

EARTHDAWN THIRD EDITION

# SHARDS

COLLECTION VOLUME TWO



AN EARTHDAWN ADVENTURE COLLECTION







• THIRD EDITION •  
**SHARDS COLLECTION**  
**VOLUME TWO**

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**Dedication:** To the authors of the original **Shards**, thank you for letting us visit Earthdawn through your eyes. And, as always, our heartfelt thanks to our families, friends, and loyal Earthdawn fans everywhere for your ongoing support.

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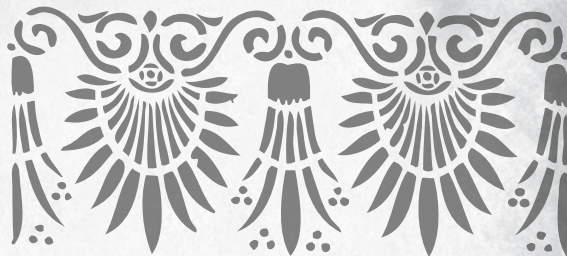
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## SHARDS COLLECTION VOLUME TWO





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*Where is more important than when at this stage. Why is everyone looking at where to place this in the grand scheme of things when they can't even tell history from legend?*

• MERROX, MASTER OF THE HALL OF RECORDS •

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# THE FLAMES OF AVARICE

*Fire consumes without mercy. Ever hungry, the more the flames destroy the larger and more powerful the fire becomes. The larger it becomes, the more it needs, and in turn the more it destroys. In that way, fire is the epitome of endless, insatiable greed.*

• GANDALAR, HUMAN NETHERMANCER •

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**T**he Flames of Avarice is an adventure scenario designed for three to five Novice adepts of any Discipline. In this adventure, the characters stumble upon a massacre at an isolated roadside inn and get swept up in the defense of the survivors. After fending off a brutal assault from the highway brigands, the players venture to the attackers' isolated lair along the shattered shore of Death's Sea, and there unearth an ancient secret.

## RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

**T**he *Flames of Avarice* is presented as a series of events. Each is described for the gamemaster, who should use the information given to run each section. There is little text to be read aloud to the players, meaning the gamemaster must describe many of the scenes to the characters as he sees fit. Where possible the text describes the terrain and areas the characters encounter, but much of the detail is left to the gamemaster to devise.

Each encounter contains four sections: **Setting the Stage** contains a narrative description that the gamemaster reads aloud to the players, **Themes and Images** helps the gamemaster set the mood and pacing for a particular encounter, and **Behind the Scenes** explains what is really going on in each encounter. The final section of each encounter, **Troubleshooting**, offers suggestions to help the gamemaster get the adventure back on track should things go awry.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The newly found nation of Cara Fahd has drawn many orks to its banner. Not all who heeded Krathis Gron's call have been honorable, however. One band of raiders—known as the Tears of the Dead and some 50 strong—headed south, lured by the promise of a new ork realm. When they finally arrived, they were shocked to find not a powerful coalition of orks who were ready to raid and burn their way across all of Barsaive, but instead a meek nation struggling to share its food and water equally among even the old, sick, and wounded. Finding themselves at odds with Gron's policies, the Tears of the Dead began to sow discord, attempting to fire up their fellow orks' *gahad* and bloodlust, encouraging them to dismiss Krathis Gron's idealistic nonsense and wage a raiding war against their neighbors for loot and plunder.

But Krathis Gron is not to be challenged. After a bloody confrontation, the Tears of the Dead were forced to flee Cara Fahd, only half of them remaining. They wandered for a time in the lands between

the Scarlet Sea and the Twilight Peaks, raiding stray travelers and overland shipments headed to and from Scavia.

One day nearly 30 days ago, the hunters suddenly became the hunted, as a drakkar filled with sky raiders fell upon them like angry raptors, further diminishing their numbers and sending the survivors fleeing to the South. They found themselves in a scattering of small woods that ran all the way up to the edge of the Scarlet Sea, the brown-leaved trees and dry brush surviving only because they stretched out along the top of a 100-foot-cliff, shielding them somewhat from the harsh waves of heat constantly flowing off the sea of lava that swirled and churned far below.

It was not long before the group's leader, Gorthrash the Grim, discovered a ledge protruding a ways down the cliff face, leading to a forgotten pre-Scourge fortress. Gorthrash, a Nethermancer adept, was able to overcome the flock of shadowmants calling the entrance home, and soon discovered that the fortress had once belonged to a powerful Elementalist. Convinced that the interior of the fortress holds the secrets to unimaginable power but unable to solve the riddle that would allow him to pass beyond the outer ward, Gorthrash sent a few of his men to a nearby roadside inn to secure provisions. He would need time.

Three of the raiders burst into the Silent Wayside, a roadside inn an hour to the north, demanding food, ale, water, and silver. Unfortunately, a group of would-be heroes were in the inn and decided to stop the orks. Two of the adventurers were killed and the inn's proprietor gravely wounded, but they managed to drive the orks away. The orks vowed they would return, however, and in greater numbers.

Moments after the orks are away, the player characters arrive in search of a warm meal and dry bed, only to find an inn soon to be under siege.

## PLOT SYNOPSIS

The adventure begins when the player characters enter the Silent Wayside, a roadside inn an hour north of the Scarlet Sea. Upon discovering the grisly scene, they quickly learn that an attack by ork scorchers upon the helpless patrons is imminent. After thwarting the attack, the characters learn of the location of the orks' base, where they subsequently defeat Gorthrash and the rest of his band.

If the characters can solve the riddle that awaits them, they are awarded the Elementalist's staff, which can be used as a hook for an ongoing campaign.



## THE VAGARIES OF TRAVEL

**I**n this encounter the characters arrive at the Silent Wayside and are asked to help defend its inhabitants from the merciless orks, who vowed to return.

### SETTING THE STAGE

When the characters enter the inn, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

*"Rather than the gentle din of cutlery mingled with the sounds of a dozen simultaneous conversations, a scream heralds your entrance into the roadside inn. Startled, you gaze about in transfixed horror at the sight of overturned benches and tables, smashed mugs, pools of blood, and several bodies. Gathered around the bar stand four Namegivers: two human males, a human female, and a dwarf male. Lying on the bar in front of them is a fifth Namegiver, an older human male, a feathered crossbow bolt planted deep in his belly.*

*"The patrons gaze upon you in unmistakable terror. Finally the woman says in a trembling voice, 'Please don't kill us... they've gone... you can have whatever you want!'"*

### THEMES AND IMAGES

Once the characters have entered the inn, the survivors mistake them for the bringers of the promised retribution. The realization of impending danger should raise a certain tension, especially as the force of the enemy is unknown to them. As adepts and heroes, the player characters aren't expected to run, but to prepare for another attack instead.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

The Silent Wayside has just been attacked by three ork scorchers who had been sent by Gorthrash to secure food and provisions. When a group of overzealous adventures decided to display misguided heroics, the simple extortion gig turned quickly into a bloodbath as the three enraged orks began to slaughter anyone and everyone who stood in their way. In the end, two of the four would-be heroes were killed, but the remaining two managed to drive off the three orks, who screamed bloody vengeance as they vanished on their mounts to the South. That was half an hour ago.

Among the dead are five patrons, though it is impossible to quickly discern that number, since the severed limbs, cleaved faces, and spilled entrails give the illusion of far more. The adventurers (not wishing to face even more ferocious ork scorchers) fled with their fallen comrades soon after the battle.

### A Plea for Help

Provided the characters do not enthusiastically adopt the role of raiders themselves, the patrons quickly beseech them for help, recounting the harrowing ordeal and begging the characters to not abandon them to their fate. The nearest village is a day's walk away, so any ideas of fleeing are fiercely countered with fears of being caught on the open plain by the mounted raiders.

The patrons do not know how long until the orks will return, but they all assume it will be at any moment. If the characters choose to flee they will survive (as the orks only are interested in plunder and revenge, not chasing after people), though the patrons will be slaughtered to a man.

## THE SURVIVORS

The survivors are Josar the dwarf (for stats, use dwarf merchant, *Gamemaster's Companion* p.85), who currently suffers 7 points of damage from a jagged cut across his brow; Jassimar, human male (for stats, use the human cult member, *Gamemaster's Companion* p.84); Frasyne, human male (for stats, use the human cult member, *Gamemaster's Companion*, p.84), who currently suffers from 11 points of damage from a cut to his left thigh and another to his right forearm; Shahiva, the proprietor's wife (for stats, use the human tavern owner, *Gamemaster's Companion*, p.89); and Mayneth, the proprietor (for stats, use the human tavern owner, *Gamemaster's Companion*, p.89), who currently suffers 12 points of damage from a crossbow bolt in his belly. In addition, he is slowly bleeding to death (see the rules for bleeding on p.222 of the *Player's Guide*). His wife is applying pressure to the wound, slowing the bleeding to 2 Damage Points every minute.

If the players decide to stay, the characters have just under two hours before the orks arrive (at that point, refer to **The Attack**, below).

### The Silent Wayside Inn

The Silent Wayside is an isolated three-building compound. The main building is a simple two-story inn. The lower floor is divided into three sections: the common room, the storage (located behind the bar), and the kitchen. The second floor is bisected by a single hallway lined by 10 rooms (five on each side). Windows at either end of the hall and in each room provide a view to all four sides of the building. The main door faces south, and a second door faces to the East leading from the kitchen. On the first floor there are two large windows, both located in the common room: one on the south wall next to the door, and one on the east wall.

The second building is the barn, lying approximately 10 yards to the West of the inn. It currently holds four riding horses. The third building is north of the inn, and is a simple privy containing a bench with four holes cut along the top.

If armed with ranged weapons (of which they currently have none), the patrons agree to position themselves on the inn's second floor to fire out the windows, but they do not suggest this course of action themselves. The exception to this is Shahiva who, unless her husband is dead or has been healed, remains by his side at all times.

### The Attack

Approximately two hours after the characters arrive at the inn, the orks arrive from the South and attack. There are two orks for every player character (for stats, use the ork scorchers from page 87 of the *Gamemaster's Companion*, but give them medium crossbows and 10 bolts each instead of spears, and replace the Throwing Weapons skill with the Missile Weapons skill). Each rides a mount (war horse, *Gamemaster's Guide*, p.179). The orks are expecting resistance and so approach with weapons drawn and a plan in mind. Two of them remain outside, mounted, to watch over the others' mounts, to fire off their crossbows at any heads appearing in any of the windows, and to run down anyone who tries to flee.





## The Silent Wayside Inn

The remaining orks attempt to rush inside and kill everything and everyone they come across. If the door is barred, they spread out, surrounding the building and attempting entry in multiple areas, even climbing up to a second floor window if they must. The orks do not burn the inn, because they need the provisions. However, if the player characters go upstairs and abandon the downstairs area, the orks take what they need from the storage room and then set the inn on fire, sticking around to run down anyone who manages to escape the angry flames.

The orks retreat only if their number is reduced to two or less. In this case, the surviving orks hop on their mounts and flee back to the South to tell Gorthrash and the others what happened.

The players might think to try and bluff the invaders when they arrive, but the orks waste no time with words. They do not care who the characters are—everyone in the inn, no matter who they are, is subject to the orks' wrath.

If the characters are captured, the orks, realizing their prisoners are adepts, decide to take them before Gorthrash, in case they have arcane secrets their Nethermancer leader might be able to rip from them (if this happens, skip to **Of Riddles and Shadow**, p. 9).

### Our Heroes!

After the battle, if any of the patrons survived, the characters are given de facto leadership as the survivors look to them for guidance and protection. One of the dead orks (chosen by the gamemaster) holds a map of the surrounding area, showing the Silent Wayside and Avanthus' Retreat, though the latter is not marked as such. Instead, it is marked simply as "base."

If none of the characters think to do so themselves, have one of the survivors (if there are any) suggest that the group go to the ork

base to ensure the raiders will not be back. If the characters refuse, have Mayneth offer them a reward of 200 silver each to "guarantee the future safety of the inn and surrounding countryside."

## TROUBLESHOOTING

If the player characters don't fight (or even run from the encounter), they won't find the map. In this case, the gamemaster might want to harass them again further down the road, by having the band of orks attack and plunder them as well.

## MAGMA CAVES

**I**n this encounter the characters arrive at the area marked "base" on the procured map. After overcoming a starving crak-bill and enraged firebird, the characters discover the long-lost retreat of Avanthus Emberheart, recently turned scorcher base.

## SETTING THE STAGE

When the characters approach the woods, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

*"A small but dense wall of trees and dry brush divide the flat plains and the Scarlet Sea beyond. The vegetation, starved for water, displays a sickly brown face, struggling as it does to survive this close to the blasting furnace of Death's prison."*



## THEMES AND IMAGES

Emphasize the jaw-dropping surroundings of the Scarlet Sea coast, playing upon a sense of exploration, wonder, and danger: the ruddy gloom of the burning sea is everywhere, as are steep cliffs and the heat. The player characters should explore this area cautiously, realizing that they might run into a hostile band of ork scorchers at any time.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The orks' base is a place well defended by natural obstacles, dangerous creatures, and finally the orks themselves. To the characters, it may seem that this is all they must overcome to resolve the adventure, but there are unexpected wonders to be found inside the fortress...

### Crakbill Attack

Shortly after the characters enter the woods, they are stalked by a starving crakbill (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p.164), who soon attacks. If the characters were captured and arrive as bound prisoners, have the crakbill attack the ork scorchers, giving the characters an opportunity to escape their restraints. Starving, the crakbill fights to the death.

### CRAKBILL

#### Attributes

DEX: 5      STR: 7      TOU: 5  
PER: 2      WIL: 7      CHA: 3

#### Characteristics

Initiative: 5	Physical Defense: 7
Actions: 1	Spell Defense: 5
Attack (2): 7	Social Defense: 6
Damage:	Physical Armor: 3
Bite (2): 9	Mystic Armor: 4
Death: 31	Recovery Tests: 2
Unconsciousness: 22	Knockdown: 7
Wound Threshold: 8	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.

### Descent into Steel and Flame

Near the edge of the cliff that plunges 100 feet down to the burning sea below, the characters find a makeshift stable for the orks' mounts constructed from tree limbs and branches. If any of the orks escaped the fight at the inn, their mounts are here. Otherwise it is empty.

In addition, players find a single thick rope tied to the base of a sturdy tree. The other end of the rope vanishes over the rim, dangling 50 feet down to a small ledge that pokes out from the cliff face.

## DANGERS OF THE SCARLET SEA

The game rules given for travel and survival in and around the Scarlet Sea also apply to nearby Death's Sea.

### Travel Near Scarlet Sea

High cliffs and rock formations that contain paths leading down to the fiery shoreline ring both Death's Sea and the Scarlet Sea. Characters who travel down these paths must contend with the Seas' intense heat, as well as creatures that dwell in and near the Seas.

The heat of the Scarlet Sea makes characters traveling near it more susceptible to Fatigue (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 122). Such travelers may even risk burns or heat stroke if exposed to the heat for prolonged periods of time. When traveling within two hundred yards of the Scarlet Sea, characters suffer a -1 penalty when making Fatigue Tests (the penalty is cumulative with any Initiative Penalty of armor worn). For example, a character wearing crystal ringlet armor would suffer a -3 penalty to his Fatigue Tests (-1 for the heat, and -2 for the armor). Traveling within 50 yards of the sea increases the penalty to -2.

Furthermore, any character within 50 yards of the Scarlet Sea must make a Toughness (6) Test every 2 hours to resist the heat. If the test fails, the character suffers from either heat stroke or a severe burn, at the gamemaster's discretion (see p. 118 and p. 121 of the *Gamemaster's Guide* for game effects for both of these injuries).

### Scaling the Cliffs

Climbing the paths along the seashore cliffs requires Climbing or Dexterity (4) Tests, though the more treacherous paths may raise the Difficulty Number to 7 or even 9. If such a test fails, the character stumbles and falls toward the burning lava. The player character may then attempt to grab hold of something by making a Dexterity or Strength Test against the same Difficulty Number as the Climbing Test. If this second test fails, the character falls to his doom.

The boiling magma inflicts Step 40 damage on any character who falls into it, and again for each Combat Round that he remains immersed plus 5 Combat Rounds after he gets out. No armor protects against this damage. The character loses everything he is carrying or wearing, and the magma vaporizes him in seconds. (Technically, a character can survive this experience, but very few characters can stand such massive damage.)

Occasionally, the magma pops and bubbles, sending spurts into the air that can strike nearby characters. When this happens, the gamemaster makes a Step 4 Spurt Test, comparing the result to the Physical Defense of any character within 10 yards (5 hexes) of the spurt. If the Test Result equals or exceeds a character's Physical Defense, the magma hits that character, and he suffers Step 40 damage for 3 rounds. Characters can avoid the spurt by making a successful Avoid Blow Test against the Spurt Attack Test (consider this to be a ranged combat attack).

Note that dying by falling into molten stone or at the hands of a random magma spurt may seem arbitrary to many players, so gamemasters should carefully consider the consequences before inflicting either fate on player characters.



Scaling the cliff requires a successful Climbing (9) Test. Characters using the rope are granted a +4 bonus. When the first player character makes it 25 feet down, a firebird (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 169) swoops up from below and attacks. When Gorthrash and his men first arrived on the ledge, they cleared the firebird's nest—along with its eggs—by dumping them unceremoniously over the edge, down into the lava. The firebird, who has been out hunting, has finally returned. When it sees that its eggs and nest are missing, it flies into a rage and attempts to kill the player characters. If its Current Damage is brought close to its Unconsciousness Rating or if it suffers 3 Wounds, its sense of self preservation overwhelms its sense of vengeance, and it flees.

A character suffering a knockdown falls from his perch (be sure to review the rules for climbing in the *Gamemaster's Guide*, p.108). Characters climbing down the rope fall onto the ledge, but there is a chance they bounce off the edge and down into the Scarlet Sea unless they make a successful Dexterity or Strength (9) Test. Characters not climbing down the rope risk falling past the ledge into the hungry lake of fire below. See the **Dangers of the Scarlet Sea** sidebar for more information.

## Spanning Death

The ledge, which is roughly 4 by 4 yards (2 by 2 hexes), sits at the opening of a narrow cave entrance, about four feet wide and eight feet tall. The slender cave snakes its way approximately 40 yards sloping steeply downward, widening at some points to just over five feet and narrowing to only three in others. Roughly halfway down the claustrophobic trek lies a crudely designed Blade Trap (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p.111), set up by the orks in the unlikely case of intruders.

The cave finally opens into an immense cavern bisected by a 60-yard-wide chasm that falls sharply several hundred feet to a river of lava. A rope bridge spans the gulf, surviving the centuries due to the trace amounts of True earth woven within it. This gives the rope a Physical Armor Rating of 7 and a Death Rating of 50. In addition, the rope is fire resistant.

The ceiling stretches away to nearly 150 feet. Stalagmites line the edge like stony spears, flanking to either side of the rope bridge and rising to nearly 12 feet. Perched on the far end of the rope bridge sits the retreat of Avanthus Emberheart, which was once home to a powerful Elementalalist who reigned over the region in the years just before the Scourge. If any of the orks managed to escape the attack on the inn, they are perched at the far end of the rope bridge, loaded crossbows in hand. If the characters attempt to cross, a swarm of shadowmants (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p.198) descends from the shadowed ceiling and attacks.

If none of the orks made it back from the inn, then Gorthrash and his remaining men are unaware of the possibility of the characters' arrival and do not exit the retreat until after a battle begins with the shadowmants. The orks do their best to prevent the player characters from being able to get across the bridge.

## SHADOWMANTS (1 PER CHARACTER)

Attributes		
DEX: 5	STR: 5	TOU: 6
PER: 4	WIL: 5	CHA: 4
Characteristics		
Initiative: 7	Physical Defense: 7	
Actions: 1	Spell Defense: 6	
Attack (2): 7	Social Defense: 7	
Damage:	Physical Armor: 4	
Stinger (2): 7 (poison)	Mystic Armor: 0	
Death: 35	Recovery Tests: 2	
Unconsciousness: 27	Knockdown: 5	
Wound Threshold: 9	Movement: 8*	

\* This value is the creature's flying Movement Rate

### Legend Award

Second Circle

### 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.

## Of Riddles and Shadow

Beyond the bridge, Avanthus' Retreat stands silent and imposing, its entranceway doorless and leading into a vast circular room that no one has been beyond since before the Scourge. If the characters managed to get this far without somehow alerting the orks to their presence, Gorthrash and his remaining raiders are here when the characters arrive. There is one ork for every character, plus Gorthrash. For the orks, use the stats of the ork scorchers from p. 87 of the *Gamemaster's Companion*, but give them medium crossbows and 10 bolts each instead of spears and replace the Throwing Weapons skill with the Missile Weapons skill.

## GORTHRASH THE GRIM

### Attributes

DEX (13): 6      STR (16): 7      TOU (14): 6  
PER (16): 7      WIL (13): 6      CHA (12): 5

### Characteristics

Initiative: 6      Physical Defense: 8  
Physical Armor: 4      Spell Defense: 10  
Mystic Armor: 1      Social Defense: 7  
Death: 52      Recovery Tests: 3  
Unconsciousness: 40      Knockdown: 7  
Wound Threshold: 10      Movement: 6  
Karma Points: 20/20

### Nethermancer Talents

Astral Sight<sup>D</sup> (4): 11  
Durability (4/3) (4): 4  
Frighten<sup>D</sup> (4): 10  
Karma Ritual<sup>D</sup> (4): 4  
Read/Write Magic<sup>D</sup> (4): 11  
Spellcasting<sup>D</sup> (5): 12  
Spell Matrix<sup>D</sup> (4): 4  
Spell Matrix (4): 4  
Spell Matrix (4): 4  
Spell Matrix (4): 4  
Spirit Hold<sup>D</sup> (4): 10  
Spirit Talk<sup>D</sup> (4): 11  
Thread Weaving (Nethermancy)<sup>D</sup> (4): 11  
<sup>D</sup> Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)  
Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

### Warrior Talents

Anticipate Blow<sup>D</sup> (2): 9  
Avoid Blow<sup>D</sup> (2): 8  
Climbing (2): 8  
Melee Weapons<sup>D</sup> (2): 8  
Missile Weapons (2): 8  
Unarmed Combat<sup>D</sup> (2): 8  
Wood Skin<sup>D</sup> (2): 8  
<sup>D</sup> Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)  
Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

### Skills

Animal Bond (4): 9  
Animal Handling (2): 8  
Animal Training (2): 7  
Charge (2): 9



Read/Write Language (2): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, Or'zet)

Robe Embroidery<sup>A</sup> (2): 7

Speak Language (2): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, Or'zet)

Tears of the Dead Group<sup>K</sup> (2): 9

Trick Riding (2): 8

<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

#### Nethermancy Spells

Arrow of Night<sup>M</sup>, Astral Spear, Chilling Circle, Command Nightflyer<sup>M</sup>, Dark Spy,

Insect Repellant, Mount Scare, Repel Animal<sup>M</sup>, Spirit Dart<sup>M</sup>, Spirit Grip

<sup>M</sup> Denotes spell in Spell Matrix

#### Armor

Padded Leather (Phys 4)

#### Weapons

Broadsword (Damage 12), Dagger (Damage 9; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes),

Medium Crossbow (Damage 12; Range 40–80 yards/20–40 hexes),

Quiver (10 medium crossbow bolts)

#### Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, 2 Booster Potions, Climbing Kit, Embroidery Tools, Grimoire, 2 Trail Rations (2 weeks), Water Skin, War Horse (combat trained, tack and harness, large saddlebag)

#### Loot

70 silver pieces

#### Legend Award

Fourth Circle

#### Notes

As an ork, Gorthrash possesses the *Gahad* and Low-Light Vision racial abilities.

#### Nethermancer Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Spell Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests

#### Warrior Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

#### Commentary

Gorthrash the Grim is an ork Fourth Circle Nethermancer and Second Circle Warrior.

#### Overall Legend Award

For simplicity, the gamemaster can consider Gorthrash and the orks to be a Third Circle (Group) encounter. For simplicity, the gamemaster can consider Gorthrash, the orks, and the shadowmants to be a Fourth Circle (Group) encounter.

## Bronze Doors

The room is approximately 16 yards (8 hexes) in diameter with a large door of bronze dominating the far wall directly across from the entrance. The burning orange light shed from the river of lava in the chasm outside creates a fixed light source, which causes the bronze to flare brilliantly. Fire-themed images crawl across the walls. Many are faded and chipped with time, though many of the likenesses can still be made out: magma beasts, firebirds, and creatures made of swirling flames.

Gorthrash has spent the last several days in this room, attempting to solve the riddle etched into the highly polished surface of the door. Evidence of several orks sleeping in here—bedrolls, camping gear, and so on—lies scattered about the room. The riddle provides a clue as to how to get past the door. It is written in *Sperethiel* and reads as follows:

*I can be larger than a man or smaller than an ant, and yet I always weigh the same. Spawned by fire, I am neither hot nor cold. What am I?*

As an immortal, Avanthus wrote the riddle to remind himself how to open the door should he ever forget. The answer itself is the clue: a shadow. If the players correctly guess, they must still discern how it applies to opening the bronze door.

In order to enter through the door, someone must stand at just the right spot in the room to cause his shadow to be cast over the door, covering it completely. In order to do this, the person must stand close to the portal leading out to the rope bridge, blocking a large portion of the fixed light that spills through. Doing so causes the character's shadow to run across the floor and up the opposite wall, over the door. If a person allows his shadow to cover the bronze door for 30 consecutive seconds, it opens.

The retreat itself was looted of all valuables by a group known as the Triad Mages (see **Campaign Ideas**, p. 12), who defeated Avanthus just before the start of the Scourge. However, the Triad Mages left Avanthus' fire staff, as it is the key to his eternal imprisonment.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

Since it is not imperative that the characters enter Avanthus' Retreat in order to complete the adventure, do not let them do so unless they figure it out completely. After all, there is a reason why no one has set foot inside Avanthus' Retreat in hundreds of years!

## AVANTHUS' RETREAT

**I**n this encounter the characters must overcome deadly traps and an ancient guardian to retrieve the Staff of Avanthus.

## SETTING THE STAGE

When the characters enter the retreat, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

*"The bronze doors open into a large hall filled with darkness. The place, which appears to have been an awe-inspiring foyer, looks abandoned and has collected the dust of many centuries. An eerie silence goes with the darkness, creating an uneasy feeling. Has this place been hidden throughout the Scourge without protection against the Horrors?"*

## THEMES AND IMAGES

Though long pillaged of its wealth, Avanthus' Retreat is still the very image of power and splendor. Marble pillars are carved into the shape of dragons, reliefs displaying a lordly figure (Avanthus) commanding legions of fiery beasts crawl across the tall walls, and the floors display stunning and intricate patterns. Everything about the fortress should point to self-aggrandizement and megalomania.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The retreat of Avanthus is but one of many he had scattered across the lands he called home. This particular one, due to its proximity to the Scarlet Sea, was one dedicated to magical research and the furthering of his elemental powers. The tower rises three stories, embedded deep in the rock of the magma cave, and remains at a constant temperature that most find mildly uncomfortable.

### Entrance

The room immediately beyond the bronze doors was once a foyer but now is a room designed for death. Fearing someone might one day make it beyond the enchanted bronze doors, the Triad Mages created traps meant to dissuade any would-be treasure hunters from going any further.

The room is rectangular in shape, approximately 10 yards wide and 14 yards long. The marble floor is designed like a dark red and





dark green checker board, each square approximately 1 by 1 yard in shape. For the first 7 yards, each green square is actually a Mantrap (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p.111; these traps only do Step 10/2d8 damage); for the second 7 yards, the green squares are normal, and the red squares are Mantraps.

A single doorway lies at the far end of the room.

### Up or Down

The small room beyond the doorway presents a choice to the player characters. Directly ahead of them, a sloped floor leads down into darkness, while a spiral staircase on their right leads to the second and third floors of the fortress.

### Second Floor

The second floor is nothing more than an immense circular room with arrow slits overlooking the rope bridge in the Magma Cave. The walls present the story of Avanthus, up to the time when he received the shard heart from the dragon, Dread Talon (see *Campaign Ideas*, p. 12). Once the characters have Avanthus' Name, they can attempt a Legends (8) Test to recall the rest of the legend regarding his feud with the Triad Mages and his subsequent defeat (though how it ties into the Staff of Avanthus should not be revealed to them).

However, the story and images carved into the room's walls was enchanted by the Triad Mages. Anyone reading or viewing them must make a Willpower (12) Test immediately afterwards, to avoid having his memory erased up to the point just before he began reading. This causes a loop effect, as the character then starts to read again, believing that he had just begun. A person thus affected can make an attempt to break the effect once every 6 hours. Continual failures result in the character reading the passage over and over and over until eventually dying of dehydration.

A bystander can break the cycle by physically getting the character's attention, but the affected character is unable to remember what he just read until he makes a successful Willpower Test. Note that a character cannot write down what he has read either, unless he writes as he reads, since the spell takes effect as soon as he stops reading, even for a moment.

### Third Floor

The third floor once housed Avanthus' servants and retainers. There is now nothing more than a dozen empty rooms.

### Treasure Room

The sloped floor leading down runs for nearly 30 yards before opening into a square room approximately 10 by 10 yards. Stacked high and covering nearly every step of the room lie shattered and overturned chests. The Triad Mages looted all of Avanthus' considerable wealth, transporting it by magic and leaving the chests here, which now lie scattered in mountainous heaps.

The far end of the room conceals a secret door, which can be found with a Perception (11) Test.

### The Staff of Avanthus

The secret door slides open to reveal another sloped floor, which gradually descends for 20 yards before the walls fall away, and the floor becomes a narrow, 1-yard-wide bridge spanning a bubbling lake of magma 15 yards below. The bridge continues to descend to a wide, stony pillar that rises from the fiery lake, broadening into a 10-yard-diameter platform, a mere 4 yards above the magma. Hanging motionless five feet above the center of the platform is the Staff of Avanthus: a vibrant reddish-orange wooden staff shined to a bright polish.



If someone touches the staff, a magma spirit (use a Rating 4 fire spirit, *Gamemaster's Guide*, p.220) rises from the waist up, forming from the magma, and attacks.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

The player characters may be unable to find and collect the Staff of Avanthus. Recovering the staff is not the goal of this adventure, but the gamemaster may feel like granting the players a suitable reward. If the players don't look for secret doors at all, the gamemaster may show them an opened one leading into a dead end in a similar location—simply to provide a hint that the retreat holds more secrets to uncover. Alternatively, the player characters may be able to spot the staff in the distance from the rope bridge (it might have been hidden once, but a rock wall between the bridge and the staff collapsed into the magma in the meanwhile). In this case, the player characters can just see it but prove unable to retrieve it due to the strong heat and/or other obstacles.

## AFTERMATH

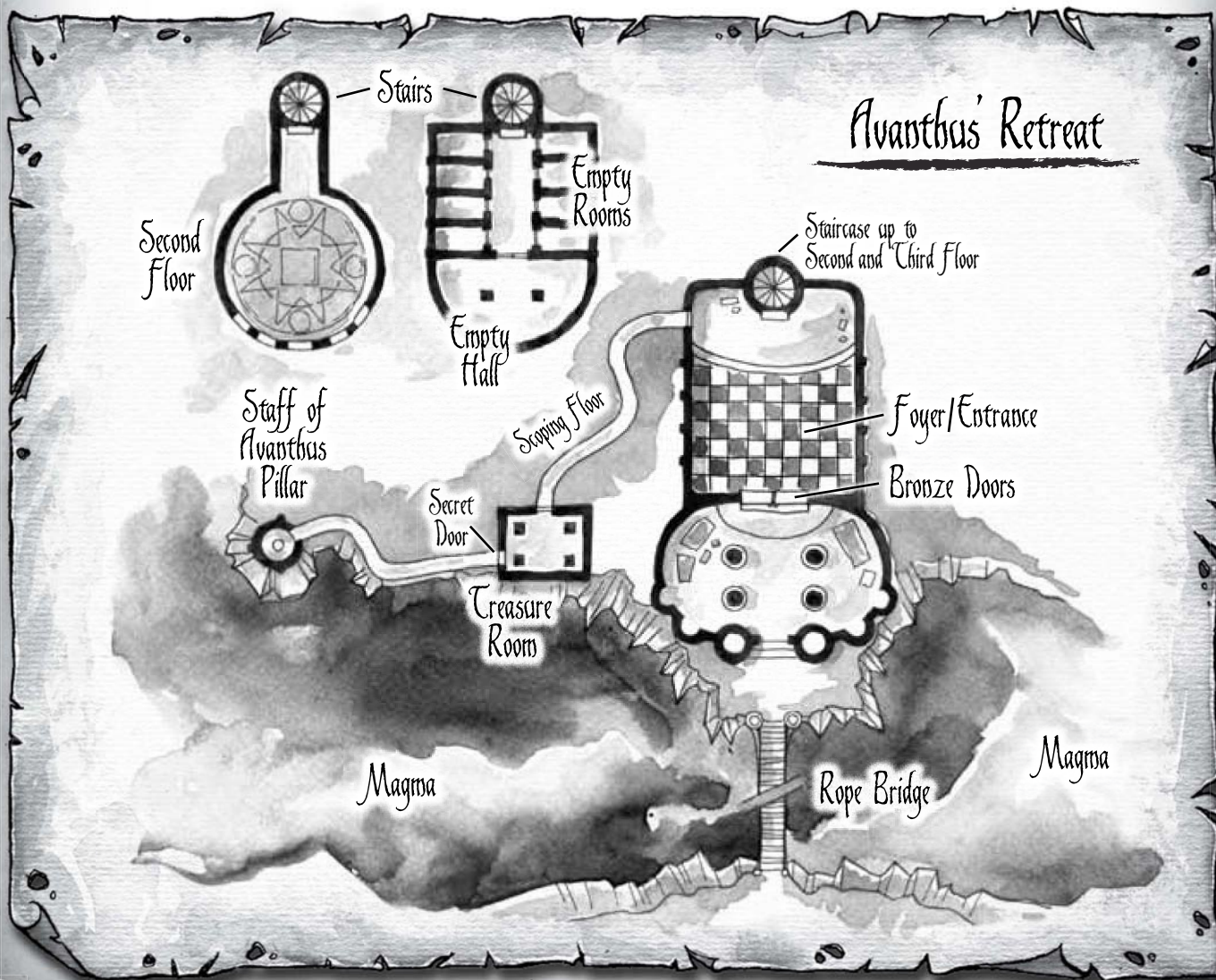
**M**ayneth and the other survivors give the characters a warm welcome upon hearing the news that the orks have been driven off and will no longer terrorize the area. If the characters have not succeeded in driving off all of the scorched, Mayneth is worried about retaliation and is thus willing to pay the characters to get rid of them once and for all.

Depending on the number and mindset of the surviving Tears of the Dead, the Wayside Inn may still be in danger of getting burned down by the ork scorched. If Gorthrash has been killed, it is more likely that the remaining ork scorched either join an existing scorched tribe or leave the area altogether, since their pride and reputation has taken a serious blow.

## CAMPAIGN IDEAS

If the characters recover the Staff of Avanthus, then they risk awakening one of the cruelest Elementalists Barsaive has ever known. An elf, Avanthus Emberheart was a powerful adept following *Draesis ti'Morel*, the Wheel of Life (see *Namegivers of Barsaive*, p.24). He had already achieved Fifteenth Circle as a Warrior for *Mes ti'Meraerthsa*, the Path of Warriors, and was on *Mes ti'Telenetishsa*, the Path of Scholars, making it to Thirteenth Circle as an Elementalist. His experiments and craving for power made him many enemies over the centuries; one particularly epic battle between two dragons—of which he was on the winning side—left him nearly dead. To save him, his dragon ally replaced his heart with an enchanted shard of True fire, granting him an incredible affinity with the element and practical immortality for as long as his heart of fire burned.

Eventually, three mages known collectively as the Triad Mages (drakes who once served the slain great dragon), Named Te-Eshpa, Aksatra, and Calah, ambushed Avanthus and stole his fire staff. Then merely a pattern item of Avanthus, the staff allowed the Triad Mages





to cast a powerful spell over the Elementalist, and became a Legendary Item in the process. Not wishing to simply destroy him, the Triad Mages sought to punish him for the death of their master. The magic forced the Elementalist into an enchanted slumber. Unable to die and unable to move, Avanthus was forced into a catatonic state, aware of everything. The Triad Mages placed him inside a deep, cold cave, far up in the Throal Mountains, where he would be safe during the Scourge and for all time, alone with his thoughts in the frigid, snow-capped peaks. The combination of the cold that reduced his burning heart's heat and the spell cast on him were sufficient to trap Avanthus, but if one of the two should fail, he will awaken.

The only thing that can break the spell is if another Namegiver attaches a thread to the Staff of Avanthus. Once a thread is attached, the Triad Mages, who still live, will become aware that their spell has ended, and Avanthus will be awakened, free to do as he wishes once again. And his first wish will be to recover his staff and regain his powers. It will not take long for Avanthus to regain many followers, and perhaps his old ally, the dragon Kuduru-Gara (known more commonly as Dread Talon), who still lives.

For their part, Eshpa, Aksatra, and Calah will attempt to locate the staff, kill the one who attached a thread, and once again enchant their nemesis, casting him back into eternal agony.

## AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

As suggested in the **Gamemastering** chapter on p.97 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*, **The Flames of Avarice** awards a number of Legend Awards to the player characters. A single Legend Award should award a number of Legend Points as determined by the character's Circle. For example, a Third Circle character receives from 200 to 500 Legend Points per Legend Award, and a total of two to five Legend Awards per game session. In the final game session that concludes the adventure, the characters gain an additional Legend Award for completing the overall adventure goal. The characters earn a Legend Award for Conflicts in sessions they fight opponents and creatures presented here.

The adventure goal for **The Flames of Avarice** is to defeat Gorthrash and his men.

## MAGICAL TREASURES

**T**he following magical treasures can be found during the adventure. Some are in the possession of gamemaster characters, who generally won't choose to give the items away.

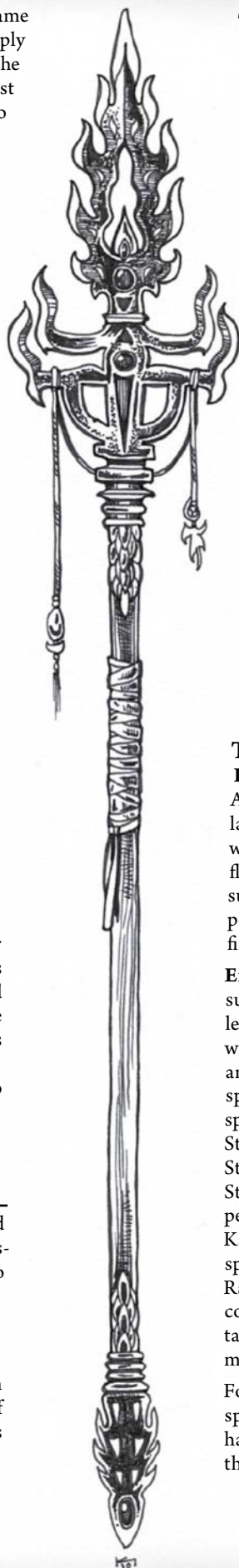
### THE STAFF OF AVANTHUS

The Staff of Avanthus is a strong wooden pole with metal tips resembling flames on both ends. The top of the staff is larger and more ornate, with several blades worked into the shape of a fire.

**Maximum Threads:** 2

**Spell Defense:** 18

**Legend Point Cost:** Warden



### Thread Rank One

**Key Knowledge:** The wielder must learn the Name of the staff.

**Effect:** The staff grants a +1 bonus to the wielder's Spellcasting and Thread Weaving (Elementalism) talents.

### Thread Rank Two

**Effect:** The staff now acts as a spell matrix at the same rank as the Thread Rank woven to the staff.

### Thread Rank Three

**Key Knowledge:** The wielder must learn Avanthus' history up until the time of his defeat by the Triad Mages.

**Effect:** The staff now grants a +4 bonus to Contest of Wills Tests (see the *Player's Guide*, p.212) when attempting to control any spirit associated with fire.

### Thread Rank Four

**Deed:** The wielder must sacrifice a creature associated with the element of fire (for example, a fire bird, hellhound, etc.).

**Effect:** The staff now grants a +4 bonus to attempts to summon any spirit associated with fire.

### Thread Rank Five

**Deed:** The wielder must travel to the cave where Avanthus was trapped during the Scourge, build a large, roaring fire inside, and cast the staff, along with 3,000 silver pieces worth of True fire, into the flames, allowing it to burn down to ash. The staff survives this process and is imbued with the fire's power. If less than 3,000 silver pieces worth of True fire is used, the staff is destroyed.

**Effect:** If near magma or lava, the wielder can summon and control a lava spirit. If the lava spirit leaves contact with the body of lava or magma from which it was formed, it cools in a matter of rounds and is destroyed. The Strength Rating of the lava spirit depends on the amount of Karma the wielder spends to summon it: 1 to 4= 1 Karma Point per Strength Rating; 5 to 8= 2 Karma Points per Strength Rating above 4; 9 to 12= 3 karma points per Strength Rating above 8; 12 to 16= 4 Karma Points per Strength Rating above 11. For example, it costs 4 Karma Points to summon a Strength Rating 4 lava spirit, 6 for a Strength Rating 5, 15 for a Strength Rating 9, and 28 for a Strength Rating 12 spirit. It costs 1 standard action to summon a lava spirit, and takes 1 Strain per Strength Rating per round to maintain it in this existence.

For the stats of a lava spirit, use the stats for a fire spirit (see the *Gamemaster's Guide*, p.220). In the hands of Avanthus, this power can be used at half the Karma Cost and Strain (rounded down).



# BLACKOUT

*You'd think that the races that can see in a sliver of light, peer into astral space, or detect heat would be immune to a fear of darkness. You'd be so very wrong...*

• GAURNG METSMETEV •

Gaurng Metsmetev shivered, peering vainly through the pitch darkness as though straining his eyes might magically produce some glimmer of light. His footsteps echoed off the stone walls and ceiling, and his own breathing sounded like the roar of a hundred skeorxes in his ears. His bones ached with cold, and he was afraid. He didn't know what he was afraid of.

He couldn't see what he feared. He simply knew it was there. Something waited for him in the dark; something he couldn't Name but knew existed. His breathing sounded louder now, faster. He willed himself to breathe more slowly, to calm down, but the harsh noise refused to subside. Slowly, it dawned on him that the roaring in his ears was not his own frightened breathing, but something else. Something ahead of him, somewhere in the dark.

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

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

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

"Sir! Sir! Lord Metsmetev, please wake up!" The voice was young, panicked ... familiar. Gaurng followed the sound upward, dragging himself out of the well of sleep. Young Nikol was bending over him, shaking his shoulder frantically. "Please, sir ... !"

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

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

"And—" Nikol broke off and stared at the floor, twisting his hands together.

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

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

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

▲ ▲ ▲

**B**lackout is an adventure scenario designed for three to five Journeyman adepts of any Discipline. In this adventure, the characters travel to the tunnels and caverns far beneath the Inner City of Hustane in the Kingdom of Throal. The adventure requires social skills in addition to abilities suited to exploration and combat, and characters should be able to deal with Throalic politics as capably as Horrors. The adventure assumes that the characters have high enough status in Throal to come to the attention of the Royal Chancellery, and that they begin the adventure in Throal or Bartertown.

## RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

**B**lackout is presented as a series of events. Each is described for the gamemaster, who should use the information given to run each section. There is little text to be read aloud to the players, meaning the gamemaster will have to describe many of the scenes to the characters as he sees fit. Where possible the text describes the terrain and areas the characters will encounter, but much of the detail is left to the gamemaster to devise.

Each encounter contains four sections: **Setting the Stage** contains a narrative description that the gamemaster reads aloud to the players, **Themes and Images** helps the gamemaster set the mood and pacing for a particular encounter, and **Behind the Scenes** explains what is really going on in each encounter. The final section of each encounter, **Troubleshooting**, offers suggestions to help the gamemaster get the adventure back on track should things go awry.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In addition to the thousands of citizens who live in the Halls of Throal, the Kingdom of Throal also contains nine Inner Cities. Five of these cities—Oshane, Yistane, Tirtaga, Bethabal, and Wishon—are thriving communities with sizable populations. Raithabal and Thurdane are still in the process of being built, although their construction has been halted (see p.94 in *Nations of Barsaive Volume One*). The Inner Cities of Hustane and Valvria opened only recently and are still filling up with settlers. Unfortunately for the dwarf





kingdom, things are not going smoothly: it appears one settler took residence in Hustane far ahead of schedule—one whose presence threatens not only the city, but the entire Kingdom of Throal.

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

The rumbling of the Horror's excavations has attracted the attention of the remaining worker crews still left in Hustane, who have

reported the strange noises to the Warden in charge of the construction. The Warden in turn alerted his superiors in the Royal Chancellery, who allowed him to send a team in search of the cause of the mysterious sounds beneath the city. After two unsuccessful expeditions, the Chancellery has decided to hire an experienced group of adepts who presumably will have a better chance of surviving.

Through a bit of cloak-and-dagger maneuvering, the adventurers are hired to venture into the tunnels beneath Hustane, both to discover the source of the mysterious sounds and to find out what happened to the previous two groups. The Chancellery has decided to keep news of any potential dangers a secret, however, which complicates the characters' mission. Chancellery officials fear that if word of the situation should spread, it might slow or even stop settlement of the city. The level of secrecy is so tight that even the newly appointed Baroness of Hustane, Divuna Divunicus (see p.93 of *Nations of Barsaive Volume One*), remains uninformed. The



player characters cannot discuss their mission with anyone, not even after it is over. The common folk must never know the truth, lest fear of unknown Horrors and other hazards lead people to leave Throal in large numbers.

## PLOT SYNOPSIS

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

After gathering equipment and dodging inquiries, the adventurers set off for Hustane. Along the way, the characters are tailed by a Thief in the employ of yet another House Moberl noble, and attacked by thugs working for Lendiltay. After dodging the Thief and fighting off their assailants, the characters must cope with the difficulties of descending into the lower tunnels and caverns. They must cross chasms, climb down sheer rock walls and avoid flammable pockets of subterranean gases. Meanwhile, every light source they carry with them grows gradually dimmer, no matter what they do to compensate for the deepening gloom.

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

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

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

## A CONFIDENTIAL MEETING

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

## SETTING THE STAGE

*When you first met the dwarf Named Iroz, you thought he was the oddest person you'd ever dealt with, at least in Throal. He followed you halfway around the Grand Bazaar before asking you—in a voice so quiet you had to ask him to repeat his words just to be sure you'd heard aright—if you wanted to*



*perform a great deed for a great power. And he flatly refused to say anything else—he wouldn't answer a single one of your questions about himself or his employer. Definitely a strange one, that dwarf. But he intrigued you, so you told him you were interested, despite your better judgment.*

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

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



**From:** Gaurng Metsmetev, Chancellery of Hustane

**To:** Tonliga Uvnimsaya, Officer of the Court for Construction, Royal Chancellery of Throal

**Subject:** Report Concerning the Second Deep Exploration Team

**Confidential:** Officer's Eyes Only

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

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

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

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

Yours,  
Metsmetev

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

## THEMES AND IMAGES

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

## BEHIND THE SCENES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## TROUBLESHOOTING

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

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



# TRAVELLING TRIBULATIONS

**I**n this encounter, the characters travel to the caverns beneath Hustane. Along the way, hirelings of Baroness Divuna and her mysterious opponent, the former Baron Lendiltay, follow (and may confront) them. Everyone wants to know what is going on in Hustane, and some are willing to resort to extreme methods to ferret out the information they seek.

## SETTING THE STAGE

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

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

## THEMES AND IMAGES

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

## BEHIND THE SCENES

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

### Research

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

When making a Research Test (Player's Guide p.78), treat the knowledge sought for as Intricate information, resulting in a Difficulty Number of 9. The Research Results below shows the information the characters can obtain, based on the Result Level of the Research Test.

### Research Results

**Pathetic:** There is no such thing as a subterranean Horror.

**Poor:** You find a lot of material, but so badly organized that you could spend days just looking for a useable index.

**Average:** You get sidetracked, learning more than you might want to know about specific subterranean Horrors, but nothing that looks useful in the current situation. Well, at least you now know that these things exist, so you cannot rule them out for your mission.

**Good:** Plenty of Horrors seem to prefer deep places. Artificer is prominent among them, as well as others best not Named. Unfortunately, none in particular seems quite appropriate to your mission.

**Excellent:** Several records describe sounds from deep in the Throal Mountains, the Caucasics, and the Tylon Peaks. Unfortunately, none of the adventurers who sought the source of these mysterious rumblings apparently survived to tell their tales.

**Extraordinary:** You find a fragmentary account of an encounter with something called the Dweller in the Depths. Some of the pages are missing; others are damaged by fire and rot. Apparently the author ran into this Dweller during a trip into Braza's Kingdom. He describes it as having claws like a cave crab and a passionate hatred of light. The middle of the record is covered in messy scrawls, in which the author complains about not being able to see well enough to write properly.

## I Want Some Answers!

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

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

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

If the characters ignore Lady Chireget and her questions, she has them followed, first by a pair of dwarfs and then—if those spies fail to get results—a Fourth Circle Thief Named Dendok the Unruly (see below for game statistics).

## Ever Have the Feeling?

As the characters continue on their way, they may notice that they are being followed. A character who makes a successful Perception (7) Test notices that a pair of dwarfs have been following the adventurers since shortly after they ran into Lady Chireget. Evading the dwarfs should be easy enough—they are neither adepts nor professional spies, and so the characters can get away by simply ducking into one side of a tavern and out the other. For these dwarfs, use the statistics given for the thugs in **Ambushed!** on p. 19.

If the characters shake the two dwarfs, a successful Perception (11) Test allows them to notice that a third dwarf has now begun to follow them. This dwarf is Dendok, under orders to find out what



the group is up to and report to Lady Chireget. Under no circumstances is he to interfere with the adventurers or stand and fight if they spot him. He runs away as soon as he realizes he's been tagged, but continues shadowing the group at his first opportunity.

## DENDOK THE UNRULY FOURTH CIRCLE DWARF THIEF

### Attributes

DEX (15): 6      STR (17): 7      TOU (18): 7  
PER (13): 6      WIL (16): 7      CHA (14): 6

### Characteristics

Initiative: 6      Physical Defense: 9  
Physical Armor: 3      Spell Defense: 9  
Mystic Armor: 5      Social Defense: 9  
Death: 63\*      Recovery Tests: 3  
Unconsciousness: 51\*      Knockdown: 7  
Wound Threshold: 12      Movement: 5

Karma Points: 16/16

\* Modified by Blood Magic

### Thief Talents (Knacks)

Avoid Blow (4): 10  
Climbing (4): 10  
Detect Trap<sup>D</sup> (4): 10  
Disarm Trap<sup>D</sup> (4): 10  
Durability (6/5) (4): 4  
Karma Ritual<sup>D</sup> (4): 4  
Lock Picking<sup>D</sup> (4): 10  
Melee Weapons (4): 10  
Picking Pockets<sup>D</sup> (4): 10  
Silent Walk<sup>D</sup> (5): 11 (Shadow Hide)  
Steel Thought\* (1): 8  
Thread Weaving (Thief Weaving)<sup>D</sup> (4): 10

Trap Initiative<sup>D</sup> (4): 10

<sup>D</sup> Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

<sup>D</sup> Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

\* Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Amulet

### Skills

Craftsman (Mason)<sup>A</sup> (2): 8  
Espionage<sup>K</sup> (2): 8  
Haggle (2): 8  
Read/Write Language (1): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic)  
Speak Language (2): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic, Or'zet)  
Stone Carving<sup>A</sup> (2): 8  
Streetwise (2): 8  
Subterranean Throat Geography<sup>K</sup> (2): 8  
Surprise Strike (2): 9  
Throwing Weapons (1): 7  
Tracking (2): 8  
Wilderness Survival (2): 8

<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

### Armor

Fernweave (Phys 2; Myst 3), Buckler (Phys 1; Deflect 1/0, Shatter 17)

### Weapons

Dwarf Sword (Forged +1; Damage 12), Dagger (Forged +1; Damage 10; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

### Thread Items

Protective Amulet (Rank 4; SocDef +1; SpellDef +2; Steel Thought +1 Rank Bonus)

### Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Carving Tools, Climbing Kit, Craftsman Tools, Desperate Blow Charm (3 Blood Magic Damage), Dwarf Miner's Garb, Dwarf Rations (1 week), Light Quartz Lantern, Quiet-Fingers Gloves, Quiet Pouch, Waterskin

### Loot

50 silver pieces

### Legend Award

Fourth Circle

### Notes

As a dwarf, Dendok possesses the Heat Sight racial ability.



### Thief Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

### Commentary

Dendok is a little taller and thinner than the usual dwarf, and definitely looks shifty. He has worked for Lady Chireget before, is quite the professional, and follows her orders to the letter, in spite of his Name.

## Ambushed!

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

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

The characters can track down the agent who hired the thugs on Lendiltay's behalf, but this also delays the expedition to Hustane. Finding the agent leads the character to an employee of House Moberl, who does not Name Lendiltay as his superior unless his life is threatened (and in that case, his confession will not stand up before a magistrate). If the characters go this route, Tonliga tracks them down either directly or through agents and express his displeasure at the delay.

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



## DWARF THUGS (2 PER CHARACTER)

### Attributes

DEX (16): 7      STR (15): 6      TOU (15): 6  
PER (10): 5      WIL (14): 6      CHA (6): 3

### Characteristics

Initiative: 5      Physical Defense: 9  
Physical Armor: 7      Spell Defense: 6  
Mystic Armor: 2      Social Defense: 4  
Death: 38      Recovery Tests: 3  
Unconsciousness: 30      Knockdown: 6  
Wound Threshold: 10      Movement: 5

### Skills

Acrobatic Strike (2): 9  
Avoid Blow (2): 9  
Climbing (2): 9  
Craftsman (Mason)<sup>A</sup> (1): 8  
Craft Weapon<sup>A</sup> (1): 6  
Great Leap (2): 9  
Melee Weapons (7): 14  
Missile Weapons (7): 14  
Mining K (1): 6  
Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)  
Speak Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)  
Streetwise (2): 7  
Subterranean Throat Geography<sup>K</sup> (1): 6  
Surprise Strike (2): 8  
Throwing Weapons (5): 12  
Unarmed Combat (5): 12

<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

### Armor

Ringmail (Phys 6; Init 2), Buckler (Phys 1; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17)

### Weapons

Broadsword (Damage 11), Dagger (Damage 8; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes),  
Throwing Dagger (Damage 8; Range 16–32 yards; 8–16 hexes), Medium Crossbow  
(Damage 11; Range 40–80 yards/20–40 hexes), Quiver (15 medium crossbow bolts)

### Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Belt Pouch, Climbing Kit, Craftsman Tools, Dwarf Miner's Garb,  
Dwarf Rations (1 week), Forge Tools, Light Quartz Lantern, Mining Tools

### Loot

1d12 silver pieces

### Legend Award

Fourth Circle

### Notes

As dwarfs, these thugs possess the Heat Sight racial ability.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

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

The characters may also get into trouble with Lady Chireget. If they get too far out of hand, Lady Chireget may have them apprehended by the Royal Guards. In this case, Tonliga receives word of their arrest and makes arrangements for their swift release, although he is not happy about it.

## GOING DOWN

**I**n this encounter, the characters travel through the half-settled city of Hustane and begin their descent beneath it. On their journey, they must cope with various natural hazards while either avoiding or confronting the exploring parties sent by Lendiltay and Divuna.

## SETTING THE STAGE

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

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

## THEMES AND IMAGES

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

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Parts of the city of Hustane are not yet complete. The entire cavern has been excavated, and large parts of the city are finished and settled. Three decantans are still under construction: the streets have been laid out, and most of the buildings are half-finished. No one lives in these decantans yet except for the construction crews, and so the characters must pass by a large expanse of unlit and empty houses as they walk through the cavern. This part of the city is spooky, dark, and far too quiet for comfort. Describe the strange shadows, the echoes, and the creepy emptiness of the city to set the stage for this encounter and the subsequent descent.

The characters head down the tunnel and into the unworked caverns without incident. Describe their progress from carved stairs to partly worked tunnel with clear footing and recent tool marks on the walls, to partly cleared natural tunnel with rubble carefully swept to either side, to natural cavern with bits of fallen rock strewn liberally over the floor. From this point on, all movement takes place over difficult ground, and the Impaired Movement Situational Modifier (*Player's Guide* p.228) is applied. At this point, there is Light Impairment, but things become worse over time, as appropriate to the descriptions in the individual Encounters.

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

### Finding Their Way

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

### Dimming Lights

As the characters get closer and closer to the Horror's lair, the light sources they carry get progressively dimmer. Where appropriate, the events below describe specific reductions in the range of the light. For example, in *Bugs 'R' Us*, p.23, the characters' light sources are reduced to half their normal effectiveness, meaning





that a torch allows its holder to see for only 5 yards (see **Darkness**, *Gamemaster's Guide* p.119), eventually leading to a Darkness modifier (*Player's Guide* p.226). If the characters think to link the reduction in light with the source of the strange rumblings, have each of them make Perception or Evidence Analysis (6) Tests. Any character whose test succeeds eventually figures out how to use the dimming effect as a direction finder, which proves useful in finding the Horror and getting back home after the battle. If the characters do not make the connection on their own, have them make Perception (9) Tests once their lights have been reduced to half the usual effectiveness to draw the conclusion described above.

### The Chasm

Shortly after entering the natural caverns, the adventurers reach a chasm 50 yards deep and 5 yards across. The survivor of the second expedition cut loose the rope bridge that once spanned the chasm during her retreat toward the surface. If the characters choose to climb down one side of the chasm and up the other, each phase of the climb (descent and ascent) requires a number of Climbing (12) Tests as appropriate to the climber's rank in the Climbing talent or skill (see *Gamemaster's Guide* p.108). The characters may use any number of mundane or magical abilities to aid them in crossing, and the gamemaster should allow any reasonable idea for crossing the gap to work. After all, the characters cannot continue the adventure until they reach the other side! If they have the appropriate tools at hand and the ability to reach it, they might also be able to repair the bridge. Its anchoring can also serve to tie ropes to.

If a character fails a Climbing Test, he falls and takes normal Falling damage (see *Gamemaster's Guide* p.108).

### Hide and Go Boom

Ten to fifteen minutes after crossing the chasm, the characters enter a chamber measuring two hundred yards from end to end and side to side, sectioned off by walls and pillars of stalactites and stalagmites that have grown together. So numerous are these walls and pillars that the characters have no clear line of sight from one side of the cavern to the other. The Partial cover modifier (*Player's Guide* p.226) applies to all missile weapon attacks made at a distance of more than four yards from a target; no such attacks may be made more than ten yards away from a target.

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

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

The group ahead consists of eight non-adept dwarf warriors led by Arrisaz Heptagar, a Fourth Circle dwarf Swordmaster. These warriors work for Baroness Divuna, and do their best to avoid meeting the characters face to face. They are investigating the mysterious



rumblings on their own, and are attempting to be just as secretive about it as the player characters. If the characters decide to try to catch up to the other group, the characters must make a successful Perception (7) Test. If any of the characters' Perception Tests succeed, they locate and catch up to the other exploring party.

If confronted by the player characters, Arrisaz identifies himself and his people as tunnel inspectors checking for fault lines. He claims they are all armed because Foreman Metsmetev decreed days ago that no inspectors were to travel into the deeps unarmed or in groups of less than five. Arrisaz has a plausible explanation for most questions, and clearly wants to get on his way. If necessary, a character can make an Insight Test to Detect Deception (see *Gamemaster's Guide* p.95) to see through Arrisaz's story. Under no circumstances does Arrisaz's party join the characters on their mission.

Arrisaz's party will not start trouble. They want to leave the tunnels and return to the safety of Throal. If the characters threaten them, they answer by asking if the characters are sure they want to start a fight. If the characters insist on drawing weapons, Arrisaz and his men draw weapons, and Arrisaz uses Taunt against the character who has led the conversation for the group's side. Starting trouble with Arrisaz's party will have repercussions later on, especially when the characters return to the surface and report to Tonliga (see *Endgame*, p. 26).

Use the statistics for the dwarf thugs in *Ambushed!* (p. 20) for the non-adepts in Arrisaz's party. Arrisaz's statistics appear below.

## ARRISAZ HEPTAGAR FOURTH CIRCLE DWARF SWORDMASTER

### Attributes

DEX (16): 7 STR (14): 6 TOU (16): 7  
PER (11): 5 WIL (15): 6 CHA (14): 6

### Characteristics

Initiative: 4 Physical Defense: 10  
Physical Armor: 7 Spell Defense: 9  
Mystic Armor: 2 Social Defense: 9  
Death: 69\* Recovery Tests: 3  
Unconsciousness: 56\* Knockdown: 6\*\*  
Wound Threshold: 11 Movement: 5

Karma Points: 16/16

\* Modified by Blood Magic  
\*\* Arrisaz knows the Wound Balance talent

### Swordmaster Talents

Durability (7/6) (5): 5  
Heartening Laugh<sup>D</sup> (5): 11  
Karma Ritual<sup>D</sup> (4): 4  
Maneuver<sup>D</sup> (6): 13  
Melee Weapons<sup>D</sup> (4): 11  
Parry<sup>D</sup> (5): 12  
Riposte<sup>D</sup> (4): 11  
Steel Thought\* (1): 7  
Taunt<sup>D</sup> (4): 10  
Thread Weaving (Weapon Weaving)<sup>D</sup> (4): 9  
Throwing Weapons (4): 11  
Wound Balance (6): 12

<sup>D</sup> Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)  
<sup>I</sup> Italized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)  
\* Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Amulet

### Skills

Acting<sup>A</sup> (2): 8  
Climbing (2): 9  
Conversation (2): 8  
Craft Armor<sup>A</sup> (2): 7  
Craftsman (Mason)<sup>A</sup> (1): 8  
Dwarf Culture K (5): 10  
Dwarf Military Organization K (2): 7  
Forgery (2): 9  
Great Leap (2): 9  
Mapmaking<sup>A</sup> (1): 6

Mining<sup>K</sup> (2): 7  
Missile Weapons (3): 10  
Navigation (4): 9  
Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)  
Speak Language (2): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic, *Or'zet*)  
Streetwise (2): 7  
Subterranean Throal Geography<sup>K</sup> (2): 7  
Wilderness Survival (2): 7  
<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

### Armor

Chainmail (Phys 7; Init 3)

### Weapons

Dwarf Sword (Damage 10), Dagger (Damage 8; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 × Hawk Hatchets (Damage 10; Range 24–48 yards; 12–24 hexes), Medium Crossbow (Damage 11; Range 40–80 yards/20–40 hexes), Quiver (w/15 medium crossbow bolts)

### Thread Items

Protective Amulet (Rank 4; PhysDef +1; SpellDef +2; Steel Thought +1 Rank Bonus)

### Equipment

Absorb Blow Charm (2 Blood Magic Damage), Adventurer's Kit, Belt Pouch, Booster Potion, Climbing Kit, Craftsman Tools, Dwarf Miner's Garb, Dwarf Rations (1 week), Fake Tunnel Map in Map/Scroll Case (Forgery Detection DN 9), Forge Tools, Horror Fend Charm (3 Blood Magic Damage), Kelix's Poultice, Light Quartz Lantern, Mapmaking Tools, Navigation Charts in Map/Scroll Case, Whetstone, Writing Kit

### Loot

50 silver pieces

### Legend Award

Fourth Circle

### Notes

As a dwarf, Arrisaz possesses the Heat Sight racial ability.

### Swordmaster Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Social Defense  
Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

### Commentary

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

### Overall Legend Award

For simplicity, the gamemaster can consider Arrisaz and his men to be a Fifth Circle encounter.

## Down is Bad, Back is Worse

Shortly after exiting the chamber, the characters reach a point where they must make a long vertical descent in order to continue exploring. When they reach this point in their travels, all the characters' light sources have become 25 percent less effective than normal. As the characters prepare to follow the decline, have each character make a Perception (5) Test. Any character whose test succeeds can hear sounds coming from behind the group— sounds clearly being made by yet another group of people in the vast chamber. If the characters turn back to investigate these sounds, they run into Lendiltay's explorers (described in *Cast of Characters*, p. 28). Lendiltay has sent this group to find out what is going on beneath Hustane, stop the Chancellery's (and Divuna's) attempts to find the truth, and report back to him. If the characters confront them, Lendiltay's explorers at first give vague answers as to who they are and why they are down in the tunnels. If the characters do not buy their story, Lendiltay's party attacks the characters. They want to hurt the characters badly enough to force them to abort their mission, but do not want to risk severe injury themselves.

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



## CREATE DARKNESS

**Step Number:** Rank+WIL

**Action:** Yes      **Type:** Mundane

**T**o use this power, the Horror makes a Create Darkness (4) Test. If the test succeeds, all light sources are reduced in effectiveness according to the Create Darkness Table. For every 5 points of Strain the Horror takes, double the power's area of effect. Each use of the power lasts for 24 hours.

## Descending

If the characters follow the dimming of their lights as they move through the tunnels, they should proceed downward. If they have not yet figured out that they can use their dimming lights for navigation, another chance with a successful Perception (9) Test is appropriate now. The steep downward slope stretches forward for twenty yards and is fifty yards long. Getting down the slope requires a character to make successful Climbing (5) Tests unless the characters drop a rope down the slope. In that case, they can use the rope to guide themselves down without making a test. Characters may also use appropriate magical abilities to aid their descent.

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

## Bugs 'R' Us

Their lights now at 50 percent of normal effectiveness, the characters enter a roughly excavated tunnel strewn with rubble and boulders. Suddenly, giant cave crickets, two per character, leap out from behind the boulders and attack the adventurers. The crickets use their Surprise Attack power to begin the fight. To determine if a character counts as Surprised, you can let the character make a Perception Test against the crickets' lowest Initiative Test result, or handle this at your discretion.

## GIANT CAVE CRICKETS (1 PER CHARACTER)

Attributes		
DEX: 11	STR: 5	TOU: 5
PER: 4	WIL: 3	CHA: 4
Characteristics		
Initiative: 10 (13)	Physical Defense: 14	
Actions: 2	Spell Defense: 5	
Attack (2): 13	Social Defense: 5	
Damage:	Physical Armor: 6	
Bite (2): 7	Mystic Armor: 0	
Death: 56	Recovery Tests: 2	
Unconsciousness: 44	Knockdown: 7	
Wound Threshold: 8	Movement: 8	
Powers		
Durability (4), Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 6, Surprise Attack (3)		
Legend Award		
Fifth Circle		
Commentary		
These insects are the size of large dogs, stone gray with pure white eyes. Savagely hungry, they will fight to the death in hopes of a meal.		
Rules		
Totally blind, giant cave crickets rely on sound and scent to locate their prey, and chatter constantly during combat.		
Light Immunity: Light-based attacks will not affect them.		



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

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

## Too Big to Be Termites

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

## STONECRUSHER (1 PER 2 CHARACTERS)

Attributes		
DEX: 10	STR: 12	TOU: 14
PER: 9	WIL: 12	CHA: 8
Characteristics		
Initiative: 12	Physical Defense: 13	
Actions: 2	Spell Defense: 12	
Attack (2): 12	Social Defense: 10	
Damage:	Physical Armor: 12	
Claws (3): 15	Mystic Armor: 7	
Death: 68	Recovery Tests: 7	
Unconsciousness: 61	Knockdown: 15	
Wound Threshold: 20	Movement: 7	



#### Powers

Climbing<sup>S</sup> (3): 13

<sup>S</sup>General skill

#### Loot

Claws worth 2d12 × 20 silver pieces (worth Legend Points).

#### Legend Award

Fifth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

#### Commentary

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

A Bonesmith can work the bone from a stonecrusher carapace into a set of armor (see p.237 of *Namegivers of Barsaive*).

### Parley or Fight

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

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

If a fight starts, Lendiltay's party assess the odds at the end of each round and flee if the tide turns badly against them. If the characters slaughter Lendiltay's group, they will face repercussions during their debriefing (see **Endgame**, p.26). If they leave the explorers alive, Lendiltay's people may cause trouble later on.

### TROUBLESHOOTING

This encounter becomes problematic only if the characters are too badly injured to continue or to face the Horror in the following encounter. If necessary, arrange for the characters to discover the

remains of either of the other exploring parties and find booster or healing potions among the deceased explorers' supplies.

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

## THE BATTLE BELOW

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

### SETTING THE STAGE



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

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

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

### THEMES AND IMAGES

This encounter is a desperate fight under terrible circumstances. The characters are fighting in near black-out conditions against a



formidable opponent. The frantic dancing of shadows created by the dying flickers of light should create an atmosphere right out of the characters' worst nightmares.

By the time the characters find the Horror, all their light sources have dimmed to one-tenth their normal effectiveness, and so a full Darkness modifier (*Player's Guide* p.226) applies to all tests made in combat with Emr'r'ko. The characters confront the Horror in a cavern with an uneven, rock-strewn floor that leads to Hard Impaired Movement (*Player's Guide* p.228). Have each character make a Dexterity (7) Test each round he moves during combat. During the battle, the Horror remains low to the ground to protect its less-armored underside, and uses spells to soften up the opposition before closing in for the kill. As they battle the Horror, the characters may notice that it stays in a crouching position; a successful Perception (9) Test allows a character to notice that the Horror's armor is thinner on its underside. Attacking the Horror's underside requires a successful Called Shot (*Player's Guide* p.222). If such an attack succeeds, use the Armor Rating listed in parentheses in the statistics below.

If and when the characters kill the Horror, Emr'r'ko uses sacrifice magic to create a dying curse (*Player's Guide* p.126). As the Horror breathes its dying breath, it whispers to the characters, "My legacy will live on. The city above shall live in darkness for eternity." With those words, a burst of black flames erupts from the Horror's carcass. These flames do no damage, but the characters all feel a deep foreboding as the Horror dies.

## EMR'R'KO DWELLER IN THE DEPTHS

### Attributes

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

### Characteristics

**Initiative:** 16      **Physical Defense:** 20  
**Actions:** 3      **Spell Defense:** 19  
**Attack (3):** 19      **Social Defense:** 18  
**Damage:**      **Physical Armor:** 21 (11; see Rules)  
Pincers (3):22      **Mystic Armor:** 16  
**Death:** 143      **Recovery Tests:** 8  
**Unconsciousness:** 129      **Knockdown:** 21  
**Wound Threshold:** 23      **Movement:** 7  
**Karma Points:** 30/30      **Karma Step:** 9

### Powers

Astral Sight (3): 18, Corrupt Karma (3): 19, Create Darkness (4): 20, Damage Shift (3): 19, Durability (7), Enhanced Senses [Listen, Smell] (2): 17, Forge Horror Construct (Stonecrushers) (3): 18, Horror Mark (3): 18, Karma Tap (3): 18, Spellcasting (3): 18, Thought Worm (3): 18, Thread Weaving (Elementalism) T (3): 18, Thread Weaving (Nethermancy) T (3): 18

### Spells

Elementalism and Nethermancy (Fourth Circle)

### Loot

Carapace worth 5,000 silver pieces (worth Legend Points).

### Legend Award

Eighth Circle (Group)

### Commentary

Emr'r'ko appears in blurred shadows as a bloated crab with two massive pincers and six squat, bent legs. Emr'r'ko hates light, and so cloaks itself in unnatural darkness. The Horror also hates fire and high-pitched sounds. The Horror focuses its energies on eliminating any character using fire, light, or high-pitched sounds to attack it.

### Rules

The following special rules apply to Emr'r'ko:

**Create Darkness:** Emr'r'ko has a unique magical ability that allows it to dampen light sources of all kinds within a certain range of its location. This power gradually weakens as the light sources get farther away from the Horror. Emr'r'ko has been using its Darkness power to

reduce the light cast by the characters' torches, lanterns, light-quartz crystals, and so on. In its dying curse, the Horror imbues the foundation of Hustane with this power, the effect of which will remain in place until it is broken. In this adventure, Emr'r'ko took 10 points of Strain, increasing the range of the power by a factor of 4. Emr'r'ko may have used a Recovery Test to eliminate this Strain; however, the gamemaster may wish to have Emr'r'ko start the battle with 10 Current Damage, especially if the group has taken severe damage thus far over the course of the adventure.

**Armor Flaw:** Emr'r'ko's armor is thinner on its belly. Attacking the Horror's underside requires a successful Called Shot (see *Player's Guide* p.222). If such an attack succeeds, use the Armor Rating listed in parentheses in the statistics above. In addition, the Spot Armor Flaw and Show Armor Flaw talents require a Result Level one lower than normal for success.

**Darkness Invulnerability:** Emr'r'ko is immune to the effects of Darkness attacks such as Ethereal Darkness and Arrow of Night.

**Fire Vulnerability:** Fire attacks are automatically Armor-Defeating against Emr'r'ko. Emr'r'ko cannot use the Damage Shift power on fire attacks.

**Light Vulnerability:** Light attacks are automatically Armor-Defeating against Emr'r'ko. Non-damaging light attacks, such as Blessed Light and Spotlight, require a Result Level one lower than normal for success. Emr'r'ko cannot use the Damage Shift power on damaging light attacks.

**Sound Vulnerability:** Non-damaging sound attacks with a high pitch, such as Battle Shout, require a Result Level one lower than normal for success. Extremely high-pitched sound attacks such as the Metal Scream spell cause the Horror to become automatically Harried. Emr'r'ko is not affected by low-pitched sounds such as rumbling earth.

## CREATE DARKNESS TABLE

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





## Going Up

After defeating the Horror, the characters must return to the surface and report to Tonliga. They should find going back up much easier than coming down, because they know the route and have already slaughtered many of the nasty creatures in their way. Their light sources get brighter as the characters ascend, making it even easier to find their way. When the characters finally emerge in Hustane, they see darkness spreading slowly over the city from the caverns below. The darkness heralds the beginning of the Horror's curse, which worsens until the entire city is enveloped in gloom that reduces the normal effectiveness of all light sources by half. For more information about the curse, see **Campaign Ideas** (p. 28).

## TROUBLESHOOTING

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

If you want to go easier on the characters, have the Horror refrain from using Karma in attacks made against them. Additionally, Emr'r'ko has enough weaknesses to allow the adventurers to defeat it; if it goes badly and the group does not note these weaknesses, describe the effects of the respective attacks or the Horror's behavior in more details. To successfully complete the adventure, the characters must slay the Horror; beating a fast retreat won't produce the results they are being paid to achieve.

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

## ENDGAME

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

## SETTING THE STAGE

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

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





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

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

## THEMES AND IMAGES

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

## BEHIND THE SCENES

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

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

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

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

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

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

### If Any of Lendiltay's Explorers Made it Back:

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

Lendiltay's actions depend on how the characters dealt with his hirelings. If the characters negotiated an agreement with Lendiltay's people to take the matter to Tonliga for adjudication, Lendiltay is quietly intense. He is still angry about Divuna's appointment to the barony of Hustane, but the characters are not in his line of fire. If the characters got Lendiltay's explorers to agree to keep the Horror a secret (see **Going Up**, p.26), Lendiltay may not know

about Emr'r'ko, unless the gamemaster decides that Lendiltay's explorers did not keep their word.

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

### If None of Lendiltay's Explorers Made it Back:

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

### If the Characters Dealt Peacefully with Arrisaz's Party:

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

### If the Characters Attacked Arrisaz's Party:

If any of Divuna's explorers survived, she has heard their version of the conflict and gives the characters a scathing piece of her mind. If none of her hirelings made it back, she suspects that the characters either killed them or injured them so badly that they succumbed to some other hazard, and she asks pointed questions about whether or not the characters met her people. She picks at the tiniest inconsistency in the characters' story, pushing Tonliga (and likely the characters) to the limits of his patience.

## In Conclusion

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

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



## TROUBLESHOOTING

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

## AFTERMATH

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

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

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

## AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

As suggested in the **Gamemastering** chapter on p.97 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*, **Blackout** awards a number of Legend Awards to the player characters. A single Legend Award should award a number of Legend Points as determined by the character's Circle. For example, a Seventh Circle character receives from 1,650 to 4,900 Legend Points per Legend Award, and a total of two to five Legend Awards per game session. In the final game session that concludes the adventure, the characters may gain an extra Legend Award for completing the overall adventure goal. The characters earn a Legend Award for Conflicts in sessions they fight opponents and creatures presented here.

The adventure goal for **Blackout** is to defeat Emr'r'ko.

## CAMPAIGN IDEAS

If the characters succeed, they have proven themselves capable and discreet, and so the Royal Chancellery will have other work for them. Baroness Divuna owes them a favor, and is glad to grant it if the adventurers did not massacre her explorers. The Chancellery or the Baroness may hire the characters to find and destroy the focus of the Horror's curse, a task that requires adepts of great skill and courage. The characters might also be hired to accompany teams of engineers venturing beneath Hustane to repair the damage done by the Horror and its constructs. Though Emr'r'ko is gone, more cave crickets and stonecrushers may still roam the tunnels beneath the city.

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

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

**T**his section offers descriptions and game statistics for Lendiltay's explorers: an ork Nethermancer, a dwarf Warrior, an elf Thief, a troll Illusionist and a dwarf Weaponsmith. The exploring party also includes three dwarf soldiers who are not adepts. For them, use the game statistics given for the dwarf thugs in **Anbushed!** on p. 19.

### CRIF ERMOREEM FIFTH CIRCLE DWARF WARRIOR

Attributes		
DEX (14): 6	STR (17): 7	TOU (18): 7
PER (11): 5	WIL (12): 5	CHA (11): 5
Characteristics		
Initiative: 6	Physical Defense: 9	
Physical Armor: 4	Spell Defense: 7	
Mystic Armor: 1	Social Defense: 7	
Death: 87	Recovery Tests: 3	
Unconsciousness: 69	Knockdown: 7*	
Wound Threshold: 12	Movement: 5	
Karma Points: 20/20		
* Crif knows the Wound Balance talent		
Warrior Talents (Knacks)		
Acrobatic Strike (S): 11		
Air Dance (S): 11		
Anticipate Blow <sup>D</sup> (S): 10		
Avoid Blow <sup>D</sup> (S): 11		
Durability (9/7) (S): 5		
Karma Ritual <sup>D</sup> (S): 5		
Melee Weapons <sup>D</sup> (6): 12 (Improvised Weapons)		
Parry* (1): 7		
Temper Self <sup>D</sup> (S): 10		
Thread Weaving (War Weaving) <sup>D</sup> (S): 10		
Throwing Weapons (S): 11		
Tiger Spring (S): 5		
Unarmed Combat <sup>D</sup> (6): 12		
Wood Skin <sup>D</sup> (S): 12		
Wound Balance <sup>D</sup> (S): 12		
<sup>D</sup> Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)		
<i>Italized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)</i>		
* Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Wrist Carvers.		
Skills		
Craftsman (Blacksmithing) <sup>A</sup> (2): 8		
Dwarf Military Organization <sup>K</sup> (2): 7		
Dwarf Military Procedures <sup>K</sup> (2): 7		
Physician (2): 7		
Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)		
Speak Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)		
Swift Kick (3): 9		
Tactics (4): 9		
<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill		



**Armor****Padded Leather Armor** (Phys 4)**Weapons**

**Wrist Carvers** (Rank 5; Damage 12; 1 Strain Point for a +3 bonus to the next Attack Test with the wrist carver; 1 Strain Point for a chance to create a Bleeding Wound, if the opponent is Wounded by this attack, they take 2 Damage Points (No armor protects) until they make a successful Recovery Test; Parry +1 Rank Bonus, Wrist Carver is Size 3 for Parry Deflection only; Attack Test –1 penalty for every 2 pounds the wearers holds in his hand), **Dwarf Sword** (Forged +1; Damage 12), **Dagger** (Forged +1; Damage 10; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 × **Hawk Hatchets** (Damage 11; Range 24–48 yards/12–24 hexes)

**Equipment**

Adventurer's Kit, Belt Pouch, Cloaksense Brooch, Craftsman Tools, Dwarf Winternight Cloak, Forge Tools, Healing Kit (3 uses), Light Quartz Lantern, Physician Kit (3 uses), Trail Rations (1 week), Traveler's Garb

**Loot**

80 silver pieces

**Legend Award**

Fifth Circle

**Notes**

As a dwarf, Crif possesses the Heat Sight racial ability.

**Warrior Abilities****Second Circle:** +1 Physical Defense**Fourth Circle:** Karma on Strength-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Battle Rites

**Commentary**

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

**Skills**

Arcane Mutterings (2): 8

Engaging Banter (4): 10

Melee Weapons (4): 10

Read/Write Language (4): 10—(Dwarf/Throalic, Or'zet, Sperethiel, Troll)

Robe Embroidery<sup>A</sup> (2): 8

Scourge History K (2): 8

Speak Language (2): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic, Or'zet)

Subterranean Throat Geography<sup>K</sup> (2): 8

Unarmed Combat (4): 10

**Wound Balance** (4): 11<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill**Nethermancy Spells**

Astral Spear, Astral Whisper, Bone Dance, Circle of Astral Protection, Death's Head, Detect Nethermancy Magic, Detect Undead, Dispel Nethermancy Magic, Fog of Fear, Incessant Talking<sup>M</sup>, Last Chance, Life Circle of One<sup>M</sup>, Sculpt Darkness, Sense Horror, Shadow Meld, Shadow's Whisper, Shield Mist<sup>M</sup>, Spirit Dart, Spirit Grip<sup>M</sup>, Undead Struggle

<sup>M</sup> Denotes spell in spell matrix.**Armor****Padded Leather Armor** (Phys 4)**Weapons****Dagger** (Damage 9; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)**Thread Items****Protective Brooch** (Rank 4; PhysDef +1; SocDef +2; Resist Taunt +1 Rank Bonus)**Equipment**

Adventurer's Kit, Belt Pouch, Booster Potion, 2 × Embroidered Robes, Embroidery Tools, Grimoire, Last Chance Salve, Light Quartz Lantern, Trail Rations (1 week), Traveler's Garb

**Loot**

80 silver pieces

**Legend Award**

Fifth Circle

**Notes**

As an ork, Novodtic possesses the Gahad and Low-Light Vision racial abilities.

**Nethermancer Abilities****Second Circle:** +1 Spell Defense**Fourth Circle:** Karma on Perception-only Tests**Fifth Circle:** Decay and Renewal**Commentary**

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

## NOVODTIC DRENEX FIFTH CIRCLE ORK NETHERMANCER

interact with him.

**Attributes**

DEX (15): 6      STR (18): 7      TOU (15): 6  
PER (14): 6      WIL (13): 6      CHA (13): 6

**Characteristics**

**Initiative:** 6      **Physical Defense:** 9  
**Physical Armor:** 4      **Spell Defense:** 9  
**Mystic Armor:** 1      **Social Defense:** 9  
**Death:** 58      **Recovery Tests:** 3  
**Unconsciousness:** 45      **Knockdown:** 7\*  
**Wound Threshold:** 10      **Movement:** 6

**Karma Points:** 25/25

\* Novodtic knows the Wound Balance skill

**Nethermancer Talents**

Astral Sight<sup>D</sup> (5): 11  
Durability (4/3) (5): 5  
Frighten<sup>D</sup> (5): 11  
Karma Ritual<sup>D</sup> (5): 5  
Read/Write Magic<sup>D</sup> (5): 11  
Resist Taunt\* (1): 7  
Spellcasting<sup>D</sup> (6): 12  
Spell Matrix<sup>D</sup> (5): 5  
Spell Matrix (5): 5  
Spell Matrix (5): 5  
Spirit Hold<sup>D</sup> (5): 11  
Spirit Talk<sup>D</sup> (5): 11  
Summon (Ally Spirits)<sup>D</sup> (5): 11  
Thread Weaving (Nethermancy)<sup>D</sup> (6): 12  
Willforce (5): 11

<sup>D</sup> Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)  
Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

\* Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Brooch

## HIATORI CAHZ FOURTH CIRCLE ELF THIEF

**Attributes**

DEX (18): 7      STR (13): 6      TOU (10): 5  
PER (15): 6      WIL (12): 5      CHA (18): 7

**Characteristics**

**Initiative:** 6      **Physical Defense:** 11  
**Physical Armor:** 6      **Spell Defense:** 10  
**Mystic Armor:** 1      **Social Defense:** 11  
**Death:** 55      **Recovery Tests:** 2  
**Unconsciousness:** 42      **Knockdown:** 6  
**Wound Threshold:** 8      **Movement:** 7

**Karma Points:** 16/16**Thief Talents**

Detect Trap<sup>D</sup> (4): 10  
Disarm Trap<sup>D</sup> (4): 11  
Durability (6/5) (4): 4  
First Impression (4): 11



Karma Ritual<sup>D</sup> (4): 4  
 Lock Picking<sup>D</sup> (5): 12  
 Melee Weapons (4): 11  
 Picking Pockets<sup>D</sup> (4): 11  
 Silent Walk<sup>D</sup> (4): 11  
 Steel Thought\* (1): 6  
 Surprise Strike (4): 10  
 Thread Weaving (Thief Weaving)<sup>D</sup> (4): 10  
 Trap Initiative<sup>D</sup> (4): 11  
<sup>D</sup> Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)  
*Italicized Talents Require Karma.* (Except when also a Discipline Talent)  
 \* Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Ring

#### Skills

Acting<sup>A</sup> (2): 9  
 Alchemy (2): 8  
 Alchemy and Potions<sup>K</sup> (2): 8  
 Climbing (2): 9  
 Conversation (2): 9  
 Flirting (3): 10  
 Haggle (2): 9  
 Missile Weapons (4): 11  
 Read/Write Language (1): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic)  
 Seduction (3): 10  
 Speak Language (2): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic, *Sperethiel*)  
 Streetwise (2): 8  
 Torture<sup>K</sup> (2): 8  
 Windling Poisons<sup>K</sup> (2): 8  
<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

#### Armor

**Hardened Leather Armor** (Phys 5; Init 1), **Buckler** (Phys 1; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17)

#### Weapons

**Dagger** (Forged +1; Damage 9; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), **Blowgun** (Damage 7; Range 8–16 yards/4–8 hexes), Box (w/10 needles poisoned with Whaydra Venom; SD 6; Effect 10 Paralysis)

#### Thread Items

**Protective Ring** (Rank 4; SocDef +1; SpellDef +2; Steel Thought +1 Rank Bonus)

#### Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Alchemy Kit (at home), Climbing Kit, Healing Potion, Kelia's Antidote, Kelix's Poultice, Light Quartz Lantern, Quiet Pouch, Trail Rations (1 week), Wealthy Traveler's Garb

#### Loot

70 silver pieces

#### Legend Award

Fourth Circle

#### Notes

As an elf, Hiatori possesses the Low-Light Vision racial ability.

#### Thief Abilities

**Second Circle:** +1 Physical Defense

**Fourth Circle:** Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

#### Commentary

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

## T'PORIF THE REDEEMER FOURTH CIRCLE TROLL ILLUSIONIST

#### Attributes

**DEX (11): 5**      **STR (20): 8**      **TOU (17): 7**  
**PER (13): 6**      **WIL (15): 6**      **CHA (11): 5**

#### Characteristics

**Initiative:** 5      **Physical Defense:** 9  
**Physical Armor:** 4      **Spell Defense:** 8  
**Mystic Armor:** 2      **Social Defense:** 8  
**Death:** 56      **Recovery Tests:** 3  
**Unconsciousness:** 44      **Knockdown:** 8  
**Wound Threshold:** 11      **Movement:** 7  
**Karma Points:** 12/12

#### Illusionist Talents

Avoid Blow\* (1): 6  
 Dead Fall<sup>D</sup> (4): 10  
 Disguise Self<sup>D</sup> (4): 10  
 Durability (4/3) (4): 4  
 False Sight<sup>D</sup> (4): 4  
 Karma Ritual<sup>D</sup> (4): 4  
 Read/Write Magic<sup>D</sup> (4): 10  
 Speak Language<sup>D</sup> (4): 10—(*Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*)  
 Spellcasting<sup>D</sup> (5): 11  
 Spell Matrix<sup>D</sup> (4): 4  
 Spell Matrix (4): 4  
 Spell Matrix (4): 4  
 Spell Matrix (4): 4  
 Thread Weaving (Illusionism)<sup>D</sup> (5): 11  
<sup>D</sup> Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)  
*Italicized Talents Require Karma.* (Except when also a Discipline Talent)  
 \* Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Bracers

#### Skills

Botany<sup>K</sup> (2): 8  
 Farming<sup>K</sup> (2): 8  
 Melee Weapons (4): 9  
 Read/Write Language (4): 10—(Dwarf/Throalic, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Troll)  
 Robe Embroidery<sup>A</sup> (2): 7  
 Speak Language (2): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic, Troll)  
 Streetwise (2): 7  
 Unarmed Combat (4): 9  
<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

#### Illusionist Spells

Assuring Touch<sup>M</sup>, Bellow of the Thundras, Best Face, Conceal Tracks, Crafty Thought, Disaster, Disguise Metal, Displace Image<sup>M</sup>, Ephemeral Bolt<sup>M</sup>, Encrypt, False Floor, Fun with Doors, Great Weapon<sup>M</sup>, Hunger, Memory Blank, Mind Fog, Nobody Here, *Pauper's Purse*, *Remove Shadow*, *Unseen Voices*, *You Got Me*  
<sup>M</sup> Denotes spell in spell matrix.

#### Armor

**Padded Leather Armor** (Phys 4)

#### Weapons

**Troll Sword** (Damage 14), **Troll Dagger** (Damage 11; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

#### Thread Items

**Protective Bracers** (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SocDef +1; Avoid Blow +1 Rank Bonus)

#### Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Belt Pouch, Booster Potion, Embroidered Robe, Embroidery Tools, Grimoire, Light Quartz Lantern, Trail Rations (1 week), Wealthy Traveler's Garb

#### Loot

50 silver pieces

#### Legend Award

Fourth Circle

#### Notes

As a troll, T'porif possesses the Heat Sight racial ability.

#### Illusionist Abilities

**Second Circle:** +1 Spell Defense

**Fourth Circle:** Karma on Perception-only Tests



**Commentary**

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

## JADRIS GANTRIEF FIFTH CIRCLE DWARF WEAPONSMITH

**Attributes**

DEX (13): 6      STR (18): 7      TOU (18): 7  
PER (17): 7      WIL (14): 6      CHA (10): 5

**Characteristics**

Initiative: 5      Physical Defense: 7  
Physical Armor: 6      Spell Defense: 10  
Mystic Armor: 2      Social Defense: 6  
Death: 72      Recovery Tests: 3  
Unconsciousness: 59      Knockdown: 7  
Wound Threshold: 12      Movement: 5  
Karma Points: 20/20

**Weaponsmith Talents (Knacks)**

Abate Curse<sup>D</sup> (5): 11  
Detect Weapon (5): 12  
Durability (6/5) (5): 5  
Evaluate<sup>D</sup> (5): 12  
Fire Heal (5): 11  
Forge Weapon<sup>D</sup> (6): 13 (Forge Arrow)  
Haggle<sup>D</sup> (5): 10  
Item History<sup>D</sup> (6): 13  
Karma Ritual<sup>D</sup> (5): 5  
Melee Weapons (5): 11  
Parry (5): 11  
Steel Thought<sup>D</sup> (5): 11  
Temper Self<sup>D</sup> (5): 11  
Thread Weaving (Smith Weaving)<sup>D</sup> (5): 12 (Create Thread Item)  
<sup>D</sup> Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)  
*Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)*

**Skills**

Alchemy (3): 10  
Alchemy and Potions<sup>K</sup> (3): 10  
Ancient Weapons<sup>K</sup> (4): 11  
Climbing (3): 9  
Physician (3): 10  
Read/Write Language (4): 11—(Dwarf/Throalic, Or'zet, Sperethiel, Troll)  
Resist Taunt (2): 8  
Speak Language (4): 11—(Dwarf/Throalic, Or'zet, Sperethiel, Troll)  
Streetwise (2): 9  
Weapon Rune Carving<sup>A</sup> (3): 8  
<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

**Armor**

**Hardened Leather Armor** (Phys 5; Init 1),  
**Buckler** (Phys 1; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17)

**Weapons**

**Thread Scythan Axe** (Damage 18; Climbing Tests +1 bonus when using hook or spiked end), **Dagger** (Forged +1; Damage 10; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

**Equipment**

Adventurer's Kit, Alchemy Kit (at forge), 3 × Aloe doses, Climbing Kit, Forge Tools, Healing Kit (3 uses), Light Quartz Lantern, 3 × Mist Blossom Poultices, Physician Kit (3 uses), Quiet Pouch, Trail Rations (1 week), Traveler's Garb

**Loot**

130 silver pieces

**Legend Award**

Fifth Circle

**Notes**

As a dwarf, Jadris possesses the Heat Sight racial ability.

**Weaponsmith Abilities**

**Second Circle:** +1 Spell Defense

**Fourth Circle:** Karma on Willpower-only Tests

**Fifth Circle:** Traveling Smithy

**Commentary**

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

**Overall Legend Award**

For simplicity, the gamemaster can consider Lendiltay's five adepts and the three dwarf soldiers a Seventh Circle encounter.





# BETRAYAL'S STING

*The Horrors may have forced us to live in darkness.*

*The Horrors may have destroyed our world.*

*The Horrors may have taken our lives.*

*But the worst thing they have done?*

*They have made us live in fear.*

• CARCINOS THE YOUNGER, THERAN PHILOSOPHER •

**B**etrayal's Sting is an **Earthdawn** adventure for three to five Journeyman (Fifth to Eighth Circle) adepts of any Discipline. In **Betrayal's Sting**, the player characters meet a traveling merchant who suffers from a mind-affecting poison (injected by a Horror construct) and must deal with all the trouble it causes—to others and to themselves. They should get a good impression of how the vile work of the Horrors affects Barsaive's common man even today, a century after the kaers re-opened. In the end, they should realize that it is because of these common men that the adepts of legend set out to battle the Horrors in the first place, because others cannot help but fall victim to such monstrosity...

## RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

**W**hile **Betrayal's Sting** is a relatively straightforward adventure, each step depends on the prior actions of the group. Everything depends on the characters' choices, but chances are they will only slowly realize what this is all about. The gamemaster, on the other hand, needs to be prepared, and should be familiar with the entire adventure before the game starts. The first section in the plotline, **This is Something that Might Interest You**, p. 33, serves to get the characters on their way to the town of Escandar. But prior to arriving there, they have an unusual encounter which unfolds a whole new mystery:

**Who are You? What do You Want?**, p. 34, details the characters' meeting with Vebraan, a merchant under the effects of a paranoia-inducing poison. Their interaction with him affects the remainder of the adventure.

**Madman's Diary**, p. 36, describes how the group can follow hints to discover the source of the poison that affects Vebraan: a Horror construct lurking near the road. It ends in a battle with the beast, with some characters possibly being poisoned themselves. From this point on, how the adventure develops is largely up to the player characters. Once all of them (and Vebraan, if he survived) are free from the poison, the adventure is nominally over. However, the events might well haunt the characters in the future.

**The Enrager's Legacy**, p. 39, is a general section needed throughout the adventure, detailing how the gamemaster can handle the group's attempts to work on the problems the poison poses.

**Places of Interest**, p. 41, details the town of Escandar and the hamlet of Mehlan's Rest, places that are dead-ends for the purpose of finding the cause of the paranoia, but which can become a focus of the characters' attention or used to expand the adventure.

**Aftermath**, p. 46, presents multiple options for modifying or expanding the adventure.

Because **Betrayal's Sting** is not absolutely predictable, many sections present the gamemaster with some options to adjust the adventure on the fly.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Knowing a lot about traveling the wilderness, Vebraan, a former military scout for the Arm of Throal, put his abilities to use by starting a new life as a traveling merchant some ten years back. He is not the best merchant, but then again, he is not the worst, and villagers in the hinterlands are thankful for people like him. He also has a small family to take care of back in the dwarf kingdom, which is what keeps him going. He's not an unhappy dwarf, but struggles for economic survival with each new day.

That changed a couple of days prior to the beginning of **Betrayal's Sting**. A Horror construct, called an Enrager, crossed paths with Vebraan. It was forged by a Named Horror known as Fleshforger, a Horror that revels in destroying bonds between Namegivers with its vile powers, feeding on the pain its victims cause each other.

The Enrager injected the sleeping merchant with a poison that has made him paranoid. Once injected, the dwarf felt surrounded by a conspiracy dedicated to ruining him and endangering his family. He now reacts suspiciously and hostilely towards anyone he meets, assuming those he encounters have been sent after him. He is not sure who exactly is involved in this conspiracy so far, but they are out there watching him—he knows it.

Enter the player characters...

## PLOT SYNOPSIS

The player characters encounter a human who tells them of a relative of his from the town of Escandar, located north of the Thunder Mountains. The human's relative is in need of a group of adepts for some unknown task and is willing to pay good silver, but has not disclosed any details. The characters have to travel to Escandar to find out more.

The adventure proper begins with Vebraan meeting the characters on the road. Vebraan instantly assumes they are part of the conspiracy determined to ruin him and attacks them sooner or later, depending on the characters' behavior and their answers to his strange questions. If the characters do not kill him, they will likely have to deal with him for the rest of the adventure, as he is not cooperative if captured, and continuously attempts to escape or kill the characters.

Vebraan carries a diary that includes some hints as to what has happened, and the group can ignore it, take it as a warning, or choose to act upon the information in it to find out the cause for the dwarf's strange behavior.



Sooner or later, the characters will meet the Enrager themselves, and every part of the mystery they unlock before the encounter can help them defeat the Horror construct and escape its terrible poison. Every action the characters take brings them closer to the truth, and there is a good chance one or more of the characters will meet Vebraan's fate, and become poisoned by the Enrager, possibly even turning on the rest of the group. Once the characters have eliminated this threat, they are ready to head out for new adventures, either having deepened their bond or distanced themselves carefully from each other.

## THIS IS SOMETHING THAT MIGHT INTEREST YOU...

**T**he player characters meet Graleg, a human merchant, who tells them of a job a relative of his has to offer. This encounter serves to simply get the characters on their way, to make them travel the trade route between Urupa and Travar. This encounter is not required at all to run **Betrayal's Sting** if the characters are already traveling said route, if the gamemaster devises another way to get them there (for example by running **Betrayal's Sting** as an interlude in another adventure), or if the gamemaster places the events of **Betrayal's Sting** anywhere else in Barsaive (which requires minor modifications to the adventure). If the gamemaster replaces Escandar with a town already introduced into his game, this can intensify the experience of characters encountering old acquaintances under the poison's influence. On the other hand, it prevents him from adding a new location to his game, and the player characters might not make new friends or enemies there.

## SETTING THE STAGE

The gamemaster can set the encounter with Graleg in any place he likes. However, it is advised that the encounter is a casual one; it should be clear that Graleg did not seek the player characters out. He just happens to meet them, probably at a tavern or his shop, and mentions something a relative wrote to him in a letter.

It might pay to stage this encounter as close to Escandar as possible, perhaps in Travar or Urupa, because it is more likely the group will consider the journey to Escandar if they are already in one of these cities—travel time is only a few days from either city to Escandar.

## THEMES AND IMAGES

The encounter with Graleg should be similar to any trivial conversation, and Graleg telling them of the job offer should not appear to be a meeting with an employer or part of some mysterious plot. The gamemaster should start the conversation with another topic, with Graleg only mentioning the job once the attention turns to the characters' status as a group of adventuring adepts.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

There is nothing going on behind the scenes. For the course of this adventure, the encounter with Graleg loses any importance. It can, however, be employed at a later point to bring the characters back on track while in the town of Escandar.

## I've Got This Uncle...

The characters meet Graleg, a local human merchant, at a location of the gamemaster's choosing (see **Setting the Stage** above). Graleg has an uncle by the Name of Nosleth who makes a living as a fur trapper in the foothills of the Thunder Mountains, near

the town of Escandar, situated halfway between Travar and Urupa. Graleg was raised in the town of Escandar, but moved to become a merchant after his parents' death over fifteen years ago. Still, Nosleth and Graleg exchange letters on a regular basis, and in the last one, Nosleth mentioned he might have a need for some adepts for a task he could not handle alone. The gamemaster may read the following passage aloud to the players or paraphrase:

*"A group of adepts you say? Well, I should have guessed as much from the looks of you. As it so happens, an uncle of mine from Escandar mentioned in his last letter that he had a need for some adepts. He makes a living hunting animals for their meat and fur, selling them in town. He didn't say why he needs a group of adepts, but I guess he's found something of interest. He gets around the Thunder Mountains a lot, and the Passions know what he might have found there that he can't handle alone. An old kaer perhaps, or some dangerous but prized animal he can't bring down himself. If you're interested, I can give you directions."*

Graleg can point the characters towards Escandar and describe his uncle, but really does not know anything else about the matter. He can tell the characters more about the town and its surroundings (see **Places of Interest**, p. 41), but this might not help the characters much—they need to get there to learn more. Of course, Graleg does not leave after his story; he is happy to spend more time with the adventurers and gladly answers all of their questions. He did not come to deliver a message, but to spend some time at the place of the meeting (or to work there, if the characters were visiting his shop).

## On the Road

Depending on where the characters met Graleg, the gamemaster will have to decide what happens on the road once the characters decide to seek out Nosleth. If the encounter with Graleg took place in Travar or Urupa, it is only a short trip to Escandar, and the bulk of the adventure takes place before they even arrive there. In this case, simply move on to **Who are You? What do You Want?**, below.

If the characters are farther away, they will likely have to travel via either Travar or Urupa and take the trade route between these cities from there. Travar and Urupa are also easily reached by riverboat or airship if the characters can afford these modes of transportation.





If the characters decide to travel to Escandar directly from the North, for example from Lake Ban, the gamemaster has to devise a way to get them onto the trade route and meet Vebraan before reaching the town. But as Escandar's location can be varied by a couple of days' walk in any direction, this should not pose any problems.

It is important to note that the encounter with Vebraan, the event which sets everything in motion, happens on the trade route between Travar and Urupa, but it is intentionally left open in what direction Vebraan is traveling. This allows the gamemaster and the player characters to start the adventure without too many complications.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

The only thing that can go wrong here is if the characters do not take the bait. However, **Betrayal's Sting** can be re-introduced at any later point in the game. Graleg should not encourage the characters too much, as he really does not have anything to do with what comes afterwards. He does not offer money. He can offer them a small discount on a travel-related item or two at his shop if they sincerely promise to help his uncle, but does so only if the characters have been friendly.

## WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

**T**his encounter is staged on the road between Urupa and Travar, close to the town of Escandar, and signals the start of the plot. The characters meet Vebraan, who attacks them after a brief chat, setting things in motion.

## SETTING THE STAGE

The characters are on their way to Escandar after their meeting with Graleg. This encounter occurs on the road, and the important thing is that it does not take place too close to Escandar so there is enough room to place the hamlet of Mehlan's Rest, Vebraan's campsite, and the lair of the Enrager on the characters' way to the town.

## THEMES AND IMAGES

Meeting a traveling merchant on the road is a common event for adventurers, even in Barsaive's hinterlands. These merchants supply small towns and villages with many things of need, and often are a good source of information and equipment for travelers. However, the characters' conversation with Vebraan is brief, and with every second he grows more uneasy and suspicious. The characters should find his behavior curious, and perhaps even unsettling. The gamemaster should familiarize himself with the effects of the poison prior to this encounter (see the **Enrager's Kiss** sidebar on p. 38).

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Vebraan was injected with the construct's poison two days ago and has not slept much since, which adds to his poor state. While the poison enhances his physical state, it also reduces his judgment and ability to reason. He talks to the characters to see if they are just travelers on the road or if they are part of the conspiracy dedicated to ruining him and his family by stealing his goods—his personal version of the paranoia caused by the construct's poison.



## An Attack with Little Warning

The characters spot the merchant and his wagon approaching from far away and traveling in the opposite direction. Coming closer, they can see he is one of the many merchants traveling Barsaive, selling goods to villagers or trading them in for foodstuffs. A donkey pulls his small cart, and he seems to trade in household and crafting wares like pans, pots, and tools, as well as food. The merchant looks to be a dwarf in his late fifties or early sixties, wearing plain clothes.

As the characters come within a few yards of Vebraan, he greets them formally, speaking in the Throalic dialect. He takes the initiative in the conversation, asking the characters who they are, where they come from, and what they are doing here. He reveals information about himself only if asked directly, although such questions strengthen his mistrust (especially if the characters do not give any information about themselves in return). Of course, everything the characters say makes them suspicious in Vebraan's eyes; it is just a question of when he will act on this suspicion.

During the conversation, the characters can make a Perception (6) Test, requiring an Extraordinary Result, to realize something is wrong with Vebraan. If successful, they notice that he is quite pale and his hands are shaking, and that his behavior grows progressively stranger. In addition, Vebraan carries various weapons on his body, concealed half-heartedly. Reduce the Result Level needed to succeed on the Perception Test by one for every minute the characters can keep the conversation up.

As soon as the gamemaster deems appropriate, Vebraan attacks, leaving all characters who did not succeed in the Perception Test surprised (see **Surprised**, *Player's Guide* p.228). Vebraan is no match for the characters, even with the benefits the poison grants him. Nevertheless, he does not surrender, and is not susceptible to any attempt made to manipulate him (also a result of the poison's effects). Vebraan shouts at the characters when initiating combat and also while fighting; "You'll not ruin me, foul folk!" or "I've seen through your lies!" for example. This can give the characters some initial hints that Vebraan suffers from delusions. When the fight is over, proceed to **When the Smoke Clears**, p. 35.

Keeping Vebraan alive for the rest of the adventure is a good idea if the gamemaster is comfortable acting out Vebraan's poison-induced insanity and paranoia, and wants to continue to keep track of him. Whether Vebraan lives or dies during this encounter may affect the remainder of the adventure, as the characters having to take care of him can become central to the plot. Of course, this would be ideally suited for characters who have had little or no contact with the Horrors' taint, letting them experience how it can affect a Namegiver without actually encountering a Horror.



## Attributes

DEX (10): 5\* STR (13): 6\* TOU (13): 6\*  
 PER (12): 5 WIL (10): 5\*\* CHA (9): 4

\* Add +3 steps when Vebraan is under the effect of the Enrager's Kiss poison.

\*\* Add +6 steps when Vebraan is under the effect of the Enrager's Kiss poison.

## Characteristics

Initiative: 5 Physical Defense: 6  
 Physical Armor: 4 Spell Defense: 7  
 Mystic Armor: 0 Social Defense: 6\*\*  
 Death: 35 Recovery Tests: 2  
 Unconsciousness: 27 Knockdown: 6\*  
 Wound Threshold: 9 Movement: 5

\* Add +3 steps when Vebraan is under the effect of the Enrager's Kiss poison.

\*\* Immune when Vebraan is under the effect of the Enrager's Kiss poison.

## Skills

Arm of Throat<sup>K</sup> (1): 6  
 Avoid Blow (2): 7\*  
 Climbing (2): 7\*  
 Conceal Object (2): 7\*  
 Conversation (2): 6  
 Craftsman (Mason)<sup>A</sup> (2): 7\*  
 Dwarf Trade Routes<sup>K</sup> (3): 8

## VEBRAAN'S CART

Vebraan's cart contains a wide array of goods he sells to and buys from the different communities he visits. The list below is presented to allow the gamemaster to have a reference at hand without the need for too much preparation.

Item	Quantity
Animal hides	7
Backpack	2
Bedroll	3
Beer, simple	1.5 barrels
Blanket	5
Boots, mountain	1 pair
Boots, soft	3 pairs
Candles	20
Chicken, live	4
Childrens' toys	5
Cloak, woolen	2
Dress, plain	6
Dried meat	20 pounds
Hat, woolen	4
Iron pot	1
Kelix's Poultry	1
Lantern, hooded	3
Oil	11 flasks
Parchment	13 sheets
Rope	15 yards
Sack, small	3
Shirt, patterned	3
Torch	4
Trail rations	7 weeks' worth
T'skrang fish, grade B	.25 duari
Waterskin	7
Wheat	150 pounds
Whetstone	3
Wine, average	12 bottles
Wine, fine	2 bottles
Writing ink	3 vials

Great Leap (2): 7\*  
 Haggle (3): 7  
 Melee Weapons (4): 9\*  
 Navigation (2): 7  
 Negotiation<sup>K</sup> (3): 8  
 Painting<sup>A</sup> (3): 7  
 Physician (2): 7  
 Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)  
 Speak Language (5): 10  
 —(Dwarf/Throalic, Human, Or'zet, Sperethiel, T'skrang)  
 Streetwise (1): 6  
 Throat Military History<sup>K</sup> (1): 6  
 Throat Military Organization<sup>K</sup> (1): 6  
 Tracking (3): 8  
 Throwing Weapons (2): 7\*  
 Unarmed Combat (1): 6\*  
 Wilderness Survival (2): 7

<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

\* Add +3 steps when Vebraan is under the effect of the Enrager's Kiss poison.

## Armor

Padded Leather Armor (Phys 4)

## Weapons

Dwarf Sword (Damage 10\*), Short Sword (Damage 10\*), 3 × Daggers (Damage 8\*; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 4 × Knives (Damage 7\*; Range 8–16 yards/4–8 hexes)

\* Add +3 steps when Vebraan is under the effect of the Enrager's Kiss poison.

## Equipment

Craftsman Tools, Navigation Charts in Map/Scroll Case, Quiet Pouch, Painting Tools, Wealthy Traveler's Garb, Donkey (use Pack Mule statistics from *Gamemaster's Guide* p.188), Small cart filled with trade goods, see the *Vebraan's Cart* sidebar)

## Loot

53 silver pieces, 76 copper pieces

## Legend Award

First Circle (Group)

## Notes

As a dwarf, Vebraan possesses the Heat Sight racial ability.

## Commentary

Vebraan is prepared for a fight. He is expecting the imaginary conspiracy to move against him, and is armed with items usable as weapons from his cart, concealed in various places on his person.

In addition to the loot found on Vebraan's body, the cart contains simple items and foodstuffs worth 1,000 silver pieces (cart and donkey included). Refer to the *Vebraan's Cart* sidebar for more information on the goods Vebraan takes along with him.

## When the Smoke Clears

The easiest solution for the characters is killing Vebraan, although this is not necessarily in their, or the gamemaster's, best interest. The characters can, by accident or intent, subdue the dwarf, but this does not calm him down. On the contrary: whenever possible, he tries to free himself. If successful, he either attacks the characters or flees. Vebraan makes it as difficult as possible for the characters to hold him captive or interrogate him. Gamemasters should keep in mind that he might still have some weapons concealed, perhaps in a boot or some other place the characters didn't check, which he may pull out unexpectedly.

If one of the characters can use an appropriate talent, skill, or spell to determine Vebraan's condition, he can discover that Vebraan is insane and has not slept in a while. Any character investigating Vebraan up close may make a Perception (12) Test to spot a tiny, swollen entry wound, similar to a bee sting, on his neck. This is where the construct stung Vebraan while he was asleep. This wound vanishes completely within another day. A character with the Physician skill can diagnose the poisoning as per standard rules (*Player's Guide* p.99). Treat the poison as a strong poison, with a Difficulty Number of 11 to diagnose it as such. As the Physician skill mainly concerns the body, an Average Result only diagnoses Vebraan's seemingly high physical strength paired with exhaustion. At the gamemaster's discretion, a better Result Level might lead to knowl-



edge of the psychological effects of the poison. No matter what they do, the characters do not get any useful information about what happened to him, except for the facts mentioned above.

Thus, if Vebraan lives, the characters are kept busy keeping him under control; they may want to discuss what to do with him if his condition does not improve. If they cannot solve this puzzle while on the road, they could leave him in the care of a temple or questor of Garlen, for example in the nearby town of Escandar. Regardless, the group should reach Vebraan's campsite, the place where the Enrager attacked, before they reach someone else who can help with him. At any point the characters may realize that Vebraan was poisoned, even without using any skill confirming it. Consult *The Enrager's Legacy*, p. 39, to handle upcoming questions and possibilities about diagnosing and treating the poisoning.

### What's All this About?

The best source of information for the characters is Vebraan's journal, which he keeps in a small chest on his cart along with the rest of his personal effects. An excerpt from the journal is available as a handout (see p. 89). Give it to the players, read it aloud, or paraphrase; but make sure the characters are able to get the important facts: that Vebraan's behavior and state of mind changed abruptly, and that he has been at a certain campsite during this transition. Move on to **Madman's Diary**, below.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

As it is unlikely that Vebraan will defeat the characters, the one problem that could come up is that the characters just travel on, without showing any interest in the situation (for example to reach Nosleth to learn more about the job offer). To get their attention, the gamemaster can stage a second encounter with another traveler the next day. If the characters did not find Vebraan's diary, they could find another one in this encounter. If the gamemaster anticipates such a problem, he can also prepare an encounter with another traveler before Vebraan, perhaps the one hinted at in the diary, who left some wood back at the campsite. This also opens other possibilities that can be used as variations of the adventure. Another traveler that was behind the adventurers could make up the time and reach them in the next town. This traveler sleeps at the same campsite, becomes a victim of the construct's sting, and causes some problems at the town's market or inn.

A convenient way to accomplish this presents itself in Nosleth, the person they are supposed to meet in Escandar. Refer to **This is Something that Might Interest You...** on p. 33.

Alternatively, if the gamemaster wants to stick to the plot of this adventure, but the characters do not find the diary and Vebraan does not survive, he can simply arrange for the characters to use Vebraan's old campsite and fall prey to the construct.

If none of the more subtle ways work, or if the gamemaster prefers having the characters hired, he should keep them busy in town a couple of days and have an important citizen approach them to investigate a massacre at a nearby hamlet (the hamlet is mentioned in Vebraan's journal). In this case, while out hunting, one of the farmers set camp near the construct's lair. After being stung, he returned and massacred his family. This might show the characters what can come from ignoring such obvious warning signs.

It might seem important to keep Vebraan alive, but it is not essential to the plot. Vebraan serves as an early warning to give the group a hint about the Enrager, a distraction to keep the characters busy, and possibly a moral dilemma when deciding what to do about him. The primary goal is to get one or more of the characters poisoned and let the rest of the group deal with him based on their knowledge that the strange behavior is not his, or their, fault.

## MADMAN'S DIARY

**T**his section details how the characters can use the diary to trace Vebraan's steps back to the campsite where he fell prey to the construct. They can set up a trap for the construct here or follow it back to its lair.

## SETTING THE STAGE

Ideally, this section starts right after the fight with Vebraan and the discovery of his journal. If the gamemaster chooses another way to play the adventure or had to resort to one of the solutions in the **Troubleshooting** section above, he will probably have to modify it. If the characters lose track or get lost at any point, they can always come back on track by reconstructing Vebraan's actions from the place where they met him on the road.

## THEMES AND IMAGES

Up to the final encounter, the characters should feel uncertain about their actions. They only have sketchy information at best, and do not know what they are up against. Is it the magic of the place, a Horror, or perhaps even a conspiracy of some kind? The gamemaster should try planting speculation amongst the players, but without giving too much information away. This is a riddle to solve, after all.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The Enrager has a lair near the site where Vebraan set up camp two days ago. It stays there during the day, coming out at night to search for new victims. How large its hunting grounds are and how long this has been going on are left to the gamemaster's discretion. All that is required is that the Enrager has access to the campsite near its lair.

## Investigating the Evidence

The first step for the players is to put all the pieces together: the journal, the marks on Vebraan's body, and his entire behavior during the encounter. The journal is the best source of clues, and the only one that is needed, although anything reaffirming what is written in it will help the players. Note that the entries for some days feature two paragraphs: the first one was written in the morning and the second one in the evening. However, there is no indication during which time of day any entry was written—this is left to the players to figure out.

It should be fairly obvious to the player characters that Vebraan's entries from three days ago and from two days ago are quite different, and that this development continues on the following days. Somehow, Vebraan started fearing that someone was out to get him (the same fear he expresses in his encounter with the characters). If Vebraan is still alive, he does not comment on the journal, except perhaps with a phrase like "There's nothing in there you conspirators don't already know!" If the players ask him about the campsite specifically, Vebraan might tell them that is when he first discovered that the characters were after him because they left "evidence" behind. If the gamemaster wants to add to their uncertainty, Vebraan's imagination could well have come up with even more "evidence" he observed back at the campsite. Nothing is too absurd for Vebraan's theories. For example, he might state that "the fact that the fire was out in the morning clearly shows that you wanted to freeze me to death." If there is a troll in the group, he might bring up that he thought one of his food containers was opened—because he thinks trolls constantly eat large amounts of dried meat. Likewise, if there's a windling in the group, Vebraan suspects that a barrel of wheat was opened because "flying creatures eat such things."



## OH NO, IT MOVES!

The gamemaster can complicate the adventure by having the Enrager move. If the players realize what's going on too fast, and identify the possibility of a poison or Horror involvement and the campsite as the place where this happened, the gamemaster may just let the Horror construct move on from there. It may, for example, travel on to the hamlet of Mehlan's Rest (see **Places of Interest** on p.41), poisoning several of the farmers. The player characters may find the farmers have slain each other out of mistrust, or might stumble right into the fight (either one with words or one with swords). As part of an investigation by the inhabitants of the nearby town, the characters might even be the prime suspects in such a bloodbath. Of course, the Enrager could also travel even further to wreak havoc on the town of Escandar itself...

### The Journey of the Mad Merchant

The location of the specific campsite Vebraan used three days before is not that hard to find. It is along the road, although approximately 50 yards away from it. According to the journal, Vebraan left it in the morning two days ago, and it is described as being between a handful of trees and a hill. How far away from the characters' position it is depends on the time the gamemaster staged the encounter. If the gamemaster staged it early in the morning, the campsite is close by. If the gamemaster staged the encounter with Vebraan in the evening, perhaps at the characters' campsite, there lies another day of walking in between the locations.

There are hints in the journal for when the characters have gone too far. Two and a half days before being poisoned, Vebraan visited a farming community not far from the main road to conduct business. Needless to say at this point, the hamlet is a dead end, but it is possible the group connects the change in Vebraan's behavior to his visit there. Who knows; perhaps the farmers were the ones who messed with him?

Before he visited the hamlet of Mehlan's Rest, Vebraan stayed at the nearby town of Escandar, which likewise is a dead end except as a place to find medical aid for Vebraan or the characters themselves (refer to **Places of Interest**, p. 41, for more information on the hamlet and town). Vebraan's journal entries do not hint towards any sign of his madness during his time at the town, and should the group travel there, they find that no one observed any unusual behavior in the dwarf merchant. From their current location, the characters can probably reach the town in two days by horse, so reaching it by strictly following the hint of traveling two days is a possibility. Needless to say, it is generally a bad idea for the group to base its own traveling times on Vebraan's diary; not only did the dwarf move at slow and irregular speeds, but the characters also have no way of knowing what else he did on the way—if he stopped for several hours to check behind bushes for conspirators, or to smear his face with mud so conspirators can't see him at night, for example. When the group travels near the campsite, the gamemaster should allow any character who read the diary a Perception (7) Test to spot it.

The characters can also employ the Tracking talent or skill to follow Vebraan's tracks back. Vebraan has used the knowledge from his time as a military scout to obscure his tracks, however. His cart traveled quite slowly, giving him enough time to obscure the tracks at least half of the way. Taking into account Vebraan's skill and the age of the tracks, the tracking character must succeed on a Tracking (10) Test (*Player's Guide* p. 84). The tracking character must make a new test every time the track he is currently following changes, for example if the tracks have been obscured by weather, or once the tracks become older than a day. The Difficulty Number for the Tracking Test may change due to these conditions.

### Trees by a Hillside

There is a range of hills rising some 50 yards away from the road, continuing for several miles, to eventually become the foothills of the Thunder Mountains in the far, far distance. To some extent, the road seems to be built around these hills to ease travel. Where the hills are nearest to the road, five trees form a rough half-circle. Between hills and trees, Vebraan's old campsite can be found.

An old fire pit and the deep tracks where the cart stood are visible once the characters reach the campsite. There are a great number of footprints, most notably Vebraan's, all over the place—more than there normally should be at a campsite used by one Namegiver for just one night. Vebraan most likely ran around a lot during his stay, searching for hidden conspirators. But there are also other footprints, which do not resemble those of a Namegiver. If any character searches for unusual footprints, these can be found with a successful Perception (8) Test. They are perfectly round, 4 inches in diameter, and deeper on one side. The only thing that identi-





## THE ENRAGER'S KISS

**Type:** Special (see text)

**Spell Defense:** 7

**Onset Time:** 3 hours

**Step Number:** 9

**Duration:** Effect Test days

**T**he Enrager's Kiss is a treacherous substance, physically beneficial but wreaking havoc on the mind. It is created by glands in the tail of the Enrager Horror construct, a hideous creature created just for the purpose of producing and injecting the poison. An affected individual feels the first effects of the poison after a few hours, becoming suspicious of his surroundings, of people currently present, or of people not present if he is alone. The victim feels as if he is being watched and followed, and is likely to be ambushed. The victim makes up his own story to explain why this is the case—a story most fitting to his personal situation and his deepest fears. At the same time, his Dexterity and Strength Attributes gain a bonus of +3 Steps, his Willpower Attribute gains a bonus of +6 Steps, he becomes immune to all abilities used against his Social Defense, and he is unaffected by the rules for Fatigue (*Gamemaster's Guide* p.122). With his paranoia growing, the victim will try to find a solution to his problem, but as he trusts no one, the solution must be one that can be carried out alone. This may be running away, but as the victim feels he is powerful enough to take on almost anything directly, the solution most likely results in violence.

The Enrager's Kiss is a debilitating poison, and as such can be resisted once per day, after 24 hours have passed from the previous attempt.



## SCALING THE RAGE

The Enrager is not designed to be the ultimate challenge for the player characters. It is an encounter to advance the plot by allowing the characters to determine the cause of Vebraan's madness, to give them the opportunity of finding a cure, and to possibly get them affected by the poison. If the group of player characters is very strong in combat, is of a higher Circle or is greater in number than intended for this adventure, or the gamemaster wants to make the fight with the Horror construct harder for the characters (at the same time making it more likely for them to become poisoned), the following guidelines should be considered.

There might simply be two or even three Enragers. The Horror that created the Enrager saw the opportunity presented by so many merchant caravans passing through the area, and left several constructs behind to poison whole groups of travelers. The Horror knew that a large group of poisoned Namegivers would scatter in all directions, suspicious of each other, and cause suffering throughout a larger area. On average, use one Enrager for characters of Fifth or Sixth Circle, and use two for Seventh or Eighth Circle characters. Two Enragers are worth a Seventh Circle (Group) Legend Award.

fies them as footprints is that they are in the pattern of a walking, four-legged creature. Characters not searching for them might spot them by chance with a Good Result on the Perception Test. The footprints cannot be identified as belonging to a specific animal; they simply are unknown to any of the characters.

If the characters find the construct's tracks and assess the situation, they can either follow it to wherever it went after attacking Vebraan at the campsite or they can wait, hoping for it to return. The construct lairs just a half mile into the hills, and regularly wanders the area at night in search of new victims, visiting the campsite almost every night.

## Calming the Enrager

If the characters follow the construct's tracks, they can find it hiding amongst a field of bushes in a small valley half a mile from the campsite. If the characters follow the Enrager's tracks here or stumble upon it by accident, the Horror construct has the advantage of Full cover (*Player's Guide* p.226) and is hard to see between the bushes (refer to **Perception Tests** in the *Gamemaster's Guide* p.92). When it is hiding in the bushes, the base Difficulty Number to spot the Enrager is its Dexterity Step of 12, with a +4 bonus from being in Full cover. This Difficulty Number is lowered by -2 because the Enrager is uniquely shaped compared to its surroundings, and by another -3 because it contrasts with the bushes in color, for a final Detection Difficulty of 11.

The better an idea the characters have of what to look for, however, the easier detecting the Enrager should be. The gamemaster is free to lower the Detection Difficulty as he sees fit for every effort the characters take and every bit of knowledge they have gathered. Appropriate modifiers may include the "viewer knows what to look for" entry on the Perception Modifiers Table, as well as modifiers from categories other than Sight if the characters venture close to the patch of bushes. Flying characters may also spot it more easily because they can see between the bushes from above.

If the player characters are at the edge of the bushes, the Enrager attacks them from its cover, but it only profits from Partial cover at the edge of the field of bushes.

If the characters wait for the Enrager at the campsite, it shows up an hour after midnight. Sneaking up on them, it attacks any sleeping character first with a single attack from its stinger once it sees a chance to do so unobserved. This attack does not wake the character. If the Enrager does not see any chance to inject some of its poison unobserved, it sneaks up on any character on watch and tries to eliminate him quickly, although this will be hard to pull off with adepts. Of course, the construct is not that clever; it acts like a predatory hunter, but lacks instincts of self-preservation. It is driven by the desire to poison as many living beings as possible, as fast as possible (a directive implanted by its Horror creator).

Once the Enrager goes down, refer to the next section to see what could happen to the characters after the fight. In any case, the gamemaster should not reveal the Difficulty Number for the Poison Resistance Test (*Gamemaster's Guide* p.124) If the players do not yet know about the poison and all their characters have to resist against it is their Toughness (if they do not have abilities such as the Poison Resistance talent, for instance), the gamemaster should not even call for a Poison Resistance Test, but a Toughness Test—in order not to ruin the 'surprise' later on. The gamemaster may even consider making these tests in secret.



## THE ENRAGER

### Attributes

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

### Characteristics

**Initiative:** 11 (16)      **Physical Defense:** 15  
**Actions:** 2      **Spell Defense:** 15  
**Attack (S):** 17      **Social Defense:** 13  
**Damage:**      **Physical Armor:** 9  
**Tail Club (4):** 13      **Mystic Armor:** 7  
**Tail Sting (2):** 11 (poison)  
**Death:** 90      **Recovery Tests:** 6  
**Unconsciousness:** 78      **Knockdown:** 10  
**Wound Threshold:** 17      **Movement:** 7

### Powers

Durability (S), Heat Sight, Poison [Enrager's Kiss; Debilitation; SD 7; Effect Step 9; see sidebar], Silent Walk <sup>T</sup> (S): 17, Surprise Attack (S)

<sup>T</sup> Talent as power

### Loot

Poison glands containing 2D6 doses of Enrager's Kiss (see sidebar), worth 100 silver pieces per dose.

### Legend Award

Fifth Circle (Group)

### Commentary

The Enrager is a Horror construct forged by the Named Horror known as Fleshforger (see **Campaign Ideas**, p.46). It has a yellow flat body only some eight inches thick, but nearly two feet wide and three feet long. It is supported by four short legs less than two feet in length. Its small head resides directly on its body, without any neck worth mentioning. All in all, it's probably best described as a pebble on legs. Its most prominent feature, however, is a nine-foot-long tail that arches over its head to attack opponents in front of it. The end of its tail houses poison glands and a retractable stinger, three inches long. These are surrounded by a thick, protective layer of bone, making the end of its tail nearly as big as a troll's fist, able to deliver powerful, mace-like blows.

### Rules

In a fight, the Enrager prefers to use its tail as a clubbing weapon, especially if it has already injected its poison, as the stinger is quite fragile.

**Stinging Attack:** On a Tail Sting attack only, the Enrager can poison its opponent if it inflicts damage. The stinger itself is very thin, bypassing armor on a result one level lower than normally required (usually on a Good Result). However, the stinger is so fragile that it breaks off on a Pathetic Result with this attack, growing back as soon as the Enrager regains its Recovery Tests. If a Stinging Attack causes any damage, the target is subject to the Enrager's Kiss poison.

**Poison:** The Enrager's poison can be extracted from the creature and used for other purposes. See *The Enrager's Legacy*, below, for information about extracting the poison. Both inside and outside of the creature's poison glands, it uses the same mechanics. Refer to *The Enrager's Kiss* sidebar, p.38, for the effects of the poison, and to the Poison section of the *Gamemaster's Guide* p.123, for information on how to resolve it.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

Although the Enrager should not be too difficult for even a group of Initiate adepts to fight, the characters could have some problems with it. This largely depends on the circumstances of the fight. If the Enrager catches them unprepared, with perhaps a lone guard during the night, or if the group has no members of combat-oriented Disciplines in it, the Enrager could pose a greater threat. If the gamemaster fears the construct is too powerful under certain circumstances, he may remind the players to be prepared for specific situations, as they do not know what they are up against. The characters know their own world better than their players, after all.

It is possible the characters do not find the Enrager, either because they travel too far, they don't take enough interest, or for any other reason. In this case, they might be brought back on track by having someone ask them to investigate another situation where the Enrager has played a role, possibly including a number of additional victims, thereby making it clear this was no lone incident. Refer to the previous **Troubleshooting** section, p. 40.

## THE ENRAGER'S LEGACY



This section is only required in full if Vebraan survived or if one of the player characters was poisoned by the Enrager.

It is not an event or encounter chronologically following the fight with Vebraan or the Enrager, but rather a guideline to deal with the effects of the Enrager's poison. It may be needed at any point during the adventure.

If the gamemaster enjoys the role-playing possibilities offered here, he might want to arrange for one or more of the characters to be poisoned during their encounter with the Enrager. As the events and problems detailed here depend on what the characters did before and affect what they can do after the encounters with Vebraan or the Enrager, the gamemaster may have to utilize and combine the following bits and pieces in any given situation.

Note that some of the information found here may even be required *before* the characters fight the Enrager, such as when discovering that Vebraan was poisoned or treating the poison.

## SETTING THE STAGE

The events and problems detailed in this section most likely arise on two occasions: when deciding what to do with Vebraan after he has been defeated, and after the fight with the Enrager; the characters will not get to rest, even after all this. Vebraan is still affected by the poison and might pose a problem (especially when the characters need rest after a fight), and the same is true for poisoned player characters after the fight with the Horror construct. By meeting Vebraan, the characters have experienced what is waiting for them, so they can act accordingly, if they see it coming.

## THEMES AND IMAGES

Themes and images depend very much on the characters' reactions to a member of the group being poisoned or their examination of Vebraan's symptoms. Although the poison will wear off in a matter of days, the characters do not necessarily know that. If the group does not feature a character with at least tangential knowledge of Namegiver physiology, the characters might even assume the poison is fatal, since Vebraan has become worse with each day (a result of his sleeplessness and all the bad things that might have happened to him).

## BEHIND THE SCENES

This section describes ways to deal with the poison's effects on Vebraan and the characters, and might be required at any point during the adventure. However, the gamemaster may want to utilize options to expand *Betrayal's Sting* at this point (see *Aftermath*, p.46), and has to decide at what point to introduce them.

## Working the Loot

It is a good idea to use the Alchemy skill to analyze the Enrager's Kiss. Even using it to produce a treatment is possible. Doing so is not required to solve the adventure, but it can underline the usefulness of certain abilities that are not very often the center of attention. When describing the Enrager as it fights with the adventurers, the gamemaster should draw the players' attention to its tail and stinger to hint at it as something noteworthy; if the characters examine the Enrager after the fight, he should do the same (it is a pretty prominent feature of the beast, after all).

The gamemaster needs to decide how easy learning about the poison glands should be for the characters. A Skill Test against Difficulty Numbers ranging from 5 to 7 is good enough to instantly get an idea that there is something to be found on the corpse. The Difficulty Number should depend on how much the skill is related



to the task, and applicable skills can include Alchemy, Hunting, Knowledge (Animal Lore, Horror Lore, Nature Lore, Poison Lore), or Wilderness Survival (although this list is nowhere near complete). Also note that some of these skills can be defaulted to or are covered by the Half-Magic abilities of certain Disciplines. If the characters examine the construct's corpse or the poison using a suitable skill, refer to the general guidelines for Knowledge skills (*Player's Guide* p.98) to determine what they can learn. For experienced adventurers, the gamemaster may also decide that some of this is part of their common knowledge already.

To use the poison for any purpose, it has to be extracted first. This requires the poison glands to be removed from the construct's corpse without damaging them—not an easy procedure given the construction of the Enrager's tail (see **The Enrager**, p. 39). Removing the glands requires about 10 minutes of time and a successful Alchemy, Hunting, or Wilderness Survival (7) Test—although skills allowing similar procedures (experience as a cook or butcher, for example) may be applicable, requiring a Good Result at the gamemaster's discretion.

Once extracted, the poison can be analyzed according to the standard rules for the Alchemy skill (*Player's Guide* p.91). It can be used to produce new or modify existing antidotes in only 1 hour, requiring an Alchemy (12) Test. A new antidote conveys a +3 bonus to Poison Resistance Tests made, while modifying an existing antidote raises the antidote's Effect step by +3. For every dose of the poison, one antidote can be produced or modified. At the gamemaster's discretion, an Excellent Result on the Alchemy Test produces a cure: an antidote immediately neutralizing the poison. In any case, the poison only takes effect for a few days and wears off after that.

## Dealing with Vebraan

At any given time, before or after the fight with the Enrager, the characters may realize that Vebraan is poisoned, and may want to act on that knowledge. There are several possibilities to counter the poison. The most noteworthy are the Cleanse Poison Potion, Kelia's Antidote, Kelix's Poultice (*Player's Guide* p.265), and the Resist Poison spell (*Player's Guide* p.192).

**Kelia's Antidote** prevents effects of poisons, but does not completely restore the target. As a result, if Vebraan takes the antidote, his paranoia will not worsen (although it already is almost at its worst), but he won't be cured either. To be cured, Vebraan has to successfully resist the Enrager's Kiss or wait until the poison wears off.

**Kelix's Poultice** and the Resist Poison spell can actually help Vebraan shake off the effects of the poison, as they grant bonuses to Resistance Tests, albeit for a limited time only. As a debilitating poison with a Duration in days, the Enrager's Kiss can be resisted in intervals of 24 hours after injection. The bonus provided by the Resist Poison spell has to be available at the time Vebraan makes his Resistance Test, while Kelix's Poultice provides the bonus for a whole day and so guarantees it is available at the right time, though only once. Vebraan makes his Resistance Tests an hour after midnight (the time he was poisoned), so the spell or poultice must be active at that time to be of benefit. Characters who

have succeeded in a Physician Test (or a suitable Knowledge Skill Test) likely know that Resistance Tests can be made once a day, although the characters themselves obviously do not know the game mechanics. This knowledge might be explained by informed observations, for example a character might notice Vebraan starting to shiver—his body is beginning to fight the poison—and apply the healing aids at that time.

**Cleanse Poison Potions** grant an additional Resistance Test, so they can be used to give Vebraan an additional chance to shake the poison's effects. Note that this additional test can benefit from bonuses as described above.

Additionally, the characters can also find help for Vebraan in the nearby town of Escandar (see p. 44).

## If the Characters are Affected

During the fight with the Enrager, one or more of the characters could be poisoned. For diagnosing, treating, and handling the effects of the poison, use the same guidelines given for Vebraan (see above). The poison has an Onset Time of 3 hours, after which an Effect Test determines the number of days for which the character is poisoned. If the poison's effects do not come as a surprise to the characters, they have a good chance to prevent a lot of trouble. For example, an affected character may ask his companions to restrain him to prevent an attack against the rest of the group.

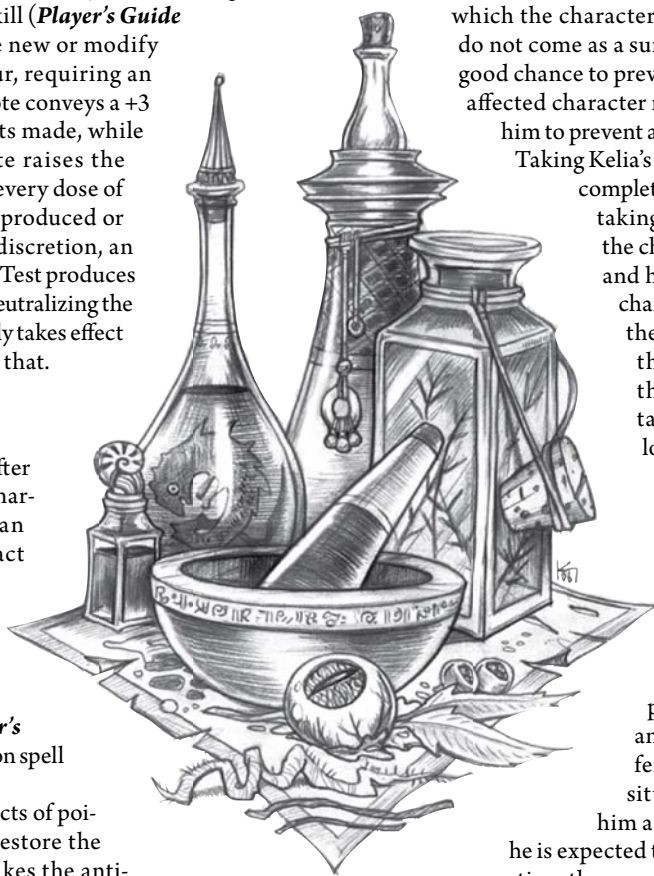
Taking Kelia's Antidote before the Onset time even completely prevents the poison's effects, and taking it early during the Duration leaves the character with a mild paranoia at best, and he may still be reasoned with! If the characters did not realize one or more of them might have been poisoned, then their companions will surely open their eyes when the Enrager's Kiss takes effect. In any case, use the following guidelines.

After being poisoned, a character does not feel any different. In fact, even if the poison takes effect and meddles with his wits, he still feels completely normal, perceiving every one of his imaginations as true. If the gamemaster wants to take the players by surprise, he should not announce that the player is feeling different. Rather, he should explain the situation to the player alone or hand him a note on what has happened or what he is expected to do. If the players are totally unsuspecting, the gamemaster can even call for Perception

Tests to create the illusion that the note is not connected to the poisoning. He may even want to hand out notes to all of the players: for the ones poisoned, describing the above; for the rest, writing down unrelated information; or for characters who previously succeeded in appropriate skill tests, earlier information about a shift in behavior on part of the poisoned characters.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

The worst thing that can happen is if the group starts some real trouble in the town or hamlet (see below) or any other community they visit as a result of being poisoned or by drawing the wrong conclusions, possibly ending in violence. That, however, is part of the adventure. Each character is free to decide how to deal with the residents of these communities, and having these people react





appropriately is important to show that any prior mistakes can influence the remainder of an entire adventure. The gamemaster should not hold back to protect the characters.

Another possibility is that of the group splitting up because of whatever happens while a member is poisoned. The gamemaster should judge if there are latent conflicts present anyway and employ the poisoning attacks of the Enrager accordingly (the beast might perceive such things with a weird sense for relationships between Namegivers—breaking them apart is its main function, after all). Such a situation can also be employed to find out how thick the group's bonds truly are—maybe the characters are ready to form a group True pattern after this experience?

## PLACES OF INTEREST

**T**his section details the town of Escandar and the outlying farming community of Mehlan's Rest a couple of days from it. The town of Escandar is the next big settlement on the road the characters are traveling, while visiting the hamlet means taking a small detour. Neither place necessarily has to be visited by the characters to conclude **Betrayal's Sting**, and at what point of their journey they might come here is uncertain. The gamemaster can also replace Escandar and the farming community with locations of his own choosing or relocate them within Barsaive (see **This is Something that Might Interest You...**, p. 33, for guidelines).

## SETTING THE STAGE

The town of Escandar is introduced to the player characters as their primary destination in **This is Something that Might Interest You...**, p. 33, while they can learn about the hamlet of Mehlan's Rest from Vebraan's journal or by discovering the small path branching off of the main road. The group can visit either community at any point after encountering Vebraan, if they do so at all.

## THEMES AND IMAGES

Themes and images for each of the two places can be found in their descriptions below. The following applies to both of them, however: the people of Escandar and Mehlan's Rest live peaceful lives far away from any of the major trouble that plagues Barsaive. There has not been hostility in this area for decades, and the wild-life is not too dangerous. The residents approach outsiders in a friendly manner, but might seem naïve to not expect anything bad to happen to them.

Compared to what the player characters might have seen in their travels, the people of Escandar and Mehlan's Rest (with the exception of Mehlan himself) give the impression of innocent children. They are not ignorant to the possibility of violence, however, but this does not necessarily help the characters either: the farmers and townsfolk might simply seek the most obvious solution, which presents the characters in a bad light. If the group drags Vebraan along and cannot explain this properly, most will probably believe that the characters are the culprits...

## MEHLAN'S REST

Mehlan's Rest is a small community at the end of a path branching out from the road to Escandar. Travel from the road takes about two hours on foot, and it is a day's walk from the cross-roads to Escandar.

The community is home to a handful of extended families of humans, about sixty people including the very young and the very old, living in a dozen medium-sized houses surrounded by a five-

foot palisade to keep animals out. The farmers are not that badly off; they had a prime pick when claiming the land. As far as farmers in the hinterlands are concerned, they are pretty wealthy.

The head of this community is Mehlan, a retired adventurer and Swordmaster. When he was weary of adventure and injured in the First Theran War, he and his (now deceased) wife retreated to this remote piece of land to found the agricultural community that would grow into the hamlet bearing Mehlan's Name. The land is fertile, irrigation draws water from several nearby creeks, and having the town of Escandar with its market nearby has bought the residents a few possessions many farmers can only dream of, like enough draft animals to plough the fields and oil-fueled lamps to illuminate the houses at night—to read books or write letters!

While Mehlan made this community prosperous, he long ago left the day-to-day business to his son Joerm, whom he sent to Throal for some business experience and dwarf education. As a result, Joerm is well versed in trading and other forms of diplomacy. He was trained to wield a weapon by his father, but does not share the magic of the Swordmaster Discipline.

The other inhabitants of the hamlet are simple farmers, but they have also been trained at arms. They are better educated than most Barsaivian farmers, and several of them have spent a year or two in one of Barsaive's larger cities. They leave dealing with the characters to Mehlan and Joerm, but are quick to support their headmen if there is any sign of trouble.

Should the characters arrive during the daytime, Mehlan is the only adult present, teaching a group of eight children. Joerm and the rest of the farmers come home from the fields in the late afternoon.

## MEHLAN NINTH CIRCLE HUMAN SWORDMASTER

### Attributes

DEX (12): 5      STR (15): 6      TOU (11): 5  
PER (16): 7      WIL (14): 6      CHA (18): 7

### Characteristics

Initiative: 5\*\*\*      Physical Defense: 7  
Physical Armor: 0 [11]<sup>A</sup>      Spell Defense: 9  
Mystic Armor: 2 [3]<sup>A</sup>      Social Defense: 12  
Death: 98\*      Recovery Tests: 2  
Unconsciousness: 80\*      Knockdown: 6\*\*  
Wound Threshold: 8      Movement: 6

### Karma Points: 45/45

\* Modified by Blood Magic

\*\* Mehlan knows the Wound Balance talent

\*\*\* Mehlan knows the Tiger Spring talent; Initiative Step does not change when he uses his chainmail (-1 penalty) and spear (+1 bonus) together

<sup>A</sup> Statistics in brackets apply when Mehlan dons his chainmail.

### Swordmaster Talents (Knacks)

Air Sailing<sup>V</sup> (5): 11  
Climbing<sup>V</sup> (5): 10  
Disarm<sup>D</sup> (9): 14  
Durability (7/6) (10): 10  
Etiquette (9): 16  
First Impression (9): 16  
Great Leap<sup>V</sup> (5): 10  
Haggle (9): 16  
Heartening Laugh<sup>D</sup> (9): 16  
Impressive Strike<sup>D</sup> (9): 14  
Item History<sup>V</sup> (8): 15  
Karma Ritual<sup>D</sup> (9): 9  
Lasting Impression (9): 16  
Leadership<sup>V</sup> (5): 12  
Maneuver<sup>D</sup> (9): 14  
Melee Weapons<sup>D</sup> (10): 15 (Armor Beater,<sup>D</sup> Reflect Blow)  
Navigation<sup>V</sup> (5): 12  
Parry<sup>D</sup> (9): 14 (Arrow Cutting)  
Pin (9): 14  
Research<sup>V</sup> (8): 15



Resist Taunt<sup>D</sup> (9): 15  
 Riposte<sup>D</sup> (9): 14 (Claw Riposte)  
*Second Attack*<sup>D</sup> (9): 14  
 Second Weapon<sup>D</sup> (9): 14  
 Tactics<sup>V</sup> (5): 12  
 Taunt<sup>D</sup> (10): 17  
 Thread Weaving (Weapon Weaving)<sup>D</sup> (9): 16  
 Tiger Spring (9): 9  
 Versatility (9): 9  
 Windcatcher<sup>V</sup> (5): 11  
 Winning Smile (9): 16  
 Wound Balance (9): 15  
<sup>D</sup> Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)  
<sup>I</sup> Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)  
<sup>V</sup> Talent learned through Versatility

#### Skills

Airships<sup>K</sup> (7): 14  
 Animal Handling (4): 10  
 Anticipate Blow (5): 12  
 Botany<sup>K</sup> (5): 12  
 Conversation (5): 12  
 Creature Lore<sup>K</sup> (5): 12  
 Escandar Town<sup>K</sup> (3): 10  
 Engaging Banter (5): 12  
 Farming<sup>K</sup> (5): 12  
 Horror Lore<sup>K</sup> (5): 12  
 Legendary Spears<sup>K</sup> (7): 14  
 Mapmaking<sup>A</sup> (5): 12  
 Mehlan's Rest History<sup>K</sup> (3): 10  
 Military Organization<sup>K</sup> (7): 14  
 Read/Write Language (4): 11—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human, Troll, T'skrang)  
 Speak Language (6): 13—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human, *Sperethiel*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang)  
 Storytelling<sup>A</sup> (5): 12  
 Throwing Weapons (4): 9  
 Thunder Mountain Trollmoots<sup>K</sup> (7): 14  
 Trick Riding (4): 9  
 Wilderness Survival (5): 12  
<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill



#### Armor

**Thread Chainmail** (Rank 4; Phys 11; Myst 1; Init 1)

#### Weapons

**Thread Crystal Spear** (Rank 8; Damage 14; Range 13–25 yards/6–12 hexes; Initiative Step +1; Lower the Result Level for Armor-Defeating Hits by one (from Excellent to Good normally); 1 Strain Point: next Damage Test +3 bonus; 2 Strain Points: PhysDef +2; SpellDef +2 for 8 rounds or until the wielder makes an Attack Test with the spear; 3 Strain Points: next Damage Test that scores 1 Damage Point causes an additional Wound; 5 Strain Points: All allies within 100 yards/50 hexes gain +1 to Attack Step and Initiative Step, PhysDef, SpellDef, and SocDef. Increase the Result Level to hit the wielder by one (from Average to Good normally); for 8 rounds or until the wielder makes an Attack Test with the spear; Blood Oath with Thunder Mountains trollmoot leader (2 Permanent Damage), Weapon Bond (2 Blood Magic Damage), **Quarterstaff** (Damage 10)

#### Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Belt Pouch, Climbing Kit, Farming Tools, Forge Tools, Last Chance Salve, Mapmaking Tools, Navigation Charts (in Map/Scroll Case), Traveler's Garb, Writing Kit

#### Loot

250 silver pieces

#### Legend Award

Ninth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

#### Notes

As a human, Mehlan possesses the Versatility racial ability. Mehlan has used the Versatility talent to learn the Air Sailing, Climbing, Great Leap, Item History, Leadership, Navigation, Research, Tactics, and Windcatcher talents.

#### Swordmaster Abilities

**Second Circle:** +1 Social Defense  
**Fourth Circle:** Karma on Dexterity-only Tests  
**Fifth Circle:** Flourish  
**Sixth Circle:** Karma on Charisma-only Tests  
**Seventh Circle:** Karma on melee weapon Damage Tests  
**Eighth Circle:** +1 Social Defense  
**Ninth Circle:** Karma on Recovery Tests; Weapon Bond

#### Commentary

As the founder of Mehlan's Rest, the old Swordmaster of some seventy years is quite protective of the hamlet and its people. However, he is also down to earth and easy going. All-too-ordinary problems do not matter that much any more once one has reached a certain age. Most things can be fixed. Then again, there is a certain way things are done. From simple greetings to challenges of battles to the death—all these things should follow a code. It is a matter of mutual respect. If you cannot behave yourself, cannot carry yourself with the dignity of a Namegiver, you are not worthy of a Namegiver's attention. Mehlan had hoped that a good education would teach this to his son Joerm, but it seems that it only made him feel superior. Sometimes, Mehlan feels closer to the other farmers of the hamlet than to his own son. They are less educated, but so much wiser in his opinion. Should a situation arise in which Mehlan can foresee trouble and has time to prepare, he might arm himself with his old spear and probably also don his armor. If he does, the rest of the farmers likely do the same. Mehlan considers himself a Spearmaster specialist.

## JOERM

#### Attributes

DEX (9): 4	STR (13): 6	TOU (8): 4
PER (15): 6	WIL (12): 5	CHA (9): 4

#### Characteristics

Initiative: 4	Physical Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 0	Spell Defense: 8
Mystic Armor: 1	Social Defense: 6
Death: 28	Recovery Tests: 2
Unconsciousness: 19	Knockdown: 5
Wound Threshold: 7	Movement: 6

#### Skills

Animal Handling (4): 9  
 Anticipate Blow (3): 9  
 Botany<sup>K</sup> (3): 9  
 Conversation (3): 7  
 Creature Lore<sup>K</sup> (3): 9  
 Escandar Trade Routes<sup>K</sup> (3): 9





Etiquette (5): 9  
 Farming<sup>K</sup> (3): 9  
 Haggle (5): 9  
 Legends and Heroes<sup>K</sup> (3): 9  
 Mehlan's Rest Finances<sup>K</sup> (3): 9  
 Maneuver (5): 9  
 Melee Weapons (6): 10  
 Parry (5): 9  
 Poetry<sup>A</sup> (4): 8  
 Read/Write Language (2): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human)  
 Riposte (5): 9  
 Speak Language (4): 10—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human, Sperethiel, T'skrang)  
 Storytelling<sup>A</sup> (3): 7  
 Taunt (6): 10  
 Throwing Weapons (4): 8  
 Trick Riding (4): 8  
 Wilderness Survival (3): 9  
<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

#### Weapons

**Longspear** (Forged +5; Damage 16), 2 × **Spears** (Damage 10; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

#### Equipment

Belt Pouch, Farming Tools, Traveler's Garb, Writing Kit

#### Loot

25 silver pieces, 35 copper pieces

#### Legend Award

Third Circle

#### Commentary

Already in his mid forties, Joerm is the day-to-day leader of Mehlan's Rest, while his father is the wise old man everybody goes to for personal advice. Joerm is well educated and well spoken, and while those who surround him are not typical farmers or people from some backwater village, he stands out even from them. For the most part, this is an active effort of his. If he meets someone equally interested in elevated conversation, he seizes the opportunity to converse on a high level, but likely seems arrogant or condescending in doing so.

While Joerm thinks he is on par with his father and has the same background, he has not been to war with the Therans, has not fought Horrors, and has neither suffered nor triumphed significantly. In the end, he will seem unremarkable to most adepts, contrary to the way he carries himself. Should Joerm take part in any conversation with the characters and his father, he tries to take the lead in it, eager to prove himself, and speaks out of turn even if ignored.

## HUMAN FARMER

#### Attributes

DEX (10): 5      STR (11): 5      TOU (11): 5  
 PER (13): 6      WIL (12): 5      CHA (9): 4

#### Characteristics

Initiative: 5      Physical Defense: 6  
 Physical Armor: 0      Spell Defense: 7  
 Mystic Armor: 1      Social Defense: 6  
 Death: 32      Recovery Tests: 2  
 Unconsciousness: 24      Knockdown: 5  
 Wound Threshold: 8      Movement: 6

#### Skills

Animal Handling (4): 9  
 Avoid Blow (2): 7  
 Botany<sup>K</sup> (3): 9  
 Creature Lore<sup>K</sup> (3): 9  
 Farming<sup>K</sup> (3): 9  
 Fishing (1): 7  
 Hunting (3): 8  
 Mehlan's Rest Area<sup>K</sup> (3): 9  
 Melee Weapons (4): 9  
 Missile Weapons (3): 8  
 Read/Write Language (2): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human)  
 Speak Language (2): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human)  
 Swimming (2): 7  
 Wilderness Survival (3): 9  
 Wood Carving<sup>A</sup> (1): 5  
<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

## ADVENTURE HOOK

The rumor of Therans active in the area is true, although they do not have anything to do with Vebraan's madness. While in Escandar (probably after **Betrayal's Sting** is completed), the characters are approached by a Throalic merchant coming through. The merchant is in fact an operative of the Eye of Throal (see *Nations of Barsaive Volume One*, p.69), sent out to investigate rumors of Theran activity in the area. He sees the player characters as an opportunity to gather information without blowing his cover, and will reward them handsomely for venturing into the foothills of the Thunder Mountains to find out what the Therans are up to.

If the characters take up the offer, they can ask the hunters active in the area about Theran activity, and several reports of Theran airship activity can be used to calculate a destination for the airships from their respective courses. It still is a large area to search, but eventually the group can find a small Theran camp used as a base of operations for expeditions into the mountains. Either by interrogating a captured Theran Elementalist from the camp or stealing the Therans' documents, the characters find out that the expedition was sent to determine if the rare phenomenon of the thunder in the Thunder Mountains can be used as a weapon: the thunder sometimes deafens everybody in a large area for a couple of days, and creating this effect by any other means would be a great asset in mass engagements—an entire army deafened would be much more easily defeated.



#### Weapons

**Dagger** (Damage 7; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), **Hoe** (Damage 9; Improvised Weapon), **Shortbow** (Damage 8; Range 30–60 yards/15–30 hexes), Quiver (w/20 shortbow arrows)

#### Equipment

Belt Pouch, Carving Tools, Farming Tools, Fishing Kit, Peasant's Garb

#### Loot

8 copper pieces

#### Legend Award

First Circle

#### Commentary

The typical farmer from Mehlan's Rest is proud of his community and reassured of his peers' abilities and willingness to stand for him. Mehlan has inspired the community to form a deep bond, and while the Swordmaster holds no particular position, the farmers see him as the wise elder that deserves to lead them for all he has done for them.

### Paranoid at the Hamlet

The hamlet is not the place to solve the mystery of the Enrager. It is a place where the characters can find confirmation that whatever happened to Vebraan happened after he was there—as well as a place where they can get into trouble by accusing the wrong people.

If the characters leave the impression that they suspect the farmers of having poisoned Vebraan, Mehlan does not take any accusation lightly—the characters pose a challenge to him, and it has been many years since he has had anyone disturb his peace. Although he cannot even walk straight any more, he carries a quarterstaff to support himself that he can bring to bear to teach any offending characters a lesson. Unfriendliness or lack of manners might warrant the same response from him (no outright attack, just a 'friendly call to etiquette' with the end of his staff) after a subtle warning.

It is also possible the characters visit Mehlan's Rest while under the effects of the Enrager's poison, or bring the paranoid Vebraan with them. This could develop into a nasty situation very quickly. Should the group arrive with one or more restrained individuals, the characters had better have a good explanation, especially if one of the restrained Namegivers is Vebraan—the kind merchant who was there not a week ago. The farmers are willing to care for the poisoned Vebraan if they believe the characters have a sufficient reason to not take the dwarf along, but make it clear they have no way of treating him. They may also refer the group to the temple in the town of Escandar, below. They will not do the same for a poisoned player character, having no way to restrain an adept. If the gamemaster wants to expand the adventure (see the **Oh No, it Moves!** sidebar, p. 37), Mehlan's Rest can be a place to work with.

## THE TOWN OF ESCANDAR

Escandar is a small town situated approximately halfway on the trade route between Travar and Urupa. While in past years that trade route was of little importance (with merchants favoring the river to transport goods between Travar and Urupa), the Therans' return and subsequent introduction of new tolls on the Serpent River's south reach by their K'tenshin allies has revived the land route to a certain extent. It is still primarily used for trade going into and out of the region, but sees more merchants and caravans coming through with every month. The town of Escandar draws its economic power from its position along the road, where it serves as a welcome rest to travelers, lone traders, and caravans. A small trading company buys raw materials and natural products from producers in the surrounding area and re-sells them to the caravans of bigger companies that come through with increased frequency.

The town existed before the Scourge and was re-settled when the inhabitants' ancestors left their kaer in 1432 TH. The opening of the kaer saw an exodus of its residents to the city of Travar and later the emerging Urupa, but a good deal of daring kaer-dwellers stayed

## ADVENTURE HOOK

With more and more trade coming through Escandar, the town's citizens Skeljar, Linsiel, and Haars have formed a trade council in the hopes of promoting their town as a way station for larger caravans. Each one of them has something to gain in respect of local trade, but they need a partner on the outside who can bring caravans through on a regular basis, because their businesses do not allow them to be active outside of Escandar at the moment (they would have to invest heavily in their current operations for their plan to work already, expanding their facilities and stocks).

They ask the player characters to travel to Travar and Urupa as their representatives, advertising Escandar to trade companies running caravans. They can probably even convince one or two to favor the caravan route between Travar and Urupa over the Serpent River route because of the recent trouble with the Theran behemoth.

The characters have to look for likely prospects and do their best to advertise the services of Escandar's trade council to be successful on this mission.

behind in this remote place to become the foundation of this town that numbers 600 today, with more exploring and taking residence in the surrounding area. For these reasons, many Escandarians have family ties in Travar, Urupa, and among the many Namegivers who live in the larger area as farmers, hunters, or gatherers (or a mix of these occupations).

With only about 600 mostly human residents, Escandar does not maintain a watch or professional administration, but the people here watch out for each other, and the three inns are always filled with some wilderness-hardened individuals who are in town for a day or two. Most are friends or distant family with the townsfolk and are willing to come to their aid. With more and more trade coming through town, there has been debate whether or not the community should elect or commission someone to deal with outsiders in an official manner, but so far the innkeepers and merchants of Escandar have been proficient in explaining to visitors the way the town works, and the townsfolk have trusted this arrangement to keep the peace. In case of conflict between inhabitants of the town, they often turn to the questors of the temple (see below), which is also a place the player characters can turn to for help.

### Investigating Vebraan

To find out more about Vebraan's stay here, the player characters had best talk to the town's merchants and innkeepers.

Vebraan stayed at the Golden Stack for one night. It is run by an ork Named Haars, who remembers Vebraan as a quiet customer should the group ask, but he wants to know why the characters want to know before he answers any questions. He reacts positively if he learns what has happened to the dwarf and that the group wants to help him, as do most of the townsfolk. The Golden Stack is the only inn to have rooms for travelers and is mostly frequented by traveling merchants and Namegivers from the surrounding area who do not have any ties with the townsfolk. Those who have ties in town frequent the other two inns and stay with friends or relatives for the night, but none of them have met Vebraan. The other inns are the Red Hill, kept by the human Lisslaa, and the Soaring Dragon, Named for the alleged sighting of a dragon by its human proprietor, Mankall. Vebraan has not been to either of these inns.



There is a human grocer by the Name of Skeljar, the human smith Hekrath, and the small trading company led by the elf Linsiel (who moved here from Urupa three decades ago). Vebraan has done business with all of them (refer to **Vebraan's Diary**, p. 89, for a few of these details), but none can give any hints as to what might have happened that made him go crazy. They otherwise react as the innkeeper (see above), and can all refer the characters to the inn Vebraan stayed at for the night. Other inhabitants of the town might have seen Vebraan, but did not spend enough time talking to him to be of any help. They refer the player characters to the merchants or Haars.

In the end, Escandar is as much a dead end as Mehlan's Rest (see above), a hint that whatever happened to Vebraan happened after he was there. The player characters can of course inquire as to current Horror activities in the area, and the hunters visiting Escandar seem a prime source of information for this (move on to **Horror Stories**, below). As with Mehlan's Rest, Escandar is also a place to get into trouble if the characters draw the wrong conclusions...

### Paranoid in Escandar

Escandar is a much more open community than Mehlan's Rest, and it is likely the player characters expect a single individual to have made Vebraan become mad. However, there is simply no way they can find evidence proving this (as there is none), and if they accuse someone, the other townsfolk are unlikely to believe them. The citizens explain to the characters that a lot of things can happen in the wilderness, especially if one travels alone.

Again, there is the possibility of poisoned characters causing trouble. And while Escandar does not have high-Circle adepts like Mehlan to protect itself, there are a handful of less powerful adepts and trained fighters among the visiting hunters, and the townsfolk themselves have overwhelming numbers on their side. Should any trouble arise in Escandar, the gamemaster should tell a poisoned character that he is surrounded on all sides and harshly outnumbered, and that the best solution is to flee. This might not be true for all characters, however.

### Horror Stories

If the player characters try to learn more about the activities of Horrors or plant and animal life in the area that might give a clue as to Vebraan's condition, they had best turn to one of the visiting hunters. None of them have ever heard of something like this, however, and none can give any confirmation of Horror activity. They are, however, eager to share a tale. The gamemaster may pick any number of the tales and rumors listed below as red herrings or to make the encounters livelier.

*"There is an unknown type of mountain lion living in the Thunder Mountains that is said to travel all the way to the trade route and attack travelers. Those who have seen it say it has greenish fur and eyes shining an eerie blue."*

*"This area is the logical direction for the Therans to expand their hold on Barsaive. They send scouting parties into the Mountains, but it seems they do not dare to venture too far. Being evil people, they might have captured Vebraan and... changed him..."*

*"Old stories from before the Scourge tell of a Horror that harassed the builders of the old kaer. Every full moon, it would come out to take one of the workers, returning him changed, each in a very different way. A group of adepts managed to put an end to this, but it is rumored that they only drove the Horror off, and did not kill it."*

*"A similar story to that of Vebraan has been heard of from Urupa. There, a husband attacked his wife for no good reason, killing her. The husband has relatives in Escandar, maybe they know more..."*

### At the Temple

Escandar is home to a mixed temple of the Passions, where there are three questors present, living on the temple's premises. There are two young human questors of Astendar, Lelaan and Horoon, who seem to be a couple, but follow some other lines of business (if the gossip the characters can hear from out-of-town patrons at the local inns is true). Then there is Marka, an elderly dwarf who seems to be a stereotypical questor of Garlen. Her matronly nature reminds any dwarf character of his mother, and she seems to be able to handle any problem they have, including poison. Marka is well respected in Escandar, and should the group get into good standing with her, this will influence relations with any other inhabitant should the characters have worsened some attitudes. If the characters seek help from her, they receive it without any conditions, though donations are always welcome. Marka is skilled in alchemy and is a good physician, which enables her to diagnose Vebraan's or the characters' condition as a poisoning. She has all the necessary ingredients to devise a cure (see **The Enrager's Legacy**, p. 39), but it helps if the characters can provide the Enrager's poison itself or any knowledge of the construct. Marka can also sell the player characters healing aids.

### MARKA DWARF QUESTOR OF GARLEN

3

#### Attributes

DEX (11): 5 STR (13): 6 TOU (14): 6  
PER (15): 6 WIL (14): 6 CHA (13): 6

#### Characteristics

Initiative: 5 Physical Defense: 7  
Physical Armor: 0 Spell Defense: 8  
Mystic Armor: 2 Social Defense: 7  
Death: 36 Recovery Tests: 3  
Unconsciousness: 28 Knockdown: 6  
Wound Threshold: 10 Movement: 5

#### Talents

Questor of Garlen (5): 5—Comfort, Heal, Seal Home (5): 11

#### Skills

Alchemy (4): 10  
Alchemy and Potions<sup>K</sup> (4): 10  
Animal Handling (3): 9  
Botany<sup>K</sup> (4): 10  
Creature Lore<sup>K</sup> (3): 9  
Craftsman (Woodworker)<sup>A</sup> (1): 6  
Melee Weapons (2): 7  
Physician (6): 12  
Read/Write Language (1): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic)  
Speak Language (1): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic)  
Wood Carving<sup>A</sup> (1): 7  
<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

#### Weapons

Dagger (Damage 8; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), Quarterstaff (Damage 10)

#### Equipment

Alchemy Kit (at the temple), Belt Pouch, 3 × Booster Potions, Carving Tools, Craftsman Tools, Healing Kit (3 uses), Peasant's Garb, Physician Kit (3 uses), Small Sack (with Medicinal Herbs), Symbol to Garlen

#### Loot

50 silver pieces

#### Legend Award

None

#### Notes

As an dwarf, Marka has the Heat Sight racial ability. Marka has 1,000 Devotion Points to Garlen.



## What About the Job?

The initial need for adepts by the trapper Nosleth presented at the start of the adventure (refer to **This is Something that Might Interest You...**, p. 33) is left open for the gamemaster as a wildcard. The gamemaster can decide to make it anything he wants, but it can also serve his needs to bring the characters back on track.

If the characters rushed past the Enrager after their encounter with Vebraan, Nosleth can ask them to investigate some strange creature he has seen in the foothills near a popular campsite. It is the Enrager, but Nosleth has not told anyone, because he does not want to scare people.

If the characters have not been to Mehlan's Rest, and the gamemaster wants to explore the **Oh No, it Moves!** option, p.37, Nosleth can send them to investigate the strange behavior of the farmers at the hamlet.

If the characters come to him after meeting the Enrager, after the initial adventure is concluded, it can turn out that this was what Nosleth originally had in mind, and the characters have already completed his task. Of course, he could also be the one who brings the Thera's machinations presented in the Adventure Hook on p. 43 to the characters' attention.

Another option to make the job offer come true is to utilize the **Mountain Rangers** campaign idea presented on p. 47 and have the player characters search the foothills of the Thunder Mountains for more Horror constructs.

Nosleth can be present in Escandar at the gamemaster's discretion. He owns a small cabin south of the city, but is out in the wild at any given time to check his snares and hunt. He visits Escandar regularly to trade fur and meat for other necessities of life, but does not have a timetable.

## AFTERMATH

If run as presented here, **Betrayal's Sting** does not have any larger influence on Barsaive. If the Enrager gets away, it wreaks havoc on a number of poor Namegivers, but its goals do not differ from the machinations of other Horrors and constructs still roaming the province. It is active in wild and remote areas and hopes its victims will reach one of the bigger cities one day, but even if they do, it is unlikely to be of consequence in the greater scheme of events. What becomes of the player characters, however, is an entirely different story. **Betrayal's Sting** might see them end up as culprits in a case of murder, even a massacre, if they are poisoned. Although the poison will eventually wear off, they might suffer a bad reputation in southern Barsaive if poisoned characters cannot be held in check by their peers.

The adventure might even cause mistrust inside the group, depending on how well the characters can cope with what happened—if one character cannot see that another's actions were beyond that character's control, or if a poisoned character is not happy with the way he was treated. After all, the group is supposed to help each other and be loyal, and if an unpoisoned character tried to save his own hide rather than stand with his poisoned pal, that unspoken contract was broken.

The gamemaster may decide to make use of one of the Campaign Ideas below or devise his own means to expand on **Betrayal's Sting**.

## AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

As suggested in the **Gamemastering** chapter of the *Gamemaster's Guide*, p.98, **Betrayal's Sting** awards a number of Legend Awards to the player characters. A single Legend Award should award a number of Legend Points as determined by the character's

Circle. For example, a Seventh Circle character receives from 1,650 to 4,900 Legend Points per Legend Award, and a total of two to five Legend Awards per game session. In the final game session that concludes the adventure, the characters may gain an extra Legend Award for completing the overall adventure goal. The characters earn a Legend Award for Conflicts in sessions they fight opponents and creatures presented here.

The adventure goal for **Betrayal's Sting** is to discover the Enrager's existence and prevent it from doing further harm.

Harvesting the Enrager's poison is a suitable candidate for awarding Legend Points for finding treasure. Players whose characters' have been poisoned should receive a Legend Award for roleplaying for their characters appropriate to their performance, but the gamemaster should not forget that the same is true for the unpoisoned characters' responses. Characters who contributed significantly to finding a cure to the poison (see **Working the Loot**, p. 39) might receive Legend Points for individual deeds. An additional Legend Award should be granted if the group handled Vebraan in an exemplary manner, trying everything in its power to save him.

## CAMPAIGN IDEAS

This section offers some loose ends gamemasters may use to weave the adventure into their own campaign or to expand on the events presented in **Betrayal's Sting**.

### The Grey Eminence

Horror constructs don't just fall from the sky; there has to be a Horror involved. For the events in **Betrayal's Sting** as presented, it is assumed that the Horror has moved on—probably to plant another Enrager elsewhere. The group might realize this and try to find this Horror on its own. After all, the Enrager cannot have been here for very long; people would have noticed. As a result, the Horror cannot be far.

Gamemasters might want to introduce the Horror because the group simply is up to the task of defeating it. It might either lurk nearby, following the characters or other victims of the Enrager to feed on their troubles, or the group might get its attention by defeating the construct. If the characters are not up to the task yet, they can continue to come across stronger and stronger constructs of Fleshforger until they grow to the point where they can face the Horror directly.

## FLESHFORGER

### Attributes

DEX: 14	STR: 17	TOU: 15
PER: 14	WIL: 21	CHA: 13

### Characteristics

Initiative: 17	Physical Defense: 18
Actions: 3	Spell Defense: 18
Attack (7): 21	Social Defense: 17
Damage:	Physical Armor: 17
Claws (6): 23	Mystic Armor: 17
Death: 155	Recovery Tests: 7
Unconsciousness: NA	Knockdown: 17
Wound Threshold: 22	Movement: 5
Karma Points: 20/30	Karma Step: 10

### Powers

Astral Camouflage (3): 24, Astral Sight (3): 17, Corrupt Karma (3): 24, Durability (11), Forge Horror Construct (6): 20, Horror Mark (3): 17, Silent Walk <sup>T</sup> (5): 19, Spellcasting (7): 21, Thread Weaving (Nethermancy) <sup>T</sup> (7): 21, Thought Worm (3): 17

<sup>T</sup> Talent as power

### Spells

Nethermancy (Seventh Circle)



**Legend Award**

Twelfth Circle (Group)

**Commentary**

Fleshforger is a very powerful Bloatform, although it does not appear as bloated and repulsive as most of its peers. Rather, it looks like a Namegiver of human build, but the size of a troll and with yellow skin covered in blisters. Remarkable are its enormous hands, double the size of a troll's and ending in vicious claws. It is these hands Fleshforger physically uses to create Horror constructs out of dead bodies, burying them deep in flesh, bone, and gut to shape its vile creations. They are infused with vile magic, and deform flesh on direct contact rather than ripping it.

Fleshforger is fascinated by Namegivers' ability to create, design, and bring life into the world. It tries to mimic these abilities by designing new constructs, and in turn receives power from them. It considers itself to be an artist among the Horrors, striving for the perfect tool, not satisfied with the constructs known of the past and still forged by other Horrors.

Fleshforger sometimes follows its new constructs to see them in action, to see what it can do better. It normally does not interfere in any fights its constructs fight, because this would not allow the Horror to judge their effectiveness. Fleshforger is a subtle Horror, and can satisfy its need for causing pain by knowing its constructs are out there, and occasionally witnessing the pain and destruction they cause.

**Rules**

Whenever a construct forged by Fleshforger causes someone to die, whether directly killing a Namegiver or bringing a Namegiver to kill another, Fleshforger instantly recovers one Karma Point, up to a maximum of 30. It also instantly learns the location of the corpse, and often travels there to use it to forge the next construct.

Fleshforger depends on its constructs to remain in the physical world. If it does not receive a Karma Point through the link with one of its constructs for a year and a day, Fleshforger will be cast back to its native netherworld.

Due to the same link, Fleshforger's constructs count as Major Pattern Items for the Horror. At the gamemaster's discretion, exceptionally long-lived constructs may count as Core Pattern Items for the Horror.

**Benefactors**

In the event Vebraan dies, he leaves behind a family in Throal: a wife and two kids, as mentioned in his diary (see p. 89). The group may decide to deliver the bad news of the dwarf's death, or the characters might worry that his family will feel animosity towards them because Vebraan's death was the group's fault.

The group might also help Vebraan's family financially, which could develop a relationship for the remainder of the characters' careers. It is a responsibility, but can of course be interpreted as a heroic act and good roleplaying. This relationship can also be advantageous to the players in some occasions, for example if they need a place to hide in Throal. If contact with Vebraan's family becomes a regular occasion, the gamemaster can use it as a starting point for new adventures, bringing the characters into ordinary situations to see how they resolve them by an adept's means.

**Scapegoats**

Even if the group does not deliver the news of Vebraan's death, his family might still hear about it, eventually learning the characters' role in the events. Vebraan's wife, Fabra, might hold them responsible and somehow manage to gather the money or influence necessary to take revenge. The group may be faced with a hired assassin or another group of adepts pursuing the righteous path of bringing the "murderers" to justice, or Fabra might just turn the group's stay in Throal into a nightmare. The characters can try to escape her wrath, or try to resolve the situation by some other means.

**ADVENTURE HOOK**

The gamemaster can have Marka (see p.45) send the player characters on a mission to collect a rare herb found only in the Thunder Mountains. The herb is needed for treating the Enrager's Kiss, and the characters must climb high into the mountains to collect it (possibly facing green-furred mountain lions, see **Horror Stories**, p.45). This herb is also among the favorite foods of the vetta in these mountains, adding additional challenge to the mission.

This adventure hook is best employed when no member of the group is poisoned so everybody has a chance to participate. Another option for a similar mission is if the characters are in Marka's debt after completing **Betrayal's Sting**, they can hardly turn down her request for help after she depleted her healing aids for them.

The same is true if the characters caused a death in any other community due to being poisoned themselves or acting the wrong way during their investigations. They might end up being wanted criminals, having to redeem themselves.

**Mountain Rangers**

The Horror responsible for placing the Enrager near Escandar might have left more than just the one beast behind. It might have used the mountains as a base of operations or a "construct laboratory" for some time, and the nearby foothills of the Thunder Mountains might be crawling with Horror constructs of all types. If not eliminated, they might become a threat to the town, hamlet, and hunters in the wilderness soon.

The characters might suspect this themselves, or might be made aware of the possibility by the townsfolk or Nosleth, the trapper who sent for adepts in the first place.

In this scenario, the gamemaster can lay a trace of Horror constructs through the mountains, and it is possible it eventually ends at the Horror's lair. As such, this option can be combined with the **The Grey Eminence** campaign idea (see p. 46). A group with characters proficient in Tracking and Horror Lore might see this as a special challenge, and in these cases an emphasis should be placed on finding the constructs.

This scenario also poses a great opportunity to engage the characters in a series of smaller skirmishes, testing their endurance and ability to equip and prepare themselves for such a challenge. If they succeed, they are sure to receive the gratitude of the townsfolk and local hunters.



# A TEAR FOR JASPREE

*Jaspre understands killing to survive. Sometimes you eat; sometimes you are eaten. But someone is torturing and killing Jaspre's children for sport and profit. Jaspre will not allow this to go unpunished. As his questor, I am charged with finding the sadistic murderer and bringing him to justice.*

• KARTHALUS, QUESTOR OF JASPREE •

**A** **Tear for Jaspre** is a short adventure scenario designed for three to five Novice (Second to Fourth Circle) adepts of any Discipline. In this adventure, the characters discover short-sighted greed, confront one of Barsaive's most dangerous predators, and become the instruments of a Passion's wrath. In the process they encounter some unlikely allies and meet a village with its own story to tell—a village in which they get in trouble if they ask too many questions, but which could also serve as a safe haven in the future.

## RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

**A** **Tear for Jaspre** is presented as a series of events, broken down into key scenes that are played in a particular sequence. Although the Shard is designed to lead from one scene into the next, gamemasters can alter the key scenes to suit their campaign. Each scene is described for the gamemaster, who should use the information given to run each section. There is little text to be read aloud to the players, meaning the gamemaster has to describe many of the scenes to the characters as he sees fit. Where possible the text describes the terrain and areas the characters encounter, but much of the detail is left to the gamemaster to devise.

Each encounter contains four sections: **Setting the Stage** contains a narrative description that the gamemaster may read aloud to the players, **Themes and Images** helps the gamemaster set the mood and pacing for a particular encounter, and **Behind the Scenes** explains what is really going on in each one. The final section of each encounter, **Troubleshooting**, offers suggestions to help the gamemaster get the adventure back on track should things go awry.

The encounters in this adventure are designed to be challenging for Novice characters. Some of the encounters may appear to be difficult, but many tricky situations can be avoided with a little planning. If the gamemaster feels that the adventure is too hard, it can be modified to suit the group's style of play. In some scenes, characters standing their ground and meeting their adversaries head-on may well result in the death of the entire group. If this seems to be the case, reduce the number of opponents or their Step Numbers. Keep in mind, Barsaive is a dangerous place and discretion would aid young adventurers well.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Espagra are known across the land as voracious beasts that attack any creature they come across. There is nowhere that one can go to escape this plague on Barsaive. Every year, during the months of Charassa and Rua, espagra migrate to the high peaks of the mountains to mate and bear offspring. During this time, Barsaive gets a reprieve from

espagra attacks until they descend back to the lowlands to find food for themselves and their hatchlings. Famished from the long mating cycle, espagra attack prey indiscriminately, and those that live near the mountains know to watch the skies at that time of year.

In the bustling city-states of Barsaive, the elite strive to outmatch one another by displaying impressive acquisitions and elaborate playthings. Fashion is always a high priority. Those of status, or those who pretend they have status, constantly attempt to outdo their peers in the fashion game. Espagra has always been a desirable fashion in these privileged circles, and azure cloaks of espagra hide can be purchased in any major city.

In the city of Iopos, the Denairastas recently dazzled their visitors by wearing dresses of espagra hide so beautiful it would make Queen Alachia green with envy. Because tanning espagra hide is a difficult process, the material is very rare and expensive. Soon people began requesting articles made from espagra hide, from the simplest of accessories to entire outfits. Word went out and the price of espagra increased even more.

Bergot, a dwarf Thief adept, aware of the demand for espagra hide, concocted a scheme to become rich off its sale. Discovering that espagra would eat anything when coming down off the mountain, Bergot used his knowledge of plants to poison small animals. While the poison was not lethal, it was extremely painful to animals and made them appear wounded. His men would then stake the beasts to the ground. Hungry espagra would find the wounded animals and devour them. This would soon make the espagra very ill and Bergot's men could easily kill them.

After a number of failed attempts at tanning, Bergot sought a professional tanner. He met with several candidates, but none could guarantee success because of the difficulty in trapping the elemental air in the hides. He finally heard of Urzon, a tanner in the village of Safeway renowned for his ability to tan exotic creatures. Bergot secretly arranged for Urzon to skin the espagra for him while he sent others to contact various merchants to find buyers for the hides. Unfortunately for Bergot, the time that it had taken to kill, gather, and transport the espagra to the tanner had made some of the beasts unsuitable for tanning. Unwilling to lose more of the beasts in transport, Bergot kidnapped Urzon so that he could tan the hides as soon as the brigands killed the espagra.

Karthalus, a questor of Jaspre, has been having visions of an espagra being injured cruelly by Namegivers; he has taken this as a missive from the Passion Jaspre. The stories of espagra hunters have led him to the village of Safeway. When Karthalus heard that the tanner, Urzon, had a large quantity of espagra hides, he went to talk to him. Discovering the tanner missing and the village unwilling to discuss it, Karthalus began to think there was more afoot than there appeared. Karthalus has been camping near the edge of



the village, but has seen no one suspicious while watching. He has been waiting for a sign from his Passion to give him direction.

The high demand on espagra hide has left a lot of young espagra stranded high in the mountains without food. Lacking a parent to teach them how to hunt, they have begun to descend down the mountain in search of food. There were only a few at first, but as the more assertive espagra started heading down, other orphaned espagra have followed and they have been descending the mountainside in droves, devouring everything they encounter.

## PLOT SYNOPSIS

The player characters are resting at an inn in Bartertown when a friend contacts them. A tailor nicknamed 'Hardly' Fitz wishes to hire the characters to help with an endeavor. When they meet, Hardly explains to the characters that he is hoping to increase his selection of rare and exotic apparel; he has found a supplier and wishes the characters to accompany his apprentice to purchase several espagra hides from a tanner in a distant village. The group is shuffled off as soon as possible because he does not want his competitors to catch wind of the sale and make it to the village before his apprentice.

On the way the group encounters a large exultation of espagra, unheard of in Barsaive. After the main body passes overhead, a number of espagra dive at the group, thinking that the characters may be an easy meal. After a pitched battle, the espagra fly away to the southwest towards the Servos Jungle.

When the characters break to make camp, they discover a shrine to Jaspre. In the main area is a statue of Jaspre holding a wounded espagra. Later in the night, a group of dwarf brigands that were tracking the espagra attempt to sneak into camp in order to catch the beast. The group is forced to confront the thieves and they flee off into the night.

The next day, the group arrives at the village of Safeway and discovers that the tanner is missing. A visiting questor of Jaspre believes the group is the answer to the visions he has been having and asks the characters to aid him. After some investigation, the characters discover Bergot's operation. During a battle with the characters' overpowered adversaries, the espagra break loose from their cages and attack their captors, causing them to flee into the woods. With Urzon freed and Bergot captured, the characters are able to finish their business and return to Bartertown.

## IT'S HARDLY FITZ

**T**his scene takes place after the characters have found a place to stay in Bartertown, near Throal (a suitable place would be the Juggling Shadowmant; see *Nations of Barsaive Volume One* p.105). A person, preferably someone with whom the characters have interacted before, approaches the characters, informing them that an artisan is seeking adepts for a job.

## SETTING THE STAGE

Once the characters are in the tavern room or another suitable location, have someone approach the group—preferably an old friend. He informs the characters that he knows someone who would like to meet with them. After they agree, he directs them to a tailor shop in the market district of Bartertown where they meet a dwarf nicknamed 'Hardly' Fitz. Hardly has a flair for the dramatic and a witty repertoire. Some people say he was a Swordmaster in his younger days, but Hardly shows no interest in swords, preferring to fight his battles in the fashion arena.

Once the characters have been introduced to Hardly, read the following aloud.

*"Well met, travelers. Many, many thanks for coming to see me. My Name is Darius A. Fitz, but everyone calls me Hardly; the pun is most intended. I am a tailor, as you might have guessed, and my clothes have been seen as far away as Iopos. You see, I am in need of some unique material in order to create my next stunning outfit. Unfortunately, my normal distributors have not the material I am looking for. I have, however, managed to locate a source, and if you can agree to be discreet in our dealings then I would like to retain your services."*

After the group agrees to not disclose the nature of the business, read the following aloud:

*"Rumor has it that the Denairastas of Iopos stunned the people of the royal house by wearing a shimmering blue gown made from the scales of espagra. As I am most informed on all things fashionable, I have noticed a lack of available espagra hides of late, and those that are for sale are exorbitant in cost. As I have said, I have located a source that is willing to sell me what I need for a fair and marketable price. Unfortunately, I have a need for some able-bodied adepts to protect my apprentice from theft and misfortune. If you are in an adventurous mood, I am willing to offer you one hundred seventy-five silvers each for your services. Alternatively, I can outfit your entire group with the most fashionable of attire available."*

After the group members agree on a price:

*"You will accompany my apprentice Savron to the village of Safeway. Once there, Savron will purchase the hides of espagra from a tanner Named Urzon. You will then accompany him back here to receive your payment."*

## THEMES AND IMAGES

Hardly's shop is a chaotic montage of bright colors and rich fabrics. Hardly uses his etiquette on the characters and focuses on those who respond in kind. Some characters may feel out of place around Hardly as etiquette and knowledge of the upper class society are more the rule here than the exception. Hardly attempts to convince





the characters that a colorful outfit will enhance their reputation. Even though he is located in the market district, an aristocrat may arrive to sample his garments, perhaps casting a disapproving look at common adventurers. Players can use this opportunity to learn some tricks from Hardly when dealing with aristocracy.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Every imaginable article of clothing is available here and in no particular order. Since Hardly caters to the wealthy, any number of expensive materials can be found. If the characters request some clothing, Hardly is more than happy to comply. He charges half the listed price for anything they request except for the very rarest of material like silk from Cathay (in which case he charges listed prices).

Savron is listening from the back room; characters notice him on a successful Perception (6) Test. If called out, he moves to knock something over on purpose and clammers out awkwardly. Savron is a competent assistant, but he has learned that it is easier for people to accept a person with less capable talents. He has been pretending for so long, it has become second nature. People who are around him for a while may notice that Savron is faking his clumsiness (Perception (9) Test). Hardly is well aware of this and assures the characters of his dependability.

If the characters inquire about espagra, Hardly tells them of their justly deserved reputation, sharing wild stories about how dangerous the creatures can be. He reassures the characters that they do not have to hunt any espagra. He also informs the player characters (in great detail) that the hides are very fashionable.

The characters may wish to ask Hardly about Safeway. He doesn't really know much about it other than the fact that it is a small village about eleven days' walk from Throal. He points out the general location on a map—if the characters have one—and informs them that Savron has been instructed on how to find the village; Hardly doesn't pay much attention to such things.

## SAVRON, HUMAN TAILOR APPRENTICE

### Attributes

DEX (14): 6      STR (12): 5      TOU (14): 6  
PER (11): 5      WIL (12): 5      CHA (11): 5

### Characteristics

Initiative: 6      Physical Defense: 8  
Physical Armor: 2      Spell Defense: 7  
Mystic Armor: 1      Social Defense: 7  
Death: 36      Recovery Tests: 3  
Unconsciousness: 28      Knockdown: 5  
Wound Threshold: 10      Movement: 6

### Skills

Acting<sup>A</sup> (4): 9  
Avoid Blow (2): 8  
Craftsman (Tailor)<sup>A</sup> (1): 7  
Embroidery<sup>A</sup> (1): 6  
Fast Hand (1): 7  
Gangs of Bartertown<sup>K</sup> (1): 6  
Lock Picking (1): 7  
Melee Weapons (2): 8  
Picking Pockets (1): 7  
Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)  
Speak Language (2): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human)  
Streetwise (2): 7  
Throal Politics<sup>K</sup> (1): 6  
Throwing Weapons (1): 7

<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

### Armor

Padded Cloth (Phys 2)

### Weapons

Short Sword (Damage 9), Dagger (Damage 7; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

### Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Belt Pouch, Embroidery Tools, Quiet Pouch, Thieves' Picks and Tools, Trail Rations (1 week), Traveler's Garb

### Loot

200 silver pieces (to buy espagra skins), 20 silver pieces

### Legend Award

None

### Commentary

Savron grew up on the streets of Bartertown. Unaware of whom his parents were, he stole in order to survive. To make up for his lack of skill in thievery, Savron usually played the part of a bumbling child in order to hide his actions. On one occasion, he happened into Hardly's shop, knocking over bolts of fabric. Unperturbed, Hardly caught Savron attempting to steal a minor thread item. Rather than calling the guards, Hardly offered Savron the chance to learn a trade. Savron readily accepted and has been apprenticing with Hardly ever since. While Savron is competent in his abilities, he has been playing the bumbling fool for so long that it has become second nature. While often chastised for "accidents," Savron has been trying to act more according to his station in life lately. Hardly worries that Savron may one day become an adept, but he does not voice his concerns about it.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

If the characters turn down his offer, Hardly is willing to attire the entire group in the latest fashion. If the group chooses to negotiate the price, he is willing to go as high as 275 silver for each character. If they wish to have items made from espagra, Hardly readily agrees but insists that the characters provide their own hides.

## THE SWARM

**T**he characters travel several days without incident. They are enjoying the peaceful journey when they spot an exultation of espagra overhead. While the characters watch, a few espagra break from the flock and attack the characters.





## SETTING THE STAGE

*Traveling through the hinterlands is an uneventful journey; the warm sunshine and the sounds of nature soothe your souls as you travel. Today is different though. The sound of the wilderness is eerily quiet. The birds have stopped chirping and there are no sounds of other animals in the brush. A shadow passes across you, then a second, and a third. You look up to see the sky filled with dragon-like creatures. What seems like hundreds pass overhead, blotting out the sun's rays and creating a sparkling sea of blue and green. They pay no notice to your group, but after the main body passes overhead, a group of them break off and dive towards you. As they draw near they appear more like flying lizards than dragons, and you realize that you are beset by espagra. Most are a brilliant blue in color, but a few in particular catch your eye as sun glints off their green scales like emeralds.*

## THEMES AND IMAGES

This scene displays the vast contrasts that can exist in Barsaive's hinterlands. One moment the scene is a bright sunshiny day, and the next moment it is eerily quiet. Experienced players may assume that a Horror is causing the quietness. If such is the case, drawing out the encounter may add to the tension of the group.

When the group sees the espagra exultation, inform them that the characters have never heard of that many espagra flying together before. The characters should feel a deep sense of dread seeing that many espagra in one area. The combination of silence and awe should tell the characters that things are not right in the world.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The hordes of espagra are younglings descending from the mountains in search of food. Fortunately for the characters, the espagra have recently eaten. A few brash espagra, however, have decided to see how easy the group is. Inform the characters that the number of espagra attacking them is roughly double the number in the group, the lead espagra being of a rare jungle breed with bright green scales. Because all of these are so young, they are not quite as adept in their attacks. If the espagra miss on their dive attack, they take a tumble on the ground. They take damage equal to their Damage Step and are stunned for one round, after which they take off to rejoin the exultation. Those that do not return immediately try to escape after they take any damage. The green espagra, how-

ever, do not make dive attacks and retreat only if they take a Wound. Because the espagra are so young, the green espagra are only able to use their Blinding Spit once during combat.

The group can choose to dash towards a small copse of trees 60 yards/30 hexes away. The espagra are 72yards/36hexes away and reach the group in three rounds. At a full-out run, the group may have just enough time to reach the copse of trees and hide amid the trees before the espagra can attack. Taking shelter in the trees causes all but the green espagra to rejoin the exultation. Not intimidated by the copse of trees, the green espagra land on the closest tree and spit poison at the characters' eyes in an attempt to blind them.

### ESPAGRA (1 PER CHARACTER)

#### Attributes

DEX: 9 STR: 6 TOU: 8  
PER: 6 WIL: 10 CHA: 4

#### Characteristics

Initiative: 10 Physical Defense: 11  
Actions: 3 Spell Defense: 9  
Attack (3): 12 Social Defense: 8  
Damage: Physical Armor: 5  
2 × Claws (3): 9 Mystic Armor: 6  
Tail (3): 9  
Death: 56 Recovery Tests: 4  
Unconsciousness: 46 Knockdown: 7  
Wound Threshold: 13 Movement: 9\*

\* This value is also the creature's Flying Movement Rate

#### Powers

Durability (2)

#### Loot

Scales worth D20 × 10 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

#### Legend Award

Fourth Circle

#### Commentary

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.

#### Rules

An agile beast, the espagra can strike at three different targets simultaneously without penalties, one with each attack, as long as the targets stand within 2 yards/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.

**Youngling:** As young espagra, if they miss their swoop attack they crash, taking Step 9 Damage and are Stunned (*Player's Guide* p.228) for 1 round. After the stunned effect wears off they flee. The rest also flee after taking any damage.

### JUNGLE ESPAGRA (1 PER 2 CHARACTERS)

#### Attributes

DEX: 10 STR: 5 TOU: 7  
PER: 7 WIL: 10 CHA: 4

#### Characteristics

Initiative: 11 Physical Defense: 13  
Actions: 3 Spell Defense: 10  
Attack (3): 13 Social Defense: 8  
Damage: Physical Armor: 4  
2 × Claws (3): 8 Mystic Armor: 6  
Tail (3): 8

### BLINDING SPIT

Step Number: Rank+DEX

Action: Yes

Type: Mundane

**T**he creature has poisonous saliva and can spit this venom into a target's eyes, causing extreme eye irritation and temporary blindness. Most creatures with this power have an enlarged saliva gland in their throats that can store this venomous spit for later use, typically enough for a number of uses per encounter equal to their rank in Blinding Spit. The creature makes a Blinding Spit Test against the Physical Defense of a target within 4 yards/2 hexes. If the test achieves a Good or better Result, the creature has successfully hit the target's eyes. Targets affected by the poison suffer the effects of Blindness (*Player's Guide* p.227), as if they were in Full Darkness, for a number of rounds equal to the creature's Blinding Spit rank.





**Death:** 60                      **Recovery Tests:** 3  
**Unconsciousness:** 49       **Knockdown:** 6  
**Wound Threshold:** 12      **Movement:** 9\*

\* This value is also the creature's Flying Movement Rate

#### Powers

**Blinding Spit** (3): 13, **Durability** (3), **Great Leap**<sup>S</sup> (3): 13

<sup>S</sup> General skill

#### Loot

Scales worth D20 × 15 silver pieces (worth Legend Points). Saliva gland worth D6 × 10 silver pieces (worth Legend Points).

#### Legend Award

Third Circle (1 per 2 PC)

#### Commentary

Jungle espagra are a bright emerald green in color. They generally inhabit areas of thick vegetation like the Liaj and Servos Jungles. These espagra only occasionally make trips outside the jungle—usually to mate in the safety of the high mountain peaks. Because of their habitat, jungle espagra are smaller and more agile than normal espagra, with wingspans rarely larger than eight feet. And while not as strong or large, they do have an enlarged neck compared to other espagra. Jungle espagra do not make swooping attacks like standard espagra; instead they choose to hop from tree to tree, spitting a blinding poison into the eyes of their prey. Because of the rarity of jungle espagra scales, they can fetch a higher price in cities.

#### Rules

Jungle espagra do not make Swooping attacks. When surrounded by trees and vegetation, they are considered camouflaged (see Perception Tests on p.92 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*); add +3 to the jungle espagra's Dexterity Step to determine its Detection Difficulty. Jungle espagra can spit venom into an opponent's eyes, causing temporary blindness by using their Blinding Spit power.

**Youngling:** As younglings, they flee after taking 1 Wound.

#### Overall Legend Award

If the characters fight off both groups of espagra, they earn a Fourth Circle (Group) Legend Award.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

Characters standing their ground against such a large number of espagra are likely to be killed in this encounter. Savron runs towards the trees for cover. If the group doesn't follow, inform them that some of the espagra are flying to intercept Savron. If the characters still do not follow, all the espagra target the player characters after Savron reaches the safety of the trees. At this point the characters are in for a hard fight.

If the gamemaster is hesitant to kill the characters, he may apply a -3 penalty to the espagra's tests to reflect that these are young espagra, which may increase the characters' chances of survival. Subtract 90 Legend Points from the Legend Award if this option is used. If the fight with the espagra starts going badly, have the

espagra withdraw from the fight. They consider the characters too much of an effort to finish. This only happens after several of the characters have been knocked unconscious and it is apparent that they are going to lose the fight. If the espagra manage to knock all the characters unconscious, they begin eating the characters. All characters knocked unconscious have two Wounds when they wake up, whether the espagra were driven off or left on their own. Thankfully these espagra have already eaten before this encounter.

## THE SHRINE TO JASPREE

**T**he characters are only a day away from the village of Safe-way. When they decide to search for a suitable campsite for the night, they discover a shrine to Jaspree with a mountain espagra dying in the statue's arms.

## SETTING THE STAGE

As the group searches for someplace to bed down for the night, have each player make a Perception (5) Test. Those that pass notice a group of six pillars amidst a small stand of trees. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

*The setting sun paints the sky in hues of pink and orange. As you search for a suitable place to make camp, you notice six large pillars among the trees. Closer inspection reveals an area cleared away to make a shrine to one of the Passions. In the middle of the six pillars stands a seven-foot tall statue of a female elf with the lower body of a horse. One of her hands is outstretched as if offering something. In the other arm, she holds a dying espagra—which isn't actually part of the statue. The creature's wings hang down towards the ground, its breaths coming in shallow gasps. Three arrows protrude from its side causing blood to seep from the wounds. The statue is splattered with its blood except for the elf's face, where two small trails of blood descend down her cheeks as if she is crying. Though The thing that really catches your eye is the color of the espagra's scales: they are a shimmering white, similar to pearls found in the Aras Sea.*

## THEMES AND IMAGES

The shrine to Jaspree is a peaceful place. Characters should feel at ease despite the initial scene. Woodland creatures are abundant near the shrine, and the light rain (see **Behind the Scenes**, below) is refreshing after the long journey. Characters should fall asleep easily, although sleep is not magically induced. The feeling that Jaspree watches over the shrine relaxes the characters.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The espagra is a rare breed that lives in the mountains of Barsaive. This espagra got caught up in the exodus and fell victim to Bergot's troupe. Instead of risking it getting away, they tried to shoot it out of the sky. It managed to fly here before crashing into the statue of Jaspree.

There is a copper bowl lying near the statue that the espagra knocked over. A Perception (4) Test notices the bowl. If the group helps the espagra and replaces the bowl into Jaspree's hands, a light rain starts shortly after sundown. Sometime in the middle of the night, the espagra claws its way towards the foot of the statue and makes a weak attempt at climbing it. A character may remove the bowl and allow the espagra to drink from it. The espagra immediately gets a Recovery Test and the water acts as a booster potion. There is enough water in the bowl for a total of three potions' worth.



Afterwards, the espagra follows the character that helped him around like a trusting pet for the bulk of the adventure. It also has a Friendly attitude towards all of the group members.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

If the group attempts to kill the espagra, Savron throws himself in the way to save it, claiming that it would be bad luck to kill the creature at a shrine to Jaspre. If a character kills the espagra, he gains a major curse (*Gamemaster's Guide* p.113). If the characters miss the bowl, Savron finds it and can point it out to them or he may replace it in the statue's hands himself; he also helps the espagra if the characters show no interest in it. In this case, the espagra follows Savron with a Friendly attitude but distrusts the rest of the group slightly at a Neutral attitude until they earn its trust.

If all characters fail the Perception Test to notice the Shrine, the gamemaster may allow the character with the highest result on his Perception Test to be the one to notice it. Alternatively, the characters may make camp nearby, and overhear the struggle between the espagra and the brigands in the following encounter. In this case, the gamemaster may have to alter the descriptions appropriately.

## A THIEF IN THE NIGHT

In this scene, the group has its first encounter with Bergot's Brigands. The brigands wounded the white espagra a few hours earlier and have tracked it to the shrine. After reinforcements arrive, they ambush the group in an attempt to capture the espagra in the confusion.

## SETTING THE STAGE

Have any characters on watch make a Perception (6) Test to hear someone approaching the camp. If a character is successful, allow them to prepare themselves accordingly before reading the following:

*You yawn to stave off the late night. Two dwarfs step into the firelight with arms upraised.*

*"Greetings traveler, my friend and I could not help but notice your fire in the night. We are traveling from Iopos to Barter-town in search of work. My Name is Bertus Groshuk, and my brother here is Named Anvar Kilmus. We are performers trained in the arts that amaze the crowds. If you are willing to share your fire, I will regale you with tales of legends past. I assure you we are not Horror-tainted and will gladly perform any test you wish to administer."*

*With a flourish of Bertus' hand and a slight bow, the glade erupts in a mass of activity.*

*Four brigands then jump from hiding and join the two posing as travelers in an attack.*

## THEMES AND IMAGES

Here the characters' feelings of safety and goodwill are violated. What appear to be fellow travelers are anything but. The sudden attack should catch the characters off guard and set a more desperate and urgent feel to the battle. The nervous reaction of their new, scaled companion should make them curious about it after the dust has settled and even more interested in what happened to the unfortunate creature for it to wind up here in the first place.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Bergot's troupe has been tracking the espagra ever since they wounded it earlier that afternoon. They sent word back and have been watching the group since dusk. Since the white espagra is so rare, Bergot has demanded that it be captured at all costs. Once the rest of the group arrives they plan to launch a surprise attack on the group. Their plan is simple: as the two brigands posing as travelers distract the characters, four more brigands attack from hiding, while another two attempt to capture the espagra. The espagra, which they believe wounded, is their main objective; the characters are only to be kept busy until it is captured.

The brigands' main purpose is to keep the characters busy while two of them bag the espagra. They are under orders not to kill it as Bergot does not want to risk ruining the hide. Unknown to the brigands is that the espagra is fully healed. Once the mountain espagra notices the two brigands approaching with the sack, it lets out an icy blast that scares its two assailants and causes them to run.

### BRIGANDS (6)

#### Attributes

DEX (15): 6 STR (16): 7 TOU (14): 6  
PER (11): 5 WIL (10): 5 CHA (8): 4

#### Characteristics

Initiative: 5 Physical Defense: 8  
Physical Armor: 5 Spell Defense: 7  
Mystic Armor: 1 Social Defense: 5  
Death: 36 Recovery Tests: 3  
Unconsciousness: 28 Knockdown: 7  
Wound Threshold: 10 Movement: 5/6\*

\* Dwarf Movement Rate/Human Movement Rate

#### Skills

Acting<sup>A</sup> (1): 5  
Avoid Blow (2): 8  
Craftsman (Blacksmith)<sup>A</sup> (2): 8  
Craftsman (Leatherworker)<sup>A</sup> (1): 7  
Creature Lore<sup>K</sup> (1): 6  
Hunting (1): 7  
Melee Weapons (3): 9  
Missile Weapons (2): 8  
Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)  
Snares and Traps<sup>K</sup> (1): 6  
Speak Language (2): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human/Iopan)  
Streetwise (4): 9

<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

#### Armor

Hide Armor (Phys 5; Myst 1; Init 1)

#### Weapons

Club (Damage 10), Dwarf Sword (Damage 11), Dagger (Damage 9; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), Light Crossbow (Damage 11; Range 32–64 yards/16–32 hexes), Quiver (w/15 light crossbow bolts)

#### Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Belt Pouch, 2 × Craftsman Tools, 2 × Flasks of Oil, Hooded Lantern, Trail Rations (1 week), Traveler's Garb

#### Loot

D6 silver pieces, 2D20 copper pieces

#### Legend Award

Second Circle (3 per 2 PC)

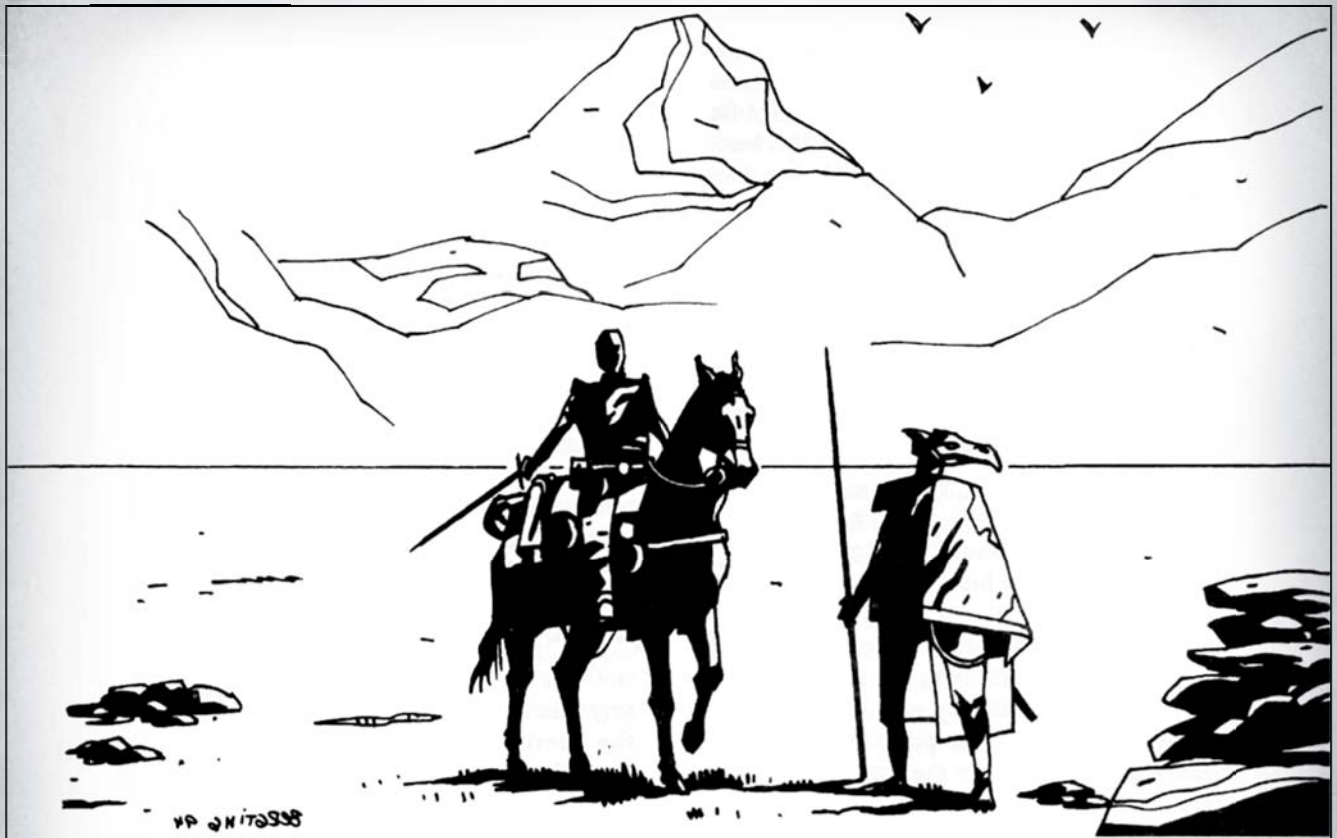
#### Notes

Dwarf brigands possess the Heat Sight racial ability.

#### Commentary

These dwarfs and humans are part of Bergot's Brigands and fight in a Defensive Stance (*Player's Guide* p.223). Each brigand fights until he is wounded or the espagra has been captured. If any of the brigands are caught, characters need to achieve a Good Result on their Intimidation Tests (*Gamemaster's Guide* p.95) in order for the brigands to give any information about Bergot. None give the location of the camp as long as they are held captive and more than likely give false information if they are released.





## MOUNTAIN ESPAGRA

### Attributes

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

### Characteristics

**Initiative:** 10      **Physical Defense:** 11  
**Actions:** 3      **Spell Defense:** 10  
**Attack (3):** 12      **Social Defense:** 8  
**Damage:**      **Physical Armor:** 6  
2 × Claws (3): 10      **Mystic Armor:** 4  
Tail (3): 10  
**Death:** 66      **Recovery Tests:** 4  
**Unconsciousness:** 56      **Knockdown:** 8  
**Wound Threshold:** 14      **Movement:** 9\*

\* This value is also the creature's Flying Movement Rate

### Powers

Breath Weapon [Ice] (3): 10, Durability (3), Endure Cold <sup>T</sup> (3): 12, Spellcasting (3): 10

<sup>T</sup> Talent as power

### Loot

Scales worth D20 × 20 silver pieces (worth Legend Points).

### Legend Award

None

### Commentary

Mountain espagra live in the high peaks of the various mountain ranges in Barsaive. Rarely leaving their icy homes, the mountain espagras' pearly white scales help them to blend into their habitat. This hardy breed of espagra is virtually unknown in Barsaive and exhibits a shyness from Namegivers that other espagra do not. They have the ability to breathe an icy breath at their prey and appear unaffected by the coldness in which they dwell.

### Rules

Mountain espagra do not make Swooping attacks. When surrounded by snow and ice, they are considered camouflaged; add +3 to the mountain espagra's Dexterity Step to determine its Detection Difficulty.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

The group, if completely surprised by the brigand attack, may start losing the battle. Remember that the brigands do not really want to fight with a group of adepts; they use the Defensive Stance and Giving Ground (*Player's Guide* p.223) combat options after the first round—this should increase the characters' survivability. Once things start going wrong, the brigands flee into the night. Any captured brigands are receptive to kind treatment as they are not hardened criminals. The brigands are fearful of Bergot and do not willingly betray him. If questioned, they tell the characters that they were hunting the espagra and nothing more.

## THE VILLAGE OF SAFEWAY

**T**he characters arrive at Safeway to discover that the tanner they are supposed to meet is missing and that the village is strangely quiet about questions concerning him. The characters have the opportunity to search the village for clues about what is going on.

## SETTING THE STAGE

The village of Safeway is roughly a day's walk from Jaspre's shrine. When the group gets close enough to see the village read the following:

*Following the road towards the Scytha Mountains, you catch your first glimpse of Safeway as the trees thin: a small village of a couple dozen buildings that lies nestled between a small stream and the surrounding forest. A stone edifice, three stories high, watches over the small hamlet. From the aged look, the tower may have stood since before the Scourge. A wooden palisade encircles the town on three sides, but the beginnings of a stone wall are starting to be built.*



*The villagers smile and wave as you approach and you can see dwarf soldiers patrolling the wall. As you approach the main gate a sign is posted in both Throalic and Theran:*

*"Welcome to the free village of Safeway, All persons herein are free people by order of the Magistrate. Those that would practice slavery are unwelcome. Therans Beware!"*

*You ask for directions to the local tanner and after a few quizzical looks find a nice-looking wooden house with hides stretched out behind it. A dwarf woman is busy tending to her wares. When you ask if she is the local tanner, her eyes begin to well and she tells you her story.*

*"I be the tanner's wife. Me husband has been missin' two days now and no hide nor hair can be found of 'im. I think it be them shifty fellas that been comin' about lately but none in town seems to be lookin' hard to find 'im. If you be decent folks, I be willin' to pay fer you to be lookin' fer 'im."*

## THEMES AND IMAGES

The sense of mystery about the events occurring around the characters should be heightening. The mixed messages and ignorance concerning the tanner should start to seem intentional as the characters note how widespread it is. The tale from the tanner's wife plants the seed for the suspicion of a conspiracy, even as the reasons for the villagers' responses have little to do with the tanner's disappearance. This scene gives the characters some clues as how to proceed and should make them more receptive to the questor that seeks them out during their investigations in town.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Safeway is a village composed mainly of ex-slaves. The village was built after a group of adepts freed a number of slaves from Theran slavers. Without a second thought, the adepts helped the ex-slaves build a town and Safeway was born. The village is located between Haven and Kaer Eidolon and doesn't see a lot of visitors because of its location. The village is a close-knit community, and the original adventurers, who are regarded as local heroes, visit from time to time. The town magistrate, one of the original adventurers, runs the town, and with the help of his companions has helped the small village grow. Most of the buildings in the town belong to the local farmers, though a few of the more notable buildings are listed below.

The village is home to a tanner Named Urzon—a Cavalryman adept that adventured many years ago. During the previous year, a group of individuals came to Safeway searching for Urzon; once they located him, he was captured and put into chains. When confronted, it was declared that Urzon was an escaped slave and thief. The enraged town descended upon the Theran captors and when the dust settled, Urzon was free once again. Since that time, no one speaks of Urzon to strangers.

### Theran Outpost

The main building in town is the three-story square tower that was used as a Theran outpost before the Scourge. The bottom level is used as offices for town business, while the upper two levels are used as living quarters for the Magistrate and his adventuring companions when they happen to be in town. Since the locals consider the adventuring group members to be heroes, they do not question this arrangement.

### Clankin' Steins Inn and Tavern

Clankin' Steins is the only inn and tavern in town. It is run by an old dwarf that goes by the Name 'Smitty' who was in the Throalic army. His prices are fair, but if he does not like the look or mannerisms of a person he doubles the price on the spot. Clankin' Steins is

the only building in the village, other than the old outpost, made of stone, so it is a common place for people to gather in the event of trouble. If asked about Urzon by Name, Smitty states that he has never heard of him. If asked about the tanner, he says that the tanner keeps to himself and that he doesn't really know him that well. If the characters inquire about the individuals who stayed there a couple of days ago, he informs them that they were Iopans on their way to Parlainth. He knows they left by the east gate. If asked, Smitty directs the group to Gruson Mortier, a farmer to the east of Safeway, as the travelers would have had to pass by his farm to head towards Parlainth.

### Gruson Mortier Farm

Farmer Gruson is an ex-slave like many others in Safeway. He is good-natured and quick to tell a joke, especially at the expense of Therans. He is aware of neither the tanner's predicament—having not been to town in a few days—nor the Iopans that traveled past. What he does know is that he has seen a number of half-eaten carcasses on the south end of his farm lately and believes that it may be because of a Horror. He has also heard shouting on occasion in the woods to the South but has been too afraid to investigate. Unbeknownst to him or anyone else in the area, the carcasses are the bait used to catch espagra and the source of this shouting is actually Bergot's Brigands conducting their shady business.

### Tanner

Urzon, the local tanner, performs all of the tanning for Safeway. He has become a well-known tanner in the area and is often sought out by trappers who wish to have unusual creatures skinned and tanned. Urzon's success can be attributed to a minor thread item he stole from his Theran captor when he made his escape. The dagger, Named Gou-tar, is an ancient tribal weapon from a tribe of jungle t'skrang. It improves the individual's ability to skin animals. Suffering several failed attempts to skin the espagra himself, Bergot sought Urzon's reputed expertise. After further failures in transporting the espagra carcasses, Bergot offered Urzon the chance to join his band. Outraged at the tanner's refusal, Bergot had him kidnapped and brought to his camp.

### Tanner's Apprentice

The home of the tanner's apprentice is a rundown shack on the other side of the village. Investigating the area shows signs of recent use as Ruga, the apprentice, is not actually missing, but hiding in his home from the brigands. He refuses to answer the door for anyone and sneaks out at night to get food. The door to his shack is easily forced open, and when confronted, Ruga surrenders and begs for mercy. When questioned, he claims that four individuals attacked Urzon late at night when the two of them were checking the hides. The attackers did not see Ruga so he ran home to hide. He does not know who Urzon's assailants were but recalls seeing one of them at the Weaponsmith's forge a few days ago.

### Mason

This is the home of the mason who has just recently arrived in the village and has been commissioned to build a stone wall around it. Since the mason has not been here long, he freely talks about Urzon's business. He knows that Urzon has been tanning a lot of espagra lately but does not know who is bringing them. He also says that Urzon and his family keep to themselves, although Urzon frequently travels to other towns because of his skill in tanning.

### Weaponsmith's Forge

This is the Weaponsmith's shop and home. He performs all the Weaponsmithing needs for the town and militia, supplementing his income with blacksmithing work when times are slow. If





asked about Urzon, the Weaponsmith claims ignorance like everyone else. If asked about the two strangers in his shop recently, he explains that some travelers came to Safeway about five days ago and asked for some chains and shackles. He first thought they might be Therans because they had a strange accent, but when asked the two informed him that the chains were for animals they planned on capturing. The shackles they asked for were too small for Namegivers (and too large for windlings), so he assumed they were telling the truth. He knows that they stayed at the local inn until the items were finished two days ago.

### Livery & Stables

This is the livery and stables. Like most, the stable master is unwilling to talk about Urzon or his business. He is unaware of the situation with the brigands.

### Martial Training Hall

The most interesting building in the village is the martial training hall. It is a special training hall that supports Warriors and Swordmasters. It was set up by two of the town heroes, and they can be found here training young adepts when they are in town. The town has a few Warriors and Swordmasters acting as town guards because training at the hall is paid for with service in the town militia. A person wishing to be trained must make a blood promise to serve as a protector of the village for a number of months equal to the Circle they wish to attain. The trainer returns the blood promise oath, promising hospitality for the trainee during his training and his stay as protector of the village, including room and board. Although it is not well known, the training hall has been seeing more regular attendees since it has been opened.

A few weeks earlier, Bergot's brother, Beograd, finished his term of service after training at the hall. If asked about individuals with an Iopan accent, his teacher, K'srak T'sir, can recall Beograd mainly because of his melancholy mood. He sensed that Beograd was having some internal dilemma that he was working through, but Beograd was not willing to discuss it.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

The characters should wish to seek out the missing tanner to finish their current job. If they do not, Savron reminds them that he cannot conclude his business otherwise. K'srak T'sir, one of the local heroes, approaches any characters expressing interest in studying at the training hall. K'srak is a Ninth Circle t'skrang Warrior and enjoys training young Warriors. He explains that payment for training is to serve on the village's militia so the character may wish to conclude his business before committing himself to training. K'srak is even willing to train humans in a talent or two if they agree to serve the village as if they were gaining the relevant Circle.

## THE QUESTOR OF JASPREE

**W**hile the characters are searching for the missing tanner, they are confronted by a questor of Jaspree. Seeing the characters as a sign from his Passion, the questor requests their aid and the group sets out to find exactly what is transpiring.

### SETTING THE STAGE

Once the questor approaches the characters, read the following aloud:

*"Excuse me sirs, but I could not help but notice that you have a white espagra with you. I am Karthalus, a questor of Jaspree. I have been traveling, trying to find out why the espagra are migrating in such large numbers. You yourself are looking into matters of espagra, are you not? Perhaps we can benefit from working together."*

*I came to Safeway after hearing that the local tanner, Urzon, had a large number of espagra hides for sale. I have asked around, but no one is willing to discuss the tanner or his business. The most I could gain from the magistrate is that the tanner probably left with his apprentice to another village to work, but the tanner's wife would say otherwise.*

*If you would be gracious enough to allow me to travel with you, perhaps we could unravel this mystery."*

## THEMES AND IMAGES

This brief encounter serves as a point of decision: will the characters seek out the tanner and try to resolve the mystery or will they go their own way and ignore the problems they've uncovered? They also form their first impressions of Karthalus, playing the part of an impassioned questor on a mission, overshadowing his adventuring past.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Karthalus has been having dreams of a white espagra being cruelly injured by Namegivers. At first he assumes that the characters are mistreating the espagra they have captured, but after seeing how they interact with it, he takes it as a sign from Jaspree that they are the key to unlocking the meanings of his dream. He insists that he help the characters to fulfill the destiny that is meant for them. If they refuse, he challenges a character obviously of a fighting Discipline, to a duel. If he successfully beats the character, he insists that they find out what has become of the tanner and why he has so many espagra hides for sale.



# KARTHALUS, FIFTH CIRCLE ELF SWORDMASTER & QUESTOR OF JASPREE

## Attributes

DEX (18): 7      STR (13): 6      TOU (11): 5  
PER (13): 6      WIL (10): 5      CHA (15): 6

## Characteristics

Initiative: 4      Physical Defense: 10  
Physical Armor: 7      Spell Defense: 9  
Mystic Armor: 0      Social Defense: 10  
Death: 67      Recovery Tests: 2  
Unconsciousness: 54      Knockdown: 6\*  
Wound Threshold: 8      Movement: 7

## Karma Points: 20/20

\* Karthalus knows the Wound Balance talent

## Swordmaster Talents

Acrobatic Strike (S): 12  
Durability (7/6) (S): 5  
First Impression (S): 11  
Heartening Laugh<sup>D</sup> (S): 11  
Karma Ritual<sup>D</sup> (S): 5  
Lion Heart (S): 10  
Maneuver<sup>D</sup> (S): 12  
Melee Weapons<sup>D</sup> (S): 12  
Questor of Jaspre (S): 5—Animate Plant, Plant Growth (S): 10,  
Command Animal (S): 11  
Parry<sup>D</sup> (S): 12  
Riposte<sup>D</sup> (S): 12  
Second Weapon<sup>D</sup> (S): 12  
Steel Thought\* (1): 6  
Taunt<sup>D</sup> (7): 13  
Thread Weaving (Weapon Weaving)<sup>D</sup> (S): 11  
Wound Balance (S): 11

<sup>D</sup> Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

<sup>\*</sup> Italized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

\* Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Amulet

## Skills

Ancient Weapons<sup>K</sup> (1): 7  
Animal Handling (4): 9  
Botany<sup>K</sup> (3): 9  
Creature Lore<sup>K</sup> (3): 9  
Legends and Heroes<sup>K</sup> (1): 7  
Passion Lore<sup>K</sup> (3): 9  
Read/Write Language (1): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic)  
Speak Language (S): 11—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human, Or'zet, Sperethiel, T'skrang)  
Streetwise (1): 7  
Tracking (1): 7  
Travar History<sup>K</sup> (1): 7  
Weapon Rune Carving<sup>A</sup> (1): 7  
Wilderness Survival (2): 8  
<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

## Armor

Chainmail (Phys 7; Init 3)

## Weapons

Broadsword (Forged +1; Damage 12), Short Sword (Damage 10), Dagger (Damage 8;  
Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), Spear (Damage 10; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

## Thread Items

Protective Amulet (Rank 4; SocDef +1; SpellDef +2; Steel Thought +1 Rank Bonus)

## Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Belt Pouch, Booster Potion, Carving Tools, Forge Tools, Trail  
Rations (1 week), Traveler's Garb

## Loot

138 silver pieces

## Legend Award

None

## Notes

As an elf, Karthalus possesses the Low-Light Vision racial ability. Karthalus has 1,000  
Devotion Points to Jaspre.

## Swordmaster Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Social Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Flourish

## Commentary

Karthalus grew up in the city of Travar. As a child he would frequently sneak into taverns to listen to the dashing tales of Swordmasters. He envisioned himself as a famous hero performing great deeds, like many children of his age. When he was old enough, he found a mentor to train him in the ways of the Swordmaster and was soon on an adventure to make a Name for himself.

On his first adventure, his group discovered a Horror in an abandoned village. Although he believed himself to be noble in heart, he could not quell the fear he felt inside when they encountered the Horror. In the middle of combat, Karthalus panicked and ran from the village, leaving his group to the Horror.

Despondent about his actions, Karthalus could not bring himself to return to the village and began to travel the hinterlands alone. He did not travel far before he found himself running again, mortally wounded in a fight with a brithan. As he lay dying, lamenting over failed attempts at heroism, Karthalus had resigned himself to his fate, uncomfortable by the thought that many would-be heroes probably arrived at the same one.

In the delirium of his death, Karthalus was visited by the Passion Jaspre. Although he barely remembers the vague, dreamlike visit, he recalls with striking detail the half-elf, half-horse avatar that healed him that day. When he awoke, his wounds had been healed and food left for him to eat. Karthalus, believing this was his second chance, set out again to be a hero in the Name of Jaspre.

Karthalus generally travels only with those who are trying to help Namegivers live harmoniously with nature. He traveled for a short time with other adepts but found himself to be on the receiving end of many jokes. Although he is an accomplished Swordmaster, he prefers not to tell others of it. This has caused Karthalus to question his choice in Disciplines and he now believes his work as a questor is more important.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

If the characters choose not to find the missing tanner, Savron reminds them of their duty to escort him back to Bartertown.

In addition, any brigands who were captured at the shrine use the village as their escape. All the brigands are aware of Safeway's hatred for Therans, and when the group comes close to the gates, the brigands make a dash for the village yelling about Therans and pretending to be bound even if they are not. The town's villagers confront the characters about the accusation and the brigands use the delay to escape through the east gate.





## BERGOT'S BRIGANDS

**I**n this scene, the characters enter the woods to find the source of the noise near the farm. The characters find a group of Bergot's Brigands subduing an espagra. After a short encounter, they discover what has happened to Urzon and the location of Bergot's camp.

### SETTING THE STAGE

Read the following as the characters are searching the forest:

*As you crest the hill searching for the noise that farmer Gruson mentioned, you see three dwarfs assaulting an espagra with clubs. The creature is trying weakly to get away, but it appears to be in pain. Two of the Namegivers beat the espagra ruthlessly while the third stands a few feet back. The third dwarf does not seem to you to be a common brigand. He wears well-kept chain mail and seems to dislike what the other two are doing. Nearby you see a half-eaten squirrel staked to the ground.*

*Without a word, Karthalus advances into view of the trio and yells a challenge to the attackers. Startled, the three men look at your group and prepare to fight. The dwarf in chain mail quickly steps in front of the other two, his sword suddenly drawn and ready.*

### THEMES AND IMAGES

The pieces of the puzzle begin falling into place. The characters' clues and suspicions are now given hard evidence as to what's going on. On the heels of this realization arise a challenge and an opportunity for aid. As they face Beograd, the proud, yet conflicted Warrior, they have the chance to make a powerful ally on their quest.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

Beograd, Bergot's brother, is here with two other brigands at one of the stakeout areas. The sight of the senseless beating enrages Karthalus, and he marches down the hill without a second thought for the group. He challenges any of the trio to a duel.

Beograd, on the other hand, is only half-hearted in his attempts to capture espagra. Being a Warrior, he does not see any honor in poisoning the beasts for capture. Beograd agrees to a duel, offering information if he can be bested. He points to a fighter in the group and only agrees to the duel if he fights another Warrior or

another seasoned fighter in fair combat. He states the rules of the duel as the two are to use the flats of their blades; using the Attacking to Stun combat option (*Player's Guide* p.222), and that they cannot attack the other on the ground. The other two brigands do not interfere and trust Beograd's judgment. Regardless of the outcome of the duel, Beograd is heartened by the display and agrees to help the characters stop his brother's activities if the characters agree not to kill Bergot.

## BOEGRAD ANDALIS SECOND CIRCLE DWARF WARRIOR

### Attributes

DEX (17): 7 STR (20): 8 TOU (15): 6  
PER (9): 4 WIL (11): 5 CHA (12): 5

### Characteristics

Initiative: 4 Physical Defense: 10  
Physical Armor: 8 Spell Defense: 6  
Mystic Armor: 1 Social Defense: 7  
Death: 56 Recovery Tests: 3  
Unconsciousness: 44 Knockdown: 8  
Wound Threshold: 10 Movement: 5

Karma Points: 8/8

### Warrior Talents

Acrobatic Strike (2): 9  
Anticipate Blow<sup>D</sup> (2): 6  
Avoid Blow<sup>D</sup> (2): 9  
Durability (9/7) (2): 2  
Karma Ritual<sup>D</sup> (2): 2  
Melee Weapons<sup>D</sup> (4): 11  
Unarmed Combat<sup>D</sup> (2): 9  
Wood Skin<sup>D</sup> (3): 9

<sup>D</sup> Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

*Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)*

### Skills

Ancient Weapons<sup>K</sup> (2): 6  
Etiquette (1): 6  
Hunting (1): 8  
Legends and Heroes<sup>K</sup> (1): 5  
Military Procedures<sup>K</sup> (1): 5  
Read/Write Language (1): 5—(Dwarf/Throalic)  
Speak Language (2): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human/Iopan)  
Tactics (2): 6  
Throwing Weapons (2): 9  
Weapon Rune Carving<sup>A</sup> (1): 6

<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

### Armor

Chainmail (Phys 7; Init 3), Buckler (Phys 1; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17)

### Weapons

Dwarf Sword (Damage 12), Dagger (Damage 10; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 × Spears (Damage 12; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

### Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Belt Pouch, Carving Tools, Forge Tools, Trail Rations (1 week), Traveler's Garb

### Loot

30 silver pieces

### Legend Award

Second Circle

### Notes

As a dwarf, Beograd possesses the Heat Sight racial ability.

### Warrior Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

### Commentary

Beograd is Bergot's younger brother. He adventured briefly, but he worries about his brother's attempts to get rich. He wishes to adventure more and make a Name for himself, but Bergot manipulates him with guilt when he tries to leave. This latest scheme is causing Beograd to have a crisis of conscience, but he is unwilling to talk about it with anyone.





## DWARF BRIGANDS (2)

These brigands are loyal to Beograd and are the only brigands with whom Beograd works. They have been inspired with Beograd's tales of heroic warriors and hope to one day become adepts. Use the Brigand statistics on p. 53.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

The only problem the characters can encounter here is if they kill Beograd. He is not vital to the completion of the story, and characters may wish to fight Beograd even after he calls for a truce. If they attack Beograd after he calls for a truce, Karthalus tells the characters not to give in to the Passion of Raggok and that everyone knows when to call a fight. If none of the player characters accepts Beograd's challenge, Karthalus does so eagerly, and wins easily. In this case, the players receive no Legend Points for the encounter.

## THE BRIGANDS' CAMP

**A**fter finding the location of the brigand camp, the characters confront Bergot. Attempts to convince Bergot to stop are found to be fruitless, and combat ensues. After the fight, the characters are able to finish their dealings with the tanner and return to Bartertown.

## SETTING THE STAGE

When the characters approach the camp, read the following aloud:

*The forest opens into a small glade about a hundred yards across. A large tent has been erected in the center of the clearing. There is a dwarf chained to a tree next to the tent diligently working on skinning a recently slain espagra, while two humans are busy stretching out other espagra hides on wooden frames. A human and a dwarf kneel a few feet away engrossed in some other activity.*

*After a short time, you see a skinny dwarf come out of the tent and yell at the two kneeling and then check the progress of the espagra. Satisfied with the progress, he returns to the tent. The human and dwarf almost immediately resume their endeavor at the new location they have moved to.*

*A dozen espagra lie on one side of the clearing. They are chained to trees or held in cages. The dwarf skinning the espagra looks worn and haggard. When he stops, one of the other dwarfs walks over to him and pokes him with his club.*

## THEMES AND IMAGES

Even with their abilities, the player characters should have a feeling of apprehension about taking on a large camp of brigands. They also see the exploitation of these espagra firsthand and may be caught up in the same feelings of outrage expressed by Jaspre through their traveling companion. His dash into the fray may catch them by surprise and draw them into the conflict sooner than they feel ready for.

As the espagra are freed, the assurance that the characters are fighting on nature's side, even for such voracious creatures, can be evoked. They are righting a wrong and growing in their legends, even in such small conflicts and seemingly minor misuses of a Namegiver's power.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Not much is going on throughout the day. Urzon is here chained to a tree, tanning espagra hides. Two brigands are helping him, while another two are on guard. Bergot can usually be found in his tent coming up with new schemes to get rich. He makes it a point to come out frequently to make sure everything is going smoothly.

Once any fighting starts, Bergot blows a thundra beast horn, signaling his brigands to come back to camp. The brigands are spread out up to half a mile away from the camp, with four brigands—three dwarfs and one human—arriving every two rounds until the eighth round when all the brigands have returned. If Beograd initiates conversation, Bergot blows the horn and attempts to delay the characters until his brigands arrive. Regardless of what happens, he does not give up his operation before it has even had a chance to start.

At some point during combat, Karthalus goes to the espagra to set them free. The espagra, being hungry and sick for the last few days, take the opportunity to attack their captors. At the game-master's discretion, have the espagra make a Perception (5) Test. Success indicates the espagra target one of their captors; failure targets the closest character—not including Karthalus. Once this happens, Bergot tries to make his escape. Urzon can be found hiding in some of the loose hides that were lying beside him, and any surviving brigands attempt to flee into the woods.

### BERGOT ANDALIS THIRD CIRCLE DWARF THIEF

#### Attributes

DEX (17): 7      STR (14): 6      TOU (14): 6  
PER (16): 7      WIL (12): 5      CHA (13): 6

#### Characteristics

Initiative: 6      Physical Defense: 10  
Physical Armor: 5      Spell Defense: 9  
Mystic Armor: 2      Social Defense: 7  
Death: 54      Recovery Tests: 3  
Unconsciousness: 43      Knockdown: 6  
Wound Threshold: 10      Movement: 5

Karma Points: 12/12

#### Thief Talents

Detect Trap<sup>D</sup> (3): 10  
Disarm Trap<sup>D</sup> (3): 10  
Durability (6/5) (3): 3  
Karma Ritual<sup>D</sup> (3): 3  
Lock Picking<sup>D</sup> (3): 10  
Melee Weapons (4): 11  
Picking Pockets<sup>D</sup> (3): 10  
Silent Walk<sup>D</sup> (4): 11  
Surprise Strike (3): 9  
Trap Initiative<sup>D</sup> (3): 10  
<sup>D</sup> Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)  
*Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)*

#### Skills

Acting<sup>A</sup> (3): 9  
Alchemy (2): 9  
Alchemy and Potions<sup>K</sup> (2): 9  
Avoid Blow (2): 9  
Botany<sup>K</sup> (2): 9  
Climbing (3): 10  
Creature Lore<sup>K</sup> (2): 9  
Haggle (2): 8  
Hunting (2): 9  
Missile Weapons (2): 9  
Poison Lore<sup>K</sup> (2): 9  
Read/Write Language (1): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic)  
Snares and Traps<sup>K</sup> (2): 9  
Speak Language (2): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human/Iopan)  
Streetwise (3): 10  
<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill



### Armor

Hide Armor (Phys 5; Myst 1; Init 1)

### Weapons

Dwarf Sword (Forged +1; Damage 11), 2 × Daggers (Damage 8; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), Light Crossbow (Damage 10; Range 32–64 yards/16–32 hexes), Quiver (w/15 light crossbow bolts)

### Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Alchemy Kit at Brigand's Camp, Belt Pouch, Booster Potion, Kelia's Antidote, Kelix's Poultice, Large Sack (w/Debilitating, Ingested Poison Herbs, mimics Black Brine poison except source), Trail Rations (1 week), Traveler's Garb

### Loot

50 silver pieces

### Legend Award

Third Circle

### Notes

As a dwarf, Bergot possesses the Heat Sight racial ability.

### Thief Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

### Commentary

Bergot Andalis, the leader of Bergot's Brigands, is a Third Circle Thief adept. Bergot is skinny for a dwarf. When his parents died, Bergot tried to support himself and his younger brother, Beograd. Because of his size, he found it difficult to find honest work and turned towards thievery. Bergot wants nothing less than to become an important person and believes that wealth is the only means to accomplish this. Always scheming, Bergot pursues any endeavor wholeheartedly, every failure making him angrier and less prone to listen to his brother's warnings.

## DWARF BRIGANDS (15), HUMAN BRIGANDS (5)

Those in Bergot's Brigands are not hardened criminals as Bergot would make them appear. If they take a Wound or more damage than half their Death Rating they flee into the woods. Should more than two-thirds flee or become incapacitated the rest also flee. Use the Brigand statistics on p. 53.

### Overall Legend Award

Defeating Bergot and his brigands earns the characters a Fourth Circle (Group) Legend Award.

## ESPAGRA (10)

Use the Espagra statistics on p. 51.

## URZON TEGIN FOURTH CIRCLE DWARF CAVALRYMAN

### Attributes

DEX (14): 6      STR (16): 7      TOU (17): 7  
PER (13): 6      WIL (10): 5      CHA (14): 6

### Characteristics

Initiative: 6      Physical Defense: 8  
Physical Armor: 0      Spell Defense: 7  
Mystic Armor: 0      Social Defense: 8  
Death: 68  
Unconsciousness: 56      Recovery Tests: 3  
Wound Threshold: 11      Knockdown: 7\*  
Movement: 5

Karma Points: 16/16

\* Urzon knows the Sure Mount talent

### Cavalryman Talents

Animal Bond<sup>D</sup> (4): 10  
Avoid Blow (4): 10  
Blood Share (4): 11  
Charge<sup>D</sup> (5): 12  
Durability (7/6) (4): 4  
Empathic Command<sup>D</sup> (4): 9

Karma Ritual<sup>D</sup> (4): 4

Melee Weapons<sup>D</sup> (5): 11

Sure Mount<sup>D</sup> (4): 11

Thread Weaving (Rider Weaving)<sup>D</sup> (4): 10

Trick Riding<sup>D</sup> (4): 10

Wilderness Survival (4): 10

<sup>D</sup> Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

<sup>I</sup> Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

### Skills

Craftsman (Leatherworker)<sup>A</sup> (3): 9

Creature Lore<sup>K</sup> (3): 9

Fast Hand (1): 7

Lock Picking (1): 7

Read/Write Language (1): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic)

Scythan History<sup>K</sup> (2): 8

Speak Language (1): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic)

Unarmed Combat (2): 8

<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

### Weapons

Thread Gou-Tar (Rank 4; Damage 11; +4 bonus to tests involving skinning or tanning)

### Equipment

Peasant's Garb

### Legend Award

None

### Notes

As a dwarf, Urzon possesses the Heat Sight racial ability.

### Cavalryman Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Charisma-only Tests

### Commentary

Urzon is a Cavalryman adept from a small village in the northern hinterlands. He adventured for a short time before his adventuring band was captured by Therans and forced into slavery. Urzon spent several years as a slave before being bought by a young Theran scholar. Being very interested in Scythan history, the Theran was more generous with Urzon than his previous masters had been. This new master often had discussions with Urzon about Scythan history and lore, and even though he showed Urzon more leniency than previous masters, the Theran still ensured that Urzon knew his place there.

After several years, Urzon's master allowed him the freedom to travel his lands unsupervised. Unknown to the Theran, Urzon had fallen in love with a fellow servant—another dwarf whose parents had been captured as slaves. Urzon was determined to escape and show her the freedom she had never experienced.

Urzon made a daring escape, stealing some of his master's gold and possessions to barter his passage back to Barsaive. He returned with his love to the northern region of Barsaive and came across Safeway, where he decided to start over, becoming the local tanner.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

If the characters choose not to engage the brigands to stop their activity, Karthalus and Beograd, if he is with the characters, confront Bergot and his evil deed. Savron insists on accompanying them because he cannot finish his dealings without the tanner. The final sign is the white espagra, which flies to attack the brigands. If the group still refuses to help them, remind the players that nature is all around and dismissing Jasprey off-hand is not a wise idea. If they are still not swayed to help, let them leave. Savron returns to Bartertown and tells Hardly of the characters' cowardice. Word gets around, since Hardly knows a lot of influential people, and the characters will have a hard time dealing in Bartertown.

## AFTERMATH

**A**fter the group has dealt with Bergot's Brigands, they still need to get Urzon back to Safeway and escort Savron back to Bartertown.

Karthalus informs the characters that he is going to stay, as several of the espagra were injured when the brigands subdued them—he believes this is what Jasprey wishes him to do. He does not let anything happen to the remaining espagra and challenges anyone who wishes to harm them. They do not seem to mind the



questor's help but hiss loudly at anyone else who comes near them. Karthalus tells the characters that they have done a great service to Jaspre and wishes them well on their journey. The white mountain espagra remains with Karthalus.

After the group returns to Safeway, Urzon retells every one of the characters' great heroics; a small feast is held in their honor at Clankin' Steins, and their room and board is provided at no charge. Savron negotiates the price for the remaining hides; he has a shrewd eye and makes sure that he gets all of the green hides for Hardly. If the players wish, Urzon is more than happy to give the characters a few hides for their help.

The journey back to Bartertown is uneventful. Hardly is overjoyed at the character's return as well as the quality of the hides brought back. He offers the characters an additional 25 silver each and agrees to make them any outfit they want (although it takes him at least a week to get it all done).

## AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

As suggested in the **Gamemastering** chapter on p.97 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*, **A Tear for Jaspre** awards a number of Legend Awards to the player characters. A single Legend Award should award a number of Legend Points as determined by the character's Circle. For example, a Third Circle character receives from 200 to 500 Legend Points per Legend Award, and a total of two to five Legend Awards per game session. In the final game session that concludes the adventure, the characters may gain an extra Legend Award for completing the overall adventure goal. The characters earn a Legend Award for Conflicts in sessions they fight opponents and creatures presented here.

The adventure goal for **A Tear for Jaspre** is to free Urzon and capture Bergot before getting the hides and returning to Bartertown.

## MAGICAL TREASURES

**T**he following magical treasures can be found during the adventure. Some are in the possession of gamemaster characters, who generally won't choose to give the items away.

### GOU-TAR

Gou-tar is a bone dagger similar to those used by the jungle t'skrang. Loosely translated Gou-tar means 'skin-taker' in the t'skrang language. With no threads attached to it, the Gou-tar has the same characteristics as a normal bone dagger (see *Player's Guide* p.251 and *Namegivers of Barsaive* p.238). Urzon Tegin (see p. 60) currently has a Rank 4 thread woven to Gou-tar.

**Maximum Threads:** 2

**Spell Defense:** 12

**Legend Point Cost:** Journeyman

### THREAD RANK ONE

**Key Knowledge:** The wielder must learn the Name of the dagger.

**Effect:** The dagger is now Damage Step 3. The wielder adds a +1 bonus to tests involving the skinning or tanning of an animal's hide.

### THREAD RANK TWO

**Effect:** The wielder adds a +2 bonus to tests involving the skinning or tanning of an animal's hide.



### THREAD RANK THREE

**Key Knowledge:** The wielder must learn the Name of the tribe that the dagger's creator was from.

**Effect:** The dagger is now Damage Step 4. The wielder adds a +3 bonus to tests involving the skinning or tanning of an animal's hide.

### THREAD RANK FOUR

**Effect:** The wielder adds a +4 bonus to tests involving the skinning or tanning of an animal's hide.

### THREAD RANK FIVE

**Deed:** The wielder must travel to a jungle t'skrang village and participate in the ceremony of the skin-taker. This is a great honor among jungle t'skrang, and convincing them to perform the ceremony on a non-member may be the subject of an adventure itself.

**Effect:** The wielder of Gou-tar can use the hide of an animal to take that animal's form. In order to take a creature's form, the wielder must skin the animal with Gou-tar. Once skinned, the hide is good for one week and the wielder can transform any number of times within that week. This ability can only be used on mundane, non-magical creatures and the transformation either way requires four combat rounds. While in beast form, the wielder gains all of the chosen animal's normal physical Attributes and abilities, but retains his own mental Attributes and talents. Characters in beast form can be affected by any talents or spells that normally affect animals. They can cast only those spells requiring gestures that the animal is capable of performing; this limitation automatically excludes any spell requiring speech.



# WESTHRALL'S PASSAGE

*Half of Westhrall's map may be only half a chance,  
but it is far better than my alternatives.*

• ELA PONO •

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



**Westhrall's Passage** is an adventure scenario designed for three to five Novice adepts (Second to Fourth Circle) of any Discipline. In this adventure, the characters are taken on a journey into the depths of the Kingdom of Throal, where the Pale Ones dwell and survival is always uncertain. **Westhrall's Passage** begins as a linear adventure but becomes more open-ended as it progresses, with the final outcome based on the actions of the player characters. Most of this adventure happens underground and includes a significant amount of rafting, so obsidimen characters will face more difficulties than Namegivers of other races.

## RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

**W**esthrall's Passage is presented as a series of events. Each is described for the gamemaster, who should use the information given to run each section. There is little text to be read aloud to the players, meaning the gamemaster will have to describe many of the scenes to the characters as he sees fit. Where possible the text describes the terrain and areas the characters encounter, but much of the detail is left to the gamemaster to devise.

Each encounter contains four sections: **Setting the Stage** contains a narrative description that the gamemaster reads aloud to the



players, **Themes and Images** helps the gamemaster set the mood and pacing for a particular encounter, and **Behind the Scenes** explains what is really going on in each encounter. The final section of each encounter, **Troubleshooting**, offers suggestions to help the gamemaster get the adventure back on track should things go awry.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

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

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

Recently, Baron Mardek Silkback of Valvria has begun secretly attempting to reopen the underground river routes to Throal. An ambitious ork and a consummate politician, Mardek would like nothing better than to take the crown of Throal for himself from the dwarf kingdom's weakening royal line. A secret road in and out of Throal would enable the baron to bring mercenaries into the kingdom under his banner, or make a quick exit should his schemes turn sour. Mardek is exceptionally loyal to Throal's ideals, but he feels that King Neden is likely to get himself killed on some foolish venture or another, especially after the fiasco that was the Battle of Prajor's Field. If this happens, the Kingdom of Throal will need someone to protect it from the eager scions of House Ueraven and House Garsun, all of whom are circling the throne like vultures. Mardek is confident that he is just the person to save Throal from such a disaster. See p.95 of *Nations of Barsaive Volume One* for more information on Baron Mardek.

Ela Pono is an apprentice archivist in the Great Library of Throal. She has served Thom Edrull for several years, and on many occasions acted as the front woman for Edrull's less savory activities. Prior to becoming an archivist, Ela was part of an adventuring group called the Band of Blood that mapped a section of Braza's Kingdom. When a wrong turn sent four of her best friends to a ghastly death, she retired and became a scholar at the library. Since then, she has undertaken to learn all she can about Throal's lowest depths. She recently discovered a fragment of one of Captain Westhrall's maps of the underground routes into the kingdom, which she sold to Mardek without Edrull's assistance or knowledge. See p.33 of *Nations of Barsaive Volume One* for more information on Ela Pono.

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

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

This second expedition also wandered into a political mire. A tribe of Pale Ones known as the Raghul is trying to take over the communities in the Great Dome of Yatrivash, with the help of dwarfs from the banned House of Endour (see **On the Banned Houses** on p.28 of *Nations of Barsaive Volume One*) and t'skrang from the Abanos foundation of House K'tenshin, the House of the Nine Diamonds (see **The Nialls of House K'tenshin** on p.42 of *Nations of Barsaive Volume Two*). The Abanos possess the other half of Westhrall's map, and are searching for a way into the Kingdom of Throal as a gift for their Theran allies. In the meantime, they are enslaving the Pale Ones of Yatrivash, whom the dwarfs of House Endour are also using to mine a vein of silver ore.

Mardek has ordered Ela Pono to put together a third expedition to venture into subterranean Throal. He intends to use Ela's knowledge of Braza's Kingdom to get a small group of skilled adepts through the





first part of the journey. He believes that the regiment of soldiers he sent with the second expedition attracted hostile attention from the locals, and that a small group might be seen as less of a threat.

Ela would do just about anything to avoid returning to Braza's Kingdom, where she lost her friends six years ago. However, Mardek has her boxed into a corner. If she doesn't go on the expedition, she will have to face Mardek's wrath at being cheated. She can't approach the throne for help without risking exposure of her illegal deals at the Great Library. She can't approach Thom Edrull for fear of losing her position once he finds out she has made deals behind his back. She won't flee Throal, because she badly wants to become the first ork to be appointed Scribe and Archivist at the Great Library. Thom Edrull has promised her this position, should he succeed Merrox as Master of the Hall of Records. She has no choice but to follow Mardek's orders and hope to survive.

## PLOT SYNOPSIS

Ela Pono hires the player characters to accompany her far beneath the Kingdom of Throal. She tells them she has found a fragment of a map that shows a route from the Serpent River into the Throal Mountains, and that she must verify its authenticity. By the time she approaches the characters, Ela has already acquired two native guides from the Pale Ones, a raft, and 10 days' worth of provisions. She offers the characters a generous advance for equipment costs and pledges them to secrecy about the mission.

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

During this encounter, the Raghul, aided by the Abanos of House K'tenshin, attack the village. The characters see firsthand the ravages of the Raghul tribe and its allies, and discover that a riverboat is moored somewhere in the caverns. Their t'skrang guides are killed in the battle, cutting the characters off from their only reliable means of getting safely back to the surface. In order to return to Throal and the world they know, the characters must forge ahead and find **Westhrall's Passage** on their own. Of course, this means they must first slip past, infiltrate, assault, or retreat from the Raghul and K'tenshin warriors. As they plan their escape, the characters also discover that the allies of the Raghul include dwarfs from the Banned House of Endour. Depending on the choices that the player characters make, the adventure may end in a number of different ways.

## INVITATION TO AN EXPEDITION

**I**n this encounter, Ela Pono, an apprentice archivist at the Great Library of Throal, approaches the characters. She says she has discovered a fragment of what could be a map made by the great Captain Westhrall of House V'strimon, drawn during the Theran War, which shows an underground route linking the Serpent River and the dwarf kingdom. She wants to hire the characters to accompany her on an expedition to authenticate the map.

## SETTING THE STAGE

The adventure begins with one or more of the player characters in the Reading Room of the Great Library of Throal. Once the character is settled in the Reading Room, the gamemaster should read the following aloud to the player:

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

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

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

At this point, the gamemaster should hand out the letter printed below.





Dear Sir,

If you and your company are not otherwise engaged, I wish to employ your services on an expedition into the deep subterranean regions of Throal. My employer has authorized me to offer 400 silver pieces each for the successful completion of this exploratory mission. If you wish to know more, please come to the tavern called Ambica's Beard in the city of Valvria, tomorrow at the tenth hour. Please also come prepared to depart immediately on the expedition, should you decide to accept the offer.

With respect,

Ela Pono

Apprentice Archivist of  
the Great Library of Throal

## THEMES AND IMAGES

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

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The adventure begins with at least one of the player characters in the Reading Room of the Great Library of Throal. The gamemaster may wish to create a brief scenario that leads the characters to the library, or may have Ela seek them out at their lodgings if none of the characters has reason or desire to be visiting the library. If the player characters press Ela for more information immediately, she replies that she can say no more until the appointed place and hour, and she will stick to this position. If any of the characters are foolish enough to try strong-arming anything out of Ela, the gamemaster should point out that physically threatening a staff member of the library would undoubtedly draw the attention of the Royal Guards stationed at the doors. See p.32 of *Nations of Barsaive Volume One* for more information on the Great Library.

### Who is Ela Pono?

If the characters ask around in hopes of learning more about Ela Pono, they can use their Streetwise or Research skills to gather knowledge, or any other method the gamemaster deems appropriate; for example, knowledge skills about Throal or the Great Library. The Difficulty Number for all such Tests is 7 (*Player's Guide* p.98). How much the characters learn depends on the Result Level they achieve, as shown below.

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

**Good:** Ela specializes in studies of Throal's subterranean regions.

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

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

## ELA PONO THIRD CIRCLE ORK THIEF

### Attributes

DEX (14): 6      STR (11): 5      TOU (16): 7  
PER (15): 6      WIL (9): 4      CHA (10): 5

### Characteristics

Initiative: 5      Physical Defense: 9  
Physical Armor: 6      Spell Defense: 8  
Mystic Armor: 0      Social Defense: 6  
Death: 57\*      Recovery Tests: 3  
Unconsciousness: 46\*      Knockdown: 5  
Wound Threshold: 11      Movement: 6

Karma Points: 15/15

\* DR 53/UR 42 with blood promise

### Thief Talents

Detect Trap<sup>D</sup> (3): 9  
Disarm Trap<sup>D</sup> (3): 9  
Durability (6/5) (3): 3  
Karma Ritual<sup>D</sup> (3): 3  
Lock Picking<sup>D</sup> (3): 9  
Melee Weapons (3): 9  
Picking Pockets<sup>D</sup> (3): 9  
Silent Walk<sup>D</sup> (3): 9  
Surprise Strike (3): 8  
Trap Initiative<sup>D</sup> (3): 9  
<sup>D</sup> Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)  
*Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)*

### Skills

Avoid Blow (2): 8  
Bribery (2): 7  
Climbing (2): 8  
Forgery (2): 8  
Haggle (2): 7  
Horror Lore<sup>K</sup> (1): 7  
Lost Kaers<sup>K</sup> (1): 7  
Magic Lore<sup>K</sup> (2): 8  
Mapmaking<sup>A</sup> (2): 8  
Read/Write Language (5): 11—(Dwarf/Throalic, Or'zet, Sperethiel, Theran, T'skrang/Pale Ones)  
Research (4): 10  
Speak Language (3): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, Or'zet, T'skrang/Pale Ones)  
Streetwise (3): 9  
Subterranean Throal Geography<sup>K</sup> (3): 9  
<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

### Armor

Leather Armor (Phys 3), Footman's Shield (Phys 3; Init 1; Deflect 2/0; Shatter 19)

### Weapons

Short Sword (Damage 9), Dagger (Damage 7; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), Knife (Damage 6; Range 8–16 yards/4–8 hexes)

### Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Climbing Kit, Felt Hat, Mapmaking Tools, One-half of Westhrall's Map in Map/Scroll Case, Trail Rations (1 week), Traveler's Garb, Writing Kit

### Loot

Gold bracelet (worth 60 silver pieces), gold ring (worth 30 silver pieces)

### Legend Award

None

### Notes

As an ork, Ela Pono possesses the *Gahad* and Low-Light Vision racial abilities.

### Thief Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

### Commentary

A Third Circle ork Thief, Ela Pono is an apprentice archivist at the Great Library of Throal, under the tutelage of the morally bankrupt Thom Edrull. For more information about Ela, see p.33 of *Nations of Barsaive Volume One*. Note that with the blood oath below, Ela Pono's Death Rating and Unconscious Rating will decrease by 4 each due to Blood Magic. Treating Ela like a child is likely to trigger her *gahad*. On the other hand, her *gahad* will never be triggered when her own scholarly curiosity sets in. The gamemaster is free to describe the other triggers or nullifiers of her *gahad*.





### At Ambica's Beard

Ambica's Beard is located in a working-class neighborhood of the Inner City of Valvria. The tavern's sign, painted in unusually detailed fashion for such an establishment, shows a drunken ork pulling hard on the beard of an otherwise female-looking dwarf. The tavern's clientele consists mostly of guards and *b'jados* who work for the dwarf trade houses based in Valvria, and most of them are much better behaved than the stereotypical ork. The Beard has only one house rule: no fights. If a fight looks likely to break out, every customer in the place will converge on the offenders and manhandle them out into the street.

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

Read aloud or paraphrase the following paragraphs:

"To business, then. I recently came across part of a most interesting map, showing the way from the Kingdom of Throal to an underground river system that runs beneath the Throal Mountains. According to my research, this map might be part of the one made by Captain Westhrall during the Theran War, when he first discovered the underground route between the Serpent River and the dwarf kingdom. I want you to accompany me on an expedition to find out if my research is correct. My employer wants very much to authenticate the map, and has sent two expeditions already. Unfortunately, neither one succeeded. The first retreated when they discovered that the mapped route runs close to Braza's Kingdom,

a dangerous place rumored to be full of Horrors. The second expedition was accompanied by a sizable band of soldiers, but I have heard nothing from them since they left more than two weeks ago.

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

"Upon our return, you will each receive 200 silver pieces in addition to the 400 I mentioned in my letter. Any treasure we may find on the way is ours to keep—but I must be honest with you, I've been in the area before and haven't found much. I also want you to know that my employer has arranged for a stipend for myself and our guides—an amount of money that decreases for each member of the expedition lost. I tell you this so that you understand that I have a vested interest in getting every one of us out alive.

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



This deal is completely straightforward, at least as far as the fees are concerned; Ela has no authority to negotiate the cash reward. The blood oath may seem like an unusual twist, but such oaths are typically sworn by a *b'jados* to his employer in Throal. This oath is a blood promise, sworn between one of the characters and Ela (*Player's Guide* p.125). After hearing Ela out, the characters may have a few questions for her. If they ask how long the journey will take, Ela estimates fifteen to twenty days out and ten to fifteen days back to Throal. The expedition will get under way as soon as the characters swear the blood oath.

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

As for supplies, Ela has already acquired 10 days' worth of provisions for a group of five; poles, tarps, and waterskins; four light-crystal lanterns; ropes, fish nets, lines, hooks, and floats; chalk for leaving marks on the cavern walls; quills and paper; and a variety of trinkets, cloth, and steel items for trade with the Pale Ones. If the characters need or want anything else beyond that, they must purchase it with their own money, and quickly.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

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

If the characters do refuse the job, after some time goes by, Baron Mardek might approach them through another agent. This agent explains that Ela's expedition has failed to return, and offers the characters a reward to find out the expedition's fate. The adventure can then be run pretty much as written, but the characters will not have Ela's expert help. In this event, Ela will be enslaved in the dwarf mining camp (see **Enslaved!** on p. 82).

**Westhrall's Passage** assumes that the characters are not employed directly by the Kingdom of Throal in any capacity. If they do work for Throal, the gamemaster can still run the adventure with a slight alteration. If the characters report Ela's offer to their employer (the Eye of Throal, Arm of Throal, His Majesty's Exploratory Force, or whoever) their superiors ask them to go on the mission and submit a detailed report afterward. They also ask the characters to do their best to recover the map fragment, along with any maps made during the mission that show the route from the Great Dome of Yatrivash to the Serpent River. See the possible outcomes, p. 84 in **Aftermath**, for more information about this turn of events.

## SHUSS HALIMA

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

## SETTING THE STAGE

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

*Ela steers you toward a large, low building. Walking inside, you see crates and barrels stacked on long rows of shelves. Ela turns down one of these rows, walks about twenty feet, then suddenly stops and stomps on the floor. A trap door slides*

*open, revealing a ladder leading down. You look through the trap door and see a dwarf with a lantern beckoning from the bottom of the ladder.*

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

## THEMES AND IMAGES

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

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The two *t'skrang*, whom Ela introduces as Shigo and Muravi, are the adventurers' guides. Though the expedition will go to places neither *t'skrang* has ever seen, their knowledge of the underground passages and their skills in the water make them invaluable additions to the team. Muravi is delighted at this chance to practice her broken Throalic, and joins any conversation with enthusiasm.

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

The basket ride deposits the characters in a wide tunnel, about twenty feet high and sixty feet wide, with an underground river running through it. The basket drops down lightly on a fifteen-foot sandy bank between the tunnel wall and the water's edge. The rotting remains of a wooden dock extend from the bank into the water, and a raft is tied to the timbers. The raft is four yards wide and seven yards long (see p. 117 of *Nations of Barsaive Volume Two*).

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

In preparing for their raft trip, the characters should keep two things in mind: swimming skills and storage. The Base Difficulty Number for Swimming Tests in the underground river is 5 (*Player's Guide* p.102). Keep in mind that obsidimen cannot swim: if they fall in the water, they sink unless they can climb out. Windlings only swim if there is no other way to survive, because getting their wings wet effectively cripples them until their wings dry out.

The characters should also remember to tie down any weapons and armor they are not wearing in order to keep them from sinking to the bottom if the raft capsizes. The Pale Ones have constructed pairs of loops on the edge of the tarp—two on the front and back, four on each side—onto which the passengers can bind up to twelve items. Shigo and Muravi have each bound their spears in this fash-



ion, and assist the others in doing the same. Ela carries her sword, but has bound her shield to the side of the tarp instead of stowing it inside, for quicker access. This allows the characters to attach an additional amount of up to nine pieces of equipment to the sides of the tarp. Anything bound inside the tarp (as opposed to the side loops) takes 2 Combat Rounds to retrieve, so each character should choose what to bind to the loops carefully.

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

## SHIGO

### Attributes

DEX (14): 6      STR (14): 6      TOU (11): 5  
PER (10): 5      WIL (11): 5      CHA (8): 4

### Characteristics

Initiative: 5      Physical Defense: 8  
Physical Armor: 5      Spell Defense: 6  
Mystic Armor: 1      Social Defense: 5  
Death: 32      Recovery Tests: 2  
Unconsciousness: 24      Knockdown: 6  
Wound Threshold: 8      Movement: 6

### Skills

Bone Carving<sup>A</sup> (1): 5  
Craft Armor<sup>A</sup> (1): 6  
Creature Lore<sup>K</sup> (1): 6  
Fishing (2): 7  
Melee Weapons (2): 8  
Read/Write Language (1): 6—(T'skrang/Pale Ones)  
Sailing (3): 9  
Speak Language (1): 6—(T'skrang/Pale Ones)  
Subterranean Throal Geography<sup>K</sup> (1): 6  
Swimming (1): 7  
Throwing Weapons (1): 7  
Unarmed Combat (2): 8

<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

### Armor

Bone Mail (Phys 5; Init 1; *Namegivers of Barsaive* p.238)

### Weapons

Knife (Damage 7; Range 8–16 yards/4–8 hexes), Spear (Damage 10; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

### Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Carving Tools, Fishing Kit, Forge Tools, Peasant's Garb, Trail Rations (1 week)

### Legend Award

None

### Notes

As a Pale Ones t'skrang, Shigo possesses the Heat Sight and Tail Combat racial abilities.

## MURAVI

### Attributes

DEX (14): 6      STR (14): 6      TOU (11): 5  
PER (11): 5      WIL (11): 5      CHA (13): 6

### Characteristics

Initiative: 5      Physical Defense: 8  
Physical Armor: 5      Spell Defense: 7  
Mystic Armor: 1      Social Defense: 7  
Death: 32      Recovery Tests: 2  
Unconsciousness: 24      Knockdown: 6  
Wound Threshold: 8      Movement: 6

### Skills

Bone Carving<sup>A</sup> (1): 7  
Conversation (1): 7  
Craft Armor<sup>A</sup> (1): 6  
Creature Lore<sup>K</sup> (1): 6  
Engaging Banter (1): 7  
Fishing (1): 6  
Melee Weapons (2): 8  
Read/Write Language (1): 6—(T'skrang/Pale Ones)  
Sailing (2): 8  
Speak Language (2): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic, T'skrang/Pale Ones)  
Subterranean Throal Geography<sup>K</sup> (2): 7  
Swimming (1): 7  
Throwing Weapons (1): 7  
Unarmed Combat (2): 8

<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

### Armor

Bone Mail (Phys 5; Init 1; *Namegivers of Barsaive* p.238)

### Weapons

Knife (Damage 7; Range 8–16 yards/4–8 hexes), Spear (Damage 10; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

### Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Carving Tools, Fishing Kit, Forge Tools, Peasant's Garb, Trail Rations (1 week)

### Legend Award

None

### Notes

As a Pale Ones t'skrang, Shigo possesses the Heat Sight and Tail Combat racial abilities. Muravi speaks broken Throalic well enough to get by in most situations.

## Exploration

This adventure does not include a copy of Westhral's map because playing out the adventurers' progress across every foot of the subterranean passages under the Throal Mountains would become extremely tedious. Instead, the characters measure progress toward their goal by reaching various milestones (see the **Travel Table**), each of which represents one day's journey by raft. A milestone can be any fitting place, such as a junction, a good campsite, or a deserted way station from the Theran War (see **Adipae Rapids** on p. 60 of *Nations of Barsaive Volume Two*).

Each day, a member of the expedition makes an Exploration Test against the Difficulty Number of the region through which they the group is traveling. If the test succeeds, the adventurers reach the next milestone—or more, depending on the Result Level achieved (see the **Exploration Results**, below). There are five milestones between the shaft below Valvria and the surface exit to the Coil River. Their general locations and Difficulty Numbers appear in the Travel Table.

The Step Number for the Exploration Test is the character's Perception Step, increased (if appropriate) by any talents or skills possessed by any of the other adventurers that pertain directly to the expedition's mission. This bonus is cumulative for the entire group, regardless of which individual makes the Exploration Test. For example, Ela Pono has the Knowledge skill of Subterranean Throal at Rank 3, which adds +3 to the Exploration Test Step Number. The two t'skrang guides know quite a bit about traveling through the underground regions, and their expertise allows them to add +1 and +2 respectively to this Step Number for a total of +3. The non-player characters present add up to a total of +6 Steps to the Exploration Test.

The player characters can add further Step bonuses with appropriate Knowledge or General skills at the gamemaster's discretion. Possible General skills include Navigation and Read River. As the Step Number for the Exploration Test is determined by a joint effort, only skills can be employed to raise it; talents and spells cannot be shared in that same way.

The Step Number of the Exploration Test can be further modified by the information the explorers have collected about the region in



which they are traveling. For example, Westhrall's map adds +3 to all Exploration Tests for the first two milestones. The *Shivalahala* Yatrivash can share enough information to add +2 to the Exploration Test for Milestones 3 and 4 (the Yatrivash and Dragon's Jaws regions), and may also be able to offer some hints about the area beyond the Dragon's Jaws. The t'skrang of the Abanos foundation have the other half of the Westhrall map; if the characters obtain the second half of the map, it adds +3 to Exploration Tests for Milestone 5 (between the Raghul encampment and the surface exit).

## Exploration Results

Only one character may make the Exploration Test each day. The expedition's progress depends on the Result Level that character achieves:

**Pathetic:** The explorers are hopelessly lost and lose a day finding their way back to the last milestone. A successful Exploration Test on the following day is required to reach the missed milestone.

TRAVEL TABLE

Milestone	Difficulty Number	Location
1	12	Between the shaft from Valvria and Braza's Kingdom
2	14	Between Braza's Kingdom and the first island in the Great Dome
3	13	Across the Great Dome of Yatrivash
4	14	Between the village of Yesha and the Dragon's Jaws
5	13	Between the Dragon's Jaws and the surface exit near the Coil River

**Average:** The explorers make some progress. Move to the next milestone.

**Extraordinary:** The explorers find a shortcut and travel two milestones.

The expedition can survive for approximately one week on the food supplies Ela purchased but this time varies depending on the number of adventurers and how much was brought with them. They can extend their rations by fishing, but should keep in mind that doing so near Braza's Kingdom (Milestone Two) will probably yield Horror-tainted or poisonous fish.

## Encounters

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

Each night the adventurers should camp on the banks of the underground river. The raft makes a poor bed for so many to sleep on, and the guides explain the importance of mooring the raft nightly and checking the underside for wear and tear. Shortly after the journey starts, Ela stops the raft to harvest a number of phosphorescent-green balls of fungus growing by the side of the river. She calls it brain sponge, and explains that it wards off certain kinds





of Horrors. Each night, she ensures the rest of the explorers use a little brain sponge as a pillow.

### Milestone One

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

On the evening that the expedition first reaches this region, the characters awake to Ela Pono's screams. Ela is in the grip of a terrible nightmare. "Run, Ch'sanga, run!" she screams, over and over. When she finally comes to her senses, she stands on shaky legs and takes her "brain sponge" to soak it in the river. When she wrings it out, three worms with hook-shaped tentacles squirm out of it. She crushes one under her heel and keeps grinding it into the ground. When she lifts her boot, the worm is still trying to move away. She stomps on it again and again. "Mindslugs," she mutters, and washes the sponge a second time.

The brain sponge tricked the mindslugs (*Gamemaster's Guide* p.292) into believing they had found a victim, thereby keeping the minor Horrors from crawling inside Ela's own head and mitigating the damage they were able to do. Ela again warns everyone to be on the lookout for signs of the Horrors. If the characters ask who Ch'sanga is, Ela replies, "That was long ago. I won't think about it now." In fact, Ch'sanga was one of Ela's former adventuring companions lost in Braza's Kingdom years ago. If the characters had much success researching Ela's background (see *Invitation to an Expedition*, p.64), they might recognize this Name.

### Milestone Two

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

### Milestone Three

See *Among the Pale Ones*, below, for more information.

### Milestone Four

Unknown to the characters, they have set up camp near the lair of a jehuthra (*Gamemaster's Guide* p.281). Unsurprisingly, the jehuthra attacks. Using its Iron Web power to cover the entire camp, it separates the characters from one another and then attacks them individually. The jehuthra does not fight to the death; if it takes damage to within 10 points of its Unconsciousness Rating, it flees into small tunnels along the cavern wall. Defeating the jehuthra is worth a Third Circle (Group) Legend Award.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

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

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



## AMONG THE PALE ONES

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

## SETTING THE STAGE

This encounter includes several pieces of text to read aloud to the players as their characters travel across the Great Dome of Yatrivash.

When the characters enter the dome, read the following:

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



When the characters travel further, read the following:

*A raft much like your own floats abandoned in the lake. Its surface is pocked with scorch marks and what look like bloodstains. A few minutes later, you reach an island that appears inhabited. When you land on the beach, you see that the sand has been churned up, as if by many running feet. A path leads up a steep slope; along the slope stand the ruins of a dozen dome-shaped huts, linked in groups of three or four, surrounded by six-foot-high palisades. The palisades and ruined huts also show fire damage. Near the bottom of the slope lie several decomposing bodies, each covered with a thick layer of insects. Most are dwarfs, but you can also identify an ork and a t'skrang dressed in a breastplate of overlapping bones. They have been dead for several days.*

A few hours later, the characters observe the following:

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

At the end of the day, read the following:

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

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

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

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

## THEMES AND IMAGES

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

## BEHIND THE SCENES

This section details the background of the locations presented in **Setting the Stage**, above.

## The Statue of Garlen

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

## The Destroyed Villages

The destroyed villages are casualties of the most recent raids. If the characters look around even briefly at any of these villages, they notice that there are too few bodies for the number of huts in each village; clearly, more people lived in these places than were killed in the fighting. The characters may assume that the missing villagers abandoned their homes in haste and left their dead to rot. In fact, the raiders took the villagers as slaves, which the characters will most likely discover later in the adventure (see **Enslaved!** on p. 82).

## The Village of Yesha

At the end of the day, the characters have reached the island village of Yesha, one of the few in this dome that has not yet fallen to the Raghul raiders. When the t'skrang warrior on the beach confronts them, Shigo and Muravi explain that the warrior is offering ritual combat: "She say, we fight." The combat must be one-on-one with spears—the character chosen to fight may wear armor, but may use no other weapon. The guides say that the battle must be fought to first blood—as soon as the warrior or the character takes a Wound, the ritual combat is over. Neither Ela nor the two t'skrang guides offers to fight, so the characters must choose a champion from among themselves.

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

For the Yesha warrior, use the statistics given below. When the fight ends, another t'skrang comes down the path, checks to see that the warrior is still alive, then beckons for the group to follow her up the path toward the village gathering hall. As the group passes through the palisades, a crowd emerges from the dwellings and follows close behind. If one of the characters is an obsidiman, various people try to touch him. Windlings and trolls also fascinate the villagers, as do large metal weapons like axes and swords. By the time they reach the hilltop, the characters should realize that at least a hundred Pale Ones are behind them.

### YESHA CHAMPION

#### Attributes

DEX (18): 7      STR (14): 6      TOU (13): 6  
PER (10): 5      WIL (11): 5      CHA (8): 4

#### Characteristics

Initiative: 6      Physical Defense: 10  
Physical Armor: 5      Spell Defense: 6  
Mystic Armor: 1      Social Defense: 5  
Death: 35      Recovery Tests: 2  
Unconsciousness: 27      Knockdown: 6  
Wound Threshold: 9      Movement: 6



### Skills

Bone Carving<sup>A</sup> (1): 5  
Craft Armor<sup>A</sup> (1): 6  
Creature Lore<sup>K</sup> (1): 6  
House Yatrivash History<sup>K</sup> (1): 6  
Melee Weapons (3): 10  
Read/Write Language (1): 6—(T'skrang/Pale Ones)  
Speak Language (1): 6—(T'skrang/Pale Ones)  
Throwing Weapons (3): 10  
Unarmed Combat (3): 10

<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

### Armor

**Bone Mail** (Phys 5; Init 1; *Namegivers of Barsaive* p.238)

### Weapons

**Spear** (Damage 10; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

### Equipment

Carving Tools, Forge Tools, Peasant's Garb

### Legend Award

Second Circle

### Notes

As a Pale Ones t'skrang, the Yesha Champion has the Heat Sight and Tail Combat racial abilities.

## YATRIVASH WARRIORS

### Attributes

**DEX (15): 6**      **STR (11): 5**      **TOU (11): 5**  
**PER (10): 5**      **WIL (11): 5**      **CHA (8): 4**

### Characteristics

**Initiative:** 5      **Physical Defense:** 8  
**Physical Armor:** 5      **Spell Defense:** 6  
**Mystic Armor:** 1      **Social Defense:** 5  
**Death:** 32      **Recovery Tests:** 2  
**Unconsciousness:** 24      **Knockdown:** 5  
**Wound Threshold:** 8      **Movement:** 6

### Skills

Bone Carving<sup>A</sup> (1): 5  
Craft Armor<sup>A</sup> (1): 6  
Creature Lore<sup>K</sup> (1): 6  
Fishing (1): 6  
House Yatrivash History<sup>K</sup> (1): 6  
Melee Weapons (2): 8  
Read/Write Language (1): 6—(T'skrang/Pale Ones)  
Sailing (1): 7  
Speak Language (1): 6—(T'skrang/Pale Ones)  
Swimming (1): 6  
Throwing Weapons (2): 8  
Unarmed Combat (2): 8

<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

### Armor

**Bone Mail** (Phys 5; Init 1; *Namegivers of Barsaive* p.238)

### Weapons

**Dagger** (Damage 7; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), **Spear** (Damage 9; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

### Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Carving Tools, Fishing Kit, Forge Tools, Peasant's Garb, Trail Rations (1 week)

### Legend Award

None

### Notes

As Pale Ones t'skrang, Yatrivash warriors have the Heat Sight and Tail Combat racial abilities.

## The Raid

As the characters approach the gathering hall, they hear a faint shout that sends ripples of fear and anger through the t'skrang all around them. If they ask what's happening, Shigo and Muravi tell the characters that the island is under attack by raiders, accompanied by a riverboat equipped with fire cannons. Though the guides do not know the attackers by Name, the raiders are the Raghul and the riverboat belongs to the t'skrang of the Abanos foundation.

Roughly five minutes pass between the watchman's first sighting of the riverboat (the distant shout) and the first fire-cannon bombardment. The Abanos use their weapons sparingly. They fire only one of the ship's cannons—once per minute—aiming at each hut in the village, starting with those closest to the beach. Ten minutes after the first sighting of the riverboat, three rafts full of Raghul land at the beach and four-dozen enemy warriors begin their advance up the path toward the gathering hall. Along the way they fight anyone who attacks them and capture and bind unarmed villagers. From the high ground near the hall they split into two roughly equal groups; the first group retraces the path down the hill, while the second descends the slope behind the gathering hall to the other side of the island (see **Map of Yesha**, p. 73).

As soon as the villagers realize they are under attack, a few adults lead the children and elderly to a subterranean sanctuary (A) on the far side of the island from the raiders' landing site (B). It takes at least fifteen minutes for these people to move across the island. Meanwhile, the *Shivalahala* Yatrivash leads three-dozen warriors toward the beach (C) to hold the Raghul at bay. If any Raghul warriors manage to slip past the defenders and reach the head of the shorter path (D) while the young and the elderly are still heading toward the sanctuary, the raider(s) spot the non-warriors and try to take them captive.

The sanctuary is a grotto under the hill. A narrow passageway winds about thirty feet into the hill, then opens into a cavern roughly forty-five feet in diameter. The cavern is dimly lit by phosphorescent moss of every imaginable color. At the lowest point in the cave is a ten-foot-wide pool. The women of Yesha incubate their eggs in the mud along its edges. The grotto is connected to the giant lake that fills the entire cavern; a character must swim 24 yards/12 hexes to reach the cavern via the water (*Player's Guide* p.102).

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

To make it easier to keep track of this large-scale battle, the gamemaster may wish to decide on a specific number of Raghul warriors that the adventurers must incapacitate in order to swing the battle their way—for example, enough Raghul warriors to equal the total Circles of all the characters in the adventuring group or enough for the Yatrivash to gain superiority in numbers. If the characters defeat this number of Raghul, the remaining warriors retreat. Keep track of the casualties suffered by the raiders in this battle; that number becomes important in the following encounter, **The Dragon's Jaws**, p. 78.

The characters should find it relatively easy to defeat the Raghul, as the raiders were not expecting to fight against experienced adepts. After the battle, the *shivalahala* asks to meet the characters (assuming the raiders did not capture them); go to **In the Gathering Hall**, p. 74. If the Raghul defeated and captured any of the characters, see **Troubleshooting**, p. 78.

The characters definitely notice the riverboat shooting its fire cannons at the village during the battle. From the presence of the riverboat in the dome, the characters should figure out that a navigable route must exist between the Great Dome and the Serpent River. If they do not come to this conclusion themselves, Ela Pono comments on it; it means her map is authentic, and that's why the adventurers are there in the first place. Ela Pono should also suggest





to the characters that the riverboat may have followed the route on the missing half of Captain Westhrall's map, meaning that the t'skrang aboard it might have the map in their possession.

The characters may also start wondering which of the *aropagoi* would give one group of Pale Ones a riverboat to help them raid another; the t'skrang of the Serpent River don't usually involve themselves in the Pale Ones' affairs. Ideally, they will want to solve the mystery; if not, events soon leave them with little choice. The riverboat is flying the flag of House K'tenshin, which any t'skrang player character from a river *niall* or any character who has worked on a riverboat automatically recognizes. Characters with an appropriate Knowledge skill related to the t'skrang of the Serpent River

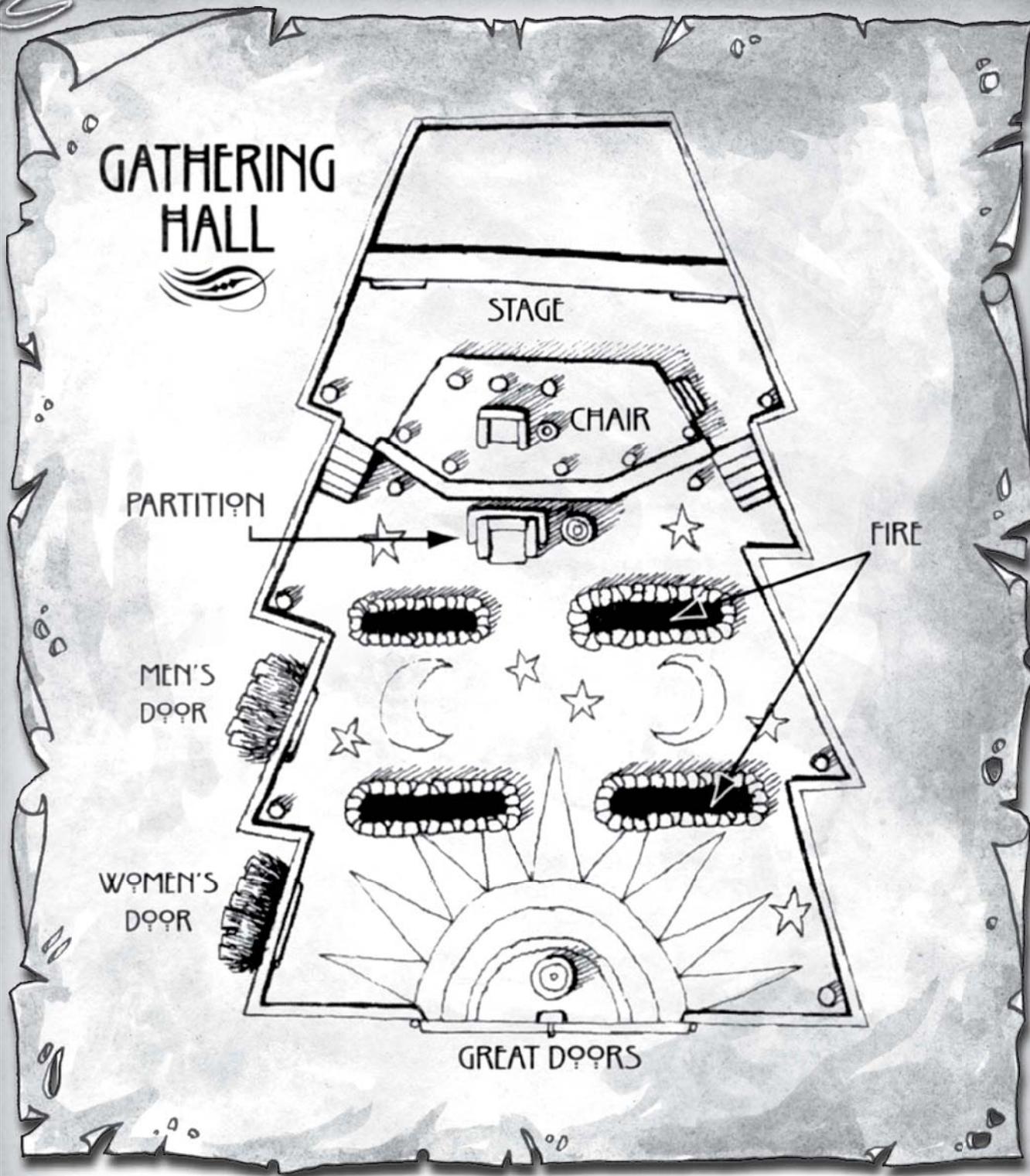
may recognize the symbol of the Abanos *niall* on the flag by making an appropriate Knowledge Test against a Difficulty Number of 9.

### After the Battle

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

If the Raghul win, they round up all the villagers left alive and march them to the beach in shackles, then ferry them by raft to





the riverboat. Then they search for the t'skrang who hid at the onset of the battle, but the entrance to the Yesha sanctuary is well enough hidden to defy their best efforts unless they actually saw the people going inside. The raiders' main force leaves after two to three hours, and a third of their number stay behind a while longer in hopes of capturing any survivors. This group leaves after twenty to twenty-five hours.

If the characters have avoided capture, they may try to get to a beached raft and escape. They must be careful, however, because the riverboat crew is watching intently for any movement on or near the beach. Five riverboat crewmen are stationed on deck as guards, and each of them has a Perception Step of 5. If they spot the characters heading for a raft, they aim a fire cannon at it and attack.

Refer to the *Gamemaster's Companion* and *Nations of Barsaive Volume Two* for ship combat and the vessels used.

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

### In the Gathering Hall

After the battle, the villagers tell the characters that the *shivalahala* wishes to meet them. A pair of t'skrang warriors escorts the characters to the Gathering Hall, a huge building made of enormous



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

Light fills the hall from four fire trenches and a row of light quartzes. The quartzes are set in the floor at the hall's far end on a raised platform that looks very much like a stage. The men sit on the floor behind the rear fire trenches, the women behind the front trenches. Between the front fire trenches and the stage is a plain wooden bench, on which sits an ancient t'skrang with an oddly luminescent cast to her skin. Her garments are decorated with ornate beadwork and her head-dress, made of feathers and bone, is nearly half as tall as she is. The warriors escort the characters to a spot about a dozen paces shy of the bench, then kneel gracefully and bow their heads.

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

*"A holy man was bathing in the lake when a poisonous serpent sped toward him, intending to bite him. When he saw the snake, the holy man gently stretched out his hand to the creature and said, 'Go ahead and bite!' The snake, who had expected a struggle to the death with its victim, was startled at this strange behavior.*

*'My bite will kill you,' it said. 'Are you so eager for death, that you freely offer me your hand?'*

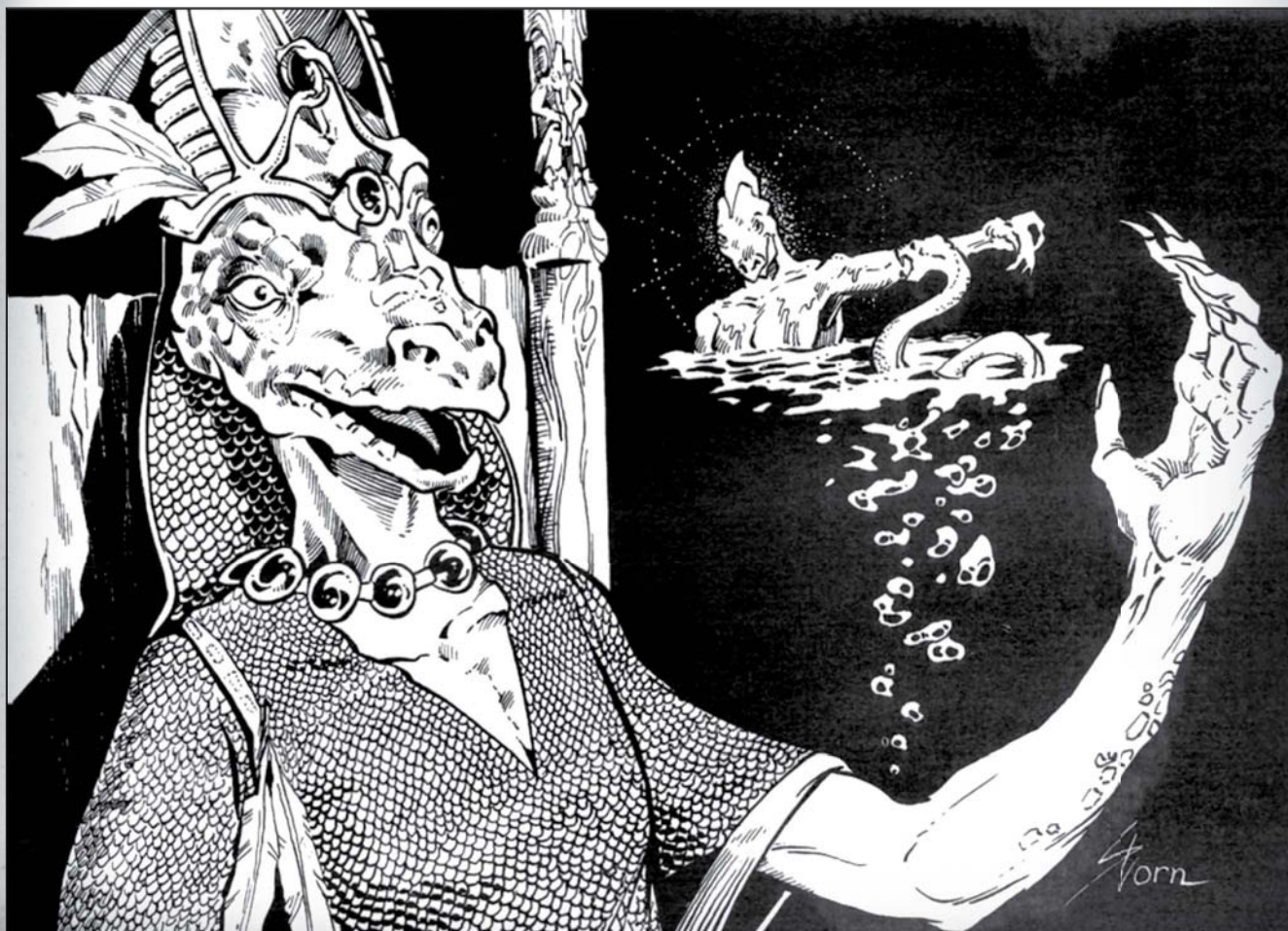
*"And the holy man answered, 'I know that to take life is wrong. If it is wrong for you to kill me, O snake, then how can it be right for me to raise my hand against you?'*

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

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

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

When the *shivalahala* finishes her story, the characters must tell a story of their own. Then the *shivalahala* begins the Ritual of Questions by asking about the characters' origins, destination, purpose, adventures, and so on. She makes a point of asking about





their connection (if any) with the Raghul and their allies. The characters must answer each question she poses before they may ask one of their own. The Ritual of Questions is a favorite form of entertainment for the villagers; their *shivalahala* is particularly skilled at asking penetrating questions and making the most succinct possible answers.

During this question-and-answer session, the characters can learn the following information from the *shivalahala* if they play the game well:

- She calls the Raghul the “Deep Ones,” and believes that they come from lower regions of the caverns.
- She knows the Raghul have so far raided a third of the villages in the Great Dome of Yatrivash, and that they have powerful allies.
- She calls the Abanos riverboat a “magic raft,” refers to the Abanos t’skrang as “colored ones” (surface-dwelling t’skrang have brighter-colored skin than the Pale Ones), and calls the dwarfs of House Endour “bearded ones.”
- She has heard tales of fire cannons from survivors of earlier Raghul raids, but she believes that a cannon’s destructive power comes from the spells of vile magicians aboard the magic raft.
- The Raghul’s surprise attacks and enslavement of defeated villagers deeply offend her sense of what is right, because they violate the traditions of the Pale Ones.
- She does not know exactly where the Raghul have made their encampment, as the speed of the attacks and the scarcity of refugees has made it virtually impossible to track the raiders back to their base of operations.
- She believes that the raiders entered Yatrivash through Braza’s Kingdom, which she calls “the realm of the Ashnazg.” She has since forbidden her people to venture past the statue of Garlen (see p. 71) built by one of her predecessors many centuries ago.

The *shivalahala* also possesses ancestral memories of Westhral’s exploration of the Great Dome of Yatrivash, and she remembers helping him to find the way up and out toward Throal. If the characters think to ask, the *shivalahala* can give them a few useful hints about the route ahead of them past the Dragon’s Jaws (Milestone Five), though how much she reveals is up to the gamemaster. She knows how to speak Throalic because the “colored ones with their magical rafts” visited Yatrivash and its villages many times during the Theran War. The magical rafts entered the cavern through the Dragon’s Jaws, a treacherous outflow of Lake Yatrivash from which no raft of the Pale Ones has ever returned.

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

## SHIVALAHALA YATRIVASH

### Attributes

**DEX (18):** 7      **STR (9):** 4      **TOU (19):** 8  
**PER (13):** 6      **WIL (18):** 7      **CHA (14):** 6

### Characteristics

**Initiative:** 6      **Physical Defense:** 10  
**Physical Armor:** 5      **Spell Defense:** 7  
**Mystic Armor:** 3      **Social Defense:** 8  
**Death:** 43      **Recovery Tests:** 3  
**Unconsciousness:** 35      **Knockdown:** 4  
**Wound Threshold:** 12      **Movement:** 6

### Skills

Bone Carving<sup>A</sup> (1): 7  
 Conversation (5): 11  
 Craft Armor<sup>A</sup> (1): 7  
 Creature Lore<sup>K</sup> (1): 7  
 Fishing (1): 7  
 House Yatrivash History<sup>K</sup> (5): 11  
 Melee Weapons (2): 9  
 Read/Write Language (1): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic)  
 Sailing (1): 8  
 Speak Language (2): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic, T’skrang/Pale Ones)  
 Storytelling<sup>A</sup> (5): 11  
 Subterranean Throal Geography<sup>K</sup> (3): 9  
 Swimming (1): 5

### Throwing Weapons (1): 8

<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

### Armor

**Bone Mail** (Phys 5; Init 1; *Namegivers of Barsaive* p.238)

### Weapons

**Dagger** (Damage 6; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), **Spear** (Damage 8; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

### Equipment

Carving Tools, Fishing Kit, Forge Tools, Traveler’s Garb

### Legend Award

None

### Notes

As a Pale Ones t’skrang, *Shivalahala* Yatrivash possesses the Heat Sight and Tail Combat racial abilities.

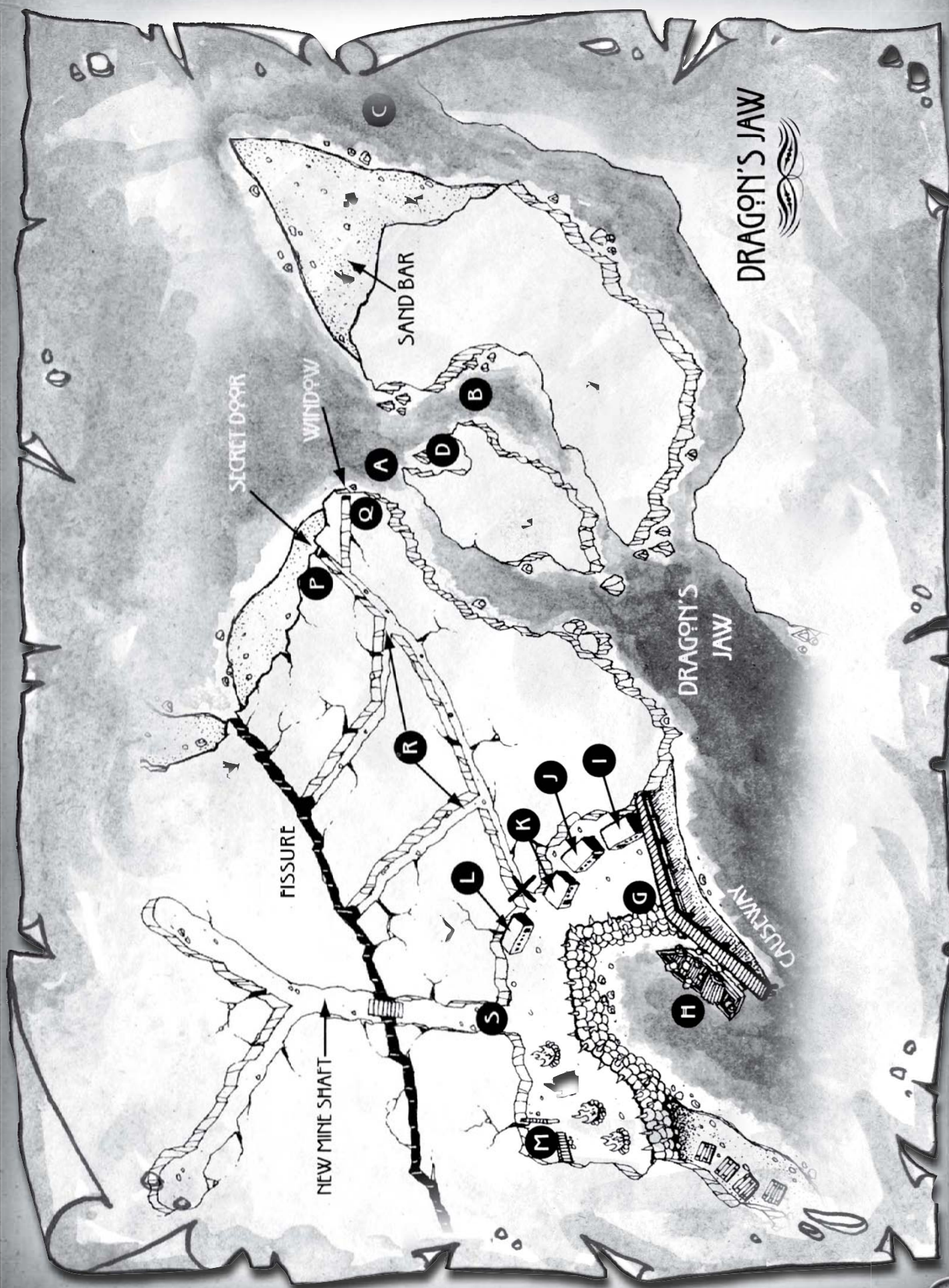
### Commentary

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

## Where To Next?

How the characters proceed in the adventure depends on what happened during this encounter. If the characters are captured by or surrender to the Raghul, the raiders round them up with the rest of the villagers and take them to the Raghul encampment under the Dragon’s Jaws. In this case, go to **Enslaved!** on p. 82. If the characters drive the raiders off or manage to escape their clutches, they must choose their next step. If they know that the Raghul are taking slaves, they may want to find the raiders’ base of operations and free the captives. Or they may simply want to find the route back to the surface. Either way, they will end up traveling through the Dragon’s Jaws and passing by the Raghul encampment. Go to **The Dragon’s Jaws**, p. 78.







## TROUBLESHOOTING

The characters are unlikely to die in this battle, but if the worst seems likely to happen, feel free to fudge dice rolls to ensure the characters' survival. Keep in mind that the Raghul would rather have live slaves than corpses, and so are likely to pull their punches somewhat. If all of the characters are knocked unconscious, they are taken captive and brought to the Raghul encampment (see *Enslaved!* on p. 82). In this case the group does not meet the *shivalahala*, and must find out firsthand about the Raghul and their allies. The characters also learn nothing from the *shivalahala* about the route ahead of them. If some of the characters are captured and others remain free, the free agents may want to set off immediately to rescue their companions. Feel free to suggest that they might find it useful to talk with the *shivalahala* first, but allow them to take off right away if they insist. (They'll find out all they need to know about the Raghul and their allies soon enough...) Go to **The Dragon's Jaws**, below.

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

## THE DRAGON'S JAWS

**I**n this encounter, the characters must navigate a treacherous section of river that runs right past the Raghul encampment. Depending on the choices they make, they may attack the Raghul and their allies or be forced into combat while searching for the exit to the surface. This encounter assumes that the characters arrive at the encampment as free agents; if they arrive there as captives, go to **Enslaved!** on p. 82.

## SETTING THE STAGE

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

## THEMES AND IMAGES

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

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The following map and key describe the Raghul encampment.

### (A, B, C) Entrance Channels

The characters can enter the Dragon's Jaws through any of the three channels. Channels A and B are safer than C, but from the

characters' viewpoint on the lake side, C appears easier to navigate. Entering the Dragon's Jaws through any of the three channels requires the characters to make several Boating Tests, for which the Step Numbers are the chosen character's Strength Step, Step Number in the Sailing skill, or Step Number in the Pilot Boat talent or skill. To safely enter through Channels A or B, the two characters poling the raft must each make two successful Pilot Boat (6) Tests. To safely enter through Channel C, the characters must each make three Pilot Boat Tests: the first and third against a Difficulty Number of 5 and the second against a Difficulty Number of 8, as the tunnel veers sharply to the right. If one of the characters fails one of these tests, that character must achieve a Good Result or better on a second test in order to prevent the boat from capsizing. If this test fails, everyone on the boat falls into the water and needs to swim to safety. The Water Condition is considered to be 9 for Channels A and B, and 11 for Channel C (*Player's Guide* p.102). A character succeeding at a Dexterity (6) Test can clutch to the capsized raft, gaining a bonus of +5 to his Swimming Tests. Characters holding on to the raft also have a chance to save one piece of equipment per round from the loops on the raft's side, although this might influence their ability to swim, due to additional weight. Any item not retrieved can only be used after the raft is recovered.

Poling upstream against the current adds +2 to the Difficulty Number for all Boating Tests.

### (D) Inlet

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

### Fissure

This fissure is a three-foot-wide crack in the cavern wall, through which water churns and plunges sixty feet downward. The fissure cuts across several of the mineshafts below. Characters can reach the mine shafts by climbing down this fissure, though doing so is extremely difficult; the Climbing Difficulty (*Gamemaster's Guide* p.109) is that of a rocky cliff.

If a character fails a test, he slips and may be swept to the bottom by the rushing water. The character can try to regain his footing by making a Strength (9) Test. If the test succeeds, the character catches himself and can continue climbing. If the test fails, the water pulls the character along until he reaches the nearest mineshaft below him. At each mineshaft, the character can try to save himself by making a Strength (7) Test. If the test succeeds, the character pulls himself from the water. If the test fails, the character continues his plunge downward to the next shaft. If a character fails this Strength Test at the bridge across the fissure (Point T on the map), he falls past the last of the mineshafts and dies unless his fellow adventurers can somehow manage to retrieve and revive him.

### (G) Rampart

Along the shoreline closest to the cavern's north wall, near the place where the channel widens to several hundred feet, the Raghul and their allies have built a fortification around their camp. This steep rampart of rock, debris, and packed sand stands about forty feet high. At the top of the rampart is a hedgerow of iron spikes, each spaced about a foot apart and angled over the edge. Scaling the rampart requires Climbing (4) Tests only, but at its top, a character has to succeed at a Dexterity (6) Test to avoid taking Step 6 damage from the spikes.





## (H) Pier and Riverboat

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

The fifty riverboat crewmen—forty regular crew (see below) and ten officers (see p. 85)—spend most of their time aboard their ship while in camp. All ten officers, including the captain, are adepts of varying Circles. Find crew and officer statistics below. Every third crewman wears the token of the House of Nine Diamonds: an earring made of rubies and diamonds.

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

In the captain's private cabin is a copy of the second half of Westhrall's map, marked with numerous corrections charting the changes in the watercourse between the Great Dome and the surface world since Westhrall's day. If the raiders captured the characters and took Ela's half of the map, it is lying near the second half. The captain also carries valuable maps of the South Reach of the Serpent River worth 250 silver pieces. The captain is a Seventh Circle Boatman (see *Namegivers of Barsaive* p. 139).

The ship's stores contain barrels of prepared fish, preserved eggs, flour, wine, and a wide selection of chains and shackles. The armory contains enough broadswords, daggers, and leather armor to equip twenty t'skrang. A locked chest with a Lock Picking Difficulty of 16 contains six silver ingots, as well as any treasure or items taken from the player characters by their captors. Each ingot is worth 500 silver pieces.

## ABANOS SAILORS (40)

### Attributes

DEX (15): 6	STR (12): 5	TOU (11): 5
PER (10): 5	WIL (11): 5	CHA (10): 5

### Characteristics

Initiative: 6	Physical Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 3	Spell Defense: 6
Mystic Armor: 1	Social Defense: 6
Death: 32	Recovery Tests: 2
Unconsciousness: 24	Knockdown: 5
Wound Threshold: 8	Movement: 6

### Skills

Climbing (2): 8
Creature Lore <sup>K</sup> (1): 6
Fishing (1): 6
House K'tenshin History <sup>K</sup> (1): 6
Melee Weapons (3): 9
Navigation (1): 6
Pilot Boat (1): 6
Read River (1): 6
Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic, T'skrang)
Swimming (1): 6
Throwing Weapons (1): 7
Unarmed Combat (3): 9
Wood Carving <sup>A</sup> (1): 6

<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill



### Armor

Leather Armor (Phys 3)

### Weapons

Broadsword (Damage 10), Dagger (Damage 7; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

### Equipment

Carving Tools, Fishing Kit, Navigation Charts in Map/Scroll Case, Traveler's Garb

### Loot

See Notes

### Legend Award

Second Circle (3 per 2 PC)

### Notes

As t'skrang, the Abanos Sailors have the Tail Combat racial ability. Every third crewman possesses a token of the House of Nine Diamonds—an earring made of rubies and diamonds—worth 125 silver pieces. However, trying to sell or wear these earrings may arouse suspicion from anyone who recognizes it.

## (I, J, K, L) House Endour Barracks

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

## DWARFS OF HOUSE ENDOUR (30)

### Attributes

DEX (12): 5      STR (14): 6      TOU (13): 6  
PER (10): 5      WIL (11): 5      CHA (8): 4

### Characteristics

Initiative: 2      Physical Defense: 7  
Physical Armor: 7      Spell Defense: 6  
Mystic Armor: 1      Social Defense: 5  
Death: 35      Recovery Tests: 2  
Unconsciousness: 27      Knockdown: 6  
Wound Threshold: 9      Movement: 5

### Skills

Climbing (2): 7  
Craftsman (Blacksmith)<sup>A</sup> (2): 7  
Craftsman (Mason)<sup>A</sup> (2): 7  
House Endour History<sup>K</sup> (1): 6  
Melee Weapons (3): 8  
Mining<sup>K</sup> (1): 6  
Missile Weapons (3): 8  
Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)  
Speak Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)  
Wilderness Survival (1): 6  
<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

### Armor

Chainmail (Phys 7; Init 3)

### Weapons

Dwarf Sword (Damage 10), Whip (Damage 9; Entangle 9), Dagger (Damage 8; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), Light Crossbow (Damage 10; Range 32–64 yards/16–32 hexes), Quiver (w/15 light crossbow bolts)

### Equipment

Climbing Kit, 2 × Craftsman Tools, Mining Tools, Peasant's Garb

### Legend Award

Second Circle (3 per 2 PC)

### Notes

The dwarfs of House Endour have the Heat Sight racial ability.

### Commentary

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

## (M) Raghul Living Area

The Raghul live out in the open, sharing the warmth of four communal fire pits. At the beginning of this adventure, the Raghul warriors number about one hundred. By the time the characters arrive at the encampment, losses suffered during the raid on Yesha have reduced this number somewhat. The Raghul keep a crude field hospital (M), where the wounded and sick are tended by a physician with a Physician Skill Rank of 4. Their rafts are lined up on racks on the beach outside their half of the camp.

## RAGHUL RAIDERS

### Attributes

DEX (14): 6      STR (14): 6      TOU (11): 5  
PER (11): 5      WIL (11): 5      CHA (8): 4

### Characteristics

Initiative: 5      Physical Defense: 8  
Physical Armor: 5      Spell Defense: 7  
Mystic Armor: 1      Social Defense: 5  
Death: 32      Recovery Tests: 2  
Unconsciousness: 24      Knockdown: 6  
Wound Threshold: 8      Movement: 6

### Skills

Bone Carving<sup>A</sup> (1): 5  
Craft Armor<sup>A</sup> (1): 6  
Creature Lore<sup>K</sup> (1): 6  
Fishing (1): 6  
Horror Lore<sup>K</sup> (1): 6  
Melee Weapons (2): 8  
Read/Write Language (1): 6—(T'skrang/Pale Ones)  
Sailing (1): 7  
Speak Language (1): 6—(T'skrang/Pale Ones)  
Swimming (1): 7  
Throwing Weapons (2): 8  
Unarmed Combat (2): 8  
<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

### Armor

Bone Mail (Phys 5; Init 1; *Namegivers of Barsaive* p.238)

### Weapons

Knife (Damage 7; Range 8–16 yards/4–8 hexes), Spear (Damage 10; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

### Equipment

Carving Tools, Fishing Kit, Forge Tools, Peasant's Garb

### Legend Award

Second Circle (3 per 2 PC)

### Notes

As Pale Ones t'skrang, Raghul Raiders have the Heat Sight and Tail Combat racial abilities.

### Total Legend Award

For an average group of 4 characters, the characters earn a Second Circle Legend Award for defeating 6 of any of these opponents, a Third Circle Legend Award for defeating 8 of any of these opponents and a Fourth Circle Legend Award for defeating 10 of any of these opponents.

## (P, Q, R, S) Mineshafts

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





away from the Raghul, such as kegs of ale and extra weapons. This improvised “armory” holds enough chain mail, short swords, and crossbows to outfit fifteen dwarfs. Each side cut ends abruptly at the fissure, which is approximately twenty feet at this point.

The newer mineshaft (S) is described in detail in **Enslaved!** on p. 82.

### Bridge

The dwarfs of House Endour built this wooden bridge across the fissure to accommodate the carts full of ore from the mine. For more details, see **Enslaved!** on p. 82.

### Attacking the Encampment

If the characters launch a full frontal assault on the Raghul encampment, their odds of success or failure depend in part on how many casualties the Raghul suffered in the raid on Yesha and whether or not the Abanos riverboat is docked at the camp. If the characters are smart enough to wait for the riverboat to enter the Great Dome on another raiding expedition before they take their own raft through the Dragon’s Jaws, they do not have to face the riverboat’s weapons and crew, or the Raghul warriors aboard the vessel. The gamemaster determines the exact number of raiders departing; make sure, however, that enough Raghul stay at the encampment to make the fight challenging for the adventurers. He should also keep in mind that if the raid on Yesha was ultimately

successful, roughly a third of the raiding force is still on the island waiting for survivors to come out of hiding.

An assault is possible via the Pier (G) or Rampart (F). Alternatively an assault is possible from behind, using the Secret Entrance (P) or Fissure (E) as a point of entry.

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

The dwarfs of House Endour do not join the fight unless they must; they prefer to let the Raghul, whom they regard as expendable, deal with the characters. If the Raghul look likely to retreat, the dwarfs head down the old mineshaft in hopes of escape. If the characters follow closely, they confront a group of ten dwarfs in the mineshaft at the point marked ‘X’ on the map. The mineshafts are twenty feet across, giving the characters plenty of room to battle the dwarfs. While the ten-dwarf rear guard fights a delaying action, the remaining dwarfs spend the next ten Combat Rounds assembling a raft at the secret entrance (P).

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



The Abanos t'skrang defend their riverboat rather than joining their allies near the rampart. If the characters bypass the riverboat, the Abanos attack with their fire cannons. If the Raghul seem likely to lose to the characters, the Abanos leave their allies to fend for themselves. Protecting the riverboat is their primary concern.

### Slipping by the Camp

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

If any of the tests fails, the Raghul warriors spot the characters and sound an alarm. The Raghul immediately man their rafts and head out to confront the characters, and the Abanos launch the riverboat in an attempt to cut off the characters' avenue of escape. At this point, the characters must decide to fight or flee. If they choose to flee, Pursuit is enacted (*Gamemaster's Companion* p.64).

### Attacking the Riverboat

The characters can attack the riverboat in dock or while it is out raiding in the Great Dome. If they attack it in dock, they do not have to contend with the fire cannons, because they are inside minimum firing range. However, they face a large number of angry t'skrang willing to fight as hard as necessary to keep their precious boat safe. Also, if the characters focus their attack on the riverboat for more than three minutes of game time (approximately 18 combat rounds), half of the Raghul join the Abanos in defending the vessel.

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

The riverboat pulls three empty rafts linked together on a thirty-foot line—the Raghul intend to get ashore on these rafts when they launch their next raid. The characters may pole their own raft close to the riverboat and attempt to board, or climb onto an in-tow raft and then pull it close to the riverboat. The guards posted on the riverboat's deck have a Perception Step of 5, and may notice the characters' approach by making a successful Perception Test. Once they spot the characters, the guards immediately alert the rest of the crew.

If the adventurers ambush the riverboat, they must confront the combined might of the Raghul war party and the entire riverboat crew. The odds against success are high, but the payoff for the characters is enormous. Seizing control of the riverboat keeps the Raghul from traveling to the headwaters of the Dragon's Jaws, and also gives the characters the second half of Westhral's map. The characters can then easily follow the map to where the Serpent River emerges above ground, successfully completing the adventure. If this happens, go to **Aftermath**, p. 84.

### TROUBLESHOOTING

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

## ENSLAVED!

**U**se this encounter only if the characters are captured during the raid on Yesha (**Among the Pale Ones**, p. 70) or in the attack on the Raghul encampment (**The Dragon's Jaws**, p. 78). In this encounter, the characters are stripped of their possessions and set to slave labor in a silver mine. Their fellow slaves are men, women, and children of the Pale Ones captured in several raids against the villages in the Yatrivash dome. Also among them is Yegor Grodno, an ork Liberator and one of the few survivors from Baron Mardek's second expedition.

### SETTING THE STAGE

When the characters are led to the mine for the first time, read the following aloud to the players:

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

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

*A whip cracks loudly near you, and you see two dwarfs standing over an ork on the cart-pulling detail. The ork lies prone with his ear to the ground. "Get up!" the overseers shout at him in Throalic. He obeys slowly, keeping his head bent and his eyes averted. They give him a few lashes, which he stoically endures. Then he bends over and grips the stanchions of a full ore cart. A terrible smile full of rage crosses his face, and then vanishes. As his gaze briefly meets yours, he grins again—almost warmly this time.*

### THEMES AND IMAGES

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

### BEHIND THE SCENES

The characters begin this encounter working in the more recent of the camp's two mineshafts. A mining slave's life is a dreadful fate—there is no respite from the mind-numbing, backbreaking work except sleep or death. The characters wear iron shackles; breaking them requires a successful Strength (12) Test, use of the Shackle Shrug talent or skill, or by attacking them with a metal weapon (treat these chains as having a Physical Armor of 5 and a Death Rating of 20). For more information see *Gamemaster's*



**Guide** p.108). Each character is chained to approximately fifty other people, who must all move in the same direction at the same time in order to effectively attack the guards. The slaves' diet consists of a cup of water every three hours, and raw fish that the dwarfs throw to the slave gangs as if they were feeding animals. For each day a character spends in the mines, he suffers Step 7 damage (which may result in a Wound, see **Player's Guide** p.221). Needless to say, the characters have been divested of their possessions, including Ela's half of Captain Westhrall's map.

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

On the third day, the dwarfs move the characters from the pickaxe crew to the cart-pulling crew. The carts go up to the bridge across the fissure (see map of **The Dragon's Jaws**, p.77), then roll down a gentle slope out of the mine. The slaves are never allowed to cross the bridge.

While on the cart-pulling crew the characters meet Yegor and learn his story:

*"I serve Baron Mardek of Valvria. Garrison life bored me, so I volunteered to go crawling through the lower parts of Throal. We slogged through some kind of Horror nest while perched on little rafts, but the Horrors were mostly as scared of a regiment of soldiers as we were of them. Then we got to a giant lake and found real trouble. We camped on an island—big island, no creatures lurking near, safe enough we thought—and woke up to find the place swarming with fish-bellies—t'skrang, you know. We fought hard, but we were outnumbered—four, maybe five to one.*

*"I was one of the few that survived. The fish-bellies took us with them, set us to slaving for the dwarfs. My friends and I worked this mine for a while, planning a breakout the whole time. We got some of the poor fish-bellies down here to join up, but we didn't realize how many friends these plague-rotted dwarfs had out there. We walked straight into more fish-bellies, more dwarfs, and more riverboat t'skrang than we could handle—especially on the poor excuse for food and water they give us. They killed my friends and left me alive, probably because they figured out that I planned it all. That's their revenge. Slavery is worse than death for folk like me, who yearn to be free. Now I can't get anyone to look twice my way ... except you."*

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

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

As far as Yegor is concerned, the only hope the slaves have of fighting their way out of the encampment is to wait for the riverboat to leave on a raid, which cuts the camp garrison roughly in half. Yegor had his ear to the ground during **Setting the Stage**, p. 82, because he was listening for the echo of the paddlewheel or the footsteps of new slaves; by these sounds he can keep rough track of the riverboat's comings and goings.

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

As an ork Liberator, Yegor can use his Shackle Shrug talent to break his chains and his False Shackles talent fools the guards until he is ready to make his move.

Should the escape attempt succeed, the characters march out of the mineshaft at the head of a mob of 120 angry t'skrang who are out for blood. The garrison, minus the Raghul in the raiding party and the riverboat crew, will be hard pressed to resist an unexpected attack from within, even when the attackers are without armor and half-dead on their feet.

## YEGOR GRODNO

### Attributes

DEX (11): 5      STR (15): 6      TOU (16): 7  
PER (10): 5      WIL (17): 7      CHA (11): 5

### Characteristics

Initiative: 5      Physical Defense: 8  
Physical Armor: 0      Spell Defense: 6  
Mystic Armor: 3      Social Defense: 7  
Death: 79      Recovery Tests: 2  
Unconsciousness: 61      Knockdown: 6  
Wound Threshold: 11      Movement: 6  
Karma Points: 25/25

### Liberator Talents (Knacks)

Avoid Blow (S): 10  
Durability [8/6] (S): 5  
False Shackles<sup>D</sup> (S): 10  
Free Mind<sup>D</sup> (S): 10  
Freedom Search<sup>D</sup> (S): 10  
Heal Slave (S): 12  
Heart of Freedom (S): 12  
Karma Ritual<sup>D</sup> (S): 5  
Lock Picking<sup>D</sup> (S): 10  
Melee Weapons<sup>D</sup> (S): 10 (Improvised Weapons)  
Shackle Shrug<sup>D</sup> (S): 10  
Shout of Justice<sup>D</sup> (S): 10  
Thread Weaving (Freedom Weaving)<sup>D</sup> (S): 10  
Unarmed Combat (7): 12 (Head Butt)  
<sup>D</sup> Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)  
*Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)*

### Skills

Climbing (2): 7  
Ork Culture<sup>K</sup> (2): 7  
Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)  
Speak Language (2): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic, Or'zet)  
Storytelling A (2): 7  
Surprise Strike (2): 8  
Swimming (2): 8  
Tactics (2): 7  
Tracking (2): 7  
Wilderness Survival (2): 7  
<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill



#### Equipment

Peasant's Garb

#### Legend Award

None

#### Notes

As an ork, Yegor possesses the *Gahad* and Low-Light Vision racial abilities.

#### Liberator Abilities

**Second Circle:** +1 Physical Defense

**Fourth Circle:** Karma on Charisma-only Tests

**Fifth Circle:** Shield of the Weak

#### Commentary

A Fifth Circle ork Liberator (*Namegivers of Barsaive* p.155), Yegor was part of Baron Mardek's second expedition to the Yatrivash dome. Raghul raiders captured him and several of his companions, and Yegor has been laboring in the silver mines for the dwarfs of House Endour ever since. One failed escape attempt has only whetted Yegor's appetite for another try. The arrival of the adventurers gives him just the chance he's been waiting for. He is an experienced soldier and a reasonably sound strategist, though he tends to favor blunt tactics over subtlety.

## T'SKRANG SLAVES

#### Attributes

<b>DEX (12):</b> 5	<b>STR (8):</b> 4	<b>TOU (8):</b> 4
<b>PER (7):</b> 4	<b>WIL (8):</b> 4	<b>CHA (5):</b> 3

#### Characteristics

<b>Initiative:</b> 5	<b>Physical Defense:</b> 7
<b>Physical Armor:</b> 0	<b>Spell Defense:</b> 5
<b>Mystic Armor:</b> 0	<b>Social Defense:</b> 4
<b>Death:</b> 28	<b>Recovery Tests:</b> 2
<b>Unconsciousness:</b> 19	<b>Knockdown:</b> 4
<b>Wound Threshold:</b> 7	<b>Movement:</b> 6

#### Skills

Bone Carving<sup>A</sup> (1): 4  
Craft Armor<sup>A</sup> (1): 5  
Creature Lore<sup>K</sup> (1): 5  
Fishing (1): 5  
House Yatrivash History<sup>K</sup> (1): 5  
Melee Weapons (2): 7  
Read/Write Language (1): 5—(T'skrang/Pale Ones)  
Sailing (1): 6  
Speak Language (1): 5—(T'skrang/Pale Ones)  
Swimming (1): 5  
Throwing Weapons (1): 6  
Unarmed Combat (2): 7  
<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

#### Equipment

Peasant's Garb

#### Legend Award

None

#### Notes

T'skrang Slaves have the Heat Sight and Tail Combat racial abilities.

## Now What?

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

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

If the characters want to retrieve their personal belongings before heading out, they are stored in the old mine shafts along with the dwarfs' weapons (see **Mine Shafts**, p. 80).

## TROUBLESHOOTING

The biggest problem in this encounter occurs if the escape plan fails. Should this happen, Yegor is killed and the characters are imprisoned in cages on the riverboat. About a week later, the riverboat leaves the Throal Mountains with a cargo of silver and slaves for the markets of the South Reach of the Serpent River. For details, go to **Aftermath**, below. If one or more of the characters dies in a failed escape attempt, the gamemaster may declare them captured and caged along with the surviving characters, or may simply leave them dead.

## AFTERMATH

**T**his adventure has several possible outcomes, each of which is described below.

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

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

The characters can ransom the riverboat back to the Abanos of House K'tenshin for a handsome sum, or they can sell it to a dwarf consortium interested in probing the delicate secrets of its fire engine. For the specific amounts of silver and Legend Points available as a result of either of these actions, see **Awarding Legend Points**, p. 84. If the players want their characters to keep the riverboat, discourage them; keeping the boat will only buy them trouble. The Abanos t'skrang will come chasing after their prized property before too long, and are likely to have Theran backing; do the characters really want to take on this kind of opposition for a boat that not many of them are likely to know how to operate? Also, maintaining such a vessel (and the extra crew needed to run it) is expensive. The characters are far better off ransoming the boat back to its owners or selling it to someone else and letting them deal with the angry t'skrang.

If the characters defeat the Raghul and their allies but do not seize the riverboat, they do not get their hands on the missing half of the map, unless a character managed to sneak into the captain's quarters—no easy job considering how many t'skrang were squeezed onto the boat. However, they can still find their way out of the caverns by making an Exploration Test for Milestone Five (see **Shuss Halima**, p. 67). In addition, they must navigate the rest of the passage to the surface by raft. The defeated Abanos return home to the K'tenshin stronghold on the south Serpent River, and the *niall*'s elders plan their next move. This gives the characters several months to find a way to the surface and return to Throal.

Any victory over the Raghul earns the player characters the everlasting friendship of the t'skrang in the Great Dome of Yatrivash. As a token of her gratitude, the *Shivalahala* Yatrivash gives the adventurers a Fire piece, which is a coin woven with elemental fire that Captain Westhrall of House V'strimon bequeathed to the Pale Ones just before the Theran War ended and the underground passages to Throal were closed.



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

If the Raghul capture the characters, several possibilities crop up. If they take part in the slave rebellion and succeed, they may ultimately manage to capture the riverboat and get the rest of Westhrall's map; if they defeat the garrison without capturing the riverboat, they at least earn the gratitude of the freed slaves and the friendship of Yegor Grodno. Yegor may turn up in subsequent adventures, either as a catalyst or as a supporting gamemaster character. If the rebellion fails, the Raghul send the characters down the river to be sold in the southern markets, perhaps in Travar or Vivane. If the players have grown tired of the subterranean realm, it may be best to send their characters to the surface with the next slave shipment and let events play out from there. Escaping from slavery could become an adventure in itself. If the Raghul take Ela's half of the Westhrall map from the captured characters, make sure the players understand the danger that threatens Throal. The Raghul will almost certainly give the map to their Abanos allies, meaning that the pro-Theran House K'tenshin will possess a secret route into the heart of the dwarf kingdom. If the K'tenshin share this secret with the Therans in turn, Throal is in terrible peril. The Therans are unlikely to do anything hasty, but will certainly start crafting plots around this valuable information.

## Home Again, Home Again

Unless they are sent down river to the slave markets, the characters eventually find their way to the surface exit and the Coil River. The first community downstream of the tributary is the town of Ardanyan. River and ground transport leave Ardanyan on a daily basis. The first community to the North is the small dwarf mining colony of Shabaz. A dwarf barge collects the ore mined there every ten days or so and drops it off in Ardanyan or Darranis.

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

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

Mardek reminds the characters to observe their oaths of secrecy and then pays them off. If the characters remain in Throal, Mardek has them watched carefully for several months to make sure they keep quiet. If the baron learns that the characters have approached any of the powers-that-be in Throal, he seals the shaft beneath Valvria and attempts to discredit the adventurers or get them expelled from the dwarf kingdom. More than a few factions in Throal would be interested in the results of the expedition. Loyalist forces, including the Eye of Throal and Master Merrox of the Great Library, lobby Neden to send an army underground if they find out about the doings of House Endour and the K'tenshin t'skrang so close to the heart of Throal; the potential Theran threat only makes them more determined to strike first. Noble houses opposed to Neden, particularly House Ueraven, might attempt to somehow discredit Neden by making the finds of the expedition public. Both sides are likely to give Baron Mardek and his motives a much closer look than the baron might like.

## AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

As suggested in the **Gamemastering** chapter on p.98 of the **Gamemaster's Guide**, **Westhrall's Passage** awards a number of Legend Awards to the player characters. A single Legend Award should award a number of Legend Points as determined by the character's Circle. For example, a Third Circle character receives from 200 to 500 Legend Points per Legend Award, and a total of two to five Legend Awards per game session. In the final game session that concludes the adventure, the characters may gain an extra Legend Award for completing the overall adventure goal. The characters earn a Legend Award for Conflicts in sessions they fight opponents and creatures presented here.

The adventure goal for **Westhrall's Passage** is to acquire the missing half of Captain Westhrall's map.

The only treasure the characters can gain in this adventure is the gift from the *shivalahala* if they defeat the Raghul. The Fire piece is worth 1,000 silver pieces and counts as Treasure worth Legend Points. However, the characters can ransom the riverboat to the K'tenshin for approximately 2,000 silvers, or sell it to the dwarf consortium for the same amount. The silver ingots from the forge and the riverboat (**The Dragon's Jaws**, p.78) are each worth 500 silver pieces. Gamemasters who do not want to put that much money in the hands of their player characters may feel free to reduce this award, or reduce the number of ingots in the first place.

## ABANOS OFFICERS

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

Two of the adepts are First Circle, one is Second Circle, and two are Third Circle. The four senior officers are all Fourth Circle, and the captain is a Seventh Circle Boatman.

Attributes					
DEX (14): 6	STR (14): 6	TOU (14): 6			
PER (12): 5	WIL (13): 6	CHA (12): 5			
Characteristics	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	7th
Initiative:	6	5	5	5	5
Physical Defense:	8	9	9	9	9
Spell Defense:	7	7	7	7	7
Social Defense:	7	7	7	7	7
Physical Armor:	3	6	7	7	8
Mystic Armor:	1	2	2	2	3
Death:	36	42	54	60	78
Unconsciousness:	28	33	43	48	63
Wound Threshold:	10	10	10	10	10
Recovery Tests:	3	3	3	3	3
Knockdown:	6	6	6*	6*	6*
Movement:	6	6	6	6	6
Karma Points:	4/4	8/8	12/12	16/16	28/28

\* Has the Wound Balance talent starting at Third Circle

Talents	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	7th
Climbing <sup>D</sup>	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	7/13
Karma Ritual <sup>D</sup>	1/1	2/2	3/3	4/4	7/7
Melee Weapons <sup>D</sup>	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	7/13
Pilot Boat <sup>D</sup>	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	8/13
Swimming <sup>D</sup>	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	8/14
Avoid Blow	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	7/13
Cast Net <sup>D</sup>	—	2/8	3/9	4/10	7/13
Durability [6/5]	—	1/1	3/3	4/4	7/7
Read River <sup>D</sup>	—	—	3/8	4/9	7/12
Wound Balance	—	—	3/9	4/10	7/13
Thread Weaving <sup>D</sup>	—	—	—	4/9	7/12
Heartening Laugh	—	—	—	4/9	7/12
Swing Attack <sup>D</sup>	—	—	—	—	7/13



Haggle	—	—	—	—	7/12
Lion Heart <sup>D</sup>	—	—	—	—	7/13
Evaluate	—	—	—	—	7/12
Second Weapon <sup>D</sup>	—	—	—	—	7/13
Engaging Banter	—	—	—	—	7/12

<sup>D</sup> Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

*Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)*

Skills	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	7th
Fishing	2/7	2/7	3/8	3/8	5/10
House K'tenshin History <sup>K</sup>	2/7	2/7	3/8	3/8	5/10
Mapmaking <sup>A</sup>	2/7	2/7	3/8	3/8	5/10
Read/Write Language	2/7—	(Dwarf/Throalic, T'skrang)			
Speak Language	2/7—	(Dwarf/Throalic, T'skrang)			
Throwing Weapons	2/8	2/8	3/9	3/9	5/11
Unarmed Combat	2/8	2/8	3/9	3/9	5/11

<sup>A</sup> Artisan Skill; <sup>K</sup> Knowledge Skill

Armor (Phys/Myst)	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	7th
Leather	—	—	F1	F1	R2
Espagra-Scale Cloak	3/0	3/0	4/0	4/0	5/1
	3/1	3/1	3/1	3/1	3/1

F1: The Forge Armor talent has been used on this item to provide the bonus given.

Weapons	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	7th
Broadsword	—	—	F1	F1	R1
Damage	11	11	12	12	14
Short Sword	—	—	F1	F1	F2
Damage	10	10	11	11	12
Dagger	—	—	F1	F1	F1
Damage	8	8	9	9	9

Weapons	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	7th
2 × Spears	—	—	F1	F1	F3
Damage	10	10	11	11	13

#### Casting Net (Entangle 10)

F1-F3: The Forge Weapon talent has been used on this item to provide the bonus given.

Weapon Ranges: Dagger/Spear (10-20 yards/5-10 hexes)

Armor/Weapons R1-R2: Thread Rank One-Thread Rank Two

#### Equipment

Fishing Kit, Mapmaking Tools, Navigation Charts in Map/Scroll Case, Traveler's Garb, Writing Kit

Loot	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	7th
Silver pieces	10	20	30	50	210

#### Legend Award

1 per 2 PC

#### Notes

As t'skrang, Abanos Officers have the Tail Combat racial ability. Every officer possesses a token of the House of Nine Diamonds worth 25 silver pieces. The captain possesses a map of the South Reach of the Serpent River in a map/scroll case worth 250 silver pieces.

#### Boatman Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

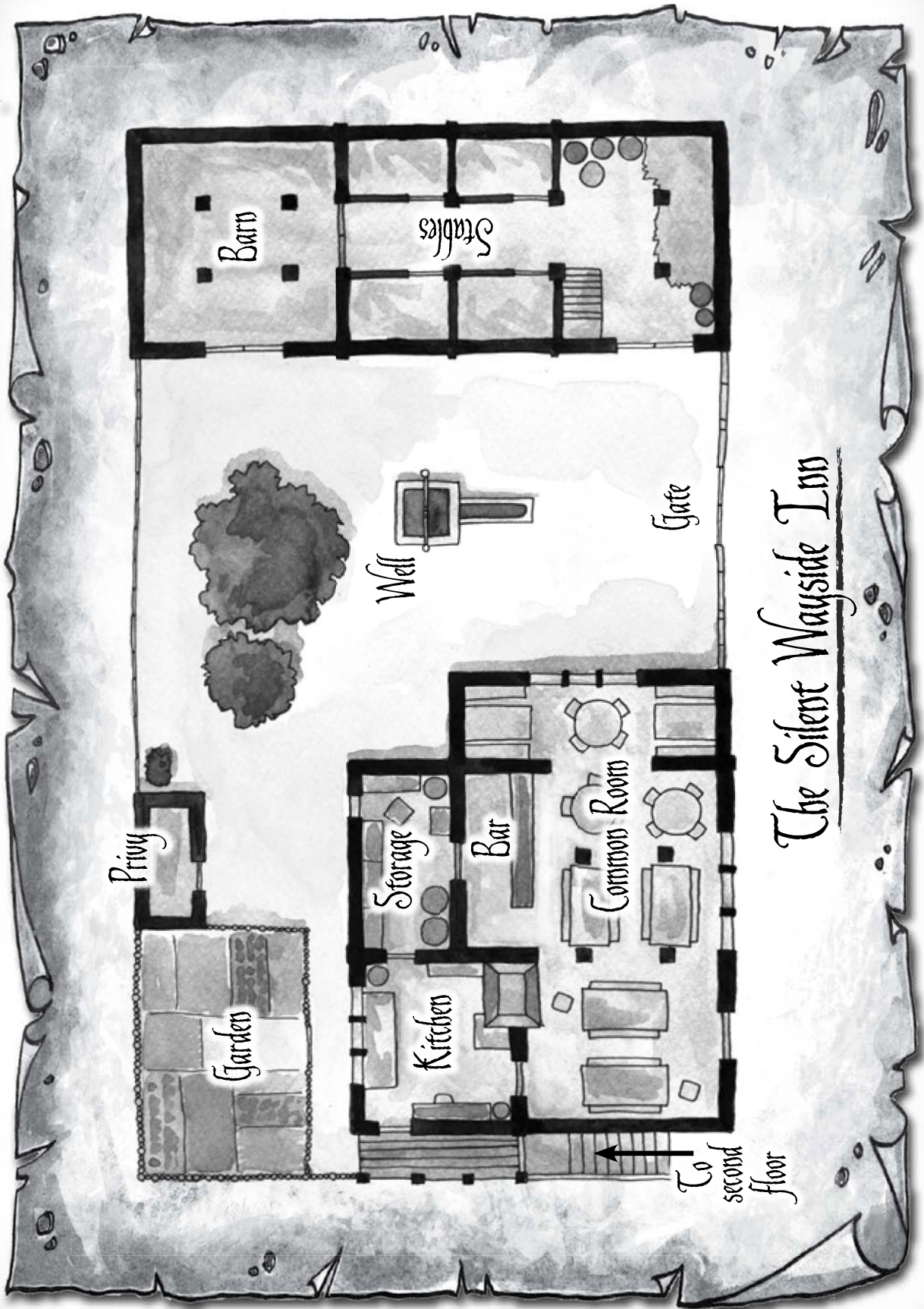
Fifth Circle: Flow of *Kiatsu*

Sixth Circle: Karma on Charisma-only Tests

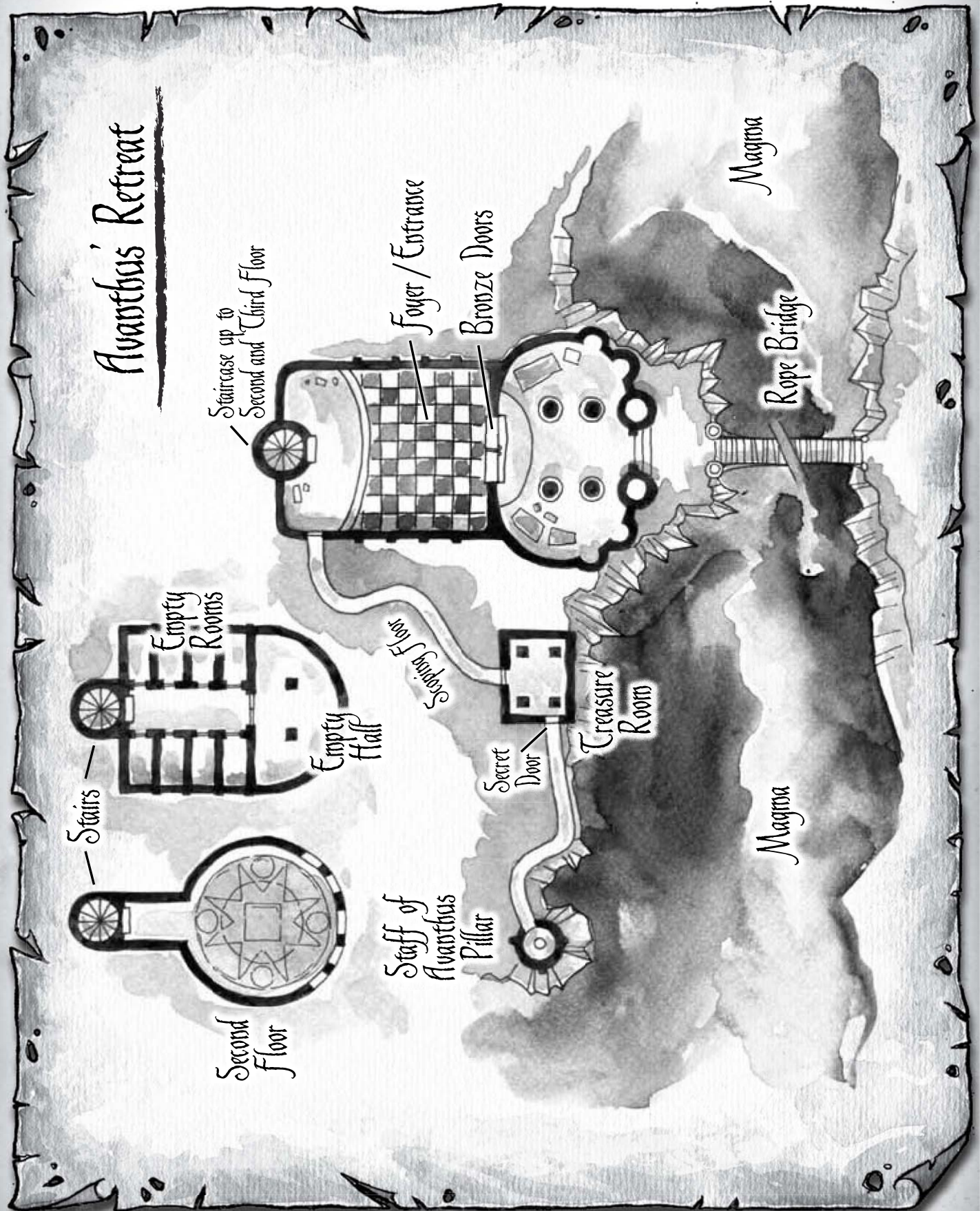
Seventh Circle: Karma on any Action Test on a riverboat













**6 Days Ago**

My work in the town is done, it seems. It's before sunrise now, but I want to have as much time as possible today, in case I find some outlying farms where some trading can be done. I made some good deals yesterday, but the townsfolk have little coin. Traded some tools for grain with the local store and some pots for dried meat with the local company. The smith had a nice short sword. I haggled him down, as it seemed no one would buy it anyway. I am keeping it for myself; he only wanted a bottle of quality elven wine.

No farms there. The soil doesn't seem that good on this side of town. Anyway, I saw enough of them on the other side. Found an established campsite by the road, there was already some cut wood there from the last traveler. I'd cut some for the next, but my feet are aching. Didn't want to ride the cart, Sticky already has his problems with the grain.

**5 Days Ago**

I made a detour today to follow a small path, leading me to a farm at its end. Took me half the day to get there and back to the road, but it paid off. The farmers don't get into town often, and I traded some cloth in for preserved fruits. I need to remember this place, they're hard-working people who got their rightful share—they got some coin and are willing to spend it.

**4 Days Ago**

Not much to write. No people on the road, no people living besides it. I miss Fabra. I'll be home again in another month or two. Can't wait to give the kids the toys I got them. It's been three months now, hope they'll still recognize me. If times weren't so hard for us, I could be at home more. But things are as they are. Ah. Shouldn't spend so much time alone, all that thinking and rambling...

**3 Days Ago**

I found a lovely campsite some fifty yards away from the road. A handful of lonely trees by the road, with low branches. On the other side, a small hill rising. That will keep the wind away. It is quite beautiful, so I'll draw it to give to Fabra when I'm back.

**2 Days Ago**

The day seems beautiful, but I think it's treacherous. I just made the cart ready for today, and I think someone touched it while I was sleeping. I looked around, but could find no trace of an intruder. All is quiet, too quiet. Even the birds are silent. Something has happened. Someone was here.

I didn't see a trace of my stalkers during the day. I've set up camp, but will stay awake, feigning sleep. When they come out, I'll confront them. Will teach them a lesson! Wonder who's behind it.

**1 Day Ago**

Up all night, thinking. They didn't show up, but I think they were there. Heard something last night. Must be someone from home, or someone who travels this route regularly. Or bandits, trying to get at my goods. But more likely competitors. Bandits would've attacked me right away. Wonder what they want. Is it personal?

Perhaps they are Horror-tainted, or some weird cult. I walked as fast as possible. I think I'll return home right away, it is not safe anywhere else. They want to ruin me, I'm sure. They'll pose as bandits or scorchers or something else, but it's not that, it's not about that. This is pure evil. I can't rest long, have to escape them. But is home safe? There must be many of them, they probably lurk everywhere. I have to be careful.

**Today**

I'm sure they walked around the camp perhaps they are there even now outside of sight I have to be fast but ill likely have to fight them cause that's the only thing that stops them but I have not figured out why and so I don't know if I'm up to them or if I get to know why I hope Fabra and the kids are safe but perhaps they've already reached them I have to get back to see maybe the watch can help me but will they believe me. But ... what if they are in on it too?



**From:** Gaurng Metsmetev, Chancellery of Hustane

**To:** Tonliga Uvnimsaya, Officer of the Court for Construction, Royal Chancellery of Throal

**Subject:** Report Concerning the Second Deep Exploration Team

**Confidential:** Officer's Eyes Only

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

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

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

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

Yours,  
Metsmetev

Dear Sir,

*If you and your company are not otherwise engaged, I wish to employ your services on an expedition into the deep subterranean regions of Throal. My employer has authorized me to offer 400 silver pieces each for the successful completion of this exploratory mission.*

*If you wish to know more, please come to the tavern called Ambica's Beard in the city of Valvria, tomorrow at the tenth hour. Please also come prepared to depart immediately on the expedition, should you decide to accept the offer.*

With respect,

Ela Pono  
Apprentice Archivist of  
the Great Library of Throal

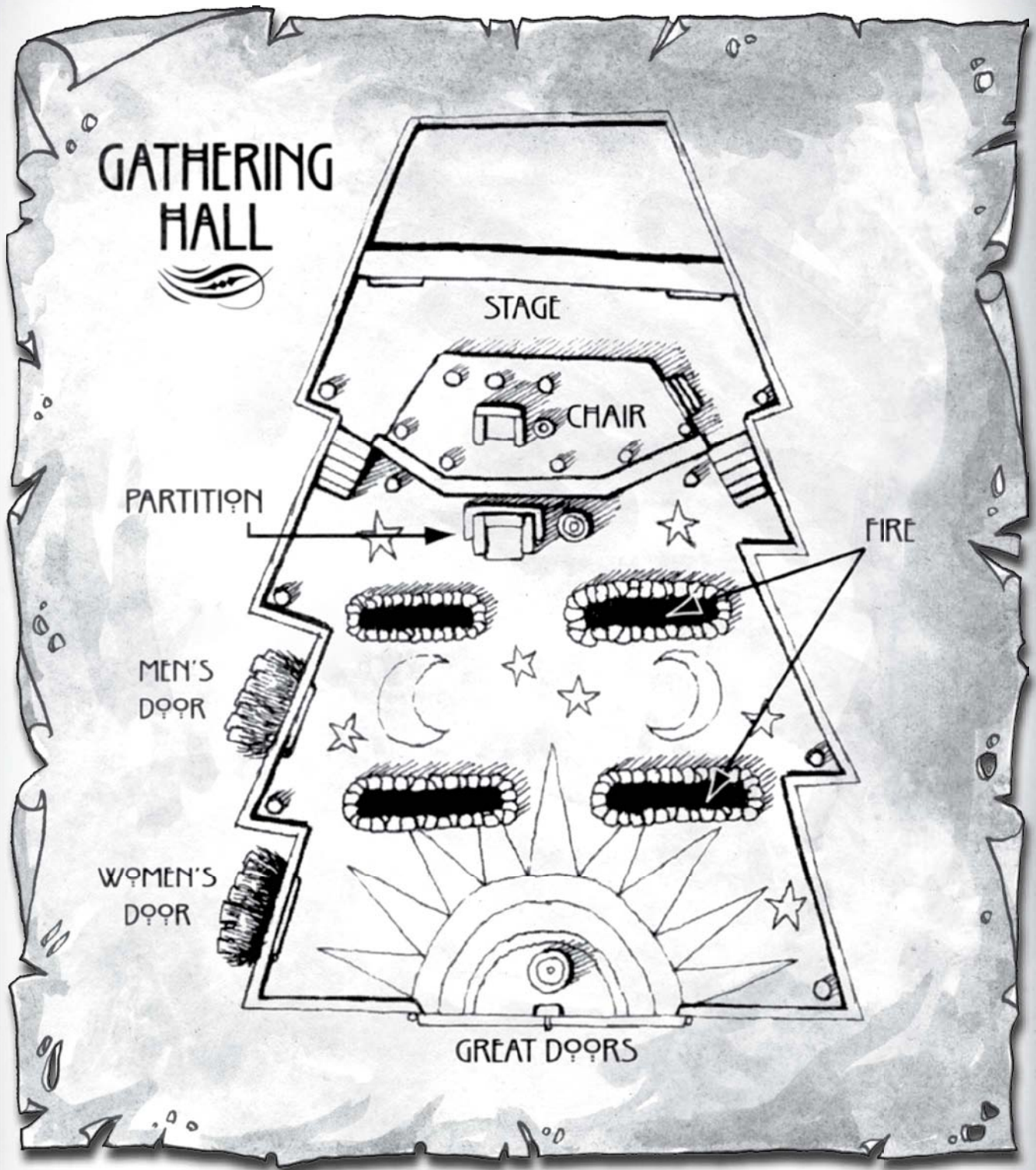


YESHA (WESTHRALLS PASSAGE)



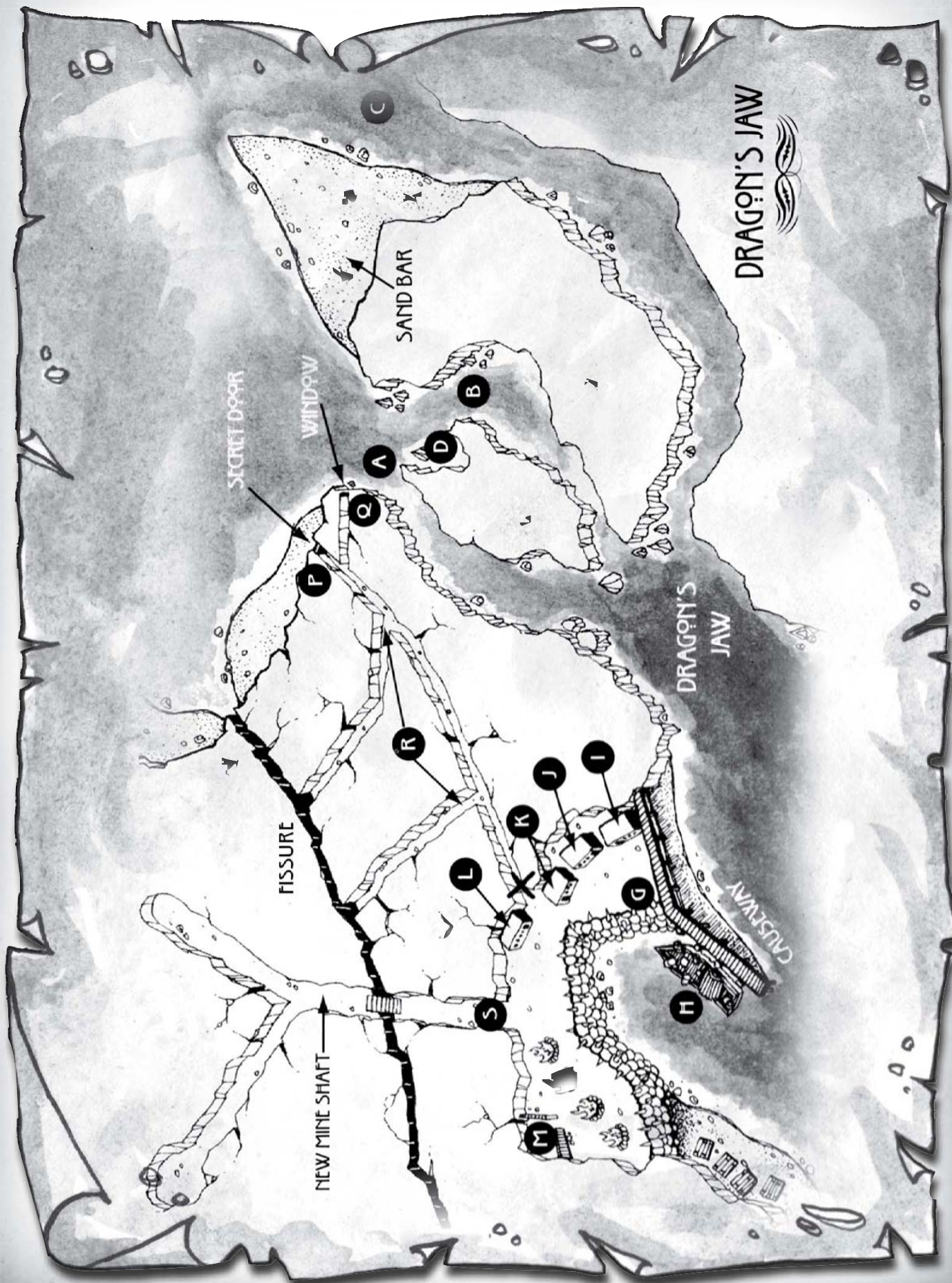


❧ GATHERING HALL (WESTHRALLS PASSAGE) ❧





❧ DRAGON'S JAW (WESTHRALLS PASSAGE) ❧





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# EARTHDAWN SHARDS: SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

**T**he Shards series is a collection of adventures and encounters for the Earthdawn game. Intended as an inexpensive adventure resource for Earthdawn gamemasters, they are also a springboard for aspiring writers. The Shards series is published and available for purchase online from OneBookshelf.com—it is possible that a collection might see print at a later stage. Please read the following guidelines carefully before submitting your idea for a Shard. Submissions that do not conform to the guidelines may not be accepted.

## WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

Short adventures and encounters (including appropriate setting descriptions) for **Earthdawn**, written to be used with the rules contained in the *Earthdawn Player's* and *Gamemaster's Guides*. A Shard can also contain new creatures and gamemaster characters. The tone and style of the text should fit the **Earthdawn** setting (refer to previously published adventures to get an idea of what we are talking about here).

As mentioned above, the Shards series also serves as a hunting ground to find potential new writers we can send outlines to and ask to participate in bigger projects, so succeeding here may result in future agreements.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO SEND US

Your manuscript, formatted as outlined below, attached to an email sent to [submissions@earthdawn.com](mailto:submissions@earthdawn.com). The email must contain a standard disclosure agreement (you can copy and paste the boxed text unaltered into the body of your email). Please note that these guidelines are subject to change, so check our web site at [earthdawn.com](http://earthdawn.com) for updates and an FAQ).

### Formatting

We accept electronic submissions only. Each entry should come as a separate file (please use any of the following formats for your entries: DOC, RTF, TXT, or PDF). Your full name and email address should be provided clearly on the first page of the entry and/or in the header/footer. All pages should be plain white Letter- or A4-sized paper with one-inch margins all around, and set in a Times Roman type no smaller than 10 point). Using the default settings of your word processor is usually a good idea. Please pay close attention to spelling, grammar, and punctuation—use our Submission Handbook as a guide.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MY SUBMISSION GETS ACCEPTED?

If your submission survives our evaluation process (as outlined in the Revisions and Rejections section on p. 6 of our Submission Handbook), we will contact you and start working on getting the Shard ready for publication (this involves editing, artwork selection/creation, and layout by our staff).

Once we reach this stage, your submission becomes the property of RedBrick LLC and FASA Corporation, meaning you lose all rights to publish it elsewhere.

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I wish to submit the materials attached to this eMail for consideration for publication by RedBrick LLC, subject to all of the conditions below:

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