KREESCRA

Most kreescra stand just three feet tall, a few as tall as four feet. Their bodies are misshapen travesties—all twisted limbs and jaws and faces that seem about to slide off their heads. Despite their crippled appearance, kreescra are surprisingly nimble and difficult to catch or strike.

DEX: 9 **STR:** 10 **TOU:** 9
PER: 6 **WIL:** 11 **CHA:** 6

Initiative: 10
Actions: 2
Attack (2): 11
Damage:
Unarmed (2): 12

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

Death: 75
Unconsciousness: 64
Wound Threshold: 13

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 6

Legend Award: Fourth Circle

Karma Points: 15 **Karma Step:** 5

Powers: Climbing [T] (1): 10, Cursed Luck (2): 13, Durability (4), Lock Picking [T] (1): 10, Silent Walk [T] (1): 10, Spellcasting (4): 10, Tracking [T] (4): 10

Rules

The following special rules apply to kreescra.

Haunting Nightmares: Kreescra usually attack by approaching wounded individuals who are deep in slumber. Finding such a victim, the Horror places its hands on the victim's head and makes a Spellcasting Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, nightmares of horrible events from the victim's past overwhelm the dreamer and disrupt his sleep. The victim does not wake from these terrors; he stays asleep, sweating and tossing and turning. The kreescra can reactivate this power at a range of up to 100 yards, keeping the victim under its influence for at least one hour each night. During the day, the kreescra hides near the victim's sleeping place. When the victim travels, the kreescra trails him, keeping out of sight and only using its powers while the victim slumbers.

During the horrible nightmares, the victim makes a Willpower Test against the kreescra's Willpower Step. If the Willpower Test is unsuccessful, the victim receives no Recovery Tests the next day despite his full night of sleep. For every continuous week that the kreescra haunts the victim, whether or not it successfully keeps the victim from making daily Recovery Tests, the victim takes 7 Damage Points. If possible, the kreescra stays with the same victim until the victim dies, slowly killing him with nightmares and the effects of unhealed wounds. If the victim achieves an Extraordinary result on one of his Willpower Tests against the kreescra, he has forced the Horror from his mind. Once a victim recovers from the damage done by the kreescra, the creature seeks out another victim.

MINDSLUG

Mindslugs feed off the pain caused by their attacks on a victim's skull and brain. These mindless creatures usually travel in groups of three, seeking out victims as a poisonous spider might. Six inches long and black in color, mindslugs have no obvious sensory organs, such as eyes or a nose. Instead, each possesses several tentacles that it uses to crawl along the ground, walls and ceilings. The tentacles are lined with small, silvery hooks that provide the slug with sensory information.

DEX: 6 **STR:** 6 **TOU:** 8
PER: 7 **WIL:** 10 **CHA:** 6

Initiative: 8
Actions: 1
Attack (1): 7
Damage:
Tentacle (2): 8

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 6

Death: 50
Unconsciousness: 41
Wound Threshold: 12

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 6
Movement: 5

Legend Award: Third Circle

Karma Points: 10 **Karma Step:** 5

Powers: Corrupt Karma (1): 11, Durability (1), Gain Surprise [T] (1): 11, Lacerators

Rules

The mindslug hides in dark places where a potential victim might rest, and attacks as the victim sleeps. Piercing the victim's skull, the mindslug worms its way into the victim's brain and begins to feed. The Horror has two magical abilities that give it an advantage over its prey: Gain Surprise, which allows the creature to sneak up on its victim by crawling up his back or dropping down from the ceiling, and Lacerators, which increase the mindslug's Damage Step (see below).

Once the mindslug has successfully entered its victim, the creature makes a Damage Test in every round without needing to make an additional attack. The mindslug continues these Damage Tests until the victim removes the slug or dies, at which point the mindslug leaves the corpse and seeks out a new victim.

Removing the creature is no easy task. The mindslug's body is slippery, and it uses the small hooks along its tentacles to grip the inside of its victim's skull. Both of these characteristics make these creatures difficult to dislodge, assuming that a character can catch one. To catch the creature with fingers, tweezers or some similar tool, the character doing the catching must make a successful Dexterity Test against the creature's Physical Defense. Once he has grabbed the slug, the character must make a Willpower Test against the mindslug's Willpower Step. If the test succeeds, the victim can remove the mindslug, inflicting Step 6/D10 damage and 1 Wound to the character. No armor protects against this damage. If the Willpower Test is unsuccessful, the mindslug continues to worm its way into the victim's brain.

Starting with the second round in which the mindslug inhabits the victim's skull, each round that the creature remains in the victim's head increases its Physical Defense by +2. For example, by the third round after a successful attack the creature's Physical Defense is 12 (8+2+2 = 12). Also, each round that the mindslug remains in the victim's head further increases the Difficulty Number for removing it (its Willpower Step) by +2. Once plucked out of the victim's skull, the creature attempts to wriggle away and escape.

Lacerators: Lacerators are cold, icy spikes that form on the mindslug's tentacles, granting a +4 bonus to the Horror's Damage Tests. They take 1 round to form and last for Step 10 rounds.

SCURRIER

Rarely seen elsewhere in Barsaive, scurriers are regrettably common inside the ruins of Parlainth. Most Namegivers find the sight of these small, humanoid Horrors disturbing. Exposed bits of living brain bulge out from their skulls, their saucer shaped eyes glow with a pale, sickly color, and coarse, insect-like hair covers their bodies. Weak and cowardly by nature, scurriers prefer to

harm their victims from a distance. They scurry through the rubble, using their Repair Trap power to restore the Forgotten City's many damaged and deteriorating traps in the hopes of catching hapless explorers. The scurriers feed on the pain and suffering of their trapped victims. Though scurriers usually flee when threatened, they fight ferociously when cornered.

DEX: 9 **STR:** 6 **TOU:** 9
PER: 9 **WIL:** 9 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 9 **Physical Defense:** 11
Actions: 1 **Spell Defense:** 12
Attack (3): 12 **Social Defense:** 8
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 6
Spear (4): 10 **Mystic Armor:** 6

Death: 54 **Recovery Tests:** 4
Wound Threshold: 13
Knockdown: 6
Unconsciousness: 46
Movement: 7

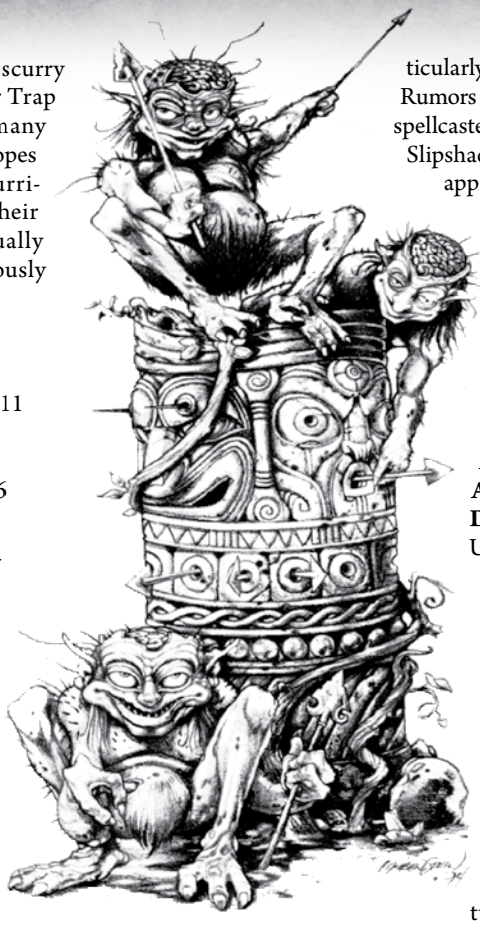
Legend Award: Third Circle

Karma Points: 15
Karma Step: 4

Powers: Cursed Luck (3): 12, Durability (1), Repair Trap (3): 12

Equipment: Spear (Damage Step 4)

Loot: None



Rules

The following special rules apply to scurriers.

Repair Trap: The Horror power of Repair Trap allows scurriers to use elemental force to fuse together the broken pieces of a trap. A scurrier using this ability makes a Repair Trap Test against a Journeyman Difficulty Number (see **Creating Difficulty Numbers**, p.89) determined by the gamemaster based on the condition of the trap in question. For example, a trap that needed only a single part replaced would be an Easy task for the scurrier (Difficulty Number of 3–6); restoring a trap corroded into a pile of rust would be a Heroic task for the scurrier (Difficulty Number of 23–27).

SLIPSHADE

Slipshades are a greatly feared, but thankfully rare type of minor Horror. Slipshades resemble humanoid shapes of absolute blackness, anywhere from four to six feet tall, and can transform themselves into a flat form no thicker than a sheet of parchment. When in this form, these dangerous entities can slide along a floor, ground, or even across walls or ceilings. Slipshades attack with their bare hands, leaving gaping, tearing wounds much like the bite of a carnivore. Fortunately, these entities are quite rare, not particularly aggressive (for Horrors), and generally do not cooperate with greater Horrors. Otherwise, few kaers would have been able to withstand the slipshades' powers of infiltration.

Apparently, slipshades do not seek out intelligent prey but will destroy mercilessly any sentient creature that wanders into their territories. Some slipshades have been known to establish permanent lairs, usually in caves or grottos in deep wilderness, and grow fiercely protective of these areas. Though these strange Horrors do not love precious stones or metals for their own sake, they seem to appreciate fine workmanship and do not wantonly destroy intricate things of beauty. Occasionally slipshades even hoard treasure, particularly magical objects and finely worked craft pieces. Rumors also tell of certain exceptional slipshades that are spellcasters of potent ability.

Slipshades' goals are mysterious. These Horrors do not appear to devour or otherwise derive nourishment from their victims, and their means of sustenance remains unknown. No slipshade has been reliably reported in Barsaive in more than 75 years, but some may still lurk about, hidden away in the deep wilderness.

DEX: 11 **STR:** 8 **TOU:** 11
PER: 11 **WIL:** 15 **CHA:** 13

Initiative: 13 **Physical Defense:** 14
Actions: 2 **Spell Defense:** 15
Attack (6): 17 **Social Defense:** 14
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 11
Unarmed (6): 14 **Mystic Armor:** 11

Death: 100 **Recovery Tests:** 5
Unconsciousness: 87 **Knockdown:** 8
Wound Threshold: 17 **Movement:** 8

Legend Award: Seventh Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Karma Points: 15 **Karma Step:** 8

Powers: Durability (6), Terror (1): 14

Equipment, Loot: Varies (see text)

Rules

Slipshades usually attack in groups of two to five. Because they are dim and shadowy, two-dimensional slipshades gain a +4 bonus, and three-dimensional slipshades gain a +2 bonus, to both their Physical and Spell Defenses while in dim and shadowy conditions. Two-dimensional slipshades are virtually impossible to see when viewed in profile.

Switch Form: Slipshades can switch from three- to two-dimensional form or vice versa instantaneously, as often as they wish. In two-dimensional form, the slipshade can elongate itself and pass through a crack of any width whatsoever, as long as the opening is at least six inches long. The slipshade can move normally by sliding along a wall, floor, ceiling or the ground. If moving upright across an open area while in two-dimensional form, the slipshade's speed is reduced by half to 4 and its movement acquires an eerie, unsteady, undulating quality. Slipshades cannot attack while in two-dimensional form, but take damage normally. In three-dimensional form, slipshades can move normally across open territory but cannot slide up walls or across ceilings.

WINGFLAYER

Wingflayers are among the strangest of the minor Horrors to plague Barsaive. The unique physical properties of these Horrors have led some authorities to claim that wingflayers never really existed except in the minds of overly imaginative windlings. Those who have studied the matter deeply, however, point to several reliable accounts that seem to establish that wingflayers did exist during the Scourge—and may still live.

Wingflayers appear as swirling clouds of hundreds of tiny airborne slivers, each about half an inch to two inches long, made of some unknown metallic substance. Usually the cloud resembles a rough cylinder about three feet wide and six feet high, but wingflayers have been known to take other shapes, including crude parodies of the human form. Wingflayers can also expand themselves. Some evidence suggests that wingflayers can expand to four times their normal size before they begin to lose shape. Also, a wingflayer can insert itself through pinhole-sized openings by sending its slivers

through one at a time. At rest, wingflayers settle into piles of slivers about a foot in diameter and barely an inch high. Resting wingflayers appear to need a certain amount of open area to reanimate themselves; they have been successfully captured inside fragile glass vessels and even in light leather sacks that a fully animated wingflayer could shred in seconds. Wingflayers do not appear to be particularly social Horrors and never form groups of more than two.

The slivers that make up a wingflayer are remarkably light, and an entire wingflayer normally weighs less than five pounds. Although this would seem to suggest these entities are insubstantial and weak, wingflayer attacks usually leave their victims little more than unidentifiable piles of raw meat. Indeed, a particularly intensive or prolonged attack can reduce a victim to a small scattering of bone splinters.

Wingflayers seem to be creatures of almost pure magic. They possess nothing that even remotely resembles sensory, digestive, or reproductive organs, yet they seem to see and hear, take in nourishment, and even reproduce. Some scholars theorize that wingflayers take the vital energy of their victims and convert it directly into mass for their constituent splinters. When the splinters reach a certain size, they divide into two or more smaller splinters.

DEX: 15 **STR:** 16 **TOU:** 14
PER: 9 **WIL:** 14 **CHA:** 13

Initiative: 10
Actions: 3
Attack (7): 22
Damage:
Slivers (1): 17

Physical Defense: 20
Spell Defense: 12
Social Defense: 17
Physical Armor: 25
Mystic Armor: 10

Death: 137
Unconsciousness: 120
Wound Threshold: 19

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 16
Movement: 6*

Legend Award: Eleventh Circle (Group)
Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step:** 8

* This value is the Horror's flying Movement Rate

Powers: Durability (10)

Rules

Surprisingly, physical attacks harm wingflayers. Theorists contend that blows from solid objects disrupt the matrices of the unknown energies that give wingflayers their form. However, streamlined missiles such as arrows, darts, and thrown spears are curiously ineffective against wingflayers. Damage Tests made with such weapons against the Horror suffer a –3 penalty.

Armor is ineffective against wingflayers unless it covers the target's entire body. Armor that leaves certain body parts entirely uncovered or contains significant gaps in its structure, such as blood pebble armor or ring mail, which offers only the protection of the leather underneath, is ineffective. Furthermore, most armor made from organic materials (including leather, hide and fernweave, but not obsidiman skin) can be permanently scoured away by persistent attacks from a wingflayer at a rate of –1 point of Physical and Mystic Armor every three combat rounds. However, some enchantments may make organic armor impervious to, or at least more resistant against, wingflayer attacks. Eye protection is particularly crucial when arming against wingflayers.

WORMSKULL

Wormskulls are a class of Horrors that vary in appearance but have one feature in common: their skulls look like masses of writhing worms. Often, their hands and feet also end in worm-like appendages. Wormskulls range in height from five to eight feet tall.

Their bodies are made partly of armor, and pieces of this armor count as treasure worth Legend Points. Because wormskulls prefer dry environments, their presence tends to remove moisture from an area 1,000 yards in circumference around them. Occasionally, wormskulls serve other Horrors.

DEX: 13 **STR:** 10 **TOU:** 10
PER: 13 **WIL:** 11 **CHA:** 10

Initiative: 13
Actions: 2
Attack (7): 20
Damage:
Unarmed (10): 20

Physical Defense: 17
Spell Defense: 17
Social Defense: 18
Physical Armor: 17
Mystic Armor: 14

Death: 110
Unconsciousness: 95
Wound Threshold: 15

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 9
Movement: 5

Legend Award: Eighth Circle (Group)

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step:** 7

Powers: Animate Dead (8): 19, Avoid Blow[T] (5): 18, Create Shadow (6), Displace (6): 19, Durability (8), Skin Shift (5): 16, Spellcasting (6): 19, Thread Weaving[T] [Nethermancy] (6): 19, Terror (8): 18

Spells: Nethermancy (Sixth Circle)

Loot: Breastplate pieces made of elemental earth. Characters can pry out pieces of armor worth (D20+D8+D6)×100 silver pieces (count as treasure worth Legend Points)



CHARTS & TABLES

POISON TABLE

Poison Type	Spell Defense/ Step Number	Onset Time	Duration
Damage	5–9	Instant/1–2 days	1–6 rounds
Debilitation	5–7	Instant	Effect Test days
Paralysis	5–9	Instant	Effect Test hours
Death	10–13	Instant/1–2 days	Instant

CURSE TABLE

Curse Type	Step Number*	Effect
Minor	7–8	Reduced steps, minor damage
Major	9–15	Scars, reduced Attribute Values
Horror	Horror's Spellcasting step	Horror-marked items or characters, use of Horror powers through item

* The step number used to determine if a curse affects a character.

TRAVEL RATE TABLE

Method of Travel	Travel Rate
Airship	255 miles (per 16 hour day)
Caravan (foot)	20 miles (per 8 hour day)
Caravan (mounted)	30 miles (per 8 hour day)
Namegiver (foot)	25 miles (per 8 hour day)
Namegiver (mounted)	45 miles (per 8 hour day)
Riverboat	160 miles (per 16 hour day)

BARRIER RATING TABLE

Barrier Material	Physical Armor	Death Rating
Blood Ivy	3	15
Cave or Natural Wall	30	150
Wood (up to 2 inches thick)	7	20
Wood (more than 2 inches thick)	9	30
Stone Wall (mortared)	12	45
Stone Block	20	85

DETECTION DIFFICULTY TABLE

Detection Difficulty	Difficulty Number
Easy	5
Average	9
Hard	15
Very Hard	21
Heroic	25

LIGHT SOURCE VISIBILITY TABLE

Light Source	Radius
Candle	2 yards
Torch	5 yards
Campfire	10 yards
Lantern	10 yards
Light Quartz	5 yards

LEGEND AWARD TABLE

Current Circle	Legend Award*	Total Legend Points Awarded Per Session*
1	25–75 (50)	100–300 (200)
2	100–300 (200)	400–1,200 (800)
3	200–500 (350)	800–2,000 (1,400)
4	250–700 (475)	1,000–2,800 (1,900)
5	500–1,500 (1,000)	2,000–6,000 (4,000)
6	900–2,700 (1,800)	3,600–10,800 (7,200)
7	1,650–4,900 (3,275)	6,600–19,600 (13,100)
8	2,350–7,000 (4,675)	9,400–28,000 (18,700)
9	4,800–14,200 (9,500)	19,200–56,800 (38,000)
10	8,600–25,800 (17,250)	34,400–103,200 (68,800)
11	15,450–46,350 (30,900)	61,800–185,400 (123,600)
12	22,950–68,850 (45,900)	91,800–275,400 (183,600)
13	42,500–127,500 (85,000)	170,000–510,000 (340,000)
14	77,500–232,500 (155,000)	310,000–930,000 (620,000)
15	120,000–360,000 (240,000)	480,000–1,440,000 (960,000)

* The Average Award for each Circle is shown in parentheses.

FALLING DAMAGE TABLE

Distance Fallen	Damage Step
2–3 yards	5
4–6 yards	10
7–10 yards	15
11–20 yards	(2) 20
21–30 yards	(2) 25
31–50 yards	(3) 25
51–100 yards	(3) 30
101–150 yards	(4) 30
151–200 yards	(4) 35
201+ yards	(5) 35

FIRE DAMAGE TABLE

Size of Fire	Damage Step
Campfire (small)	6 (touch)
Campfire (large)	8 (touch)
House Fire	10
Forest Fire	12
Torch	4 (touch)

CLIMBING DIFFICULTY TABLE

Surface	Difficulty Number
Tree	5
Pole	7
Rocky Cliff	9
Wall	12
Sheer Surface	15

PERCEPTION DIFFICULTY TABLE

Situation	Typical Difficulty Number
Hidden target	Target's Dexterity step
Locate trap	Trap Detection Difficulty
Spot secret doors	8+
Notice clues	5+
Notice anything unusual about surroundings	6

PERCEPTION MODIFIERS TABLE

Environmental Condition	Difficulty Modifier
Sight:	
Dusk/dawn	+2
Darkness:*	
Partial	+1
Full	+2
Complete	+3
Light rain/precipitation	+1
Heavy rain/precipitation	+3
Target concealed:	
Partial	+2
Full	+4
Complete	+6
Target camouflaged, same color as surroundings	+3
Target color contrasts with surroundings	–3
Target uniquely shaped compared to surroundings	–2
Viewer knows what to look for, i.e., has seen specific object or character before	–2
Sound:	
Soft background noise	+1
People talking	+2
Boisterous talk/singing	+3
Loud noises/battle sounds:	
10–20 yards away	+1
21–50 yards away	+2
More than 50 yards away	+4
Sound lower in pitch than background noise	+2
Sound higher in pitch than background noise	–2
Sound has steady rhythm that contrasts with background noise	–2
Listener heard sound before and recognizes it	–2
Listener trying to identify the only audible sound	–3
Smell:	
Obvious odor	–2
Other odors present	+2
Touch:	
Extreme temperature (hot or cold)	–3
Perceiver is wearing gloves	+3
Taste:	
Taste is obvious	–3
Perceiver has a cold	+3
Astral Sensing (see the **Workings of Magic** chapter of the ***Player's Guide***)	Varies

* In addition to any Action Test penalties (see **Situation Modifiers** on p. 226 of the **Combat** chapter of the ***Player's Guide***).

DIFFICULTY NUMBER TABLE

Acting Character	Easy	Average	Hard	Very Hard	Heroic
Ordinary	1–2	3–5	6–9	10–12	13–15
Novice	1–2	3–7	8–12	13–16	17–20
Journeyman	3–6	7–12	13–18	19–22	23–27
Warden	6–8	12–16	18–24	25–29	30–35
Master	8–11	17–20	25–28	29–34	35–41

INTERACTION SUCCESS TABLE

Type of Interaction Test	Result Level
Deceit:	
Exaggeration	Average
Fabrication	Good
Half-Truth	Average
Insight:	
Detect basic emotions	Average
Detect deception	Good
Detect deception when target's features are obscured	Excellent
Intimidation:	
Do nothing	Average
Take action	Good
Make an Impression:	
Improve target's attitude by one level	Average+
Worsen target's attitude by one level	Poor–
Ask for a Favor:	
Refer to the Favor Success Table	Varies

FAVOR SUCCESS TABLE

Target Attitude	Small Favor	Large Favor
Awestruck	Poor	Average
Loyal	Average	Good
Friendly	Good	Excellent
Neutral	Excellent	Extraordinary
Unfriendly	Extraordinary	NA
Hostile	NA	NA
Enemy	NA	NA

VISIBILITY TABLE

Condition	Short Range	Medium Range	Long Range
Daylight	20	200	750
Dawn/Dusk	15	125	500
Light fog	10	75	250
Heavy fog	2	5	10
Light rain/drizzle	15	175	350
Heavy rain	10	50	100
Night with moon	5	60	200
Night with no moon	5	15	30

COMBAT QUICK REFERENCE

COMBAT OPTIONS TABLE

Combat Option*	Effect/Modifier
Aggressive Attack (1 per attack)	+3 bonus to Attack and Damage Tests; –3 penalty to Physical and Spell Defense
Aiming (1 per round)	+2 (1 round) or +3 (2 rounds) bonus to next ranged Attack Test (see text)
Attacking to Knockdown	Possibly knocks opponent down; inflicts no real damage to opponent
Attacking to Stun	Damage Test inflicts Stun damage; Wounded opponent is also Stunned
Called Shot (1)	–3 penalty to Attack Test; if successful, attack hits designated area
Defensive Stance	+3 to Physical and Spell Defense; –3 penalty to all Action Tests (except Knockdown Tests)
Giving Ground (1)	+1 to Physical Defense per yard given (up to maximum of Melee Weapons or Unarmed Combat Rank); –2 penalty to Attack Tests
Going Inside a Shield	Negates opponent's shield bonuses; –2 penalty to Attack Test
Jumping Up (2)	Allows the character to stand up and perform a Standard action; no other movement allowed
Running (1)	Character doubles his Movement Rate, but is Harried
Setting Against a Charge	Allows the character to unhorse a charging opponent
Shattering a Shield (1)	Breaks opponent's shield
Splitting Movement (1)	Allows a move/action/move combination; character is Harried
Tail Attack [t'skrang only]	Allows an additional Unarmed Combat attack (–2 to all Action Tests)
Tail Parry [t'skrang only]	+1 to Physical Defense per –1 to all Action Tests (max. +3 bonus)

* The number shown in parentheses after the combat option is the Strain cost for using that option.

COMBAT ROUNDS

1. Declare Actions (p.214)
2. Determine Initiative (p.214)
3. Resolve Actions (p.215)
4. Begin a New Round (p.215)

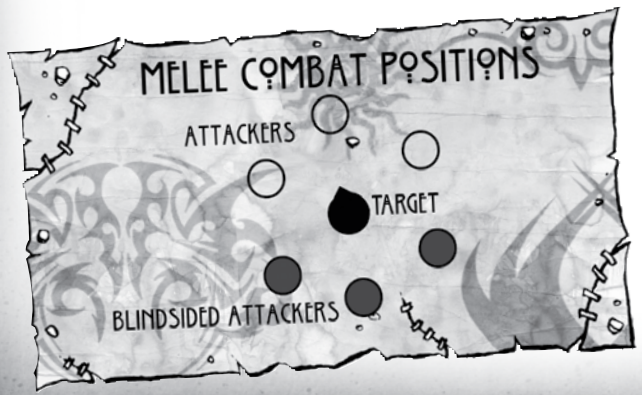
RESOLVING ATTACKS

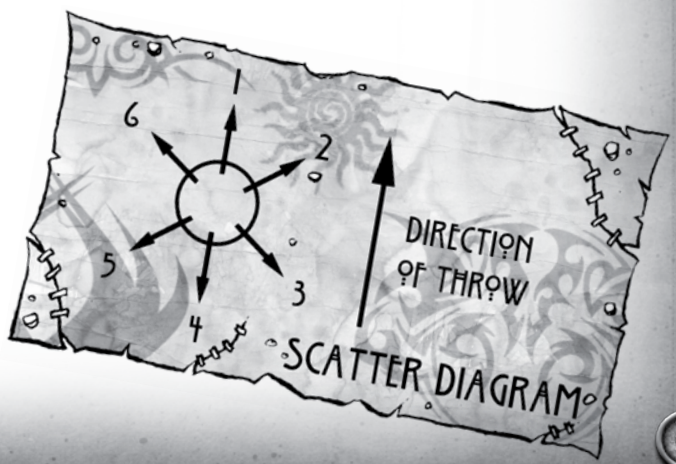
1. Make an Attack Test (p.218)
2. Determine Success (p.218)
3. Make a Damage Test (p.218)
4. Adjust Damage for Armor (p.219)
5. Check for Wounds (p.219)
6. Make a Knockdown Test (p.219)
7. Check for Unconsciousness or Death (p.219)

SITUATION MODIFIERS TABLE

Situation	Action Test Modifier	Defense Modifier*
Blindsided	–	–2
Cover	–	Partial: +2 Full: +4 Complete: NA
Darkness (Blindness; Dazzled)	Partial: –1 Full: –3 Complete: –5	–
Distance	Short: NA Long: –2	–
Harried	–2	–2
Overwhelmed	–3	–3
Impaired Movement	Light: –2 Medium: –3 Hard: –4	–
Knocked Down	–3	–3
Stunned	Simple actions only; Harried (–2)	–2
Surprised	No Action Tests allowed	–3

* Also applies to Social Defense, at the gamemaster's discretion.





RESULT LEVEL TABLE

Difficulty Number	—Result— Pathetic	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	Extraordinary
2	*	1	2–4	5–6	7–8	9+
3	*	1–2	3–5	6–7	8–9	10+
4	*	1–3	4–6	7–9	10–11	12+
5	1	2–4	5–7	8–10	11–13	14+
6	1	2–5	6–8	9–12	13–16	17+
7	1–2	3–6	7–10	11–14	15–18	19+
8	1–3	4–7	8–12	13–15	16–19	20+
9	1–4	5–8	9–14	15–17	18–21	22+
10	1–5	6–9	10–15	16–19	20–22	24+
11	1–5	6–10	11–16	17–20	21–24	25+
12	1–6	7–11	12–17	18–22	23–26	27+
13	1–6	7–12	13–19	20–24	25–28	29+
14	1–7	8–13	14–20	21–25	26–30	31+
15	1–8	9–14	15–22	23–26	27–30	31+
16	1–9	10–15	16–23	24–27	28–32	33+
17	1–10	11–16	17–24	25–29	30–33	34+
18	1–11	12–17	18–25	26–30	31–35	36+
19	1–11	12–18	19–27	28–32	33–36	37+
20	1–12	13–19	20–28	29–33	34–38	39+
21	1–13	14–20	21–29	30–35	36–40	41+
22	1–14	15–21	22–30	31–36	37–41	42+
23	1–15	16–22	23–32	33–37	38–42	43+
24	1–15	16–23	24–33	34–38	39–43	44+
25	1–16	17–24	25–34	35–40	41–45	46+
26	1–17	18–25	26–35	36–41	42–46	47+
27	1–18	19–26	27–36	37–42	43–48	49+
28	1–18	19–27	28–38	39–44	45–49	50+
29	1–20	21–28	29–39	40–45	46–50	51+
30	1–20	21–29	30–40	41–46	47–52	53+
31	1–21	22–30	31–41	42–47	48–53	54+
32	1–22	23–31	32–42	43–48	49–54	55+
33	1–23	24–32	33–44	45–50	51–56	57+
34	1–23	24–33	34–45	46–51	52–57	58+
35	1–24	25–34	35–46	47–52	53–59	60+
36	1–25	26–35	36–47	48–53	54–59	60+
37	1–26	27–36	37–48	49–55	56–61	62+
38	1–27	28–37	38–50	51–56	57–62	63+
39	1–28	29–38	39–51	52–57	58–63	64+
40	1–29	30–39	40–52	53–58	59–65	66+

*No such thing as a Pathetic result for this Difficulty Number, except if the **Rule of One** (see the ***Player's Guide***, p.15), is being used.

STEP/ACTION DICE TABLE

Step Number	Action Dice
4	D6
5	D8
6	D10
7	D12
8	2D6
9	D8+D6
10	2D8
11	D10+D8
12	2D10
13	D12+D10
14	2D12
15	D12+2D6
16	D12+D8+D6
17	D12+2D8
18	D12+D10+D8
19	D12+2D10
20	2D12+D10
21	3D12
22	2D12+2D6
23	2D12+D8+D6
24	2D12+2D8
25	2D12+D10+D8
26	2D12+2D10
27	3D12+D10
28	4D12
29	3D12+2D6
30	3D12+D8+D6
31	3D12+2D8
32	3D12+D10+D8
33	3D12+2D10
34	4D12+D10
35	5D12
36	4D12+2D6
37	4D12+D8+D6
38	4D12+2D8
39	4D12+D10+D8
40	4D12+2D10

STEPS 1, 2, AND 3

Step Number	Action Dice
1	D6–3
2	D6–2
3	D6–1

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ADVENTURE: _____

CAMPAIGN DATE: _____

GROUP NAME: _____

GROUP MEMBERS

CHARACTER NAME	DISCIPLINE (CIRCLE)	HAS PLAYED?	TOTAL LEGEND AWARD
		☐	
		☐	
		☐	
		☐	
		☐	
		☐	
		☐	

ADVENTURING LOG

WRITTEN BY: _____

ADVENTURING LOG

NOTABLE GAMEMASTER CHARACTERS

CHARACTER NAME	RACE / OCCUPATION	NOTES

CHARACTER NAME	RACE / OCCUPATION	NOTES

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Canal
Topos
Elf Queens Palace
the Blood Wood
MOTHINGALE RIVER
Scol Mountains
SERPENT RIVER
Eidolon
SERPENT RIVER
Scytha Mountains
Caucavic Mountains
CAUCAVIC RIVER
Haven
Parlainth
BARSAIVE PROVINCE
Major City
City
Town or Village
Place of Importance
Seven days walking
Four days riding
Throal Mountains
Marrek
ONMAN RIVER
Barter town
Throal
Syrtis
ALIDAR RIVER
Cansiarda
Ardanyan
COIL RIVER
Old Theran Road
Pilgrimage Route
Darrantis
Derlikiyan
Vorst
Lake Ban
Adipae Rapids
Triumph Ayodhya
Vastrimon
Axalalan
Lake Pyros
Servalen
Urupa
Aras Sea
Axalekso
Glenwood Deep
Lake Vors
Ishkarat
the Wastes
Poison Forest
Jerris
Liaj Jungle
LIAJ RIVER
Delaris Mountains
Tylon Mountains
Kratas
Daiche
TYLON RIVER
SERVOS RIVER
Servos Jungle
GALANGA RIVER
Ustrect
Claw Ridge
Twilight Peaks
Scavia
Mist Swamps
Crosk
SERPENT RIVER
Farrum
Ktenshin
BYROSE RIVER
IONTOS RIVER
Travar
Thunder Mountains
Cara Fahd
Scarlet Sea
the Badlands
GREENHEART RIVER
Landis
FLAMEWALK RIVER
Vivane
Sky Point
Lankarden
Death's Sea
Dragon Mountains
N
W
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