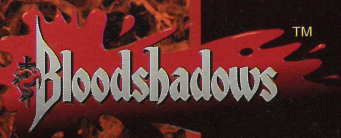


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# WILDERNESS



Shane Lacy Hensley



# WILDERNESS

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Publisher: **Daniel Scott Palter** • Associate Publisher/Treasurer: **Denise Palter** • Associate Publisher: **Richard Hawran** • Senior Editor: **Greg Farshtey**

Editors: **Miranda Horner, Peter Schweighofer, Bill Smith, Ed Stark** • Art Director: **Stephen Crane**

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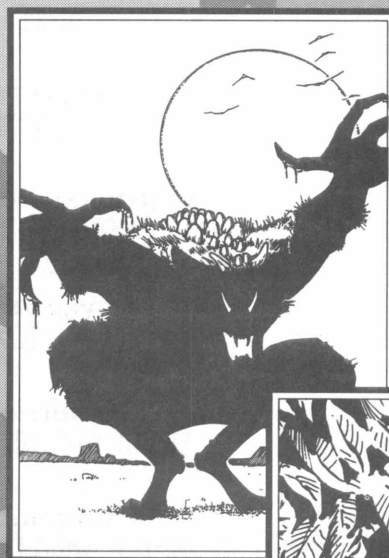
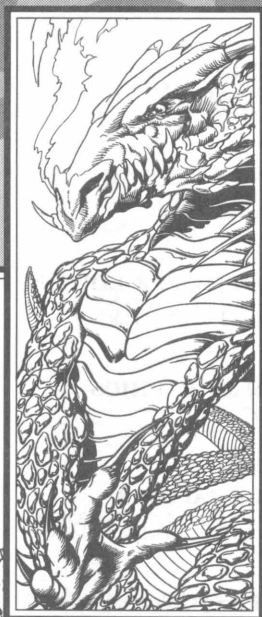
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## INTRODUCTION

# WILDERNESS TALES

*So I was sitting in this bar in Galitia when these two suits walked up. I was expecting them to hire me for the usual courier job. That would have been peachy, too, 'cause these two guys looked like they might actually pay what they promised. But instead, one of them whipped out four old scrolls and handed them to me.*

*"Buck Granger?" he asked.*

*I nodded and took the scrolls. He must've known who I was already or he wouldn't have handed them over before making sure it was me. The first scroll was all about Silver Eyes, this weird demon-thing that's supposed to roam the Pendar Mountains. The second was all about Dirak, the Taxim god that the desert is named after. The third was about the Dark Heart, and the last was about the lost Crystal Host in the Boiling Swamps.*

*"So what?" I said.*

*The guy that handed me the scrolls pulled out a chair and sat down. He was wearing a velvet suit and a bowler. The other guy was wearing a basic black suit and carrying a book, but I noticed all the pages were blank. This same guy whipped out an inkwell and a pen like he was going to start writing.*

*"Ms. Granger," the first guy said, "My name is Pinion, Tewlopolus Pinion." I hid my laugh with a quick swig of yukka.*

*"And this is my barrister, Mr. Finchester. I represent me."*

*Or at least that's what I thought he said. I looked confused so he tried again.*

*"I mean, M.E., or Mythic Explorations. We specialize in researching myths and legends of Marl."*

*"Why?" I asked suspiciously. It wasn't usually a good idea to go looking for trouble. There's enough of that to go around anyway.*

*"Curiosity. . ." he said, but his eyes said something else. Anytime someone doesn't look me in the eye I know he's lying.*

*I took another drink. "Try again."*





Acting disinterested worked. He knew he wasn't going to get what he wanted without being straight. "Money, Ms. Granger. The myths we research all have something to do with fabulous treasures — ancient statues, magical swords, lost silver mines — anything of significant value. We sponsor people such as yourself to find these items, then pay them for it."

"Nice try, boys, but I'm not interested. I'm a courier. I deliver things, I don't go looking for them. I've seen too many strange things out in the Wilderness to go stirring up more."

"Precisely!" Pinion turned to his lawyer, "See, Finchester? I told you she was perfect!"

"I'm clueless here," I shrugged. "I just told you I'm not interested, and you're smiling."

"Yes! We would certainly like to employ you for one of our expeditions, Ms. Granger, but we have a much more important offer for you first."

Now I was getting real suspicious, but I thought I'd hear him out.

"We'd like to interview you."

I snorted some yukka out my nose and laughed a little too loud. "You wanna what?" Pinion handed me his handkerchief and I wiped off my face.

"We've been told that no one knows more about the local Wilderness than you, Ms. Granger. Is that true?"

"I don't know. I've been around, I guess, but

I never thought of myself as an expert. What exactly do you want me to do?"

"We just want you to tell us everything you can about certain regions of the Wilderness. Regions associated with these legends," he pointed to the scrolls. "The information you share with us might help keep our agents alive."

"I'm a very busy girl," I hinted.

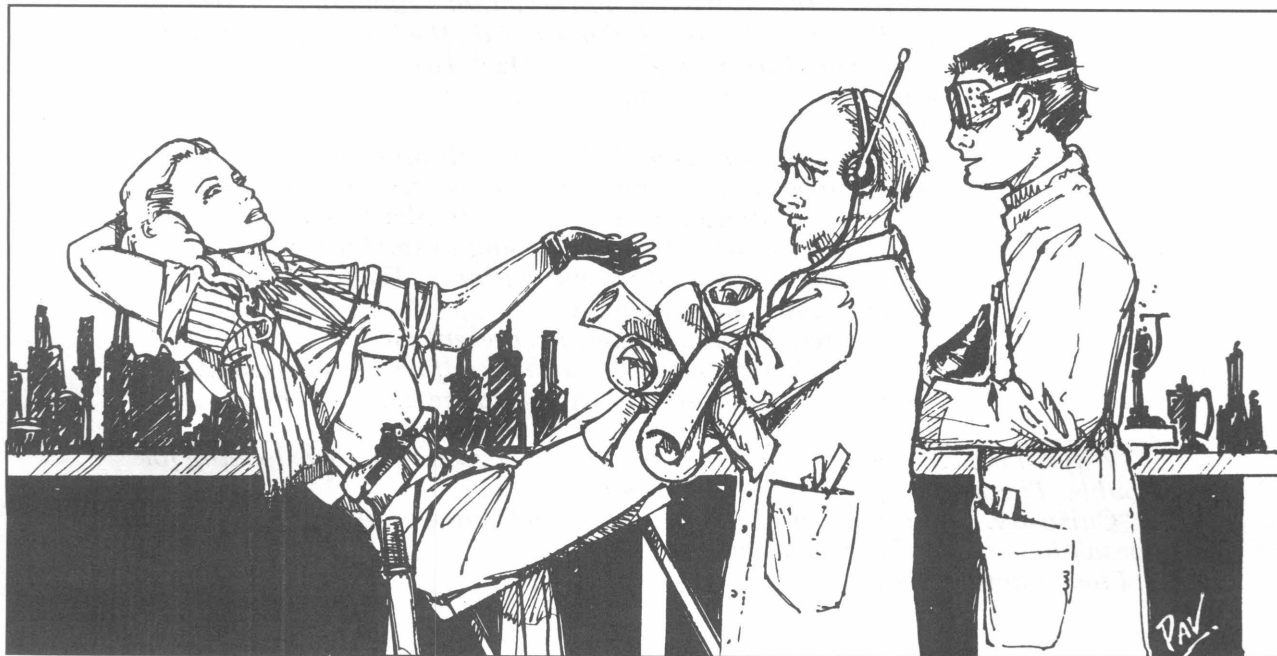
"We pay very well," Pinion whispered. Then he pulled an envelope out of his pocket and flipped through a few c-notes.

It all sounded fairly harmless, and the money was good. Besides, talking about the Wilderness beats the hell out of going out in it.

"Bartender," I yelled and pointed at my empty yukka glass. "Talking's thirsty work."

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The Wilderness sourcebook has been designed for the gamemaster to use in several ways. Read through each of these methods and choose the one that works best for you. You can also mix and match methods to tailor it to your specific campaign. As you read this book, you will notice that there are sections in italics. These sections contain information that Buck Granger is giving the player characters about the Wilderness. Anything that is not in italics is strictly for the gamemaster.



Terry Pavlet



## PLAYERS CHOOSE THEIR OWN MINI-CAMPAIGN

The best way to use *Wilderness* is to casually slip one of the “Legend Props” into the middle of a totally unrelated adventure. Each legend in this book has the hint of fabulous rewards embedded within it, so most characters will likely wish to investigate them as soon as they have the opportunity. This has several advantages, but most importantly, the players will be choosing their next adventure instead of being routed into one by the gamemaster. Allowing the group to choose their own path usually makes them work a little harder for their goal. It also takes some of the pressure off of you, the gamemaster. How many times has the group been forced into doing something and you, as the gamemaster, have had to come up with a hundred and one ways to keep them from getting out of it? If the group chooses their own adventure, you won’t have to do anything but sit back, stir up the local monsters occasionally, and watch the story unfold.

## LEGENDS AND REGIONS

Each legend included in this book is associated with a region. The Pendar Mountains, the Dirak Desert, the Alerios Jungle, the Boiling Swamps, and the Gwalior Ruins are all detailed at length. As the group follows the trail of their legend, you can use these people, places, and things to fill in the world around them. Consider each chapter the setting for a mini-campaign, the goal of which is the treasure hinted at in the local legend.

## BUCK GRANGER’S SURVIVAL GUIDE

If the party does a little research before embarking on their expedition, they might come across a copy of Mythic Exploration’s interview with Buck Granger. If so, the gamemaster should let the players read the italicized sections in this book. This will help prepare them for some of the challenges that lie ahead, but it won’t spoil the fun (and frustration!) of finding out the real scoop on their own.

## THE CHARACTERS ARE HIRED BY MYTHIC EXPLORATIONS

This method is very close to the first, though the players will be hired by Mythic Explorations rather than choosing to pursue a legend and its treasures on their own. M.E. has branches in many of the major cities, so characters can be contracted no matter where you’ve set your campaign.

## THE TERMS

Mythic Explorations’ terms are simple. The explorers receive no cash advance or any special assistance. The team is responsible for everything, including weapons, ammunition, food, and water. Only in certain circumstances, and if a group has a sterling reputation, M.E. might provide items intended for a specific purpose (such as a truck to haul back a lost statue, or a spell to defeat a particular guardian that protects the treasure).

If a treasure is discovered, it is to be brought back to M.E. and the explorers awarded one-half the market value. Since M.E. has connections with collectors and mages across Marl, this reward is often higher than the characters might get by selling the item on their own. The exploration team should definitely be given a copy of Buck Granger’s Survival Guide if they are backing an expedition. That is what it was written for, after all.

## WILDERNESS AS A SOURCEBOOK

Finally, if you aren’t interested in the legends provided in this book, ignore them and simply use the material for each region. These should be considered “examples” of the kinds of places characters might encounter within that type of terrain in the Wilderness. The Sentinel Peak area of the Pendar Mountains, for example, is only one small part of this gigantic range. There are certainly many other strange areas within these ancient mountains. Similarly, there might be places like Sentinel Peak in other mountain ranges.

Remember, it’s your book. Use what works for your campaign, and throw out the rest.





CHAPTER  
ONEBUCK GRANGER'S SURVIVAL  
GUIDE

## BUCK'S SURVIVAL GUIDE

*Before we get into all those weird places and legends, I should lay out the ground rules. Any group that heads into the Wilderness has to know a few basic rules to stay alive.*

## 1. LISTEN

*The most important rule for the Wilderness is to listen. I'm going to give you a lot of advice, and you'd better pay attention. But you're also going to have to listen to what the locals say. If they tell you not to touch the golden statue on the hill, there's probably a reason. I've heard Undead complaining that if someone had only told them about the "fill-in-the-blank," they'd still be alive. It's better to spend a few minutes listening to some old geezer than to be a damn sorry Undead.*

## 2. BE PREPARED

*Don't go out into the Wilderness without "beans and bullets." Not many explorers forget to bring their favorite shotgun, but a lot of guys go light on food and water. Think you can catch your own game? That's fine — there's lots of critters out there to pick on — but do you know what's good to eat and what's not? Some things are poisonous, some might start regenerating in your stomach, and some are just too damn weird to sink your teeth into. If you do run out of food, remember rule number one — listen. Find out what the locals eat. Just be careful when you ask them, 'cause you might be what the locals eat.*



## 3. KEEP QUIET

*Stay out of everyone's hair. Don't go looking for any more trouble than you're going to run into already. The best way to do that is to stay quiet. Creaky saddles, clanking armor, clanging rifle-strap rings — all those things sound way out-of-place in the Wilderness. Use tape or cloth to keep this stuff quiet and you'll cut way back on the number of things that come bounding out of the bush to eat you.*

*If you're on horseback, there's a few other things you can do. Put a blanket between your saddle and the horse's back. That animal's going to sweat, and the saddle will begin to rub him raw without a blanket in-between. A horse with a raw, blistering back will snort a lot, and that's a dinner call to any hungry critters in the area. While you're at it, oil the saddle and any other leather gear you're carrying. That'll keep it from creaking.*

*If you're traveling by vehicle, there's only one thing you can do to keep it quiet, and that's buy a long-lasting silence spell. Outfitters in Galitia, Selastos, and Guildsport all have mages on hand who can cast this kind of spell for reasonable rates.*

## 4. MAKE NOISE

*No, I'm not contradicting myself. I'm talking about communication. Work together as a team. Even if you don't like somebody, keep it to yourself. You'll feel really silly if somebody didn't shoot the granite cat behind you because you wouldn't make him a pot of java that morning.*

*Also, when you get attacked by something, start yelling. The bad guys probably already know where you are, so start shouting out instructions to the rest of your group. Keep quiet and you've got a bunch of individuals shooting at anything that moves. Shout out what you're doing and suddenly you've got a team that's concentrating all their efforts on the enemy. And once you've dealt with the threat, get the hell out of there — all that noise is going to attract attention.*

## 5. DON'T GO

*If you really want to be safe, don't go into the Wilderness. You think I'm kidding? You think because you can handle a pack of alley-bandits you can survive some silly old forest? I knew a*



Marshall Andrews III

lot of guys that thought the same thing. Their bones stretch from here to Gwalior.

## PARTY STEALTH

When a group moves through the Wilderness, it is only as quiet as its loudest element. Moving silently is extremely important in the dangerous wilds of Marl. A party that makes too much noise will find themselves attracting every hungry beast within earshot.

A rough measure of the party's noise level is a special group "skill" called *party stealth*. To find the *party stealth* score, simply average the *stealth* skills of everyone in the party. Don't forget to add in *stealth* scores of any beasts or mounts in the party as well. After you average the *stealth* skills for the party, count how many members, including mounts, the party has. The more members there are in the party, the more difficult it is to move stealthily. The chart below shows the modifiers to add to the total *party stealth* score.

*Party stealth* is intended for traveling and to give the gamemaster a feel for the party's ability to move about the Wilderness without attracting too much attention. It should not be used after an encounter has occurred. At that point, individual *stealth* skills are used normally.

A party traveling at "normal" speed, which is explained below, subtracts -2 from its *party stealth*. This accounts for quiet conversation, movement through brush, and other necessary noise that the party will make as it moves. As long as the group moves at this speed, *party stealth* is at -2. When the group really needs to move silently, it can choose to *creep*. This eliminates the penalty, but slows the party down to half speed.

## USING PARTY STEALTH

When it becomes important to know if someone — or more commonly, something — hears the group traveling, the gamemaster should refer to the current *party stealth* skill. Pick a player randomly and allow him to roll a *party stealth* total. The picked player may spend life points or use his cards to augment the *party stealth* roll, but other players may only support him by trading cards or discarding supporter cards.

## PARTY STEALTH MODIFIERS

# in Party	Modifier
1-2	+1
3-4	0
5-6	-1
7-8	-2
9-10	-3

*Party stealth* is also used to determine wandering encounters. This is discussed below under "Flora and Fauna."

## EXTRA EFFORT

Characters who oil their leather and secure loose items effectively add +1 to their individual *stealth* totals. Note that this can raise the *party stealth* score as well.

## VEHICLES

It is impossible to silence a vehicle without the aid of magic. See the "Outfitter's, Goods, and Services" chapter for information on the availability of spells and other devices.

## GETTING THERE

*There's a lot of roads in the Wilderness, and even more trails. Some of them even lead somewhere. The road between Gwalior and Adderhead, for instance, is well known. Go any farther than that and you'll find yourself walking in the woods or the mountains.*

*But even isolated cities, like Guildsport, will usually have lots of outposts or outlying villages nearby. They have to, 'cause there aren't many places that have all the resources they need right within the city's limits. Outposts will almost always have a decent road leading to the city, and you should stick to it if you find one.*

*Paths in the middle of nowhere are usually nothing but trouble. If you follow the trail, stay off of it by a few meters. Whoever lives at the end is powerful enough to protect himself from Wilderness creatures, so you can bet your ass he'll be powerful enough to ward this road.*



## ORIENTEERING

*The safest bet when moving through the Wilderness is to know where you're going. Do a little research before you leave the safety of the city. There aren't a lot of maps floating around, but a good outfitter will sell you a compass heading for a few bucks. This'll keep you from going off-course and give you a way back if your luck turns bad. (For those of you who are new to orienteering, add your compass heading to 180, wrapping zero if you have to, and that'll point you back toward home.)*

*If you're on foot, you should expect to make about ten to fifteen kilometers a day at a decent rate, depending upon the type of terrain you find yourself in. If you're mounted you should double that. You can go faster if you really need to, but your feet will pay for it.*

*Finally, don't travel through the night, 'cause if you think there's a lot of critters hopping around in the day-time, you should see what happens when the sun goes down.*

## TRAVEL RATES

The movement rates below are the number of kilometers a group traveling twelve hours a day can expect to make through various types of terrain. There are three different rates that a group can use: normal, creeping, and pushing.

### NORMAL

Travelers can take it easy by using the numbers listed after Rate in the "Travel Types" section below. The first number listed is the number of kilometers a party can travel on fairly flat, easy terrain, while the second number lists the distance traveled through the rougher terrain of the Wilderness. Normal movement assumes that the party is moving relatively quietly, but still makes normal conversation. The group might stop for short periods of time when strange sounds are heard or something looks suspicious, but overall travel time is unaffected.

### CREEPING

Parties can also creep for short distances when it's obvious there's something dangerous lurking about. The group is being extra

quiet, covering obvious tracks, and stopping for long periods when they hear or see something strange.

Creeping eliminates any *stealth* penalties for movement, but slows travel to half the normal rate, rounded up.

## PUSHING

When time is more important than safety, a party can push. Only the most blatant threats cause the group to stop, and then they get moving as soon as it is dealt with or disappears. Traveling through the Wilderness isn't quiet at this speed, but you'll get through it twice as fast.

Unfortunately, rushing through the broken lands of Marl is tiring work. Every character in a party that pushes will take one shock due to general exhaustion, foot blisters, or the occasional bump and scratch suffered on the trail. This special travel fatigue is cumulative, and cannot be removed until an entire day (24 hours) is spent without strenuous activity.

## TRAVEL TYPES

There are several different ways to travel through the Wilderness. Below, you'll find movement rates listed beside each method of travel. The first number listed is the approximate number of kilometers travelled if the party is on a road or an easy walk through level fields. The second number is the approximate number of kilometers travelled while walking through the variable terrain of the Wilderness.

### Foot Rate: 15/10

Traveling by foot isn't glamorous, but it'll happen more often than most characters will be happy about.

### Horse Rate: 30/25

Horses are by far the most common conveyance in the Wilderness. They can go most anywhere, "fuel" can be obtained in the nearest meadow, and a good horse might even help out in a fight. If the "push" rate is used, a horse carrying an average load (a rider and some gear) takes two fatigue points per day until resting. Attributes for horses can be found in the "Outfitters, Goods, and Services" chapter.

## Motorcycle Rate: 45/35

Motorcycles don't have push rates. They can travel at their top speed for several weeks with no more wear and tear on the engine than usual. A rider only needs to make sure he has enough fuel to get where he's going. They can creep if they wish, but this has little effect on stealth unless magically silenced.

If traveling off-road, the gamemaster should assign a difficulty number to the area and have the rider's character make a *vehicle piloting*: *motorcycle* skill roll every 12 hours of travel (effectively each day with normal rest stops). Every point the skill roll falls short of the DN is read as damage for the bike itself. The gamemaster should describe this as worn shocks, flat tires, broken axles, or whatever seems appropriate for the rider's speed and the area he is traveling. A successful *vehicle mechanic* skill total versus a DN of 8 plus the bike's shock will repair the damage. If the roll is failed, repairs may not be attempted again until the mechanic finds new parts (purchased or salvaged).

## Four-Wheeled Vehicles Rate: Variable

Vehicles can generally travel an average 50 kilometers per hour on decent roads. Unfortunately, there are few such roadways on Marl. It is possible for four-wheeled automobiles to travel off-road, but only in meadows, deserts, beaches, or other unobstructed areas. When they do so, the gamemaster should treat them as described under "Motorcycles," above.

## ROADS

If a party travels only on good roads, use the "push" rate (the second number), but ignore the fatigue penalty. These are rare in the Wilderness, but there are a few.

## RESTING

After a hard day's travel, you're going to need a place to sack out. The Wilderness isn't known for its four-star hotels, so you'll need to know what's safe to lay on and what might try to eat you. In general, a big, flat rock is the best place to unroll your blanket. If there's another one hanging over it, it'll keep the rain off as well. Just make sure that those "rocks" don't have teeth and aren't the jaws of some sneaky

## SAMPLE DNS FOR MOTORCYCLE TRAVEL

Plains	12
Deserts	14
Mountain Paths	18
Open Forest	18
Dense Forest	12
(but at 1/4 normal speed)	

*critter. If a rock isn't available, look for patches of stinkweed. It's soft, it's high enough to hide you, and bugs hate the stuff. Don't let the name scare you off—stinkweed smells just like grass to you and me. Just don't eat it unless dying of chronic halitosis is your idea of being cool.*

## WILDERS

*Anyone who lives too far away from the cities is called a Wilder. There are a lot of decent people who have somehow found a niche in the Wilderness, but there are a lot more wackos.*

*Wilders are rarely found in small, family groups. They're almost always loners or extended communities. Loners are usually mad hermits or somebody who's been chased out of the city — usually for good reason. If they've survived on their own, they're most likely packing something you don't want to mess with. Isolated settlements are likely to be home to a cult or other fringe group outlawed in the cities. Watch out for them too, because anyone who sacrifices the luxuries of mankind probably sacrifices mankind as well. And if any Wilder asks you to dinner, say "no thanks," unless you like taking hot baths with an apple in your mouth.*

## FLORA AND FAUNA

*I'll tell you about the creatures of a particular area as we go. There's no sense telling you about sandsharks while we're talking about the jungle. But no matter how many critters I wind up describing, you should remember one thing: there are so many nasties out here that even an experienced courier like me won't have seen half the things that might come after you.*



*Anything you don't understand, haven't seen before, or can't identify is an enemy, and should be shot if it gets too close. I know that sounds rough, but we're not in the city anymore. The Wilderness is the monster's playground.*

## ENCOUNTERS

Travel in the Wilderness should be dangerous, and attacks by strange beasts and creatures should be fairly common. This doesn't mean that the gamemaster should bombard his player characters with a horde of monsters every time they stop to rest — unless he wants to. Encounters with the creatures described in this book should be strange and mysterious.

## ENCOUNTER LISTS

Each chapter in this book includes a listing of the creatures found in that area and the Encounter Level. This should aid the gamemaster by providing a list that shows how common the various creatures described in the chapter are to the terrain. The gamemaster could also use this list as inspiration if unplanned encounters are needed. Featuring the monster rolled on the chart doesn't mean it simply jumps out of the shadows and starts slashing. Most beasts are intelligent enough to stalk strange prey for a while before attacking, thus learning their habits and preparing for the perfect moment to attack. Therefore, the best strategy is to plan all of the encounters. The chart is simply meant to spark the encounter planning process, not simplify it.

## OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER FREQUENCY RULES

Every four hours a party is in the Wilderness, the gamemaster could have one player make a *party stealth* skill roll. The gamemaster shouldn't tell the player what the roll is for, but he may spend cards and life points on it if he chooses. If the *party stealth* total equals or exceeds the Encounter Level, the group has been quiet enough to avoid any major trouble. If they miss the roll, check the appropriate Encounter Table and add the amount they missed the check by. This should give the gamemaster a creature or event to insert into the adventure whenever it's convenient.

Very stealthy parties should be rewarded

for their efforts. If a group ever exceeds the Encounter Level by more than five, they should spot some indigenous being without being seen themselves. Roll on the Encounter Table as if they missed their roll by one to see who or what they have discovered. If the party is clever enough, they might be able to track the creature to its lair and trap it for food or wait until it leaves and search for loot.

**Example:** *A group of heroes is looking for the mysterious creature known as Silver Eyes in the Pendar Mountains. The Encounter Level of the region is 18. The group gets a party stealth score of 15. They're pretty good, but they've still made enough noise to attract something's attention. The gamemaster figures out the difference between the Encounter Level (18) and the party stealth score (15), and adds it (+3) to a 1d10 roll on the Encounter Chart. He rolls a 5 for a total of 8 — 1d10 granite cats. Bad news!*

*Instead of having the cats charge mindlessly into combat, the gamemaster has them quietly stalk the party for a while instead. Every now and then the heroes hear a noise from the ledges above them, but see nothing. This goes on for a while, building tension and suspense while the group scours the mountains for Silver Eyes. At one point the group must start climbing a cliff face. After a few minutes, only one character is left at the bottom holding a belaying rope for his climbing partner. The granite cats see that one of their prey has become isolated, licks their chops, and bounds down from their perch to attack. The lone hero can now fight the cats or hold on to his friend's belaying rope — but it's doubtful he'll be able to manage both!*

## LOOT

*Okay, so you just had to mess with the steam dragon, and someone managed to kill it. You've already done the hard part, you might as well find the thing's lair and see what it's dragged in there over the years. You'd be surprised how many dumb animals are laying around on bundles of cash, weapons, ammo, and even magic goodies. They kill someone, drag him*

*back to their lair, and eat him — they could care less if he's wearing a money-belt stuffed with greenbacks.*

*Keep in mind that I'm not telling you to go hunting critters on the off-chance its former victims might have been loaded. That violates rule number one — don't go looking for trouble. I'm only saying that if trouble finds you anyway, you might as well see what's in it for you.*

## FINDING LAIRS

Skilled characters can often follow a creature's tracks back to its lair, and might possibly find something valuable within. To find a creature's lair, use the *tracking* skill as described in *MasterBook* on page 108. If the roll is successful, the character is able to find the creature's lair in a reasonable amount of time.

Once the lair is found, the chance of the creature having any treasure depends on its ability to hunt men (the original source of its

treasure), or its own intelligence. Included in the statistics of each monster is a line labeled "Loot," which is the number needed on a single ten-sided die to find treasure in the creature's lair.

If you should roll equal to or beneath the "Loot" number, immediately roll again on the sample "Loot" table included in each of the chapters.

**Example:** *The party has successfully fought the granite cats. They decide to try and seek out the lair of these beasts. Since the party is trying to track the granite cats over rock, the modifier of +10 is added to the base difficulty of 8 to come up with a total of 18. One of the party members with a tracking skill of 12 manages to roll a bonus of +8. Success — the party finds the lair! Granite cats have a 1 in 10 chance to have loot in their lair. Therefore, a roll of one would allow the party to roll on the "Loot" table to see what kind of stuff they could find in the lair.*





## CHAPTER TWO

# THE PENDAR MOUNTAINS

## THE LEGEND OF SILVER EYES

Deep in the shadowy heart of the Pendar Mountains wanders a Demon summoned from another world. The thing hates all living things and rends them to pieces in its great, stony hands. No one knows its name or why it was brought to our world. We locals call the creature Silver Eyes. A short, bloody stranger stumbled into our camp some thirty years ago. We bandaged him up as best we could, and when he was finally able to talk, he told us a strange tale, one that might hint at the origin of Silver Eyes.

The stranger said that most of his people had lived in caves beneath the Pendar Mountains. One day their ancient home began to crumble, catching the group completely by surprise. Only a handful were left, lying bleeding and screaming in the dusty dark. Suddenly, great creatures of earth rose from the rubble and braced the collapsing ceiling. The survivors didn't understand why they had been rescued, but they rushed past the stony sentinels and out of the tunnels forever. Perhaps twenty of them managed to crawl out of that dark hole and found themselves atop a great peak deep in the Pendar Mountains.

The bright sunlight pierced their eyes blind, but still they screamed for joy, for they were alive. Only one of their group, an earthmage named Kulo, wept. He claimed that he had summoned the elemental guardians, but that the price he had to pay was high.

The stranger that told this tale would not finish the story. He collapsed into unconsciousness and never woke again. We never learned the name of his lost city, or even the true name of his people. Beneath his nails, on his clothes, and even trapped in his dirty beard were flecks of pure silver. We knew that he and his brothers must have found a vein of the precious stuff, but he never woke to tell us where it came from. He died the day after we found him, but just



before he went, I heard him mumble “May the world forgive us for what we have unleashed upon it.” Whatever dark deed the earthmage performed, it, like their silver mine and their history, is lost forever. Some think that whatever happened on that mysterious peak, the creature named Silver Eyes was born of it, for that is when the creature first appeared among the Wilders of the Pendars.

— As told by a miner near Sentinel Peak

## THE PENDAR MOUNTAINS

The mountains of the Pendar range are nothing short of awe-inspiring. Snow-capped peaks melt into rocky cliffs here and there, covered in thick brush and dense forest. Some of the slopes are a brilliant red, some translucent green, and some are even black as night. Some are rough as sandpaper and others are smooth as glass. Beyond one peak it's possible to find a hidden valley untouched by Human hands for generations; beyond the next there might be a mining camp full of wide-eyed hopefuls waiting to strike the mother-lode.

## CROSSING THE PENDARS

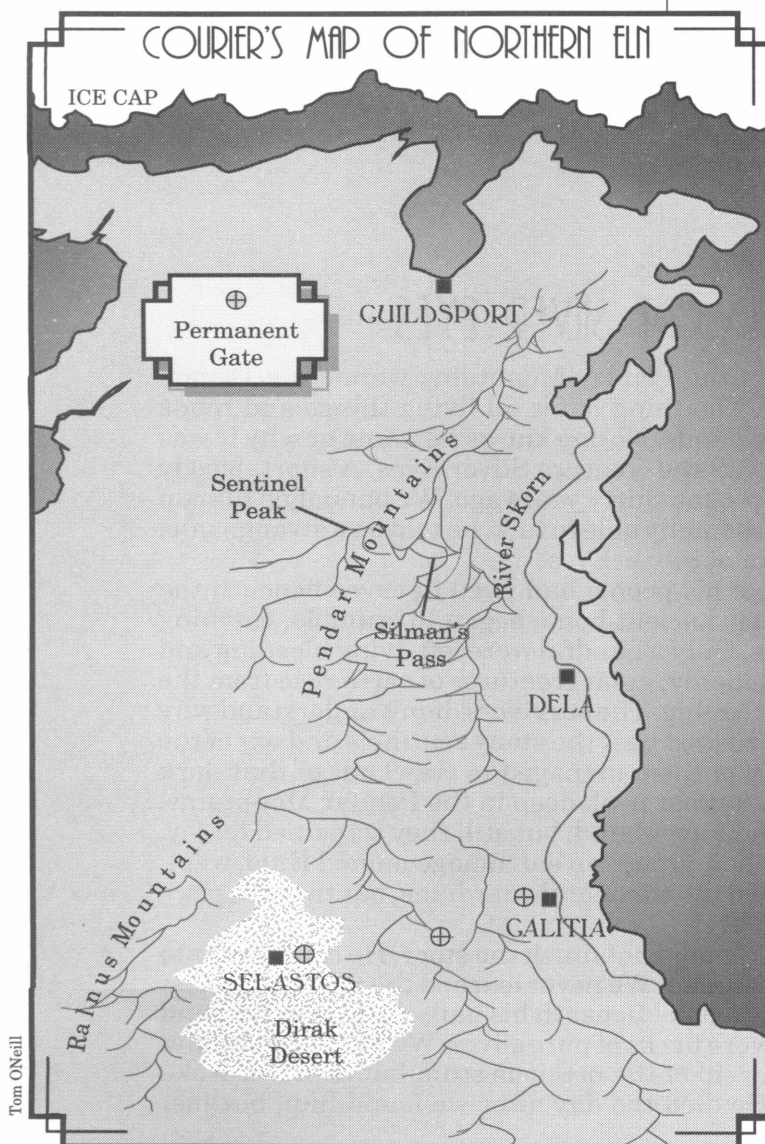
If the party is leaving Galitia for points west, or trying to get to Galitia, they will have to cross the Pendar Mountains. There are only three relatively safe ways to get through these ancient hills: the Galitia-Selastos gate, climbing, or through Silman's Pass.

## THE GALITIA-SELASTOS GATE

*This is by far the quickest and easiest route through the Pendar range, but only a handful of people know where it's at and they're not talking. If you can find the gate, it lets out about a kilometer from Selastos in the Dirak Desert. The other end is rumored to be in an unguarded cave in the foothills of the Pendars. Carts, vehicles, and horses can all move through here with ease.*

*There aren't any guards posted at the gate — that would just attract more attention. Occasionally a big, nasty beast will take up residence in the caves, though, so watch your step.*

Finding the Selastos gate isn't easy. The few people who know about it guard their secret jealously. If the gamemaster wants his group to find the cave that houses the gate, it should be the focus of an entire mini-adventure of its own. The actual site isn't particularly spectacular — travelers





## WOUND LOCATION

1d10	LOCATION
1	Neck*
2-3	Right Arm
4-5	Left Arm
6-7	Left Leg
8-9	Right Leg
0	Special**

\*Characters with *broken* necks are considered *mortally wounded*.

\*\*Special limbs are for Unnaturals who have other appendages. If the character is Human, simply roll again.

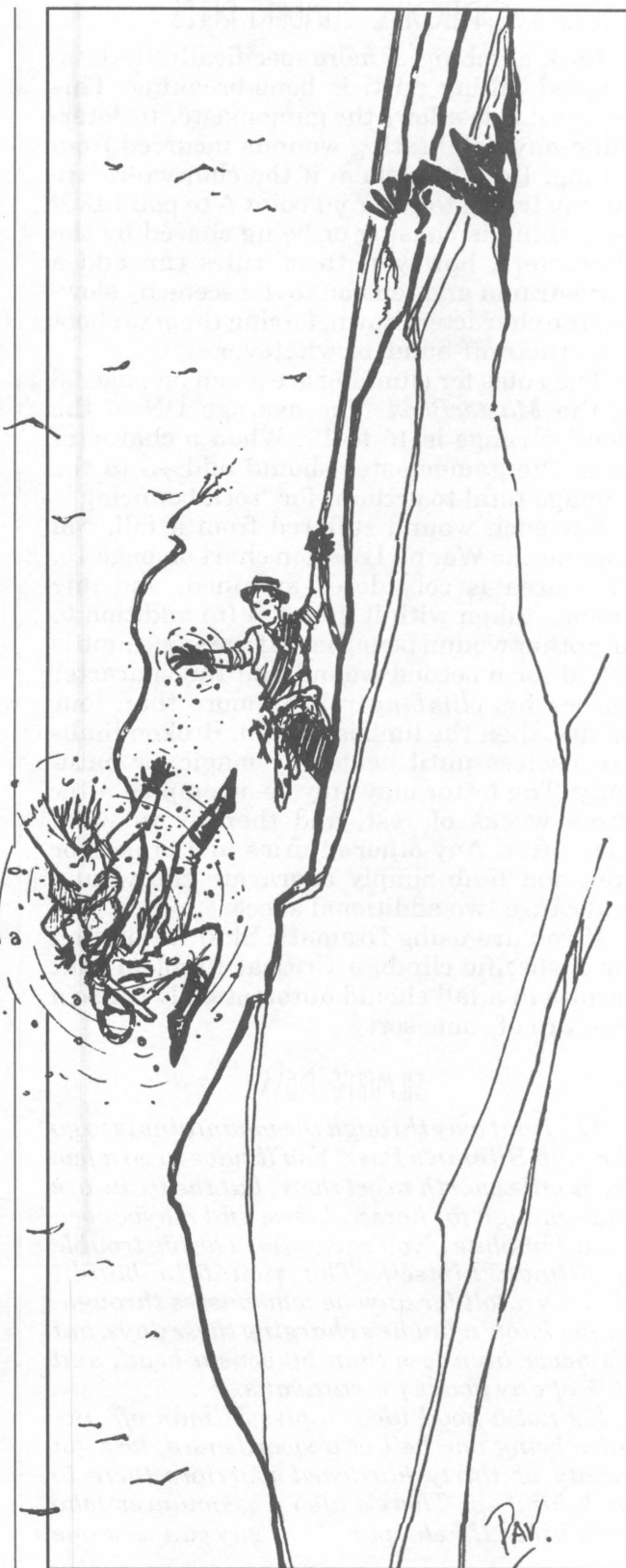
go in, walk a few hundred meters, and then emerge in the Dirak Desert.

The cave makes a great lair for transient creatures, so if you are using the optional encounter rules, characters should make a *party stealth* roll whenever they near it. The Encounter Level for the cave area should be raised by +2.

## CLIMBING

*The Pendar range doesn't have many trails, so bring your climbing gear if you can't find the Selastos gate. And don't even think about bringing a vehicle or even a horse. Ropes, climbing saddles, pitons, and the rest of that stuff you'll need can be bought at any decent outfitter's. When you do have to climb, make sure you're belayed to a friend. He probably won't help you much, but at least you won't have to suffer alone.*

*The most common way to scale a sheer cliff is for the best climber in the group to go first, hammering in spikes as he goes. Every three meters or so, he can tie off his belaying rope to one of the spikes. If he falls, the belay rope will catch him. If you've got enough rope and a good place to stand, another person should hold the other end of the rope instead of tying it to a spike. That way the falling climber gets a little less shock, and the person on belay can hoist him back up to his last position. Another person should carry a rifle and watch for any critters that might start messing with the climber.*



Terry Pavlet

## OPTIONAL CLIMBING RULES

Rock-climbing, or more specifically, the less-favored falling part, is bone-breaking. This optional rule allows the gamemaster to determine any debilitating wounds incurred from falling. Don't use them if the characters are simply trying to get from point A to point B. If something is chasing or being chased by the characters, however, these rules can add a little drama and tension to the scene by slowing the characters down, forcing them to shoot with their off-hand, or whatever.

The rules for climbing are given on page 98 of the *MasterBook*. The average DN of the Pendar range is 15 to 19. When a character falls, the gamemaster should add +3 to the damage total to account for "rock bouncing."

For each wound suffered from a fall, roll once on the Wound Location chart on page 15. This area is considered sprained, and any actions taken with it are at -1 (in addition to any other wound penalties). If the same limb is rolled for a second wound and the character misses his *climbing* roll by more than four points, then the limb is broken. Broken limbs are useless until healed by magic, or naturally. The latter may only be attempted after three weeks of rest, and then every week thereafter. Any other injuries to a broken or sprained limb simply aggravate the wound and cause two additional shock.

If you are using Dramatic Skill Resolution for a specific climb, a Critical Problem that results in a fall should automatically cause a fracture of some sort.

## SILMAN'S PASS

*The final way through the mountains is to go through Silman's Pass. You'll have to go a few extra miles north to get there, but the trails are wide enough for horses, bikes, and maybe even an automobile if you're careful. The big trouble is Silman himself. The mountain bandit charges a toll for anyone who passes through. I don't know what he's charging these days, but it's never been less than 50 vens a head, and 10% of any goods for caravans.*

*It's not a good idea to piss Silman off. Besides being one hell of a swordsman, he's got twenty or thirty hardened warriors there to back him up. There's also a geomancer who calls himself Feldspar. That guy can cast one*

*mean fireball. Still think you can take them out? Okay, they all ride granite cats as well. These things'll rip your throat out just for kicks. Eating you afterwards is optional.*

*All this is moot if you pay your toll. Silman may be a highwayman, but he also knows that if he robs every caravan that comes through the pass, somebody's eventually going to put together a team to take him out. Still, I've heard that a few caravan masters have gotten on his bad side and gone "missing" shortly after passing through the toll house. There's a rumor that Silman feeds these people to the queskworms in Larvae Valley.*

*Nowadays, being a highwayman isn't as lucrative as it once was. Since Silman's Pass isn't exactly the busiest place in the world, the bandit has taken up with some of the crime bosses in Galitia. If that doesn't make you tread with care around this man, then you deserve what's coming to you.*

## NATURAL HAZARDS

*The Pendars have a plethora of tricky plants and other surprises just waiting for an inexperienced explorer. Here are a few of the most common.*

### ACID MOSS

*That funny white stuff you see growing on the side of the cliffs is called acid moss. If you touch it, you're going to lose some flesh. If you eat it, well, let's just say you better have a glass toilet nearby. Other than that, there's only two ways this stuff can really be dangerous to you. The first way is a real bane to mountain climbers. If you throw a grappling hook up the cliff and part of your rope lies over some acid moss, get ready for some flying lessons. The other way acid moss will get you is if you should happen to fall in a bed of the stuff. I've heard a few climbers have fallen into acid moss beds and gotten so busted up they couldn't crawl out. I'll leave the gory details to your imagination.*

*I've heard some interesting stories about this moss. There was a man down Galitia way who got on the bad side of the mob. One morning, this man woke up with no face thanks to a moss mash. Not a pretty picture.*

Acid moss causes a single shock point to anything it comes in contact with except rock





Kar Waller

or glass. This shock will not heal as normal, but instead goes away at the rate of one per day. Acid moss will eat through one inch of thick rope in 2 rounds.

Acid beds have a "Loot" value of 2.

## BREAKAWAY TREES

*A lot of plants grow on the eastern Pendar slopes. Winds blow topsoil up the mountain and a lot of it gets caught in the niches, cracks, and crevices of the cliffs. Occasionally, some sort of plant will take root there. One such plant is the breakaway tree. If you grab hold of it, it'll seem like a good hand-hold for climbing. Then, when you're putting all your weight on it, the thing folds like a trapdoor and you go plummeting to your doom. Tiny arachnids, called blood spiders, live in the branches of the breakaway tree. When something falls, they scurry down to it and soak themselves in the blood. Then they climb back up to the tree to feast — the breakaway soaking up whatever the spiders miss. I imagine such a peculiar diet means the tree lives like other plants most of the time, blood just seems to be 'dessert.'*

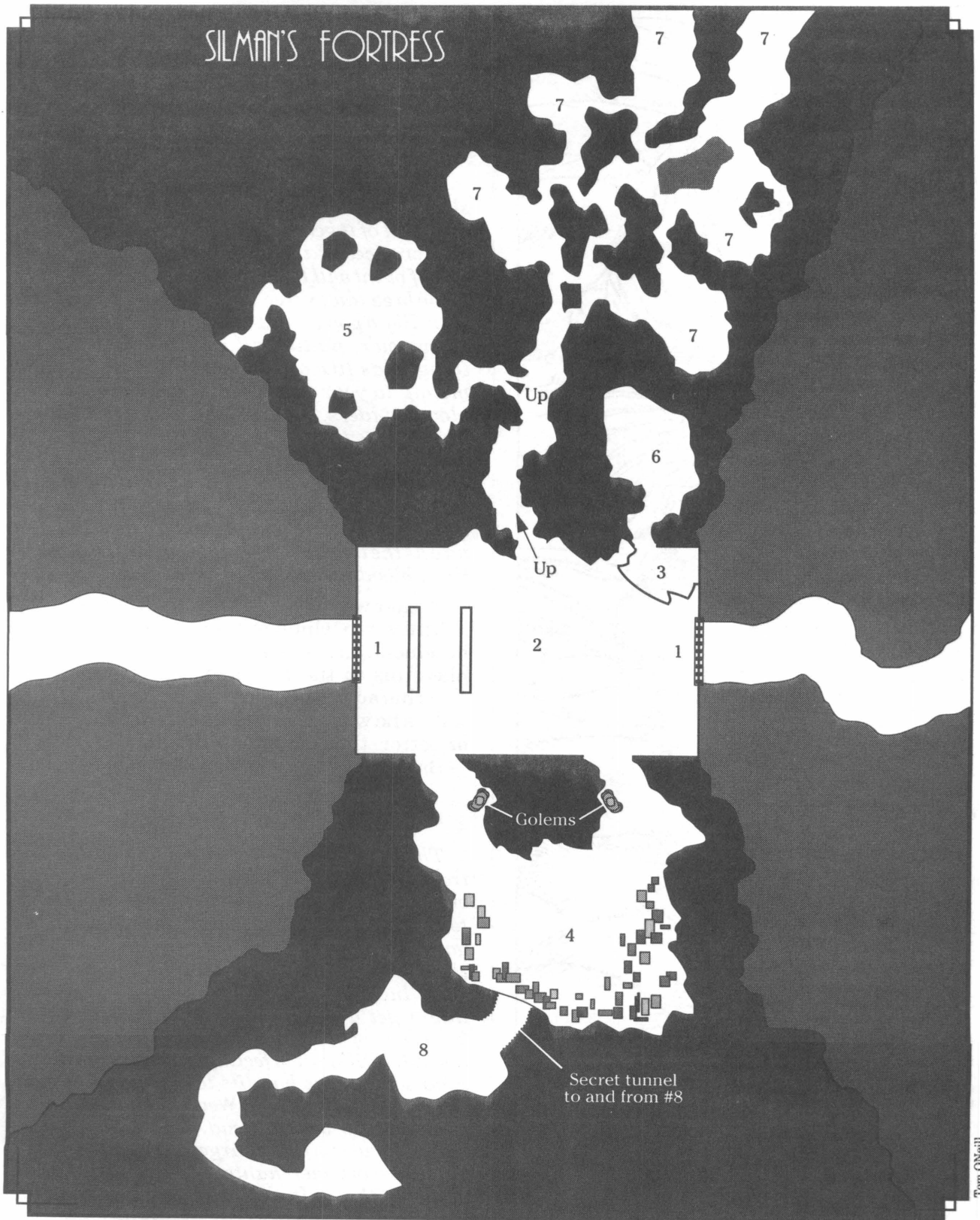
Breakaway trees have a *trick* score of 14. Whenever a climber tries to use one as a handhold, the tree generates a total and applies this to the character's *willpower* skill. The character shouldn't get an active defense unless he was expecting it. On a *setback* result or better, the character will fall.

Breakaway trees have a "Loot" value of 1.

## SILMAN'S FORTRESS

*The bandit Gerthos Silman has built a fortress around the only known pass in the northern Pendar range. There he charges a variable toll on anyone who wishes to pass through his gates. Silman bases his rate on what he thinks the travelers can pay. Those who look down on their luck usually pay around 10 vens, but might get a free meal if Silman likes them. Travelers of modest wealth pay around 50 vens a head. If Silman is feeling generous, he might send some of his bandits to escort a group for the next kilometer or so. Wealthy characters are charged 100 vens a head. Caravans are assessed for worth and charged 10%. Silman will rarely escort merchants — he doesn't really care for them. If the price is right and the*





Tom O'Neill



merchants haven't aggravated him, however, he might change his mind.

On occasion, someone will try to cheat the warlord, or perhaps just insult him. Either way, he and Feldspar will slip out later and attempt to quietly kidnap the offender. Then they take him back to the fortress, gather the gang, and head down to Larvae Valley (see below).

The brigand's fortress and even part of the pass were carved out by Feldspar's *earthheater* spell. The demon face carved on either side of the keep is none other than Silver Eye's itself. The statue's eyes are made of actual silver. The bandits know the legend of Silver Eyes, and they swear that he is real, but they know little else. Feldspar knows a bit more, but getting him to talk is difficult.

**1. Portcullis:** The entrance and exit portcullis of the fortress form the teeth of the giant, leering demon called Silver Eyes. Each is made of iron and has a Toughness of 32, with a weight value of 13 (400 pounds).

**2. Great Hall:** This large chamber serves as the bandit's main feasting hall. They spend most of the day hunting or patrolling the mountains, and then spend the night here eating and drinking. On any given night, 2-20 of the bandits will be drunk and passed out in the Great Hall after midnight. The rest usually manage to stagger back to their own quarters. Silman used to post guards, but has had little reason to do so in the last few years. If he feels threatened, he may change this policy. In this case, one bandit guards the entrance to the lairs, and the other hides amongst the pillows on top of Silman's "throne."

Silman has two mammoth tables made from stout oak in the center of the room. The bandits eat and celebrate here, so there are scores of dirty plates, greasy leftovers, and shards of broken mugs everywhere. The tables effectively block the passage of any kind of vehicle or cart trying to get through the toll house. Silman keeps them this way until a visitor's toll has been paid. Only then will he order his bandits to move the tables out of the way. Each table has a mass value of 14 (around 600 pounds), so it normally takes at least four able-bodied persons to move them.

**3. Silman's "Throne":** The bandit king overlooks his great hall from this raised plat-

form, nearly two meters above the floor. Atop it is a great chair carved of stone, which can rotate about to face any part of the hall. The back of the chair bears the likeness of Silver Eyes, with actual silver inlaid. The throne and the chair around it are covered in soft, satin pillows.

The throne has a secret weapon built into it. If Silman presses hidden buttons on the underside of each arm, two glass spheres filled with *thunder* potions shoot out to a range of 4 or 7 meters (depending on which button is pressed first). These ranges are preset, and cannot be changed unless the springs inside are tampered with.

**4. Wares:** The band's food and water, along with any other stolen or confiscated wares, are kept in this large chamber. Silman's men catch game animals in the Pendar mountains for meat, but vegetables, liquor, and other essentials must be taken as barter from passing caravans. Feldspar, Silman's wizard companion, has created two stone golems and posted them at either entrance to this room. They will activate automatically if a stranger enters the room (the wizard has "introduced" them to all the bandits), or if the command words "iron pyrite" are spoken. Should anyone activate the golems by using the command words, they will be able to control them as well. Only Silman and Feldspar know the command phrase.

## STONE GOLEM

### AGILITY 11

Climbing 12, dodge 12, maneuver 12, unarmed combat 15

### DEXTERITY 7

### ENDURANCE 15

### STRENGTH 15

### TOUGHNESS 20

### INTELLECT 6

Deduction 7, perception 7

### MIND 5

### CONFIDENCE 13

Willpower 18

### CHARISMA 4

Life Points: 0

**Roleplaying Notes:** These are bargain basement golems. They've been told to beat the living hell out of any strangers that wander into this area. They are completely fear-





Jaime Lombardo & Ron Hill

less, but can hardly tell an intruder from a bandit who parts his hair on a different side. The brigands hate these things — they're always making a mistake and clobbering the people they're supposed to recognize.

**5. Cat's Lair:** The bandits' 18 granite cats live in this cave situated high above the rest of the keep. It is open to the outside so the cats can come and go as they please. This poses some risk of infiltration, but Silman believes the cats can deal with anyone that tries to creep through their lair. Granite cats hunt by day, so there are usually only 1-10 present from dawn to dusk. By night, the entire pride is usually lying about, lazily consuming their latest kill.

**6. Silman's Lair:** The bandit king Gerthos Silman lives in this dim chamber. The southern half of the room is covered in plush blankets and satin pillows. Silman usually has two or three female bandits living with him as well. He keeps a strongbox of money hidden in one of these pillows. The amount inside varies with the season, though it usually contains 1,000–10,000 vens.

## GERTHOS SILMAN, BANDIT KING

### AGILITY 10

Acrobatics 11, beast riding: granite cat 15, climbing 13, dodge 16, long jumping 11, maneuver 12, melee combat 15 (saber 20), melee parry 13 (saber 18), stealth 12, unarmed combat 11

### DEXTERITY 11

Fire combat 12, lock picking 12, missile weapons 12 (crossbow 14), thrown weapons 13

### ENDURANCE 11

Resist shock 13

### STRENGTH 10

### TOUGHNESS 11

### INTELLECT 9

Camouflage 10, deduction 10, perception 11, tracking 10, trick 15

### MIND 9

Business 10

### CONFIDENCE 11

Gambling 13, intimidation 13, survival: mountains 14, willpower 13

### CHARISMA 10

Charm 11, disguise 13, persuasion 11, taunt 12

## Life Points: 5

**Roleplaying Notes:** Gerthos Silman was raised in the Pendar mountains by his prospecting father. When the elder Silman was killed by a steam dragon, Gerthos escaped and was forced to survive on his own. He did so, mostly by infiltrating other prospecting camps in the area and stealing as much as he could before getting thrown out. Some of the things that happened to him in these camps seem to have left a bad impression on Silman. Eventually, he began to gather a few followers, and he and his men became full-time mountain raiders. One of these men was an earthmage who called himself Feldspar. The ingenious Silman realized the potential profit they could make if there was a pass between the Pendar Mountains, and Feldspar agreed. The wizard used his powerful *earthhealer* spell to carve out and create the fortress. Silman is the wily leader of the group; Feldspar is the enforcer. To supplement his income, Silman also works with the organized crime mobs of various cities to supply alcohol and other drugs to mining camps.

Gerthos has a soft heart for orphans and those he considers victims. He has little liking for merchants or wealthy persons, and enjoys charging them outrageous amounts for using his pass. Silman also seems to despise miners because of his earlier experiences with them.

**Equipment:** Crossbow, range 3-10/100/200/300, damage 17; 16 bolts; 4 runebolts (+1 action and effect totals); magical saber (+3 effect); leather armor; .44 Karr Automatic, damage value 20, ammo 6; *potion of power*.

**7. Bandit Lairs:** These twisting tunnels form the bandits' personal quarters. Glowing runes bathe the tunnels in eerie light, and might hint at traps to intruders, though there are none. There are 34 bandits in Silman's stronghold. Most are survivors of caravans lost to the creatures of the mountains and taken in by Silman. There are bandits of both sexes in the lair, but Silman has forbidden them to have children. Publicly, he says children would make the fortress weak. In truth, Silman knows his subjects would make terrible parents, and he doesn't want to see others suffer the same abuses he suffered as a child.

All of the bandits have learned how to ride the granite cats, but there are only enough

animals for 18 of them to mount up at any one time.

## STANDARD MOUNTAIN BANDIT

### AGILITY 9

Beast riding: granite cat 10, climbing 11, long jumping 10, maneuver 10, melee combat 9 (cutlass 12), melee parry 9 (cutlass 12), stealth 11, unarmed combat 10, unarmed parry 10

### DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 10 (shotgun 12), missile weapons 9 (bow 11)

### ENDURANCE 9

### STRENGTH 9

### TOUGHNESS 10

### INTELLECT 7

Camouflage 8, perception 8, tracking 8, trick 8

### MIND 6

### CONFIDENCE 8

Gambling 9, intimidation 9, survival: mountains 10

### CHARISMA 6

### Life Points: 2

### Alignment: None

**Equipment:** Bow, range 3-10/40/100/150, damage 14; 20 arrows; Gelvash "Thunder" Shotgun, damage 21, ammo 2; cutlass, damage 15; leather armor

**Roleplaying Notes:** Silman's bandits are all hardened warriors made even tougher by the rigors of life in the Pendar Mountains. Some have more skill in *fire combat* than listed above, but Silman encourages quieter weapons such as bows and crossbows. If necessary, the bandits will use their shotguns, but this is only as a last resort.

**8. Feldspar's Lair:** Gerthos' best friend is an earthmage who calls himself "Feldspar." He lives in this elevated chamber secluded some fifty yards away from the fortress. The entrance to his cave is covered in stone, which will open up and let anyone through should they speak the word "onyx." The room is filled with dozens of rocks and geodes, all of different colors, shapes, and sizes. Feldspar practices his geomancy on these stones, one of which is a lump of solid gold worth 300 vens. There is also a 7 in 10 chance that Feldspar's grimoire is lying about the room as well.

A secret tunnel, hidden behind a boulder at his end and behind a pile of empty boxes at the other, provides him with a quick path to the





fortress. The bandits know Feldspar has a secret entrance in the warehouse, but have never bothered to find out where. Most just think he walks through the earth itself.

## "FELDSPAR"

### AGILITY 8

Beast riding: granite cat 10, climbing 9, stealth 9

### DEXTERITY 9

### ENDURANCE 8

### STRENGTH 8

### TOUGHNESS 9

### INTELLECT 11

Apportation: elemental 14, cantrips 13, deduction 13, first aid 12, perception 13, science: geology 14, trick 13

### MIND 11

Conjuration: elemental 14

### CHARISMA 8

Summoning 11

### CONFIDENCE 9

Alteration: elemental 13, survival: mountains 11

**Life Points:** 4

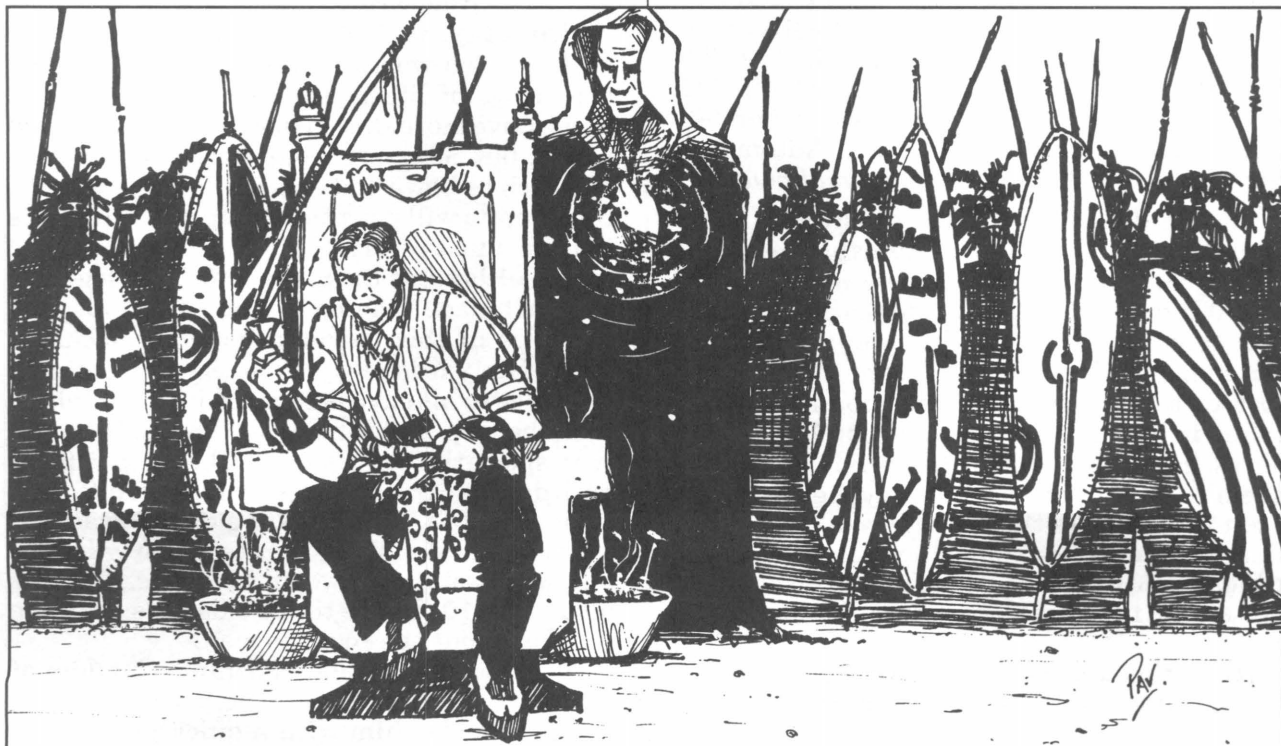
**Alignment:** None

**Arcane Knowledges:** Earth 4, air 2, fire 1, water 1

**Spells:** *Acid bath*, *stone bullet* (as *bullet spell* with *apportation: elemental*), *animate stone golem* (with *conjuration: elemental*), *control earth golem* (with *conjuration: elemental*), *fireball*, *fingers of earth* (as *plant cuffs* with *alteration: elemental*; difficulty is 23; earth has Toughness 14), *wall of air*, *windstorm*, *earth eater*.

**Background:** Feldspar is unusually tall for a Human, suggesting that at least one of his parents was an Unnatural. No one knows for sure, because the wizard never speaks about his past. He and Gerthos met under ironic circumstances — they were both about to ambush a passing caravan. The ensuing fight forced them to ally. Since then, the bandits have been the closest of friends.

No one knows where Feldspar comes from, or why someone with his potential chooses to live with a group of bandits in the Pendar Mountains. When not riding with Silman, Feldspar spends much of his time on solitary pilgrimages, looking for rare stones. He is also trying to find out more about the creature known as "Silver Eyes," but has kept this quest private for some strange reason.



Terry Pavlet

## LARVAE VALLEY

*One of the weirdest places in the Pendar Mountains has to be Larvae Valley. I'm sure you've heard of queskworms — well, this is the place where a lot of the little suckers grow up. I don't think a lot of people know about them — if they did, they'd probably come and wipe 'em out.*

*The bandit king, Gerthos Silman, definitely knows about Larvae Valley. He and his goons like to throw people in there from time to time. If you can't pay your toll, or maybe just because you piss the bandit king off, the word is you're worm-bait.*

*I don't know how many queskworm larvae live here, but there are enough holes to hide fifty or more. You probably won't see them unless you go down in the valley — I think they only come out when they hear something moving around. These things are called larvae, but they're still as big as a house. Plus, if there are babies, there's got to be a momma creepin' around somewhere. Maybe several.*

*How do you survive getting thrown into Larvae Valley? You probably won't. I've heard that some of the tunnels lead to strange places beneath the mountains — places the queskworms can't follow. That's probably just wishful thinking, though.*

There are 2–20 immature queskworms living in the caves of this valley at any given time. When they hear commotion in the canyon floor, they crawl out of their caves to eat it, sometimes fighting each other for the privilege.

One to ten mother queskworms are within “earshot” of Larvae Valley. Gunfire, running, or other loud noises or vibrations will bring them crawling, each one arriving 2–20 rounds after becoming alerted. If the noise comes from the valley, the mother queskworms will burst through one of the tunnels to attack. If the noise comes from the valley rim, the worms will burrow up to the nearest available point and attack from there.

**1. Worm Holes:** Over fifty of these tunnels have been bored into the valley floor and walls. Most of the tunnels lead back into each other in an endless maze of spirals. A few lead out of the area, though the queskworms won't venture far from their home until fully mature. There are also rumored to be some tunnels

## EARTHEATER

**Skill:** *Apportation: elemental*

**Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge:** *Earth*

**Difficulty Number:** 13

**Feedback:** 13

**Effect Value:** 17 (1 ton)

**Range:** 8 (40 meters)

**Speed:** 1

**Duration:** 5

**Cast Time:** 4 (6 seconds)

**Modifiers:**

Component: A handful of earth.

Gestures: To move material, the caster throws the component in the direction it should go. To shape material, he molds the earth in his hands as if it were putty.

*Eartheater* moves rock, stone, and earth from one point to another. With a little practice, the caster can also use the spell to mold earth into most any basic shape. This is handy for making simple statues of stone, forming a hasty wall, or tunneling out tons of earth. The geomancer Feldspar used this spell to create Silman's Pass and the bandit fortress.

Material moved by this spell crawls up to 40 meters away in 25 seconds. Each casting can move or shape one ton of rock or earth. Raw metal ore can be moved and shaped as well, but refined ore cannot. This means the spell cannot affect tools, armor, weapons, or any other metal that has already been worked into other forms.

that lead to other places — strange places far beneath the surface of the mountain.

**2. Pond:** Whenever Silman and his men bring someone to Larvae Valley, they push them into this deep pond. The bed of the pond is extremely solid rock that the larvae cannot break through from below. Unfortunately, a victim's initial splash into the water and any swimming motions vibrate the bedrock like a dinner bell. Anytime someone falls into the pond, 2–20 queskworms are alerted and start crawling for their meal, each one arriving 1–10 rounds later. After this first wave has arrived, the rest of the brood (up to 20) will

begin to respond, one more arriving every round thereafter.

**3. Hanging Tree:** This tree looks like it's about to topple off the side of the ledge, but in truth, it's anchored in solid stone. The bandits keep a rope hidden beneath the overhanging roots — a precaution in case a victim should somehow take someone with him when thrown over the side.

## QUESKWORM (LARVAL STAGE)

### AGILITY 7

Unarmed combat 8

### DEXTERITY 4

### ENDURANCE 18

### STRENGTH 18

### TOUGHNESS 18 (22)

### INTELLECT 3

Perception 10, tracking 7, trick 5

### MIND 3

### CONFIDENCE 3

Intimidation 16, survival: desert 6, willpower 12

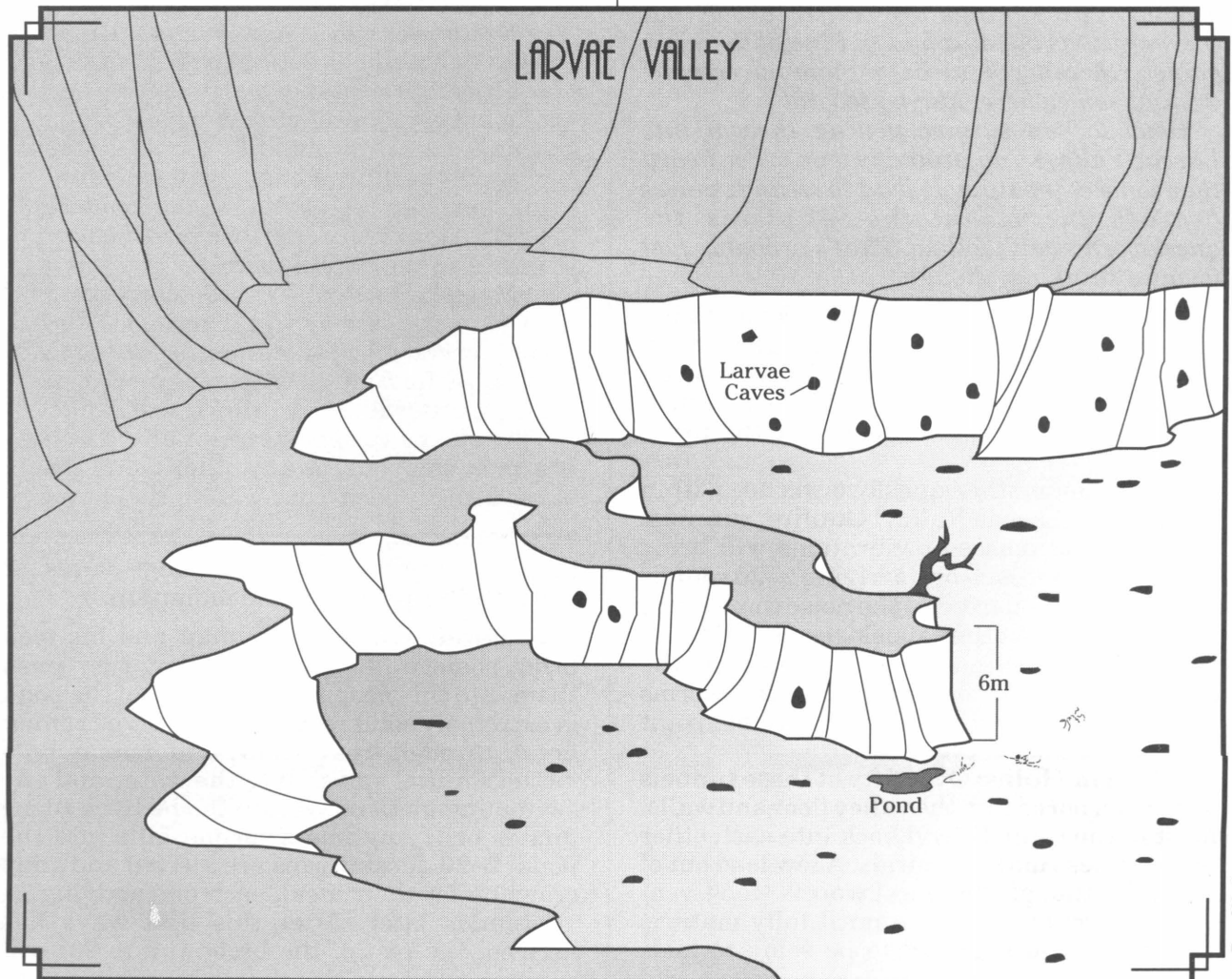
### CHARISMA 1

### Life Points: 1

**Natural Tools:** Carapace, armor value TOU+4/22; mandibles, damage value STR+2/20; crushing attack, damage value STR +5/23

## MINING CAMPS

*Diamonds, emeralds, gold, silver, and other precious metals and gems can be found deep in the Pendar Mountains. Those that have the wherewithal to survive the experience, and a little luck, are set for life. Finding valuable gems or metals is tricky. Most miners can cast*



Tom O'Neill





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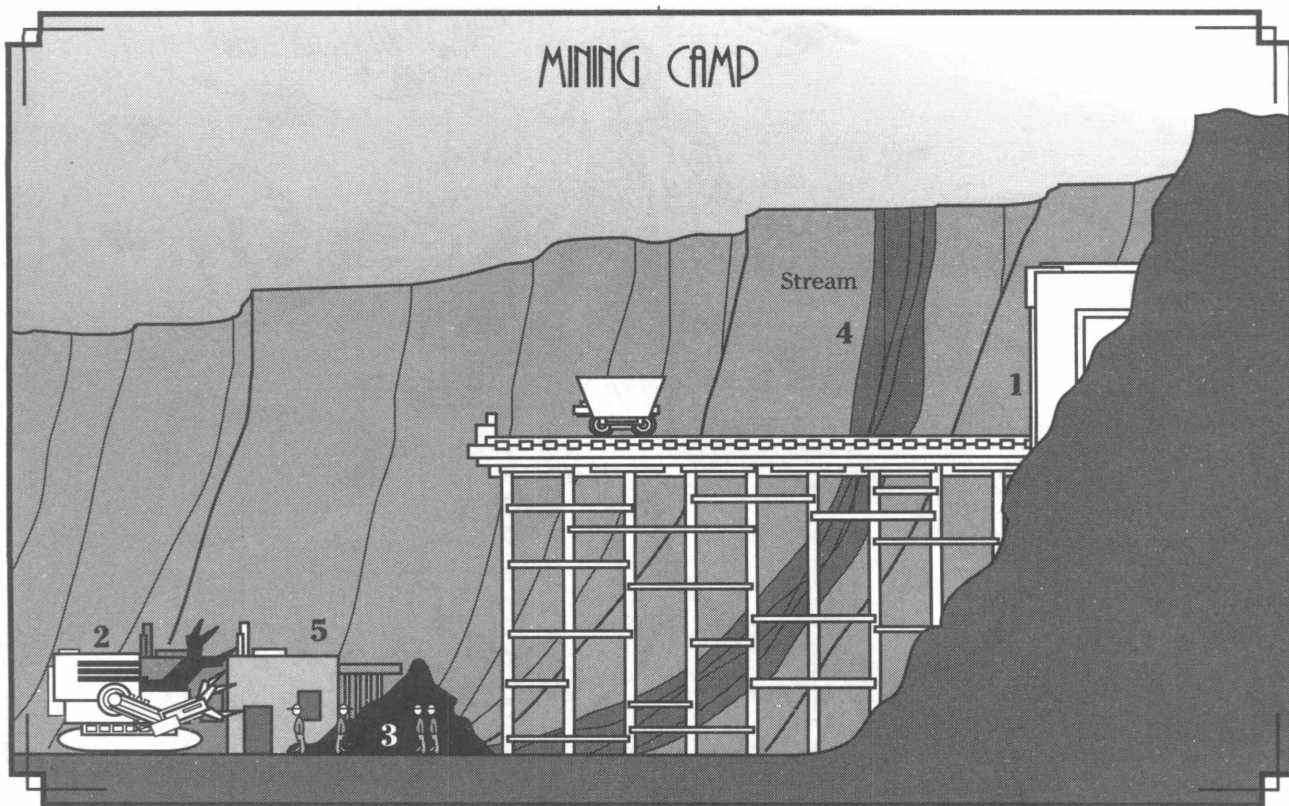
simple cantrips to find different types of lodes, but the spell is only attuned to one thing at a time — you'll walk right over gold if you're looking for diamonds.

And if you do get lucky enough to find something, you've still got to get it out. Most lodes are buried beneath a few hundred thousand tons of rock and earth. Picks and shovels might get you to the goods, but more likely, you'll need some fancy magic. With the trouble in finding the stuff and getting at it, you'd think there would be a lot of wizards hanging out in the mining camps. Truth is, most wizards could care less about striking gold, especially in the Pendar where they're just as likely to get eaten as they are to get rich. I guess most of the good mages are busy working on spells and magic toys in the city. They might head into the hills occasionally to fund their experiments, but I've never seen anybody with any real talent hanging out in the mining camps. Don't get me wrong, most miners have a little bit of magic, but nothing really earth-shattering — if you'll pardon the pun.

## TYPICAL LARGE MINING CAMP

The smaller mining camps, such as Pete's Peak and Adler's Mine, have anywhere from ten to fifteen families. The people in the community take turns picking out rock in the mine itself, sorting through the rubble, hunting for game, looking out for rampaging monsters, and generally trying to survive. Everyone carries at least a pistol to protect themselves from things that might come out of the mine or the area around them. Lookouts usually carry rifles. Mining camps are a close knit group by sheer necessity. That's not to say there aren't rivalries within one, but these will be forgotten if an outsider sticks his nose where it doesn't belong. And if you harm one person in the settlement, you can bet the rest will come looking for payback.

**1. Mine Entrance:** Mines can extend for several thousand meters beneath the earth, though most are usually only a few hundred meters long. The miners pick out rock from the walls, then mule-teams cart it up to the conveyor belt. Miners always look for the



Tom O'Neill

“mother lode,” a thick vein that will make the whole community rich, but they usually settle for the few grams of dust that can be culled from the sorting piles.

All mines have gates across them that can be locked at night. There’s no telling what might come creeping out of these deep holes when the miners aren’t about.

**2. Crusher:** Two spinning rods of steel pulverize large chunks of rock into smaller pieces. The debris then falls out the sides and bottom into the sorting pile. Most crushers are powered by simple elemental magic. If anyone should happen to fall into this thing, don’t bother rolling for damage — it’s time to make a new character.

**3. Sorting Pile:** Five to six people are usually combing through these rocks looking for flecks of silver, diamonds, or any other valuable minerals. When found, these are given to the foreman of the village for collection. When the foreman has enough ore collected (usually around 400 vens per month), he heads to Galitia to sell it and bring back supplies for the rest of the community. The rest of the rubble is loaded into mule carts and eventu-

ally thrown over a tall cliff somewhere.

**4. Stream:** Good mining sites have a mountain stream running through them. Besides providing water and perhaps power for a mill, some of the miners can pan for gold.

**5. Shacks:** Miners usually live in ramshackle huts that can be taken down and reassembled when the camp moves to a new location. Most families have two adults and one or two children. Children in mining camps begin working from the time they can walk.

## STANDARD MINER

### AGILITY 7

Beast riding: mule 8, climbing 9, melee combat 9, melee parry 8, stealth 8

### DEXTERITY 7

Fire combat 8

### ENDURANCE 10

Resist shock 11

### STRENGTH 10

Lifting 11

### TOUGHNESS 11

### INTELLECT 7

Demolitions 8, first aid 8, perception 8, tracking 8

## MIND 7

Business 10 (foreman only), scholar: geology 8

## CONFIDENCE 6

Gambling 8, survival: mountains 8

## CHARISMA 5

Taunt 7

## Life Points: 1

**Equipment:** Pick, damage value STR+6/16, -3 to user's *melee parry*; Gelvash .38 pistol, range 3-10/25/40/140, damage value 17. Look-outs carry Guardian rifles, range 5-20/75/200/300, damage value 22. Other miners usually have one in their shack for hunting.

**Background:** Most of the miners in the Pendar region came to escape something or someone in Galitia or Selastos. Many are suspicious of outsiders, and might think a visitor is there to collect on an old debt or pay back something from their past. Miners have been "eliminated" often enough to make this a real fear for those who have guilty consciences.

There are also a few mining camps that can trace their origins back to some minor cults from the first Godwar. Because of this, these mining camps tend to be set up as walled camps or forts. The miners from these camps dislike any contact from the outside world. As a result, these camps are fairly self-sufficient. If they do have to garner supplies from the outside world, the cult miners generally set up

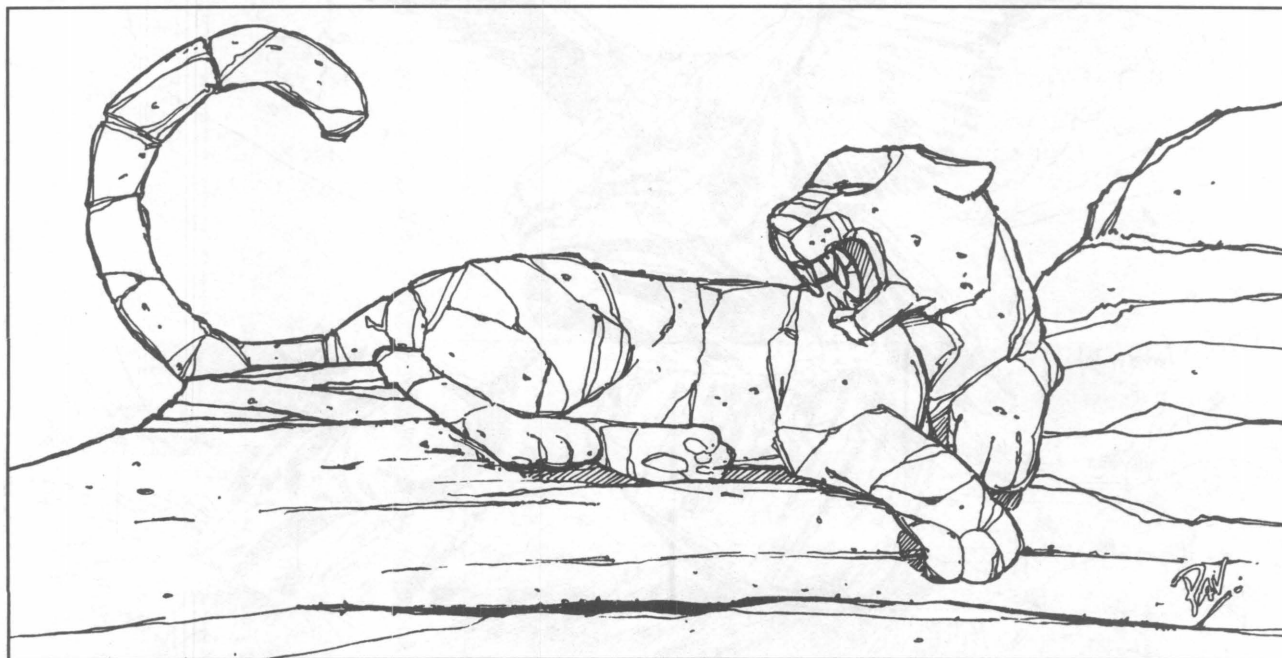
some kind of schedule with a trader. When the trader comes with the needed supplies, the miners reluctantly come out from behind their walls to do business. Undoubtedly, these miners have many secrets to hide from the outside world.

## CRITTERS

*The Pendar Mountains are home to a number of beasts and Unnaturals. Most will try to eat you, some might hunt you out of boredom, and a few might even help you out if you know how to approach them. Everybody knows what a queskworm and a slashtor is, so I won't explain those again (see The World of Bloodshadows, pages 40 and 43). I'll just tell you about the stuff you never even knew existed.*

## GRANITE CATS

*There are a number of large cats preying in the mountains, but the high granite slopes of the Pendars are home to one of the sneakiest and deadliest felines in Marl. Granite cats are so named because they blend into the gray walls, making them almost invisible. If you're up in the high mountains where the granite runs, it's a good idea to have a mage get a detect life spell up. That way part of the slope won't reach out and rake your face off.*



Terry Pavlet



Granite cats also have the uncanny ability to perch on the narrowest ledges. Their strong claws can carry them up anything but a completely vertical slope. They like to play with string just like their domesticated cousins, only in their case, the string is often a rock climber's rope. If something starts playing your belay cord like a guitar, it's time to look for a good handhold.

The bandit king Silman somehow found a way to harness these creatures a few years ago. I don't know if he uses magic or if he's just real good with animals. Regardless, now he and his entire band ride these beasts when hunting game or tracking intruders that somehow bypass his toll-house.

## GRANITE CAT

### AGILITY 13

Acrobatics 16, climbing 17, long jumping 15, maneuver 15, running 15, stealth 16 (19 if stationary near rock walls), unarmed combat 15, unarmed parry 15

### DEXTERITY 11

### ENDURANCE 13

Resist shock 15

### STRENGTH 14

### TOUGHNESS 13

### INTELLECT 4

Perception: smell 14

### MIND 3

### CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 13

### CHARISMA 7

Life Points: 1-2

Loot: 1 in 10

**Natural Tools:** Claws, damage value STR+3/17; teeth damage value STR +1/ 15

## ROCKS

Dime novelists say that "rocs" are giant birds that like to eat people, but more often wind up carrying some dim-wit hero around on their ankles, blissfully unaware that the schmuck is even there. Don't believe everything you read. If "rocs" exist, they don't have a lot in common with the "rocks" of the Pendar Mountains.

Real rocks are giant birds, and they certainly like to eat people, but that's where the similarity ends. These things pick up a half-ton boulder, then fly around until they see some unsuspecting critter to drop it on. If the rock hits, the prey is either dead or stunned out of its



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mind, so the bird drops down to finish it off with its talons. It's gooey, but it's good. Rocks can have wingspans up to 20 meters. Their favorite prey are young queskworms. (And if you can't figure out how rocks got their name, you probably shouldn't be out in the Wilderness.)

When you see a rock headed your way, your best bet is to hide. Even a stout tree might not protect you from a half-ton boulder, but if the rock can't see you, he probably won't drop his load.

I know at least two mages in Galitia that'll pay 1000 vens for rock eggs, but trust me, there's easier ways to earn a living.

## ROCK

### AGILITY 12

Flight 13, maneuver 13, stealth 14 (gliding 16), unarmed combat 13

### DEXTERITY 14

Missile weapons 14 (boulder dropping 18)

### ENDURANCE 16

### STRENGTH 22

### TOUGHNESS 18

### INTELLECT 2

Perception 11

### MIND 2

### CONFIDENCE 13

Intimidation 16

### CHARISMA 6

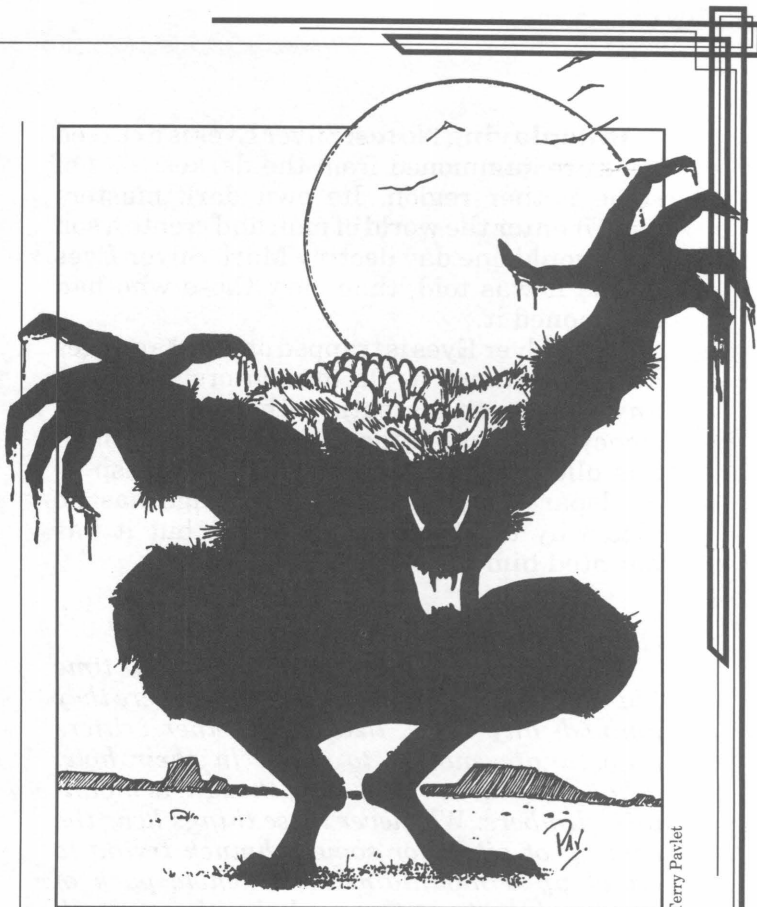
Life Points: 1

Loot: 3 in 10

**Natural Tools:** Talons, damage value STR+6/ 28; beak, damage value STR+4/26. Boulders have a mass value of 13 (400 pounds), and are usually dropped from a height of about 250 meters (value 12). Anyone hit by one thus takes a damage value 25 plus bonus (minimum of +1) hit. A standard-sized boulder is large enough to hit two people if they are standing side by side. Note that unless a target sees the boulder coming, it is *completely surprised*, thereby raising the damage value by +3.

## SILVER EYES

The Demon called Silver Eyes is a legend spoken of only in quiet whispers in the Pendar Mountains. If the myths are true, the thing has skin of stone and long arms that end in terrible, oversized talons. A few miners claim to have



seen the thing over the years, but none have been foolish enough to mess with it. Occasionally a settlement or mining camp is found massacred, the inhabitants torn to pieces. This is said to be the work of Silver Eyes, but no one really knows for sure.

## SILVER EYES

### AGILITY 16

Climbing 18, maneuver 17, stealth 17, unarmed combat 19

### DEXTERITY 10

### ENDURANCE 18

### STRENGTH 23

### TOUGHNESS 21

### INTELLECT 13

Perception 15, tracking 14, trick 14

### MIND 11

### CONFIDENCE 12

Intimidation 21, willpower 16

### CHARISMA 5

Life Points: 5

Loot: 4 in 10

**Natural Equipment:** Stony hide, armor value TOU+3/24; fists of stone, damage value STR+1/24.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Silver Eyes is a cursed creature summoned from the darkest pits of some nether region. Its own dark masters bade it enter the world of man and create a son that would one day destroy Marl. Silver Eyes did as it was told, then slew those who had summoned it.

Now Silver Eyes is trapped on Marl and sees all living things as its tormentors. He slays any that cross his path with merciless efficiency. There is only one being that the Demon has allowed to escape its crushing grasp — Feldspar the geomancer. The mage has no idea why the thing let him live, but it has haunted him ever since.

## SKEETHARKS

*These little Demons spend most of their time hiding in small niches in cliff faces. There they ambush any birds, lizards, or other critters unfortunate enough to crawl in their hole. What skeetharks really love, though, is mountain climbers. Whenever these things hear the spiking of pitons or some schmuck trying to crawl up a mountainside, a whole pack of skeetharks get together and give the guy hell. I've heard of skeetharks cutting ropes, starting avalanches, and even taking a leak on some guy's head. They always try not to let you see them, but if more than half your party tumbles to their doom, you can probably figure they're around.*

*The skeetharks' natural enemy is the granite cat, who thinks the little pests make a wonderful snack.*

## SKEETHARK

### AGILITY 13

Acrobatics 16, climbing 16, dodge 14, long jumping 14, maneuver 15, stealth 14, unarmed combat 14

### DEXTERITY 11

Thrown weapons 13 (rocks 15)

### ENDURANCE 18

### STRENGTH 5

### TOUGHNESS 10

### INTELLECT 6

Perception 13, trick 13

### MIND 5

### CONFIDENCE 12

Intimidation 13, willpower 13

### CHARISMA 5



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Taunt 13

**Life Points:** 1 each

**Loot:** 1 in 10

**Natural Tools:** Leathery hide, armor value TOU +1/11; claws, damage value STR+2/7

## STEAM DRAKES

*The Pendar Mountains are full of natural steam tunnels. You can usually find some valuable goodies inside, but it's not worth the risk — most of the tunnels are inhabited by steam drakes. These cold-blooded beasts spend most*



of their time basking in the scorching hot vapors that rise up from the earth below. Steam drakes are clever hunters. They like to herd their prey to the edge of a cliff and give it the choice to fight or jump. If the prey jumps, the dragon scales down the cliff with its claws and eats a slightly softer meal than it had planned. In the summer you might see one "cooling down" by basking in the sunshine. They won't come out at all in the winter.

These lizards are called drakes because they can evidently bottle up steam from their tunnel and store it inside them for some time. If prey puts up too much of a fight, the lizard opens its gullet and cooks it in a searing cloud of steam.

## STEAM DRAKES

### AGILITY 10

Climbing 15, stealth 12, unarmed combat 15

### DEXTERITY 12

Missile weapon (breath) 14

### ENDURANCE 15

### STRENGTH 16

### TOUGHNESS 15/20

### INTELLECT 7

Perception 12

### MIND 2

### CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 15

### CHARISMA 4

Life Points: 2-3

Loot: 3 in 10

**Natural Tools:** Scales, armor value TOU+5/20; claws damage value STR+4/20; teeth damage value STR+3/19; steam breath (once when outside, every other turn if in its lair), damage value 28, target receives only half the normal armor bonus versus steam breath.

## ENCOUNTERS AND LOOT

### OPTIONAL LOOT TABLE

Roll 2d10 to determine the loot that the party finds in the lair. Items marked in bold-faced type are never found twice. If these discoveries have already been made, roll again. If a two is rolled on this table, then roll for a number on the "superior" table. Should a two be rolled again on the "superior" table, then roll on the "exceptional" table.



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2 Go to the table of "superior" loot.

3 Whatever creature was being tracked didn't live alone. The same number of creatures encountered previously are in the lair. Roll again for loot immediately. If this number comes up again, add that many *more* creatures, then roll for loot *again*.

4 A pit of vipers lives in a pit near the creature's lair. There is no loot.

## VIPER (1-10)

### AGILITY 10

Maneuver 12, stealth 12, unarmed combat 13

### DEXTERITY 1

### ENDURANCE 6

### STRENGTH 3

### TOUGHNESS 5

### INTELLECT 2

Perception 8, tracking 9

### MIND 2

### CONFIDENCE 6

Intimidation 12, willpower 12

### CHARISMA 4

Life Points: None

**Natural Tools:** Fangs, damage value STR+4/7. Whenever a viper causes a Knockdown or a K, it has pierced the skin and injected its poison. The venom does damage value 18 every ten minutes until the victim dies or receives magical healing. A *first aid* total of 15 will remove the poison if administered in the first ten minutes of the injury.

5 A few old coins lie amid the dust. They might be worth a few vens to a collector.

6 An old pair of serviceable boots with some bony feet inside are the only reward today.

7 There's no loot, but there is some meat that might be edible if cooked.

8 A wallet holds 1-10 vens.

9 A wallet holds 2-20 vens.

10 A wallet holds 1d10 x 100 vens.

11 On a bony finger is a ring worth 2d10 x 100 vens.

12 A moldering corpse has a wallet with 1d10 x 100 vens inside. He also carries a .38 Gelvash with 2-20 rounds.

## ENCOUNTER TABLE

### Encounter Level: 16

1d10 plus difference in party stealth and Encounter Level

2-5	Granite Cat
6-8	1-10 Granite Cats
9-11	Steam Drake
12-15	2-20 Skeetharks
16	1-10 bandits from Silman's Pass
17	Rock
18+	Queskworm

13 A moldering corpse has a wallet with 2-20 vens inside. He also carries a .38 Gelvash with 2-20 rounds, half of which are runeslugs loaded with the *fireball* spell.

14 This is the body of an adventurer carrying binoculars and a Gelvash pistol with 1-10 rounds.

15 Under a pile of bones is a pouch containing an old potion, determined randomly by the gamemaster.

16 In a backpack attached to a body is a moldering grimoire. The character can learn three spells from this book, chosen at random by the gamemaster.

17 The body of a dead wretch lies twisted and broken in the creature's lair. Around its rotting neck is an amulet that repels runeslugs (add +3 to *dodge*).

18 In this lair is the body of a crystal knight which has obviously lain here for many centuries. In the chipped corpse's hand is a crystal sword (damage value STR+7). Lying nearby is a crystal shield (*melee parry* +3).

19 An ancient skeleton covered in cobwebs sits in an even older throne in this otherwise nondescript lair. On its head is a golden crown, and in its hands is a greatsword caked over with years of limestone. If the crown or the sword is disturbed, the thing will come to life and attack, breaking off the limestone on the sword to reveal a magical, glowing blade beneath.

## ANCIENT UNDEAD

### AGILITY 11

Dodge 13, maneuver 13, melee combat 14 (17), melee parry 14 (11)

### DEXTERITY 12

### ENDURANCE 17

### STRENGTH 18

### TOUGHNESS 17

### INTELLECT 3

### MIND 3

### CONFIDENCE 13

### CHARISMA 5

### Life Points: 6

**Equipment:** The crown worn by the ancient king is non-magical but is made of gold and set with precious gems. Its worth at least 3,500 vens, though characters good at haggling might get more. The greatsword adds +3 to a character's *melee combat* skill and therefore damage, but subtracts -3 from *melee parry* because of its unwieldiness. It is cursed however, and any character who uses it in combat will begin to believe that all those around him are out to steal it. This counts as a CII Com-

pensation. If the character ever loses the greatsword or it is taken from him, he must quest to get it back and take bloody revenge on those who took it. The only way to halt the sword's curse is to present it to the Undead king and say his true name. The gamemaster will need to create an entire adventure around this quest.

**Roleplaying Notes:** The ancient Undead king is immune to shock and KO damage, as well as *intimidation* or any interaction that relies on its intelligence. Its only desire is to slay anyone who tries to touch its magical sword or crown.

**20 Corpse:** An unidentifiable Unnatural lies dead in the debris of the creature's lair. If disturbed, spores burst into the air and get into the explorer's lungs. The character that touched the remains may choose one Special Ability (CIV), a power passed on by the spores of whatever creature died here. Unfortunately, he also acquires a CIV compensation along with it.



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## OPTIONAL SUPERIOR LOOT TABLE

This table is a sample of a “superior” loot table that you can create for yourself, if you wish to use these optional rules. Each of these “superior” items does not have an easily recognizable use. In fact, most of these items are found with other things that help hide the item’s true worth. Because the items on this table could overbalance the characters, the gamemaster should look carefully at this table ahead of time to determine the best way to introduce these items if they are rolled. When creating a similar table for one of the other Wilderness areas, keep in mind the terrain of the area. For example, finding an item that shoots *fireballs* in the Boiling Swamps, where most of the creatures are resistant to heat, would not be particularly useful.

## SUPERIOR LOOT TABLE

Roll 2d10 to find out what “superior” item the party finds in the creature’s lair. Each item on this table can only be found once.

2 The characters find “exceptional” loot.

3 A torn pouch with a scratched pair of thick glasses, an almost empty bottle of eyedrops, and a lace handkerchief are found here. The glasses and the handkerchief are exactly what they seem. The eyedrops, on the other hand, allow the user to see a map on the inside of their eyelids for 24 hours. The map is centered on the user, allowing her to know what lies within a mile’s walk in any direction.

4 There is a torn overcoat, an empty bottle, some chalk, several bullets, and five gems here. Except for the gems, there isn’t really any value to these items. Of the gems, there are two deep rubies, a sapphire, an emerald, and a topaz. The first four gems are worth about 200 vens. The topaz is really a gem called the “Eye of the Dragon.” It lowers the difficulty number of any spell relating to the summoning, binding, or banishing of a Demon by -2. If one of the party members has the arcane knowledge *entity*, then that character can make a *perception* roll and add his *entity* adds to the skill total to find out if she recognizes the gem’s ability. If nobody in the party realizes what the topaz truly is, then the party

could sell it for 50 to 2000 vens, depending on where they decide to sell it.

5 A faded yellow bag with some flat wooden chips of differing colors, a pair of red dice, and a few tarnished silver coins of unknown origin are found in this lair. The coins could fetch about 300 vens if sold to a collector. The dice are called “Red Devil’s Dice” to those in the know (like collectors, etc.). When rolled, the following results are achieved:

**Snake-eyes:** If two ones are rolled on the dice, then the character has summoned a minor Demon that will do her bidding for a day.

## SNAKE IMP

### AGILITY 12

Dodge 15, maneuver 15, stealth 13, unarmed combat 15, unarmed parry 14

### DEXTERITY 8

### ENDURANCE 11

### STRENGTH 9

### TOUGHNESS 10

### INTELLECT 7

Apportation: wizardry 9, trick 15

### MIND 7

Hypnotism 13

### CONFIDENCE 9

Alteration: vitomancy 12, con 10

### CHARISMA 5

Taunt 10

**Life Points:** 4

**Alignment:** Chaos 2

**Arcane Knowledges:** Folk 3, Living 1, Wizardry 2

**Spells:** *First aid, invisibility, motion*

**Natural Tools:** Fangs, damage value STR+5/14. The imp has a venom that lowers a victim’s Endurance by -3. This venom is injected whenever a Knockdown or a K is achieved. The effects of this venom are cumulative, so it is possible for the imp to actually take a victim out with multiple bites.

**Roleplaying Notes:** The snake imp that is summoned by these dice is a mischievous Demon in the shape of a large red snake that will try to get out of anything that the character wishes for it to do. Its various tricks include trying to *con* the character out of the wish, *tricking* her into doing something else, or, when all else fails, *hypnotizing* the character by weaving its head back and forth. In the past, this Unnatural has even managed to

make the character let it out of its one day of bound service.

Once the day of service is over, the imp seems to disappear, but, in reality hangs around the party for another day and tries to undo the things that it was forced to do while in the character's service. For example, if it healed someone, then the imp will try to maneuver that character back into a situation that will cause the same amount of damage that it healed. If it helped the party defend itself against a creature, then the imp will help the next creature that attacks the party. It is the nature of the imp to try to do these things without exposing himself to the party again.

**Doubles:** If the same number is rolled on both dice, then the character rolling the dice receives a bonus of +2 to all actions for a day.

**Odd:** If the total of the dice add up to an odd number and a Chaotic or Oathbreaker Chaotic character is rolling the dice, then the character receives a +2 bonus to all actions for the amount of hours equal to the total of the dice. If an Order or Order Oathbreaker character is rolling and achieves this result, then she receives a -2 to all actions for the amount of hours equal to the total of the dice. Neutral characters are not affected.

**Even:** If the total of the dice is even, then an Order or Order Oathbreaker character receives a +2 bonus to all actions for the amount of hours equal to the total of the dice. Chaotic or Oathbreaker Chaotic characters receive a -2 to all actions for the amount of hours equal to the total of the dice. Neutral characters are not affected.

**6** There is a leather belt here with a pouch and a very rusted dagger attached to it. The pouch contains five strange seeds about the size of a coin. These seeds have four "legs" that allow it to stand up much like caltrops do. Other than that, there is nothing else of interest about these seeds. The dagger, on the other hand, is a STR+6/19 dagger. To the party, it looks like any old rusty dagger until they use it. However, because of its condition, the dagger will snap if any kind of negative bonus is rolled.

**7** A sword can be found in this lair. It looks like an ordinary sword, but if there is a mage with the arcane knowledge of *wizardry* in the

party, she will see the runes on the sword. If this mage manages to roll a *superior* success or better, then she will realize that the runes, while impressive, don't really do anything for the sword.

**8** There is a pack with some broken glass, a jar of ointment, and a couple of pieces of soggy paper. The paper has nothing on it. The ointment can be used to mend broken bones.

**9** A ring of five brass keys can be found here with a dozen drelmarks. Four of the keys have no use to the characters. The fifth one, however, will open a gate predetermined by the gamemaster, but only if the key is bent in some manner. This gate should be a one-way gate back to an area that the characters have already been. Once the gate is used, the key will disappear.

**10** There is a metal tube in this lair. Inside the tube is a nicely drawn city map of someplace that the characters have never seen. The legend of this map contains indecipherable runes that tell the characters nothing. The map could be sold by the party if they can convince someone into buying it.

**11** A primitive leather bag is in this lair. It seems to contain some dust mixed with herbs. Any character skilled with any kind of magic can roll to see if she recognizes its use. The mixture in this bag allows the user to become *invisible* for 12 combat rounds. All the user has to do to use the dust is to sprinkle a pinch of it on her head. There are about five pinches in the bag.

**12** There is a frayed and weathered purse here. Inside, there are black silk gloves and what looks like a spray bottle of perfume. When sprayed, the liquid inside this bottle melts everything but the container that is holding it (damage value 25).

**13** A glass decanter containing a red, smoky liquid can be found here. When opened, a fire imp forms and will attack the party unless someone finds a way to control it.

## FIRE IMP

### AGILITY 12

Dodge 14, unarmed combat 13, unarmed parry 13

### DEXTERITY 11



Missile weapons (breath 15)

**ENDURANCE 13**

**STRENGTH 14**

**TOUGHNESS 13**

**INTELLECT 10**

**MIND 7**

**CONFIDENCE 8**

Intimidation 14

**CHARISMA 10**

Taunt 11

**Life Points: 2**

**Natural Tools:** This fire imp has the ability to breathe fire (damage value 22). The only way to get rid of this thing is to kill it, banish it, or bind it.

**14** There is a wallet containing 30 selasts and a thin gold bracelet. If a character wears this bracelet, it will enable her to perform the *medicine* skill with a skill value of 25. However, to discover this, the character must first try to perform some kind of *first aid* or *medicine* on someone.

**15** In a bag with 20 Albreduran marks are a pair of worn yellow dice and a broken amulet. The dice don't have any special powers unless they're thrown at something. When these dice hit the target, several things could occur. Have the player roll 2d10 and add the results together to find out what happens.

**Doubles:** If both dice have the same number show up, the dice disappear.

**Evens:** A yellow acid cloud forms, causing damage value 25 for one round to the target specified when the dice were thrown.

**Odds:** The dice start glowing brightly. The light burns the target for damage value 15.

**16** There are the remains of a torn outfit here. Hidden among the folds of the cloth are a gold powder compact with a mirror inside, a gold locket with a smashed watch inside, and a dainty gold pistol. The pistol has the ability to hit anything within line of sight with no range limitations. It does a damage value of 20. There are only 2 slugs left. If a character wishes to continue using this pistol, she must have the bullets specially made for it. A weaponsmith would probably charge about 200 vens to make 6 slugs.

**17** There is a satchel containing a stack of weathered papers. If the party decides to look through the stack, one of the characters should

find a list of names. At least one of the names should be familiar to the character. This paper is a "Squealer Scroll." Generally, it lists things like a mob boss and his subordinates or a judge and the people he's taking bribes from. If a character concentrates on the scroll for a minute, she can choose whatever person she wants to be the subject of the scroll. However, if the subject of the scroll is within five meters of the character, the subject immediately knows what the character is doing. This could be really nasty if the subject turns out to be a mob boss.

**18** A backpack with some tattered clothes and a mystery novel can be found in this lair. The mystery novel is called *The Curse of the Snake Women*. If a character reads it all the way through, she gains a skill add of +1 to *deduction*.

**19** There is a skeletal hand clutching an amulet in the shape of a granite cat head. The usefulness of this amulet is not apparent until the character who wears it either tries to use her *climbing* skill or *stealth* skill. Both of these attributes gain +2.

**20** Inside this lair, there is an ornate leather bag that contains a spellbook. The bag is in good shape and has protected the spellbook well. Should a character with any type of magical skill read this book, she will lose the "on the fly" penalty that is applied to special effects created in the middle of an adventure (pages 156–157 of *MasterBook*). This bonus applies to only one special effect per character. If the character hasn't created a special effect yet, the bonus can be held back until the character does create a special effect.

## OPTIONAL EXCEPTIONAL LOOT

"Exceptional" loot includes truly rare items that the gamemaster wishes his party to have for a time. Since these items are extraordinarily powerful, it would be wise to plan for their inclusion in the campaign ahead of time. It is for this reason that there is no table included here. In instances like this, it is better for the gamemaster to figure out what would work best in the campaign. An example of an item that could be placed in this category would be an old scratched gong that summons minor Demons. Of course, it would be up to the





characters to figure out how they are going to bind the Demon that shows up. Because this item and any other item that could be placed in this category will be so powerful, it would be a smart idea to limit the party's access to or use of the items somehow. For example, the old scratched gong could have only seven more

charges before shattering. When creating "exceptional" items, keep in mind that the players *will* use them. If you want to keep a campaign challenging, tailor any items that you create to fit within the level of challenge that you wish to achieve.



CHAPTER  
THREE

## THE DIRAK DESERT

## DIRAK THE UNDEAD GOD

The great and evil Dirak was the champion of the Undead. His great bone sword cut a bloody swath through the tide of living heroes that tried to oppose him. Their blood trickled down the arms of great Dirak and filled him with energy. Then one of the treacherous lifers arrived in a chariot of blazing sunlight, pulled by four white chargers coursing with holy energy. They were a terrible sight, but Dirak stood firm. Then the hero and his horses charged, his great lance sizzling with white energy. Dirak struck the lance with all his might, but the enchanted thing snapped his bone sword in two. Then the lance struck home and buried itself deep in Dirak's black heart. The mighty god roared in defiance as holy power surged into his being and planted a fiery seed within his chest. Dirak's Undead minions flocked to his side and beat back the horrible lifers. But it was too late. As the battle raged, Dirak stumbled away, clutching his pierced and burning heart. For days the god suffered, bellowing in rage as he staggered over the Pendar Mountains and into the burning desert. Finally, the great Undead god lay down, his energies consumed by the searing holy lance planted in his dark heart.

The Great One still lies in the Dirak Desert beneath a heath of molten sand, the accursed holy lance still buried deep in his evil bosom. While Dirak sleeps, his Undead children are shunned and abused by the victorious lifers. But some day, Mighty Dirak will awaken and pluck the lance from his chest. Then he will arise from his blasted heath and avenge those who hold his memory dear.

— as told by the Taxim Neropses of Selastos



## THE DIRAK DESERT

### TREKKING THE DIRAK

The dusty, arid wasteland called the Dirak Desert was named after a Demon worshipped by Taxim. Rumors have it that this Demon existed at about the same time as the last Godwar. I don't know about you, but any place named after a Demon — and one worshipped by possessed Undead at that — sounds like a really bad place. And it is. If you absolutely have to cross the Dirak, don't.

Okay, so you're obviously not listening. Then you better pay attention to this. There's one thing more valuable than bullets or gold out here, and that's water. You might be able to scoop a few drops of water from mud streams, but drink much of this stuff and you'll know what zuvembie feel like. If you haven't got the real thing, or at least a spell that can make it, then you'd better know a few desert tricks.

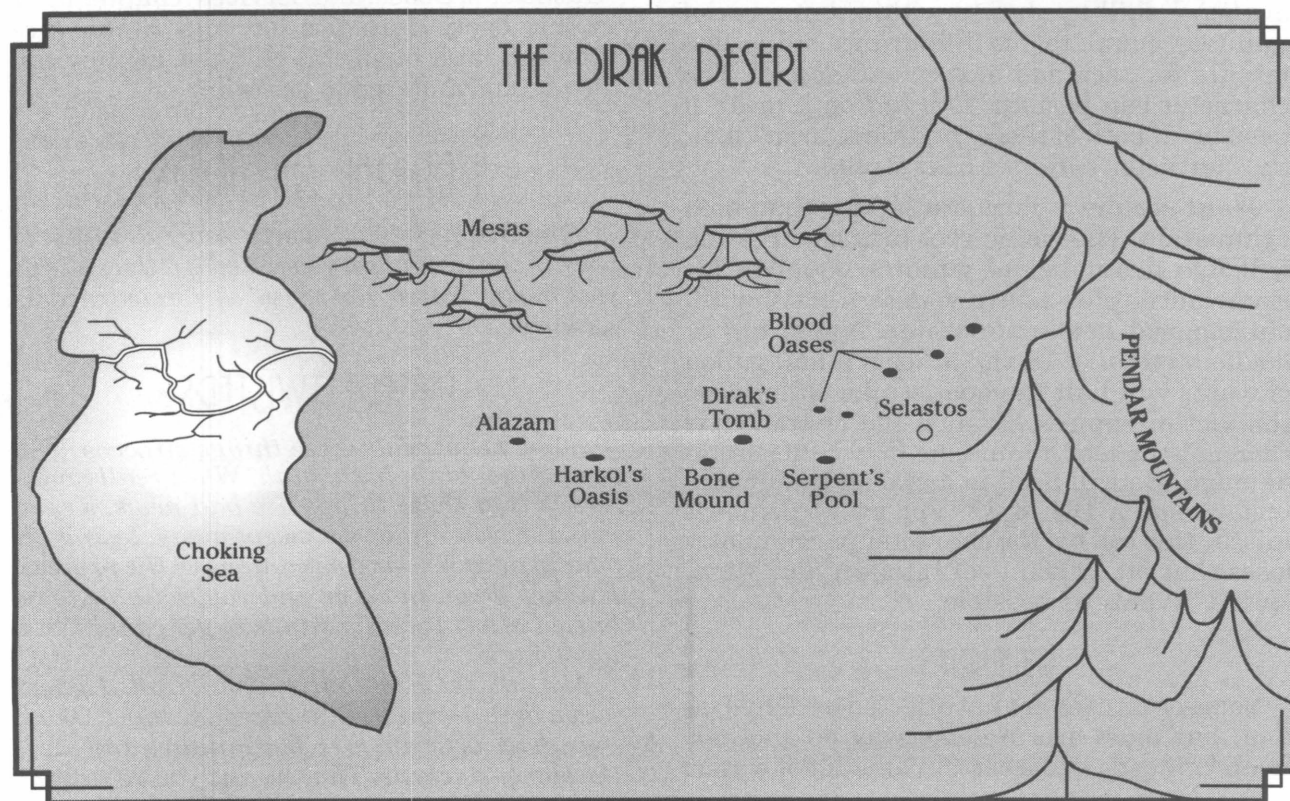
A good rule of thumb is each person needs a gallon of water per day. This'll let you keep moving and fighting. You can get by on less if

you're not very active, but sitting still in the Dirak is not a good idea.

Another thing to consider would be traveling by night. There are a lot of nasties waiting for you in the dark, but I'd rather combat those than heat stroke. That sun can sweat a lot of water and life out of you. If you insist on walking through the desert, do it at night. Find yourself an empty burrow or something to sleep in during the day. Be careful, though. A lot of the creatures that you'll be facing during the night will be sleeping in the burrows by day.

### DEHYDRATION

In a hot, arid environment like the Dirak, most characters will need to consume a lot of water. The following rule will tell you how much water a character needs to drink per day to avoid dehydration. Figure an average Human has a weight value of 10 (75–100 kilograms.) He'll need to drink one gallon of water per day if he's active. For every point of weight value over 10, the character will need to drink an extra gallon of water. The same formula works in reverse for smaller travelers. And



Tom O'Neill



just so you don't have to figure it out, a horse or mule needs about two gallons of water per day.

Any character who doesn't get the right amount of water begins to dehydrate. Those with no water take two permanent shock that can only be healed by magic or a full day's rest with plenty of liquid. Those who get about half of what they need take a single shock per day. If shock due to dehydration (not combined with other sorts of fatigue) ever equals Endurance, the character suffers heat exhaustion.

## HEAT INJURIES

Trekking a desert is serious business. These rules are intended to make the player characters think more about water and survival than solid gold goodies. If water is plentiful, don't worry about the rules, they'll just slow up the action. When water starts running low, then you can use these rules to heighten the tension and the atmosphere of the Dirak.

**Heat exhaustion** immobilizes the sufferer, and if he doesn't get help soon, he'll suffer heat stroke. To prevent that, the victim will need at least a half-gallon of water and a *first aid* or *medicine* skill total of 12 within a number of minutes equal to his Endurance (plus one minute for each add in *survival: desert*). The character can perform *first aid* on himself if need be. If both of these conditions aren't met, the character suffers a heat stroke.

**Heat stroke** is far more serious than heat exhaustion. The victim goes into seizures and will live a number of minutes equal to his Endurance (plus *survival: desert* adds) without magical healing or water. A *first aid* or *medicine* total of 18 and at least a half gallon of water will halt the heat stroke, otherwise, the victim expires. Even if the character is saved at the last minute, he may suffer brain damage. He will need to make an Endurance test versus a DN of 18. For every point he misses this roll by, the character permanently loses that many points of Intellect and Mind, split as evenly as possible.

## UNNATURALS

Some creatures are not affected by dehydration, but most are in some way or another. Even Undead need a certain amount of water.

Though they cannot die due to dehydration, Undead do become stiff and almost mummified if they do not receive their normal nourishment. Of course, if they do not partake of their "food," then they will die eventually.

## RANTAN

*Horses, motorcycles, and vehicles might get you through the Dirak, but if you plan on spending any time out there, you'd better buy a rantan. Rantan are giant lizards that roam wild in the Dirak. A band of animal handlers outside of Selastos has managed to capture and tame a number of these predators and train them as mounts. They're expensive, but they're worth it. Rantan are twice as big as horses, but their scaly skin prevents evaporation so that they only need about a gallon of water a day. They can usually get this just by consuming the blood of their prey, which you can let them hunt on their own. These critters are even good in a fight. They've got sharp claws, jagged teeth, and a tail that can knock over a duner.*

Trained rantan are detailed in the "Outfitter's, Goods, and Services" chapter later in this book. Statistics for wild rantan are provided later on in this chapter, as they can also be encountered in the wild.

## NATURAL HAZARDS

*The Dirak Desert sports several types of terrain that might get you killed if it doesn't kill you itself. Watch for these — forewarned is forearmed.*

## DESERT TWISTERS

*Some people call these things siroccos. You say potato, blah, blah, blah. What really matters is that these things are bad news. Try to run and you might get swept away, losing all your gear and your companions in the process. Hunker down in cover and you're liable to be buried alive. It really stinks to get caught in a twister.*

*My advice? Stay out of the Dirak. I guess we've been through that already, huh? Okay, my advice is to run for a few minutes and see if the storm slackens. That means you've run the right way. If you can't tell a difference, you're*



*going to have to dig in somewhere. Big rocks and caves are best. You could also dig yourself in under a tarp for protection — if you can't do this, bend over, put your head between your legs, and kiss your ass good-bye.*

On any given day in the Dirak, there's a 1 in 10 chance that a desert twister, or sirocco will spring to life and scour the blasted plains. If the characters are in the area, they'll only feel a slight breeze at first. Then the wind will pick up and blowing sand will make it hard to see. Anyone who makes a *survival: desert* roll of 8 will realize what's about to happen.

In general, there's a 7 in 10 chance that a storm will move toward a group of player characters. A *survival: desert* roll of 10 will allow a character to realize whether the storm is headed towards or away from him.

## CHARACTERS WITHOUT COVER

When the storm hits, creatures that aren't underneath heavy cover (such as boulders, houses, or tarps) take damage value 8 plus a bonus number from the blowing sand and other debris. If a character is not wearing a scarf or similar protection across his nose, mouth, and eyes, the damage is increased by +3. Roll for this damage every round. Most storms will remain in an area for one to ten minutes, twisting back and forth as it decides which way to blow next.

If the final damage total of the twister is ever equal to or greater than a character's weight value, he is caught up in the swirling sirocco. He is thrown out of the twister when the damage total is less than his weight value (usually due to a bad bonus.) Every round a character spends in a twister causes damage as normal.

Anyone who is picked up by a twister is bound to lose most of their equipment. Clothes are reduced to rags, backpacks are torn free, and scabbards are ripped from their belt. Only the most secured items (such as armor) are not torn from the character's body. Items in hand are dropped if the character cannot make a *willpower* total equal to the damage total for every round he is caught up in a twister.

When the storm is finally over, characters will often find themselves miles away from the rest of their group. Those adventurers who lose equipment can attempt to find each individual item on a *perception (find)* total equal to

18. Each time this roll is missed, however, the DN increases by +2.

## CHARACTERS IN COVER

Those lucky enough to find sturdy shelter might still find themselves buried alive. Twisters might strip an area clean, or they might dump tons of sand on it. Every minute that a group is within a sandstorm, roll a die. On a roll of 1, they are buried alive beneath a great dune of sand. The group will have to dig their way out of the sand to save themselves.

Characters do not take damage until they can no longer hold their breath, which is a number of rounds equal to Endurance divided by two and rounded up. Every round thereafter, suffocating characters take two shock until dead. Creatures who do not breathe are immune to this damage, but will still have to crawl their way out.

To crawl out, characters must complete a Dramatic Skill Resolution. The victim must pit his Strength against a DN equal to 14 for each step.

## SETBACKS

Use the following list to determine what happens during *critical problems*, *complications*, or *possible setbacks* that occur during Dramatic Skill Resolution.

*Critical Problem:* If the character does not make his Strength total this round, he swallows a mouthful of sand and loses whatever breath remained. If he cannot escape in the next two rounds, he will pass out and die.

*Complication:* Something else sought cover in the shelter just before it was buried. Pick or roll a random creature from the Encounter List. Depending on the circumstances, it may or may not attack the character until it has saved itself.

*Possible Setback:* The character has dug deeper into the sand and comes up beneath the shelter he was hiding within. He is now trapped beneath it and must pull himself out, restarting at Step A and raising the DN of each step by +1.

## SAND LAKES

*The Dirak is home to scores of "ponds" and*

*“lakes” of loose sand that look relatively normal but won’t hold any real weight. Most are only a meter deep, so you can wade through them if you have to. I don’t advise it because of the things that lie hidden beneath the surface, but sometimes you’ve got no choice. Some pools are a lot deeper — we call ’em lakes. Fall in and you’ll die choking on gritty sand — not a pleasant way to go.*

## WADING A SAND LAKE

How a party negotiates a sand lake will vary depending on resources and abilities. Most will simply wade across shallower pools. Each round of movement requires a Strength total of 8 or more in waist deep sand, 10 or more in chest deep sand, and 12 in sand that comes up to the neck.

Anytime characters enter a pool of sand over their head, use the Dramatic Skill Resolution system defined on page 128 of the *MasterBook Rules*. The character must use his Strength to push himself through. Each step completed is simply another quarter of the distance between the starting point and the destination. The DN of each step is 14.

Most characters can only hold their breath for a number of rounds equal to half their

Endurance (rounded up). After that, the hero takes two shock points per round until unconscious. Creatures that don’t need to breathe can obviously ignore this limitation.

## SETBACKS

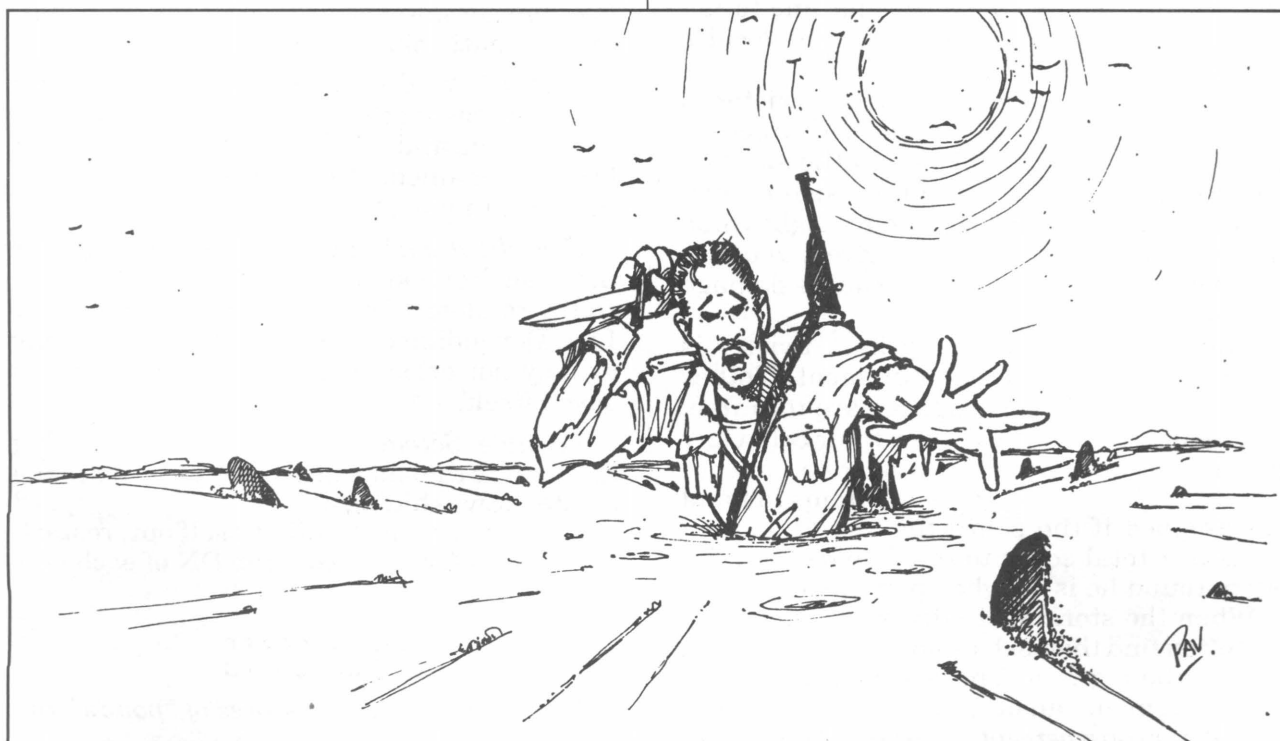
Use the following list to determine what happens during *critical problems*, *complications*, or *possible setbacks* that occur during Dramatic Skill Resolution.

**Critical Problem:** The character stumbles into a hole or crevice beneath the sand. If he is holding a rope, he can pull himself out with a Strength total equal to his weight value +1. Until he emerges from the hole, he must hold his breath as described below.

**Complication:** The character feels shaky ground ahead and decides which way to move to avoid it. If he fails the Strength check this round, all future rolls are made at +1.

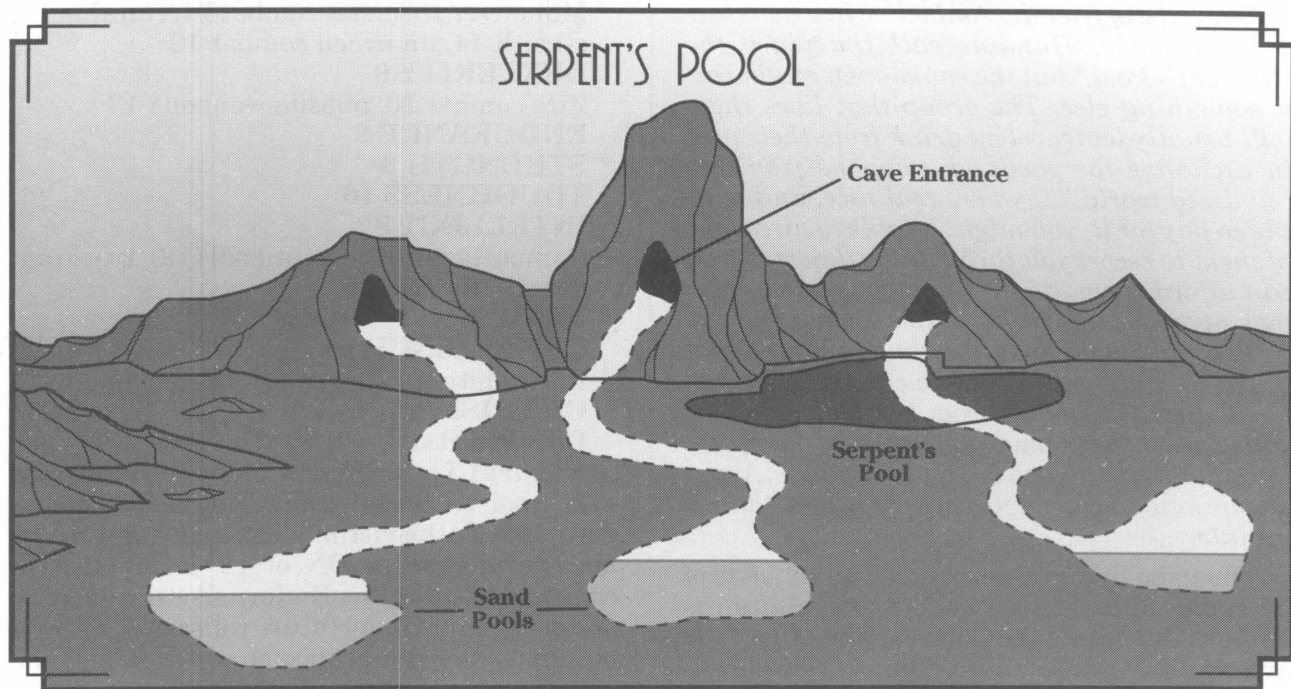
**Possible Setback:** The hero realizes he is at the edge of a crevice and must decide which way he will try to circumvent it. A Strength failure on this round means he must back up and try another route. Success indicates he has chosen the right path.

**Sandsharks:** Sand lakes are the homes of



Terry Favlet





Tom O'Neill

creatures called sandsharks. Anytime a *complication*, *critical problem*, or *setback* appears on the command line of the Drama Deck, 1–10 sandsharks will move in for the kill. See stats on page 56.

## TINKLE TREES

No, these trees won't take a leak on your head. They're called tinkle trees, or "tinklers," because of their strange leaves. Tinklers secrete a mild acid into the soil around them that temporarily turns hardened minerals to goo. Then they suck up the "soup" with their roots. A lot of the minerals wind up in the leaves where they eventually harden again, making the leaves glass-like. Tinklers aren't dangerous on their own, but unfortunately they like to grow in groves. If a strong sirocco hits them, it will often pick up hundreds of the glassy leaves and spin them around inside like razor blades. Get caught in one of these "tinkle-storms" and you're history.

A tinkle-storm is a desert twister filled with the leaves of tinklers. About 1 in 10 twisters will hit a tinkler grove and become a tinkle-storm. This raises the base damage of the storm by +5.

## OASES

The Dirak is full of oases. Most of these have drinkable water, but don't go waltzing in unprepared 'cause all the local creatures are going to drink there too. Here's a short list of the most useful or dangerous oases you'll encounter.

## THE SERPENT'S POOL

Despite the horrors of the Dirak Desert, there are a few intelligent races that manage to live there. One such group is the Amba, a race of serpentine Unnaturals. Rumors have it that the Amba are left over from the Godwar. They certainly look it. Amba have the lower body of a giant snake and the upper body of a Human. Scaly hoods frame their serpentine face, which is complete with forked tongue and slitted eyes. Most have dusty brown scales, but I've seen a few of more brilliant hue.

Amba are phenomenally fast. They can slide along on their scaly coils almost as fast as a horse can run. They use this speed in the desert to catch prey, mostly harmless plant-munchers like sand-pigs or the fast desert birds called sprinters.

*One tribe of friendly Amba live in a den near a large oasis. Humans call the place the "Serpent's Pool," but the snake-men might call it something else. The group that lives there will usually let travelers drink from their pool in exchange for goods or weapons from the "civilized world." If you're real nice, and willing to pay for it, you might be able to hire some of them to escort you through the desert. If you can afford them, do it. These guys know their way around and can fight like Demons.*

*There are other nomadic bands of Amba that aren't as amiable, so be extra careful when you encounter them away from Serpent's Pool. If you do meet the nomads and it looks like a fight is unavoidable, watch out for their fangs. Amba poison will paralyze a person in less than a minute.*

The tribe living at Serpent's Pool consists of 32 individuals. Twenty-eight are adults capable of defending themselves. The other four are small children and have not even developed their fangs yet. The tribe is led by an Amba named Red-Band after the crimson whirls that decorate his coils. He is advised by two shaman that accompany him whenever strangers are present. Red-Band will trade water for knives (used more for utility than for combat), firearms, or anything else that might prove useful to the village.

**1. Snake-Holes:** These are the entrances to the Amba nests below. The snake-men have little trouble sliding through the twisting tunnels, but other creatures move at 1/5 their normal speed when sliding, climbing, or crawling through the maze.

**2. Nesting Area:** Many of the Amba like to sleep in pools of soft sand one to two meters deep. Anywhere from 2–8 serpent-men will sleep together in these nests. The Amba also roll around in the sand to clean their scales.

**3. Sand-Rats:** Amba cannot tolerate cooked meat, and actually prefer to consume their prey live. The tribe at Serpent's Pool have carefully encouraged a pack of sand-rats to live a short distance from their own lair. When better game is scarce, the Amba can raid this warren of sand-rats and collect enough vermin to feed the tribe for several days.

STANDARD AMBA  
AGILITY 11

Maneuver 13, melee combat 14, running 15, stealth 14, unarmed combat 12

**DEXTERITY 9**

Fire combat 10, missile weapons 13

**ENDURANCE 9**

**STRENGTH 9**

**TOUGHNESS 10**

**INTELLECT 8**

Camouflage 10, perception 9 (12), tracking: desert 10, trick 10

**MIND 7**

**CONFIDENCE 10**

Intimidation 12, survival: desert 14

**CHARISMA 7**

**Life Points: 2**

**Natural Tools:** Fangs, damage value STR +2/11; poison, if a bite causes at least a Knockdown or a K, the victim must make an Endurance test versus a DN of 12. Every time a character makes this Endurance test, he may add a +1 bonus to any future rolls versus Amba poison. If the Endurance check is failed, the victim instantly takes three points of shock, and another point in each successive round for ten more turns. When this shock equals the victim's Endurance, he becomes paralyzed. Shock from this venom is cumulative with any actual shock taken. Subsequent Amba bites cause their regular damage, but cause no further effects from venom.

**Equipment:** Spear, damage value STR+5/14; crossbow, range 3-10/100/200/300, damage value STR+9/18.

Amba use spears and crossbows. Some have firearms for emergencies, but bullets are hard to come by in the desert.

**Background:** Amba are natural born hunters. They live for the chase and the slow kill. They are not evil creatures, but a long evolutionary history in the harsh Dirak has made them somewhat ruthless. Those who have something to offer an Amba are considered trusted hunting companions. Everyone else is an obstacle. Or food.

AMBA SHAMAN

**AGILITY 9**

Maneuver 10, running 12, stealth 12, unarmed combat 10

**DEXTERITY 8**

**STRENGTH 8**

**ENDURANCE 8**

**TOUGHNESS 9**

## INTELLECT 10

Apportation: vitomancy 11, camouflage 11, divination: vitomancy 12, perception 11 (14), trick 12

## MIND 9

Conjuration: wizardry 11, conjuration: photomancy 10

## CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 12, survival: desert 14

## CHARISMA 7

Summoning: vitomancy 9

## Life Points: 3

**Typical Spells:** *Alarm, blind, charm, communicate with animal*

**Arcane Knowledges:** Folk 2, light 1, magic 1

**Natural Tools:** As regular Amba.

**Background:** Amba shaman are quiet leaders in their communities. They are respected for their wisdom and their cunning in dealing with marauding desert beasts.

Amba shaman cannot usually study alchemy or technomancy. Those who do study these skills must pay double the normal cost for each add learned.

## HARKOL'S OASIS

*If you see a pool of water and you're standing hip deep in sand, you might be at Harkol's Oasis. Smack in the middle of nowhere is a rock basin full of clear water. This is good stuff, and it'll quench your thirst in a hurry — if you can get to it. All around the oasis is a sand lake. And like most sand lakes, a pack of sandsharks is crawling around inside.*

*Sandsharks are bad news. Wade out into the sand lake and you'll find out why. These sneaky critters lie at the bottom of the sand lakes and wait for unwary prey to enter. Harkol's Oasis is perfect bait. If you really need that water, you better figure out a good distraction. That's hard to do 'cause sandsharks are patient creatures. They won't jump at the first movement they hear. The ones at Harkol's Oasis like to wait until the prey gets to the pool. That way the prey's friends might think the lake is safe and wade out too.*

*There's probably a load of loot lying around Harkol's Oasis. If someone had time to dig around the sand, who knows what they might find?*

## BACKGROUND NOTES: AMBA

### Advantages/Compensations

2CII, 2CIII

### Mandatory A/C:

**Advantages:** Special Abilities (CII): Enhanced Senses, can sense vibrations adding +3 to *perception*; Special Abilities (CIII): Speed; Special Abilities (CIII): Poison.

**Compensations:** Prejudice (CII); Nutritional Requirements (CIII): Amba must eat their prey live.

### Recommended A/C:

**Advantages:** Any

**Disadvantages:** Poverty (CI)

### Restricted A/C:

None

The sand lake around the oasis is roughly circular with a 20 meter radius. It lies in a depression circled by high dunes. In the middle is the rocky head of an artesian well. A pack of 1–10 sandsharks can be found in the lake at any given time. When prey is scarce, they crawl out of this lake and head for others nearby.

Lying about the bottom of the lake are a few decades worth of bodies and lost treasures. A character who searches the pool and makes a *perception* (find) total of 12 or more may roll on the loot table at the end of this chapter.

## BLOOD OASES

*Don't be fooled by the name, the water in a blood oasis looks as clear as any other. But drink it and you'll die so fast you'll fall in. Some people call these things "Fool Holes."*

*So how can you tell the difference between a blood oasis and good, clean water? A circle of long-dead corpses is always a good sign that something's wrong, but I've seen nomadic Amba pile up dead bodies just to keep people and animals away from their pool. Which brings up an interesting point — I'm sure we've all heard rumors about animals having some kind of sixth sense about these things. So you might get a clever idea, like waiting to see if your horse takes a sip. If he does, you're walking, pal. All that stuff about animals is malarkey. The local beasts know which pools are poison, but a*





Jaime Lombardo & Ron Hill

horse from Galitia won't have a clue 'til you're cuttin' up his sides for steaks. One good tip that you might want to consider would be the possibility of bringing along a few small creatures to throw into the water. If it dies, well, that's one less creature to carry. If it lives, drink all you want.

A few clever assassins and mobsters from the cities have trekked off into the desert to bottle this stuff and use it back home. For some strange reason, and I can attest to this, it doesn't work. Take it outside the Dirak, and you've got a bottle of sand. Now that's weird.

So you're probably thinking, "Why are these things called blood oases?" The Amba snake-men have a legend that explains it. They say that the great god Dirak was mortally wounded in the last Godwar and stumbled back to his home in the desert to die. Along the way, his blood formed a trail of poisoned puddles that later became the blood oases. To drink from one is to drink the blood of Dirak himself.

You can believe it if you want. It's still just as poisonous.

The poisoned pools of the desert do form a ragged trail that leads to the place called "Dirak's Tomb." Whether there is any truth to the legend or not is lost to the winds of time. What is certain is that the deadly waters of the

blood oases are one of the strongest poisons on Marl. Any living being who drinks the stuff dies. Period. No clever attribute checks or damage values — just death. Even spells that negate poison will only work if cast within ten seconds after consumption. Only Undead and their ilk are immune to the poison. They can drink it to their heart's content. Gamemasters should make sure characters have heard warnings about these poisonous pools. After that, they're on their own.

Water taken from these oases turns to sand in a few hours. No one has yet found a way to stop this bizarre transformation.

## ALAZAM

There's a crumbling old manor house out near the Serpent's Pool. No one knows what used to be there or why, but there's a stone marker nearby that reads "Alazam." Some say it's the name of the manor. Others say it's a tombstone.

There's a fountain in front of the ruins. The basin of the thing is full of wet sand — I guess a trickle of water still bubbles into the fountain from below. If you've got the time, you can dredge out a handful of gook and filter the water out through a rag. Watch out though, a lot of desert critters like to hunt nearby. The

*Sandmen hole up inside from time to time. I'm not sure if it's their lair, or if it's more of an outpost. If you get in trouble in the Dirak, though, Alazam is a good place to look for help.*

The stone that rests in front of the ruins was intended to mark the site of a great city, named after its founder, Alazam the Sorcerer. Alazam's tale is one of tragedy, and the stone marker has now become his tombstone.

Several hundred years ago, Alazam decided to tame the Dirak Desert and make it habitable for Humans. To aid him in this task he summoned a magical race of warriors called the Sandmen. Over fifty Sandmen were created, but the first, Sylis, proved to be the strongest.

Alazam realized that the blood oases would have to be purified before people could live here and help populate his city. He had heard the Amba tales about Dirak, and decided to send Sylis to the dead god's alleged tomb. He hoped that his magical friend could slither inside the tomb and perhaps find some clue that would reveal how to purify the poisoned pools. Sylis poured his malleable body through the cracks and disappeared for some time. No one knows what he found inside the tomb, but when he reemerged, he was tainted with darkest evil. Even his sandy form changed. Thick blood oozed between the crystals of his body and stained them a dark crimson. Sylis headed back toward his creator and slew him along with several other Sandmen. Then he buried Alazam's shattered corpse beneath the city's flagstone and set the manor on fire. The secret of the Sandmen's origin was lost forever. Sylis fled into the desert and soon after conquered a band of rogue Amba. He and his serpent friends hunted the rest of the Sandmen until only a few of the strongest remained. The struggle continues to this day.

## SYLIS AND THE RENEGADES

Today Sylis leads a new band of renegades in the genocide of his brothers. There is no confusion on the Amba's part — they know that Sylis is evil. They simply revel in the freedom he offers and enjoy hunting worthy foes like the Sandmen. This warband lives at a place called the Bone Mound (see below).

## DIRAK'S HEATH

*Past Alazam is an oblong rock some twenty meters long. It's surface is twisted and mottled, like the rock was melted and then cooled here. It's not much to look at, but it's still really creepy 'cause the Amba claim Dirak is encased within it.*

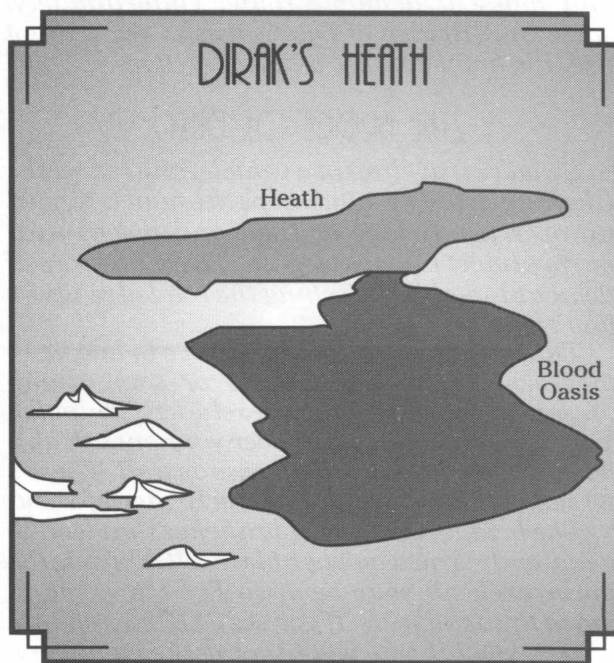
*A blood oasis sits at the edge of the mound. Strangely, the shape of the pool looks like it once "bled" from the heath. Not a big deal 'til you think about the legend of the blood oases. I'm not saying those legends are true, but it sure makes you wonder.*

What lies within the blasted heath is still a mystery. So far, only Sylis has been able to slip inside the stony cocoon. Other Sandmen will not enter the tomb now for fear of being corrupted.

Amba shaman of Serpent's Pool whisper that when the last of the Sandmen are wiped out, Dirak will arise from the dead and reclaim his barren lands.

## CHOKING SEA

*Though this vast sand lake is called a "sea," you can't swim in it. Sandsharks and dusters can "swim" through the stuff 'cause they're built for it. The rest of us just sink straight to the bottom.*





Terry Pavlet

The Choking Sea blocks off the southwestern route to places like the Alerios Jungle, Gwalior, and the Boiling Swamps. You can go around if you need to, but it's a long trip. The eastern edge is at least 500 kilometers long. Fortunately, there's a rocky isthmus that runs smack through the middle of the sea. The Amba say that most of the ridge has been there forever, but a Human mage filled in the gaps a few centuries ago and made it a viable route. Unfortunately, since the "Bridge of Dust" doesn't see a lot of use, it's home to a lot of nasty critters.

## THE BRIDGE OF DUST

If you're traveling in a vehicle, go around the Choking Sea. The wind keeps the sand whipped up over the Bridge of Dust and mechanical parts almost always clog up. There's a score of dead automobiles blocking the road already — don't add any more.

This means you're going to have to hoof it — whether they're your hooves or some dumb animal's (present company excluded, Tadpole). You'll need to put a scarf over your mouth and nose, and I recommend glasses as well. There's a reason this thing's called the Bridge of Dust.

The bridge has several branches that lead to dead-ends. You won't be able to tell which is the main path on your own, so I've left signs to mark the dead ends. If you see a "B" carved into a rock, you'll know you're going the right way.

## KNOWN HAZARDS

Things change, but there's a few places along the bridge where you can always expect trouble. I'll tell you all I know, so if you get yourself killed, it's your own fault. That means you better not come back as some creepy Undead thing and hunt me down.

## THE CENTIPEDE CAVE

Three meters from the Dirak side of the Bridge of Dust, you'll come to a large, natural tunnel. It's only a few hundred meters long so you'll be able to see out the other side, but the inside is dark as night. You get halfway through and several hundred centipedes the size of your arm will drop down out of the ceiling. These things have mandibles like ants and can take a hell of a bite out of you.

So how do you avoid them? A good magic spell is probably the best way, but I've never had much talent for that sort of thing. I usually cover a blanket in oil and set it smoldering, then run through the tunnel with it over my head. The critters land on it but don't stay on long. By the time the blanket gets too hot to hold, I'm usually through the other side. You'll have to figure out your own method for getting through this nasty cave.

There are several hundred centipedes living in the cave Buck described. Their usual



prey is sandsharks that try to cross the ridge to get to the other side, dusters, and more often, each other. The centipedes are completely blind but have an individual *perception* of 12 due to their ability to sense vibrations. As a group, the community's *perception* score is 22 (a many-on-one *perception* roll versus *party stealth*).

Once they notice potential prey, the centipedes hurl themselves off the cave ceiling at the first moving target.

## CENTIPEDE SWARM

### AGILITY 12

Climbing 18, long jumping 12 (hurling 15), unarmed combat 15

### DEXTERITY 3

### ENDURANCE 9

### STRENGTH 9

### TOUGHNESS 10

### INTELLECT 1

Trick 6, perception 2 (sense vibrations 22)

### MIND 1

### CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation (12)

### CHARISMA 1

**Life Points:** 1 per swarm

**Natural Tools:** Bite STR+1/10

**Roleplaying Notes:** Cave centipedes are treated as a single "swarm" creature. Each normal sized character may be attacked by no more than two swarms at a time. They are smart enough not to bite metal, bone, or other hard armor. Only leather or other soft protection actually counts against their attacks.

## CRUMBLERS

*For various reasons, part of the Bridge of Dust crumbles away from time to time. We call these areas "crumblers," and they're a real pain in the ass. A few are small enough to jump, but most are so wide you'll have to get down in the sand to keep going. Watch out when you do, 'cause sandsharks have probably been following you since you got on the bridge. If they hear you shuffling around in the sand, they're going to attack.*

*The best way to cross a crumbler is to plow straight ahead. Part of the bridge will still be beneath the sand. With any luck, you won't have to wade any deeper than your waist. Keep hold of a rope as you cross 'cause there will be*

*holes and crevices you can't see. Fall in one and you'll slide right down into the Choking Sea.*

Whenever characters come to a crumbler, roll the dice and add them together. This is the width of the missing road. Now roll a die. This is the average depth of the sand above whatever remains of the roadway. Wading through these areas is handled just like wading through a sand lake (see that section under "Natural Hazards," above).

## THE BONE MOUND

*The renegade Sandman Sylis and his blood-crazy Amba hunters live beneath the earth here in a warren of twisting caverns. All along the entrances are piled the bones of the animals and men they've slain. I've seen it from a distance, a very long distance, and it's just downright creepy. Even duners won't go near this place, so you shouldn't either.*

*Sylis is the only Sandman I know of that even has the capability to do evil. No one that I know can figure out why he's so much different. The Sandmen might know, but they're close-mouthed on the whole thing. If he sees you, he's going to kill you. No torture, no dramatic gloating — just a quick and merciless stab through the heart. If you can't get away, fight to the death. I haven't seen much that can take out a Sandman, but Sylis doesn't take prisoners.*

There aren't many reasons to venture inside Sylis' warren. It is filled with creatures that can kill most any character party, and there's little of value in there since the warband spends most of their time prowling the desert hunting for Sandmen. Only adventurers interested in ending Sylis' genocide have any reason to come here. If they do, they should be well-prepared, because there aren't many beings who can hope to defeat this warband in a straight-up battle.

All of the snake-holes lead into the maze of twisting tunnels below. They are not trapped or guarded in any way. Most are only a couple of meters high, so explorers will have to crawl to move through them. Amba may slither along at half their normal speed. All other characters use 1/5 of their basic move rate. Human, Amba, duner, and other skeletons lie all around the snake-holes. There is nothing of



value amongst this gruesome montage.

Sylis' Amba allies sleep in one large chamber in and on a bed of soft, silty, sand. They sleep at night, so all are present from dusk to dawn. During the day, they are either out hunting or sunning themselves on a large rock somewhere, so only 1-5 are present in the lair itself.

## SYLIS, RENEGADE SANDMAN

### AGILITY 16

Maneuver 17, melee combat 17, stealth 18, unarmed combat 19

### DEXTERITY 10

Fire combat 11

### ENDURANCE 14

### STRENGTH 17

### TOUGHNESS 18

### INTELLECT 11

Camouflage 13, deduction 12, perception 14, tracking 14, trick 13

### MIND 11

### CONFIDENCE 12

Faith: Dirak 14, intimidation 16, survival: desert 14

### CHARISMA 10

Taunt 11

### Life Points: 8

**Equipment:** Sylis carries a magical sword (STR+4/21) unearthed from some ancient ruin in the desert. Anyone who takes even a single point of shock from the weapon must make an immediate Endurance test versus a DN of 13. If this roll is failed, the victim suffers from immediate heat exhaustion (see the special rules under "Dehydration," above, for consequences and treatment).

Within the last several years, Sylis has also started using firearms. He discovered how these worked by watching one of his renegade Amba use one. Sylis was enthralled with this new type of weapon, so he took a Skandra "Annihilator" submachine gun (damage value 17, range 5-10/20/50/100) and has been using it when he has the ammo for it. Since ammo is rather limited in the desert, it is possible that Sylis might not be able to use the gun when he meets the party. There is a 2 in 10 chance that Sylis might open up on the party with a loaded weapon before attacking with his sword.

**Known Compensations:** Quirk (CII: Sylis must slay all other Sandmen.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Sylis looks like other

Sandmen except his sandy skin is mixed with thick, dark blood. He is a strong warrior and a cold strategist. Sylis is fearless in combat but not reckless. If he is losing a fight, which is rare, he will not hesitate to retreat so that he can return later and fight the battle on his own terms.

Ever since Sylis entered the tomb of Dirak he has been obsessed with wiping out the rest of his race. An Amba prophet once said that the end of the Sandmen would cause the resurrection of Dirak. Why this race is targeted by the dead god and his evil avatar is unknown, but if this prophecy is ever fulfilled, the consequences would be cataclysmic.

Sylis' following consists of 23 renegade Amba and two renegade Amba shamans. These Amba are the outcasts of the settlement at the Serpent's Pool. Some have violated tribal laws, others simply joined Sylis for the challenge of hunting Sandmen. This is a difficult task, so these Amba will stop at nothing to acquire new weapons or powerful spells. Renegades may be armed with anything from a magical sword to a machine gun. About half of any group should be so equipped. These cunning warriors are also adept at digging and concealing water-filled pits, a deadly trap for Sandmen.

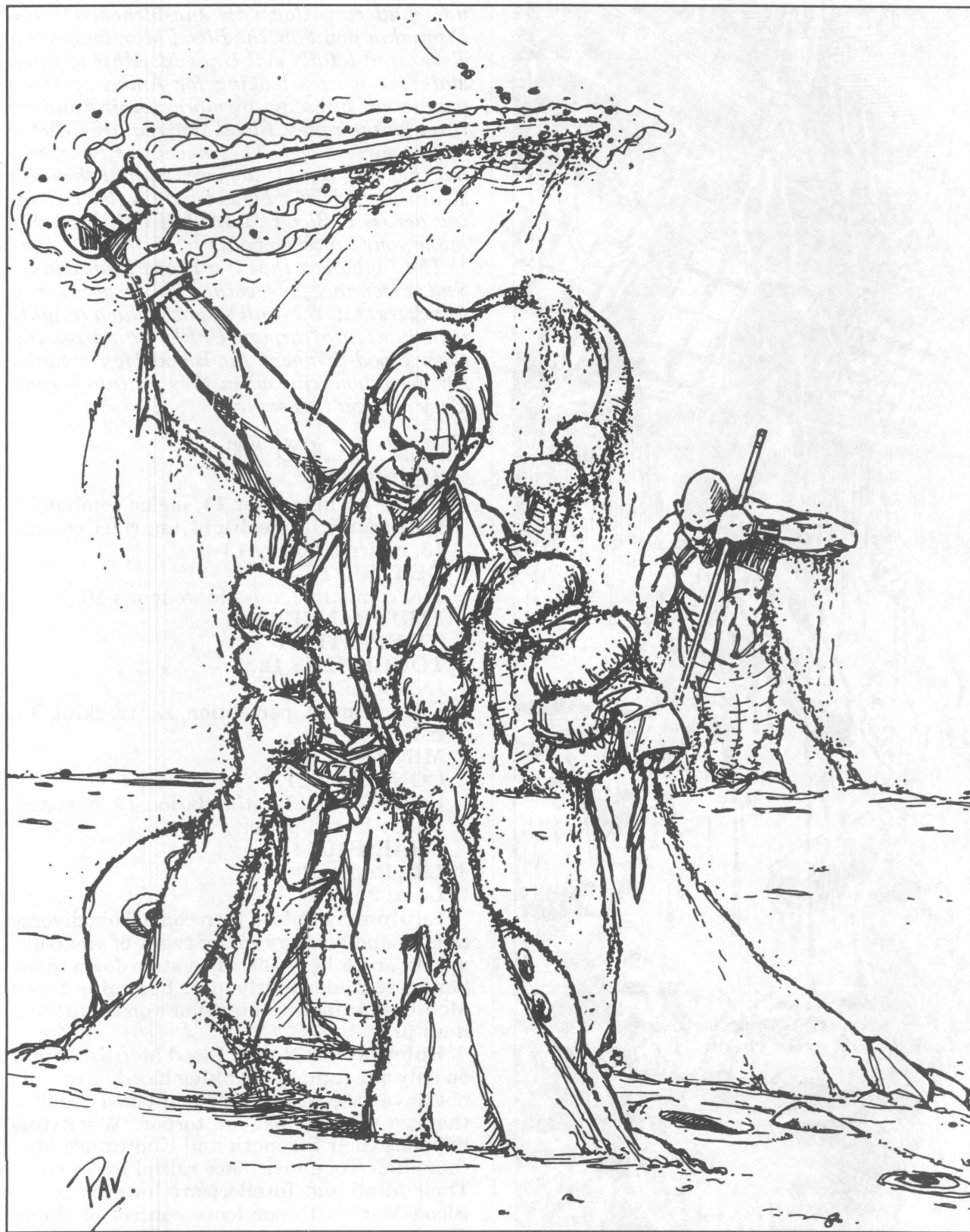
## CRITTERS

The Dirak is chock full of things that would love to sink their teeth into you. The biggest trouble you'll have will be seeing them before they see you. Dirak dwellers live beneath the sand, hide behind rocks, and skulk in gullies you won't even know exist until you're almost on top of them.

## BLOOD MEN (DIRAK'S CHILDREN)

*Most people who drink from the blood oases die instantly. A few rare individuals linger on for several hours, dying in terrible agony. Those who die in this way will rise again in three days as a creature the Amba call "Dirak's Children." Most everyone else I know calls them "Blood Men."*

*After death, the body lies baking in the sun for three days. Animals might pick at the flesh and buzzards might pull out an eye, but the corpse miraculously stays relatively intact. Then, on the third night, the body sits up and screams. Blood boils out its mouth, ears, and*



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nose and runs down its sun-bleached body. From that point on, the Blood Man becomes a clever and totally evil Undead. Most of them stalk the wastes looking for Amba or stray wanderers, but some are more cunning and set traps for their prey. Blood Men require a diet of fresh, warm blood. They never eat their kill, but they will rend it to pieces so that they can strain every drop of blood from the flesh. Coming across a Blood Man's kill will probably make your lunch go ballistic.

The Amba say that if a Blood Man cannot find sustenance for several days, he goes into a mindless state they call *kunasi*, which roughly translates into "torpor." Unlike Vampires and other blood-drinkers, the Blood Men actually get more powerful when they go into torpor. They also get less smart.

## STANDARD BLOOD MAN

### AGILITY 12

Dodge 14, maneuver 14, melee combat 13, melee parry 13, stealth 14, unarmed combat 13, unarmed parry 13

### DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 10, missile weapons 10

### ENDURANCE 13

### STRENGTH 11

### TOUGHNESS 12

### INTELLECT 9

Deduction 10, perception 12, tracking 15, trick 13

### MIND 8

### CONFIDENCE 10

Faith: Dirak 13, intimidation 13, survival: desert 13, willpower 13

### CHARISMA 4

### Life Points: 3

### Loot: 2 in 10

**Equipment:** Blood Men come from diverse origins and so carry many types of weapons, armor, and other tools. Most strip down to the bare essentials shortly after becoming Blood Men, discarding anything that won't help them hunt prey.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Blood Men are intent on only one thing — drinking blood. If they do not have at least one gallon of blood per day, they go into *kunasi*, or torpor. When this happens their Strength and Endurance (and thus their Toughness) are raised by +3 each. Their Mind and Intellect are lowered by -3. Blood Men in torpor lose control of them-

selves and hunt for prey in a berserk fury. They cannot regain their self-control until they consume several pints of fresh, warm blood.

When not frenetic killing machines, Blood Men can be quite clever. Some have been known to bury themselves in loose sand near an oasis and spring up to attack anything that approaches. Others have crushed caravan guards with boulders rolled off of rocky desert passes.

## DUNERS

*It seems the Dirak was once home to a race of giants. They aren't around anymore, but a few have lingered on as Undead. Duners get their name from the way they cover themselves in sand — like a giant dune. Whenever anyone gets too close, the skeletal giant bursts out of the sand and attacks. Duners never attack animals or unintelligent beasts. A few Amba I know even say that a duner won't come out of its mound unless it hears speech. If this is true, then it's one more reason why you should keep quiet like I told you.*

*Since duners are basically mindless Undead, they can hide under the sand for a long, long time. I think these things may have been created as ambushers or "listening posts" in the first Godwar. If so, could their master have been Dirak himself?*

## DUNER

### AGILITY 9

Maneuver 11, melee combat 13 (club 15), stealth 11

### DEXTERITY 6

### ENDURANCE 16

### STRENGTH 18

### TOUGHNESS 20

### INTELLECT 2

Camouflage 14, perception 14

### MIND 2

### CONFIDENCE 13

Intimidation 15

### CHARISMA 2

Life Points: 2

Loot: 2 in 10

**Equipment:** Bone club, damage value STR+4/22



Marshall Andrews III

## PIT MOUTHS

So you're walking along, minding your own business, keeping quiet like Buck told you, and all of a sudden, the ground opens up and swallows you whole. It's not fair. That's why I keep telling you to stay out of the Dirak if you can help it — it's not fair!

This particular critter really plays dirty. It burrows into the sand and waits until something walks atop it. Then it opens up its huge mouth, making a hole 2–3 meters across! A ton of sand just disappears down that nasty gullet, and guess who falls along with it? If this happens to you, you're going to have to crawl out of all the sand plus cut or blast the pit mouth open. You'll be running out of air, so be quick. Trigger-happy companions might get you killed here. If they start shooting the thing, those rounds will probably do more damage to you than to it. Your best bet is for everyone to break out their trusty knives and start carving. Fast.

## PIT MOUTH

**AGILITY 3**

**DEXTERITY 1**

**ENDURANCE 15**

**STRENGTH 14**

**TOUGHNESS 15**

**INTELLECT 2**

Camouflage 15, perception (smell 15), trick 15

**MIND 2**

**CONFIDENCE 9**

Intimidation 13

**CHARISMA 4**

**Life Points: 1**

**Roleplaying Notes:** Whenever a character walks over a pit mouth, the gamemaster should roll a *trick* total for the creature. Characters that are acting cautiously (or *creeping*) get an *active defense*, all others do not. If the pit mouth gets a result of *untrained* or better, the character (and any mount he was riding) fall into its huge maw. Pit mouths cannot actually



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bite or chew because of all the sand that falls into their throat. Instead, they wait until the victim has suffocated. Then they expel the sand and eat the prey at their own leisure.

Escaping a pit mouth is handled just like being buried alive in a "Desert Twister" (see above). Step D, however, requires the character to cause at least one wound to the pit mouth. This indicates that he has torn open a hole large enough to crawl through. Critical Problems are handled as listed under "Desert Twisters." Complications and Possible Setbacks are ignored.

## RANTAN, WILD

*These are the same lizards that the outpost near Selastos sells as mounts. If you spot them out in the wild, you'll appreciate how much hell those guys have gone through to train these ornery things. Rantan are like little stompers: they're fast, they're mean, and they like to eat — a lot. If they see you, they'll hunt you. If there's only a few, you might be able to put them down. If the odds are two to one or better, you'd better find some shelter fast.*

## RANTAN

### AGILITY 11

Climbing 12, dodge 12, long jumping 14, maneuver 13, running 13, stealth 12, unarmed combat 14

### DEXTERITY 7

### ENDURANCE 13

### STRENGTH 13

Resist shock 15

### TOUGHNESS 12/14

### INTELLECT 4

Perception 9 (smell 13), trick (6)

### MIND 3

### CONFIDENCE 11

Intimidation 13, survival: desert 13

### CHARISMA 6

Life Points: 1

Loot: 1

**Natural Tools:** Scaly hide, armor value +2/14, claws, damage value STR+3/16, bite, damage value STR+1/14.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Wild rantan are fast and vicious hunters. They hunt in packs of 1–10 and, like wolves, are excellent at using their numbers to herd prey into a trap. Rantan are cunning and courageous, but they also know

when to back off. If a third of their number is slain or disabled, the rest will flee.

## SANDMEN

*Some of the strangest sentients you'll meet in the Dirak are the Sandmen. Their bodies are made up of nothing but sand crystals! They can rearrange these however they want, harden them like stone, or "melt" into natural sand and disappear. And maybe even stranger, most of these guys are actually nice! If anyone helps you out in the Dirak, it'll be the Sandmen.*

*I've never seen a Sandman community or even a family. They all seem to be loners. Most claim that they're the "Sentinels of the Sands," and that it's their job to fight the evil of the Syllis and Dirak. I don't know about you, but I think that's a lot more bizarre than their amorphous body.*

## STANDARD SANDMAN

### AGILITY 15

Climbing 16, dodge 16, maneuver 17, melee combat 15 (sword 17), melee parry 17

### DEXTERITY 9

Thrown weapons 11

### ENDURANCE 15

### STRENGTH 14

Resist shock 17

### TOUGHNESS 15

### INTELLECT 9

Camouflage 11, deduction 10, perception 11, tracking 11, trick 11

### MIND 8

### CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 12, survival: desert 14 (Dirak 16)

### CHARISMA 7

Shapeshifting 10

**Life Points:** 7

**Background:** All Sandmen in the Dirak were created by a long-dead sorcerer, Alazam (see above). Alazam wanted to establish a city in the desert, but knew that the terrible creatures lurking there would keep away any sane settlers. He created the Sandmen to tame the land. Perhaps they would have been successful if one of their own hadn't turned against them and destroyed many of the other Sandmen. It was this lone Sandman, Syllis, that destroyed his creator and doomed the race to eventual extinction. The survivors continue the fight to this day. There are perhaps

only twenty to thirty Sandmen left in the Dirak.

## SANDSHARKS

*One of the most voracious predators in the Dirak is the sandshark. These nasty critters look a lot like regular sharks, except they have longer and wider fins to propel them through the thick sand lakes. They also have leathery, ridged skin to protect them from their abrasive environment. Sandsharks hunt in packs of 5-10, though I've seen a few really big ones hunt alone.*

*Sandsharks can sense prey moving around them up to a hundred meters or so — or at least that's the conventional wisdom. If you think some might be lurking about, stay on packed earth. Sandsharks can't go through solid dirt like queskworms can.*

### STANDARD SANDSHARK

#### AGILITY 13

Maneuver 14, stealth 14, swimming 15, unarmed combat 14

#### DEXTERITY 5

#### ENDURANCE 12

#### STRENGTH 12

#### TOUGHNESS 12

#### INTELLECT 2

Trick 5

#### MIND 2

#### CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 13

#### CHARISMA 3

Life Points: 1

Loot: 2 in 10

**Natural Tools:** Teeth, damage value STR+4/16; leathery hide, armor value TOU +2/14

## STOMPERS

*The biggest, meanest lizard in the Dirak is called a stomper. These things are a good thirty meters tall with a head the size of a horse and teeth as big as your hand. Fortunately, there aren't many stompers — I suppose there isn't enough game to support more than a few. If you hear the ground shaking around you, it's probably a stomper and you'd better hide somewhere quick. They may look slow, but once a*

## BACKGROUND NOTES: SANDMEN

### Advantages/Compensations

2 CIII, 1 CV

### Mandatory A/C

**Advantages:** Environmental Tolerance (CIII): Sandmen do not need to breathe and are not affected by temperature; Long Life Span (CIII): Sandmen do not die of old age; Malleable Form (CV): A sandman's body can assume any form, but it cannot change volume and it will still look like sand. Wounds sustained are regenerated at the rate of 1 shock every round, a K or an O every two rounds, and a wound every 3 rounds.

**Compensations:** Quirk (CIII): A Sandman must always help those who ask for it (provided the individual is not known to be evil). They must also attempt to kill any "savage" beast they encounter, and will never back down until dead; Achilles Heel (CIII): Sandmen cannot control the composition of their body while in water. If they are ever trapped in a body of water, they will "melt" and cannot reassemble themselves unless every grain of sand is extracted and dried. Water thrown on a Sandman will cause two shock points of damage. If this damage ever equals their Toughness, they are effectively dissolved and cannot reassemble themselves until dried. Finally, if a "dissolved" Sandman is spread out over an area greater than 25 meters, he cannot reassemble himself even after drying out; Environmental Intolerance (CV): no Sandman may leave the Dirak Desert until the city of Alazam is established. Their eternal quest is to cleanse the area around Alazam of anything that might cause harm to potential settlers.

### Recommended A/C

**Advantages:** No more are allowed.

**Disadvantages:** No more are allowed.

*stomper spots prey, you wouldn't believe how fast it can move.*

## STOMPER

### AGILITY 10

Climbing 11, dodge 11, long jumping 11, maneuver 12, running 12, unarmed combat 13

### DEXTERITY 4

### ENDURANCE 22

### STRENGTH 24

### TOUGHNESS 22/24

### INTELLECT 3

Perception (smell) 14, tracking 5, trick 5

### MIND 3

### CONFIDENCE 11

Intimidation 15

### CHARISMA 4

### Life Points: 1

**Natural Tools:** Scaly hide, armor value TOU+2/24; claws, damage value STR+3/27; bite, damage value STR+3/27.

## TRAPPERS

*I don't think a desert would be complete without some sort of tentacled monster lurking beneath the sand. Trappers are just that. They have a score of spiked, red-green tentacles all leading to a nasty looking nerve-bundle hidden beneath the sand. Walk over one and the tentacles tear up out of the ground and start ripping into you. If you can find the nerve bundle, it's fairly soft and easy to kill. Unfortunately, the bundle's usually two meters below the sand.*

## TRAPPERS

### AGILITY 13

Maneuver 16

### DEXTERITY 4

### ENDURANCE 12

### STRENGTH 16

### TOUGHNESS 14

### INTELLECT 2

Camouflage 13, perception 6 (smell 14), trick 12

### MIND 2

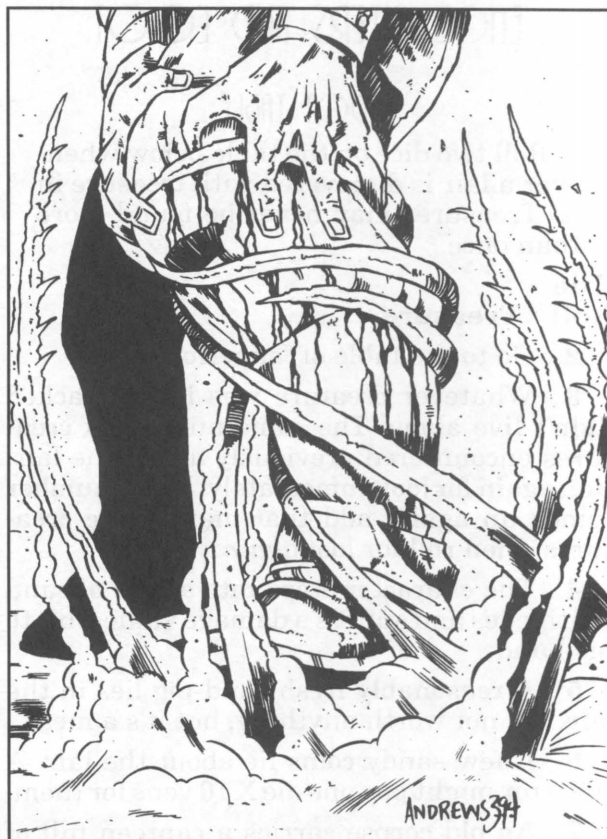
### CONFIDENCE 8

Intimidation 11, survival: desert 10

### CHARISMA 3

### Life Points: 2

### Loot: 1



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**Natural Tools:** Spiked tentacles, damage value STR+1/17. Each tentacle attempts to grapple with its prey, then the spines draw out the victim's blood. Every round that a character remains entangled, he takes one extra shock point due to blood loss, regardless of how much damage was caused that round. All of these creature's attacks use its *maneuver* skill.

To escape the trapper, a character must beat it in a contest of *maneuver* (exceptionally strong characters may try to use their Strength instead). If there are less than twelve victims, the trapper will use multiple tentacles on the same prey. Treat this as a Many-On-One attack.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Each tentacle is treated as a separate entity with the statistics listed above. Every two tentacles that are knocked "unconscious" or destroyed cause one wound to the creature itself. If characters can find the central nerve bundle of the trapper, it has a Toughness of 5.



## ENCOUNTERS AND LOOT

### LOOT TABLE

Roll two dice on the table below whenever a lair is discovered with treasure in it. Treasures may never be found more than once.

#### Die Roll Treasure

- 2 Go to the table of "superior" loot.
- 3 Whatever creature was being tracked didn't live alone. The same number of creatures encountered previously are in the lair. Roll again for loot immediately. If this number comes up again, add that many *more* creatures, then roll for loot *again*.
- 4 The character steps into a nest of sand centipedes and suffers a damage value 8 hit to his hand.
- 5 A reasonably fresh sand-pig lies in the lair. It's not worth anything, but it's a meal.
- 6 A few sandy coins lie about the lair. A collector might pay one die X 10 vens for them.
- 7 An old corpse carries a canteen full of water.
- 8 The creature's lair is a small cave with a natural spring inside. There are also a few pieces of simple jewelry mixed in with some gnawed bones (value two dice X 20 vens).
- 9 A pouch on an Amba corpse contains 3 gemstones. Each one is worth one die X 50 vens.
- 10 On a mummified corpse is a Gelvash "Thunder" Shotgun with 1-10 shells. Three are runelugs with the *lightning bolt* spell impressed upon them.
- 11 A well-equipped adventurer lies dead in this lair. He carries a gallon of water (stale but still good), a machete (damage value STR+4), and a Gelvash shotgun. On his finger is a silver ring worth 150 vens.
- 12 The creature's lair lies in a shallow cave full of sand-rats. Embedded in the wall just out of reach are several large gemstones worth 3,500 vens altogether.

### SAND-RAT SWARM

#### AGILITY 12

Climbing 18, unarmed combat 14

#### DEXTERITY 4

#### ENDURANCE 6

#### STRENGTH 5

#### TOUGHNESS 6

#### INTELLECT 1

Trick 6

#### MIND 1

#### CONFIDENCE 4

Intimidation (5)

#### CHARISMA 1

**Life Points:** 1 per swarm

**Natural Tools:** Bite, damage value STR+1/6

**Roleplaying Notes:** Sand rats are treated as a swarm. They are timid creatures until cornered, in which case their *intimidation* skill is raised by +3.

**13** An old map shows the location of a cavern called the "Cave of Shadows." It's a long way off, giving the gamemaster plenty of time to create a mini-adventure of his own choosing deep in the Dirak Desert.

**14** In a small pool of water (half-gallon) is an old book. Most of the grimoire is rotted, but a character who takes the time to dry it out can learn one new spell of the gamemaster's choosing.

### ENCOUNTER TABLE

#### Encounter Level: 18

One die plus difference in *party stealth* and Encounter Level

2-3	Trapper
4-5	Duner
6-7	Pit Mouth
8	Sandman
9-10	Sandsharks (or 1-10 rogue Amba)
11-14	Blood Man
15	Sylis and 1-10 renegade Amba
16	1-10 Wild Rantan
17+	Stomper

**15** A black scroll tube is found amongst a clutter of other useless junk. Inside are two scrolls containing spells of the GM's choosing.

**16** Lying in the creature's lair are 1-5 gourds with magical runes painted on their surface. If a character actually eats the gourd, it will explode in their stomach, causing damage value 15. If someone in the party tries to read the runes, any sort of magical skill roll at a DN of 12 will reveal the command word used to make these gourds create a steady light.

**17** An old leather pouch containing a few ancient silver coins is dredged up from the sand lake. These are worth 1000 vens to an antique dealer.

**18** The searcher finds an old, seemingly worthless knife. If someone cleans it up, they'll see that it is extremely well made and has an incredibly sharp edge (damage value STR+18). The hilt is made of ivory.

**19** An ornate dagger lies under an old corpse in the creature's lair. Chaos symbols are carved on the blade's jade hilt. If thrown by a follower of Chaos, the blade will automatically hit its target as long as the victim is in range and at least some part of him is exposed (+20 to *thrown weapons* check for purposes of hitting only). Once imbedded, the dagger can only be pulled free by the person who threw it, by a *dispel magic* or similar spell, or after the target's death. As long as the dagger is imbedded in the flesh, the victim suffers excruciating pain and performs all actions at +2 DN.

**20** An ancient wand made of obsidian lies among a pile of old bones. The word "Alazam" is written on the side in tiny gemstones. When wielded by a mage, the wand adds +2 to any skill rolls used to cast spells.



CHAPTER  
FOUR

## THE ALERIOS JUNGLE

## THE REVENANT WAR

Five hundred years ago, the villagers of Telanna discovered sapphires in the rich soil beneath their homeland. Others soon heard the news, and the tiny town quickly grew too large for its borders. Like the roots of a great tree, the village began to expand, looking for new ground to support their existence. But the Telannans had little respect for the forest around them. They cleared the land for their city with fire and began constructing stone and metal buildings. The thoughtless Telannans destroyed more than just bark and leaf in their damning conflagration — eleven sacred *birth-trees* were burned as well.

*Birth-trees* are gateways to the spirit world of nature. The great spirits of the wood, the trees, the meadows, and all other natural things are brought into this world through the *birth-trees*. When these were destroyed in the Telannans' fire, scores of spawning nature spirits inside the *birth-trees* were destroyed as well.

The Telannans finished their great city and rested for eleven months before the nature spirits had their revenge. On the last day of the eleventh month, the great *birth-trees* returned, growing up out of the earth with lightning speed and bursting through the cobblestone streets. Buildings buckled and crumbled around them as the giant trees roared back into existence. Then the trees cracked, the bark splintering into eleven separate shards. Each of these shards gained life of its own and tore loose from its parent with a twisting, creaking, groan never heard by Human ears before or since. The splinters were unliving beings, the Undead forms of those unborn nature spirits slain eleven months prior. The "Bark men" tore through the streets of Telanna, setting it afire and slaughtering the citizens they encountered. Everyone they touched felt their heart turn to wood and explode in their chest, gory splinters of bark poking through their bleeding corpses. The Undead nature spirits reveled in



their grisly revenge.

But the people of Telanna weren't through. As the last fire in the city finally flickered and died, a few of the bloody, broken corpses began to twitch. Then, as one, the Telannans rose from the dead. Their bodies were shattered, but their hatred for the spirits of nature had given them new unlife. A war started that day, a war that has raged for generations. This is why we call this the Revenant War, because the soldiers who fight it will not even be stopped by death itself.

— as told by the Green Sage

## THE ALERIOS JUNGLE

*The southwestern edge of the Dirak Desert is bordered by the Ngutu Mountains. Like the Pendar range to the northeast, this high barrier blocks most moisture that might otherwise have swept into the desert. On the other side of the Ngutu is a sight most travelers won't believe when they see it — a steaming, tropical jungle.*

*Getting through this lush wilderness is as tough in its own way as trekking the Dirak. You won't have to worry about water anymore, but the thick growth of the Alerios Jungle hides more predators than you can shake a pointed stick at. If you can trade your water jugs for bullets, do it.*

## LIFE IN THE JUNGLE

*Hot and wet. That's what you're going to be whenever you're in the Alerios Jungle. Your clothes will stay drenched, your feet will squish, and you won't have to worry about taking those diet-cantrip pills anymore, 'cause you're gonna' sweat off several pounds. The plants will rake you, the insects will bite craters out of your skin, and all kinds of disgusting things will crawl into your boots at night. Have I scared you off yet? No? Well, I'll keep trying.*

*The Alerios is the lushest place I've ever been to. I don't mean it drinks a lot, smart-ass. I mean there's more green things per square meter than anywhere else on Marl. The jungle floor is a carpet of creeping vines, huge ferns, and tall grass. You'll see mosses, molds, and fungi in colors you've never imagined. High above the dripping canopy is another world,*

*also thick with vines and leaves. You'll hear a lot more up there than you'll ever see. Things leap from branch to branch high overhead and chitter at you from unseen perches. Other things scurry beneath the dewy ferns with only a rustle and a few shaking fronds a sign of its passage.*

*All of this stuff will get the better of you if you don't know what you're doing. So listen up. I don't like to repeat myself.*

## SURVIVAL TIPS

*Bring a bug-net. Sleep without one and you'll look like you've got measles in the morning. If you've got a horse or a rantan, buy one for him too. Another thing that'll cut down on the bug problem is a magical bug lamp that entraps and zaps the stupid critters by its glow. When you're moving you can smear repellent on your skin. Get the right stuff from the outfitters and you can hide your own scent as well. Your team will appreciate it, I'm sure, but it'll also make it harder for critters to smell you out.*

*You won't find many trails in the jungle, so you're going to need a machete to help you through the thickest parts. That makes a whole hell of a lot of noise, though, so make sure your buddies are paying attention if you're the one blazing the trail.*

*Characters will suffer from constant abuse in the Alerios Jungle. Bugs, thorny plants, and treacherous footing will all conspire to keep a traveler battered and bruised.*

*At night, characters without some means of keeping away insects become a smorgasbord. This has two effects. First, the DN of all healing rolls is raised by +1 as insects get into wounds and start new infections. The second effect is that characters become irritable and short-tempered from the constant itching. This lowers Charisma by -1. Any treatment or spell that can relieve the terrible itching will eliminate this penalty. Also, anyone with *survival: jungle* skill can make a numbing poultice that will stop the itching on a DN roll of 12.*

## NATURAL HAZARDS

*Carnivorous plants are your greatest worry in the Alerios. I don't know about you, but when the vegetables start biting back, I get a little unnerved.*

## BLEED WEED

All you Vampires out there better watch out for this stuff. Bleed weed will turn the tables on you faster than you can turn to mist. Bleed weed looks just like any other thorny vine and grows in dense tangles. When you step in it, the stuff springs to life and wraps around your legs. When it starts constricting, all the little thorns poke through your skin and start sucking out blood. The vine will eventually get thick and bloated enough to drop off on its own, but you'll probably look like a mummy by then.

I've heard that someone in Galitia has found a use for this particular weed. She got some of this stuff's seeds from a courier and managed to off a Vampire that had wronged her. I hope that the courier got a lot of money from the gal, 'cause I certainly wouldn't want to fight this weed for its seeds without getting a large sum out of it.

### BLEED WEED PATCH

#### AGILITY 13

Maneuver 14, unarmed combat 15

#### DEXTERITY 5

#### ENDURANCE 10

#### STRENGTH 12

#### TOUGHNESS 11

#### INTELLECT 0

#### MIND 0

#### CONFIDENCE 0

#### CHARISMA 0

Life Points: 0

**Natural Tools:** Blood drain, treat as life drain attack on target's physical attributes, armor does not protect.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Characters trapped in patches of bleed weed need to beat the thing in a contest of strength to escape.

If some characters wish to collect the seed from this weed, they must generate a *maneuver* total of 15 to retrieve the seed. The seeds of this weed are usually near the outer part of the tangle. If the character fails the *maneuver*, then she becomes trapped in the bleed weed. If the character succeeds, then she has managed to pluck a seed from the vine. At this point, the character should make another *maneuver* against the weed's *maneuver* to avoid being pulled in.

## SLUMBER BERRIES

These things are an insomniac's best friend. Eat a handful and you'll be sawing logs by the time they hit your stomach. They must be magical, 'cause I've even seen Taxim go down after dropping a few of these down their throat. Slumber berries are red, round, and have a shiny coating. If you don't mind taking a hard nap, they're good eating.

For those of you with an interest in herbs and stuff, you might want to collect these berries and make them into some kind of elixir. I've heard that some people have managed to sell vials of this stuff as both sedatives and poisons, depending on the strength of the dose.

Anyone who ingests at least a handful of slumber berries must make an Endurance total of 18 or more to stay awake. Each clump usually puts someone to sleep for a number of hours equal to their Endurance subtracted from 20. Even those who do manage to stay awake are lethargic for a similar duration. During this time their Agility and Strength are lowered by -3.

## SNAKE WEEDS

If you see a swarm of little green snakes wiggling around in the bush, they might actually be weeds. Snake weeds are ambulatory plants that roam the jungle in swarms of 10-100 individual cord-like leaves. Each cord has a fan of roots at its 'tail' that it uses to drain nutrients from its current location. They aren't intelligent, but they can seek sun-spots to engage in some floral sun-bathing. If you can catch them, they make a tasty stew. Snake weeds aren't dangerous either, though I've seen a few real snakes hiding amongst them from time to time.

### SNAKE WEED (10-100)

#### AGILITY 13

Maneuver 14

#### DEXTERITY 3

#### STRENGTH 1

#### ENDURANCE 1

#### TOUGHNESS 1

#### INTELLECT 0

#### MIND 0

#### CONFIDENCE 0

#### CHARISMA 0

Life Points: 0

## VEIN BERRIES

*You're walking down the trail and you spot some delicious-looking berries. You pop a few in your mouth, grin like an idiot at the taste, and keep on going. About an hour later, you can see your veins through your skin. Clearly. Then you notice your heart's pumping a mile a minute, and your sweat's starting to look a little bloody. You can taste it in your slobber, your eyes are shot straight through, and your head begins to pound like it's going to explode. Guess what? It is.*

*Vein berry bushes have a very unique method of reproduction. Anyone who eats their berries starts manufacturing more blood than their body can handle, and eventually, their veins and arteries rupture. When your corpse collapses somewhere, all your blood, now filled with microscopic vein berry seeds, pumps out into the ground and gives rise to a whole new bush. Pleasant, isn't it?*

*If you're dumb enough to eat these things, you'd better have a mage handy. If he can slow down your metabolism, you might just ride it*

*out. Sleep spells usually do the trick, as will slumber berries. Trouble is, slumber and vein berries are identical. Good luck.*

*I know that some of you out there are wondering about the possible herbal qualities of this plant. Well, it has one that I know of. Poison, pure and simple. Other than that, you're on your own.*

Any character with a normal circulatory system who ingests a vein berry will die within one hour. Any spell that slows the metabolism, such as *sleep*, will save the victim's life, though he will still take damage value 14 plus the bonus. A slumber berry has a similar effect.

Those who feed off of blood, such as Vampires, actually get a temporary boost from these berries. An ingestion will raise Strength and Endurance by +3 for one hour. Eating more than a handful at once will have no further effect.

## WHIP STALKS

*I really hate these things. You're walking along, minding your own business, when this big spiked bamboo cane lashes out and smacks you across the bridge of the nose. It sounds silly, but I've seen guys killed by this stuff in a single blow.*





## WHIP STALK

### AGILITY 13

Maneuver 14, unarmed combat 16

### DEXTERITY 0

### ENDURANCE 8

### STRENGTH 14

### TOUGHNESS 11/12

### INTELLECT 0

### MIND 0

### CONFIDENCE 0

### CHARISMA 0

### Life Points: 0

**Natural Tools:** Spiny bark, armor value TOU+1/12; whip attack, damage value STR+1/15.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Whip stalks aren't intelligent, but they can somehow sense where most creature's heads are. This is its usual target. With complete surprise and the penalty for a called shot to the head, the whip stalk's penalty is usually only -3 (-8 for the head shot, +5 for complete surprise). The damage bonus is a total of +10 (+12 for the head shot, -2 for complete surprise).

## DARK HEART

*Someone once told me that the jungle was alive. I thought he meant that it was full of living things, but now I think he meant something else. I'll tell you about the Dark Heart and you can decide for yourself if it makes any sense. I've never actually seen the thing, but supposedly there's a giant, dark heart beating in the center of the Alerios Jungle. If you ever try to harm it, so the legend goes, the jungle will come alive and protect itself. If you manage to win, the entire jungle will die. The Green Sage, a local wilder, acts like this would be a bad thing. Me? I'd just as soon watch the whole thing burn, baby. Environmentalism was never my strong point.*

## VALLEY OF THE DARK HEART

*The Dark Heart beats in a hidden valley deep in the Alerios Jungle. There are many kilometers of dangerous jungle to traverse before you can even get near this place. Actually, don't go there at all. Why the hell would anyone want to get themselves killed looking for a heart that might not exist, and if it does, is*

*guarded by a giant guardian that you can't kill?*

## THE DARK HEART

*The jungle may or may not be alive, but it is true that a giant, beating heart hangs in a dense tangle of vines in the center of the Alerios. The heart is dark green in color with pulsing vines pumping green blood in one side and out the other. The vines continue from the heart into the earth itself, lending credence to the rumor that this thing is the living center of the Alerios Jungle. It has a Toughness of 24, but its main line of defense is the Guardian.*

*If anyone intent on harming the heart gets within sight, a giant creature of earth and vegetation rises from the ground to attack.*

## THE GUARDIAN

### AGILITY 10

Maneuver 11, unarmed combat 14

### DEXTERITY 8

### ENDURANCE 26

### STRENGTH 32

### TOUGHNESS 28

### INTELLECT 4

Perception 24, tracking 24

### MIND 3

### CONFIDENCE 20

Intimidation (30), willpower 22

### CHARISMA 8

### Life Points: 6

### Loot: 4 in 10

**Roleplaying Notes:** The Guardian is a 10-meter-tall mass of living earth and vegetation. It is "wired" into every living thing in the Alerios Jungle, and so is very hard to escape. The Guardian can sense any foreign presence that is in contact with living vegetation, or that can be seen by the unintelligent beasts or insects (hence the high *perception*). If it is summoned by the Dark Heart, it will not stop until whatever threatened the heart is dead or has left the borders of the Alerios Jungle.

If the Guardian is slain, another will rise from the jungle floor one minute later. Guardians always arise near the heart, so characters who manage to defeat one away from the area might have time to escape. The only way to permanently destroy the Guardians is to destroy the Dark Heart. It is rumored this will have other consequences as well ...

## TELANNA RUINS

*Here's living proof for the argument that Mother Nature always wins. After the Telannans built this place, the Bark men tore it to hell. Now the Undead occupants are content to let it grow over in an ironic tangle of metal and vine. Telannans aren't particularly evil people, but they've got a hate streak in 'em a mile wide. They probably won't attack you (unless it looks like you're working for the Bark men), but don't expect 'em to be very sociable either.*

*Telannans like to use spike launchers as their missile weapons. These are simply iron pipes with a magical spike inside. They whisper a word and the spike shoots out with the power of a crossbow. In hand-to-hand fights, the Telannans favor sharpened spears made of long, rusty pipes.*

*If you go into the ruins, watch out for the Telannan "pets." Certain wizards in their community like to create magical monsters of vegetation, metal, and animal corpses. These nasty*

*things will usually attack anything they see that isn't a Telannan.*

Today, several hundred adult Undead Telannans inhabit the charred ruins of their precious city. There are no Telannan children. The Bark men frequently lurk nearby, hiding in the dense forests of the Alerios. The two magical races detest each other with every fiber of their being and fight constantly. Outsiders, like the settlers at Nora's Dream, are either considered tools to be used in exterminating the enemy, or tools of the enemy.

The blackened ruins of Telanna itself are still visible beneath the intruding vegetation of the jungle. The frames of buildings look like giant skeletons dripping with leafy vines, a subtle reminder of who won this tragic fight.

**1. Observatory:** The Telannan wizards reside in this once grand ruin. Atop the dingy white stone walls is a great observatory of glass. The Bark men destroyed the huge telescope within, but the Telannans have since repaired some of the damage. It can no longer peer out at the stars, but it can watch the tree line for signs of barkers.

The second floor of the observatory is used for bizarre experiments with vegetation, steel, and captured beasts. The Telannan wizards, once renowned for their amazing astrological knowledge, now make only grisly monsters to hunt down the hated Bark men.

### TYPICAL CREATION

#### AGILITY 10

Acrobatics 11, climbing 12, maneuver 12, stealth 12, unarmed combat 13

#### DEXTERITY 8

#### ENDURANCE 16

#### STRENGTH 17

#### TOUGHNESS 17

#### INTELLECT 2

Perception: smell 14, tracking 5

#### MIND 2

#### CONFIDENCE 11

Intimidation 15

#### CHARISMA 4

Life Points: 1

Loot: 0

**Natural Tools:** Metal claws, damage value STR+5/2; metal teeth, damage value STR+3/20.

**Roleplaying Notes:** These creatures used



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to be bears, jaguars and other beasts. The Telannans capture them and implant steel claws and teeth in them with their dark sorcery. Creations are trained to kill anything they see besides a Telannan. The statistics above are for the most common monsters made by the Telannan sorcerers. There are others that are far more unique and terrible.

## TYPICAL TELANNAN SORCERER

### AGILITY 9

Maneuver 10, melee combat 10, melee parry 10, stealth 11, unarmed combat 10

### DEXTERITY 8

Missile weapons 10

### ENDURANCE 6

### STRENGTH 6

### TOUGHNESS 7

### INTELLECT 10

Apportation: technomancy 12, apportation: vitomancy 12, divination: wizardry 11, perception 12, trick 12

### MIND 9

### CONFIDENCE 9

Alteration: technomancy 11, alteration: wizardry 11, intimidation 9, survival: jungle 9, willpower 9

### CHARISMA 6

Taunt 7

### Life Points: 3

**Arcane Knowledges:** Metal 3, wizardry 1, plant 2

**Spells:** *Alarm of Groaning Steel* (as *alarm* but with the skill *alteration: technomancy* and the arcane knowledge of *metal*); *animate golem* (as normal though these creatures are made from the twisted ruins of Telanna, and use the *alteration: technomancy* skill with *steel* as the arcane knowledge, the thing's Toughness is 18); *bullet*; *plant cuffs*; *rain of razors*; *sense Bark men* (as *sense Undead* with *plant* as the arcane knowledge).

**Equipment:** Spike launcher, range 3-10/50/100/200, damage value 17 plus possible disease; see below. They never wear armor. Telannans may also carry sharpened metal pipes taken from the ruins of their city (damage value STR+4/12).

**Roleplaying Notes:** Telannan sorcerers are exaggerated versions of their hateful brothers and sisters. Every spell they cast and experiment they conduct has only one goal: the annihilation of the Bark men.

## BACKGROUND NOTES: TELANNAN

### Advantages/Compensations

2CI, 1 CII, 2CIII

### Mandatory A/C

*Advantages:* None

*Compensations:* Advantage Flaw (CIII): Rot I, Stench; Quirk (CII): violent hatred for all Bark men; Advantage Flaw (CIII): Nutritional Requirement, blood.

### Recommended A/C

*Advantages:* Any

*Disadvantages:* Any

### Restricted A/C

Telannans may never take Advantages that improve their interaction abilities.

**2: Telannan Homes:** Only the wizards live in the observatory. All other Telannans live in the scattered ruins about the village. Anywhere from two to twenty Telannans might live in a building, depending on its size.

## STANDARD TELANNAN

### AGILITY 10

Climbing 13, dodge 11, maneuver 11, melee combat 12, melee parry 12, stealth 12, unarmed combat 11

### DEXTERITY 9

Missile weapons 12

### ENDURANCE 8

### STRENGTH 8

### TOUGHNESS 9

### INTELLECT 7

Camouflage 8, perception 9, tracking 8, trick 9

### MIND 7

### CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 9, survival: jungle 9, willpower 9

### CHARISMA 6

Taunt 7

### Life Points: 3

**Equipment:** Spike launcher, range 3-10/50/100/200, damage value 17 plus possible disease; see below. They never wear armor. Telannans may also carry sharpened metal pipes taken from the ruins of their city (damage value STR+4/12).

**Roleplaying Notes:** Telannans are ancient Undead. Their bodies are twisted and bat-





## TELANNAN SPIKE LAUNCHERS

Telannan wizards have developed a special version of the *bullet* spell. They impress the spell onto metal stakes which are then loaded into long iron pipes. When a command word is spoken, the spell is triggered and launches the stake. It is guided by the pipe, and so fires much like a crossbow. The distinctive sound of the spell makes the pipe seem even more like a firearm. Once impressed, the user must roll a *fire combat* total to effectively employ the weapon. Telannans will never sell these weapons, but may trade for more devastating weapons or favors.

All of the Telannans spikes are rusty and covered with filth. Any living character struck by one must make an Endurance roll versus a DN of 8 with a +2 modifier per Wound Level to avoid catching some infection. Those who are infected will know it within 24 hours. The wound will become swollen and grotesque and will not heal. No natural healing rolls may be taken until the infection is healed (*medicine* total of 13). Every day, the patient's Endurance goes down by -1. If Endurance reaches zero, the character has died.

**Telannan Spike Launcher:** Range 3-10/50/100/200; damage value 17.

tered from generations of abuse and jungle fungus. They may "heal" injuries, but the damage still shows. To top off their gruesome appearance, shards of wood jut from their chests. These are the remnants of an exploding heart, the strange attack form of the Bark men.

**3. Bloody Stream:** The tributary that runs through the center of the Telanna village was once clear. Strangely, after the Telannans were slain and rose from the dead, the section from the waterfall to the jungle began to run thick with blood. Vampires, Telannans, and other blood-drinkers can drink the stuff normally, fulfilling their nutritional requirements for days. Rows of vein berries grow on either side as well.

**4. Bridge:** The bridge that once spanned

the five meter wide spring was destroyed by the Bark men long ago. The Telannans have left it that way as a natural barrier to Bark men attacks. Characters must swim to the other side of the stream if they wish to cross. Anyone who does so will be drenched in blood, attracting the attention of creatures for hundreds of yards around (decrease *stealth* by -5 versus creatures who depend on smell).

**5. Waterfall:** Although the river is forever stained with blood, clear water still falls over the hill at its head. Beneath the waterfall is the Telannan's famed sapphire mine. There is always at least one "creation" guarding the entrance (see the "Observatory," above). A casual search of the mine will net an explorer 1-5 tiny sapphire flakes, each worth 2d10 X 30 vens. Larger stones can be found with picks, shovels, and a few days worth of searching.

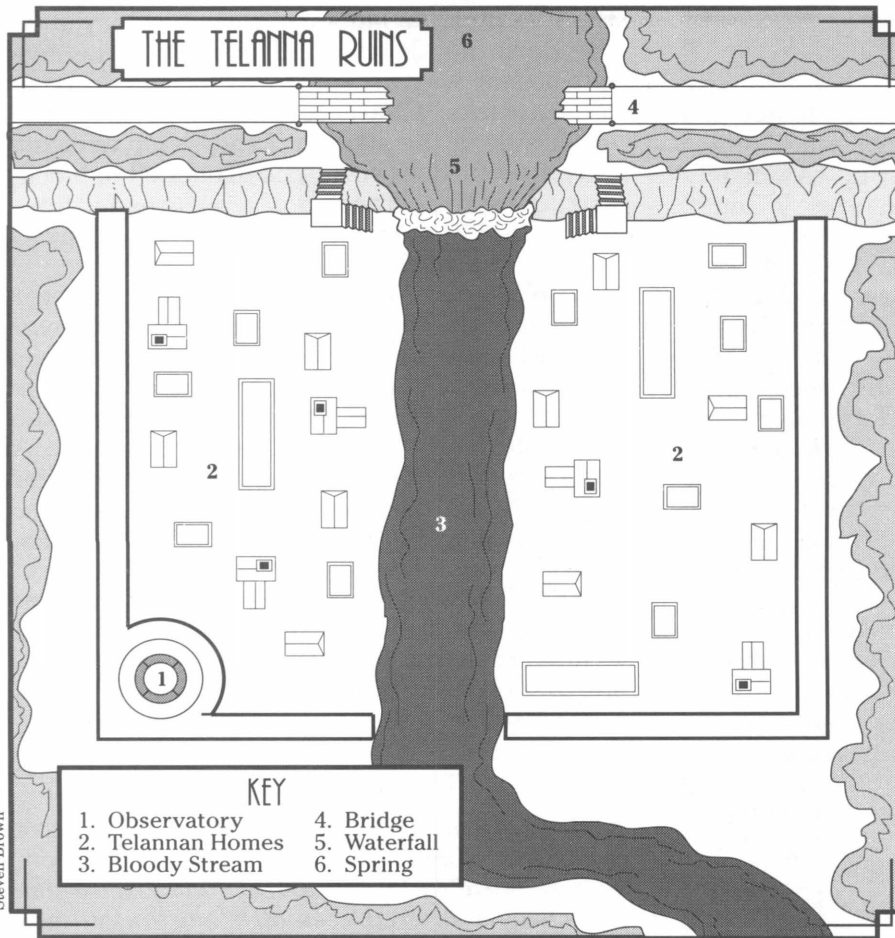
The Telannans have little use for the sapphires other than to trade with the occasional arms merchant. Still, anyone caught intruding in their mine will be treated as a Bark man sympathizer.

## BARK MEN

*Bark men are the Undead, immature revenants of spirits who were slain just before being "born" into the world. They look like scorched, splintered trees with long lanky limbs (no pun intended) and claws. Their eyes and mouths are simply jagged black holes in the surface of their thin bodies. They have no necks, but the upper part of their "trunk" bends and turns like a head. And whatever you do, don't let them touch you. They've got some kind of power in their creepy fingers that makes your heart explode in a burst of splinters. Bark men might have looked different if they'd actually made it into the world, but as Undead plants, they're downright creepy.*

*There are several hundred Bark men creeping around the outskirts of ruined Telanna. Those of you who side with them because they're the "guardians of nature" might be disappointed. These things are mean. They'll ambush most anything that passes by just to watch its heart burst out its chest. They never speak, and I'm not even sure they can hear. If they can — reasoning, bribes, and even threats don't seem to matter much — they'll still pop your ticker just for giggles and grins.*





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## STANDARD BARK MAN

### AGILITY 14

Acrobatics 15, climbing 16, dodge 15, long jumping 15, maneuver 15, stealth 16, unarmed combat 16

### DEXTERITY 11

Missile weapons 13

### ENDURANCE 10

### STRENGTH 10

### TOUGHNESS 11

### INTELLECT 7

Perception 9, tracking 9, trick 11

### MIND 7

### CONFIDENCE 8

Intimidation 9, survival: jungle 12, will-power 9

### CHARISMA 6

Taunt 9

### Life Points: 3

**Natural Tools:** Wooden claws, damage value STR+3/13; bite, damage value STR+5/

15; Touch of the Dark Heart. The Touch of the Dark Heart is a supernatural ability gained when the Bark men died and were later reborn as Undead. It supposedly comes from the Dark Heart of the forest itself, which the Telannans claim is the manifestation of all that is evil in nature.

To use the Touch, the Bark man must cause a wound or better on an *unarmed combat* attack. If successful, he can invoke the Touch, which does damage value 25.

### Roleplaying Notes:

Bark men never speak the language of man. They have their own language of eerie whistles and groans. The whistles sound like wind rustling through a lonely forest. The groans are the creaks of the trees swaying in those winds. They can understand other languages, but may never speak them. Bark men may communicate simple ideas

with their limbs or by shaking or nodding their heads.

## NORA'S DREAM

*You try to tell people to stay out of the Wilderness, but sometimes the riches laying around out there are just too great a temptation. Nora's Dream is like that. It's a tiny village on either side of a ford in the upper Roar. As fate would have it, this puts them smack dab in the middle of the Telannans and the Bark men. And if that isn't bad enough, there's always a few Drizzlers and Greeners looking to make the settlers into a wilder sandwich. So why do they stick around? Heartwood, friend. Expensive as hell, and as far as anybody knows, this is the only place to get it. Heartwood is good for a lot of things; it's hard as stone unless treated, in which case it's soft as cork. You can make most anything with it, and*



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it has a really classy dark, rich color. What really makes heartwood valuable, however, is its ability to store magical energy. Hold a lump of specially prepared and ritually carved heartwood in your hand and you'll find your spells won't wear you out as quick. A totem-heart supposedly lasts for a year after its tree is yanked out of the soil.

Heartwood trees are cut and treated in the village. They use a river freighter called the Tramp to pull the finished planks and magical hearts upstream.

## HEARTWOOD

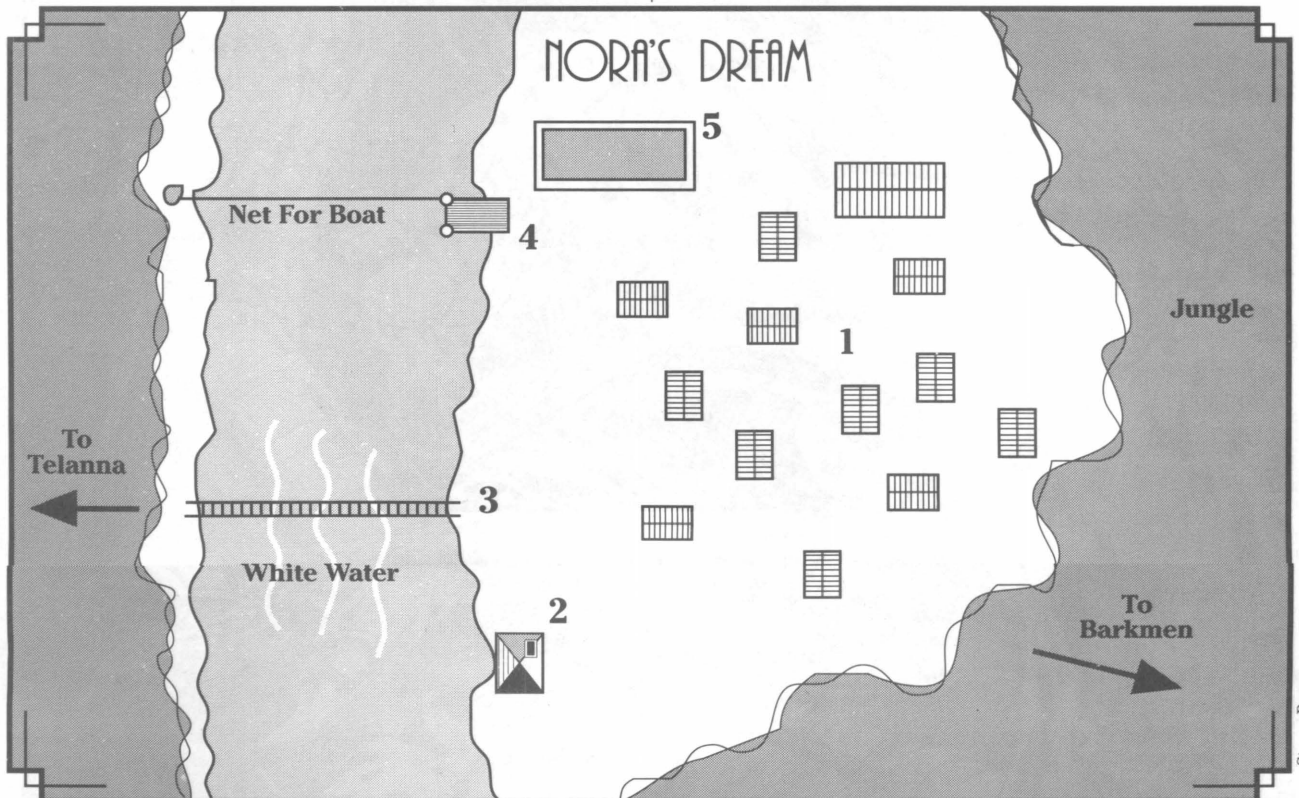
Besides being used for expensive but mundane products, these trees are carved into magical totems. The shape is always that of a stylized heart inscribed with runes that only the Telannans understand. Once prepared, the hearts can be sold to mages who need help resisting backlash. Their power lasts for 12 months from the day the tree was cut, so hearts are often sold at 100 vens for each month left in its 'life.' Whenever a mage wields one and casts a spell, he may add +2 to his spellcasting total for purposes of resisting backlash only.

## THE DREAMERS

Being a logging community puts the Dreamers squarely on the side of the Telannans, but their alliance is tenuous at best. The Telannans think the wilders are an occasionally useful tool, but are more often like burdensome children who are always asking for help against the things that creep through the Alerios. In fact, the Telannans are the ones that showed the Dreamers how to make totem-hearts, probably just so they'd shut up and leave them alone.

It's a little strange, but the Dreamers haven't built walls around their little piece of ground. I asked the founder, Nora herself, why, and she pointed at the high canopy overhead. "A wall wouldn't keep anything out," she told me, "but it would sure as hell keep us in." I thought about it for a while, and I'm not sure I agree. There are others who seemed to think a wall would be a good idea too, but I get the feeling this is an old debate with a lot of strong factions. So I followed my own advice and minded my own business.

The wilders at Nora's Dream are a tough bunch. I don't recommend getting on their bad



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side. If you can avoid offending them, and talking about the wall situation, they'll probably give you a meal and a place to stay for the night in exchange for news. Overall, this is a pretty good place to hole up if you need a break from the jungle. What you've really got to watch out for is a Bark man attack. If you're there when these things raid, you'll be expected to help defend the village. Those that don't help are booted out at the earliest opportunity.

## NORA'S FORD

Nora's Dream has an unusual origin. Nora was once involved with Harry Thorne, the captain of the Tramp. A few years ago, the two discovered the heartwood trees, and learned the technique for making totem-hearts from the Telannans. The two decided they'd settle here and make a business of it, using the Tramp to haul their goods back up the Roar to a trading post owned by merchants from Grand Eaton. But things didn't work out as planned. Harry and Nora had a falling out of epic proportions. Strangely, it was Harry that gave up on their dream, and the once prim and proper Nora that remained behind to make a go of it. By then a few wanderers at the trading post had already heard of their idea, and Nora was able to talk a handful of them into settling at what would become Nora's Dream, a name she chose to annoy her former lover. Harry wasn't a total fool, however, and managed to talk Nora into letting him haul the goods upstream as they had planned. Sparks fly when these two meet once a month, but their hateful words are only a ruse to protect emotions mutually crushed once before. It's obvious the two still love each other, but the Dreamers figure it's the boss' business, not their own.

**1. Village:** Thirty-two Humans, three Taxim, and one 'Shifter make a permanent home of Nora's Dream. Most are adults, though there are a few children present. Of the Humans, 22 of them are women. Most of these came here when they heard that a woman had settled and 'tamed' this wild land. Nora is well-liked in her community, but the women are especially loyal to her.

Occasionally, a wandering mage will come here to learn how totem-hearts are made. Nora allows these mages to stay and learn, but usually at a price. Generally, the price in-

cludes working for the community for the duration of the stay. Mages that don't like Nora's price have been known to try to contact the Telannan and learn the art from them. Very few actually manage to gain the knowledge that they want.

The buildings shown on the map are the homes of the Dreamers. These are all well-made from local timbers (not heartwood). Any settler accepted by the community will have help building her home, and the Dreamers usually make a party of it.

The larger building to the northeast is a community lodge used whenever the group needs to meet and discuss common concerns.

**2. Nora's Home:** Nora and Harry built their dream home before the argument that split them apart. It rests on a rocky overlook some ten feet above the cold waters of the Roar. By day, Nora is busy carving magical sigils on the totem-hearts that make her village famous. By night, she can often be found fishing from her porch hanging over the water.

## NORA ESCHLIN

### AGILITY 7

Climbing 9, dodge 9, maneuver 9, stealth 13, unarmed combat 8

### DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat: 15

### ENDURANCE 9

### STRENGTH 7

### TOUGHNESS 10

### INTELLECT 11

Deduction 13, divination: wizardry 12, navigation 12, perception 13, science: ecology 13, tracking 13, trick 14

### MIND 7

Artist: carving 12, business 10, conjuration: wizardry 9, medicine: herbal 10

### CONFIDENCE 10

Gambling 11, intimidation 13, survival: jungle 14, willpower 13

### CHARISMA 10

Charm 12, persuasion 11, taunt 11

### Life Points: 3

**Equipment:** Shotgun, damage 21, range 5-10/20/40/80, ammo 2; totem heart (+2 to spell totals for backlash only).

**Arcane Knowledges:** Magic 2

**Spells:** Alarm, detect magic

**Roleplaying Notes:** Nora was once a very



proper lady from Grand Eaton. Her adventures with Harry Thorne changed all that. Now she's likely to invite one into her house for cake and clean her shotgun while making small talk. Though she won't admit it to even herself, she still loves Harry and wants to rejoin him aboard the *Tramp*. If someone could ever get these two back together again, Nora might be persuaded to turn the whole heartwood operation over to them.

**3. Rope Bridge:** This is the only easy way to cross the Roar for twenty to thirty kilometers in either direction, although there are other, older bridges elsewhere. Nora used to post a guard to keep the Bark men from getting across, but her people don't really have the power to stop them. Leaving the bridge open allows them to pass *through* the village instead of in it. Though no one here knows it, the Bark men have a route through the canopy high above the Roar as well, but this way is much easier.

The rope bridge is not the sturdiest device. Anyone who crosses it must make an Agility or *maneuver* total of 8 or more. Failing by 1-2 points means the character falls but catches himself. He'll need to roll again to get across the bridge. Failing any roll by 3 points or greater means the character takes a spill into the Roar. Getting out should be a use of Dramatic Skill Resolution, with most *swimming* totals in the area of 14-16.

**4. Loading Dock:** This is where Harry Thorne docks his ship, the *Tramp*. The Dreamers stock wood planks and crates of totem hearts on the covered pier and await his monthly arrival. On his return, Harry gives them the cash from the last shipment, which usually ranges from 15-16,000 gelans. Harry also conducts a sort of "mail-order" service. The Dreamers tell him what they want and he picks it up for them for a 5% fee.

The *Tramp* is a steam-powered tug with a large rear deck for carrying smaller goods, and tows a barge for hauling planks and larger cargo. There are four other crewmen besides Harry.

Harry has run a sturdy net from the loading dock to the other side of the river that will catch the *Tramp* should it get loose from its moorings. This happened in the past during one of the Bark men raids. Luckily for Harry, some of his crewmen managed to leap onto the

ship and bring it back before it got too far.

## THE TRAMP

**Toughness 22**

**Speed 10**

**Maneuverability -1**

**Weaponry:** Chain-gun, range 10-75/150/300/600, damage value 29 (full-auto only, bonus is already added in), ammo 200, price 2,500 gelans (plus the cost of transportation). Chain-guns are large, water-cooled machine guns that fire .54 caliber rounds. A belt of 50 rounds costs 100 gelans. They require the *heavy weapons* skill to use properly.

## HARRY THORNE

**AGILITY 8**

Melee combat: machete 10, swimming 10, unarmed combat 9

**DEXTERITY 7**

Fire combat 9, gunnery 9, heavy weapons 9, thrown weapons: knife 9, vehicle piloting: ship 11

**ENDURANCE 7**

**STRENGTH 8**

**TOUGHNESS 9**

**INTELLECT 8**

Navigation 12, perception 10, trick 10, vehicle mechanic 9

**MIND 8**

**CONFIDENCE 8**

Gambling 10, intimidation 10

**CHARISMA 7**

Persuasion 9, taunt 8

**Life Points: 4**

**Equipment:** Guardian Rifle, range 5-20/75/200/300, damage value 21, ammo 6; machete, damage value STR+4/12.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Harry decided that he didn't really want to live in a place filled with mosquitoes, Undead, Bark men, and drizzlers. Nora thought the danger was worth the money, and the two went their separate ways.

## HARRY'S CREW

**AGILITY 8**

Melee combat 10, swimming 9, unarmed combat 9

**DEXTERITY 7**

Fire combat 9, gunnery 9, heavy weapons 9, thrown weapons 9, vehicle piloting: ship 8

**ENDURANCE 7**

**STRENGTH 8**



## TOUGHNESS 9

## INTELLECT 8

Navigation 10, perception 9, trick 10, vehicle mechanic 9

## MIND 8

## CONFIDENCE 8

Gambling 9, intimidation 10

## CHARISMA 7

Taunt 8

## Life Points: 2

**Equipment:** Guardian Rifle, range 5-20/75/200/300, damage value 21, ammo 6; knife damage value STR+2/13.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Harry's crew are all males, and most of them *really* look forward to the monthly visit to Nora's Dream. Almost all of them have a girlfriend there.

**5. Storage:** This building is used by the Dreamers to store the finished product that Harry sells.

## CRITTERS

*The Alerios Jungle is about hunting. If you're not one of the hunters, then I'll give you three guesses as to what that makes you. Listen to these words carefully, friend.*

## DIAMOND HEAD VIPERS

*Diamond heads are snakes with big mouths and nasty bites. Their poison won't kill you, but it'll paralyze you for a while. Diamond heads lurk in trees, on rocks, and most anywhere else you don't want them to be. I've heard that some of the bosses in the cities like to keep these snakes as pets. I think they're enough of a nuisance out here. Why take them into the city?*

## DIAMOND HEAD VIPER

### AGILITY 11

Climbing 14, long jumping 13, stealth 14, swimming 13, unarmed combat 13

### DEXTERITY 0

### ENDURANCE 5

### STRENGTH 3

### TOUGHNESS 6

### INTELLECT 1

Perception (vibrations) 14

### MIND 1

### CONFIDENCE 8

Intimidation 9

### CHARISMA 2

## Life Points: 0

## Loot: 0

**Natural Tools:** Bite, damage value STR+6/9; venom: any time damage is caused by a bite, the diamond head injects its poison. The victim must make an Endurance roll versus DN 14 or become paralyzed for 1-10 minutes.

## DRIZZLERS

*I don't know where everyone gets this crazy idea that nature's all good and fluffy inside. Every spirit of nature I've ever seen has been downright malicious. Take the Drizzlers for instance. These things are made of water and near-invisible if they're not moving around. Besides being hard to see, rain usually covers any sound or movement that might give them away. Drizzlers can mold their bodies just like sand men, and hide in puddles and ponds to attack you with complete surprise. If they can get you to drink them, you're dead, friend.*

*Drizzlers hunt Men, Barkers, Telannans, and just about anything else they see. Who knows why? They don't eat you, they don't take*



Kar Waller

your stuff — they just kill you and leave you lying in the jungle for the insects.

Fortunately, drizzlers can only come out when it's raining. Unfortunately, it rains a lot in the jungle. If one of these things starts ripping your party apart, you've got two choices. If you're the fastest runner, leave the others behind to distract the thing while you get away. If you're not the fastest runner, shoot all your faster friends in the leg, then run.

## DRIZZLERS

### AGILITY 13

Acrobatics 14, climbing 20, dodge 15, maneuver 15, stealth 18, unarmed combat 15, unarmed parry 15

### DEXTERITY 10

### ENDURANCE 10

### STRENGTH 14

### TOUGHNESS 12

### INTELLECT 11

Camouflage 20, perception 14, tracking 13, trick 14

### MIND 10

### CONFIDENCE 11

Intimidation 14, willpower 13

### CHARISMA 9

Shapeshifting 15

### Life Points: 2

### Loot: 0

**Natural Tools:** Attack form resistance (non-enchanted weapons, TOU+10/22). Drizzlers are resistant to normal weapons. Fire does +10 damage. Because of this, the most effective forms of attack or defense against Drizzlers would take the form of fire or heat attacks. Drizzlers can harden themselves to do damage, usually forming barbed arms that swipe at prey like scythes (damage value STR+4/18).

**Roleplaying Notes:** Drizzlers can take any form, though their volume may not change. Their natural form is roughly humanoid with no eyes and the jaws of a large predator. They like to rise up out of rain puddles and strike at victims from behind. They have also been known to hide in large pools of drinking water and expand as a victim takes a drink. This requires at least a *setback* result with the creature's *trick* skill.

## GATORS

The Roaring River is home to some nasty reptiles. You might also find them along the banks of the Roar's tributaries or even in large ponds. If you manage to get one, they make great boots.

## GATOR

### AGILITY 10

Maneuver 12, stealth 13, swimming 15, unarmed combat 12

### DEXTERITY 5

### ENDURANCE 11

### STRENGTH 13

### TOUGHNESS 11/13

### INTELLECT 3

Perception 11, trick 6

### MIND 2

### CONFIDENCE 8

Intimidation 10, survival: aquatic 11

### CHARISMA 4

### Life Points: 1

### Loot: 4 in 10

**Natural Tools:** Bite, damage value STR+3/16; leathery hide, armor value TOU+2/13; tail, damage value STR+2/15.

## GREENERS

Greeners are a malicious tribe of demonic manhunters. They consider anything that walks into their jungle fair game — literally. They get their name from their leafy, green skin, which keeps them near invisible in the leafy jungles. Greeners have solid black eyes, like sharks, and a row of jagged teeth that are made more for tearing than for biting.

Greeners live and hunt from the canopies of trees. They've supposedly got whole communities up there, but I've never seen one. Their favorite weapon is a spear made of a whip stalk. They hide on a high limb until prey comes along, then drop down on it from above. With a good jump behind it, the spear usually imbeds in the ground — after passing clean through its victim. Messy stuff.

## GREENER

### AGILITY 12

Acrobatics 14, climbing 14, dodge 13, long jumping 13, maneuver 14, melee combat 15, melee parry 14, stealth 15 (18)





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**DEXTERITY 10**

Thrown weapons 12

**ENDURANCE 10**

**STRENGTH 10**

**TOUGHNESS 11**

**INTELLECT 9**

Camouflage 14, perception 12, tracking 13, trick 14

**MIND 8**

**CONFIDENCE 12**

Intimidation 15, survival: jungle 13, will-power 14

**CHARISMA 7**

**Life Points:** 2

**Loot:** 4 in 10

**Natural Tools:** Leafy skin (+3 to *stealth*); teeth, damage value STR+1/11; whip stalk spear, damage value STR+6/16.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Greeners live for the hunt and love to cause terror in their prey. Most hunt in packs of 5–10, though a few particularly strong individuals hunt alone to prove their strength to the others. They like setting traps made of natural materials like swinging logs, snares, and pits filled with

living whip stalks. Another characteristic attack is the leap from above. A Greener who jumps down on his prey usually does so as an all-out attack with complete surprise.

Greeners live in small villages in the canopy of the Alerios. Characters searching for loot will have to go there to get it.

## NIPPER SWARM

*Nippers are two-foot long eels with oversized mouths. One or two can take a hunk of meat out of you. A swarm can bone a horse in thirty seconds. Any river in the Alerios is likely to have them. These things are so mean they've even been known to jump out and attack things on the bank. You men think about that the next time you take a leak in the river.*

## NIPPER SWARM

**AGILITY 12**

Long jumping 14, maneuver 13, swimming 15, unarmed combat 14

**DEXTERITY 0**

**ENDURANCE 11**

**STRENGTH 14**

**TOUGHNESS 12**

**INTELLECT 1**

**MIND 1**

**CONFIDENCE 15**

Intimidation (20)

**CHARISMA 2**

**Life Points:** 4 per swarm

**Loot:** 2 in 10

**Natural Tools:** Bite, damage value STR+3/17

**Roleplaying Notes:** Each swarm consists of around 25 nippers, and several swarms often hunt together. The statistics above are for the swarm as a whole; individual nippers are much weaker. Because nippers go after blood, they have a nasty tendency to attack their own wounded.

## PINHEADS

*Stupid name, right? I didn't name 'em. Just pay attention to my advice — you'd hate to get killed by something called a pinhead, wouldn't you?*

*Pinheads are reptilian birds the size of eagles. They dive down out of the sky and impale things on their long, sharp beaks. You won't know they're coming unless you watch the*



skies, so stay under cover when you're walking around.

## PINHEADS

### AGILITY 13

Dodge 15, flight 16, maneuver 14, stealth 14, unarmed combat 15

### DEXTERITY 3

### STRENGTH 6

### ENDURANCE 5

### TOUGHNESS 7

### INTELLECT 2

Perception 12

### MIND 2

### CONFIDENCE 6

### CHARISMA 3

Life Points: 1

Loot: 4 in 10

**Natural Tools:** Needle beak, damage value STR+3/9; on a dive, a needle beak will usually have complete surprise, plus a "dive" bonus of +4.

## ROCK SPIDERS

You'll find these nasty things lurking on rocks, often near water. If you're rafting, they'll probably jump into the boat with you — usually at the worst possible time. Rock spiders are like chameleons — they can blend in with whatever surface they're sitting on. That makes these foot-wide critters real hard to spot 'til they're bounding for your throat.

If you're interested in a way to profit from an encounter with this critter, you might want to keep the carcass and drag it into a town with you. I've heard that alchemists are interested in these spiders for some kind of new and improved invisibility potion.

## ROCK SPIDER

### AGILITY 13

Acrobatics 16, climbing 16, dodge 14, long jumping 18, maneuver 14, stealth 18, swimming 15, unarmed combat 15

### DEXTERITY 8

### ENDURANCE 6

### STRENGTH 3

### TOUGHNESS 6

### INTELLECT 1

Camouflage 16

### MIND 1

### CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 12

## CHARISMA 3

Life Points: 0

Loot: 1 in 10

**Natural Tools:** Bite, damage value STR+1/4; rock spiders always bite at soft flesh — treat this as a called shot to the head, neck, or other exposed area. They will usually have total surprise in the first round. If a bite causes even one result point of damage, the victim feels sluggish and lethargic. All skills are at -2 for the next fifteen minutes unless the poison is sucked out (a *first aid* roll of 12 or more in the round following the bite).

If the party is interested in trying to sell the spider to an alchemist, they could probably get around 100 vens for it. The spider is used to make the *blend* potion which is listed below.

## ENCOUNTERS AND LOOT

### LOOT TABLE

Roll two dice on the table below whenever a lair is discovered with treasure in it.



Jaime Lombardo & Ron Hill

## BLEND POTION

**Skill:** Alteration: vitomancy

**Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge:** Folk

**Difficulty Number:** 15

**Feedback:** 12

**Effect Value:** 20

**Range:** 0

**Speed:** 0

**Duration:** 18 (One hour)

**Cast Time:** 19 (100 minutes)

**Toxicity Damage:** 0/11

**Modifiers:**

Component: Eye of rock spider

Incantations: Litany at DN 12 vs. Mind

Focus: On target

Charges: 5 per potion

**Potion Notes:** This potion is made with an eye from a rock spider. The finished potion should be consumed by its owner. Once swallowed, the imbiber is able to "blend" more easily into whatever background there is. The effect value of the potion (20) should be compared to the imbiber's Agility on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. Then add the push value to the imbiber's *stealth* skill or his Agility. This potion is good only when attempting to use *stealth*.

### Die

### Roll Treasure

2 Go to the table of "superior" loot.

3 Whatever creature was being tracked didn't live alone. The same number of creatures encountered previously are in the lair. Roll again for loot immediately. If this number comes up again, add that many *more* creatures, then roll for loot *again*.

4 The creature's lair seems to be under an old tree. Or is that a Bark man?

5 The creature's lair seems to be under an old tree. A rock spider sits nearby.

6 The creature's lair seems to be under an old tree. A diamond head viper is coiled up inside.

7 A dead adventurer has a pair of leather breeches (armor value +1 to the legs only), but nothing else of worth.

8 The creature's lair seems to be under an old tree. Inside is a dead snake and an old diamond ring worth 100 vens.

9 A moldering corpse has a knife and 300 vens in its pockets.

10 The ancient tree the creature used as a lair is home to a Bark man. There's a 50-50 chance he's home. Draped from several of the limbs are Telannan corpses. Lying about the ground are rings, necklaces, and other jewelry worth 500 vens.

11 A decomposing Telannan lies trapped in the creature's lair. Her name is Julian, and she promises the character a sapphire (worth 200 vens) if he will pull her free.

12 A small pouch is tied to the body of a recent victim. Inside are Gwalion coins worth 450 gelans.

13 The creature's eggs or young lie inside the lair. Depending on the creature, these might be quite valuable.

14 The creature's lair is full of old bones. Lying near an old skull is a locket with a mysterious picture inside. An engraving on the inside says that the locket belongs to a powerful mage in Grand Eaton. If returned, the adventurer receives a great reward determined by the gamemaster.

15 A bizarre, red stone is clutched in a skeletal hand inside the creature's lair. This is a magical lodestone that gives its owner +2 in the arcane knowledge *earth*.

16 In an old holster is a six shot revolver. The weapon is useless, but the silver runeslugs inside add +1 to the user's *fire combat*.

17 In a leather bag in an old corpse's hand are four doses of a medicine that will cure any poison instantly.

18 A Karkas wizard lies half-eaten inside the creature's tree. His grimoire contains three spells chosen by the gamemaster. He also carries a .38, a silver dagger, and a ring that increases his Toughness by +1.



## ENCOUNTER TABLE

**Encounter Level: 18**

One die plus difference in *party stealth* and Encounter Level

Roll	Encounter
2-3	1-5 Drizzlers (accompanied by light (1-5) or heavy (6-10) rain)
4-5	Stream with 1-10 Nipper Swarms
6-7	1-5 Greeners
8	1-5 Bark Men
9	1-10 Gators (in pond or stream)
10	Diamond Head Viper
11	Diamond Head Nest (1-10 Vipers)
12	1-10 Pinheads
13-14	1-2 Rock Spiders
15+	1-10 Telannans

**19** In the creature's lair is a large sack filled with skulls. Inside each skull are the trapped spirits of men from Gwalior. They can speak, and will promise great riches if they can be resurrected. The twelve skulls become annoying after a while, perhaps even threatening to scream at a critical point if the character will not give his word to help them out. This should lead to a new mini-adventure created by the gamemaster.

**20** The tracker cannot find the creature's lair, but he does stumble across the Great Tree of the Green Sage. The Sage will answer any questions about the jungle. If he likes the characters, he might also present them with a *monocle of seeing*. Anyone who looks through this handy device will be able to see Drizzlers and even invisible beings (+10 to Perception for spotting such things).





## CHAPTER FIVE

# THE BOILING SWAMPS

## THE LEGEND OF THE CRYSTAL HOST

It has been only fifty years since the last war ravaged our world. Few Humans who fought in this awful conflict survive today. I am called the Last Paladin by some, for I was one of the honored ones chosen to fight alongside the Crystal Warriors. Those beings no longer walk our lands, but their legacy lives on. I have mentioned many of their tales in this chronicle. Now I shall tell you of their sad end.

The Crystal Knights are not of our world. I cannot tell you where they came from, or even if their proud people still shine beneath their own morning sun. They came near the end of the Godwar, fighting for the cause of Order against the hideous beasts and black-hearted schemers of Chaos. Their task was a difficult one, but many a Crystal Knight has repelled horrendous foes that would otherwise have slain a score of ordinary men. Without their help, perhaps the fiends of Chaos would have conquered our ravaged world.

The Crystal Knights were led by the Crystal Host, the name given the Queen and her court of Barons from the warriors' home-world. There were no braver beings on Marl. A few Human men and women proved themselves during the course of the war, and we were appointed Paladins. It was our honor to personally accompany the Crystal Host and fight alongside it in the grandest battles against our dark foes.

After many years of hard fighting, it became obvious that the Godwar was about to move on. The Crystal Host rewarded its Paladins well, and dismissed us in a grand ceremony. The Host was about to move on and follow the Chaos hordes into the nether regions when the Queen learned of the murder of Crystabar, one of her favored champions. It was told that Crystabar was betrayed by a Human girl living in the Boiling Swamps. The Queen honored me with the task of guiding her there, and so I did.



We arrived in the late summer. The girl, Tarrian of Grosspien, admitted her guilt and we punished her in the harshest tradition of the Crystal Host. But the vengeful girl cursed us as she died, and the souls of Crystabar and his band of six were trapped on her muddy island forever.

What none of us knew was that the Queen had paid a high price for her people's involvement in the Godwar. Crystabar's soul, as well as those of his men, had already been promised to the gods of Order that the Crystal Queen worshipped so fiercely. Since the knight's souls were now trapped by the witch-girl of the swamps, the gods of Order revoked their patronship. The Crystal Host was left behind as the war moved on, defeated by the curse of a simple swamp-girl.

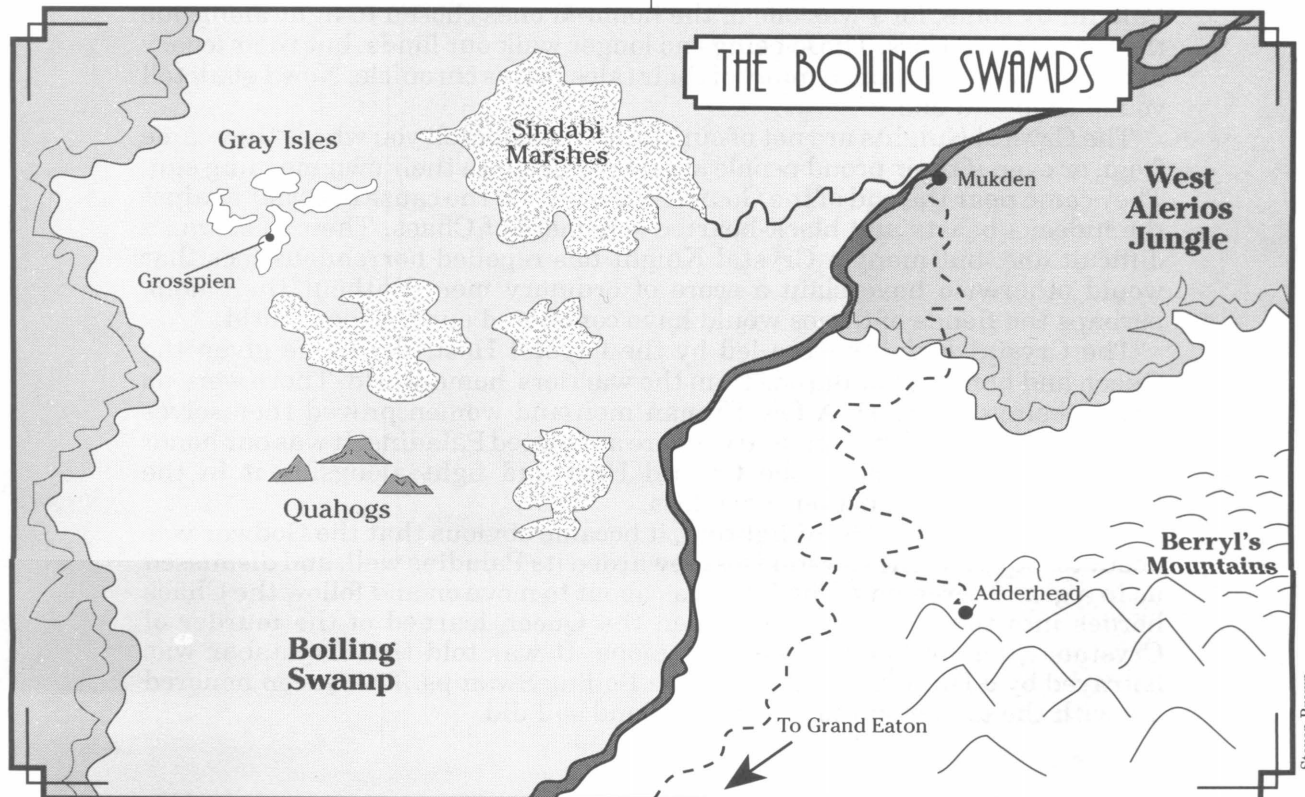
The Queen and her court bid me farewell on the banks of a small fishing village called Mukden. From there I watched them sail mournfully away. Their cause was gone, and so was the spark that had driven and sustained them for hundreds of hard-fought years.

Fifty years later, only a few moments before I wrote these words, I discovered the glass ship

of the Crystal Host wrecked in the accursed swamps. While aboard, I experienced an incredible vision. The Queen remembered me! Her Undead voice called to me! If I can only find her heart and send it back to her home world, she will live again! And if so, she and the Host will return to Marl and take up the fight against Chaos once more! There is no sign of the Queen's corpse here at the wreck, but I will attempt to find a way into the steaming waters and search for them there. Curious ... what are these strange tracks about the ship? They seem fresh ...

— From the chronicles of the Last Paladin.

*The Last Paladin's chronicle was found aboard a Quahog platform ship. Further pages are blank, save for the dark stain of blood. What caused the Paladin's demise is not known. He left no record of where the Crystal Host's glass ship lies, but such an incredible vessel would no doubt be worth a fortune. And what of his vision? Is it true that the Crystal Queen's heart might bring her and the Host back to Marl to fight in the Godwar? No doubt interested parties on all sides would pay dearly for an answer to that question.*



Steven Brown

## THE BOILING SWAMPS

*A brilliant orange and violet sky reflects off the scorching waters of the swamplands at dusk. Steam rises from the boiling surface and distorts and warps the view. Thick bubbles rise and pop in a quiet but continuous murmur of excitement. Huge beasts float lazily by, eyeing iron-hulled ships for a potential meal. Only the foolish and the adventurous venture into this land of death, but those who survive will never forget the incredible sights of the Boiling Swamps.*

*Okay, that's the standard tourist speech Tess taught me. Personally, the only reason to go into the Boiling Swamps is to . . . okay, there really isn't a good reason. (Those of you who are really observant might notice that I don't recommend many places. That's because the Wilderness will kill you. Get the idea?)*

*Like the rest of the Wilderness, the swamps are home to a variety of dangerous plants and animals. There's also a few intelligent races that will give you grief. Sindabi soul-changers and Quahog are some of the worst.*

*To call the place a swamp is kind of a misnomer (and no, I'm not talking about little demi-Human wives here). In fact, most of the "swamp" is actually marsh. There's plenty of swamp around the steaming marshes, but there's also plenty of open water deep enough to sail a barge-train through.*

## NATURAL HAZARDS

### THE BOILING SWAMP

*Think about it. The water in the swamp actually boils. Does it sound like you should take a swim? No! Don't be stupid. Jump, fall, or trip into the swamp and your friends will start thinking about what kind of wine would go best with your broiled remains.*

Characters who fall into the Boiling Swamp are in for big trouble unless they're resistant to heat. Any character who falls into the water takes two shock per round. If shock ever equals the victim's Endurance or *resist shock* score (as modified below), he slips beneath the churning waters and will drown unless saved.

Even adventuring in the humid, oppressive atmosphere of the Boiling Swamps is enough

to wear most men down. Anyone traveling through the swamps has their Endurance or *resist shock* score lowered by -2. Characters who become acclimatized to the humidity of the swamps are immune to this effect. To become acclimatized, the character has to spend at least one week in the area and have the *survival: swamp* skill with a specialization in Boiling Swamps. The total of the skill plus specialization must be at least 10.

## FEYSERS

*You've heard of a geyser? Well, this is the Boiling Swamp's equivalent. Only these things are evidently full of some kind of flammable gas, 'cause they catch fire when they erupt. If you're standing near one, you're gonna lose some eyebrows.*

Anyone within 10 meters of an erupting feyser is broiled with damage value 25 plus a bonus number. This damage decreases by -3 every 5 meters outside the initial 10 meter eruption circle. Feysers are made of water and burning gas so they actually burn as they erupt from the swamp waters. Flammable objects caught in a blast may catch fire. The clothes and other such equipment of characters who take more than one wound from a feyser burst into flame. The wearer then takes damage value 15 every round thereafter until the fire is put out or the burning item is removed.

## MUKDEN

*Mukden used to be a small and wealthy town. A few hardy souls managed to construct barges and nets that could stand the boiling waters that give the area its name. This allowed them to get to certain plants and critters that were worth plenty in the cities. Word started getting out a few years ago that some of these entrepreneurs were getting rich, and inevitably, others flocked to the swamps to get their own piece of pie. Now this once-small village has grown into something of a boomtown. Swampers dressed in loose-sleeved white shirts walk alongside lawyers, merchants, and mob representatives in expensive suits. The finest elemental cars drive up and down the narrow streets and splash mud on beaten nags. Mukden is a place of contrast. It is also*



*the only civilized town within eighty kilometers of the eastern Boiling Swamps.*

The walled town of Mukden can serve as a staging point for a party's adventures in the Boiling Swamps. Below are only a few of the people and places that can be found there.

**1. The Captain's Manor:** Mukden was founded by a group of fishermen many generations ago. The leader of this group was called the Captain, since it was he that built the first magically wrought iron-bottomed boat and led it out into the swamps. The title has stuck through the years, and now the leader of the town is called the "Captain," whether he actually runs a barge-train or not. The current Captain, "Hazardous" Bob Belle, used to command a barge-train but retired some years ago when his leg was taken off by a flamer.

**2. Captain's Office:** Captain Belle and his First Mate use this ramshackle building to conduct any of Mukden's "official" business. The rear of the building also houses a jail and a small arms locker filled with a dozen Guardian rifles.

Belle's assistant is First Mate Jiatt Hurp, an Elkist. He has the dubious honor of enforcing Mukden's laws and collecting a hasty "militia" whenever the town is attacked by Quahog or other creatures. If Hurp is pressed, he can gather 1-10 other Human "deputies" to help stop any trouble.

## JIATT HURP (ELKIST)

### AGILITY 9

Beast riding: horse 10, dodge 11, maneuver 10, stealth 11, unarmed combat 12, unarmed parry 11

### DEXTERITY 12

Fire combat 16

### ENDURANCE 11

### STRENGTH 12

Resist shock 13

### TOUGHNESS 11

### INTELLECT 9

Deduction 10, perception 11, smuggling 11, tracking 11, trick 11

### MIND 8

### CONFIDENCE 10

Gambling 12, interrogation 12, intimidation 12, streetwise 11, survival: swamp 12 (Boiling Swamps 14), willpower 12

### CHARISMA 8

### Life Points: 4

**Equipment:** .44 Karr revolver, damage value 20; range 3-10/25/50/150.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Jiatt is tough but *mostly* fair. He makes a good living at Mukden and doesn't want trouble scaring off the merchant types. Characters who get out of line will find themselves getting pistol-whipped by Jiatt and as many men as he can get together in a hurry.

**3. Crenshaw's General Store and Outfitter:** A huge glass window displays the name of this establishment in dull red letters. The owner is a man named Gilford Crenshaw. He cares for very little besides his business, and few were surprised he didn't seem to care that his only daughter, Tess, ran away some months ago. Due to his location, Crenshaw is able to sell items taken from the Boiling Swamps for much less than stores elsewhere . . . but he doesn't. Only when something is about to rot or go bad will customers find a deal on the valuable merchandise he sells. Anything bought at his store will cost up to 10% more than usual. See the "Outfitters, Goods, and Services" chapter for a list of useful merchandise.

**4. The Frosty Mug:** The *Mug*, as it is commonly called, is run by a congenial man named Kipper. He knows most everything going on in town—from shipping schedules to who's sleeping with the Captain's wife. Adventurers can get information from Kipper as long as they're willing to pay. Kipper might also hold back if the person wanting the information is obviously hostile or violent.

## KIPPER

### AGILITY 7

### DEXTERITY 7

Fire combat 8

### ENDURANCE 8

### STRENGTH 8

### TOUGHNESS 9

### INTELLECT 7

Deduction 9, perception 10, trick 8

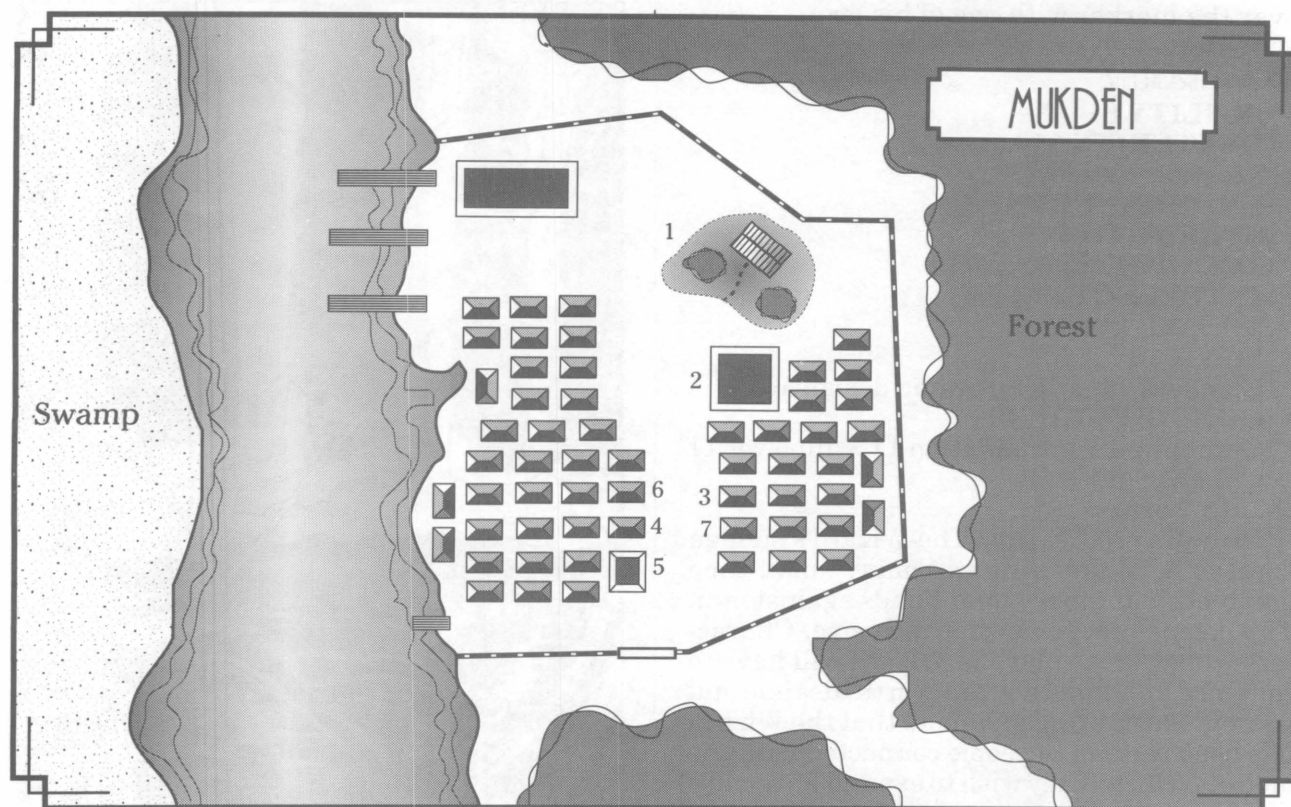
### MIND 7

Business 9

### CONFIDENCE 7

Gambling 8, interrogation 8, intimidation 8, survival: swamp 8, willpower 9

### CHARISMA 8



Steven Brown

Charm 9, persuasion 9

**Life Points:** 2

**Roleplaying Notes:** Kipper is a large man with brown hair and a handlebar mustache. He knows most everyone in town. Though he likes to hear and occasionally sell gossip, he won't usually repeat anything that could harm someone else.

**5. Henraud's Stables:** Jacob Henraud makes his living stabling the animals of visiting traders and adventurers, though he does no actual work himself. Mounts are fed and watered by a Sketh that everyone calls "Mad Willie." He is maddening to speak with, but loves horses and will insure that they are treated well. Each animal stabled costs 20 gelans per night. Mad Willie can also shoe or treat simple injuries to horses.

**6. The Muck-Den:** Few patrons understand the pun that is the name of this inn. It is owned by a Human, Pete Winter, who loves to make bad jokes and sly innuendoes. Besides the owner's sometimes grating personality, the Muck-Den is a classy place. Beds are clean, baths are cool (which is how Mukdenites like

them), and the food in the small dining room is better than average. Each bed costs 6 gelans per night.

**7. The Wizard's Parlor:** Dick Fargield is a gambler who opened his parlor and saloon in Mukden when he heard the place was becoming a boomtown. People call him the "Wizard" because of his simple magic tricks, but he actually has no spell-casting ability at all.

Drinks are cheap at the Parlor, but gambling isn't. All of the Wizard's dealers are experienced veterans (*gambling* skill 13, or 16 with their individual specializations). Besides standard card and dice games, the Wizard offers the following contests as well:

**Stick-It:** Players throw knives at a small board marked with concentric rings and special zones. Throws closest to the center win more points per throw, but special zones provide other benefits such as additional throws or penalties to the other player.

**Duel:** A game played with colored markers on a patterned board. The object of the game is to win all of your opponent's markers. Each player has round markers of one color. To win an opponent's marker, a player must jump

over the marker with one of his own.

## DICK FARGIELD

**AGILITY 8**

**DEXTERITY 11**

Prestidigitation 13

**ENDURANCE 7**

**STRENGTH 7**

**TOUGHNESS 9**

**INTELLECT 11**

Trick 13

**MIND 12**

Business 14, scholar: game design 15

**CONFIDENCE 10**

Gambling 19, intimidation 11, willpower 11

**CHARISMA 9**

**Life Points: 20**

**Roleplaying Notes:** The Wizard's sudden success in Mukden means many small-time gamblers want to try their hands against him. This keeps him somewhat reclusive. Characters who want to play the Wizard will have to convince him that they are worth his time and money. There are also rumors that the Wizard has been talking to people connected with the mob of Galitia. They wish to expand Fargield's operation.

**8. The Docks:** The famous enchanted iron-hulled barge-trains of Mukden fill these wooden docks. The water in the river is relatively cool as it flows down from the Alerios, and only becomes uncomfortably hot near the river's delta.

Most barge-trains consist of a tug and 2-4 flat barges. Tugs are usually three level affairs (engine room, office room, and helm). Barges are typically four meters long and one meter wide. Their thin shape allows a group of tandem linked barges to be pulled through narrow marsh channels. While the barges are relatively small, they are extremely heavy. When fully loaded, the one meter high walls are only a few centimeters above the water. All tugs are equipped with some sort of weapon, but chain-guns and thumpers are most common. Successful crews might have guns mounted on their barges as well, but this gets expensive quick since large weapons have to be imported from the east.

Barge-trains leave Mukden at dawn and return just before sunset. While in the swamps, the crews catch schools of fish and swarms of spicy fire-eels, collect rare plants, and haul in any large creatures they've managed to kill.



Marshall Andrews III



## TYPICAL TUG

**Toughness 32** (iron barge 40)

**Speed 10**

**Maneuverability -3**

**Weaponry:** Chain-gun or Thumper

**Chain-Gun:** Range 10-75/150/300/600; damage value 29 (full-auto only, bonus is already added in); ammo 200; price 2,500 gelans (plus the cost of transportation). Chain-guns are large, water-cooled machine guns that fire .54 caliber rounds. A belt of 50 rounds costs 100 gelans. They require the *heavy weapons* skill to use properly.

**Thumper:** Range 10-75/150/300/60; damage value 30; ammo 1; price 3,500 gelans (plus the cost of transportation). The Thumper is a single-feed, breech-loading cannon that fires high explosive shells. It requires the *heavy weapons* skill to use properly. Ammo costs 15 gelans per round.

## STANDARD HUMAN SAILOR (BOILING SWAMPS)

**AGILITY 8**

Melee combat 10, swimming 9, unarmed combat 9

**DEXTERITY 7**

Fire combat 8, gunnery 9, heavy weapons 9, thrown weapons 9 (knife 11), vehicle piloting: ship 9

**ENDURANCE 7**

**STRENGTH 8**

**TOUGHNESS 9**

**INTELLECT 7**

Navigation 9, perception 9, trick 8, vehicle mechanic: ship 9

**MIND 6**

Cartography 7

**CONFIDENCE 8**

Gambling 9, intimidation 9, survival: swamp 10 (Boiling Swamps 12)

**CHARISMA 6**

Charm 7, persuasion 7, taunt 8

**Life Points: 2**

**Equipment:** Guardian Rifle, range 5-20/75/200/300, damage value 21, ammo 6; knife, damage value STR+2/10; gaff-spear, damage value STR+6/14. A gaff-spear is a barbed weapon most often used to pull large fish from the swamps. It is modeled after the Quahog gig (see below), and has identical effects.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Sailors in Mukden are prone to getting in trouble. Fighting, swearing, and drinking are almost gauges of success

within this rough crowd. The only time Mukden sailors shape up is when they're out in the deadly swamps. There they perform their individual jobs with grit and determination.

## THE BOILERS

*Mukdenites call these islands the Boilers because it is suspected that they are responsible for heating the waters of the Boiling Swamp. The largest island, Devil's Hole, looks like a volcano, though no one can recall it ever erupting. The other islands don't have the volcano look, but they do spurt searing feysers almost constantly.*

*No Human can get within a hundred meters of the Boilers. Even Undead flesh starts to bubble and peel past that range. There are certain spells that can get you near the Boilers, but don't bother. The caves beneath them are swarming with Quahogs.*

## THE QUAHOG

*Quahogs are Humanoid amphibians that live only in the Boiling Swamps. Like all denizens of the marsh, these things can take the heat. Swampers call groups of Quahog "schools," and they seem to be led by shamans.*

*Quahogs love to eat Human flesh. By day, small groups of Quahog will quietly swim along behind a barge-train, waiting for the sailors to jump off onto an island scrounging for magical reagents and such. Then the Quahog crawl onto the island themselves and hunt the sailors with their three-pronged gigs.*

*At night the Quahog try a different approach. They build giant boats out of bamboo and wood and camouflage it with thick marsh grasses so that it looks like an island. These things would never fool anyone by day, but at night you won't see them 'til they're almost on top of you. The Quahog use these boats to creep up on barge-trains that have stayed out in the swamps too late. When they get close enough, scores of Quahog warriors jump onto the tug and rush the crew. Lately, Quahog shaman have been directing large swamp critters, like pounders, to aid in their attack.*

## STANDARD QUAHOG

**AGILITY 8**

Maneuver 9, melee combat 12 (gig 15), melee parry 12 (gig 16), stealth 12, swimming

12

**DEXTERITY 8**

**ENDURANCE 10**

**STRENGTH 11**

**TOUGHNESS 11 (+10 versus heat)**

**INTELLECT 6**

Camouflage 8, perception 8, tracking 8, trick 8

**MIND 5**

**CONFIDENCE 10**

Intimidation 12, survival: swamp 12 (Boiling Swamps 18), willpower 11

**CHARISMA 5**

**Life Points: 2**

**Loot:** 2 in 10, but lair is in the Boilers

**Natural Tools:** Claws, damage value STR +2/13; thick skin, armor value TOU+2/13, TOU+10 versus heat.

**Equipment:** Gig, damage value STR+6/17. Gigs are three-pronged, metal-tipped spears presumably forged from scavenged metals in the hot fires of Devil's Hole.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Quahog are frog-like Humanoids covered in slimy green flesh. They wear crude hides and jewelry made of natural materials on occasion. Their skin is incredibly resistant to heat. When it does finally succumb to the incredible temperatures of the swamps, it sloughs off and is replaced by a new layer. The peeling skin hangs from their appendages in long furls, giving the creatures an unclean and grotesque appearance. Quahog are clever stalkers, but show their limited intelligence once an attack begins. When prey is alerted, the Quahog's only thought is to stick it and stick it fast.

The tribes living in the Boiling Swamps are the subjects of an ancient being called the Great Mother. She rules the community through the shaman, never allowing her own subjects to spy her holy person. Though all Quahog are capable of reproduction, the Great Mother and her shaman have outlawed it. Some resent this, and the first thoughts of rebellion have begun to dawn in some of these primitive creature's minds. There is even a rumor among the more intelligent Quahog that a renegade Usari has begun to raise his own secret brood within one of the tribal holdings.

## QUAHOG GIGS

The three-pronged gigs of the Quahog are terrible weapons. Each tip is barbed so prey is usually held fast, allowing the wielder's companions to strike the victim with ease.

If a gig hits a character and causes at least one wound, the victim is *stuck*. While *stuck*, the character is at -5 to all physical actions. Should either the hunter or the prey wish to jerk the gig free and the other opposes him, the character trying to pull free will need to get a *solid* result in a contest of Strength against his opponent. When this happens, the victim takes half the result points in damage that he took when the gig went in (round down). Armor and natural Toughness does not protect against this subsequent damage since the gig is already imbedded in the flesh.

**Example:** A character is hit by a gig, and after subtracting his armor value, takes damage value 9 (Wnd K/O 5). The victim decides not to spend a Life Point and is thus considered stuck. Seeing more Quahog coming, he tries to pull free and succeeds. He now takes a damage value of 4 (half of the original 9 rounded down), which is a further three points of shock.

## TYPICAL QUAHOG LAIR

There are many Quahog lairs in the Boilers. Here is a typical cave complex inhabited by a school of forty to fifty Quahog.

**1. Nest:** Quahog sleep in shallow pools of boiling water about one meter deep. Mated pairs will often share the same pool.

**2. Staging Area:** The Quahog usually keep their strange boats lodged on a beach central to the cavern community. The beach often doubles as a preparation, feasting, or gathering area.

**3. Guard Post:** A pair of guards watch the cave entrance from concealed positions. The Quahogs are frequent victims of flamers (see "Critters" below), so guards are rarely lax in their duties.

**4. Lagoon:** Some caverns have land-access routes to their various sub-caves, but most

don't. Quahog get the vast majority of their food from the rich lagoons in their cavern. Scores of fire-eels and other fish swim in schools in these twisting, rocky aquatic tunnels. When Quahog do hunt for food, they do so in groups. They are well aware that other predators besides themselves often lurk in the deepest pockets of the lagoon.

Anytime a character enters the lagoon, there is a 4 in 10 chance that a large predator is lurking nearby. On a 1-4 this is a swarm of fire-eels, on a 5-8 it is a pounder, and on a 9-10 it is a flamer.

**5. Shaman's Lair:** Each school of Quahog is ruled by a shaman. This creature rules his tribe by force, treachery, and sometimes even good leadership. His lair is always protected by some sort of creature native to the hottest parts of the Boiling Swamp. Sometimes these beasts are befriended, other times they are simply captured and dragged into a large pool in the shaman's lair. Regardless, every Quahog in the lair is expected to pay tribute to the shaman by feeding his "nesting beast."

## TYPICAL QUAHOG SHAMAN

### AGILITY 6

Melee combat 7 (gig 9), stealth 8, swimming 10, unarmed combat 7

### DEXTERITY 6

### ENDURANCE 7

### STRENGTH 7

### TOUGHNESS 9/11 (+10 versus heat)

### INTELLECT 7

## QUAHOG FLOATING ISLAND

**Toughness 28** (made from wood native to the swamps)

**Maneuverability -3**

**Speed 3**

These ships are powered by Quahog pushing five-meter-long poles along the bottom of the swamp. This means their platforms cannot enter water deeper than about four meters or so, and must therefore hug the coastline. If a boat does enter deeper water, some of the Quahog can leap overboard and tow the vessel for short distances.

Apportation: vitomancy 10, divination: vitomancy 10

**MIND 6**

**CONFIDENCE 8**

Faith: the Great Mother 11, intimidation 11, survival: swamp 9 (Boiling Swamps 12), willpower 11

**CHARISMA 6**

Persuasion 7, taunt 7

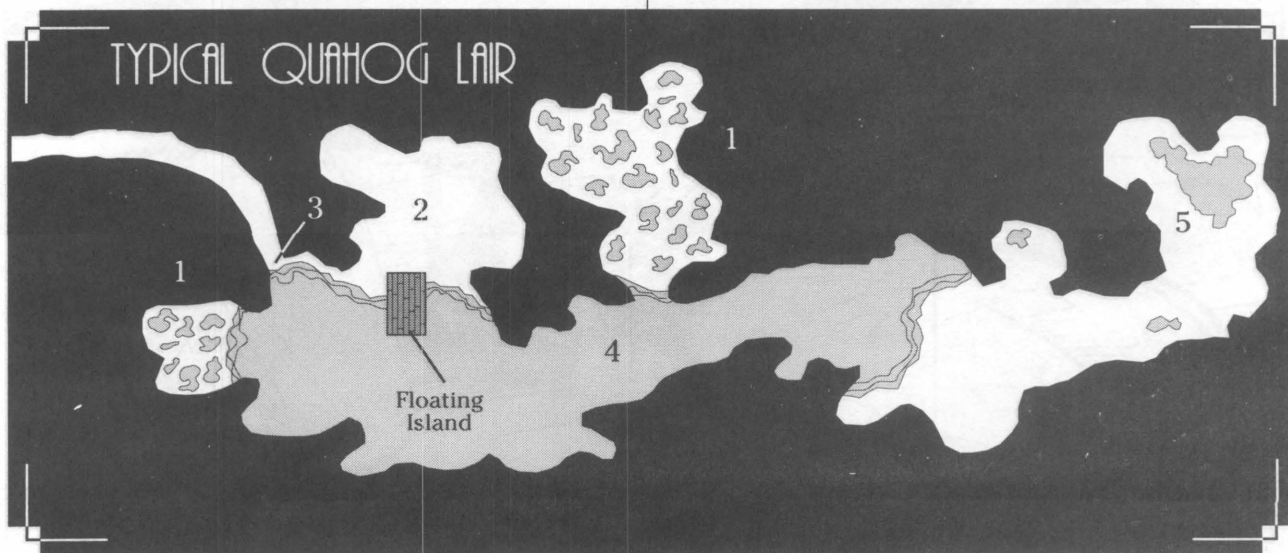
**Life Points: 3**

**Loot:** 5 in 10, but lairs are in the Boilers

**Natural Tools:** Claws, damage value STR +2/ 9; thick skin, armor value TOU+2/11, TOU+10 versus heat.

**Equipment:** Gig, damage value STR+6/17.

**Arcane Lore:** Earth 2, plant 2, water 3







Kar Waller

**Spells:** *Scorching spray* (as *acid bath* with the skill *apportation: elemental*); *communicate with animal*; *plant cuffs*.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Quahog shaman are, by necessity, jealous and petty creatures. There's always some upstart trying to take the mantle of leader, and a shaman must always guard against them. Shaman are the only "class" of Quahog that regularly wear any kind of clothing or jewelry. This usually consists of dripping seaweed "robes," necklaces made of shells or skulls, or crowns of brilliant orange coral. The shaman portray an image of independence to those they live among, but in truth, excel at groveling when in the company of the Great Mother. This being has never been seen by Human eyes (that weren't afterwards plucked out and eaten), but is known to live in a great lair somewhere at the center of the Boilers. The shaman report there when summoned and bring back young to their particular tribe. Any other young born to a tribe is considered a blasphemy, and the unfortunate newborn is taken to the Great Mother where it is consumed.

## THE LAIR OF MOTHERS

At the core of the Boilers is a great cavern occupied by the greatest of the Quahog. They are the elite Usari, which roughly translates to 'the Mother's Brood.' They are Quahog, but of a different breed than those that populate the Boilers. It is their job to serve and protect the queen of their species, a mammoth being referred to as the Great Mother. This being is the progenitor of the Quahog race. Only she can give birth to future generations. Other Quahog have the means to reproduce, but doing so is considered a grave offense punished by immediate death. The Great Mother sits in a waist-deep pool of water heated by volcanic forces below. There she lays her eggs and consumes the flesh of her enemies, brought to her by the Usari.

The super-heated complex that houses the queen is known as the Lair of Mothers by the various Quahog tribes of the Boilers. Only the shaman of the tribes are allowed to visit the Great Mother, and then only at her behest. There they may take a number of hatchlings back to their tribe and raise them as their own. It is a supreme matriarchy, and those that

displease her become food for the next generation of their strange race.

## THE SINGING STONE

The Great Mother was once brought a strange present by one of her Usari — a glass stone the size of a Human fist. At first the Great Mother was displeased, and had the presenter killed. Though the gem was near priceless by normal standards, what use had she of such a thing? But one day the stone called to her. It said that it was more than a simple piece of glass. In fact, the stone said

## BACKGROUND NOTES: QUAHOG

### Advantages/Compensations

1CI, 2CII, 2CIII

### Mandatory A/C

*Advantages:* Special Abilities (CII): scaly skin (TOU+2); Special Abilities (CIII): Immunity to heat and fire (TOU+10).

*Compensations:* Prejudice (CII); Advantage Flaw (CII): Vulnerability to cold (+5 to any cold based attack forms).

### Recommended A/C

*Advantages:* None

*Compensations:* (CIII) Cultural Unfamiliarity

### Restricted A/C

None

**Special Note:** A very few Quahog have left the Boiling Swamps to explore the outside world. Most are upset with the Great Mother's ban on bearing out their own blood-line — the instinct of evolutionary survival rebels against this.

Players who want to try a really strange character may play a Quahog if they wish. An even rarer character would be a renegade Usari Quahog — the personal bodyguards of the Great Mother herself. They are bigger and smarter than the vast majority of their fellows, and it is possible that a few of them have also become disenchanted with their goddess-like queen. An Usari character who leaves the Great Lair will be slain on sight by any loyal Quahog who realizes his identity.

that it was a great queen that would someday be reborn and cleanse the world of some enemy it called Chaos. The Great Mother knew no beast called Chaos, but it amused her that the stone contained the soul of a queen who thought she was greater than herself. So she put the glass heart beneath her great body, near where her precious eggs warmed in the soothing waters of the nesting pool. *There*, thought the Great Mother to the stone, *now you see who is queen here?* The voice from the stone was furious when it pulled the image of its fate from the Great Mother's alien mind.

That was nearly a thousand years ago. Since that time, the two matriarchs have fought bitterly. The stone criticizes the policies of the Great Mother and tries to plant treacherous thoughts in the minds of her shaman. In return, the Great Mother slaughters those whom she suspects of entreating with her 'prisoner,' and ridicules the stone for being trapped beneath her — where the helpless babes spawn.

There is little doubt that the stone is the heart of the Crystal Queen. It is an ironic fate for the ruler of such a courageous and elegant race as the Crystal Host.

## THE LAIR

The Great Mother's lair lies at the center of the Boiler mountain-islands. It is surrounded by a maze-like system of reefs made from porous, volcanic stone. Local sailors call these reefs *Boiler Run*, and the channels between them are narrow enough to keep out anything larger than a rowboat. Besides the heat, the channels are full of spawning fire-eels and rockjaws. As a result, a vessel will need to check to see if it has run into something once every three meters of movement, or ten minutes spent stationary. A roll of "1" on a die indicates an event. If an event is rolled, you could plan for the party to meet a patrol of 1d10 Usari, a swarm of fire-eels, a rockjaw, or an erupting feyser.

The lair itself is a large chamber pitted with steaming vents from the volcano below. Anyone who steps into the steam suffers damage value 25. Most of the stuff eventually rises through the ceiling and out the top of the crater, but enough lingers to limit visibility inside the lair to 2.5 meters. Explorers who rely too greatly on their eyesight may be surprised when they run into Usari or the Great

## THE BOILER RUN

A few insane groups have required their captains to undergo a terrible initiation ceremony called the Boiler Run. The object of the initiation is to navigate a small boat through the river-like maze of reefs to the volcanic isle at the center, retrieve a geode, and then return. The creatures living in the narrow channels, the incredible heat, and the Usari themselves killed most candidates, so making the Boiler Run is a thing of the past.

The last person to successfully complete the run was a sailor named Katana. Some think he cheated, but cannot quite figure out how.

Mother herself.

**1. The Nesting Pool:** The Great Mother's titanic, bloated body rests in this deceptively deep pool of boiling water. Bobbing about her are scores of milky white eggs the size of a Human head. Inside is the wiggling body of a fetal Quahog. Occasionally, these infants will claw their way from their fleshy eggs and be released into the tumultuous soup. When an entire brood of 5–9 Quahog have hatched, the Great Mother sends for one of her shamans to distribute them among his people.

At least eight Usari are always prowling about the mists of the lair searching for stray swamp creatures or anything else that might threaten their queen.

## THE GREAT MOTHER

### AGILITY 4

Unarmed combat 11

### DEXTERITY 6

Missile weapons 8 (spitting 14)

### ENDURANCE

### STRENGTH 17

### TOUGHNESS 13

### INTELLECT 5

Deduction 7, perception 12, trick 7

### MIND 5

### CONFIDENCE 8

Intimidation 12, willpower 12

### CHARISMA 4

Life Points: 9

Natural Tools: Acid spittle, damage value





Jaime Lombardo & Ron Hill

8 plus bonus, armor does not protect; must make a Strength total of 13 or more to escape from the sticky globules; teeth, damage value STR+3/20.

**Roleplaying Notes:** The Great Mother looks like a Quahog crossed with some kind of tuberous slug. Her short pudgy arms are useless in combat, but her gigantic, frog-like mouth can bite and spit acidic globs of sticky goo. One of the Great Mother's favorite tactics is to grab hold of a victim with her mouth and drag it into her pool, which is hot even by Quahog standards (damage value 25).

The Great Mother was a great warrior in the last visitation of the Godwar. Since that day, she has come to believe that only her bloodline should survive a second conflict. She has outlawed reproduction among her race, so that the only children raised in the community come from her eggs, and are fertilized incestuously by the best of the Usari.

**2. Arrival Pool:** The Great Lair is vented by dozens of small tunnels above and below. The only entrance available to normal sized beings is the arrival pool. This boiling hot pool is the head of a twisting cavern that leads back out into the swamp. Two Usari linger at the edges of the pool at all times, slaying any uninvited guests that appear there.

**3. Balcony:** A narrow ledge rings the roughly circular lair of the Great Mother. It is open for the most part, and gives the Usari an excellent view of the room below. Four of the guards usually linger about the walkway armed with their sacred bnubis and gigs.

**4. Usari Lairs:** The personal bodyguards of the Great Mother lie in bubbling pools secreted away at the ends of chambers leading off the balcony overlook. There are roughly thirty to forty Usari at any given time. Most of their time is spent scouring the island for prey, consuming their meal in their steamy chambers, or guarding the Great Mother in unorganized shifts.

## USARI, THE GREAT MOTHER'S BROOD

### AGILITY 10

Maneuver 12, melee combat 12 (gig 15), melee parry 12 (gig 16), stealth 14, swimming 14

### DEXTERITY 10

Missile weapons (holy bnubi 13)

### ENDURANCE 12

### STRENGTH 13

### TOUGHNESS 14 (+10 versus heat)

### INTELLECT 8

Deduction 10, perception 10, trick 11

### MIND 7

### CONFIDENCE 12

Intimidation 14, survival: swamp 13 (Boiling Swamps 18), willpower 15

### CHARISMA 6

### Life Points: 4

**Loot:** 4 in 10, found in Great Lair

**Natural Tools:** Claws, damage value STR +2/ 15; thick skin, armor value TOU+2/16, TOU+10/26 versus heat.

**Equipment:** Gig, damage value STR+6/18; bnubi, damage value STR+3/15. A holy bnubi is a chunk of volcanic rock carved into a circle and polished to a sharp, fine edge by the Usari. There is little else to do in the Great Lair, so the guards spend much of their time manufacturing these devices.

**Roleplaying Notes:** The Usari look much like their brothers, but have skin of deepest red coated in jet black spots. Parts of their anatomy, such as the bony ridges above their eyes and the low fins along their back, are a brilliant gold. The whole effect makes the Usari look rather like some sort of hellish demon, and adds +3 to *intimidation* attempts against those that have never seen them before.

The Usari are capable of speech, but have taken some sort of bizarre religious oath not to talk. Their communication consists of hand signals and posturing, which makes them seem all the more alien to strangers, and even other Quahog.

## THE CRYSTAL HEART

The Great Mother's stone is indeed the heart of the Crystal Queen. The Queen's soul is trapped there by sorcerous means that even she doesn't understand, but can be released if only she is returned to her home world. She bemoans her fate, and curses the Quahog, Tarrian the Gray, the Boiling Swamps, and everything else in this accursed region of the world. She can contact the mind of any sentient being within 50 meters of her crystalline heart. The Queen is proud however, and will not beg or grovel for a rescuer. Instead, she demands that those who "wish for an end to



the Godwar” retrieve her heart and take it to a mage who knows how to send it home. The Queen promises no reward, though she does promise to punish those who don’t rescue her when she eventually returns.

If someone should rescue the heart and take it to a mage well-versed in otherworldly sorceries, he will discover that the artifact must be enchanted aboard the ship of the Crystal Host. After a lengthy ceremony that actually resurrects the living crystal of the wreck, the ship will rise from the muck and begin to regenerate itself. Then a million tiny voices ring out with crystalline purity, and the vessel rises into the sky, bearing the corpses of its masters before fading away to whatever bizarre dimension they hail from.

If this occurs, crystal warriors will gradually begin to reappear upon the surface of Marl. The Godwar has not arrived in full force yet, so these scouts have been sent to pave the way for the Host’s glorious return. Only when the conflict rages in full force will the revived Queen and her vengeful warriors return to battle their hated Chaotic enemies.

## THE SINDABI SOUL CHANGERS

*Sindabi get their kicks from switching souls around. I don’t know why, and don’t even ask me how, but the Sindabi spend almost all their time doing it. They’re not immune to the heat of the Boiling Swamps, though they tolerate it better than most. I guess this is why most of them stay trapped out in the marsh — they can’t swim or they get baked just like you and me.*

*Sindabi look like Humans except they’re covered in mud and wear nothing but loincloths. A swamper named Katana told me that the rulers of the Sindabi, the Elders, have been around since well before the first Godwar. He thinks they switch their souls into younger Sindabi when their old bodies start to wear out. Personally, I think this is why the morons spend their whole lives dancing around in the mud — evolution got jilted a few thousand years back.*

*My horse Tadpole has some special connection with these weird people. I think he might have been some kind of swamp demon once, or maybe even a Quahog (though he snorts in disgust whenever I say that). Anyway, I guess*

*they captured him one day and stuck him in the body of a horse. It’s a strange world. (See the Bloodshadows novel, Blood of Tarrian, for a complete explanation of Tadpole’s relationship with the Sindabi Soul Changers.)*

## SINDABI VILLAGES

There are probably less than 300 Sindabi living in the eastern Boiling Swamps. Individual tribes don’t compete, but they never work together either. Each tribe is ruled by three to seven Elders who have been around for well over a thousand years. As many have guessed, they do indeed put their souls into younger, healthier bodies as they age. Unfortunately, their mental capacities haven’t grown much, and the high death rate among the lesser Sindabi have kept them “evolutionary challenged” as well.

## SINDABI SOUL POTIONS

Sindabi switch souls around via a potion they call *dabi* (*syn* means “drinker” in the native tongue, so *Sindabi* literally means someone who drinks their soul-switching potion). How it’s made is unknown to anyone but the Elders and a few, select lesser Sindabi. Anyone who drinks the stuff loses their essence to the liquid itself. Anyone who then drinks “tainted” liquid will gain the soul inside it. Souls that are pushed out in this way are lost and, presumably, roam the spirit world in limbo.

Most Undead are affected by the Sindabi potion. Only those beings without any kind of “life spark” are immune to its effects.

## TYPICAL SINDABI

### AGILITY 8

Climbing 10, dodge 9, maneuver 9, melee combat 9 (spear 11), melee parry 9, stealth 10

### DEXTERITY 8

Thrown weapons 8 (spear 10)

### ENDURANCE 7

### STRENGTH 7

### TOUGHNESS 9

### INTELLECT 5

Camouflage 6, first aid 6, perception 7, tracking 7, trick 7

### MIND 5

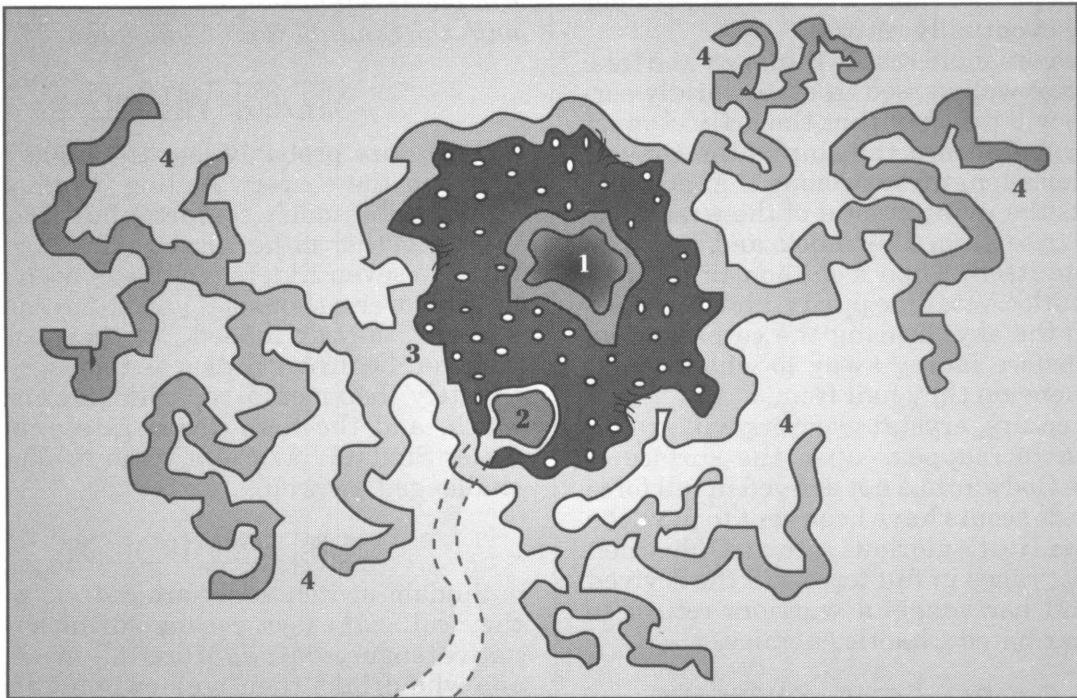
### CONFIDENCE 6

Faith: Elders 7, survival: swamp 7 (Boiling



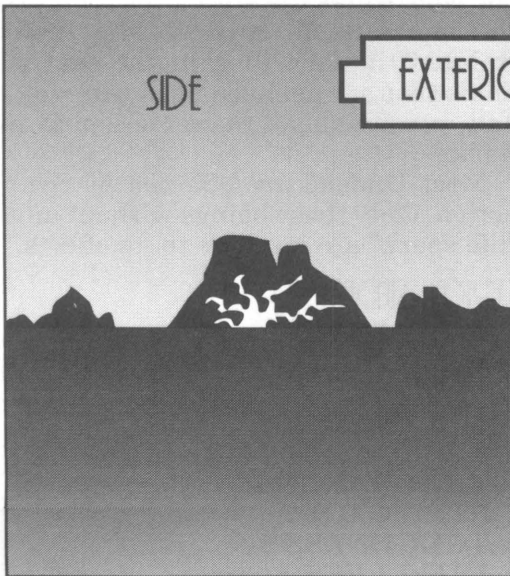


# THE LAIR OF THE MOTHER

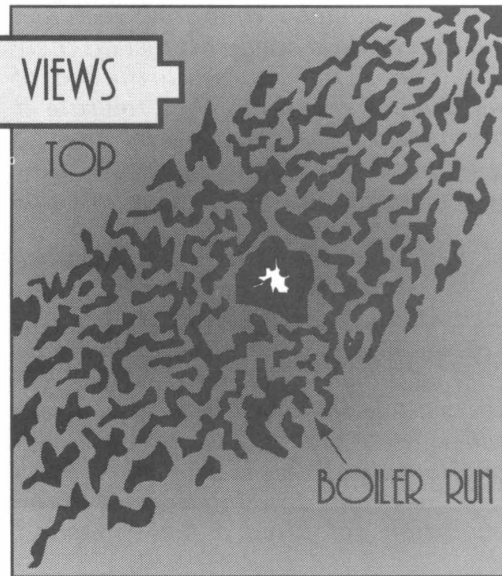


## EXTERIOR VIEWS

SIDE



TOP



BOILER RUN

Swamps 10)

**CHARISMA 5**

**Life Points:** 1

**Loot:** 1 in 10

**Equipment:** Spear, range 0-5/15/7-30/50; damage value STR+5/12.

**Roleplaying Notes:** "Lesser" Sindabi are scared silly of anything that is more powerful than them, and they're scared of the abusive Elders in particular. If a group feels confident that it can take its target, it will become cruel and merciless — an example taught them by their age-old masters.

## TYPICAL SINDABI ELDER

**AGILITY 8**

Dodge 10, maneuver 10, melee combat 9 (spear 11), melee parry 10, stealth 10, swimming 10, unarmed combat 10

**DEXTERITY 7**

Thrown weapons 8(spear 10)

**ENDURANCE 9**

**STRENGTH 9**

**TOUGHNESS 10**

**INTELLECT 10**

Apportation: wizardry 14, apportation: vitomancy 14, camouflage 11, divination: wizardry 15, perception 13, science: alchemy (herbal) 17, tracking 12, trick 12

**MIND 9**

Conjuration: elemental 16

**CONFIDENCE 11**

Alteration: elemental 15, intimidation 12, survival: swamp13 (Boiling Swamps 15), willpower 13

**CHARISMA 6**

**Life Points:** 6

**Loot:** 7 in 10

**Equipment:** Spear, range 0-5/15/7-30/50; damage value STR+5/12.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Sindabi elders are abusive and relatively dim-witted individuals. Even after a thousand years of experience they're still dancing about the Boiling Swamps switching souls for no discernible reason.

**Arcane Knowledges:** Magic 3, fire 3, plant 3, earth 3

**Spells:** Detect magic; swamp fire (as fireball though it looks like a will o' the wisp); motion (uses plants as the arcane knowledge and affects organic objects only); plant cuffs; quicksand

## BACKGROUND NOTES: SINDABI (LESSER)

**Advantages/Compensations**

3CI, 2CII, 1CIII

**Mandatory A/C**

*Advantages:* None

*Compensations:* Cultural Unfamiliarity (CII)

**Recommended A/C**

*Advantages:* SupraNormal Knowledge (CIII): some lesser Sindabi may have escaped knowing how to brew the soul-switching potion.

*Disadvantages:* Poverty (CI)

**Restricted A/C**

None

**Special Notes:** Player character Sindabi are those who have escaped the brutal Elders. They are really little different than Humans though they must have the *survival: swamp (Boiling Swamps)* skill at 10 or better.

## THE GRAY ISLES

*There's really not too much to see in the desolate forests of these isles — so don't go there. Really. The village of Grosspien, where Tarrian the Gray came from, doesn't even exist anymore. Okay, that was my warning. Now, if you find yourself forced to go there for some reason — and it had better be a good one, you'll want to watch out for the crystal knights. Yeah, I know they were supposed to have died out in the first Godwar, and they did. But Tarrian cursed their spirits to protect her island forever. And trust me, they do. Start messing around and you'll hear a quiet tinkling — like glass chimes singing in a gentle wind. It may be the last sound you ever hear, 'cause that's the sound the crystal ghosts make when they return.*

*I call 'em ghosts, but they manifest as physical beings. You can hurt them if you've got the weapon to do it with. My friend Tess tells me that high pitched noise can crack them up too, but there aren't many people who can hit that kind of note. This leaves you with only one option when confronted by crystal knights — run. If you can fight 'em and live, then you don't need my advice anyway.*



## THE CRYSTAL KNIGHTS OF THE GRAY ISLES

As Buck said, the crystal knights are cursed by Tarrian the Gray to watch over the island of Grosspien for all eternity. Whenever anyone sets foot on the island, the spirits will rise to repel them in 10–50 minutes—roll a die and divide by two for the number of knights. The first warning the group will get is the sound of glass chimes tinkling in a breeze. After that, seven crystal knights will emerge from the earth to do battle. If a knight is “slain,” it will sink into the earth and never bother anyone who fought with it again. If newcomers enter the island, the spirit will rise as if it were never slain.

### CRYSTAL KNIGHTS

#### AGILITY 14

Dodge 15, maneuver 15, melee combat 15 (sword 17), melee parry 16 (shield 18), unarmed combat 15

#### DEXTERITY 10

Missile weapon 13

#### ENDURANCE 15

#### STRENGTH 17

Resist shock 19

#### TOUGHNESS 18/22

#### INTELLECT 10

Perception 14, trick 13

#### MIND 9

#### CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 13, willpower 14

#### CHARISMA 9

Life Points: 4

**Natural Tools:** Crystal skin, armor value TOU+4/22

**Equipment:** Crystal sword, damage value +7/24; crystal shield (*melee parry* +2).

**Roleplaying Notes:** Crystal knights look like brawny Human men and women of noble stature. Their rock-hard skin is clear (though too thick to be transparent), and composed of thousands of bendable facets. Their eyes are always some brilliant shade reminiscent of gemstone. No organs are visible through this skin, leaving one to wonder what bizarre magic keeps them alive. In life, scholars say they consumed raw minerals through a strange process of absorption. They wore no armor because of their diamond-like skin, though decorative helmets, necklaces, and belts were once common. Their shields and swords are made of crystal as well, and the *Legend of Tarrian* claims that these arms were living beings. If so, any that still remain on Marl have long since died or gone dormant.

The Undead crystal knights found in the



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swamps are only pale reminders of this once proud race. They can speak in limited sentences but seldom do. Their only task is to slay any intruders who set foot on Tarrian's Isle.

## THE WRECK OF THE CRYSTAL HOST

*Some believe that the wreck of the Crystal Host still lies somewhere out there in the steaming marshes. I don't know if it does or not, but I can tell you I've encountered the spirits of crystal knights in the Gray Isles. These things were almost impossible to beat. Tadpole and I would be carrion right now if we hadn't managed to trick an even more powerful Undead into destroying most of them for us. If the wreck is out there somewhere, I'd bet money there's a few Undead crystal warriors lurking about to protect it.*

The glass ship that bore the Crystal Host does indeed lie beached on one of the Boiling Swamps' many islands. And there are guardians, but not the kind Buck Granger would expect. After the Queen learned that her warriors were trapped on Marl forever, she and her loyal barons drifted listlessly into the unexplored western swamps. Several weeks later, the ship struck ground in a dead-end marsh canal. The crew died there, most lying about the shattered debris for weeks before expiring. But what none knew, or perhaps cared about, was that the Crystal Queen had given birth to twins only months before the end of the Godwar. Crystal children grow differently than Humans, and so their presence may have remained undetected by the Queen's barons. Otherwise, they most surely would have saved them from the swamps.

At any rate, the twins, a boy and a girl, lived. They were trapped on the dismal island for decades before finally "accidentally" producing their own malformed children. Over the generations, these children beget other children, each brood more disfigured and insane than the last.

Today, a score of these misshapen, forsaken, crystal beings still live on the island. Their isolation has made them ignorant and their environment has made them belligerent. The crystal "brood" will savagely attack anything that they do not understand, which is most everything besides one another.

## CRYSTAL BROOD (23)

### AGILITY 13

Climbing 15, maneuver 15, melee combat 15 (sword 17), melee parry 15 (sword 17), stealth 14, unarmed combat 15, unarmed parry 14

### DEXTERITY 10

### ENDURANCE 14

### STRENGTH 16

### TOUGHNESS 16/20

### INTELLECT 4

Perception 8, trick 6

### MIND 4

### CONFIDENCE 8

Intimidation 13, survival: swamp 10 (Boiling Swamps 11), willpower 10

### CHARISMA 6

Taunt 9

### Life Points: 3

### Loot: 1 in 10

**Natural Tools:** Crystal skin, armor value TOU+4/16

**Equipment:** Crystal sword, damage value +7/21; crystal shield (*melee parry* +2).

**Roleplaying Notes:** The misshapen crystal brood are savage and remorseless. They look much like their noble mothers and fathers, but warped here and there with grotesque, crystalline anomalies. Any non-crystal beings will be hacked to pieces and then investigated ... in pieces. Only if the crystal brood begins to take great casualties might the survivors run in confusion. Nothing has ever managed to defeat them before, so a powerful party might be able to cow them into submission.

## CRITTERS

*The Boiling Swamp has its fair share of strange beasts wandering about. Almost all of them are immune to heat and fire, so you spellcasters better learn something besides fireball and those of you packing pieces might wanna consider taking on some runeslugs with freeze on 'em.*

## FLAMERS

*Flamers are dragon-like serpents. They have two front arms complete with razor sharp claws, a mouth full of teeth, and scaly, rock-hard skin. Adults are a good fifteen meters long and three*

meters thick. Flamers are dull brown on their top so they can sneak up on you — totally unfair for such a large and nasty beast. Oh yeah, they breathe fire, too.

When flamers attack, they rise up out of the water, set everyone on fire, and bite into a crispy and generally unhappy meal. Mukden sailors hate flamers and shoot them on sight. A chain-gun or a thumper can usually handle a flamer, or at least drive it off, but shooting it with anything less just attracts attention. These things can come out of the water, but they rarely do. I think their guts are too heavy. Anyway, if one is chasing you, find an island and head inland.

## FLAMER

### AGILITY 14

Dodge 15, maneuver 15, stealth 15, swimming 15, unarmed combat 16

### DEXTERITY 9

### ENDURANCE 20

### STRENGTH 24

### TOUGHNESS 21/25

### INTELLECT 3

Perception 10, trick 5

### MIND 3

### CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 14, survival: swamp 14, willpower 11

### CHARISMA 4

### Life Points: 4

**Loot:** 2 in 10 (but lair is underwater)

**Natural Tools:** Bite, damage value STR+3/27; claws, damage value STR+3/27; scaly hide, armor value TOU+4/25; flame breath, range 10 meters, damage value 25.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Flamers are crafty and cunning hunters. They know what chain-guns and thumpers are, so they'll frequently try to sneak up to a boat's "blind side" and attack the crew from there. If heavy guns are brought to bear, flamers will go under and try to get away quick.

## FIRE-EEL SWARM

Fire-eels are one meter long creatures colored bright orange with yellow fins. They're pretty, and they taste good too. They get their name from their color and because their flesh is really hot. Spicy hot, not temperature hot, genius. They've got a nasty set of jaws on 'em, but one or two can't really hurt you. A swarm of



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twenty or more will tear you to shreds, but if you're in the water, you're probably deep-fried anyway.

## FIRE-EEL SWARM

### AGILITY 11

Maneuver 12, swimming 15, unarmed combat 14

### DEXTERITY 1

### ENDURANCE 11

### STRENGTH 15

### TOUGHNESS 12

### INTELLECT 1

### MIND 1

### CONFIDENCE 14

Intimidation (19)

### CHARISMA 2

**Life Points:** 3 per swarm

**Loot:** 0 in 10

**Natural Tools:** Bite, damage value STR+3/17. Like most creatures in the Boiling Swamp, fire-eels are immune to heat- or fire-based attacks.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Each swarm consists of around 25 fire-eels. The statistics above are for the swarm as a whole, individual fire-eels are much weaker.

## GIANT SLUGS

When I say giant, I mean giant. These gooey things get up to 10 meters long. They're slow as hell, so you can usually outrun 'em, but watch out for their slimy tendrils. Swamp slugs got four sticky "feelers" that hang off their head. These things are used to snag prey and drag it to their mouths. If you do get snagged, don't expect a nice clean bite — slugs have no teeth. They just throw you down their throats and dissolve you into "hero stew." Nasty, nasty, nasty.

## GIANT SLUG

### AGILITY 1

Stealth 4, maneuver 14 (tendrils only)

### DEXTERITY 4

### ENDURANCE 10

### STRENGTH 10

### TOUGHNESS 12

### INTELLECT 1

Perception 2 (vibrations 14)

### MIND 1

### CONFIDENCE 8

## INTIMIDATION 11

### CHARISMA 1

**Life Points:** 3

**Loot:** 2 in 10

**Natural Tools:** Tendrils, damage value STR+1/11. Tentacles are used to grapple prey and drag them into the slug's mouth. If it gets a *good* success or better on a *maneuver* attack, the slug has wrapped the victim up in its sticky tendrils. The victim will need to cause at least two wounds to the tendril (Toughness 10), or get a *good* success on subsequent *maneuver* tests. Every round after a victim is entangled, the slug will try to stuff him in its mouth, which also requires a *good* success on a *maneuver* test. Once in the mouth, the prey takes damage value 18 from the strong acid inside. The damage continues until the prey is extracted or dies.

## POUNDERS

Pounders are giant, hard-scaled fish that attack their prey by ramming it with its horny head (no jokes, please). Most pounders I've seen, which is one, have been a dull orange in color, with tiny black eyes. The one I saw was over five meters long, though a swamp-pirate friend of mine says this one was relatively young. Pounders aren't really a threat to the magical iron-hulled barges that ply the Boiling Swamps, but sometimes the Quahog will use them to upset the crew during their own attack.

## POUNDER

### AGILITY 8

Stealth 10, swimming 15, unarmed combat 10

### DEXTERITY 0

### ENDURANCE 20

### STRENGTH 24

### TOUGHNESS 21/24

### INTELLECT 1

Perception 3 (vibrations 14)

### MIND 1

### CONFIDENCE 15

Intimidation 18

### CHARISMA 2

**Life Points:** 0

**Loot:** 0 in 10

**Natural Tools:** Scaly hide, armor value TOU+3; bony head, damage value STR+3/26.





**Roleplaying Notes:** Pounders are big, dumb animals occasionally used by Quahog for their brute strength. They range in size from 5 to 10 meters.

## ROCKJAWS

*A rockjaw is another big fish that lives in the rocky reefs of the Boilers. They're about the size of a calf with huge, crushing jaws to match, and have hard skin that looks like volcanic stone — hence the name. Rockjaws lie in channels or holes in a reef for camouflage, then open up their big mouths to chomp down on anything moving toward it. Rockjaws don't let go once they've gotten hold. Even if you kill the stupid thing you'll have to cut it off you.*

*These critters blend perfectly with their surroundings, but there's one way you can sometimes get a warning that they're around. Baby fire-eels love to hang out near these things when they can find them. Sure, the rockjaw eats a few every now and then, but the scraps the thing leaves behind are great for the scavenging eels. If you see a swarm of fire-eels just hanging out near a large rock beneath the water, steer clear.*

## ROCKJAW

### AGILITY 4

Stealth 14, swimming 8, unarmed combat 10

### DEXTERITY 0

### ENDURANCE 13

### STRENGTH 13

### TOUGHNESS 14/17

### INTELLECT 1

Camouflage 14, perception 14

### MIND 1

### CONFIDENCE 13

Intimidation 15

### CHARISMA 2

**Life Points:** None

**Loot:** 0 in 10

**Natural Tools:** Scaly hide, armor value TOU+3/17; bite, damage value STR+3/16.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Once a rockjaw has a firm grip (which causes at least a wound), it has locked onto its prey and will not let go until it or the prey is dead or unconscious. Every round after the wound was caused, the victim takes damage value 13 plus bonus from the constant crushing. Depending on the circumstances, the victim may also take damage from

drowning, boiling water, or nearby swarms of fire-eels. Breaking free requires a *good* result on a Strength total — the rockjaw will always actively resist. Even after a rockjaw is slain, the victim and his companions will have to cut the thing's mouth open to free himself.

## TAR MEN

*Parts of the Boiling Swamp actually consist of thick tar. Fall in and you're toast. But even if you stay away from the tar, it might not stay away from you. A race of creatures made out of — or perhaps just covered in — tar, live in these areas. Sometimes they come out to play. If they do, don't play back. Run away. They don't carry loot and they're not fun at parties, so there's really no reason to mess with 'em.*

## TAR MAN

### AGILITY 8

Dodge 9, maneuver 10, stealth 10, unarmed combat 11

### DEXTERITY 9

Thrown weapons 10 (tar bombs 12)

### ENDURANCE 13

### STRENGTH 12

### TOUGHNESS 12

### INTELLECT 5

Perception 7, tracking 7, trick 8

### MIND 5

### CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 11, survival: swamp 11, willpower 11

### CHARISMA 3

**Life Points:** 3

**Loot:** 0

**Natural Tools:** Smoldering body, range touch, damage value 25; tar bomb, range 3-5/10/15/25, damage value 20, +17 per round until removed.

Tar men near tar pools can throw an unlimited number of tar bombs. Away from their pools, a tar man can only throw two such bombs, each one literally scooped out of their own body. Tar is very hard to remove, usually requiring a spell. Desperate victims can jump into the water. This will extinguish the tar, though the water itself will cause damage as described above.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Tar men are solitary stalkers. They like to pelt their enemies from a distance with tar bombs and watch while the prey slowly smolders to death.



## ENCOUNTERS AND LOOT

### LOOT TABLE

Roll two dice on the table below whenever a lair is discovered with treasure in it. Treasures listed in bold may never be found more than once.

Die Roll	Treasure
2	Go to the table of "exceptional" loot.
3	Whatever creature was being tracked didn't live alone. The same number of creatures encountered previously are in the lair. Roll again for loot immediately. If this number comes up again, add that many <i>more</i> creatures, then roll for loot <i>again</i> .
4	The lair is a meter under water and a swarm of fire-eels are slithering around inside. If they are driven off and the lair explored, the searcher may roll on this table again, ignoring this result a second time.
5	A swamp version of the diamond head viper (see the "Alerios Jungle" chapter) is coiled up inside the creature's lair.
6	The bones of some ancient and unknown creature lie in this lair. A mage might pay 50 gelans for the skeleton as a curiosity.
7	A maimed but living Quahog struggles out of the creature's lair as the tracker arrives. There is no treasure, but the Quahog will give the adventurer his gig if he will leave it alone.
8	A sailor left behind when his crew scavenged this area will gladly give the tracker all that he owns if he is taken back to Mukden. The sailor will keep his word, and has 432 gelans.
9	Near the lair is a rare patch of deadly nightshade. There are 2-20 ounces of the stuff growing here. Each ounce is worth 10 gelans at an alchemist's shop.
10	The gnawed bones of a dead explorer lie near the creature's lair. On its still-fleshy feet are a pair of <i>swamp boots</i> , which allow the wearer to walk on water.
11	A dead adventurer lies half-eaten within the creature's muddy lair. He carries two potions of the gamemaster's choosing and a .44 Karr with 1-10 rounds.
12	In the lair is the unmistakable skull of a Rakalian Patriarch. Wizards in any major cities would pay up to 3,000 vens for such an artifact.
13	A wrecked tug lies on a muddy beach near the lair. The vessel is unsalvageable, but two chain-guns are functional, though empty. Shell casing around the wreck and several dead sailors tell of a desperate battle, though with what is unclear.
14	No lair is found, but nearby are the sounds of screams. A beautiful young girl has been captured by a tribe of fifteen Sindabi. If she is rescued, her father, a barge captain, will give the characters a 500 vens reward. He might also offer them the services of his tug, the <i>Rustbucket</i> .
15	Lying in a muck-filled depression near the creature's lair are scores of jutting bones. The bones are those of warriors that fought in the first Godwar, and their hands and feet are chained. These prisoners were obviously slaughtered by their captors. Whether the prisoners were aligned with Law or Chaos is up to the gamemaster. In the right circles, this information could be great propaganda.



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## ENCOUNTER TABLE

### Encounter Level: 18

One die plus difference in *party stealth* and Encounter Level

Roll	Encounter
2-5	1-10 Quahog
6-7	Quahog ship (20 Quahog plus shaman)
8-9	1-10 Sindabi
10-13	Tar Men
14	Giant slug
15	Fire-eel swarm
16	Pounder
17+	Flamer

**16** A dead flamer lies half-buried in the mud near the creature's lair. The scales can be used to make fire-resistant armor.

**17** A crystal sword lies half-buried in the muck (STR+7).

**18** Beneath an ancient, gnawed pile of mud-covered bones is an old journal. Careful

treatment will reveal that this explorer had found the ship of the Crystal Host. A map provides general directions and warns of "glass guardians."

**19** The bones of a sailor obscure a chest half-buried in the mud. This fellow obviously jumped ship with his mates' strongbox. Inside is 2,300 vens, a deed of ownership for the *Rustbucket*, and an old, ivory ring that makes its wearer immune to heat and fire.

**20** A skeleton hangs from the limbs of a blackened, gnarled tree over the creature's lair. The corpse wears rotted under-armor, as if it once wore heavier stuff, and has an empty scabbard about its waist. Surprisingly, if anyone speaks to the thing, it will talk back! This wretched follower of Order was hanged here by fleeing Chaos warriors after a great battle in the first Godwar. He is cursed to remain in this body until someone retrieves his holy armor, which he says can repel any attack. The gamemaster should create an adventure revolving around the alleged armor, rewarding the characters if they manage to free the spirit from its corpse.





## CHAPTER SIX

# THE GWALIOR RUINS

## LOST TREASURES OF THE RED HAND

*The last legend Mythic Explorations dropped in my lap was a story taken from a week-old news rag. How's that for ancient myths? It's a sign of the times, I guess. Anyway, I knew a little about this one. . .*

# The Grand Eaton Tribune

## DEMON SUMMONING RAVAGES GWALIOR!

—GWALIOR. Our sister city has suffered greatly in the past months. Those rebellious factors who opposed our rule began the trouble by calling for the ousting of our officials. After a tense confrontation, our governors agreed to grant the city its independence, but were disgraced when the Gwalions seized all Eaton property. An expedition retrieved much of our citizen's goods, but cults within the city once again sparked violence by attacking merchants and their escorts. A diplomatic mission was then sent to smooth things over, but went missing under mysteri-

ous circumstances. Those diplomats have now been found — and their names will be added to the lists of hallowed dead who tried to lead the misguided city of Gwalior from the darkness.

Now it seems the Gwalion's treachery has backfired. Sources within the city report a great disaster that leveled the southern coasts and wrecked much of the harbors that make this settlement so valuable. The tragedy seems to have started with our own missing delegation. Those diplomats were found just over one week ago — the victims of ritual mur-

der. A group calling itself the Red Hand is now known to be responsible. These villains used our countrymen to summon a beast so terrible it could not be given any other name than 'the Terror.' The creature resembled a great cloud of darkness, though great tentacles of bone and sinew issued forth from its nebulous heart hidden deep within. The thing ripped men and material to shreds as it rampaged through the city, and only the efforts of our brave soldiers and those elements of the Gwalion's military still loyal to us were able to keep it from com-

pletely leveling the place.

But as horrible as this creature was, it seems the Terror was only a part of the evil Red Hand's diabolical scheme. Our learned officials studied the creature, and after diligent research, discovered that only the blood of an ancient heroine, Tarrian the Gray, could forever send the beast back to the pits of hell from whence it came. An emergency expedition under the authority of Major Ambrocious Colley, Sgt. Robert Tisdale, and Adjutant Percy Wilkins, assisted by local guides and sorcerers, was immediately dispatched to retrieve the blood of this ancient heroine.

The group was successful in their journey, and managed to re-

turn to the city before the Terror had finished its rampage of destruction. One of the party, no doubt one of our own officers, managed to slay the awesome fiend with a sword coated in the blood of Tarrian — thus ending its menace forever. But as we have reported, this was only part of the Red Hand's insidious scheme. While our courageous ken were locked in mortal combat with the Terror, the rest of the blood was being used in an ancient ritual meant to change the face of Marl forever.

As the Terror died, a giant tidal wave swept over the city. Much of the region was forever submerged, the rest was dashed to pieces under the sea's awesome

power. But it was what rode this incredible wave that was the true object of the Red Hand's elaborate plan. As the sea receded, sea-beings of enormous strength emerged from the briny devastation and begin to slay any living thing before them. Details are still sketchy, but it appears that our own administrator, General Sir Hugh Gough himself, gave his life to somehow send the amphibious horrors back to the depths that spawned them.

We at the *Tribune* will keep you posted as more details become available. Until then, send your prayers with the beleaguered survivors of this, the Gwalion's most recent treachery.

## THE GWALIOR RUINS

*So that's the paper's version of the story. Notice how Madri, the Gwalion sorceress who actually retrieved blood from a thousand year old corpse, and myself, who squeezed a two week trip into three days, weren't even mentioned. Oh yeah, and it was me and Tadpole that killed the Terror. So much for the press as the defenders of truth.*

*Okay, so you're probably asking, who cares? Where's the loot? All these other legends hinted at some sort of treasure. Be patient. Listen to what I've got to say and you'll find that the treasure lying in ruined Gwalior may be the most valuable of all. Take a look at this article, written by a reporter in Gwalior two days before the tidal wave.*

*I was there when Shafe got waxed, and it was indeed the Red Hand that did the dirty work. I vamoosed after the lead started flying, but that fancy chess set was there when I left. I saw it again when I was ventilating cultists in one of their secret enclaves — the sewers.*

*About a third of the port city of Gwalior now lies under water, thanks to the Red Hand's botched spell. This cult of wackos had, and probably still has, scores of enclaves tucked away in the most remote regions of the city. The*

*one I'm telling you about was in the southern sewers, and let out in a high cave overlooking the bluffs. Besides the chess set, I saw rooms filled with tomes, grimoires, and other treasures that would fetch more than a few grand from any mage with the smarts to realize what he's looking at. I can't tell you exactly what was in there because we were chasing an Eaton traitor who started this whole mess and we didn't have a lot of time to browse. (Wait'll the papers find out that the instigator of all Grand*

—GWALIOR. The home of notorious gangster Yusef Shafe was found ransacked yesterday. There was no sign of the mobster nor his cronies, though bullet casings and bloodstains at the scene lead police to suspect foul play.

Shafe was a collector of rare antiquities, most of which are extremely valuable. One of the most bizarre pieces is the fabled *Chess Set of Death*. Though perhaps a bit dramatically named, this marble board and pieces of silver and gold are said to somehow return life to the dead. This and other treasures are no doubt in the hands of whomever murdered Shafe. Grand Eaton police sources hint that the Red Hand is most likely involved.

*Eaton's troubles was on the staff of General Hugh Gough himself!)*

*The best news is that the only thing living in the sewers is a feisty critter called a gator-rat. They're not pleasant, but at least honest lead'll send 'em swimming to mama. You have my personal guarantee that those are the most dangerous things in the sewers. See? What are you waiting for?*

## GWALIOR

*This book is about the Wilderness and treasure, so I'm not going to tell you much about Gwalior. If you need more information about it, read the tourist brochures. What I will tell you is that the city is in a state of change. It's been ruled by Grand Eaton for a few hundred years, and only recently has it made a move for independence. The Red Hand, a cult whose primary mission was to gain Gwalior's freedom, happened to be the ones to muck things up. Just as the Eatons had agreed to pull out, the Hand pulled this whole stunt and wiped out half of their own people besides taking a leak in Grand Eaton's pride pool. It's likely the Eaton military will come back in force after this incident, so the violence may not be over yet.*

*What this means to you is that the sewers are actually the safest place to be! Deal with a few gator-rats and you're home free. Trust me!*

Buck's knowledge is usually close to flawless, but this time she's way off the mark. Besides a few waterlogged Undead, the sewers are filled with one other dangerous group of opponents — adventurers. Word got out a few days ago that the fabled and near priceless *Chess Set of Death* was taken by one of the very same Red Hand Elders who died beneath the sewers. Since then, scores of would-be treasure hunters have been combing the system looking for the cult's ruined enclave. Fortunately, none of them know that the enclave is in the southern sewers. Since the water in that section is unusually high (about a meter on the average), and it's swarming with gator-rats, most adventurers have concentrated on the higher, northern end.

The encounter chart provided in this chapter tells you how to create a character party, and gives you some advice on how they might react to other groups searching for the Red Hand's treasure.

## THE SEWERS

*The sewers have been boarded up since the tidal wave — Gwalions are a superstitious bunch. I told you there's nothing down there but a bunch of reptilian rats with an attitude. You'll have to break down a barricade or rip off a few planks to get in. When you do, make sure you've got some light, 'cause it's dark down there. Don't put your fingers in your mouth after you've been crawling around either. Remember, this is a sewer, not some clever excuse for a dungeon.*

*The northern half of Gwalior lies on higher ground than the southern half. This means that the sewer system drops over 150 meters in less than three kilometers. A good rain turns the entire system into white-water that rivals the Roaring River. Large collection chambers slow things down a bit, but you'll still run into areas where you're just going to have to let the water take you where it wants. The tidal wave put a surge through the system like a good case of explosive runs (which is oddly appropriate for a sewer). I expect that a lot of the southern*

### SEWER SYMBOLS

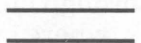


(2)

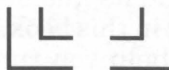
Cave-In (Thickness)



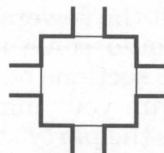
Suspension Pipe



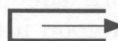
Normal Tunnel



Left & Right Turns

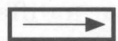


Collection Chamber



(40)

Spillway (Distance)



(30)

Drop Chute (Distance)





half has collapsed, so expect to do some climbing, digging, and swimming. You might die of old age if you're thinking of waiting 'til the city completes repairs, the sewers are the last thing on their minds. Don't forget to mark your way with chalk either, 'cause whoever designed this system must have been a big fan of mazes. Just remember you're eventually trying to get to the southernmost section. A compass is invaluable, but you'll still need a good sense of direction and a lot of luck to actually navigate.

Most of the sewers are concrete tunnels filled with about a meter full of water (I understand they're now over a meter after the tidal wave wrecked the coast). Other sections of the sewers are made of iron-pipes just tall enough to make you stoop. The collection chambers run from a meter to so deep you can't even find the bottom. Either way, these are the places you'll find gator-rats. If you come barreling out of a drop into a large room full of water and gunk, you'd best whip out your sidearm quick.

I haven't been in the sewers since the wave, so I can't tell you exactly what kind of obstacles you'll face. Off-hand, I'd recommend a lot of rope, some water-breathing and sterilization spells, shovels, and the usual stuff like spikes, torches, and big guns — I know I said there wasn't much down there to be afraid of, but it never hurts to be prepared.

## NAVIGATING THE SEWERS

A party might enter the sewers from a number of locations. The tunnels start just below the city and wind down through miles of twisting pipe to the lower cliffs, where everything eventually spills out into the sea. Since a complete map of Gwalior and its kilometers of sewer tunnels would not fit in this book, use the "Sewer Chart" below to help you run an expedition into the southern tunnels. It would, of course, be better to plan out the sewers and the encounters the party would come upon beforehand. The gridded map sections on this page show you how to diagram your maze if you'd like. The chart assumes the party starts in the southern half of the city to shorten their trip as much as possible. Before the party enters the sewers, it would be a good idea to plan out some sections of the sewers just in case the party decides to enter at a different point. If you decide to use the chart to generate the sewers, you may produce strange results,

## SEWER ENCOUNTER TABLE

1-3	1-10 Gator-rats
4	2-20 Blood Urchins
5	Grime Shark
6	1-10 Bloated Undead
7	Loot
8-9	Adventurers
10	Elder

such as a tunnel that crosses back into itself. If so, the second tunnel generated runs beneath the former and descends deeper into the vertical maze that is the Gwalion sewers.

## OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER RULES

The normal procedure for optional encounters is altered slightly in the sewers of Gwalior. Missing a *party stealth* roll does not spark an encounter. Instead, each room or area has a specific chance of containing some creature or obstacle. The gamemaster should roll this check whenever a party nears the section. At that point, use *party stealth* in place of individual's *stealth* scores to determine which party senses the other first. It is difficult to obtain *complete surprise* in the sewers as everyone is expecting trouble. Only if the difference between *stealth* and *perception* scores is more than five should one group ever have such an advantage.

## GATOR-RATS

These are covered in Buck Granger's "Critters" section.

## BLOOD URCHINS

Buck doesn't realize that many of the creatures native to the area called the Grimes were washed into the sewers when the tidal wave struck. A few creatures have flourished in the nutrient-rich 'soup' that flows through here. Blood urchins are one such creature, and are described under "Critters," below.

## GRIME SHARKS

These slick predators are another of the sea-creatures washed up into the sewers by the tidal wave. They are rare and solitary outside



of the Grimes. See the "Critters" section for their description.

## BLOATED UNDEAD

Before the tidal wave, a battle was fought in the streets surrounding the Legation, the area of Gwalior containing foreign embassies from Grand Eaton, Galitia, and other cities of Marl. The three-day siege by hordes of Red Hand cultists, Gwalion loyalists, and the creature known as the Terror resulted in hundreds of casualties. Most of these were washed down into the sewers when the tidal wave struck. Many of these water-logged corpses were brought back to life by the Primal Spirits, seemingly out of sheer maliciousness.

## BLOATED UNDEAD

### AGILITY 9

Stealth 12, swimming 12, melee weapons 10, unarmed combat 11, unarmed parry 10

### DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 10

### ENDURANCE 12

### STRENGTH 12

### TOUGHNESS 13

### INTELLECT 4

Perception 7, trick 7

### MIND 3

### CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 12, willpower 12

### CHARISMA 2

Taunt 8

### Life Points: 1

Loot: 3 in 10

**Natural Tools:** Claws, damage value STR +3/15. Bloated Undead ignore shock and KO damage.

**Equipment:** Most Undead have found a Grand Eaton rifle or cavalry sword since their creation. A few might have more exotic weaponry. (Degan rifle, damage value 22, range 5-20/75/200/300; saber, damage value STR+7/19).

**Roleplaying Notes:** The bloated Undead have lost most of their intelligence and nearly all of their memory. They feel they should remain in the sewers and prey on any mortal that ventures in there, but they don't know who instructed them so or why. The Undead gather to hunt their better armed prey, and are clever enough to set traps or gain surprise by hiding beneath the water.

## LOOT

When the tidal wave washed over southern Gwalior, hundreds of homes and businesses were wiped out. Most possessions were eventually swept into the sewers. The vast majority is junk, but a few items of real value can be found lying amidst the detritus. When this result is rolled, have the characters make a *perception* total. On a 12 or higher, they spot something in the rubble, or step on something beneath the murky water. Roll on the "Loot" table to determine what has been found.

## ADVENTURERS

As mentioned above, there are dozens of fortune-hunters prowling about the sewers. Some of these parties are ruthless and try to eliminate the competition, others might be willing to join in with the heroes and split whatever they find.

To create a party of adventurers, you can make up your own or simply use four or five of the templates provided in this book and the *Bloodshadows* rulebook. Other templates will no doubt be available by the time you read this, and they could also make up part of a fortune-hunting group.

Deciding on how this party will react to the heroes is up to you and the nature of the characters you selected. Most explorers will try to avoid trouble, and may even team up to fight gator-rats. When it's obvious the enclave is close at hand, however, greed might take over and force otherwise neutral characters to turn on the heroes. Or perhaps the heroes will turn on the treasure-hunters!

## ELDERS OF THE RED HAND

The Elders of the Red Hand were the most powerful sorcerers of their cult. Thirteen of these Elders, along with the treacherous Ilsin Graylock, played a direct role in summoning the Primal Spirits and the tidal wave that brought them. Now the slain Elders have returned to unlife in the service of the enclave's new master. This is explained in detail below. When this encounter is generated, however, one of the Elders has spied or been spied on by the heroes as it steals through the sewers looking for prey.

## ENCLAVE OF THE RED HAND

Finding the Red Hand's former lair is difficult. A group will have to negotiate kilometers of treacherous hazards before finally stumbling across the tiny section of sewer that the cult's elders used as one of their enclaves. You can use the sewer chart as you play, but it would be best to generate the sewers and any encounters beforehand. Doing so will allow you to add creative and exciting details of your own to the situations provided below.

A group equipped with a compass has an easier time heading south, which is where the enclave is reported to be. If the party has such a device, or a spell with a similar function, add +1 to all rolls you make on this chart.

## NORMAL TUNNELS

The vast majority of the party's trek will take place in normal tunnels of concrete filled with water of varying depths. Tunnel sections are 20 meters long and filled with half a meter to two meters of water. In the northern tunnels, there is no chance of an encounter. In the southern areas, there is a 1 in 10 chance of running across some other denizen.

## LEFT AND RIGHT TURNS

These are simple ninety degree turns into the next section. There is a 1 in 10 chance of an encounter in a turn, with any resulting beasts usually waiting just around the corner.

## COLLECTION CHAMBER

These square chambers have four entry/exit tunnels leading from them. Gator-rats often live in cracks and crevices in these rooms. There is a 2 in 10 chance of encountering 1-10 of the things in any collection chamber. There is a 1 in 10 chance of some other encounter. There is also a 1 in 10 chance that a collection chamber will have a ladder leading back up to the surface.

## SUSPENSION PIPE

The ground beneath Gwalior is riddled with natural sea-caves and pockets of nothingness. The architects of the sewers used round metal pipes as a sort of bridge for run-off to bypass these traps. They are three meters in diameter

and are supported by metal cables, steel rods, or whatever means was necessary to bypass some natural pocket within the earth. There is a 1 in 10 chance of an encounter within these tunnels.

If a *setback* should ever occur while characters battle inside the pipe, the wires and rivets holding it in place snap. One end of the pipe falls instantly, and the other end will fall in 1-5 rounds. Any characters inside the pipe must make an Agility total of 18 to wedge themselves between the slippery walls before falling. Adventurers near the end that is still in place may attempt to leap back into a solid area by making a *long jumping* or *acrobatics* roll of 18. Failure forces them to make the Agility check as above before falling through. If a character *above* another fails his roll, he will most likely take anyone below with him. Those who have caught themselves and are hit by another must make a Strength roll equal to the character's mass value plus +3. If several characters fall, use the One-on-Many modifiers to increase the DN. Whenever characters fall from the pipe, they will tumble 3-30 meters (1d10 x 3). The area below may be rocky or filled with water (1-5 rocky; 6-10 water.) Characters who make an *acrobatics* roll of 12 or more can fall into the water with only a fatigue result. A fall into rock raises standard falling damage by +5.

## WASHOUT

The tidal wave that rocked Gwalior has knocked many of the suspension pipes free.

## SEWER CHART

Roll	Section
2-6	Normal tunnel
7-8	Left turn
9-0	Right turn
11-14	Collection chamber
15	Suspension pipe
16	Washout
17	Cave-in
18	Drop chute
19	Spillway
20+	Enclave of the Red Hand





Marshall Andrews III

Any time this result is generated, the group comes to a chasm where a suspension pipe once hung. It is now missing and the party must figure out some method of getting to the next section. Suspension pipes and the chasms beneath them are detailed above.

## CAVE-IN

Some of the concrete sections of the sewers collapsed when the tidal wave surged through. Roll a die to see which type of area has suffered damage (1–5, normal tunnel; 6–7, turn; 8–10, collection chamber). There is 1d10 meters of debris blocking the tunnel, or some section of a collection chamber. The group will need to somehow dig through this if they wish to continue.

## DROP CHUTE

The sound of rushing water is a clue that the tunnels are about to take a serious dive. Allow the party to make a *perception* roll to determine whether they notice the change in the water. If someone succeeds, then she notices that the section between the last collection chamber and this drop chute is filled with 1d10 meters of rapidly flowing water (which is a good reason for you to design the sewers beforehand). If it has rained recently, the water is strong enough to require a *swimming* or Strength check against a DN of 10 to avoid being swept away.

The chute itself is simply a tunnel at a 45 degree angle. It's practically impossible to climb down the chutes without magical assistance or a stout rope. Most explorers will have to slide down into the darkness and hope for the best. Drop chutes typically end after 20 meters or so. From there they drop their waste into collection chambers 3–30 (1d10 x 3) meters below.

There is no chance of an encounter in the drop chutes, though the collection chambers beneath are another story.

## SPILLWAYS

Spillways are just like drop chutes except that they pour out into the grimy sea beneath Gwalior's southern cliffs. The denizens of Marl haven't learned much about environmentalism yet. Horrible sea creatures have bred in the filth beneath the spillways, so a plunge



into the area called the Grimes is almost always fatal. Unfortunately, there is no way to distinguish between these and the more common drop chutes.

A spillway drops anywhere from 6 to 60 meters (1d10 x 6) into the Grimes (see below.) If a party has already suffered several high falls from drop chutes, reduce this to 3–30 feet. Those who fall take normal falling damage +6 if they cannot make an acrobatics roll to avoid the jagged rocks below.

## RED HAND'S ENCLAVE

If you're using the optional sewer creation rules and you roll this result, move on to the next section, "The Enclave."

## ENCLAVE OF THE RED HAND

*The cult known as the Red Hand still functions in Gwalior, though its membership has been drastically reduced to a scant but diehard few. At its peak, I'd say the Hand had several thousand lunatics. They had enclaves all over Gwalior — places where they could conduct their bloody rituals without fear of discovery. Old warehouses, the basements of private homes, and of course the sewers are all known to have housed sects within this murderous Chaos cult.*

*The one I'm telling you about lies somewhere near the southern cliffs. The spell that brought the tidal wave was cast from a cave overlooking the sea. You might get the bright idea of avoiding the sewers by scaling down the cliffs and entering through this cave. It's a good plan, but there are hundreds of caves in the bluffs, and most of them are home to a mean breed of predatory sea-birds called rungles. Like I said, the sewers are safe! Not particularly pleasant, but safe. Stick to 'em.*

Buck is quite wrong. The sewers are not safe at all. In fact, they are quite likely one of the most dangerous places in all of Marl. Buck doesn't know that the old enclave has acquired some new inhabitants. One of the Primal Spirits conjured forth by the Red Hand in the novel *Blood of Tarrian* remained behind when his fellows retreated to the dark depths of the south seas. This creature is learning of the surface world from his minions, the slain elders it has brought back into unlife. When he's

ready, the thing plans to journey forth and slay the surface dwellers that so long ago cast he and his race away like a serpent sheds an old skin.

The creature now lairs in a flooded section of the Hand's enclave. From here he commands his Undead minions to teach him about the world of Marl, and steal out into the night to gather prey to feed him.

## THE ENCLAVE

Most of the Red Hand's hideout is flooded with one meter of water. Only the altar cave (area # 7) is raised above the water level.

**1. Cave-In:** A half-meter-thick section of rubble blocks the hallway. A *perception* check will reveal that a few of the top-most stones are easily removable, allowing a normal sized being to crawl through with ease. If anyone inspects the hole carefully, they'll see that a few red threads have torn off on the sharp debris.

The Undead Elders use this natural cave-in as a barrier against the common creatures of the sewers. When they need to pass it, they simply remove the top stones and wiggle through.

**2. Checkpoint:** The Red Hand once stationed several guards here during their ceremonies. A few tattered robes float in the water, alerting explorers that they must be in the enclave.

**3. Collection Chamber:** Just past the checkpoint is a drop chute that falls for ten meters before ending in a partially collapsed collection chamber. Any party that falls into the chamber takes normal damage, but more importantly makes enough noise to notify the Primal Spirit and his minions of their presence.

**4. Washout:** A metal pipe once carried the waste on past this former chasm and on to the spillway below. The tidal wave has flooded the chasm so that this area now resembles an open, underground lake. Another section of pipe lies roughly ten meters away across the deep pool, and a dark, man-made cave entrance beckons from the right. The Undead Elders reside in this flooded chasm when not undertaking the tasks of their bizarre master.

**5. Study:** The cult had a secret door in the



missing section of pipe that led to this area. Elders who stayed too late could sleep over in the posh furniture that now floats in this ruined chamber. A careful look through the debris will uncover gold candleholders worth 300 gelans, a silver-plated skull of some strange beast worth 600 gelans, and a water-stained but otherwise usable couch enchanted with a cantrip that refreshes anyone who sleeps on it.

**6. Lair of the Primal Spirit:** This chamber used to be a gathering spot. A large hole in the center held the speaker while others sat around the shallow ledge and listened to whatever eldritch or political knowledge he cared to share with his brothers. Now the oration pit serves as a bed for the Primal Spirit. The ledge is at the normal one meter level, while the bottom of the pit lies a full two meters beneath the water. The room is filled with the remains of prey brought to the creature by its servants. Bones lie about the floor and catch on explorer's legs. When they reach down to see what it is that has entangled them, they will find a grisly, water-logged corpse leering up at them.

When the Spirit senses someone other than its servants moving about the flooded enclave,

it will observe them curiously for a while. When the Elders make their presence known in defense of their master, the Spirit will arise from its lair and attack.

## PRIMAL SPIRIT OF MAN

### AGILITY 14

Climbing 15, dodge 16, stealth 17, swimming 19, unarmed combat 19, unarmed parry 17

### DEXTERITY 10

### ENDURANCE 22

### STRENGTH 22

### TOUGHNESS 22/24

### INTELLECT 14

Deduction 17, navigation: ocean 17, perception 16, trick 16

### MIND 12

### CONFIDENCE 13

Intimidation 18, survival: ocean 17, willpower 14

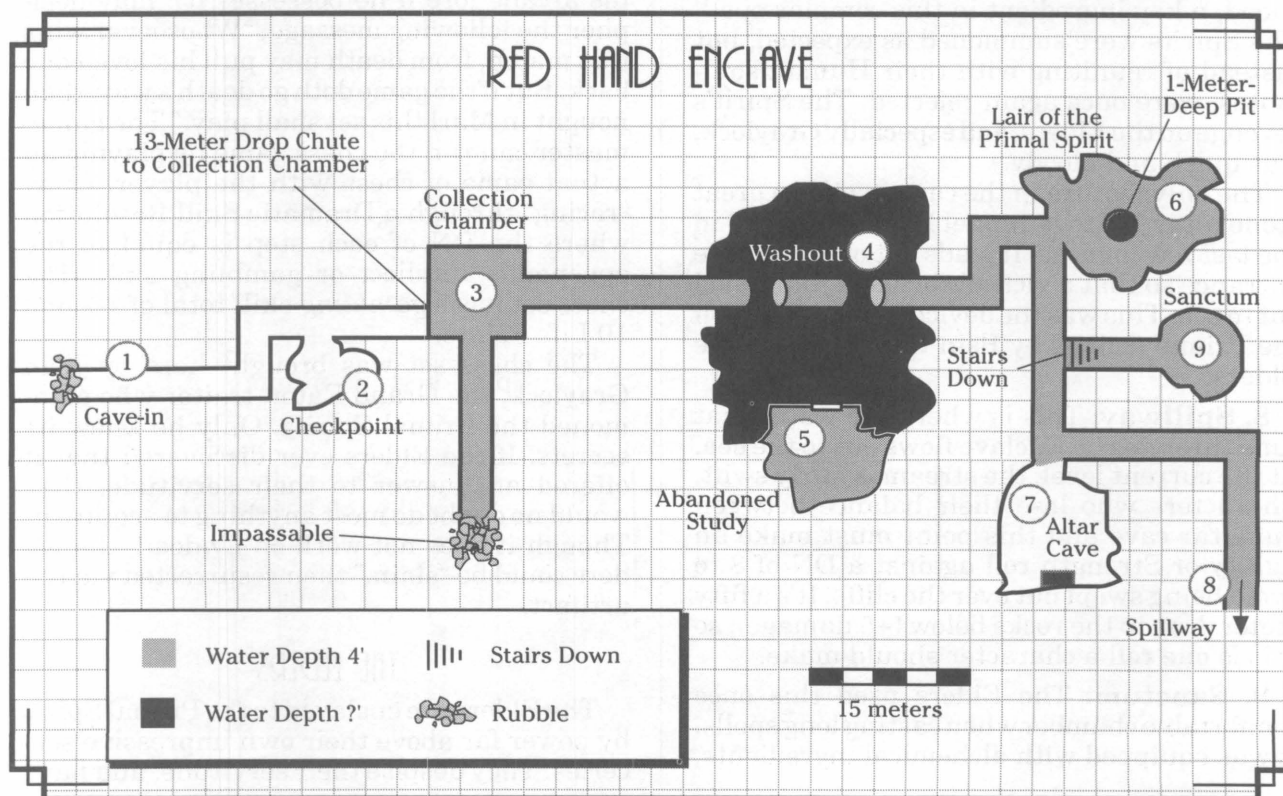
### CHARISMA 6

Taunt 9

### Life Points: 8

### Loot: Special

**Natural Tools:** Claws, damage value STR +4/18. The Primal Spirit has the ability to





create marine Undead (such as the Elders). This raises a being's natural Strength and Endurance by +2, and gives them the ability to ignore shock and KO damage. The Spirit can seemingly create as many of these minions as he wishes, and can end their unlife with but a thought.

**Roleplaying Notes:** When man left the oceans and crawled forth upon the land, he left a part of himself behind. These evolutionary cast-offs eventually developed a mind of their own. Though they have remained primitive in regards to technology and the ways of the world, the Primal Spirits have a genius level of intelligence. Some, such as the one now residing in the Red Hand's former Enclave, also have an incredible, but patient, curiosity. This one wants to learn all it can of the creatures that cast it away, and then find some way of exacting a great revenge for its rejection.

**7. Altar Cave:** This is where the Elders, led by a Grand Eaton traitor named Ilsin Graylock, cast the spell that summoned the Primal Spirits. Theoretically, the spell was also supposed to reunite the Elders with their soul-mates of the Spirits. Instead, Buck Granger's *corruption stone* inadvertently tainted Tarrian's Blood, a key ingredient in this complex spell. The Spirits were summoned as expected, but instead of reuniting with their Human soul-mates, were once again rejected. The Spirit's revenge on the Elders, and especially Graylock, was quick and bloody.

The only feature in the cave itself is a great stone altar. A stone funnel has been added in the last few months. It leads out over the cave entrance so that a victim's blood is channeled out to sea. This was the device used to summon the Primal Spirits by Ilsin Graylock and the Elders.

**8. Spillway:** This is where the water that runs through the Enclave flows out to the sea. At the current level, the stream is fairly swift. Characters who lose their balance between the altar cave and this point must make an Agility or Strength roll against a DN of 8 to avoid being swept out over the cliffs. It's a fifty meter drop to the rocks below (+5 damage), so this is one roll a character should make.

**9. Sanctum:** The Elders used this once comfortable chamber when casting long spells. It was equipped with alchemical ingredients,

ancient texts, and arcane devices of all manner and variety. The majority of this stuff has been ruined by the tidal wave. What's left is hidden beneath three meters of water, but well worth the risk of diving in after it.

One of the most valuable devices in the room is a marble chessboard framed in strange, black bone. Pieces of gold in the shape of Human warriors and wizards make up the 'white' side, while the black pieces, inlaid with silver scythes and the like, all seem to represent death. If this chess set is placed on the remains of the dead (not the living dead), the pieces are set up as if to play, and someone makes an opening move with the gold set, a strange thing will happen. One of the black pieces will move. If the character continues to respond, so will whatever macabre forces control the other side. If the gold side wins, the remains beneath the board will heal and return to life. Otherwise, the body is destroyed in a disintegrating burst of black light, and an eerie, groaning wind blows over the scene as the chessboard crumbles to dust.

Faint runes on the side of the board describe the board's function. A mage who makes any spellcasting skill roll of 13 (adding *magic* as his arcane lore if he possesses it), may decipher the following message, "Whosoever wins this match, from death may pull his loved one back. But if the game doth go death's way, then nought in Marl this set shall play." The game-master can run the chess game by playing an actual game of chess with the player, or by "racing" through a Dramatic Skill Resolution where the DN of each step is equal to the opponent's Intellect or gambling skill. The chess set has a *gambling* skill total of 16, and 10 Life Points.

The chess set was brought here by Ilsin Graylock, the Grand Eaton traitor who summoned the Primal Spirits. Only he knew its secrets. If the Elders ever discovered that it offered an answer to their servitude, they would no doubt do most anything to acquire it. Though it does not *work on Undead*, the Elders could be "slain," then resurrected via the artifact.

## THE ELDERS

The Elders are enslaved to the Primal Spirit by power far above their own impressive sorceries. They despise their servitude, and have

been plotting for some weeks a method of breaking whatever spell binds them to him. Specifically, the Undead have been brought to unlife by the Spirit, and it seems it can 'cancel' the spell at its own whim. Should they escape or attack him, the Spirit could end the spell automatically and the Elders' corpses would cease their animation.

The Elders' minds have suffered much since their death, and much of their knowledge was lost. They can still cast offensive spells, but the arcane secrets that might have turned them into independent and sentient Undead have faded from their memory. The Elders are now attempting to regain these secrets whenever the Spirit sends them to the surface world for prey. While there, they quickly and quietly search for lore that might help them regain a spell that will save their unives.

## UNDEAD ELDERS

### AGILITY 9

Stealth 13, swimming 12, unarmed combat 12

### DEXTERITY 8

### ENDURANCE 12

### STRENGTH 14

### TOUGHNESS 13

### INTELLECT 11

Apportation: vitomancy 10, divination: vitomancy 10

### MIND 10

Conjuration: wizardry 13

### CONFIDENCE 10

Alteration: elemental 12, alteration: vitomancy 14, intimidation 13, willpower 14

### CHARISMA 4

### Life Points: 3

**Loot:** 5 in 10, but lair is in Enclave

**Natural Tools:** Claws, damage value STR +4/ 18; the Elders can ignore shock and KO damage.

**Arcane Lore:** Magic 3, water 3, folk 2,

**Spells:** *Acid bath*, *freeze* (though using a jet of icy cold water instead of air, the arcane lore is *water*), *glass jaw*, *strengthen*

**Roleplaying Notes:** The Primal Spirit somehow gave the Elders webbed hands and feet when he brought them back from unlife, each topped with jagged claws that can make a scratch in *stone*! Also, their skin, which should be brown and rotting, is green and

rubbery like that of marine Undead. Finally, the Elders' mouths expanded and filled with grotesque, razor sharp teeth. The jaws are deadly, but painful and unwieldy to the Undead sorcerers.

When someone enters their lair, it is the Elders' task to destroy them. They prefer to carry out their mission by stealth and trickery rather than by direct assault. One of their favorite tricks is to wait until someone swims across area #4 (their lair). Then they cast *acid bath* to create a pocket of acid in the lake, catching the swimmer completely by surprise. When the spell wears off, they'll swim up beneath the victim and drag him down into the depths with them.

## THE GRIMES

Beneath the hundreds of spillways of the southern bluffs is a rocky coastline bombarded with fierce waves. But even the tumultuous surf cannot clear this area of the constant rain of sludge and filth that cascade into it from above. Most of the sea life either died or moved away eons ago. Strangely, or perhaps not so strangely in a world like Marl, a few bizarre creatures adapted to the grimy sea and actually came to thrive in it. The "Critters" section of this book notes several of these beasts.

Characters who fall into the Grimes must make an Endurance roll versus the damage value they sustained in the fall, or 8, whichever is higher. If the roll is failed, the character has swallowed some of the disease-ridden sludge and must test for disease as if he were bitten by a gator-rat (see below).

The Grimes are ridden with jagged rocks beaten by a fierce surf. Anyone who remains in the water here suffers damage value 9 plus bonus every round that they do not make a *swimming* roll of 14 or more. Characters may drown if they cannot swim. These rules are covered on page 101 of *MasterBook*.

## CRITTERS

*I told you the only thing you have to worry about in the sewers is the gator-rats. But just in case you wind up spilling into the Grimes, I'll tell you about the worst of the things that dwell there, too.*



## BLOOD URCHINS

*It's always about blood, isn't it? How many creatures have I told you about that suck, draw, or smell blood? Tells you something about our little world, doesn't it? Anyway, blood urchins are another creature that has adapted to the filthy water of the Grimes. They look like bright orange balls the size of your fist covered in barbed spines. Pods of 10–20 hang out where you can't see them — beneath the water, on rocks in the Grimes that you really need to cling to, etc.*

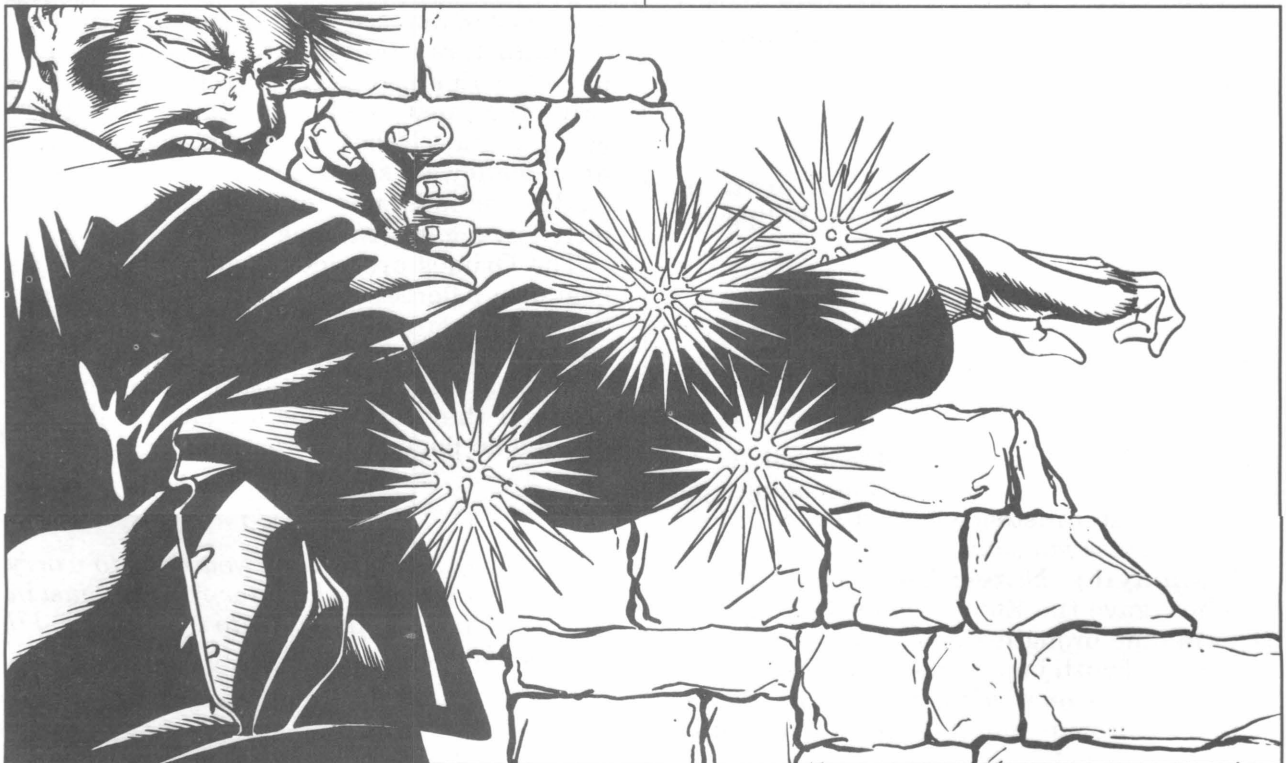
*As you might expect, blood urchins live on blood. Their long, barbed spines stick into your skin and begin to draw out blood like a suckling babe. It's pretty disgusting to watch these suckers swell up like a balloon on your blood. Pulling them off is tough work because of those barbs. The best way to remove a blood urchin is to burn them off — they hate that. You can also cut the spine off with a good knife, but that's gonna hurt, too.*

## BLOOD URCHINS

**AGILITY 1**  
**DEXTERITY 1**  
**ENDURANCE 5**

**STRENGTH 1**  
**TOUGHNESS 4/7**  
**INTELLECT 1**  
Perception 14, trick 12  
**MIND 1**  
**CONFIDENCE 7**  
Intimidation 8  
**CHARISMA 2**  
**Life Points:** None  
**Loot:** 2 in 10

**Natural Tools:** Shell, armor value TOU+3/7; spine. Blood urchins must be stepped or fallen on to sink their spines into a victim. When this happens, use the victim's weight value as the base damage. Situational modifiers may apply. If any damage is caused, the barbs stick into the character and the blood urchin begins to draw blood. This counts as a "bleeder" as defined on page 77 of the *MasterBook* rules. Burning them will cause them to remove the spine. Otherwise, a character will have to cut or saw the thing free. This method requires a *first aid* total of 12 and inflicts two shock to the victim for each attempt. Pulling the urchin free is extremely painful and inflicts the same amount of damage on the victim as it did going in (do not roll a second bonus).



Kar Waller



**Roleplaying Notes:** Scores of blood urchins cover the jagged rocks of the Grimes. When not feeding on the blood of sharks and other large fish, they suck nutrients from the sludge that surrounds them.

## GATOR-RATS

*The name ought to tell you all you need to know. These things look like long rats with the skin and jaws of alligators. Most are about one meter long, but I've heard tales of freaks that can get a lot bigger. Either way, a cheap lead slug will put these things down in a hurry. Just don't hang out where you killed 'em, 'cause the smell of blood will probably bring more. Skin 'em if you've got time, their hides make really cool jackets that will actually stop a knife blade — if it's wielded by a thirteen year old with whooping cough.*

### GATOR-RAT

#### AGILITY 12

Stealth 15, swimming 15, unarmed combat 14

#### DEXTERITY 2

#### ENDURANCE 9

#### STRENGTH 9

#### TOUGHNESS 10/13

#### INTELLECT 2

Perception 4 (smell 14)

#### MIND 1

#### CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 10

#### CHARISMA 2

**Life Points:** None

**Loot:** 2 in 10 per pack

**Natural Tools:** Scaly hide, armor value TOU+3/13; teeth, damage value STR+4/13. The bite of the filthy gator-rats can cause disease in those with weak systems. Anytime a character takes a wound or more, she must make an Endurance roll versus a DN of 10 +1 for each wound suffered from the bite. Failure means the victim's injuries are infected, and will rot and fester until cured. A *medicine* roll equal to the same DN as above must be rolled before any natural healing can take place. Common magical healing actually traps the disease inside the flesh. The victim will need to receive better treatment before the wounds will heal. A spell that removes disease, or treatment with the *medicine* skill at a DN equal to the above +4, are required before the

character may make any healing rolls.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Gator-rats are truly a cross between the two species that make up their name. They group in packs like rats, but lurk just beneath the water or in the darkest shadows waiting for prey. Their usual diet is regular old sewer rats, but since the tidal wave they've found that Human flesh is much more tasty.

Gator-rats have an acute sense of smell. Anytime more than a few drops of blood are spilled in the sewers, there is a 2 in 10 chance that another pack of 1-10 will be attracted to the scene.

## GRIME SHARKS

*The ocean south of Gwalior is warm, and as such, teems with sharks. Some of the less discriminating animals have wandered into the Grimes and decided that eating sewage is a pretty cool thing. Blech. If you go flying out a spillway and land in the Grimes, these suckers are one of the first things that'll take a bite out of you.*

*Grime sharks hang out in packs of 5-10. They have slimy gray-white skin, greenish eyes, and fins tattered and eaten away by disease and parasites. Some of them are really pale — the local fishermen call them 'ghost sharks,' but they're all the same animal. Most are about three meters long.*

*I really want to tell you to avoid their bite because it's likely to cause disease. But that's kind of silly. You should avoid their bite because it HURTS! Getting a disease in your mangled leg might not matter if the leg is in the gut of some slippery skinned predator.*

### GRIME SHARK

#### AGILITY 14

Maneuver 17 (19), stealth 15, swimming 18, unarmed combat 16

#### DEXTERITY 5

#### ENDURANCE 9

#### STRENGTH 10

#### TOUGHNESS 11

#### INTELLECT 1

Perception 5 (smell 14)

#### MIND 1

#### CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 12

#### CHARISMA 2

**Life Points:** None



**Loot:** 1 in 10, "lair" is bottom of the Grimes  
**Natural Tools:** Slick hide (+2 *maneuver* on defense only); teeth, damage value STR+5/15. Their bite causes the same wasting disease as the gator-rats (see above).

**Roleplaying Notes:** Grime sharks always "taste" their victim by rubbing up against them underwater. When they're satisfied that their prey is edible, they move in for the attack from below. Their nose is particularly sensitive. If someone takes an aimed shot against it and causes at least two result points of damage, the grime shark *breaks*. If it does not draw blood on its next attack, it retreats and leaves this fight for its fellows.

Blood sends the sharks into a frenzy. Once a single wound is caused (on a victim that bleeds), the entire pack becomes flurried and will not retreat or break until dead.

There are rumors of a gigantic 'ghost' shark that occasionally surfaces in the Grimes. No proof of such a creature exists, however.

## RUNGLES

*I warned you about scaling down the bluffs and trying to find the Red Hand's cave that way. If you've got some way of fending off the rungles, ignore me. If you don't, these things will pick you to pieces before you get halfway down the rope.*

*Rungles are the size of buzzards, but their skin is brown and leathery. Their black beaks are fork-like with three needle-like points that they use to impale prey. When rungles go after something bigger than themselves, like you, friend, they have a really nasty trick. Ten or twelve of the suckers will gang up and dive-bomb a person all at once. If you don't die, they'll pull free and come back for another run.*

## RUNGLES

### AGILITY 14

Flight 17, maneuver 17, stealth 15, swimming 15, unarmed combat 15

### DEXTERITY 3

### ENDURANCE 5

### STRENGTH 5

### TOUGHNESS 6/8

### INTELLECT 1

Perception 2 (smell) 14

### MIND 1

### CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 8



Jaime Lombardo & Ron Hill

## CHARISMA 2

**Life Points:** None

**Loot:** 1 in 10, lair is in shallow caves in Gwalior bluffs

**Natural Tools:** Thick hide, TOU+2/8; beak, damage value STR+3/8.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Rungles will always attack larger opponents in packs of 2–20. If possible, they'll all attempt to strike at once. Treat this as a Many-on-One attack. Rungles aren't intelligent, but they are clever enough to watch prey until it puts itself into a compromising position, such as climbing a cliff or clinging to a rock in the Grimes.

## LOOT

Roll two dice on the table below whenever a lair is discovered with treasure in it.

### Die

#### Roll Treasure

- 2 Go to the table of "exceptional" loot.
- 3 Whatever creature was being tracked didn't live alone. The same number of creatures encountered previously are in the lair. Roll again for loot immediately. If this number comes up again, add that many *more* creatures, then roll for loot *again*.
- 4 The searcher finds a Human corpse just beneath the water. Unfortunately, this is one of the bloated Undead described in this chapter. Its fellows lurk nearby. If they are defeated, the explorer may roll again.
- 5 A marine version of the diamond head viper (see the "Alerios Jungle" chapter) lurks near the creature's lair.
- 6 In a floating pile of debris are several corpses wearing the midnight black uniforms of Grand Eaton cavalry. The uniforms are in good condition, if someone has the heart to take them from their dead owners.
- 7 A bobbing corpse wears a gold ring worth 50 gelans. On its hip is a knife (damage value STR+3).
- 8 A wounded adventurer lies in a niche in the sewer wall (or upon a rock if in the Grimes). He will offer a great treasure if rescued, which turns out to be a silver signet ring imbued with the ability to *detect magic* once per day.
- 9 A recently devoured corpse floats in the

water. Beneath it is a backpack filled with four magnesium torches and a sealed box of rations (enough for one man for three days). A Gelvash shotgun with three rounds also lies nearby.

10 A pile of debris hides a metal box. Inside is a book on necromancy. It takes four days to read the tome, but anyone who reads it automatically gains +2 points of the arcane lore, *death*. If this result is rolled again, the book contains 1-5 spells instead.

11 A dead adventurer lies half-eaten within the creature's muddy lair. He carries two *thunder* potions and a saber (damage value +7).

12 The gnawed bones of a Red Hand cultist lie in a pile among some debris. Within the mess is a *chora*, a long knife useful in certain rituals (damage value +4, +1 to spellcasting total if used in sacrificial ritual).

13 A dead adventurer wears a bullet-proof vest and carries a Skandra Annihilator submachine gun with a fully loaded drum.

14 An adventurer is trapped in a crack in the broken walls of the sewers and is being attacked by a combined party of 12 gator-rats and 9 bloated Undead. If rescued, the adventurer turns out to be a Vampire contract killer (as per the template in the *Bloodshadows* rulebook). The Vampire claims that he is a fellow fortune hunter and will join the heroes if allowed. If another character party is encountered, however, one of them is the killer's target, and he will do his best to ensure that character does not escape alive. The game-master will need to flesh this relationship out more for a deceptive subplot.

15 A collapsible raft (see the "Outfitters, Goods, and Services" chapter) floats abandoned. Inside are several pools of blood and shell casings. A trio of bloated Undead lurk beneath the raft, and are using it to trap new prey. They are well armed from their previous victory, carrying two shotguns and a pistol.

16 A medallion is entangled in a pile of gnawed bones. On it is engraved the word "pain." If someone says this word while rubbing the medallion, a *rain of razors* spell is cast with no possibility for backlash. The medallion has five charges within it before it is exhausted.





**17** A sentinel's sword lies in the muck beneath the water. If cleaned and sharpened, it proves to have an incredibly sharp blade (damage value STR+9/22). Unfortunately, the recognizable blade belonged to a sentinel of the Guildsport embassy in the Legation area. His murderer, a member of the Red Hand, dumped his body and possessions in the sewers some time ago. Anyone seen carrying the sword will be chased for the murder. This subplot should be fleshed out and tailored to the campaign by the gamemaster.

**18** No lair is found, but the searcher does wander into something much more important. In a strange dead-end of the sewers (or in an underwater cave in the Grimes), is a shimmering field of energy. This is a gate that leads to a place of the gamemaster's choice.

**19** The tidal wave has torn the sewers near the creature's lair to shreds. No salvage is found there, but in the sundered rock wall is an exposed vein of gold. There's enough ore here to open a genuine mine. The gamemaster and the players will have to figure out how they wish to extract and sell the precious stuff without attracting too much attention. At a minimum, the find is worth 10,000 gelans, though it will take several weeks for a team of five to chip out that much ore and find someone to purchase such a large amount. This should become an entire adventure of its own.

**20** Inside a sealed bone tube are several sheets of ancient vellum. The scrolls have instructions for summoning a Demon.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

# OUTFITTERS, GOODS, AND SERVICES

*There are hundreds of stores scattered about Marl. Most of them carry a few items you shouldn't do without, and a hundred more that just take up room in your pack. I've made a list of the things you might be able to use along with their price and my advice. I've included a few gizmos and gadgets I don't particularly approve of, but I know everyone isn't as picky as me.*

## MONEY

*Before I get started on the goods, you'll probably want to know a few things about the exchange rates. After all, if you don't know how many vens there are in a selast, you'll be an easy mark for those willing to cheat you out of your money.*

Below is a chart listing the exchange rates for currencies that are accepted in Galitia. These are meant to be rough guidelines because Marl's economy is subject to periodic fluctuation.

EXCHANGE RATES						
Currency	Exchange Value					
	Galitia Vens	Selastos Selasts	Albreduran Marks	Albreduran Drelmarks	Gwalior Gelans	Kaldovian Notes
Vens =	1	1/2	1/2	1/20	1	1/4
Selasts =	2	1	1	1/10	2	1/2
Marks =	2	1	1	1/10	2	1/2
Drelmarks =	20	10	10	1	20	1/5
Gelans =	1	1/2	1/2	1/20	1	1/4
Notes =	4	2	2	1/5	4	1

## TRANSPORTATION

### COLLAPSIBLE RAFT

Now here's a handy device. It looks like a folded up tent made of rubber, but speak a few command words and the insides fill with air, giving you a raft large enough to fit eight. You'll have to come up with paddles on your own. Speak another word and the air rushes out so that you can fold the thing back up.

This is a real treasure, friends. I keep one in Tadpole's saddlebags, 'cause I do not like to swim in the Wilderness. Unfortunately, sometimes you just gotta get in the water. A collapsible raft costs 400 selasts and weighs about five pounds.

### HORSE

Don't ever underestimate the value of a good mount. An old nag won't help you escape a granite cat. It'll probably just break a leg and pin you to the ground. Look for a healthy animal with pink gums, good hooves, and just enough fat to get by when your rations run thin. The horses you're interested in are trained to stay by you, fight when they have to, and respond to simple commands like "Bust his face in." If you want a horse to pull a plow, you'll probably spend less than 100 selasts.

Cost: 600

The statistics presented below are for an average horse. Increasing any attribute costs an additional 50 selasts per point. Decreasing an attribute subtracts only 25 selasts per point — it's a seller's market. No one will sell a trained horse for less than 200 selasts.

Physical attributes may be changed by +/- 3. Intellect and Mind may be altered by +/-1. All other scores may be changed by +/- 2. Skills may also be raised or lowered by +/- 2 points, at a cost of 40 selasts per point.

### HORSE

#### AGILITY 10

Long jumping 11, maneuver 11, running 13, unarmed combat 11

#### DEXTERITY 5

#### ENDURANCE 11

#### STRENGTH 10

#### TOUGHNESS 11

### HORSE

#### Roll

#### Trait

- 1 Mean, likes to bite anyone who gets too close
- 2 Jealous, doesn't like vehicles
- 3 Flirt, always chasing after horses of opposite sex
- 4 Proud, likes to prance around other animals
- 5 Well-trained, understands more than a few simple commands
- 6 Loyal, always tries to return to its owner when separated
- 7 Courage, never retreats from a fight until ordered
- 8 Shy, avoids danger and other creatures
- 9 Ham, becomes difficult if not given frequent treats or affection
- 10 Roll again

#### INTELLECT 4

Perception 12 (smell 14), trick (6)

#### MIND 4

#### CONFIDENCE 6

Intimidation 8, willpower 7

#### CHARISMA 5

Life Points: None

**Natural Tools:** Hooves, damage value STR+2/12, teeth, damage value STR+2/12.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Horses are relatively intelligent animals with their own unique personality. Whenever a character buys a mount, the gamemaster can add life to the game world by assigning the animal its own peculiar traits and habits. The table below might provide some inspiration.

### RANTAN

Rantan are huge, two-legged lizards that run in wild and fearless packs throughout the Dirak. They've got the traditional long tail, sharp teeth, and tiny little arms of their species. Most have light brown to yellow skin with darker stripes running across their back and tails.

A few brave souls have managed to steal rantan eggs and raise the young as mounts. These things aren't cheap, and they aren't easy



to control, but if it's fighting ability you want, a rantan is the mount of choice. Don't take them where it's cold, though. These critters still have a few thousand years of desert life in their ancestry. I've heard rantan perform better if your whole party is riding them, but you'll need to figure out the truth of this rumor for yourself — I'll stick with horses.

A healthy rantan isn't cheap. Expect to pay around 3,500 selasts. Then you gotta' worry about feeding the damn thing.

## RANTAN

### AGILITY 11

Climbing 12, dodge 12, long jumping 14, maneuver 13, running 13, stealth 12, unarmed combat 14

### DEXTERITY 7

### ENDURANCE 13

### STRENGTH 13

Resist shock 15

### TOUGHNESS 12/14

### INTELLECT 4

Perception 11 (smell 13), trick (6)

### MIND 3

### CONFIDENCE 11

Intimidation 13, survival: desert 13

### CHARISMA 6

### Life Points: 1

### Loot: 1

**Natural Tools:** Scaly hide, armor value +2/14; claws, damage value STR+3/16; teeth, damage value STR+1/14.)

**Roleplaying Notes:** Rantan are feisty and an owner will need to fight for control constantly, adding +2 to the DN of any *beast riding* skill rolls. They are vicious beasts, but not quite as fearless as Buck thinks. Their instinct is to hunt in a pack, so they aren't as comfortable when fighting alone. If a rantan has no others of its kind within sight, it's *willpower* value is lowered by -3. Any time the animal takes a wound or worse, the rantan will need to make a *willpower* roll against a base difficulty number of 10 to avoid fleeing. Adverse circumstances may raise this DN at the gamemaster's discretion.

Rantan are cold-blooded creatures and become stiff and lethargic in weather below 55 degrees. Subtract -3 from their Agility and Dexterity if this occurs.



## MOTORCYCLE

*This is a good vehicle to have when you're on a trail. When you're climbing a mountain, though, this thing is more trouble than it's worth. Take my advice — stick to a horse or rantan if you don't want to hoof it yourself.*

### MOTORCYCLE

**Speed:** 125 kmh/80 mph  
**Passengers:** 1  
**Toughness:** 5  
**Maneuverability:** -1  
**Price:** 900 selasts

## SERVICES

*Don't forget that there's more to waste your money on than runeslugs and trail-candy. Cartographers, retainers, guides, and couriers like me are all available to help you get you through the Wilderness.*

### CARTOGRAPHERS

*The cost of a map depends almost entirely on what it shows. If you want a general layout of the area, such as where Selastos is in relation to Galitia and the Pendaras, you're going to pay about three selasts. If you want a map showing you how to get to Selastos from Galitia through the Pendaras, the cartographer's going to charge you upwards of 50 selasts. The cartographer guilds are old and corrupt, but everyone knows that. Pay their price or set out on your own with hope and luck as your guide. Here's some sample prices I've seen charged recently. You should be able to figure out what to pay for other maps based on these.*

### COURIERS

*I've told you a hundred times not to go out into the Wilderness. But what if you absolutely, positively, have to get something through? I'm your gal. I can't tell you just how much I'd charge, but I can give you a rough idea of the things I take into account. My base fee is 100 selasts for every day I have to travel. If you want me to go into the Dirak, I'm going to add on another 25 selasts every day I'm in that infernal place. If I can't strap your package to my horse, you're going to pay for the cart (or whatever). I don't charge you extra, but it's*

## MAPS

Map	Price
Alerios, general	4
Dirak, general	5
Boiling Swamps, general	15
Galitia to Selastos through Silman's Pass	35
Grand Eaton to Nora's Dream	50
Gwalior to Mukden via gate	100

*going to slow me down, which will add on those 100 buck days in a hurry.*

*If carrying your package is likely to get me killed, you better be prepared to drop a couple of thousand into my lap. We'll figure out just how many when you tell me who's after it and why. I know what you're thinking; not telling me will save you a few selasts. It'll also get me killed, and your package won't get where it's going. So be up front and let me do my job.*

*And one more thing. I don't mind taking half the payment up front and the other half on delivery, but a lot of you muck-heads get greedy when your package is already home. If you stiff a courier her other half, you can bet she's going to get you back. And if you stiff me, I'll pay you back double. Understand?*

### MERCENARIES

*You can call them "Wilderness Escorts" if you're embarrassed, but let's face it, you're hiring these guys to protect your butt. Surprisingly, there's quite a few lunatics willing to go out in the Wilderness and risk their neck for a few selasts. Most of these macho he-men say they can't stand the 'monotony of city-life,' or that they're reckless, thrill-a-minute heroes. Let me tell you what I think of the mercenaries I've seen. Most of them are too thick to keep a steady job. The only skill they know is how to point a gun and pull a trigger, and they're so socially dysfunctional that their own mamas kicked 'em out of the house.*

*But I digress. If you really need some muscle, you'll find guns for hire in Galitia, Selastos, Gwalior, and most any other large city. Look for them in taverns — most of them find their*

*courage in whiskey. Don't hire the sane looking ones — they're the kind that'll flip out on you when they see something that shouldn't really exist. Hire the wackos — you know what you're getting into from the start. A decent merc should hire out for about 50 selasts a day plus meals. They'll all ask for more, but if you stick to your guns, they'll sell you theirs.*

## TYPICAL MERCENARY

### AGILITY 10

Beast riding: horse 11, dodge 12, maneuver 12, melee combat 12, melee parry 12, stealth 12, unarmed combat 12, unarmed parry 11

### DEXTERITY 10

Fire combat 13 (+2 specialization in various weapons), lock picking 11, missile weapons 11, thrown weapons 12

### ENDURANCE 11

### STRENGTH 11

Resist shock 13

### TOUGHNESS 12

### INTELLECT 7

First aid 9, perception 9, smuggling 8, tracking 8, trick 9

### MIND 6

### CONFIDENCE 8

Bribery 9, con 9, gambling 10, interrogation 9, intimidation 10, survival: various 10

### CHARISMA 7

Taunt 9

### Life Points: 1–6

**Equipment:** Mercenaries carry all sorts of weapons depending on their personality. Most carry several weapons, and should be specialized with each.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Most hired guns have just enough backbone to impress the masses. These are the same guys hired by mobsters and criminals as common thugs.

Only a few are true warriors. These exceptional individuals are either dangerous opponents or staunch allies. Their skills should run a few points higher than normal, but more importantly, they're much more creative in dangerous situations. A good mercenary will out-think an opponent so that when it comes time to pull the trigger, there's no doubt who the victor will be. The rest of the crowd will just blaze away until they run out of ammo.

## TYPICAL MERCENARY, SPELL-SLINGER

### AGILITY 8

Beast riding: horse 9, dodge 9, stealth 9

### DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 10

### ENDURANCE 8

### STRENGTH 8

### TOUGHNESS 9

### INTELLECT 10

Apportation: various, deduction 11, divination: various, first aid 12, perception 12, trick 11

### MIND 10

Conjuration: various, research 11

### CONFIDENCE

Alteration: various, willpower 12

### CHARISMA 7

Summoning: various, taunt 9

### Life Points: 2

**Equipment:** Spell-slingers usually carry a small pistol as a back-up to their spells.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Spell-slingers are down-on-their-luck mages. Most have been run out of town under dubious circumstances, and are now looking for someone to cough up a few bucks for their waning power. Occasionally a mage of real power will offer his services as a mercenary. These guys are really dangerous — they're usually out testing some crazy new sorcery or trying to hide from something they've summoned that didn't appreciate the experience.

## WEAPONS

*Your basic rifle, pistol, and shotgun are your best bet in the Wilderness. A good machete or a sword will go a long way when you're getting swarmed by skeetharks, too. A few weirder weapons have surfaced from time to time. Their makers claim they're the greatest thing since sliced bread, but I've got my doubts. Most of these toys either blow up in your face or decide to malfunction just as the granite cats pounce. You can decide for yourself.*

## OMNI-GUNS

*A weapon-smith named Coll took a .44 caliber pistol and added a screw-on barrel to give it greater accuracy. Put on the attachable stock and you've got a rifle. This one actually works pretty well, though it's up to you to decide when you need a quick firing pistol or a more accurate long-arm. Me? I prefer a shotgun, but then I couldn't hit the side of a barn. Think about it.*



*Coll charges 100 selasts for these unique weapons. A few cheap rip-offs of the "omni-gun" have popped up. If you want to risk it, they're usually about 25 selasts cheaper.*

Omni-guns made by smiths other than Coll will fall to pieces whenever they are being fired and a setback occurs during combat.

Omni-Pistol: damage value 20, ammo 6, range 3-10/25/50/150.

Omni-Rifle: damage value 20, ammo 6, range 5-15/60/100/200.

## SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN

*Okay, this isn't really a nifty new invention, but it's what I carry so I thought I'd throw it in. Sawing off your barrel kills your range, but it also insures that you nail whatever's growling at you. That's pretty important if you're a bad shot like me. The short barrel of a sawed-off makes the shots spread wide at even short ranges, so they're good when you're getting jumped by several bad guys at once.*

*Shotguns cost 20 selasts. Sawing off the barrel is your job.*

Up to medium range, sawed-off shotguns ignore multi-action penalties as long as the targets are within 10 feet of one another.

Sawed-Off Shotgun: damage value 21, ammo 2, range 3-6/20/30/45

## MISCELLANEOUS

*The rest of this stuff you should be able to find most anywhere. I've listed the most common prices in selasts, but each merchant will charge more or less depending on what he has to pay for his stock.*

Backpack	45
Bedroll	5
Binoculars	30
Camp stove	10
Compass	
First aid kit (+1 to rolls, 5 uses)	25
Fishing tackle	15
Grappling hook	12
Lamp, magical bug	150
Lantern, oil	10
Lantern, attaches to helm	15
Machete (STR+4)	5
Mosquito netting for bedroll	3
Oil, flask, for lantern	3
Pocket watch	5
Rations, trail (1 week)	3
Rope, 100 feet	10
Sack, large	2
Sack, small	1
Sack, large, waterproof	4
Tent, two man	30
Tent, four man	50
Tent, eight man	100
Trap, metal (damage value 13)	10
Trap, live	10

## ONE HIT WONDERS

*'Jumping Johnny,' a pyromanic mage in Galitia, invented this thing. It's essentially just a long tube built to hold a ball of lead with the fireball spell focused into it. He calls this thing the 'one hit wonder' because that's supposedly all it takes to put somebody down. The tube is clumsy and hard to aim, but if you can get it on target, you'll see some serious fireworks. It sounds impressive, and it is if you can't cast spells yourself. Personally though, I think you should run from anything so big it takes one of these to hurt it.*

One hit wonders are only available in Galitia and cost about 60 selasts. Shells for the "wonder" can be found elsewhere, but aren't quite as powerful as Jumping Johnny's. Good ones run as much as the launcher (60 selasts), imitations are about half that (30 selasts).

One Hit Wonder: damage value 20, ammo 1, range 5-10/20/40/80.

# Bloodshadows<sup>TM</sup>

## CHARACTER SHEET

### AMBA WANDERER

<b>SPECIES</b> Amba	<b>ALIGNMENT</b> Neutral	<b>HEIGHT</b>	<b>MASS</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>SEX</b> Either
---------------------	--------------------------	---------------	-------------	------------	-------------------

<b>ATTRIBUTES</b> <b>AGILITY 11</b> Maneuver 13, running 15, stealth 14, unarmed combat 12 <b>DEXTERITY 9</b> <b>ENDURANCE 9</b> <b>STRENGTH 9</b> <b>TOUGHNESS 10</b> <b>INTELLECT 7</b> Camouflage 10, perception 9 (12), tracking (desert 10), trick 10 <b>MIND 7</b> <b>CONFIDENCE 10</b> Intimidation 12, survival: desert 14 <b>CHARISMA 6</b> Life Points: 5	<b>DERIVED ATTRIBUTES</b> <div> <div>10</div> <b>TOUGHNESS</b> </div> <div> <div>10</div> <b>TOUGHNESS</b>            (w/armor)         </div> <div> <div>8</div> <b>MRG</b>            (Movement Rate, Ground)         </div> <div> <div>5</div> <b>MRS</b>            (Movement Rate, Swimming)         </div> <div> <div>3</div> <b>MRC</b>            (Movement Rate, Climbing)         </div> <div> <div>3</div> <b>MRJ</b>            (Movement Rate, Jumping)         </div>		<b>COMBAT BOX</b>	<b>K</b> <b>O</b>
	<div> <div>WOUND LEVEL</div> <div> <input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i>  <input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i>  <input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i>  <input type="radio"/> <i>Incapacitated</i>  <input type="radio"/> <i>Mortal</i> </div> </div>		<b>MODIFIERS</b> no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text	
	<b>LIFE POINTS</b> 5		<b>SKILL POINTS</b>	
	<b>SHOCK CAPACITY</b>		<b>SHOCK TAKEN</b>	

#### DESCRIPTION

Your curiosity and natural sense of adventure has brought you out of the Dirak. You find the cities of man fascinating, but you can't understand some of their strange laws. You enjoy hunting in the twisting alleys of places like Gwalior, but you wish the Humans weren't so sensitive about the way you eat. Personally, burning honest flesh and smothering it in fermenting vegetables disgusts you, but you have enough tact not to point out the Humans' flaws.

**Natural Tools:** Fangs, damage value STR +2 (11), poison, if a bite causes at least a Knockdown or a K, the victim must make an Endurance test versus a DN of 12. Every time a character makes this Endurance test, he may add a +1 bonus to any future rolls versus amba poison. If the Endurance check is failed, the victim instantly takes three points of shock, and another point in each successive round for ten more turns. When this shock equals the victim's Endurance, he becomes paralyzed. Shock from this venom is cumulative with any actual shock taken. Subsequent bites cause their regular damage, but cause no further effects from venom.

#### BACKGROUND

**Advantages:** Special Abilities (CII): Enhanced Senses, can sense vibrations adding +3 to *perception*; Additional Skill Adds (CII): +3 to *survival: desert*; Special Abilities (CIII): Speed; Special Abilities (CIII): Poison.

**Compensations:** Prejudice (CII); Cultural Unfamiliarity (CII): Human cities baffle you; Nutritional Requirements (CIII): amba must eat their prey live; Advantage Flaw (CIII): Environmental Incompatibility, intolerant to cold, -2 to all physical skills in temperatures less than 40 degrees.

#### EQUIPMENT

Spear, damage value STR+5/14; crossbow, range 3-10/100/200/300, damage value STR+9/18.



"An ambush! I'll take the fat one!"

#### BONUS CHART

DIE	9 11																21 26 31 36 41						
ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	25	30	35	40	45	+5
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	+1

# Bloodshadows™

## CHARACTER SHEET

### COURIER

<b>SPECIES</b> Human	<b>ALIGNMENT</b> Neutral	<b>HEIGHT</b>	<b>MASS</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>SEX</b> Male
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ATTRIBUTES	DERIVED ATTRIBUTES	COMBAT BOX	K	O
<b>AGILITY 10</b> Beast riding: horse 11, dodge 11, maneuver 11, stealth 11, unarmed combat 11 <b>DEXTERITY 9</b> Fire combat 11 <b>ENDURANCE 8</b> <b>STRENGTH 8</b> <b>TOUGHNESS 9</b> <b>INTELLECT 9</b> Deduction 10, first aid 10, perception 10, smuggling 12, tracking 10, trick 10 <b>MIND 8</b> <b>CONFIENCE 9</b> Intimidation 10, survival: Wilderness 10, willpower 10 <b>CHARISMA 7</b> Disguise 8, taunt 8	<b>9 TOUGHNESS</b> <b>10 TOUGHNESS</b> (w/armor) <b>7 MRG</b> (Movement Rate, Ground) <b>5 MRS</b> (Movement Rate, Swimming) <b>3 MRC</b> (Movement Rate, Climbing) <b>3 MRJ</b> (Movement Rate, Jumping)	<b>WOUND LEVEL</b> <input type="radio"/> Light <input type="radio"/> Moderate <input type="radio"/> Heavy <input type="radio"/> Incapacitated <input type="radio"/> Mortal	<b>MODIFIERS</b> no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text	
	<b>LIFE POINTS</b> 5	<b>SKILL POINTS</b>	<b>SHOCK CAPACITY</b>	
			<b>SHOCK TAKEN</b>	

### BACKGROUND

**Advantages:** Skill Bonus (CI): +1 to *perception*, *deduction*, and *smuggling*; Additional Skill Add (CI); Equipment (CI): horse; Luck (CII); Cultures (CII): Wilderness settlements; Cultures (CII): intimate knowledge of people in one particular area of the Wilderness.

**Compensations:** Enemy (CI): Former clients; Enemy (CI): Another former client; Quirk (CI): Gruff personality (-1 to charm rolls); Bad Luck (CII); Enemy (CII): More former clients; Price (CIII): Whenever Luck (CII) is used, you usually wind up in more trouble than before, and are *setback* in some other way. This shouldn't spoil your use of the Luck Advantage, but saving your bacon is often a spectacular affair.

### DESCRIPTION

You've got a reputation among your clients for getting revenge on those who don't pay what they promised. You've recovered packages from some of those who stiffed you, and they want them back. You've got minor enemies in almost every city on Marl. It drives you crazy; these cheapskates spend more money on hit men to kill you than their original fee would have cost! Getting away from the city and back into the Wilderness is almost a relief; at least the things there don't pretend to be civilized. Unfortunately, the city is where the money is. Too, you take a sense of pride in getting your packages to their destination, no matter how difficult the trip might be. Neither rain, nor sleet, nor gloom of night will stop you from getting through. Big hairy monsters will certainly raise your fee, though.

### EQUIPMENT

Guardian shotgun, runeslugs (6), charged with *fireball* spell, backpack with trail gear, leather jacket (armor value +1), Very Important but Unopened Package (taken from a client who failed to pay), well trained horse worth \$300 worth of attribute increases.



**"Let me guess, half up front, half on delivery. I've heard this one before."**

### BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5



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## PARANOIA

### PARANOIA

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# WILDERNESS

by Shane Lacy Hensley

On the streets of Marl's cities, survival is not an easy thing. But if you think surviving in the city is hard, think again. There is a deadly Wilderness out there waiting for you. Are you ready for it?

*Wilderness* gives the gamemaster everything needed to start a campaign in the untamed areas of Marl. There are many ancient legends to uncover, dangerous critters to avoid, and treasures to grab — if the players can find them without getting eaten first. And for those players foolish enough to enter the Wilderness and expect an easy ride, there are some hints and tips from a courier who has seen it all and lived to warn others to stay away.

The Wilderness awaits your arrival. Prepare yourself well.

*Wilderness is a supplement intended for use with  
The World of Bloodshadows game.*

A **MASTERBOOK**™  
Game

