



LEX·ARCANA

THE ISLAND OF THE DEAD SAND

BY FRANCESCO NEPITELLO, MICHELE GARBUGGIO AND UMBERTO PIGNATELLI

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LEX·ARCANA

AN EMPIRE WITHOUT END



The Island of the Dead Sand
by Francesco Nepitello, Michele Garbuggio and Umberto Pignatelli

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THE ISLAND OF THE DEAD SAND

INTRODUCTION

This brief *Lex Arcana* scenario was played for the first time during the 2° *Role Play Gathering*, held in Florence in January 2019.

The profile of the main antagonist have been updated to the second edition of the game and were added a few second edition specific illustrations.

If you wish to play as a Custos and do not wish to play as the Demiurge, then you should stop reading here.

Have fun!

AT THE EDGES OF THE EMPIRE NOBODY CAN HEAR YOU SCREAM

Returning from a dangerous mission in Britannia, the Custodes are embarked as passengers on the *Naukleros*, a Greek ship headed to Carthago Nova, in Iberia, captain by some Demetrius. Departed from Londinium, the *Naukleros* travels smoothly for twenty days along the Iberian coasts, but one night, right before passing the Pillars of Hercules, it is caught in a most violent storm.

At the mercy of the sea, the Custodes must help the crew in avoiding the worst. As everything seems lost, through the lightning and turbulent heavens they spot the profile of a nearby island. At the same time, the slaves revolt below deck, thirsting for vengeance and intending to take over the vessel.

With the help of the captain, the Custodes manage to leave the ship on an escape boat. They survive the storm and at dawn they collapse on its beaches. Once they have recovered, the Custodes try to take stock of their situation; they are on a rocky island, off of the northern coast of Mauretania. Demetrius warns them against Eógan, the leader of the rebellious slaves, a massive Briton warrior of the Votadini tribe, expecting only problems from a former legionary like him.

The island is roughly three kilometers long and two wide. Exploring the beach, the Custodes find one of the boats used by the escaped slaves (the only other survivors) and a series of tracks heading into the island. Following them, the group realizes the island devoid of any life. The soil, once fertile, is covered in fine sand that suffocated anything underneath. If they proceed to the center of the isle ignoring the tracks, the Custodes find a deep



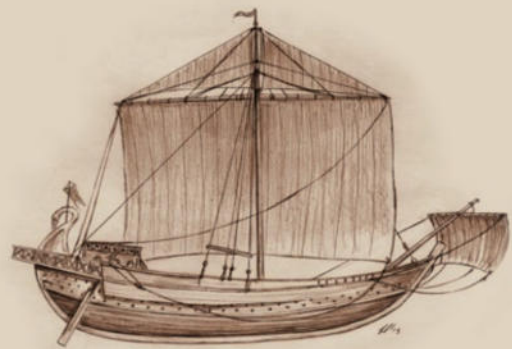
NAUKLEROS

Cargo vessel Naukleros

Crew: seventyseven

Cargo: two thousand pieces of Briton wool, 70 tons of tin and iron ingots, twelve oxen, ten Briton slaves

Route: Nova Carthago, Iberia



crater caused by the fall of a "sky stone", a meteorite, probably what killed all the vegetation. The crater is too deep to be adequately explored without proper equipment.

Following the tracks of the slaves (or by finding a path), the group reaches a small abandoned village on the coast opposite their shipwreck. The tracks of the slaves end here. If the Custodes explore the area wondering where all the locals have gone, they risk being ambushed by the ten slaves of Eógan.

The Briton does not intend to kill them; he needs them and captain Demetrius to leave the island and reach the Iberian coasts, as the slaves have found a small ship almost ready to sail in a nearby shed. They only need to drag it to the sea, but for this to happen they need to wait for the next tide, at night. The slaves are not sailors, so need Demetrius. They also promise the Custodes and the captain safety, once they are in Iberia.

The Custodes, too, must leave the island and a truce and collaboration with the mutineers seems to be the only solution. There also seems to be no food on the island, something the rebellious slaves confirm. Two of them in particular, Drust and Fáel, speak of cannibalism at the expense of the Custodes.



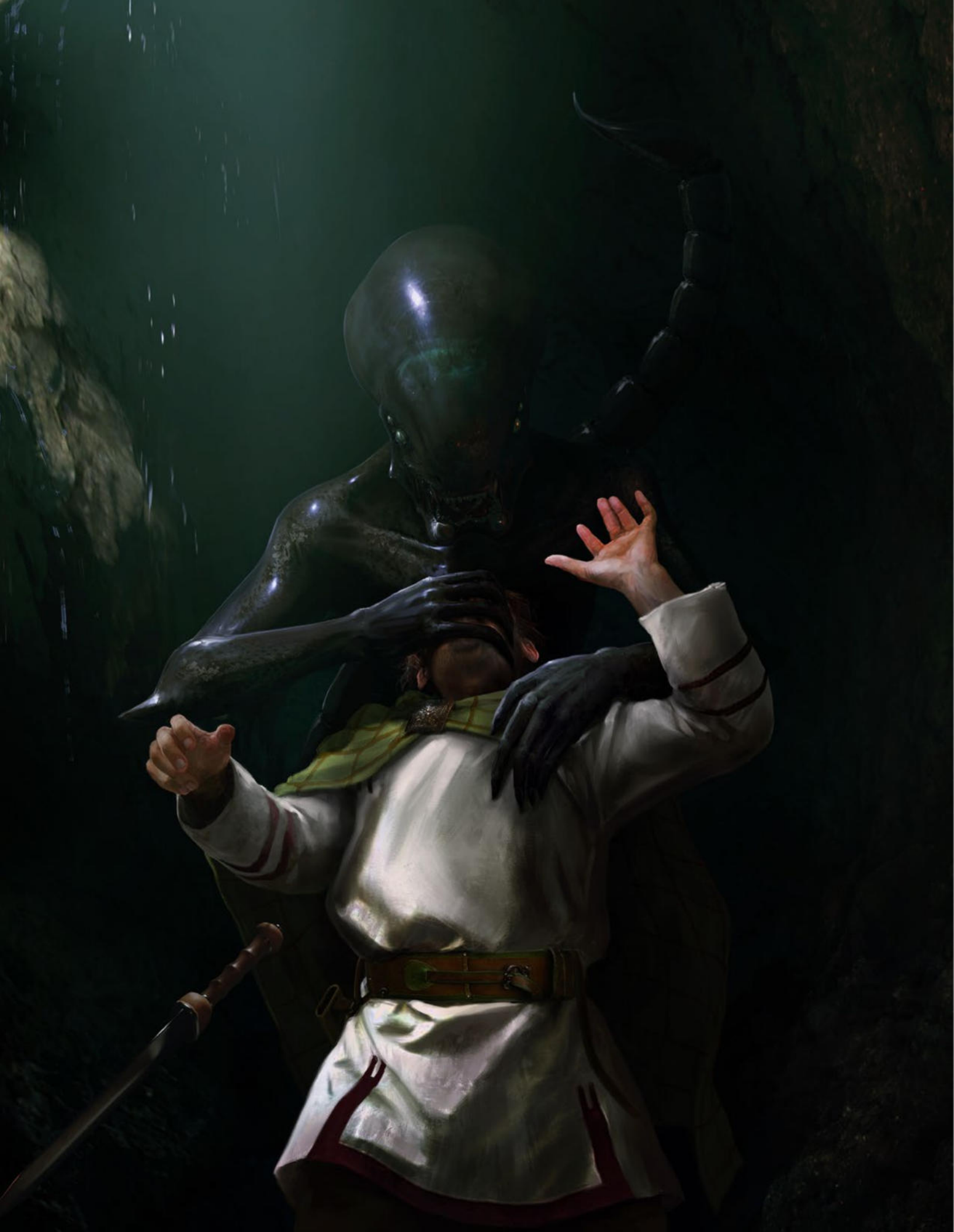
Such affirmations cause great tension, but it is dispelled as one of the slaves returns to the village claiming they have found a passage in the rocks leading to a small temple, dedicated to an unknown deity. Inside the cavity is a large amount of strange amphoras apparently made of flesh. Éógan categorically forbids his own to venture clear the strange ‘containers’, without knowing that somebody already did. If the Custodes examine the vessels, they notice that two seem to be open and empty.

If the Custodes investigate the deserted village they find, in the house of the herbalist, a diary from a few years before mentioning a “stone fell the heavens”, the “great death” and the “seeds of evil”. The entries suddenly stop.

Eventually, at night the tide rises. Custodes and slaves, back to back, must push the small vessel into the water, but right as they do Fáel falls to the ground, his body twisting and spasming. From his body suddenly bursts a horrible monster, similar to a small blind dragon, that flees into the shadows, hissing and leaving the lifeless slave behind.

Then, the Custodes must decide what to do. The slaves want to set sail immediately and leave the isle behind, but traveling at night is dangerous. If the creature returns, the Custodes may use the winches, tar and other tools available in the small port. After all, the monster is tiny, right...?

Once on board, the Custodes may finally leave this accursed place. The only one mourning poor Fáel is his friend Drust. The same Drust who, alongside Fáel, had examined the ‘amphoras’ a few hours before and now has the seed of evil ready to bloom in his body. Will the Custodes see the light of the next dawn?





INTERNECIVUS RAPTUS

They come out of the walls, Magister! They come out of the cursed walls!

Last words of Lucius Guilelmus Tiberis, Briton Explorer for the Cohors Arcana

This creature looks vaguely human; it is bipedal, has two arms and two legs, but its skull is extremely long and it has a long and powerful tail. When it stands fully erect, it is taller than seven feet, but takes a hunched position when moving. It is fast, moving on both two or four legs, and seems capable of easily running and climbing along vertical surfaces or even ceilings.

It is gifted with superhuman strength, sharp claws and deadly fangs that allow it to bash doors and bite through the sturdiest armor, its long, segmented tail ending in a sharp spike similar to the stinger of a scorpion. Its nightmarish arsenal, however, includes a retractable tongue, a toothed secondary appendage capable of striking with tremendous force through armor, flesh and bones.

Its body, black or bronze in color, is almost entirely covered in a resistant shell, making this creature similar to a horrid animated statue. It is almost impervious to weapons, but even if somebody managed to strike through its thick armor, its blood is an extremely potent poison, capable blinding, burning and corroding anything it comes into contact with.

This creature is a ferocious predator, apparently only concerned with surviving and propagating its abominable species. Recorded encounters so far identify it as a solitary hunter, although disconcerting legends speak of packs capable of wiping out entire colonies.

Death, however, may be the least dire destiny that may befall those who meet these monsters. It is said that the creature tries to capture its preys alive, to lay eggs into them and further its monstrous kin. It is imperative to eliminate any living survivor found around an area infested by such creatures.

Internecivus Raptus

Degree of Danger: 3

Size: 3

Average Value: DV6 (young) or DV8 (adult)


1 die: Damage

2 dice: Damage (while while it is grabbing the victim is grabbing the victim), Sensibilitas

3 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points

Hit Points: 18 (young) or 24 (adult)

Protections: Chitinous Shell (Protection equal to DV)

 *Special Abilities:* Acid Blood (1DV), Grab, Stealthy, Unnatural Speed

Acid Blood

If a melee attack wounds the creature, the attacker must roll **Coordinatio** with an SD equal to the damage they have dealt. If they are holding a shield, they add its Parry value directly to the Coordinatio roll (for example, a Custos holding a shield with Parry +2 rolls Coordinatio to avoid damage and adds +2 to the result). On a failure, the character is flooded with acid blood and immediately suffers damage equal to the value of the special attack (1DV). The same amount of damage is inflicted to the character at the beginning of each of the 3 following tempus. Any armor the character wears absorbs damage as usual, but it also damages itself and loses efficiency: for each damage it absorbs, it loses 1 point of its Protection value. When it becomes 0, the armor is destroyed.

According to the situation, the Demiurge is free to determine the consequences of the creature's corrosive blood. For example, if the monster was encountered in a ship, it may corrode the deck and pierce the hull, potentially leading to a leak.

*"Then Romulus shall receive the sceptre of his race, and found the walls of Mars,
and call the people Romans. I have given no limits or duration to their possession:
I've given them empire without end."*

Virgil, Aeneid

